

# TESTIMONY

## *a memory project*

Script of the spoken-word performance  
at the Grand Iftar, Southwark Cathedral, on June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2018

On the first anniversary of the 2017 terror attack, this piece was performed by twenty people who were caught up in the events and their aftermath. Most are local residents; some work, worship or socialize here. All have long roots in this community.

Each gave an account of their experiences to the writer Michelle Lovric. At the suggestion of Amir Eden, their testimonies were edited into a sequence of short extracts that expressed both the fear and fragmentation of that terrible night but also the growing solidarity and affection that remain the most lasting legacy of the time when this community was so sorely tested.

Since *Testimony* was performed, we have lost three beloved members of the cast: Tom Collins, Marion Marples and Amir Eden's mother Zakia Tafader. This slightly revised version of the spoken-word piece is now therefore dedicated to their memory as well as to the memory of those who were harmed in the attack.

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**NARRATOR**                    **In the night, it comes to you ...**

VERONICA                    At the last moment, we decided to eat in, after all.

SUSAN                        We took the next bus.

HEATHER                    My cash-out at the café was wrong, so I was running late.

**NARRATOR**                    **You missed death by seconds. You ask ...**

HEATHER                    Am I ... am I alive *because someone else died?*

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**NARRATOR**                    **Ten weeks ago, there was terror at Westminster: a man in a car, mowing down people on a bridge; an attack with knives.**

TOM                         We're on our way home, on a bus on London Bridge. A woman jumps on. She's screaming that a man has just driven a van into pedestrians. Our bus grinds to a halt.

SUSAN                        We ask to be let off. We see a body. Then another one. There's a man holding a woman's head in his lap. He's begging, 'Stay with me.' I know no first aid. I can't help save this woman. It's almost certainly too late.

TOM                         People are kneeling, cradling. It looks like reverence, like the way people pray over sick bodies at places of pilgrimage. It seems like violation to look at them directly.

SUSAN                        We know something very dangerous has happened. We're desperate to get home.

TOM                         We have no idea that, between us and Clink Street, there are terrorists with knives.

SUSAN                        Under the railway bridge, several people are lying completely still. The police charge at us, screaming, 'Run! Run! Run!'

MYRA From our flat on Clink Street, we see commotion on the bridge, police boats with searchlights. We go out on the balcony. An officer shouts from his boat, 'You lot in those flats, DO NOT leave your premises!'

VERONICA We rush to shut all the windows, as if *that* will repel whatever evil is out there. The lights have gone out in Bill's Café. That's strange. Clink Street is never quiet, even at 2am. The quiet makes it more surreal, more sinister. Then our phones flash: *BREAKING NEWS: Terror attack at London Bridge.*

SYLVIA The bridge itself is completely still. But what's happening up behind the parapet? Injuries, pain, fear? Should I be doing something? *What?*

NEIL My phone lights up with the news. I'm slack-jawed with shock, fearful. My staff are family to me. They often drink or eat at the Market. When other dreadful things have happened, there's always been a comfortable distance. But when it's your home, your office, your employees, then it's too personal, too close.

SHARON The landline, the mobiles – they all squeal at once. My sister says, 'Turn on the television! The Market's been attacked!'

ANDREW It's a text that tells me. I pull on my dog-collar and run along the river towards the Cathedral. People may need help or sanctuary. I must open their church, be there for them. But police have already blocked the path at the Globe.

DEBRA I hear multiple sirens, like a never-ending fanfare of distress. Opening my door, all I can see is police cars, one after another, speeding down Southwark Street. Then, coming from London Bridge, there's a sea of people running towards me. Every second, they're getting closer, so close I can make out expressions of shock and horror on their faces. Something terrible is happening.

AMIR It's Ramadan. I'm on my way home from breaking the fast with family. Outside London Bridge station, I see a dark blue van streaking past. I know the police don't send that kind of van for a car crash.

MYRA It's like something on TV. But it's not TV. And this show's in Surround-Sound – police helicopters yards above our roof, sirens, lights flashing on our own walls.

**NARRATOR** **Two people are already dead; many are wounded. The terrorists abandon their van on the bridge. Taking their**

**knives, they run down into the Borough Market and begin to stab.**

**They meet bravery and self-sacrifice. People throw chairs, glasses, crates, a bicycle. Some try to draw the terrorists away from their victims. But a young girl and four more men are fatally stabbed. Kirsty Boden, a nurse, runs towards the screams, and does not survive.**

**The terrorists return to Borough High Street. They re-enter the Market at Stoney Street, now crowded with drinkers and diners, many of them locals.**

EMER I'm on a first date. We've just gone into Arabica for a meal.

GEOFF I go into Black & Blue and order a Heineken. I'll never get to drink it. Someone asks, 'Do you hear screaming?' A waitress flashes past and locks the door. Diners are running to the back, knocking over tables, hiding under them. I see three men on the path that leads to the restaurant ... I register the long knives and suicide vests. The hairs rise on the back of my neck.

EMER Two people run inside the restaurant, shouting. A waiter slams the big glass door, and spread-eagles himself against it. He's not a big man. It's an incredibly brave thing to do. At least 50 people push towards the back, where we crouch, drenched in water and wine from the tables flung over in panic.

GEOFF The men are kicking the door. It's not going to hold. In that moment, it seems that the terrorists have all the power. I think, *We're in a very bad spot. If I make a mistake now, we're all going to die.*

CLIVE From my window, I hear shrieking, see people running towards the river. They keep stopping, looking back over their shoulders, and then running again.

JENNIFER There's a commotion outside the pub. A barmaid starts screaming and won't stop. People run inside in waves, some spattered with blood. My friend says, 'I think we need to get the hell out of here.' But it's too late. Whatever it is, we're in the middle of it.

EMER We surge upstairs to the restaurant's tiny office. It's a huge decision, and it might be the wrong one. We could be saving our lives – or cornering ourselves in a place where there's no escape.

GEOFF The door gives way. I'm facing three men with hate in their eyes. Those eyes are darting. They are predators hunting for prey. My

best option is to delay them. While they're concentrating on me, they cannot be stabbing others.

The leader yells, 'Everyone get down on the floor!'

I say, 'No, sorry, mate. Really. Not happening.'

That's when they stab me.

HEATHER We try to make Bill's look like an empty, closed restaurant. We hide the customers under kitchen counters. No one knows if Bill's is next.

JENNIFER It's unbearably crowded and hot in the pub's basement. The police say, 'We know it's uncomfortable. But it's safe down here. Horrible things are happening outside. You don't want to be out there.'

ANDREW At the corner of Stoney and Park Streets, a wall of armed police shouts at me to turn and run. Normally, saying 'I'm the Dean of Southwark' gets me into any situation where I need to be. Not tonight.

TOM There are policemen everywhere. I don't appreciate their shouting or their batons waved too close to my face. But the police are novices at terror attacks just as we are novices at being witnesses to one.

DEBRA I call out to the people running past. 'What's going on?' Someone screams, 'They're coming this way!'

CELIA Looking down, I see two policemen tucked behind the wall at Pret, their semi-automatics trained on Stoney Street. Then we see a black helicopter diving down to land on the bridge. A phalanx of riot police with shields and helmets marches down Clink Street.

**NARRATOR** **Police arrive at the Borough Market with its fifteen entrances, its winding corridors, its dark nooks and crannies. They know there are terrorists inside but not how many, or where. At 10.15 armed officers leap out of their cars in Stoney Street. The terrorists run towards them, knives raised. The police fire 46 bullets. Eight minutes after the first emergency call, the three terrorists are dead. Ambulance crews run *towards* the gunfire, intent on helping those who can still be saved.**

- MAUREEN            It *sounds* like fireworks but I decide to check. When I open the door, there's a police officer in riot gear. He uses the muzzle of his machine gun to gently poke me back inside. That's when I realize: *bullets, not fireworks*. And maybe *not* from police guns.
- SUSAN                We're still trying to get home. But on every road we meet policemen. One screams, 'Get out! There are more of them!' Another shouts, 'They've got bombs and guns!' We've just heard real guns. Bombs seem real too.
- MARIAM             A bang rips through the night air, followed by many more. It's a messy, confused sound. We don't understand that it's gunfire. But the officers do. They immediately start shouting, 'Get out! Go now!' It's only six days since I gave birth to my baby. I lost two litres of blood and can still barely walk. I desperately want to be the one carrying Soraya, but I simply haven't got the strength. So when the police yell, 'Run!' I have to hand her to my husband. I tell him to run as fast as he can. All I can think is, *I've only had Soraya a week. I've hardly got to know her. It's all too fragile. It is wrong, so wrong – not just my own weakness but the fact that I and my tiny baby need to be running away from terrorists.*
- GEOFF                I'm hurt but I'm alive. Outside, it's a nightmare of darkness, shrieks, sirens, flashing lights. The police are escorting us down Stoney Street. But an urgent radio message swerves us off through the centre of the Market. When I hear gunfire, I know what it is. I ask the policeman, 'Have they got them?'
- HEATHER            The police come in, yelling. Staff and customers leave in single file. We're taken to the river path, told to run as fast as we can.
- JENNIFER            The police separate the women and put them in boats. They tell us, 'You have to get out of London!'
- HEATHER            I walk north over the Millennium Bridge. No one on the other side of the river has any idea. People are drinking and dining, oblivious to the diners and drinkers dying on the other side of the Thames.
- GEOFF                I'm sitting at the triage station and suddenly I see someone covered with a blanket. It's tagged red. That's probably the worst moment, the closest I come to breaking down, because it's when I realize, *They did it. They really killed people.*
- DAVID                It's a sickening jolt, the first terror attack in our ward. There are fatalities; there are wounded. Shock and horror are heightened by the fact that these are my familiar streets. My first thought is, *Are any of our residents caught up in this? How can we find out?*

MARION There's no stiff upper lip on Twitter tonight. People are panicking, reporting blood, broken glass and bodies on the ground. There are photos of people being evacuated from their hotels in their dressing gowns.

AMIR I type a message into my phone, press 'send all': *'There's been an incident. If you're home, stay in your house. If you're out, don't come to the area. Something's going wrong.'*

**NARRATOR** **It's like a special, bad, urgent birthday. Everyone's texting and emailing. Everyone's pressing hard on the kiss key. Everyone's hoping that you're safe, imagining how you're dealing with this attack on the place you love.**

MAUREEN There are a hundred messages on my phone. *Are you OK? Tell me you're OK!* I can't answer. I don't *know* if I'm OK yet.

EMER Then a friend, who hasn't seen the news, texts to ask how the first date's going. I reply, 'Yeah, it was going great until the terrorists turned up.'

AMIR: I'm standing on the bridge. My mother's on the phone in tears, pleading with me to come home. But my home's inside the cordon. I've nowhere to go. I text the Dean.

ANDREW: Come right over. You can stay here.

THEO I've just finished a show, cycling home. I hit the cordon in Southwark Street. Suddenly, a policeman shouts, 'Run!' and we're chased into a restaurant and told to hide under the tables.

AMIR All I can think is, *What's going on behind that cordon?*

JENNIFER Then we're on the boat, the water black beneath us. The helicopters churn overhead, sirens scream and there are blue lights everywhere. We have no idea where we're going. Meanwhile my phone battery's running dangerously low.

THEO We're told, 'Locals must make "alternative arrangements".'

MARION Touchingly, on Twitter, some people are now offering sofas and beds to complete strangers suddenly rendered homeless by the fast-growing and implacable police cordon.

SUSAN In the end, we try to sleep on the floor of a hotel lobby.

**NARRATOR** **Every hour, people think that it will soon be OK to go home. They ring the incident room number for information. It never answers.**

**It's not over.**

- DEBRA                    The moon's really bright, casting a weird light. People stand in the empty roads. Everyone's behaving as if they're in the middle of an apocalypse.
- ANDREW                It's when I finally go to bed that I feel the lowest. The adrenalin drains away, leaving an aching gulf. As a priest, I know well that the early hours are the most testing to those in crisis. Helicopters still grind; floodlights still sweep – there's a sense of *ongoing* catastrophe. I keep the radio on, my heart plummeting just after 4am, when the police spell out the numbers of dead and wounded. I question whether I shall be up to the task ahead. I hope I shall be. I pray I shall be.
- MAUREEN              We know *three* terrorists are dead. But no one's said they're *all* dead.
- MYRA                    Did they also plant some bombs? The Market's full of places to hide or to hide *something*.
- VERONICA              We watch the same TV footage, over and over again. It just seems to prolong the attack. There's nothing to say that the danger's passed.
- NARRATOR            It's not over. Flare bombs explode for hours as the police search the Market.**
- SYLVIA                 One's so close that I won't be able to hear properly for days.
- MAUREEN              Each time, I ask myself, *Is that the police? Or is that the terrorists?*
- MYRA                    We keep thinking, *There must be something more than the news has reported, something we don't know.*
- NARRATOR            It's not over. In the early hours, the police, still hunting for terrorists, start breaking down doors, including those of Southwark Cathedral and its sacristy.**
- VERONICA              I'm jolted out of sleep by a bang. I'm frozen with fear. A neighbour texts that the police are using battering rams to enter our buildings. Then there are boots on the stairs, dogs barking.
- MAUREEN              I hear the doors caving in, one by one, getting closer to me. This could still be terrorists. I snatch the poker from the fireplace. I don't want the terrorists to see my hands shaking, so I hide the poker behind my back. All I can think is, *my grand-daughter's upstairs. If they get in, they're not getting my little darling.*



NARRATOR            The five police forces on site need to focus on just one thing: securing the area.

MARION                They can't concern themselves with incidental damage in the form of people who've been chased down streets, away from their homes, who still don't know when they can get back.

SUSAN                 At dawn, we walk out of the hotel where we've spent the night on the floor. But at Southwark Bridge Road, we hit the cordon. The police say, 'No way. No one's allowed through.'

DAVID                 The General Election's in three days' time, but there's no more thought of campaigning. The welfare of the residents comes first. It's a full-time job to keep them informed and support them in their battle to either return to or leave their homes It's Kafkaesque: you can't get into your home without your passport, and your passport's in your house. Five hundred people are either locked in or out of their homes.

VERONICA             We're in – me and my dinner guest. What we don't know yet is ... that he won't be allowed to leave for another two days.

MICHAEL              Of course we had resilience plans. But the one thing we never planned for was being cordoned out of our own Cathedral.

ANDREW                Normally I'd walk down the road to comfort the bereaved in their own homes. But the loved-ones of these victims are mostly oceans away. Consular officers are at this minute making terrible phone calls to families in France, Spain, Australia. Instead, the people who'll need my support are the witnesses, the residents, some of whom have seen unspeakable things, and those who can't get home.

MAUREEN             I need to get over to Lucy Brown House, where the residents are elderly, vulnerable. I tell the police, 'If I'm afraid, it'll be a hundred times worse for them. Some have Alzheimer's. They won't understand what a lockdown is. You need to tell them every fifteen minutes; some need to be told every fifteen seconds.' But I'm not allowed to go.

NEIL                    At London Bridge, it hits me hard when I see where the terrorists' van crashed into a post. Next, I see the banks of TV cameras: it's official – my practice is part of a disaster zone.

CAT                     The view from our window is inside the inner cordon: the forensic tent, the high-heeled shoes still scattered on the

ground. It's like a time capsule of the attack: nothing has changed since the moment terrorists struck. For six days, all we'll see will be these relics of the violence. The barren landscape makes us feel lonely.

- MYRA We tell a policeman, 'We have no food!' 'Sorry,' he says. We have to raid the larder for a meal of couscous with chilli oil. It's all there is.
- MAUREEN I hear that one Lucy Brown resident has been sitting for two days at her table, with her knife and fork. But her carers can't get through.
- NEIL Turned away at the cordon, I pass people popping into shops, offices. Business as usual for them. It's as if London has a wound in its side but the rest of it continues as normal. In a way, that's good: it's resilience. On the other hand, it seems heartless. I'm also thinking, *How do I keep my business running?*
- ANDREW A Dean locked out of his own Cathedral has a certain credibility with bewildered and shocked people who are cordoned out of their homes and places of work.
- MICHAEL Without our Cathedral, the church goes mobile. The silver lining is that we're out and about, talking with residents, police, Borough Market traders.
- MARION At Guy's Chapel and at St Hugh's, people read the order of service from their cell phones. When it comes to a hymn, everyone scrambles to find one on their devices. It's like being on a pilgrimage: you take where you find. You don't know what you will find. You work with it anyway.
- MICHAEL Some of the resilience plans kick in. We access our server. We need to answer many anxious emails about Doorkins Magnificat, the Cathedral's famous feline. Doorkins is fine. The police are feeding her chicken salad sandwiches.
- MARIAM But there's no way to return to normal life because we just can't get home.
- DAVID Whether you can get home or not comes to depends on which entry point you approach and what shift is on, and their degree of amiability. We ward councillors are worried about so many people. There are some locked out in just the clothes they are wearing, without money or medication. Put anyone into that scenario, without access to their home, and there will be distress.

**NARRATOR**            **Days pass in a kind of suspended animation. It's *uncomfortable* to be locked in or out. Yet you still have the home you love, unlike those taking to roads and boats, pitting their skins against barbed wire. *They* love their homes, too. Even cratered and windowless, they love them. You feel guilty, even for *thinking* you understand that a little bit better than you did before.**

MICHAEL                Never has the bond between the Cathedral and the Market felt so strong, so emotional.

SHARON                 At first, we're upbeat about a quick reopening of the Market. At the wholesaler's, I buy up every single English dahlia for my flower shop. By the time I return, there's a new email: the opening's delayed. We stay at home and watch the news obsessively. We see all the videos on YouTube, even the ones we shouldn't. I ask to go behind the cordon to water my plants. Permission is denied. Only later will I understand that my stall is a part of a crime scene. Watering my flowers might contaminate the evidence.

SYLVIA                 The silent, empty Market feels like a place of terrible loss. Without its people, the Market is literally soulless.

MICHAEL                I'm worried for the Market traders, more as every day passes. So much perishable food. How will their businesses survive?

**NARRATOR**            **You know, tragedy makes you magnetic. You draw all eyes.**

MICHAEL                I see our streets on the news. They don't *look* like our streets.

THEO                    For the media, the money shot's the man running down the street with his pint of beer. Even chased by police, even with terrorists yards away, he's not letting go of that pint.

MAUREEN              Obviously a Scot, everyone tells me.

VERONICA              The TV shows mugshots of the terrorists. But I don't want to put faces to the things that just happened.

CELIA                    I know the terrorists had to die. They had dressed in suicide vests that might have been real. The police had to stop the killing of the innocent: it was like destroying a man-eating tiger who attacks a village.

GARY                    I watch the CCTV footage. I'm a grown-up and I can handle myself, but I crack when I see the boy lost in his phone. He looks too much like my son – same shoulders, same hair, same

gait – walking into frame at the same time as the terrorists. I see them surround him. *Pictures stay in your head.*

CAT It feels like a violent burglary of our home.

CELIA It's a warped deployment of a religion: an almost mechanical issue, like a sickness of the body.

AMIR How dare they come to my home and do this? This false representation of my faith will get the whole world's attention now. I think of my mother, a woman of profound faith, whose whole life is devoted to caring, giving and forgiving. This perversion of Islam cannot stand. We will not let it stand.

ANDREW They were aiming at the nature of *this* area. At our best, in the bones of this place, we are what they hate – people living in diversity and in harmony. They attacked the playground of the city, where, for centuries, people have acted out their pleasures in a constant interplay of comedy and tragedy. Its inclusiveness and diversity are anathema to them.

**NARRATOR Trauma is strange. People ask you about how you feel. But trying to answer gets in the way of your feelings.**

AMIR Every time someone is nice to me, tears come to my eyes. I cry at a Christchurch service, at the Cathedral, at Monday's vigil at Potter's Field, at the Tuesday vigil outside Tate Modern. I cry when the Dean and the Bishop of Southwark come to my mosque to address the thousand-strong congregation a week after the attack.

ANDREW We do not think this is what Muslims do. We do not blame you ... These are criminal acts. They say they're doing things in the name of God. We know they're not.

AMIR A whole year's crying is done in a few days.

ANDREW The attacks seem to have unlocked something, making people more involved. They believe that their own empathy counts for something. That's why hundreds attend the vigils. We're societal beings. We need to get together with other people, to physically stand side by side with those who share our views and our feelings.

MARION The general election falls on the Thursday after the attack. It seems more important than ever to vote, precisely because there's been an attack on our value system.

**NARRATOR** You feel joined to others, but separated too because there are confusing hierarchies of trauma.  
**Absolutely everyone feels strangely guilty and ashamed. You didn't pay the full price; you had the *discount* experience of terrorism.**  
**You're safe, but you feel the shadow of death on your shoulders.**  
**And what is the *right* way to witness the death or agony of strangers?**  
**The darkness that befell those who died here is as real as your own survival.**  
**How does that work?**  
**What kind of victims are you?**

**HEATHER** I feel a bit of a fraud. I wasn't in danger.

**TOM** It's only when I'm alone, fixed on the media churn, that the trauma hits me. We start meeting with neighbours we got to know better through the attack. Trauma bonding, I call it. When Barcelona happens, I think, *I'm connected to these people. I'm connected to those people at the Bataclan. I'm connected to those people in Nice.* Now I joke, 'Other people will always have Paris. Sue and I will always have London Bridge.'

**SYLVIA** On London Bridge, I see the impromptu shrines for the dead and wounded: pictures, flowers, candles. The photographs are heart-breaking. The faces are young, attractive.

**CAT** Most of those killed were our age, people with their lives ahead of them. Wrong time, wrong place, which just happens to be our home.

**MARIAM** The worst thing imaginable has happened. That means it can happen again. *If they can kill one person, they can kill a baby. They could kill anyone. They have no filter. I've just brought a child into the world, and that world is suddenly not safe. The danger is demonstrably on my own doorstep.*

**JENNIFER** I ask a therapist, 'How can I have PTSD? I wasn't even hurt.'. He says, "I have people with PTSD who weren't even there.'

**EMER** I have a delayed reaction. It comes to me when I hear that the terrorists' van contained blow-torches and thirteen Molotov cocktails that they planned to throw into the restaurants. I remember the tiny windowless office with no way out.

GEOFF                    It doesn't feel as if I saved anyone, *because not everyone was saved.*

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ANDREW                How do we cope? By looking after each other more tenderly because we couldn't look after those young strangers who were executed in the place where they were supposed to be safe. Where we live is associated with nearly every facet of our life. Damage there, violation there, literally hits home. There's a supersizing of the grief, and maybe even another guilt too: that we didn't appreciate our place enough before it exploded into drama and tragedy.

MYRA                    On TV, those who speak about the terrorists' victims do not differentiate or comment on the fact that most were foreigners. They were all Londoners, all mourned with equal tenderness. It demonstrates the inclusiveness of this community.

MICHAEL                A group of a hundred imams and Islamic scholars meet at the Shard and walk with Cathedral staff to London Bridge. Muslim women hand out 3000 roses. That feels like another opportunity to say, *These people tried to divide us and actually brought us closer together.* The contrast is visceral: the attackers denied *everything* about what it means to be a human being. But the stories of bravery and self-sacrifice show *wonderful things* about what it means to be human.

SYLVIA                 The people who did this were sold a story of glorious martyrdom, sold a lie, forced to kill and be killed. The leaders never die. They send others to die. My Muslim friends feel tainted by these acts. They are afraid. Will they be attacked, pushed in front of trains, have their hijabs ripped off? I think about my own faith, about someone ripping a crucifix off my own neck. It's so complicated – trying to think in reverse, the dizzy circle of victim, enemy, prey, violence.

DAVID                  There's a new kind of pastoral work for us councillors. There are hundreds of Muslims in our ward. We have never differentiated among our residents when it comes to faith, gender, sexuality. There's no premium service. Everyone has to be listened to, as well as talked to. You must make sure that the listening is inclusive.

MARIAM                Anyone who knows anything about *my* faith will be aware that murder is against Islam's most sacred tenets. Even when people

blame Islam, you don't feed the slander with an appearance of aggression. You try to explain, gently. You *show* them that they're wrong by the way that you practise your religion and live your life.

- NARRATOR**      **At last, you're allowed back to the streets where people died.**
- MARIAM            They first thing we do is check on all our neighbours, especially the elderly. One old lady had been alone and was terrified of the gunfire, which had woken her. Gradually we work through everyone vulnerable, listening to the stories, helping them as much as we can, feeling a sense of community as a kind of physical warmth after the cold facts of what has happened.
- NEIL                On Wednesday, I get through to my office at last. The thing that strikes me is the silence. My staff arrive one by one. I want to give everyone a hug, but I'm Northern. There are touches on the shoulder, and 'Are you all right?'s. Clink Street remains an eerie ghost town, cleansed of life to a pristine state, reduced to a desolate geometry. Time seems suspended. In London's food capital, the Borough Market, you cannot even get a sandwich. It's not the London you know. You remember why you love its bustle.
- MICHAEL            Terrorists stabbed people at Black & Blue. The restaurant asks for the Cathedral's assistance. By the time I arrive, the broken glass and blood have gone. So has the food that lay decomposing on the tables for a week. The cleaning, painting and throwing away have been therapy: there's relief in doing something. But now the staff need a different kind of help. I walk around the restaurant with them, using holy water and prayer to cleanse the space that saw violence.
- NARRATOR**      **At first you walk gingerly, stepping on atoms of murder victims. Then one day you realize that you've just run to the bus stop over the dust of those who died and you never flinched, never thought.**
- ANDREW            We must not airbrush it out of our collective memory. Nor must we let it define the community. Yet it is part of the story we tell.
- NEIL                I ask all my staff to come to the reopening of the Borough Market, because this seems like the pressing of the official reset button – the one that says, *let's get back to where we were before.*
- MICHAEL            The morning the Market reopens, we first make a prayer-pilgrimage of the little streets and stalls. We pray for all those

who were harmed, swinging censers of incense and sprinkling holy water to reclaim the spirit of the place. Local people spontaneously join the procession.

**NARRATOR**      **Then, that same day, Grenfell Tower burns. It feels as if London has entered a dark vortex.**

SHARON            I'm decorating the main window of the Market office for the grand reopening. I lay down eight red roses, one for each victim. I stand with Bread Ahead, Spice Mountain, Bianco Mora, to watch the reopening ceremony. The chairman gives a speech. It's not Shakespeare, but Shakespeare would be too beautiful for what has happened here. When Paul Wheeler rings the Market bell, things start to make sense again. I think, *We're back. Let's get on with it.*

But Grenfell's still burning.

MAUREEN        The attack has changed things here. We used to have an arrogance. *We thought we were safe.*

EMER             Because it happened, it can happen again. I'll never again be able to write something off as, *It's probably nothing.*

ANDREW         God was not absent on that Saturday night; God is never absent. But God didn't send the terrorists to see what the people of Bankside are like. He knows what we're like. He didn't need to test the resilience of the waiters in the restaurants or the bravery of the police. We're tested by the event. Not by God. Human suffering is part of the crucible in which we exist. We are, like silver, refined.

**NARRATOR**      **Terrorists claim that the world is broken down, that we're in the End Days. But it has not, and we are not. Instead, residents and businesspeople here are *connected* by what happened: community still sustains and comforts. Yet things can no longer be the same. People have seen themselves through the lens of danger. They look different now. They cannot forget that men came here to kill. The bridge and the intimate vistas of the Market created a perfect dark theatre for things no one should have to see. The restaurants' full-length windows framed unforgettable images of terrorists with bloodied knives, just yards away, hunting for more victims.**

ANDREW         We must remember the courage the community showed that night, and afterwards. We didn't bring it on ourselves. It was done to us. But we stretched to withstand it and have been strengthened. We can hold our heads up about the way we hung in there.



- AMIR I want to repay the kindness and understanding that I, and all those of my faith, have been shown. I'm grateful that, instead of anger, this community's response has been a powerful resolve to keep going, do better.
- MARIAM My mother was raised to dust off trauma, not to let it in. I am my mother's daughter. I am going to get my life back. It's precisely *because* of the terror attack that I must do this. The terrorists have taken young lives out of the world – lives as young as mine. I, in contrast, have brought a new life into this world. I shall make sure there's a good life for my baby, my family, my community.
- DAVID We're certain that these acts of mindless violence and hatred will not change the way we live our lives or change our values. On the contrary they merely strengthen our resolve. Love will win.
- MARION The old important things are finding their way to the top again: love of home and love of community, spirit of place and spirit of God all working together.
- ANDREW The sacristy door will not be replaced. Southwark Cathedral will not hide the violence that happened here but incorporate it into the experience of the church.
- ALISON In the end, that's how healing happens: by acknowledging rather than hiding from pain.
- GEOFF We're all so much closer than we ever were. And *that's* what people will remember ten years from now – *not* the names or the creed of the killers – but the beautiful and innocent dead, the wounded and the brave. Most of all, they'll remember how this place survived a savage attempt on its vivid life, and how it flourished and became even more beloved.
- AMIR For Light will always defeat Darkness.

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