



Such Stuff podcast
Season 7, Episode 1: Ghost Stories

[Music plays]

Imogen Greenberg: Hello and welcome to another episode of Such Stuff the podcast from Shakespeare's Globe.

With the onset of the wind and the rain and those dark cold evenings, there's one thing we can look forward to and revel in it is of course the spooky month.

[Music plays]

And this year we will be bringing you a new digital festival on **Shakespeare and Fear**. Whilst we'll be relishing in all things horror and the suspense and fright of ghost stories old and new we will also take a deeper look at what it means to be fearful, now more than ever we are surrounded by fear. Why then do we still need ghost stories? What catharsis do they offer? What parts of us do they tap into? And how do ghost stories help us to cope with an increasingly fearful world?

Joining us are a couple of familiar voices, a little known fact about Artistic Director Michelle Terry and Actor Paul Ready is that they relish a spooky story almost as much as a Shakespearean one. As self-confessed horror fans, I sent a selection of questions over to Michelle and Paul about all things **Shakespeare and Fear**. Here they delve into what makes a ghost story scary, why we continue to tell them, and what is unique about the ghosts in Shakespeare's play.

Here's Michelle and Paul.

Michelle Terry: My name's Michelle Terry.



Paul Ready: My name's Paul Ready.

MT: And this episode of Such Stuff we are talking about ghost stories, but particularly through the prism of fear which is a subject that we have decided to focus on in this particular moment in time, for this particular festival and it just felt like, I suppose partly, for me I was kind of interested in the, in the plays that we know Shakespeare wrote during the plague, yeah I find it fascinating that he chose to write **Macbeth**, he chose to write **King Lear**, so the natural assumption would be that everybody wants comedy and escapism. I haven't checked the latest Netflix figures, or the latest amazon prime figures, it would be interesting to know the kind of films that people are, or stories that people are being drawn to at the moment, but there does also seem to be a need to face the fear and I suppose somewhere in there is something cathartic like going to the worst possible imaginable place, you said that amazing quote from **Macbeth** that present fears are worse than horrible imaginings, you know it's you turn on the news right now and there's overwhelm, whether it's COVID figures or the economy or what's gonna happen with the election in America and then –

PR: The climate

MT: – Yeah the state of the climate, there feels like a lot of things to be frightened about so then we're also facing a psychological crisis, and I know that we've talked a lot about even if I look at people in our own lives the amount of people we know with COVID is very few, but the amount of people we know with increasing anxiety or increasing insomnia or increasing depression that is sort of another plague that is running rife at the moment so it felt, that's just a bit of context about why it felt appropriate to be discussing fear rather than running away from it. It certainly felt like Shakespeare ran towards it, we know that he doesn't mention the plague once in **Macbeth** but he mentions fear nearly fifty times, so there was, this undercurrent of fear and



anxiety and how that can be harnessed for good or for bad, who harnesses the fear? Who is weaponising fear? So yeah that's sort of a bit of context of why the festival happened, and why this particular topic felt like something that was useful to talk about I suppose. I immediately lauded into like the terror of fear, or the terrorism of fear, but there is the sort of the fun bit of fear which is knowing that we talked about very real fears and then there's the fun bit of the imagined fears which is where ghost stories come in. Do you have anything to say at this moment in time? [laughs]

PR: No I'm just enjoying, I'm enjoying this [laughs] I do, I do. You were talking about catharsis –

MT: Yeah

PR: – And you know there's these things that are innate to being a human being, I think huge emotions and drives of human beings, and of course Shakespeare would deal with that seen as he was dealing with a human being, and I think one of our great drives is, is away from fear is to feel safety, all of us have fear I think, the human-animal has fear. I read a great book once called **The Denial of Death** by **Ernest Becker**, I recommend it to anybody, but in there one of the things I remember him saying is you know we take a bite of life as big as we can cope with so that might mean how we choose to have family, the job we choose, whatever it is is a, how much chaos can we cope with, and I think the bite of life he's saying that we take is, is to do with how much chaos we can cope with in our life, in a way, and fear often can be fear of chaos, I would say, so, fear of societal collapse err for example

[Both laugh]

MT: We're going a little bit Noam Chomsky on this, this is a Shakespeare podcast.



PR: It is a bit, it is a bit Noam Chomsky. But I suppose what I'm saying is there's a very real human emotion which is fear and as you say it could be used in many different ways but all we have fear and how do each of us deal with that feeling of fear.

MT: Well maybe let's, let's get to the apocalyptic abuse of power and fear, but let's maybe let's start somewhere like –

PR: I can't leave it Michelle, I cannot leave the shock doctrine [laughs]

MT: – I know as we teeter on Tier two. But why when you look at **The Denial of Death** do you think that's part of the reason why we have so many ghost stories, like the fact that ghosts appear constantly throughout the canon, you know the, it's a kind of go to, we know that **Mary Shelley** wrote **Frankenstein** against the backdrop of a world war, you know what is it about monsters, death, ghosts coming back, what is our fascination with ghost stories? Is that about trying to control the chaos the idea that there's life beyond or that, because we love ghost stories.

PR: Absolutely I love, every week we in our little film club we have we watch our horror films.

MT: We do and why? I mean there's so many films that we could watch, we're really sort of religious about putting ourselves through those kind of films. I mean not everybody some people really absolutely cannot watch horror films, thrillers, ghost stories.

PR: I was gonna say as I've got older I – I'm less inclined to watch them, when I was younger I think I'd been less afraid actually as I get older I feel like maybe it's because we've had a kid but there's certain feelings I want to try and avoid [laughs] you see what I mean?



MT: Yes I do.

PR: And yet I still go back, there's some kind of, I don't know if it's a Jungian theory or not, the idea of watching a violent film for example, the numerous violent films that are out there is a way of connecting with a dark side of ourselves that we then don't have to act on.

MT: What are the crucial components of a ghost story for you? I guess it's different for different people, a ghost story for me has to feel possible. I remember watching **Jeepers Creepers** and the start of that film is so brilliant and then it like, as soon as you see the monster I was like uh I can't watch it anymore because my imagination it became, it became impossible. So for me there's got to be the possibility, it's the what if again isn't it, there's got to be a possibility that it could happen. And I think I do want to be left with a little bit of it's sort of resolved but it's not quite complete somehow because you're left with the what if.

PR: Yeah I think for me it's definitely got to, as soon as something is, enters the ridiculous it becomes not possible then, I'm no longer, I'm no longer scared by it, I definitely agree with that.

MT: OK I've got a question now and I don't actually, I'm gonna ask the question and I don't know if I'm gonna be able to answer it, but at which point in the canon did ghosts start to come, like really come in, like feature quite heavily in the writing? Because we know Maccers would have been written for those indoor, you know where does the psychology of darkness start to lend itself to horrible imaginings as opposed to the daylight which is actually much more of an imaginative space. The imaginative work to be frightened in daylight is actually, it's pure imagination isn't it, whereas if you're watching something in the dark then all the conditions around you are working with you not against you.



What conditions do you need to tell a good ghost story, so we know that Shakespeare would've written for daylight, we also know he would've written for darkness, so when **Hamlet's** ghost comes out we know it's around midnight but we also know they would've played at two o'clock in the afternoon, so Shakespeare's not asking for those literal conditions he's asking the imagination to do the work, to do the work, whereas when we did Maccers we created literal conditions of blackout, shadow. I'm thinking **Woman in Black** being terrified in the theatre but that absolutely exploited darkness, they created conditions where that was possible but the audacity of Shakespeare going I'm going to tell you a really quite frightening potentially frightening tale in the middle of the day because he totally understood not only the power of our imagination to go there but our will to want to go there, like what is that? The desire?

PR: The will to want to go there?

MT: The will to, or the desire to want to feel A) Frightened B) That there is another world, that there is more to heaven and earth, that the life beyond, like suddenly becomes all about that doesn't it but –

PR: I think one of the things **Hamlet** mentions is the fear of, the great human fear which is fear of our own mortality

MT: Yep

PR: And he's using, he uses that doesn't he the fear, what dreams may come when we have shuffled off this mortal coil, it's the fear of the undiscovered country.

MT: Exactly from whence no traveller returns, yeah.

PR: Right, so the fear, go on.



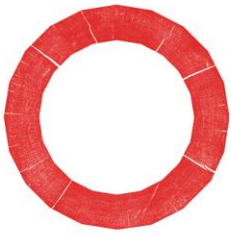
MT: Yeah no traveller returns except he then puts loads of ghosts in the play so he's still contemplating what then the possibility that you could come back.

PR: I think, I think you know like there's this idea of enjoying a ghost story because the ghost story ends and you go actually I'm safe and you've faced something that was potentially full of fear for you. I think the lie is that we can control life so we live a life potentially going we can control things and building up a life of some form of safety in whatever way but there must be a part of us that goes that's not all, that's not everything, and so maybe that's why we sit down in front of ghost stories or listen to ghost stories and then we survive it. I think often to look at your fear to look at what you are afraid of is maybe to come to understand it and yourself a bit more and that's to put the light of understanding on it might make the darkness around it go away you know, but it's quite a difficult thing to look at your own fear because you're running away from it. Looking at your fears is a very difficult thing to do so if you can look at your fears and invite the unknown within a story like **Macbeth**, but you survive it but you survive the story, or you listen to a ghost story and it excites all those things in you, of fear of the unknown, fear of what we can't see, fear of the chaos, but you let it into your life a little bit but the story ends.

MT: But the story ends, but there's still always the question mark of what if, isn't there.

PR: The what if, I mean the what if, so two stories occur to me, when we were rehearsing **Macbeth** and when I was talking to Rob Hastie the director about that, and we were talking about the idea of not messing with the spirits,

MT: Mm



PR: Like just in case don't say Beetlejuice three times, or just in case don't look in the mirror and say Candyman five times, or is it three times I can't remember. And I was talking to him about this time when I was contemplating doing a ouija board and in fact we did do a ouija board, but the real fear was that I was really playing with this, I don't know for sure if I start mucking around with this, I don't know for sure what will happen. What would happen if I conjure a spirit into the, into the room and then into our lives? What if that happens? And the danger that involves. And I think that was the exciting idea when we were playing with **Macbeth** what if, you know, what if this play is cursed, what if, what if we start talking about spirits, what if we start messing with the fates, then what happens? The other thing I say about horror, horror films what they can do when they're done well, I really liked the film we watched the other day, **Paranormal Activity**, and what that did for me was take something again that's supposed to be safe and supposed to be known, a couple going to sleep at night, you're in the safety of your room with your partner, you're in bed, you close your eyes and then one of them gets up during the night and stares at the other one for about four hours without blinking because they're possessed by a [laughs] possessed by a demon, and then, so suddenly the place of safety is not safe anymore, suddenly the bed is not safe.

MT: It's so interesting because I suddenly, now we're talking about it I'm realising how, how little Shakespeare relied on those kind of conditions. There's something very pragmatic or theatrical about it, he didn't, so it was completely up to the audience whether they decided to go there or not, the story didn't stand or fail on whether you suspended your disbelief. Whereas something like **Paranormal Activity**, we watch that in a dark cinema we're in like a sleepy Massachusetts town, every condition was building us up to be in the right place to watch that film —



PR: It was midnight

MT: – At the midnight cinema, you have that, I remember watching **The Exorcist** at midnight, like the kind of conditions we now put around it. Like Maccers, there was, when we've even contemplated taking **Macbeth** and doing it outdoors after we'd done it indoors we hadn't built flexibility into that production. I'm just thinking about the contagion of fear or the contagion of anxiety, like watching something like that in a group. I, I read somewhere recently that anxiety is contagious, that fear is contagious, and reading a ghost story on your own is very different to listening to a ghost story as part of a congregation, and nine times out of ten with Maccers we, we set up the conditions, didn't we that we were, exactly what you're talking about the conditions of we all know where in a theatre but what if and we slowly but surely start the conjuring and then we'll allow the play to unfold, and nine times out of ten an audience went with it. But I don't know if you remember, one day when we had a school party of kids in on a matinee and they just refused, like there was an act of will to refuse to engage with it, to suspend their disbelief and to engage with what we were asking them to engage with. The apparitions bit where the lights go out really we had built something into that we wanted people to feel unnerved and frightened and we're kind of capitalising on them feeling that, and this school party just would not, just wouldn't go for it. You realise how much when you're reading something or watching something in a ghost story you have to participate in that don't you, because otherwise like this kid said, because I overheard them say it, what were they talking in like funny voices and stuff for [laughs], for those kids, we thought we were all being like really spooky and to those kids it was just a bunch of actors dressed up in the theatre. And I realised that Shakespeare never asked anybody, he was asking you to participate but he wasn't expecting you to, there wasn't an immersion in the way we immerse ourselves now when we watch the horror films on a Sunday night we do turn all the lights out, or when we did the



Ghost stories in the playhouse we had it really dark and lots of shadows.

[Music plays]

MT: What do you think is behind the impulse to tell ghost stories? You were saying earlier we haven't really talked about ghosts specifically like where, where do we go? Like not to get too personal I suppose but when my, when my Grandad died my Nana was convinced that a robin came and sat on his, on her windowsill for weeks, like that he'd come back as a robin and when, now my Nana's just died there's a bit of me that is kind of going are you gonna come back and say bye are you gonna like, I'm sort of waiting for, I'm kind of waiting for something to happen, like –

PR: Like a sign

MT: – Yeah I think there's something about the possibility of ghosts which is you know some ghosts, like **Hamlet's** ghost absolutely wants revenge on the world. I think of maybe Constance in **King John** where she says 'Grief fills the room up of my absent child, Puts on his looks, walks up and down with me', she's kind of, it's like she's imagining the person that she's never gonna see again is there, because there's also some comfort in the possibility that there could be life beyond, that that you know like—

PR: Oh gosh, for sure I mean it's like –

MT: – So it's not just fear of the unknown it's also the hope of the unknown, the hope of, but ghost stories are very rarely about anyone from the dead coming back like oh it's nice to see you again [laughs]

PR: Oh I forgot to tell you I've left the oven on.



MT: [laughs]

PR: Yeah but I suppose, I suppose when you're thinking about there's something rotten in the state of Denmark, like the idea that there is something unsettled and when the ghosts are walking there's something unsettled, when the spirits are walking, when Titania and Oberon are there's something unsettled about the world. And that's unnerving when somethings unsettled and it makes me think, you know, I remember in a previous relation Michelle [cough cough] yeah in a previous relationship I remember my girlfriend at the time saying, just suddenly going something's wrong, and when she said I was like she never really said things like that, I was like OK that really unnerved me because that's not how she was so that suddenly somethings wrong, the ghosts are walking somethings wrong.

MT: And was there something wrong?

PR: I'd left the oven on [laughs] no, no, no, no, it wasn't, it wasn't that there was a conclusion to it there was something in the air about Hamlet, there's just this idea that he's not necessarily, he's not doing jump scares, he's not playing on you know the, what horror films might kind of manipulate into jump scares, he's not doing that. But I feel like something like **Hamlet** when the ghosts are walking it's not that you're supposed to be scared by the ghosts it's more that something is unnerved and it's feeling that, we try to avoid that feeling of being unnerved. Back to what I was saying about the idea of having as much control in your life as you can do.

MT: That goes back to what we were saying about a ghost is always written as a messenger they could come back and say, hello I forgot to put the cling film on the sandwiches, that doesn't really make for good drama, where Shakespeare exploits them



as they're coming back as figures of portent, they're coming back. And you project onto a ghost you're coming back to tell me something, that's what I was saying about my Nan, I'm sort of going, have you got anything to say to me, or like a sort of hope, you know that some unfinished business, but where are those figures of portent, where are those figures of messengers.

So this is is the moment just after Horatio, Bernado and Marcellus have seen the ghost, they then take **Hamlet** at midnight to wait for the ghost. This is the moment where the ghost of **Hamlet**, the Father of **Hamlet** speaks to his son.

PR: I am thy father's spirit,
Doomed for a certain term to walk the night
And for the day confined to fast in fires,
Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature
Are burnt and purged away. But that I am forbid
To tell the secrets of my prison house,
I could a tale unfold whose lightest word
Would harrow up thy soul, freeze thy young blood,
Make thy two eyes, like stars, start from their spheres,
Thy knotted and combinèd locks to part
And each particular hair to stand on end,
Like quills upon the fearful porpentine.
But this eternal blazon must not be
To ears of flesh and blood. List, list, O, list!
If thou didst ever thy dear father love—

MT: O God!

PR: Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder.

MT: That's like such an amazing description of the physical effects of fear that, that we all recognize, like your eyes, your eyes jump out of your head, your blood goes cold



PR: Your hair stands on end.

MT: Your hair stands on end. And what was the first one, thy soul, harrow the idea of your soul being, and it goes deeper, it's a physical reaction not just a mental imaginative response, your body physically has a reaction to fear. And that the idea, when we're talking about that if fear is contagious, the idea that part of it is the will of the imagination but your body, a fear is a physical, it manifests physically on the body as much as it does in the mind.

PR: And also I suppose that whole thing about not naming what it is that is to be feared is like, often in our horror film and I think of, I think of the original *It* for example, the two-parter Stephen King two-parter, is really with that clown, Pennywise I think, terrifying but as soon of the reveal of *It* as a massive spider it's not scary anymore –

MT: Yeah

PR: – And I think good suspense is about leaving it to the imagination which Shakespeare does so well –

MT: Yeah

PR: – He says I could tell you things...

MT: But I'm not going to [laughs].

PR: So what are those things the spirit could say? So there is something terrifying out there but it's not for your ears.

MT: Yeah



PR: It's not that they're afraid of the spirit, what they're afraid of, or what they're interested in is why the spirit is here, something must be wrong.

MT: Yeah.

PR: Either something needs to be fixed in the world so that the spirit can be at ease or the spirit has come back with some kind of premonition or some kind of knowledge of the future.

MT: Yes.

PR: Both of those things are, are kind of reasons to, to fear, if the world is out of kilter that's something to fear, and if there's something to be known about the future that could be something to fear.

MT: Yeah it's more frightening not to know.

PR: Yeah.

MT: It's more frightening that this being might disappear without having had the opportunity to say what it needs to say which is kind of like perfect because maybe you should do the um, maybe you should do the **Hamlet** ghost bit now where he, he, he sort of frightens Hamlet into action doesn't he in a way.

PR: But the fact still that there is a spirit there is a reason that there potentially is something to fear.

MT: Yes, it's just an example of what these figures mean, what they represent to people, the idea that they could be a messenger they could be bringing news back from the undiscovered country.

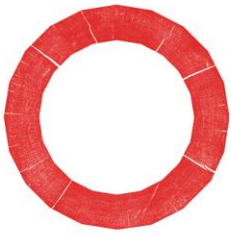
MT: But soft, behold! Lo, where it comes again.



I'll cross it though it blast me.—Stay, illusion!
If thou hast any sound or use of voice,
Speak to me.
If there be any good thing to be done
That may to thee do ease and grace to me,
Speak to me.
If thou art privy to thy country's fate,
Which happily foreknowing may avoid,
Oh, speak!
Speak of it. Stay and speak!

[Music plays]

MT: Why do we think it's good to face that fear now? And I think I go back to, it seems counter-intuitive, like I suppose as an Artistic Director with the, with the little power that I have right now to create any kind of programme of work, the last particular programme was around **Shakespeare and Race** and felt vital and necessary, timely. **Shakespeare and Fear**, fear feels like the most honest conversation that we could be having right now and it's not separate, it's not, it's not independent to the conversation that he was also have, having, we're not crowbarring Shakespeare into a conversation around fear. If we think about the conditions of 1606, or whenever, when they're going through a plague, they're going through a change of leadership, there was a plot to blow up the houses of Parliament, this is, these acts of terrorism, acts of nature, acts of power, he didn't right the comedies, there was something that he felt was necessary to explore about the supernatural, about the other, about the exploitation of the other, and **Macbeth's** mind gets exploited by what could be, he believes what these supposed weird sisters tell him. So I think I, I, we, Shakespeare's Globe, there's a, there's a fascination about when we are in a very particularly heightened moment of time, yes you want release from it, yes absolutely, like we love watching **Would I Lie To You** as much as the next person, and then there's also needing



somewhere to go with the fear, whether that's fear of where you're next pay check is coming from, whether that's the fear of the virus, whether that's fear of death, whether that's fear of the unknown, that also feels like an honest place, an honest conversation to have and there's some fun in the ghost stories where, where you play with fear and then there's some horror in the ghost stories and horror in those horrible imaginings and how that fear gets exploited by a story but there's, there is something about the need for catharsis, catharsis of grief, catharsis of anxiety. There's unrest isn't there, there's disease everywhere.

PR: Yeah and I feel like if you don't look at, if you don't look at your fear in some way then that kind of gives over some essential power of the self. I'm laughing because I don't really know how to phrase it, but if you don't allow yourself to have that, you don't allow yourself to have that conversation with fear you can be lead by somebody else's, by somebody else's manipulation of your fear. And I think, I think the world we're living in at the moment with, and I put this in like inverted commas, the strong man politics who go I will solve your problem and it's these people who are to blame and so get a lot of right, well you get all sorts of left right wing politics in that, but there's something that, like a leader tapping in, which is, **Macbeth** taps in to fear, he taps into fear so people fear him, fear what he can do, and I think he also, he also taps into his own fear which becomes a paranoia of what other people can do to him and so –

MT: Just think what Lady Macbeth said to him, Lady Macbeth says, 'What need we fear who knows it when none can call our power to account?' I mean the thing about ghosts and the other and life beyond is that it's deliciously grey, whereas Lady M is just going prove it, there's still no proof that those exist or don't exist, they still remain ghosts and the life beyond still remains one of the things that we will never ever ever be able to prove, even dreams we don't really know how they happen or nightmares we don't really know how they happen. You know



I've been in a relationship with you for ten years and I know a fraction of you, I look at our child who was in my stomach I don't know her at all, she is a secret to me. And I suppose there is something around, somehow I suppose I find comfort in the unknown, like not in the uncertainty of the economy not in the uncertainty, like there are still very, things in the world that have to remain, we still have to be able to buy food, we have to be able to live, we want to shelter, we wanna stay warm, but then there is just, I find it quite comforting that we're a mystery, we're still a mystery and I, and when I can surrender to that I find.

PR: I also feel comforted when I, when I accept that the world is chaos, the world is kind of unknown, that there's only so much that I can control, I can control a small few things. The pain is trying to control, and keep control and keep control, but when I give up to the idea that there's no, that it's OK that there's unknown, the truth is that life is chaos rather than that life is control –

MT: Yeah

PR: And I feel better.

MT: OK just quickly, last question, what makes you frightened? What makes you feel frightened right now, today?

PR: I, well I, you know all the reading I do on climate and the, you know, potential future that we face. I think what makes me fearful is that the decisions, the world that we need to create in order to be sustainable and in order to create an economy that, rather than a consumerist economy and economy that can work in a way that doesn't just eat into the planet. My fear is that our fear as human beings will be manipulated by the wrong people, and what I mean by that is when I see the rise in populism and I see the rise in the idea that it's easy to, economic, economic troubles are gonna come because of, and are here because of



the pandemic, and that economic trouble is easy to manipulate and I think, my fear is that, that if people don't get a hold, if we don't all get hold of our fear and we give, therefore, give up our, our power to the wrong people, because of, because of fear, and then I think we enter a dangerous world, and it happens, it's happened throughout history and I feel like it's a, a real potential that it could happen now and that's a fear for me.

MT: Yeah I suppose my fear is everything's in opposition isn't, so my fear similarly you know we watch those, when I think about how those Attenborough films are constructed right now and they take you to the darkest darkest possible place and then they bring you back and say but there is possibility of hope, but always the hope is, relies on people prepared to go through the struggle, but that takes collective action to go through the struggle. And I think my fear is, is, is, there's absolutely hope but it's not going to come without hard work and I feel like, feeling frightened, and feeling anxious, and feeling depressed is tiring, I think people are tired now, so fear, the rhetoric of fear can really grind you down.

PR: I think that's what I mean by instead of facing your own fear you give it up for somebody else to solve, then there's, there is a problem. **Rebecca Solnit**, a book I wrote, I wrote?! [laughs] I wish I'd written it, no a book I read by **Rebecca Solnit** who said hope is only an action.

MT: Exactly and so, and fear is also in action, like fear can either make you passive or fear can insight you into action and I think that's, that's where, I think that's partly why I want the conversation around fear how fear can grip you as an individual, how fear can grip you as an audience, how fear can grip you as a country, the question was also do you have hope? So when I think about that **Yates** quote, the best lack all conviction while the worst are full of passionate intensity, in that he's given all the action to the bad, to the worst people. I don't feel like that now, I



feel like there is collective good, I feel like yes people are frightened, people are taking to the streets, I feel like people are frightened, but people are not using as much plastic, yes people are frightened but they're doing their bit. It is terrifying, terrorism relies on you totally believing that you're powerless, and maybe something around the ghosts coming back, there's this brilliant quote about ghost stories are as much about insurrection as they are about resurrection. There's also something in that, that the ghosts come back, **Hamlet's** ghost comes back and says take action.

PR: Mm.

MT: Revenge.

PR: I also suppose, suppose when I was talking about my fear, and that's what I mean about the unknown, the fear is what could be.

MT: Yes. Yes.

PR: Do you know what I mean? So I'm talking about you know, I could see a world which I'm scared of, I could see a world that I'm scared of because you know, facing a crisis, unless people take personal responsibility they give up power to the wrong people. And I think that is a world, that could be, and it is in you know, it is in, it's a reality in some places, it is a reality. My fear is what that world could then become and actually as you say hope is, hope is in the action of facing my fear and making that world not happen.

MT: There seems to be so much to be frightened of at the moment, like climate change, the pandemic, the economic crisis, the psychological crisis.

PR: Inequalities, like mass huge inequality.



MT: But this example that we're gonna use now is were does, who has power and who wields that power and of course power and fear are inextricably linked. But this is just an example of where Shakespeare talks about that in the, at the beginning of **Julius Caesar**, where Cicero and Casca meet, there's a storm happening and this is what they say.

PR: Good even, Casca. Brought you Caesar home?
Why are you breathless? And why stare you so?

MT: Are not you moved when all the sway of earth
Shakes like a thing unfirm? O Cicero,
I have seen tempests when the scolding winds
Have rived the knotty oaks, and I have seen
Th' ambitious ocean swell and rage and foam
To be exalted with the threatening clouds,
But never till tonight, never till now,
Did I go through a tempest dropping fire.
Either there is a civil strife in heaven,
Or else the world, too saucy with the gods,
Incenses them to send destruction.

PR: Why, saw you anything more wonderful?

MT: A common slave—you know him well by sight—
Held up his left hand, which did flame and burn
Like twenty torches joined, and yet his hand,
Not sensible of fire, remained unscorched.
Besides—I ha' not since put up my sword—
Against the Capitol I met a lion,
Who glared upon me and went surly by,
Without annoying me. And there were drawn
Upon a heap a hundred ghastly women,
Transformèd with their fear, who swore they saw
Men all in fire walk up and down the streets.



And yesterday the bird of night did sit
Even at noon-day upon the marketplace,
Hooting and shrieking. When these prodigies
Do so conjointly meet, let not men say,
“These are their reasons. They are natural.”
For I believe they are portentous things
Unto the climate that they point upon.

MT: And like that, that fear of you could dismiss things, as like, as Casca says yeah you could say, everything's got its reason, you could put it down to science, you could put it down to it's just the weather, these are just natural things, or you could see these things as, as tokens, like Cicero dismisses it kinda goes yeah it's a strange dispose of time. And it's interesting then what happens, Cassius comes in and then Casca asks Cassius whoever knew the heavens menaced so, but for Casca it's the heavens that have the power, the heavens have the power, that on this earthly world we have been too saucy with the gods and now the gods are sending destruction, and Casca says 'But wherefore did you so much tempt the heavens? It is the part of men to fear and tremble, When the most mighty gods by tokens send, Such dreadful heralds to astonish us.'

PR: You look pale, and gaze,
And put on fear, and cast yourself in wonder
To see the strange impatience of the heavens.
But if you would consider the true cause
Why all these fires, why all these gliding ghosts,
Why birds and beasts from quality and kind,
Why old men fool and children calculate,
Why all these things change from their ordinance
Their natures and preformèd faculties
To monstrous quality—why, you shall find
That heaven hath infused them with these spirits
To make them instruments of fear and warning
Unto some monstrous state.



Now could I, Casca, name to thee a man
Most like this dreadful night,
That thunders, lightens, opens graves, and roars
As doth the lion in the Capitol—
A man no mightier than thyself or me
In personal action, yet prodigious grown,
And fearful as these strange eruptions are.

MT: And he is so, yes be frightened of the gods or the heavens,
but equally be frightened of the power of a human being.

PR: Yeah, I mean what is more often, what is more scary, what a
human can do, what we can do to each other, what a human
being can do is quite a terrifying thing.

[Music plays]

IG: That's it from Michelle and Paul but our **Shakespeare and Fear** festival kicks off on Halloween Saturday 31 October, for more information and to buy tickets please see our website.

You've been listening to Such Stuff with me Imogen Greenberg, Michelle Terry and Paul Ready.

To find out more about Shakespeare's Globe and what's on follow us on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.

We'll back soon with more stories from Shakespeare's Globe so subscribe wherever you get this podcast from.