



**THE ENGLISH THEATRE
OF HAMBURG**

presents

THE PRIDE

by Alexi Kaye Campbell

STUDY GUIDE

Premiere on 26th January 2023

Preview performances at reduced prices on 23rd, 24th, and 25th January 2023

Tuesday – Saturday	19:30
Sunday	14:30
Wednesday/Friday	11:30 (Matinee performances weekly alternating)

THE ENGLISH THEATRE OF HAMBURG

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TICKETS

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The English Theatre will premiere *The Pride* on 26th January 2023, with the usual preview performances at reduced prices on 23rd, 24th and 25th January. You can use the cover of this publication to advertise the play in your school or workplace. Bookings have already started. Teachers who wish to preview the play before bringing a group of students to the theatre should contact marketing@englishtheatre.de. The text of the play may be obtained at [dramatists](#) or [Amazon](#).

About the Author

Alexi Kaye Campbell was born in Athens, Greece, to a Greek father and British mother whose last name he uses today. After graduating from Boston University with a degree in English and American Literature, he went on to study acting at the Webber Douglas Academy of Dramatic Art in London. In November 2008 Kaye Campbell's second play, **THE PRIDE**, was awarded The Critics' Circle Prize and the John Whiting Award for Best New Play. In January 2010 **THE PRIDE** transferred to America where it was produced at the MCC Theater in New York City. There it won the GLAAD award for Best New Play. Since then, **THE PRIDE** has been produced in many theatres worldwide, including in Australia, New Zealand, Japan, South Korea, Brazil, Italy, Sweden, Belgium, Greece, and Germany. Kaye Campbell's third play, **APOLOGIA**, in man world venues. It was even produced at The English Theatre of Hamburg in 2020, but the run of the play was cut short because Hamburg theatres had to shut down because of the pandemic. Other successful plays written by him include **THE FAITH MACHINE**, **BRACKEN MOOR**, **SUNSET AT THE VILLA THALIA**. His first film script, **WOMAN IN GOLD** was the highest earning independent film of 2015. Since 1997 Alexi Kaye Campbell has lived with his partner, the director Dominic Cooke.

About the play

THE PRIDE focuses on the life and suffering of two gay men, Philip and Oliver and their mutual close friend Sylvia. Sylvia and Philip are married. She, an illustrator of children's books, introduces her real estate selling husband to Oliver, a creative spirit who writes children's books which Sylvia illustrates. The characters appear in two completely different times, 1958 and 2008. The author jumps from one period to another throughout the play rather than tell the story in sequence. Thus, showing in sharp contrast the way the characters were in 1958 and how they have changed in 2008. The conditions of the late 1950s with social repression, self-denial and sham marriages have changed by 2008 when there is with both freely lived out sexuality and the desire for a completely normal togetherness. In 1958 Sylvia is in love with Philip, but has not yet found out why she feels unfulfilled in their marriage. When Philip and Oliver fall in love, Philip is forced to be honest about his true sexuality. The two men live together for a year and a half, but break up because Oliver is unable to give up his addiction of having sex with anonymous men instead of living in the exclusive relationship that Philip desires. In 1958 people might dishonestly hide their true sexuality because of the fear of how society would react to them if they knew the truth. Both Sylvia and Philip suffer because of this view. Without meaning to, Philip has caused Sylvia to be unhappy by marrying her instead of accepting his true sexuality. By 2008 Sylvia has found a straight man who truly loves her, and despite what each of the three characters have experienced in life they remain good friends and still love each other. **THE PRIDE** has been produced in many theatres worldwide, including in Australia, New Zealand, Japan, South Korea, Brazil, Italy, Sweden, Belgium, Greece, and Germany. Kaye Campbell's third play, **APOLOGIA**, in man world venues. It was even produced at The English Theatre of Hamburg in 2020, but the run of the play was cut short because Hamburg theatres had to shut down because of the pandemic. Other successful plays written by him include **THE FAITH MACHINE**, **BRACKEN MOOR**, **SUNSET AT THE VILLA THALIA**. His first film script, **WOMAN IN GOLD** was the highest earning independent film of 2015. Since 1997 Alexi Kaye Campbell has lived with his partner, the director Dominic Cooke.

SUMMARY

Act 1

1958

Philip and Sylvia are married and live in an apartment in London. It is evening. They are awaiting the arrival of Oliver, the writer of children's books that Sylvia illustrates. While Sylvia is getting dressed and putting on her make-up, Oliver arrives and Philip is left with the task of entertaining him alone. The two men both have the feeling that they have met before, but they have no idea if it is true. Philip, who sells real estate, is somewhat envious of Oliver because of the artistic work that he does. Sylvia has praised Oliver so highly that Philip feels almost a little jealous. Oliver says that he enjoys writing children's books because there are no limits, no restrictions. He can run completely wild with his imagination. And he is pleased with how Sylvia can capture his characters in her illustrations. Sylvia enters the room and joins the two men drinking cocktails. She and Philip have invited Oliver to go with them to a charming Italian restaurant nearby, but before they go, they have a little time to chat. Philip tells Oliver how he has always wanted to go to other countries, especially to those in Africa, but has not yet had the opportunity. Oliver says he has been lucky enough to travel to a few places. Sylvia points out that Oliver is being modest, that he has been practically everywhere, including Greece, Italy, Lebanon and Syria. Sylvia recalls that Oliver spoke about his "epiphany in Delphi" and with much persuasion gets him to tell Philip about it. Oliver takes his time telling his story, but eventually says that one beautiful day when he was alone, he heard a voice that told him that "everything was going to be alright. That one day, maybe many, many years from now, there will be an understanding of certain things, a deeper understanding of certain aspects of our natures that would make all the difficulties we now feel, all the fears we now hold onto and the sleepless nights we now have seem almost worthwhile... And that the people who live in those times, be it fifty or five hundred years from now will be happy with that understanding and wiser for it. Better."

As they are about to leave for the restaurant, Sylvia goes to fetch her cardigan. Philip tells Oliver how important it is to Sylvia to illustrate Oliver's books. It is just what she needed after having been quite ill.

He also tells Oliver that for two years Sylvia had been an actress, but that it scared her in some way. "She was exceptionally good," Philip says. It was rather terrifying how good she actually was. She would become these people. Enter these people's lives so fully, so completely."

Philip asks Oliver if he has a lot of sleepless nights, reminding him that he mentioned sleepless nights when he spoke about his epiphany at Delphi. A few, Oliver admits. Sylvia returns with her cardigan and tells them they had better leave for the restaurant. They all get their coats and head for the front door. As they do a man enters the room wearing a Nazi uniform. He is invisible to them, but they feel something brushing up close to them.

2008

In semi-darkness, wearing only his underwear. Oliver sits on the floor at the feet of the man dressed as a Nazi. The man is obviously playing a role which Oliver seems to enjoy. They engage in a roleplay in which the man humiliates Oliver by using filthy language and ordering him to do demeaning things such as licking his boots. At this point Oliver tells the man that he wants to stop, that he is no longer in the mood, adding that he will pay him anyway the amount they agreed to when Oliver hired him to do the roleplay. He offers the man a drink and tells him that his German accent was very good and that he was very convincing in the role. He praises the picture on the internet website where Oliver found him and arranged for them to meet for some kinky sex. Oliver tells the man that his boyfriend has left him for the third time this year. This time he doesn't expect him to ever come back. The two men continue to converse in a normal, friendly way until Philip unexpectedly enters the apartment. Surprised, Oliver jumps up. Philip is angry because Oliver had told him he would be in Glasgow. Expecting him to be gone, Philip wanted to pick up one last case of books, the last thing in the apartment belonging to him. Oliver starts to explain to Philip who the man in the Nazi costume is, but Philip ignores him because he has sensed what has been going on. He goes to the bedroom quickly to get the case of books.



Oliver pays the man, asks him to change back into his street clothes and leave.

Philip returns from the bedroom with the case of books and starts to leave. Oliver begs him to stay for just one drink. "It is not a good idea," Philip says, knowing that Oliver will not be happy with just one drink and a short conversation. Oliver pours them drinks and tells Philip that he had a telephone conversation with Sylvia that morning. On Saturday she and her Italian boyfriend, Mario plan to go to Pride. Sylvia tries to convince Oliver to go with them because she thinks it'll cheer him up and get his mind off Philip. (A pride celebration is an outdoor event celebrating lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) social and self-acceptance, achievements, legal rights, and pride.)

Oliver tries to get Philip to understand that the occasional sex he has with men has nothing to do with love. He loves Philip and only Philip. He tries to explain that he can't help himself when he has anonymous sex, that it's something he wants to stop, but like an addiction he can't. But Philip cannot accept this. It depresses him deeply that Oliver can't have an exclusive relationship with him. That is why he has to leave him even though, he admits, he still loves Oliver.

Oliver changes the subject and tells Philip that Sylvia has gone back into acting, that she is going to play the lead in TWELFTH NIGHT and she is truly in love with Mario, a good man, she says, and very very straight. Philip says he has to go, that there is a part of Oliver that he will always care about, but he can't deal with what Oliver calls his addiction. Philip leaves and Oliver goes to the drinks table to pour himself a drink, then bows his head, a gesture that suggests aloneness. Then he turns off one of the lights. In semi-darkness Sylvia, wearing a dressing gown, enters from the door that leads to the bedroom. Oliver slowly walks off into the room from which Sylvia has just entered.

1958

Sylvia sits on the sofa as Philip enters wearing pajamas and a dressing gown. She asks him if he enjoyed the evening at the Italian restaurant with Oliver. He replies that he found it to be a perfectly pleasant evening.

She tells him he became increasingly quiet during the latter part of the evening as if something was bothering him. He became slightly pensive and melancholy as if something was bothering him. She asks if Philip liked Oliver and he replies that he seemed like a nice enough chap. This remark is disappointing to Sylvia. She had hoped that they would like each other because she felt they had so much in common.

Sylvia tells Philip about something that Oliver wrote: "There is a boy, the hero of the story, who has known a language since he was little, but because he's never known his parents, he can't remember how he learnt it. And he's the only person who speaks it. Then he meets another boy who is very different to him and the only way they can communicate is with their hands. One night the one boy, the hero, hears the other boy talking in his sleep and he understands him. It is the same language that he speaks. So, when they are both awake, they talk and talk and talk."

Sylvia tells Philip that she thinks about him sometimes, doing a job that doesn't fulfil him. She is concerned that Philip might be lonely and suggests that having children might make a difference in Philip's life. He reminds her that they agreed not to talk about that. When she presses him on the subject he refuses to respond. Then Sylvia reminds Philip about an actor he once met. The actor had been in a play with her. Philip didn't like him. He said he was effeminate and mannered. Being mannered was the same observation he made about Oliver that evening. She feels there was something similar about the two men that put Philip off, but she doesn't know what it was. Philip says he wouldn't know either, and that Oliver's private life is his own business. Philip says that they should go to bed because he has to get up early. She tells him she'll be along in a little while. When Philip has gone, Sylvia makes a gesture of anguish similar to Oliver's gesture at the end of the previous scene.

2008

Oliver enters in his dressing gown and sits on the sofa. Next to him is a bottle of Scotch and a glass. There is a knock on the door and Oliver opens it. It is Sylvia with a bag of groceries. She is terribly worried about Oliver because of the depression he has been experiencing



since Philip left him. As she takes the groceries to Oliver's kitchen, she tells him she can stay for only fifteen minutes because her boyfriend, Mario, has just flown in after being away for four days. They plan to eat in a restaurant and spend the night at Mario's. Oliver tells Sylvia how Philip gets depressed by his obsession with having anonymous sex with other men. Sylvia can understand why Philip would be upset. Mario phones and says he is sending a cab to pick her up. Sylvia gets ready to go, but Oliver's tone changes suddenly. He says he is scared and pleads with Sylvia to stay with him during the night because he is at a dead-end.

Philip enters from the shadows in his 1958 clothes, but he is invisible to them. Oliver continues the conversation with Sylvia. He tells her that in his life people told him who he was, and he believed them and became that very person, the one they wanted him to be. Sylvia realizes now that Oliver is so deeply depressed that he really does need her to spend the night with him. She says that she will call Mario and cancel their plans. Then she gets up and goes to the kitchen. Philip emerges from the shadows and sits in the chair Sylvia has just left. There is a knocking at the door. Slowly he gets up and walks to the door. He opens it and Oliver is standing there in his 1958 clothes.

1958

Knowing that Sylvia is not home, Oliver comes to talk to Philip. Philip reminds Oliver that they agreed not to meet again. They had been meeting secretly, having a short affair, but Philip, still refusing to accept himself as being homosexual, could not live with himself so they stopped meeting. Oliver, on the other hand, finds he has fallen deeply in love with Philip and has come to tell him that. All his life he has been waiting for confirmation that he is not alone, and he has found it in Philip.

Philip rejects all of Oliver's pleas for them to continue their affair because he is so frightened of his own true sexuality. His responses to each of Oliver's attempts at persuasion are brutal and unfeeling. He wants Oliver to leave so he can continue living with Sylvia without being distracted. Oliver counters by telling Philip that Sylvia knows all about him and that Philip is repaying her with the worst possible deception by staying in a sham

marriage, a foolish, sad way to live his life.

Philip has heard enough of the truth. He cannot bear. He strikes Oliver across the face, then immediately apologizes and begins to cry. He falls into Oliver's arms. They kiss. Then Philip's emotions change. He becomes violent, wrestles Oliver to the floor and rapes him. After a long pause, Philip gets up, gets dressed and leaves the room. Oliver remains motionless lying on the floor. A moment later Philip returns, fixes himself a drink and sits. Slowly Oliver gets up and rearranges his clothing. Philip tells him to leave and never come back. Oliver crosses to the door, pauses, and tells Philip he is sorry, that he thought he knew him. Then he leaves. Philip remains seated, drinking his whisky.

End of Act 1



Act 2

2008

An office. There is a desk. Peter sits on one side of it, Oliver on the other. Peter works in publishing and is thinking of offering Oliver a job because he has been recommended as the best queer writer around. He tells Oliver times are changing and gives the example. He says he went out with some mates and one of them says he took a trip to Thailand and when he was not with his girlfriend he had sex with a lady-boy. He tells this to a group of friends, and they are all surprised at first. But he tells them all that it was the best blowjob he ever had. The others just laughed then and went on playing snooker. Peter's point is that ten years ago the friend would have kept it to himself. Nobody cares today.

Peter wants Oliver to write a piece about how it is okay to be gay or for a straight man to have gay experiences today. So that the straight readers understand, Peter wants Oliver to turn the situation around and tell straight readers that if they could walk into a park or a public loo and there are gorgeous girls just waiting to be shagged, they would certainly be up for it. Peter wants them to identify with gay men and change their minds. He wants to point out that gay guys know what they want and they know how to get it. Peter says he will e-mail Oliver some more ideas but the main thing is to keep the article light and kind of exciting. He offers Oliver two four thousand pounds for the piece and Oliver agrees to do it.

1958

The park. There is a bench, but Sylvia and Oliver are standing. Sylvia explains that they could have met in her apartment, but the weather was so beautiful she asked Oliver to meet her in the park. They haven't seen each other for a long time and Sylvia asks Oliver if he was satisfied with the work they did together on the book. She was afraid he was disappointed with her work. Oliver says that, to the contrary, he couldn't have been happier and that he would love to work again with her on another book. Sylvia is relieved.

She tells him that when she worked in the theatre there was a sensitive actor with whom she could talk about

anything. And she felt the same thing when she met both Philip and Oliver. She sensed something similar about all three men. She wants to confess to Oliver that she is lonely. She loves Philip, but there are times when she wakes up in the middle of the night and has a deep sense of loneliness. She feels the best way to describe Philip is bruised which makes her love him more because she wants to protect him. Oliver understands.

It takes Sylvia a while to get around to it, but she wants Oliver to know she is aware that he and Philip have been together when she was not around. She gives him that she found a gold pen that she found behind a cushion in a bed chair. She was present the only three times Oliver visited them together, and she knows that he was not in the bedroom any of those times. She has put this knowledge and her feeling together and come to the conclusion the Oliver and her husband have been having an affair.

Oliver apologizes. As much as she understands and loves Oliver, she admits that she feels humiliated and angry, not only at him and Philip, but also at herself for being blind and stubborn for taking so much time to see things for what they were. She feels like a forgotten woman, one who is unloved. She feels she has paid for her ignorance with despair.

Oliver tells her it was Philip's choice not to see him anymore. Contrary to Philip, Oliver says he would have chosen to live an honest life. During their time together there was only a very brief time when he felt Philip was brave enough to feel happy. She felt enraged, Sylvia says that even for a short time during their illicit meeting Philip was able to be his real self.

Oliver apologizes again and asks Sylvia what she is going to do. She says she honestly doesn't know. Maybe she won't see Oliver for some time until they know what will happen. Philip, she adds, has been very effective in convincing her that she's lost her mind. She needed to see Oliver to be assured that her sanity has remained intact. Oliver tells her she is the sanest person he's ever met. She thanks him for that and hopes that he will someday find what he is looking for. She senses that he is lonely too.



The first time she introduced Oliver to Philip she sensed that there was something very thick in the air. She was to feel that too some day, and for someone to feel that for her. She gently says goodbye to Oliver and walks away, leaving Oliver sitting on the bench.

2008

Sylvia's flat. She opens the door to find Oliver. There is blood in his mouth. He tells her not to be alarmed. A little kitchen roll will take care of the bleeding. Sylvia runs to the kitchen to get the paper. Oliver explains that it was his farewell tour. He saw a well-dressed man in the park, had sex with him after which the man pushed him away catching Oliver's lip with his watch and told him he had to go meet his wife and take her to dinner.

Oliver tells Sylvia he is not coming to Pride the next day. Sylvia says she spoke to Philip and he will be there. When she told him Oliver might be there, Philip said that's okay, we're adults, we can cope. She asks Oliver to choose between coming or lying in bed with thoughts of loneliness and death and assures him that one day he will meet people who aspire to things like justice, equality and mutual respect.

Sylvia says she's expecting Mario, her lover, for dinner and Oliver assumes that for that reason she wants him to go. She tells him to stay for a quick drink. The buzzer rings and Sylvia goes to let Mario in. Oliver waits alone and closes his eyes. Then almost in a whisper says, "Philip."

1958

A doctor's surgery. A desk, two chairs. The doctor and Philip face each other. Philip has come to this doctor to submit himself to a radical treatment that will supposedly rid him of his homosexuality. The doctor asks Philip a series of questions to find out when he started having homosexual feelings, how he feels about it and when he last had sexual relations with a man. Philip tells him that recently he had a four-month affair with Oliver, but that he cut it off. Then the doctor explains what procedure Philip will go through to become exclusively heterosexual. A nurse will soon take Philip to a room where he will remain alone. There will be erotic pictures of men that he should look at along with a picture of Oliver. This

will no doubt arouse him. An hour later the nurse will enter the room and inject him with apomorphine. In about fifteen minutes he will become violently sick and need to vomit. He should vomit on the floor rather than in a basin after which he should return to looking at the pornographic pictures of men. The nurse will return later and give him another injection. Again, he will become violently ill and vomit. This procedure will be repeated one more time. Until the morning when he can leave the room. Philip wants to know if the procedure will also erase the other, (nonsexual) feelings that he has for Oliver. There is a long pause with no response from the doctor. The nurse comes in and takes Philip where he will spend the night. Before they leave the doctor asks Philip asked to have this treatment. He answers that he wants to forget and he wants to have an easier life.

2008

The Pride party in the park. Sylvia and Oliver are sitting on a bench drinking champagne. In the background there are lots of noises from the party—whistles, shouts and music—the sound of celebration.

Sylvia tells Oliver about a recent experience when she was riding on a bus with about ten kids, who kept using the word "gay" in different ways. "It's so gay, it's so gay, they're so gay." Sylvia asked a girl who was sitting alone what the others meant when they used the word gay. What exactly did the word gay mean to them. She answered that it meant "shit". This does not surprise Sylvia, she tells Oliver. She expected the answer or something similar from the girl.

Another story she feels she has to tell Oliver is about all the negative things that people at a recent dinner party had to say about gays. And she can't understand why Oliver and other gay men go along and joke about themselves just wanting to have fun, that they are hedonists and just want to spend most of their time at the gym. Sylvia objects to gay men putting up with this kind of attitude because it reduces them to people who are shallow, who are defined by their bodies and by their taste in things: clothes and interiors. She objects to Oliver going along with this pejorative way of describing gays. He is so much more than that. She gave some thought to what the gay movement was about and realized it



wasn't about any of those things. It was about the right to love each other.

Philip joins them saying he could hear them talking. Sylvia attributes that to her loud actress voice. She informs them that Mario will be joining them soon, and rattles on about how he has always wanted children and how much she loves him. Realizing she has been talking too much, and wanting to leave Philip and Oliver alone, she makes the excuse that she is going to go and get herself an ice cream.

After listening to Sylvia talk about how gay men regard themselves, Oliver has concluded that something did really change in the sixties and the seventies—the women's lib thing, gay rights, flower power. He tells Philip that it was a beginning, the promise of something, a breeze, a new perspective. Oliver encourages Philip to think about the freedom they have now. Philip wants to know what Oliver is going on about.

Because Oliver believes that there is more acceptance today he feels free to tell Philip that he is still profoundly in love with him. Philip acknowledges that he still loves Oliver as well although he doesn't quite understand why. Oliver then asks if he can sleep on Philip's floor for a while because he has fallen on hard times. Philip replies that he can sleep on the couch, not the floor. Oliver assures him the hard times will pass. He just needs to do some more writing to make some money.

While the men are talking, Sylvia, unseen, returns, but she comes back as she was in 1958, wearing her nightie and holding a small suitcase. She tells Philip she is leaving, that she loves him but that the future beckons. She tells him that he has been a prisoner of fear. The things that he has tried to hold onto have died in his hands. His pain will be from trying to hang on to things the way they were. All she can do is whisper from a distance: "it will be all right, it will be all right, it will be all right."

The End

Study Questions

Multiple Choice Exercise

1. 1958: Sylvia is married to (a. Peter, b. Oliver, c. Philip).
2. 1958: Sylvia illustrates children's books written by (a. Oliver, b. Philip, c. Peter).
3. 2008: Philip and Oliver's relationship breaks up because Oliver (a. has started dating women, b. Oliver cannot give up his addiction to having anonymous sex with men, c. Sylvia and Oliver are having an affair).
4. 1958: One of the characters is raped. It is (a. Sylvia, b. Oliver, c. Philip).
5. 1958: Sylvia returns something belonging to Oliver that indicates she has known of his affair with Philip for some time. It is (a. a ring, b. a watch, c. a pen).
6. 1958: Because Philip has never been able to accept the fact that he is homosexual he (a. commits suicide, b. goes to a doctor who offers a radical treatment that will rid him of his homosexuality, c. finds a therapist with whom he can discuss his problem).
7. 2008: As much as she loves Philip, Sylvia has always felt unfilled in their marriage. Now she is very happy because she has found an Italian man she truly loves and he loves her back. His name is (a. Luciano, b. Mario, c. Antonio).
8. 2008: Oliver tells Philip that (a. he is satisfied having just a platonic friendship with him, b. he is profoundly in love with him, c. he wants to show him the article he wrote that was recently published).

Interpretative Questions

1. How does Philip's refusal to accept his homosexuality affect Sylvia and Oliver
2. How have attitudes regarding homosexuality changed from the 1950s to the present?