

Author's Note

The following drama is constructed as a series of intimate encounters between the audience and at least one of the characters above.

We encounter the characters at various points in their lives including after their own deaths. This is not a naturalistic period drama but rather the opportunity to experience multiple and contradictory perspectives on the same historical events and figures. For the most part the action occurs between 1762 & 1772 which is during the period the Fairfaxes owned the Castlegate house. There are references to events prior to this period and at least one scene which would have occurred at Gilling Castle although for continuity this has not been explicitly referenced. It is also possible that part of Anne's story is entirely the result of a psychotic episode or as her friend, Mary Bellasis, once put it in a letter - a 'wild imagining'.

It is not only the mental health of both characters which are unstable. This is a world at the mercy of a disease, of wars, of persecutions and social unrest. The instability of the period is certainly reflected in the show's content; but, it is also reflected in its form. It will not be clear to the actors, at the beginning of the show, exactly which version of this 'story' they will be called upon to perform.

This is, in part, a drama about agency, or the lack of it, and raises questions as to how faith, gender, class health, and the social conditions of the time might affect the power of choice. This is reflected in the mechanics of the production whereby the audience, upon entering each room of the house, can choose a particular object. These choices determine which character they encounter and which perspective they experience. This is a production which rewards repeated and alternate viewings!

I hope that it will encourage audiences towards their own deeper investigations of the Fairfax story and also consider how the objects we live with and the spaces we live in both reflect and dictate our own characters.

I have taken liberties in imagining the world-views and feelings of these characters but I have tried to ground these fantasies in the research of the period. In this I am particularly indebted to Gerry Webb's book *Fairfax of York* and the York Civic Trust who have made the wonderful resources of the house so freely available. Special thanks must also go to Rachel Wallis who has dug deep in various archives and found the often difficult answers to my many questions.

No doubt, there are multiple errors and these are all of my own making. I am, like Anne and Charles, a product of my time.

Paul Birch