

IGNITE CLIMATE SHORTS:

THE GERMINATES
by
Holly Louise Psaliou

Produced and Directed by Lucy Evans and Kate McAll

Characters:

Charlie - Leader and Founder of The Germinates; wonderfully flawed but has all the right intentions, and still in a grieving mind-set.

Alex - Determined; ex-friend to The Germinates before the group's inception, seeks redemption.

Jordan - The academic member of The Germinates; will use any opportunity to talk about the science behind the group's guerrilla gardening.

Taylor - The compassionate member of The Germinates, all for second chances.

Frankie - Biased and influential Radio DJ; uses their position to celebrate the Mayor's gentrification and redevelopment of the Southside of the city.

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SCENE 2. INT. OFFICE AT THE HOME OF THE MAYOR. DAY.

SOUND: Alex searches through the drawers.

ALEX *(rummaging)* Arh. It's here somewhere.

TAYLOR: Alex, are you absolutely sure he's not going to come back?

ALEX: The concrete's being poured today. Dad likes to be on site for that.

TAYLOR: So, he's not making you call him Mr Mayor at home then?

ALEX: No, Taylor he isn't ... Ah, here it is. *(hands document to Taylor)*. Read that.

SOUND: pages turning

TAYLOR: Green lit plans . . . for the demolition of . . . Earth Hill Avenue? That's where Charlie's nan used to live, with the beautiful back garden. He's gonna be gutted. Why are you showing me this, Alex? I didn't think you wanted to be involved.

ALEX: Because next on the list is Meadow Fields, where the pear tree is. The one we tied a tyre swing to, remember?

Alex laughs, hopeful. It turns into a cough.

TAYLOR (CONT'D): You alright?_

ALEX: Yeah, I just need my inhaler.

JORDAN: (JORDAN PRESSES SOME BUTTONS ON HIS DEVICE. IT BEEPS).
Too high. These Northsiders never learn. Trees keep cities cooler – they reflect more heat than dark pavements and roads. And they transpire the water!

CHARLIE: *Jordan. We do know! That's why we're here.*

TAYLOR: So, Charlie, what's next?

CHARLIE: Tomorrow night we're hitting Fincers Street.

TAYLOR: That's where the Mayor lives.

JORDAN: Yeah - what if we bump into him, or Alex?

CHARLIE: If that traitor knows any better, she'll stay well clear.

SOUND: floodwater rises

CHARLIE (CONT'D): Look! The storm drains are flooding again. Water's rising. What if it drowns the tree?

JORDAN: Red maples are pretty tolerant of waterlogging. The more we plant, the more we reduce the flooding. (WATER SPLASHING). Ugh. That's another pair of trainers ruined. Look at this place. No gardens. Everyone has a driveway instead of a garden. Tarmac and concrete. No wonder the drains can't do their job.

SOUND: Taylor's phone rings

CHARLIE: Someone's keen to get hold of you today, Taylor. That's the tenth time.

TAYLOR: It's no one important.

CHARLIE: Then let's get this finished and get out of here.

SCENE 4. INT. RADIO STUDIO. DAY.

SOUND: radio jingle

FRANKIE (RADIO DJ): This is North-City FM, sponsored by North-Future Development. The evening news at six o' clock. The mayor has announced plans for another major redevelopment. The South Gardens will be turned into luxury offices and a car park. . . And we have our first caller on the line for Frankie's Happy Hour. Who are you and how are you spending your happy evening?

CHARLIE: My name doesn't matter. And I'm spending my evening angry. The Mayor signs plan after plan for his redevelopments . . . and he passed a law to make guerrilla gardening illegal. But cutting down the trees not only releases carbon back into the atmosphere, it makes our soil less rich, and leads to soil erosion.

FRANKIE: *(trying to calm things)* Okay, caller, there's no need to /

CHARLIE: We are The Germinates. We're here to protect the environment and reclaim our spaces. If you're listening, Mayor, we're putting back what you ripped away. We're coming for you! That's why we're ready to plant /

SOUND: radio music comes in under the DJ

FRANKIE *(cuts him off)* And now a weather alert. There are several flood warnings tonight and hundreds of people have been advised to evacuate. *(fades)* More heavy rain is expected tonight.

CHARLIE: Fine. Me and Taylor can do it on our own.

TAYLOR *(sighs in exasperation, leaving)*

SOUND: Taylor leaves

CHARLIE (CONT'D): Taylor, where you going? *(to self)* I guess I'll be going on my own then. *(sighs)*

SCENE 6. INT. CAR. NIGHT.

SOUND: Charlie clicks in his seatbelt. Turns the key, starts the engine. Two car doors open. Taylor and Jordan get in.

JORDAN: New rule from tonight. Here's a tenner each from us.

CHARLIE: Jordan! What's triggered this?

JORDAN: How you put yourself across on the radio wasn't great, but you showed real bravery doing it. The Mayor won't stop.

TAYLOR: We've got to do more. We'll take photos tonight. Share what The Germinates is really about. Look, we brought these.

CHARLIE: Wow! Two gorgeous flowering cherry trees.

JORDAN: *Prunus 'Accolade'*, to be exact. Sometimes you've just gotta pick a tree because it's pretty.

CHARLIE: I'm speechless, no science spiel? And you're buying supplies now, too?

JORDAN: You were right – people need to know about us.

SOUND: Music sting

SCENE 7. EXT. SUBURBAN STREET. NIGHT.

SOUND: Charlie, Jordan and Taylor slam the car doors shut.

CHARLIE: Here we are. Fincers Street. Let's get going. Wait a minute. Is that Alex over there?

TAYLOR: It's not what you think.

CHARLIE: What the hell is she doing here? Jordan, did you know about this?

JORDAN: Please Charlie, just hear her out.

ALEX: *(approaching)* Charlie, wait. I want to fix things, do something good.

CHARLIE: You're a year too late Alex. Nine months ago, you were standing outside a new office block built on top of Jordan's dad's allotment. . . holding a pair of scissors ready to cut the ribbon!

ALEX: My dad made me. I didn't want to do it.

CHARLIE: Let's just plant the cherry trees, take some photos and get out of here.

ALEX: Who do you think told Taylor your nan's garden is next?
(pause) It was me. I showed him the blueprints for the
Demolition, I to— *(coughs)*

SOUND: a coughing fit overwhelms Alex; she uses her inhaler.

CHARLIE: *(tentative)* Are you okay?

ALEX: Air pollution here in the North is getting worse. People coughing is the new birds singing. Taylor's been telling me how trees remove particulates from the air, how much they help.
Let me in, please. *(Alex rummages in a bin bag – the plastic crinkles)* Will you accept these?

CHARLIE: *(DELIGHTED)* Petunias?

ALEX: Night sky. A purple cosmos with little stars. Your nan's favourite.

JORDAN: Well?

TAYLOR: What do you say, Charlie?

CHARLIE: Give her a shovel. Here, Alex, you can go first.

SOUND: a cacophony of shovels; a friendship in the process of repair. Laughter.

FINAL CREDITS

SOUND: theme music plays under the closing credits

In *The Germinates* by Holly Louise Psaliou, Jordan was played by Alexandria McCauley, Charlie by Jerome Lance, Taylor by Peace Sogunro, Alex by Mia Catalina Gill, and radio DJ by Sebastian Isaac. Dramaturgy was by Atiha Sen Gupta, sound design by Ian Hunter and music by John Biddle.

It was a Fierce Green and Rhiannon Media co-production, produced and directed by Lucy Evans and Kate McAll.

IGNITE Climate Shorts are supported by the Royal Society of Chemistry. They were recorded at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama with a cast of their members and with technical stage management by Chris Laurich.

Visit FierceGreenProductions.co.uk for more information on the project and the science behind the dramas.

SOUND: music rises to a climax before quickly fading out.

END.