

## Appendices

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*\*\*Each Appendix within this volume represents a discrete document cited within the main thesis (Vol 1) and therefore has its own page numbering.*



## APPENDIX A:

## "GENESIS" OF THE MAN FROM MUKINUPIN

## GENESIS

PANDORAS CROSS 1978 my view of life always essentially tragic ...commission to write a play for the sesquicentennial celebrations A celebratory play with reconciliation built into it ...obvious choice maybe the time to make peace with my beginnings.

Concept of a romantic play set in a country town with paired characters....in the play there are three for a long time THE GENESIS was a merry go round in Canberra square ..JIM COTTRELL music I always see the play as having a formal circular movement like a dance.

A pastoral play set in the fairly recent past <sup>the</sup> a masque <sup>(Entertainment)</sup> the masque and anti masque <sup>non-epic like the</sup> <sup>the anti</sup> Margots stories of clog dances street dances of Eng rural life...the HOBBY

BEGAN to list rural celebrations in Aust ..the cyclical occurrences from the WA countryside...country shows country dances sewing bees weddings funerals christening sheep shearing ploughing seeding ~~reaping~~ harvesting flood fire drought store and rain ..the seasons themselves.

DELIS READ Sh. great romantic comedies again As you Like it Midsummer Night Dream Twelfth Night and for a shaft of magical darkness THE TEMPEST

I DISCOVERED THE PLACE..A WA country town in the years 1912-1920...far enough away for an idyllic haze near enough for impact. I went to the stories told on the jerrah verandahs by grandparents and parents memories

THE SETTING..how to create it OPEN SPACED the people deafened by the landscape in their anachronistic clothes . The mixture of Aust pioneer life & t a English memories ,the epic quality of the figures in a landscape from Drysdale .... From Fred Williams out of DRYSDALE the open stage set at the Opera House

Where did characters come from

POLLY P And JACK T musical comedy at His Majestys and the old Capitol (the grocer's boy at the Corrigin co-op my mother in Corrigin Their doubles emerged from the darkness at the wrong end of town

HARRY TUESDAY AND TOUCH OF THE TAR..the Yealoring outcasts...The Monday boys and EDNA and IRENE HOLMANN

EDK AND EDIE PERKINS ..the storekeeper figure Great Aunt Edie with her hearing trumpet Great Aunt Eve with her recitations It was the schooner Hesperus etc

MISS CLEMMY AND MISS CLARRY HUMMER Sir the Circle twice a year the With girls the theatrical memories of the time see Pages 19 and 20

MERCY AND MAX (MIRYABELLO) The Monteseles The Strengling of Desdemona

ZEEK PERKINS water diviner ZEK and ZEEK from Korong Vale ..the stargazer Old Testament Methodism that seemed to instruct their lives.

Tuckinupin.

- Genesis Pandora's Cross <sup>reconciliation built into it.</sup> *to note pace with beginning*  
*Septi-embred Celebros) a celebr of.*
- ~~xxxxxxxx~~ The genesis was a merry go round in Carberra square  
Jim Cotters music  
the circular movement of the play ...
- A pastoral play set in the recent past....always fascinated by  
Ben Jonson and Indigâ Jones masques and anti masques
- Margots stories of the clog dances, and straw dances of English  
rural life

I began to list the rural celebrations <sup>and cyclical occurrences</sup> I remembered from <sup>WA</sup> the countryside  
country shows country dances <sup>Quora 600</sup> weddings funerals  
~~the sheep~~ sheep shearing harvesting <sup>ploughing</sup> - <sup>had his coat over - the</sup>  
*Sept* I began to re read ~~about~~ Shakespeares comedies <sup>As You Like it</sup>  
Twelfth Night <sup>del</sup> Midsummer Nights Dream and finally for a sheft of  
magical darkness THE TEMPEST- the doubling the play within plays the use  
of music <sup>the first half hour for the other half</sup>  
the ending where in the round green wood of the world every Jack <sup>had</sup> would have his  
Jill. *the wedding Mary a Trudy, the Tal the Hobson was*  
THE PLACE... a WA country town <sup>the</sup> in the recent past ~~before~~ before ouring and  
after the first world war... <sup>the</sup> stories told on the terrah verandahs  
*the first half hour for the other half*

THE SETTING

TONY TRIPPS straw people the windmills in Adelaide the magnificent  
open space in Sydney

Where do the characters come from.

~~WALLY PERKINS~~ <sup>birthplace in musical comedy</sup> JC Williamsons His Majestys  
JACK TUESDAY <sup>and the grocers boy at the Corrigin Co op</sup>  
abd the old Capit ol my mother abd the grocers boy at the Corrigin Co op  
Their doubles who emerge from the darkness at the end of town MARRY Tuesday  
and Touch of the Tar or Lily Perkins...the Yealering outcasts

The Monday brothers the McLingns girls Edna and Irene.  
Eek and Edie Perkins ...the storekeeper <sup>and Aunt Edie</sup>  
with her hearing trumpet Great Aunt Eva with <sup>It was the schooner</sup>  
Hesperus King Bruce and the Spider and How Horatious kept the Bridge

MISS CLEMY AND MISS CLAWY HUBBER...withs Circu... theatrical end circut

remoirs of the time <sup>MAX MONTESOLE</sup> the strangling of Desdemone.  
MERCY AND MAX <sup>the</sup>  
ZEK PERKINS water diviner Fathers stories Randolph Stow's

*Sept* <sup>in Journal</sup>  
of my fathers old <sup>uncle</sup> <sup>Eek</sup> <sup>from</sup> Karong Vale in Victoria gazing at the  
stars. *Eek - Zek* *the last a circle necked*  
*button - button - best of best*

- THE WIDOW TUESDAY Mrs Monday and all these Dickensian grotesques with their misplaced manic energy
- THE FLAGGER....Mothers story
- CECIL BRUNNER the archetypal traveller ..GRANDPARENTS STORIES with his toupee acid drops and smel's
- HOW to weld all these disparate strands together to make a play
- WHAT DID I HAVE....THE PLACE
- SHAKESPEARES romantic comedies
- the doubling, the play within a play the odd speech here and there particularly from ZEK PERKINS the marriage of HARRY and TOUCH OF THE TAR
- 3 JC WILLIAMSONGS musical comedy ..POLLY AND JACK ...POLLY put the KETTLE ON MERCY AND JACKS Noel Cowardish duet in ACT II
- 4 MUSIC HALL The Lark Bros singing an An an Eeg and an Onion at RGL dances
- CECIL BRUNNER in Act one Have another Acid Drop
- 5 AUSTFOLK songs HARRY Tuesdat 's Fremantle Jail song ...JIM JONES
- JACKS FLAG JACK song ACT one BLACK ALICE Touch of the Tars song in ACT II
6. WIRING CIRCUS (tightrope walking)
- 7 ENG rural trade The Five Mens Morris and the Hobby
- 8 ENGLISH drawingroom recitations anything from Longfellow and Tennyson to Henry Lawson
- 9 My own personal image of the Canberra merry go round ..instead of the merry go round as prologue the electronic music was adapted for the opening with the voices of the town on tape (shades of MILKSD D) and a circular dance of the five mens morris ..taken from the nine mens morris is filled up with mud (M. NIGHTS DREAM)
- The end of the play repeats this circular movement with the Carousel Song.
10. Literary memories tags and quotations.... the influence particularly in the narrator figures The HUIER sisters and the cadences of their orchestrated voices UNDER MILKWOOD
- EK PERKINS Shakespearean tags and the odd quote from George Borrowes L'Avengro
- EDIE PERKINS recitations the influence of Randolph Stowes Tourmaline..<sup>the dance</sup> ~~the dance~~ singing under the ~~the dance~~ memorial <sup>the same</sup> <sup>some of the</sup> New Holland is a bitter place
- Eek Perkins <sup>corrupted</sup> <sup>made</sup> <sup>himself</sup> and the biblical implications of WATER

3

Family ... the dreamlike scene in ACT ONE is *shaggy*

From my own memories of my grandmother making dresses  
This was to be a romantic comedy .. therefore low to high fortune the  
How to darken the sunny world of the country store ... young love and  
the plover in the wheat....

THE DARK END OF THE TUNN...keep the darkend lightin precarious balance  
until the end...the mediator between the two worlds  
the ~~dark~~ <sup>dark</sup> dark secret..the murder of the aborigines in the creekbed  
the war ...I remembered the shellshocked victims still in the streets  
of country towns in the twenties. my own fathers nightbreathed the pieces  
of shapel embedded in his arms.

part of the romantic plot of course must be that true love doesnt  
run smooth..the social gap between Polly and Jack ..my own father  
and mother

At the end of the play all these disparate elements had to  
be brought together so that <sup>life embracing</sup> the happy ending became possible

the true ending of the romantic comedy is the marriage  
but as I had two sets of lovers I had to have two marriages ..one the  
formal marriage of POLY AND JACK with the traditional last minute  
switch of the right for the wrong bridegroom - *as the subplot develops itself*

2 the pagan marriage of HARRY AND TOUCH OF THE TAR  
in the creekbed with ZEEK officiating <sup>and</sup> the echoes of Miranda and  
Ferdinands ~~marriage~~ in The Tempest the marriage song being taken  
whole from ~~the same~~ see page 111

The ~~lovers~~ safely married ~~leave~~ Muckinupin Jack and Polly  
for a career with JO AS as principal boy and ~~first~~ <sup>first</sup> of the ~~play~~

Oscar Ashes Chu Chun Chow and HARRY AND TOUCH OF THE TAR  
escaping across the saltlakes into ~~the~~ a pastoral EDEN with the  
plover rising under their feet.

MURPHY MOUNTAIN AND CECIL BRUNNER their travellers stay out opening up  
a fish and chip shop in Muckinupin.

The play ends cyclically with ~~the~~ all very happy <sup>and</sup> ~~and~~ <sup>pubic</sup> speech out of  
THE DREAM page 120 and The Muckinupin Carousel repeating the  
circular movement of the original merry go round as the characters move off ~~the~~ <sup>off</sup> ~~stage~~ <sup>stage</sup>  
into death and ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> darkness in the wings of the stage

*Mythic, 1950s, Conrad - all the ~~characters~~ <sup>characters</sup> ~~are~~ <sup>are</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~same~~ <sup>same</sup> ~~type~~ <sup>type</sup> ~~of~~ <sup>of</sup> ~~people~~ <sup>people</sup>*  
*(the different products)*  
*Trotskyist, Shantelle, 19th century*  
*Madeline, Sydney space - change*  
*or sent. (the play = B)*

APPENDIX B

ROYAL SHOW: A WORKING DRAFT

ROYAL SHOW

A WORKING DRAFT

by

Louis Nowra

&

Lighthouse Company

*By [Signature]*

## ROYAL SHOW

No Australian has not been- do you know an Australian ~~who~~  
hasn't.

Only an evil person would not like coconut ice  
fat woman asked why she's fat  
why are you buying the sanatarium bags, boys? Don't you  
know that the seventh day adventist supply them and they  
hate catholics and jews.  
bulls. 184

toilet seats have powder on them left by women who  
still powder their bums.

farriers

girls talk in american

dogs referring to owners 'Without me he'd be nothing'

look into my eyes...look...into... my...eyes...

dogs look at owners with respect, adoration and contempt  
command- whistle.

get out/stop(whistle)/ come behind.

move to right. Get over (to left)

Keep back (ease up, don't push sheep  
too hard)

children dressed up as something (*competitive*)

fuzzy wuzzy

policemen

people's day- democracy gone to seed

making a living picking up paper (used to be a soldier)

last word from ghost

ferris wheel-night, sunset

fuzzy wuzzy after pig

sir truscott, politics as war

2x pig  
pig, prize porker, hide divided up-different cuts of meat  
poisoning animals. dogs

stepping on dogs feet during trial. fistacuffs.

upsetting nery types of dogs (gamesmanship)

cutting off horses tails.

exchanging chickens.

animals confronted by lights at night

fox at the end amid rubbish- the australian dream.

(fox's whole struggle to get the end right)



## Royal Show

- Steaf tossing - funny through air
- New fence steady pig at night.
- fat Bohan like hunchback
- school children at band calls find
- News : Clem. Ray
  - Mrs Mould
  - Tressy: Glad non - pull at stick
  - where - pretty up fence

P.A. Savvy. There been another mix up.

- fairy flowers like pink nohans
- 700 pwt.
- ~~Stoker: 'hall of death'~~
- ~~fox boy to call new fence down~~
- ~~Speed start city (night work) day.~~

MR. FOX  
MISS DAWKINS  
MR. HOBBS  
MRS. PINCUS  
REBECCA  
SINGING DISPLAY  
CHARLIE  
IDA  
FREDA  
P.A.  
SNELL  
FARMER  
COW (ADA)  
SHEEP 1/DAVE  
          2/DIANE  
          3/BILL  
TEACHER  
PUPILS  
MOTHER  
DAPHNE  
OLD FARMING MAN  
OLD FARMING WOMAN  
BOY  
GHOST OF MARY WATSON  
MAX  
DESMOND  
SPRUIKER  
FAUSTINE  
DEMOBBED SOLDIER  
BILLY (MEMORY MAN)  
IVORY (ALBINO ABORIGINAL)  
HOWARD (GIANT)

LOTTE (WILD GIRL)  
DAHLIA (FAT WOMAN)  
BRUNO  
CHILD 1  
    2  
BLINDMAN/PHOTOGRAPHER  
TED  
KEN  
NOREEN  
MARY  
NUN  
SIR SID TRUSCOTT  
QUARANTINE MAN  
JOE MOYNE  
CUPID  
BLUEY  
LES (POLICEMAN)  
MICK DYER (CHAMPION WOODCHOPPER)  
JUDGE 1  
    2  
HORSEWOMAN  
ITALIAN POW  
RAM  
MRS. FIELD  
DUKE OF BERKSHIRE  
HUMAN FLY  
SHEARER  
MRS. MACPHERSON  
MRS. DAVIES  
GHOST TRAIN ATTENDANT  
TOM  
JULIA

MOTHER  
JANE  
PETE (TEST YOUR STRENGTH)  
THIN MAN  
LOST CHILDREN ATTENDANT  
MAN WITH LARGE FAMILY  
FAMILY  
STREET CLEANER  
MISS ROYAL SHOW  
MICK  
HENRY (FREDA'S HUSBAND)  
DAVE  
THEO  
GEORGE McGUINNESS  
ROBERT/ROBERTA  
LADY WEEPING BLOOD  
STRANGER WITH POPPING EYES  
MAN WITH ELASTIC SKIN  
SNAKE WOMAN  
LILLY (HERMOPHRODITE)  
JAPANESE GENERAL  
GEEK

## FARM PRODUCE HALL

FARM PRODUCE DISPLAY IN THE FORM OF A MAP OF AUSTRALIA.  
ENTER THE R.A.S. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE. THEY STAND  
PROUDLY BEFORE THE DISPLAY.

DAWKINS

Experience, Mr. Fox. Experience.  
(PAUSE) Six years of war ... and  
then the greatest farm produce  
display in the Royal Agricultural  
Society's history.

HOBBS

A stroke of genius, Mr. Fox.  
Queensland made of pineapples and  
bananas, Tasmania of Granny Smiths  
and Jonathons, and the grapes -  
the grapes - South Australia as  
an Eden of juicy purple and green  
grapes.

DAWKINS

We have triumphed over rationing,  
electricity restrictions and the  
Axis powers. It makes me proud  
to be an Australian.

FOX

I carried this idea through the whole  
of the war. I remember when it  
occurred to me. I was having lunch  
in a Prague Art Gallery the Americans  
had bombed out and amidst the ruins  
I found the portrait of a man. On  
closer inspection I found the man's  
face to have been cleverly composed  
out of vegetables - a cucumber for  
a nose, strawberries for lips - and  
as I was staring at the portrait  
everything became quiet, sacred. A  
vision penetrated me and I thought  
to myself, yes, a map of Australia  
made out of real fruit and veggies;  
products of the soil, a veritable  
cornucopia of our lucky country.

(THE THREE STARE IN AWE AT IT)

DAWKINS

Magical!

HOBBS

To have been so true to your vision ...

FOX

Thank you, Miss Dawkins, Mr. Hobbs.  
Where's Snell of the Cattle and  
Swine Committee?

HOBBS

Overseeing the arrivals.

FOX

A bit late.

HOBBS

Yesterday's train strike threw  
everything out.

FOX

Marvellous. Twelve months of peace  
is too much for the unions. Bloody  
disrupting a celebration of rural  
life.

DAWKINS

They're not picking on us, Mr. Fox,  
it's the Federal Elections.

FOX

I don't know why they couldn't  
hold off the elections until after  
the Royal Show.

(WE HEAR A WOMAN CRYING OUT)

MRS. PINCUS

(OFF) Rebecca ... Rebecca ...  
(ENTERING) Oh, excuse me, have  
you seen a little girl wearing  
a harness?

FOX

How did you get in here? Who are  
you?

MRS. PINCUS

Mrs. Pincus. I've lost my daughter,  
Rebecca.

HOBBS

But the gates aren't even open yet.

1/3

FOX

I knew Charlie was getting too old.

MRS. PINCUS

I wasn't even coming to the Show. I was walking past the showgrounds when Rebecca broke away from me, ran under the turnstiles and into the showgrounds. I've been looking for her everywhere.

FOX

Madam, your Rebecca is not in the Farm Produce Hall but if you wish, have a look.

MRS. PINCUS

(HURRYING TO SEARCH THE HALL)  
Rebecca ... Rebecca ...

DAWKINS

A bit brusque, Mr. Fox.

FOX

The gates are not even open yet and we have a lost child. Didn't she know she was addressing the R.A.S. Executive? Memo, Hobbs. Lost children to be kept down to a minimum.

HOBBS

(AS HE WRITES THIS DOWN) We had better get a move on, Mr. Fox. We have to make final preparations for the Duke of Berkshire.

FOX

Ah, yes. It's strange, but I've never heard of the Duke of Berkshire.

HOBBS

It was the only Royalty we could come up with. And we need Royalty to open the British Empire Pavilion.

DAWKINS

I am so looking forward to seeing him. I just have to come within sniffing distance of Royalty and I feel as if my finger is caught in an electric socket.

*Epix*  
-  
*1/19*

1/4

(THEY BEGIN TO EXIT BUT STOP AND GAZE  
AT THE MAP OF AUSTRALIA.)

FOX

After six years of war. A vision-  
ary poem of the bounty of the  
Australian soil. Worth fighting  
the whole bloody war for.

(THEY EXIT)

(REBECCA, AGED 3 AND A HALF, ENTERS.  
SHE WEARS A HARNESS)

REBECCA

(TALKING TO HERSELF, A BIT  
DESPONDENTLY) Rebecca ... Rebecca  
... mummy ... mummy ... Becky.  
(SHE ABRUPTLY STOPS WHEN SHE SEES  
THE FARM PRODUCE DISPLAY. HER  
EYES LIGHT UP. SHE IS ENCHANTED)  
Rebecca want! Rebecca want!

(THE FARM PRODUCE DISPLAY SINGS  
TO HER)

DISPLAY

AUSTRALIA

*In Australia we never starve  
we're always got plenty to eat  
Under the red Australian sun  
lovers love rolling in the wheat.*

*If you plant your seeds  
the soil will do the rest.  
Just like a woman  
with a baby at her breast.*

*Australia is God's own earth  
The wealth of it is untold  
Food grows plump under the moon  
the fields are worth their weight in gold.*

*Australia is alone  
An island in the sun  
this fertile land  
we are lucky to call home.*

*Passionfruit, apricots, oranges  
grow strong in the breeze.  
Apples, cherries and plums  
burden down the trees.  
Carrots, parsnips and spuds  
Our fortune is there to see  
Oats, barley, wheat and rye  
We will love Australia 'til we die.*



1/5.

(THE DISPLAY SEEMS TO BE CALLING FOR REBECCA TO COME TO THEM. SHE ENTERS THE WORLD OF THE FARM PRODUCE DISPLAY. CHARLIE, THE 72-YEAR-OLD GATE KEEPER ENTERS. HE STOPS IN FRONT OF THE FARM PRODUCE DISPLAY, ENTRANCED)

CHARLIE

Real apples. Real oranges. Extraordinary. This should pack 'em in. If anyone asks me, I'll recommend the Farm Produce Hall. (LOOKING AT WATCH) I could have spent another hour in bed. Don't have to open the gates until nine. (HE MUSES ON THIS. AS HE DOES, REBECCA'S MOTHER ENTERS FROM LEFT AND CROSSES STAGE AND EXITS)

MRS. PINCUS

Rebecca ... Rebecca ... where are you?

CHARLIE

(HE HASN'T NOTICED HER) Seventy-two years old. Missed six years 'cos of war. That's ... let me see ... 1920s, 1930s ... that's (CAN'T QUITE ADD IT UP) That's ... that's a lot of shows I've been gatekeeper for. (PAUSE) I always arrive too early. Like a thoroughbred at the starting gate. Toey. Seen 'em all come and go ... Committees, Royalty, five legged sheep, farmers, larrikins, heart attacks, a woman gave birth to a monster after seeing a freak show ... that woman in '39 who jumped off the ferris wheel ... I shook hands with the sheep, all five of them. Just to check. (HE MUSES)

(REBECCA CROSSES STAGE FROM RIGHT TO LEFT, VERY HAPPY, CARRYING A HUGE PUMPKIN.)

REBECCA

Me ... Rebecca ... I got pumpcar ... pumpcar ...

P.A.

WOULD MR. SNELL PLEASE GO TO THE ARRIVAL SECTION.

1/6.

CHARLIE

(HE HAS TAKEN NO NOTICE OF THE ANNOUNCEMENT) Take it as it comes, Charlie. It may be your last one. (LOOKING OUT AT SKY) A beautiful day. The blue sky intense and cloudless as a child's imagination, the showgrounds as succulent as a ripe peach. Record crowd today. Bet ya. Everybody wanting to celebrate peace and get back to normal. People's day. (HE WALKS OFF).

Charlie

cut to

Sue

lean your + Fred

wait takepremium → jaws  
agent under

1/7.

CWA TEA ROOMS.

IDA AND FREDA STRUGGLING ON WITH TABLE.IDA

Here.

FREDA

No, here.

IDAHere!(THEY PUT DOWN THE TABLE AND SIT  
ON IT EXHAUSTED)DAWKINS(ENTERING) Good morning, ladies.  
Don't get up. I may be on the  
R.A.S. Executive Committee but I  
am not any different. Everything  
ship shape?IDAYes. The Country Woman's Associa-  
tion is prepared for the hordes.DAWKINSHordes! I find your tone a trifle  
obnoxious, Ida.IDAWhat do you expect? A record crowd  
predicted and only half the number  
of fairy cakes and scones to feed  
them. As for the tea, the leaves  
will have to be re-used.FREDA(TO THE ASTOUNDED MRS. DAWKINS)Desperate measures are called for,  
Mrs. Dawkins. There's hardly enough  
butter - we were not given enough  
ration cards and the jam is bitter  
because of the sugar shortage.  
That's why the Pavilion of Women's  
Industries looks dismal compared  
to '39.DAWKINSDismal? Yes, entries are down but  
the standard is excellent and the  
esprit magnificent.

IDA

Catering is going to be a vicious problem, Mrs. Dawkins. I can foresee a highly unpleasant afternoon of short tempers and frayed nerves.

DAWKINS

I expect the CWA to pull through as usual. The CWA must. It is to Australian civilisation what the Vatican is to Roman Catholics.

FREDA

Ida and myself finish our shift late morning and in the afternoon we're going to calm the savage beast, so to speak, by providing music.

DAWKINS

Music?

IDA

Yes. Freda will play drums and I will play the piano. Hymns we think.

DAWKINS

I may have to speak to Mr. Fox about this.

FREDA

It is the only way, Mrs. Dawkins. If not, then it is not going to be a pretty sight in here this afternoon. If only the R.A.S. had provided more tea, sugar and butter.

DAWKINS

I detect the dry rot of envy. Jealousy because I am the first woman on the Executive. (SHE TURNS TO GO AND STOPS) I expect the CWA to emulate the loaves and fishes today, if not, heads will roll. It will make the crucifixion look like a Sunday school picnic! (SHE EXITS)

FREDA

It's not because of her that the Show is what it is. (PAUSE) IF Henry had have been here he would have -

*Dawkins  
captured  
and decapitated  
piano!*

## BERRIDALE CWA NEWS

**Berridale Branch Country Womens Association held its first meeting for 1983 in the CWA hall on February 2.**

Present were S. Jamieson, J. Brooks, M. Banfield, Jean Scarlett, Leila Clarke, Vi Jamieson, D. Billmann, Belle Keevers, Beth Reid, B. Allen, L. Constance, Merle Mould and Monaro Group CWA patron F. Constance.

The president extended a special welcome to Flo Constance a new member who has been a strong supporter of CWA for many years.

The president said she hoped her association with CWA would be a long and happy one as a member.

A letter of thanks was received from The Smith Family for 13 cartons of good used clothing sent before Christmas.

A tender was accepted for the painting of the CWA hall (exterior).

A report from the sister-in-charge of the Baby Health Centre showed a total of 165 babies had been seen by the sister J. Shean from August to December.

January showed 18 babies had been brought to the centre.

The international officer, B. Allen advised that the country of study for 1983 was the Peoples' Republic of China.

M. Banfield and J. Brooks visited both the district hospital and nursing home on behalf

of CWA for January/February.

Notice of council meeting of Monaro Group CWA at Brodbo on March 1.

Several members have signified their intention of attending the Monaro Group Council meeting.

CWA will combine with Red Cross to man a tea and sandwich stall on the Saturday of the school centenary in March.

In view of the heavy expenses with the painting, insurance and electricity etc, several suggestions were made towards fund raising.

A stall will be held at each meeting. Miss Mould offered her garden for a party in the spring.

A letter of appreciation and thanks was sent to Mr and Mrs McKendrick for their generous donation of \$300 on behalf of the musical afternoons held each month in CWA hall.

A message of condolence was sent to the Halligan and Abraham family and a card of congratulations to Miss Anne Brooks on her engagement to Mr L. Robinson.

Branch Land Cookery officers, Leila Clarke and Belle Keevers organised a cookery contest on February 2.

Mrs Stella Jamieson judged the contest. The winners were: Sponge Sandwich, J. Brooks 1st, Beth Reid 2nd; Orange Cake, M. Banfield 1st, M. Bottom 2nd; Lamingtons, F. Constance 1st, L. Constance 2nd; Health Loaf, V. Jamieson 1st, D. Billmann 2nd; Sultana Cake, Leila Clarke 1st and 2nd; Plum Jam, B. Keevers 1st and 2nd.

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1/10

## ANIMAL ARRIVAL YARDS

SNELL IS WORRIED, THINGS ARE BEHIND SCHEDULE. THE P.A. SYSTEM IS ANNOUNCING FINAL CARGOS.

P.A.

Merino, class Two. Dorset Horns.  
Poll Dorsets.

SNELL

Border Leicesters to the left ...  
will the Border Leicesters go down  
that ramp ... get those merinos  
out of here. (LOOKING AT CLIPBOARD)  
Look, there's supposed to be twenty-  
two of them, I only count nineteen.  
Now what in the hell is going on  
there! (TURNING IN OTHER DIRECTION)  
Those Friesians should have been out  
of here an hour ago. (TO HIMSELF)  
God, look at them - skin and bone,  
not one prize winner amongst the  
lot of them.

P.A.

Poll Dorsets.

SNELL

Where in the hell are the other three  
Leicesters? (COUNT POLL DORSETS)  
Thirty one Poll Dorsets.

P.A.

Suffolks.

SNELL

Suffolks ... I don't have any Suffolks  
on my list.

P.A.

Would Mr. Snell of the Cattle,  
Sheep and Swine Committee please  
report to the arrival yards.

SNELL

(FRUSTRATED) I'm bloody here.  
(PUZZLES) Suffolks - I don't have  
any Suffolks ...

(A WIDE EYED FARMER AND HIS JERSEY  
COW ENTERS.

1/11

FARMER

(TO COW) Well, here it is Ada ...  
the Big time. The Royal Show ...  
look at those skinny Friesians.  
If the Jerseys are like those you  
should romp in.

P.A.

There is a bottleneck at the  
arrival yards, would Mr. Snell  
please report to the arrival yards.

SNELL

I don't have the Suffolks list!

FARMER

(AS HE AND HIS ADA SAUNTER PAST SNELL,  
ENGROSSED IN THE SIGHTS) A long way  
from Turraderra. All these animals.  
Never seen so many pigs and goats.  
Like Noah's Ark. Look at that bull -  
those balls are as big as footballs.

COW

(TO HERSELF) I want to eat. (SHE'S  
NOT IMPRESSED BY BULL AT ALL) Clover  
and thick; wet grass.

FARMER

He'd be perfect for you ... you'll  
get a first, he'll get a first ...  
we'll mate you and -

SNELL

(NOTICING FARMER FOR THE FIRST TIME)  
What are you doing here. Jerseys  
were in hours ago.

FARMER

Me and Ada have just arrived. We  
got lost.

SNELL

For God's sake, you're blocking  
traffic - get a move on, take her  
to Cattle Pavilion Two.

FARMER

Where's that?

SNELL

(MOTIONING VAGUELY) Over there.

(THE PUZZLED FARMER AND HIS COW SET OFF).

(TO HIMSELF) We fought the war for him?

P.A.

Would the Kennel Control Committee please make sure that the owners put droppings in the bin provided.

SNELL

Christ, lost three Border Leicesters, haven't got Suffolks on the list.  
(EXITING) Where is that Suffolk list.

(AS HE EXITS, THREE LOST SHEEP ENTER. WIDE-EYED THEY STARE AT THE HUB BUB AROUND THEM)

P.A.

Mr. Snell there are three Border Leicesters free.

SHEEP 1

(ASTONISHED AT WHAT SHE SEES) Shit!

SHEEP 2

Shit!!

SHEEP 3

Shit!!!

P.A.

Would Mr. Snell get those Suffolks in, the gates are about to open.

SHEEP 2

I sense confusion and panic around me.

SHEEP 1

Where is the grass. I want grass.

SHEEP 3

People think sheep are cretins, we are not. I too sense unease and confusion. I have dust in my nostrils.



1/13

SHEEP 1

Where is the grass?

SHEEP 2

Grass.

SHEEP 3

Grass.

(THEY BEGIN TO SAY GRASS TOGETHER. IT HAS A SLIGHT RESEMBLANCE TO BLEATING. SNELL ENTERS).

SNELL

What in the hell! Those three lost Border Leicesters!

P.A.

The public is now going to be admitted. Would Mr. Snell hurry, please.

SNELL

(YELLING TO SOMEONE OFF STAGE)  
Who let those three sheep out.

FARMER

(ENTERING WITH ADA) I couldn't find Cattle Pavilion Number Two.

SNELL

(TURNING AROUND, CONFUSED) What?

FARMER

The Jersey Pavilion. This is my first Royal Show. Ada and me have got to find it, judging's soon.

P.A.

Who is looking after the Suffolks?

SNELL

Bloody hell, who left the gates open! (CALLING OUT TO UNSEEN PERSON) Des, close the bloody ramp gates, the suffolks are escaping. Jesus bloody Christ ... here they come, fifty bloody stupid suffolks.

FARMER

Is this the way to the Cattle  
Pavilion?

(SNELL IS BEWILDERED)

SNELL

Will you all shut up. (TO FARMER)  
I've got three lost Border  
Leicesters, you and fifty crazy  
Suffolks on the rampage. Christ,  
here they come. Give me a hand  
rounding them up.

FARMER

But me and Ada -

P.A.

The Gates are Open on the 1946 Royal  
Agricultural Show! Welcome to the  
1946 Royal Show. People's Day.  
Where the theme is 'AUSTRALIA UNLIMITED'.

(THE SUFFOLKS RUNNING TOWARDS SNELL  
TURN INTO PEOPLE POURING THROUGH THE  
TURNSTILES, JUST AS THE FARMER AND  
HIS COW AND SNELL TRANSFORM INTO  
PEOPLE ARRIVING.)

(AS THE PEOPLE BEGIN TO DISCHARGE  
THROUGH THE TURNSTILES WE BEGIN TO  
MAKE OUT CERTAIN TYPES)

- 1) The teacher and her pupils. The pupils are tied together by a piece of rope. All of the pupils want to do something different.  
'Why don't we go there, Miss.'  
'Miss, I want to go to the toilet.'  
'Miss, I want to see the pigs.'  
'Look, Miss, the Ferris Wheel.'  
'My mother said I was allowed to buy all the showbags I wanted to.'  
Teacher to herself 'Oh, why do they always hold the Royal Show in the Spring - everything is always rutting.'
- 2) Then there is Desmond, the slightly retarded boy. He enters, wide eyed with amazement, clutching a pound note in his hand. Someone bumps into him as he stares at the joys around him. It is as if he doesn't feel the bump. He looks about him in wonder.

1/15

- 3) A mother and daughter enter. The daughter asking questions all the time. 'Mummy, why did that man take our money? Why was he so old. He's as old as grandpa, isn't he? You're not as old as that, are you? Why is that lady got such a big stomach? She's growing a baby in there, isn't she? Why has that little girl got so many showbags and I haven't got any? Why haven't I got a Daddy like that little boy? His Daddy looks nice, doesn't he?
- 4) An old farming couple. Moving slowly.

WIFE

So many people ... so many people ...

FARMER

I think cousin John is in the sheep shearing contest.

WIFE

The jams and cakes. We've got to see them first.

FARMER

Yes, dear.

WIFE

We see enough sheep at home.

(Amid this flood of humanity are also servicemen and their wives and girlfriends)

- 5) A boy spins across the stage like a piece of paper caught in the wind. His hand clutching an invisible adult's hand.

BOY

That's all I remember of the Royal Show: coming through the turnstiles and immediately being caught up in a flood of humanity. Women's legs and men's trousers. Spun in this whirlpool, I noticed nothing. The hand was gone for a moment - my mother's hand - and I panicked. But she was right next to me. She grabbed my hand again and we rushed off into the maelstrom of people. (HE GOES).

1/16

- 6) The ghost of Mary Watson.  
She looks at the flood of  
people pouring in.

MARY WATSON

I am waiting for you, Peter. I know  
you will return. You will have  
heard of my little episode on the  
ferris wheel and you will run into  
my arms and I will clutch you and  
never let you go. My hair of seaweed  
and arms of shell will invite you back.  
Amidst the sea of faces you and I will  
drown.

AS THE PEOPLE BEGIN TO HEAD OFF IN ALL DIRECTIONS, DESMOND  
IS STILL IN THE SAME PLACE, STARING IN AMAZEMENT. MAX COMES  
UP TO HIM.

MAX

Hello, there. Lost?

DESMOND

No. It's lovely.

MAX

You should see it at night.  
Australia Unlimited pulsates and  
sparks with enough ~~8600~~ lights to  
light up a township.

DESMOND

It's a beautiful sign. And so is  
that. It's King Neptune and his  
Fork.

MAX

On the side of the Merry-go-Round?

DESMOND

Yes. And that lady is making pink  
hay.

MAX

That's fairy floss.

(REBECCA WANDERS BY, GURGLING HAPPILY,  
THIS TIME CARRYING A HUGE MARROW)

MAX

My name's Max. (SHAKES HANDS)  
What's yours?

1/17

DESMOND

Desmond.

MAX

Des.

DESMOND

Desmond.

MAX

Down from the country?

DESMOND

Yes, my first time at the show.  
My Dad told me about it before he  
went to war. He was killed by  
the Germans. He was going to kill  
Hitler.

MAX

So what are you going to do first?

DESMOND

My grandmother - she looks after  
me since mum left - she's given  
me a pound. I'm going to - let's  
see - go on the slippery dip, yes,  
the slippery dip, show bags too.  
Nigger Boy. Grandma said Nigger  
Boy was the best and the merry-go  
-round and -

MAX

And you're going to use a pound  
note for that?

DESMOND

Yes, grandma said it would last -  
I just had to plan it properly,  
she said.

P.A.

Ladies and Gentlemen, don't forget  
to go to the Plastics display.  
Plastics! The great new material  
that is going to revolutionize the  
world, now at the Industries  
Pavilion. See the red telephone!

1/18

MAX

Look, Desmond, you're going about it the wrong way. You see, you've got to have threepences and six-pences to pay for the rides and showbags. They won't take a pound note.

DESMOND

They won't?

MAX

Look. Let me go and get some change for you. Have your pockets got holes?

DESMOND

No, these are my Sunday best.

MAX

Well, I'll bring back the change and fill your pockets with it.

DESMOND

Thank you, Max.

MAX

It's all right. I'm here to help. Here, take this piece of paper, it has my name and address on it if anything happens to me. (HE GIVES IT TO HIM. DESMOND CLUTCHES IT AS TIGHTLY AS HE DID THE POUND NOTE) Now, don't move, Desmond, I'll be back in a sec.

(MAX GOES, DESMOND BEGINS HIS LONG WAIT.)

(A SPRUIKER APPEARS. NEXT TO HIM IS A WOMAN, FAUSTINE, IN A BLOCK OF ICE.)

(A RECENTLY DEMOBLED MAN ENTERS AND STARES AT HER)

SPRUIKER

Yes. Here she is, ladies and gentlemen. Faustine, the most frigid lady in the whole world. She is alive, she is frozen. (TO MAN) What about you, sir. (THE MAN THINKS THE SPRUIKER IS TALKING TO DESMOND BUT THEN REALISES THAT THE SPRUIKER IS TALKING TO HIM.)

*under  
faustine  
piper*

1/19

SPRUIKER

(cont)

Does she look frozen to death to you? Come up, take a look. (THE MAN GOES TOWARDS HER. SHE IS BEAUTIFUL AND HAS LONG HAIR) Her hair sings. She is unique! Out of her coffin of frozen water she flings her hair and it sings ethereal music. (THE SPRUIKER KEEPS TALKING, HIS MOUTH IS OPEN BUT WE DON'T HEAR HIM. IT IS AS IF THE SOUNDTRACK OF A MOVIE IS NO LONGER WORKING.)

THE MAN

(MESMERISED BY FAUSTINE) I had only been demobbed the day before People's Day. I headed towards the showgrounds. By the time I had reached there I had finished my brandy flask. Drunk and scared of peace I wanted to be happy. Caught up in the happy crowds of People's Day. I do not even remember paying my entrance money, only of suddenly walking through the turnstiles and suddenly coming upon this beautiful woman frozen in a block of ice. I didn't know if I was dreaming or hallucinating. (FAUSTINE BREAKS OUT OF HER BLOCK OF ICE AND WALKS TOWARDS HIM. SHE EMBRACES HIM AND THEN MOVES AWAY. SHE SPINS, HER HAIR 'SINGS'. SHE MOVES AWAY, BACK TO THE SPRUIKER.)

SPRUIKER

Come up and inspect her yourself, sir, don't be afraid. (THE SPRUIKER AND FAUSTINE VANISH INTO DARKNESS. THE MAN IS LEFT ALONE.)

THE MAN

I thought she had whispered in my ear 'Welcome Home, Soldier boy.'

1/20

P.A.

Come and see COBRA BOY. He eats,  
sleeps and lives with cobras.  
He is immune to their bite. He  
is a freak of nature.

## 'BACKSTAGE' SIDESHOW ALLEY

A LARGE BLUE BAG WITH A YELLOW CORD TIED AT THE TOP. THE  
BAG MOVES AS IF IT HAS SOMETHING INSIDE IT. NEARBY IS BILLY  
THE MEMORY MAN RESTING HIS HEAD IN IVORY'S LAP. IVORY IS  
STROKING HER BELOVED'S HEAD AND SINGING. HOWARD, THE GIANT,  
IS SITTING IN A SMALL CHAIR AND PRACTICISING CASTING A  
FISHING LINE. IN THE CORNER IS THE WILD GIRL TEARING INTO  
A PIECE OF BREAD.

IVORY

(SINGING)

*say  
later*

I remember desert  
you remember sand  
I remember lakes  
you remember water.  
I want a son,  
you want a daughter.

DAHLIA

(THE FAT WOMAN - ENTERING) What  
this world needs is a bigger dunny  
seat. What'd ya reckon, Howard?

HOWARD

(WOKEN FROM HIS DREAM OF FISHING -  
AMERICAN ACCENT) What was that,  
Dahlia?

DAHLIA

(AS SHE COLLAPSES, BUM FIRST, ONTO  
THE FLOOR) (TO HERSELF) Like the  
Titanic going down in a pond. How's  
it going, Ivory?

IVORY

Fine, thank you, Dahlia.

DAHLIA

Don't be nervous, kiddo. I know it's  
your first show and all, but you'll  
be a hit. I mean, an Albino Aboriginal  
Princess who can mesmerise rabbits.  
What more do they want? Me using a  
dwarf as a dildo? Besides, it's your  
day. Being married on People's Day!  
Going to be a great night tonight.

*more  
come  
cut*

*slaying  
wong  
god*

*P.A. →  
me  
magg*

*holla -  
Killed  
me*



1/21

DAHLIA  
(cont)

Billy the Memory Man marries Ivory the Aboriginal Princess. Wonder what sort of kids you'll end up with? Know what you'd get if the thin man married the Alligator Lady? A slim handbag! (NO ONE ELSE LAUGHS EXCEPT FOR HER) Christ, I should be working at the Tivoli, not here in a freak show. Still, it's good to be back. (FOX ENTERS) Foxy, baby. I was just saying how good it was to be back.

FOX

Hello Dahlia. Ivory. Billy.

DAHLIA

You know Howard?

FOX

No.

DAHLIA

Browning hired him. (FOX SHAKES HIS HAND) He came over in 1940 to do the Queensland circuit and got stuck here during the war.

FOX

So you're going to stay here in Australia?

HOWARD

No, I'm saving up enough money to go back to America.

DAHLIA

I mean, what future has he in Australia, Foxy? Freaks are going to be banned here soon. You know that, it's probably going to be our last Royal Show. Marvellous, isn't it? What am I going to do then? Farm? Besides, Howard isn't really fleeing from us, he likes Australians. He's saving for an operation to stop him growing.

HOWARD

Perhaps I won't have the operation.

1/22.

HOWARD  
(cont)

Ever since I arrived in Australia a man comes and watches my every performance. He's a surgeon and I know that he's waiting for me to die, eager for me to die, so he can open me up.

FOX

Every performance?

HOWARD

Has chased me all over Australia. Even gave me his card. Henry Johnson, surgeon. (FOX HAS BEEN SO IMMERSSED IN THE STORY THAT HE IS UNAWARE THAT THE WILD GIRL IS NEAR HIM, SUDDENLY SHE GROWLS. HE JUMPS AWAY)

DAHLIA

Lotte the Wild Girl. Brought up by dingoes. Browning found her in Northern Queensland.

FOX

(AS LOTTE GROWLS AT HIM) Why isn't she chained up?

DAHLIA

She's all right. Just don't touch her food or she'll rip your stomach open.

FOX

(TO BILLY AND IVORY) Are you two prepared for tonight?

IVORY

Yes, Mr. Fox.

FOX

Looking forward to being a married man, Billy?

BILLY

Yes.

FOX

What did I say to Roger Simmons September fourteen, 1939, in the Rural Pavilion?

1/23.

BILLY

You said you wanted to achieve a production double that of '38 and that 250 merinos -

FOX

Enough. What was I wearing?

BILLY

A brown suit, white shirt and dark blue tie. You had a squint in your left eye because of mild conjunctivitis.

FOX

What can I say, Billy, but brilliant. So much in that noggin of yours. I heard that you were very brave in the Solomon Islands.

BILLY

I just wanted to survive -

FOX

Joe Moyne said -

BILLY

I'd sooner forget it. (DAHLIA LAUGHS, HE LOOKS ANNOYED AT HER)

DAHLIA

Sorry, dear, but you know that's impossible. You can forget nothing.

BILLY

(GETTING UP) Well I have to get ready for my act. (HE KISSES IVORY GOODBYE AND IS ABOUT TO GO WHEN HE FORGETS SOMETHING)

DAHLIA

You forget something, dear? (SHE CRACKS UP) Get it? Get it? I ought to be at the Tiv. (BILLY EXITS)

FOX

He seems bitter about something.

1/24.

DAHLIA

How would you feel if you remembered everything you ever did? Or what other people said or did?

IVORY

Sometimes at night he wakes up screaming - remembering the war. (PAUSE) He doesn't want to be considered a freak. But that's all he thinks people think he is. He wanted to come back after the war and get a job, but no one would hire him, except for Browning and his sideshow. He hates being a freak.

DAHLIA

But he is Ivory. Just as much as Howard, Lotte or me. A freak is someone who isn't normal. Like you. You know that. An Abo. An Albino. What a combination.

(PAUSE)

IVORY

He'll be all right, Mr. Fox. He'll just have to live with being unable to forget.

DAHLIA

Marriage will help him. You two are lucky being married.

FOX

Why don't you get married, Dahlia?  
I always see men around you.

DAHLIA

Yeh, I know. I've had more men than you could poke a stiffie at. But it's just fat they're interested in, not me soul. Well, not really. I'm a nymphomaniac and I'd be bored silly living with one man. Use 'em up, I say. Toss 'em aside like used toothpaste tubes.

IVORY

I'd better get ready too. (SHE EXITS)

DAHLIA

(TO FOX QUIETLY) Hates me talking dirty.

1/25

FOX

I'll try and see all the acts this afternoon.

DAHLIA

No, not this afternoon. Tonight. We belong to the night, not daylight. We're like deformed caterpillars that are transformed by the night. We're dreams and nightmares, not fairy floss and showbags. By the way, who changed us from SPORTS OF NATURE to EXAMPLES OF THE WRATH OF GOD?

FOX

Me. It's more dramatic, more - (THE WRIGGLING BAG CATCHES HIS EYE) What's that?

DAHLIA

Bruno. Have a look. Browning found him in Italy at the end of the war. Have a geezer. Go on, have a peek. (FOX OPENS THE BAG AND PEERS INTO ITS DARK CONTENTS - HE GOES PALE AND STEPS AWAY) Talk about Examples of the Wrath of God, eh?

FOX

My God, what is he?

DAHLIA

The ugliest man in the world.

FOX

Browning didn't tell me about him. He'll ...

DAHLIA

(SARCASTICALLY) Yeh, I know. Women who see him will give birth to monsters. What a crazy idea! I mean, why didn't women give birth to monsters after they saw Hitler or Tojo? Bruno's all right - you should hear him sing Italian opera.

FOX

Well, I'd better be going.

1/26.

DAHLIA

Promise me you won't see us until tonight - that's when we're at our best. I mean, we are a branch of show business and like to be seen at our best.

FOX

(KISSING HER) All right, Dahlia.

DAHLIA

You scrumptious man - if only you liked fat sheilas.

FOX

'Bye. (TO OTHERS) See you at the wedding. (LOTTE GROWLS AT HIM)

DAHLIA

(AS FOX EXITS) Now, Lotte don't bite the hand that feeds you. (CHORTLES) Christ, I'd be a riot at the Tiv. (TO HOWARD) Fox is always a bit unsure of us. Afraid. I'm glad he didn't see the rest of the newcomers. That geek even gives me a fright. Now there's one thing you should see during the day - the geek is a true nightmare. Me? I'm a dream and you're a dreamboat, Howard. (PAUSE) In another culture I would have been considered a fertility goddess.

(HOWARD IS 'FISHING' AND TAKES NO NOTICE OF DAHLIA)

BRUNO

(SINGING FROM RIGOLETTO FROM INSIDE HIS BAG. THE MUSIC IS BEAUTIFUL, THE SONG MARVELLOUS, THE ORCHESTRA RAVISHING.)

P.A.

Would Mr. Joe Moyne please come to the secretary's office.

1/27.

NEAR MAD MONKEY

TWO CHILDREN ENTER. THEY SIT DOWN.

CHILD 1

How many have you got?

CHILD 2

Six. What about you?

CHILD 1A Nigger Boy, Hoadleys, O-so-lite,  
Coles - Coles is a good one.CHILD 2I haven't got a Nigger Boy. All  
that licorice, mum says it makes  
you shit a lot, like prunes.CHILD 1I don't care. Why do they always  
have rulers. Four showbags and  
seven rulers - I can't work it out.CHILD 2I got four fizzers. You want one!  
(HE GIVES ONE TO CHILD 1)CHILD 1It's better if you haven't eaten  
- then your whole body tingles.P.A.Come and see the new 350cc O.H.V.  
horizontally opposed transverse  
twin Douglas motor cycle.CHILD 2

We should go and see that.

CHILD 1Nah. We should go and play a few  
stalls.CHILD 2

You can't win in those games.

CHILD 1Yes, you can. Dad says that before  
the war he cleaned out a shooting

1/28.

CHILD 1  
(cont)

gallery. He hit the ducks so many times that the man had to give him everything. We've still got a room full of kewpie dolls and pandas.

CHILD 2

What a liar.

CHILD 1

True.

(THE BLIND MAN TAPS PAST)

He's like Mr. Murphy.

CHILD 2

How?

CHILD 1

Mr. Murphy lost both legs when he stepped on a mine. They could do an act. Legless and eyeless.  
(BOTH BOYS LAUGH)

P.A.

Ladies and gentlemen, we have news that an escaped Italian POW may be here at the Royal Show. He escaped last night and we suspect he may be mingling here. Keep on your guard.

CHILD 2

We should keep our eye open.

CHILD 1

Perhaps they'll be rewarded - who ever catches him.

CHILD 2

My Dad bayoneted two wogs - come on, let's go to the shooting gallery.

(AS THE TWO BOYS EXIT, FOX AND HOBBES CROSS THE STAGE)

FOX

When did you hear?



1/29.

HOBBS

The police told me.  
Apparently he escaped yesterday  
and someone saw him getting off  
a tram outside the showgrounds.

FOX

An escaped POW - I didn't think  
there were any POWs left.

HOBBS

Plenty sir, we haven't repatriated  
them yet. I don't know why we don't.  
The last thing Australia wants is  
wogs.

FOX

Now, Hobbs, let's be generous shall  
we.

(THEY EXIT. WHILE THIS HAS BEEN GOING  
ON, TED, A YOUNG LAD IS NEARBY STANDING  
UNDER THE MAD MONKEY.)

P.A.

Would Mr. Joe Moyne please report to  
the secretary's office please.

(A NUN PASSES BY EATING A FAIRY FLOSS)

TED

(LOOKING UP AT MAD MONKEY) (REMEMBERING  
AS HE WATCHES) The mad monkey. Girls  
all a whirl. The rush of the mad  
monkey lifting up their dresses and  
skirts. Pink panties, white ones,  
suspenders, white legs marbled with  
the blue veins of fright, their screams  
so exciting that my body broke out in  
sweat. So eager, so eager to enjoy  
peace. And up there, in a billowing  
cloud of skirts, between their legs a  
nirvana of panties - if only I could  
glimpse one hair - my ears filled with  
delicious screaming. Did they know  
that me, Ted Painter, was standing here  
below gazing up into the gates of heaven?

(KEN ENTERING)

KEN

There you are!

*Handwritten notes:*  
Ted in  
con was  
the mad  
monkey  
the young  
lad  
the mad  
monkey

1/30.

TED

(BREAKING FROM REVERIE) I said I'd meet you here, under the mad monkey. This is where you pick them up.

KEN

(LOOKING UP) Are you sure?

TED

You do what the yanks did with them. This GI told me that you always take a girl to a scary picture and act all protective or you take them on a big dipper or mad monkey or ferris wheel and once they scream their hearts out they're as limp as a rag doll and you can do anything you like with them. That was the yanks' technique, it wasn't because they were any better than us. It wasn't all money and nylons. (TWO GIRLS ENTER).

P.A.

We have a lost child announcement. Would anybody seeing a three and a half year old child, a girl, answering to the name of Rebecca please contact the lost child's office.

(THE TWO GIRLS, NOREEN AND MARY SPOT THE BOYS AND, PRETENDING THEY HAVEN'T NOTICED THEM, MOVE ON, TALKING TO THEMSELVES.)

TED

See, like those two sorts.

KEN

I've only got a quid.

TED

That's all? You know you've got to buy them a kewpie doll? Here, let me help you out. The blond one's mine.

(THE TWO LADS POOL THEIR MONEY AND RUN AFTER THE GIRLS HAVE MADE THEIR EXIT.)

1/31.

P.A.

Would those people who are waiting to get into the CWA tea rooms please be patient. Those who want hot water for their picnics, again, patience thank you.

(SIR SIDNEY TRUSCOTT HAS ENTERED)

SIR SID

Patience! The mob is never patient. Give them a sniff of uncertainty and they panic. (LOOKING AROUND) I wonder where the Duke of Berkshire is? You'd think he would be easy to find - like he might have a glow, an aura that follows him around. Royalty always look shiny, like they have a lamplight inside of them.

(SCHOOL TEACHER AND HER CHILDREN - WHO ARE STILL TIED TOGETHER STRAGGLE PAST)

TEACHER

We are not going to sideshow alley. There is an interesting demonstration on honey making in the next pavilion.

PEGGY

I'm going to vomit, Mrs. Peters.

TEACHER

(TURNING ON PEGGY) Don't you threaten me, Peggy, or you'll find yourself swallowing a knuckle sandwich. You've got one showbag each. You'll get another one. This is a school excursion, you're not supposed to have fun. Is that understood?

ALL

Yes, Miss. (THEY ALL TROOP OFF, ONE OF THE PUPILS DROPPING A PAMPHLET)

SIR SID

(WATCHING THEM GO) The voters of tomorrow - rabble. (PICKING UP LEAFLET CHILD HAS DROPPED) My God, the Labor Party is shoving political propaganda in childrens' show bags! (READING AGAIN) "The Liberal Party has no sense of the future for Australia, only its past". Bloody

SIR SID  
(cont)

Reds. (LOOKING AROUND SHOWGROUNDS)  
Look at them all - having fun, unaware  
of the crucial decision they've got to  
make at Saturday's election. (A NUN  
ENTERS) Excuse me, sister. I am Sir  
Sidney Truscott, Liberal Federal Member.  
In next week's election remember a vote  
for the liberal party is to keep out  
the communists. (NUN STORMS OFF)  
(TO HIMSELF) Bloody Irish Catholics.  
(HE SPOTS MAN WHO HAS BEEN FOLLOWING  
NUN. SIR SID GRABS THE MAN BY THE  
SHOULDER. THE MAN IS PARALYSED WITH  
SHOCK) Hey, you. Yes, you. I'd like  
to talk to you: I'm a politician.  
(THE MAN PUTS HIS HANDS UP IN THE AIR  
AS IF TO SURRENDER) No, a politician.  
(THE MAN'S HANDS SLOWLY FALL DOWN)  
(SIR SID GRABS THE MAN'S RIGHT HAND  
AND SHAKES IT PROFUSELY) Sir Sid  
Truscott, Liberal Federal Member.  
Remember, a vote for the Labour Party  
is a vote for Communist tyranny  
(SLAPPING THE MAN ON THE BACK) I know  
you'll make the right decision. (THE  
PUZZLED MAN GOES OFF, HURRYING AFTER  
NUN) Good listener. Chalk up another  
vote, Sir Sid. (SUDDENLY ANOTHER MOOD)  
Amazing. Sir Sidney Truscott, famous  
industrialist, important politician,  
grovelling for votes. (TAKING OUT  
PAPER) Now, somewhere ... somewhere,  
near the Pavilion of Australian Dreams  
is where I have to deliver my speech  
on Youth and the Future of Australia.  
One of my best speeches. Good topic.  
Plenty of press coverage in that one.  
(MUSING) What I really need is a  
picture of me shaking hands with the  
Duke of Berkshire. It'd be on the  
front pages tomorrow for certain.  
Now where is His Highness?

(A BLIND MAN HAS ENTERED, SIR SID SETS  
OFF AND THE TWO MEN COLLIDE. THEY FALL  
AND TUMBLE TO THE GROUND.

(SIR SID JUMPS UP, FURIOUS)

SIR SID

(NOT REALISING THE MAN IS BLIND)  
Why don't you look where you are  
going?

1/33.

BLIND MAN

I'm sorry, sir. I'm blind.  
Kokoda Trail.

(AUTOMATICALLY SIR SID GOES TO  
PICK HIM UP, BUT HE STOPS WHEN  
SOMETHING OCCURS TO HIM. HE  
WAVES HIS HAND IN FRONT OF THE  
MAN'S EYES.)

BLIND MAN

Where am I, sir?

SIR SID

Around the back of the British  
Empire Pavilion.

BLIND MAN

My stick. Where's my stick.

(SIR SID KICKS AWAY THE MAN'S  
STICK AND, MAKING SURE NO ONE  
IS LOOKING, KICKS THE BLIND MAN)

SIR SID

(AS HE KICKS BLINDMAN) Scum.  
You'd better vote for the Labour  
Party if you know what's good for  
you. (THE BLINDMAN CRIES OUT IN  
PAIN) If not every single member  
of the Communist Party will belt  
the shit out of you.

(SIR SID HURRIES OFF. AS HE DOES  
HE SPOTS A MAN WITH A CAMERA COMING  
HIS WAY.)

Hey, you -

PHOTOGRAPHER

Yes, sir.

SIR SID

There's a blind man back there who  
has just been given a going over  
by a pack of Commo ruffians - on  
second thoughts, what are you doing  
with that?

PHOTOGRAPHER

On my way to the Pavilion of  
Australian Dreams to photograph  
children.

*Sir Sid  
not going  
to Pavilion*

1/34.

SIR SID

No you're not, you're coming with me.

PHOTOGRAPHER

I have to go and photograph the children.

SIR SID

I am a Federal MP - I am commandeering you. This is an emergency. (THE PHOTOGRAPHER GOES TO PROTEST) Please do not force me to resort to calling in the police.

PHOTOGRAPHER

But -

SIR SID

One more word out of you and you are finished. Now, let's find the Duke of Berkshire - follow me.

*Yes. McQuinn.*

1/35.

INSIDE A PAVILION

WE SEE HUGE SLIDES OF ROTTING FLOWERS AND VEGETABLES ON THE WALL. MAN IN WHITE COAT LECTURES US.MANAustralia is in danger of being  
destroyed by foreign bugs.(NOREEN AND MARY ENTER)Yes, ladies, if you only realised  
the danger. Australia is in a  
state of siege.NOREEN(TO MARY) What are we doing in  
here. I'm not interested in  
quarantine.MARY

They have to catch up.

MAN(TO HIMSELF) Bloody projector.  
(TO UNSEEN OPERATOR) Harry, can  
I have the next slide.NOREENYou've changed since you came down  
to the city.MARYYou should have been down here for  
the last days of the war. The GIs  
gave me chocolate, nylons, I got  
two rings. I went to a nightclub  
four times.NOREEN

To an adult nightclub?

MARY

Four times.

MANNo, the one for Firelight - I put  
it in there myself.MARYI looked like Alice Faye. They  
thought I was an adult. I drank  
champagne.

>

Solene

Mary

America

play

MAN

Now, there are things foreign which should be kept out of Australia. The first thing is Fireplight - a bacterial disease of pear and apple.

NOREEN

They weren't negroes?

MARY

Of course not.

NOREEN

There were negroes stationed near us but no one was allowed to talk to them. Julie Brenton had a black baby. She drowned herself and the baby.

MAN

Then there's the slant eyed Japanese beetle which causes blight in potatoes. Another insidious disease - come on Harry, Japanese beetle ...

MARY

She should have taken precautions.

NOREEN

What do you mean?

MARY

Precautions.

MAN

This next one which could destroy all our crops and our whole economy comes from China and Japan: White Rush of Chrysanthamum.

NOREEN

Boys only want one thing.

MARY

It's nice.

NOREEN

(SHOCKED) You've ...? (MARY GIGGLES)



1/37.

MARY

I mean, he took me to a nightclub  
four times.

MAN

We have to keep Australia free of  
these diseases. Close our borders  
to Asian diseases of decay and  
putrefaction.

(THE BOYS ENTER)

MARY

Shhh! Here they come. I told you  
they are following us.

MAN

If you want any information on  
quarantine and diseases - please  
ask me. The next show will be in  
half an hour's time.

TED

You girls visiting the show?

MARY

Yes.

(SILENCE)

TED

My name's Ted. His is Ken.

MARY

I'm Mary. That's Noreen.

(EMBARRASSED SILENCE)

(CHILD AND MOTHER WALK ACROSS. MOTHER  
TAKES LEAFLET FROM WHITE COATED QUARANTINE  
MAN)

CHILD

Why is that man in a white coat, mummy?  
Why has she got more showbags than me?  
If Daddy was here he'd like to see those  
new cars, wouldn't he? (THE MOTHER AND  
CHILD EXIT - THE MOTHER OBVIOUSLY  
REACHING THE END OF HER TETHER .)

TED

Want to go on the rides?

1/38.

MARY

Don't know.

TED

The mad monkey's pretty good.

MARY

What do you think, Noreen?

TED(TO NOREEN) Would you like to go  
and see The Wall of Death?NOREEN

Don't know.

TED

The Ghost Train is pretty good.

MARY

I like ghost trains.

TEDCome on, let's go - who wants to  
stay here and learn about bugs.

(THEY EXIT)

MAN(WATCHING THEM GO) They'll want to  
learn in the future if it wasn't for  
the Australian quarantine officers -  
christ, don't they realise what  
foreign bugs can do to us. I need  
a drink before the next show. (HE EXITS)(HALF A DOZEN PEOPLE WANDER AROUND THE  
CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES SHOW - AGOG AT THE  
PRODUCTS OF THE NEW WORLD)P.A.See the wonders of the Modern World,  
the Chemical Industries Exposition.  
Aluminium Kitchenware. Transparent  
perspex roofs, Satin finished  
stainless steel sinks and plastic  
gadgets.

1/39.

## WINE TASTING SECTION OF PAVILION

BILLY WINE TASTING BEFORE A TABLE OF ABOUT FIFTEEN BOTTLES OF CHABLIS. HE HAS DRUNK TWO BOTTLES SO FAR AND IS RATHER DRUNK.

BILLY

(TO HIMSELF) Not bad. Not bad.  
Hated Chablis when I started.  
(JOE MOYNE ENTERS) Joe Moyne!

MOYNE

Billy. What are you doing here?

BILLY

What does it look like. Wine tasting.

MOYNE

I didn't know you were an expert.

BILLY

I'm not. I told Fox I knew everything about Chablis. (HOLDING UP EMPTY BOTTLE) The first one's pretty good.

MOYNE

Don't you just have a sip and then spit it into a bucket?

BILLY

A sip? Spit it out? Use your noggin, Joe, why would they do that? Know anything about Chablis?

MOYNE

Wine's lolly water. Why don't they judge beer.

BILLY

Why don't you give me a hand?

MOYNE

I'm supposed to be seeing Fox about the Grand Parade - but I guess I can help out an old friend.

BILLY

(POURING OUT WINE FOR MOYNE) Thanks, Joe.

1/40.

MOYNE

Where's Tom and Ronny, they should be judging this.

BILLY

Tom's still in the repat and Ronny went down with the Canberra.

MOYNE

Well, here goes. (TASTES IT) Not bad. Not bad. (LOOKING AT TWO EMPTY BOTTLES) You've already gone through two?

BILLY

They weren't bad. It does seem a lot to drink though.

MOYNE

I'm sure it's what Tom and Ronny did - after all, I never saw them sober. You know, we haven't seen each other since '39.

BILLY

No, that's right. '39.

MOYNE

Back to the old routine. Who else but Joe Moyne as the ringmaster of the Grand Parade. It's an art, a real art. Even Noah would have been struggling to get those animals to behave. Not me, they file around placid as a housewife on Bex. Not like New Guinea. (HOLDING OUT GLASS FOR BILLY TO POUR. BILLY DOES SO, BUT HE IS SO DRUNK THAT THE WINE GOES EVERYWHERE)

BILLY

(AMUSED) A wet little white.

(THE QUARANTINE MAN, DRESSED IN A WHITE COAT ENTERS)

MAN

I thought you were going to have a drink with me, Joe.

MOYNE

I was on my way. (BILLY FAINTS BEHIND JOE) Then Billy asked for

1/41.

MOYNE  
(cont)

help. Billy? Christ, no stomach for it. Why don't you help me out.

MAN

Don't know anything about it?

MOYNE

(POURING HIM A GLASS) Doesn't matter. Neither do I.

MAN

I prefer beer myself.

MOYNE

Doesn't every man? But if Fox wants this lolly water judged, then I can't let him down.

MAN

Not bad. Tangy.

MOYNE

Christ, you sound like old Tom. That's pretty good. Tangy! Right. Number five is tangy. I was telling Billy about New Guinea ... Hear about me George medal?

MAN

(POURING HIMSELF ANOTHER WINE)  
Why are the glasses so small?

MOYNE

I'm in the New Guinea swamps. Mosquitoes and Japs all around me. The only thing visible is my face - camouflaged, of course. I have a grenade in my mouth - sticking out like a gob stopper. Inch by inch I make me way towards the pillbox. Hundreds of lives depend on me.

MAN

Aren't you supposed to be doing the Grand Parade?

MOYNE

That's well in hand. So I'm moving towards the pillbox.

1/42.

MAN

I know exactly what you should have done.

MOYNE

(CONFUSED) What?

MAN

Sprayed them. We've got a spray for Japanese beetle in the Quarantine department.

(UNBETTER KNOWN TO BOTH MEN, BILLY RISES, TRIES TO GRAB ANOTHER GLASS AND PAINTS AGAIN)

MOYNE

Japanese beetle?

MAN

Us Quarantine boys. I mean, we've got everything. Seen a fly today? Know why? I mean, generally this place is crawling with flies. See, we've got this new stuff, DOT. This morning, at five, we sprays the whole show-grounds - it was like a cloudburst. Not one fly today. Like Japanese beetles. We got sprays for them. You didn't need a grenade. If we had our way we could keep all foreigners out of Australia. Just spray 'em

(MOYNE IS DRUNK. AS HE IS TAKING IN WHAT HAS BEEN SAID HE SEES, OUT OF THE CORNER OF HIS EYE, A MAN DRESSED AS CUPID, CARRYING BOW AND ARROW.)

(CUPID COMES UP TO MAN AND WHISPERS IN HIS EAR. MAN POINTS IN ANOTHER DIRECTION. CUPID EXITS. MAN POURS HIMSELF ANOTHER DRINK. MOYNE, ASTONISHED AT CUPID'S APPEARANCE, PRETENDS NOT TO BE AND CONTINUES.)

MOYNE

Anyway, there I was, creeping towards the pillbox - hundreds of leeches clinging to me like blood starved vampires -

(SUDDENLY BLUEY WITH PLACARD HURRIES IN. ON THE PLACARD IS WRITTEN :  
THE END OF THE WORLD IS NIGH.)

1/43.

BLUEY

Drink is Sin. Rejoice in the Lamb.  
Out Sodom. Out Babylon. That is  
the drink of Satan - drink keeps  
us in mist and terror.

LES

(ENTERING - HE IS A POLICEMAN)  
Come on, Bluey, let them do the  
wine testing in peace.

BLUEY

All drink is an abomination.

LES

Look, Bluey -

BLUEY

I've got to give them the message.

LES

They won't listen to you, Bluey.  
They want happiness after the war -  
not to be told what not to do.

BLUEY

I'm the Australian Cassandra!

LES

Yeh, and I'm Phar Lap.

BLUEY

I paid me money.

LES

I'll nick you for disturbing the  
peace. Come on. Outside. (THEY  
EXIT TOGETHER)

BLUEY

(BEFORE EXITING) Repent before  
they drop the bomb! (PAUSE)

MOYNE

So, all I can see are those toothy  
grins and hundreds of slant eyes  
in the dark of the pillbox. So,  
I think to myself - (BILLY RISES  
AGAIN)

1/44.

BILLY

Number three is piquant!  
(HE FAINTS AGAIN)

MOYNE

So I thinks to myself - 'what the hell, I can only die a hero.'

(THE BLIND MAN ENTERS, TAPPING HIS CANE AND BUMPING INTO MOYNE)

BLIND MAN

I'm terribly sorry, is this the Pavilion of Women's Industries?

MOYNE

No, sorry, mate. Next door to the shellas section. Just follow the signs.

BLIND MAN

Thank you. (BLIND MAN EXITS)

MOYNE

Christ, how do they expect us to judge with all these interruptions?

MAN

(DRINKING MORE) Not bad after a while.

MOYNE

So I throw the grenade. Wham! Talk about a mess. It was like someone had brought up Irish Stew. I refuse a VC. 'No, thanks, Captain, just doing my duty.' Jesus, ten more bottles to go.

MAN

(AS HE UNDOES THE CORK OF ANOTHER BOTTLE) (SUDDENLY SUSPICIOUS) These are Australian wines - I mean, they're not foreign, are they?

MOYNE

Fuck me dead - you boys in quarantine! They're as Australian as the Abo. To your health.

(THEY DRINK)



1/45.

P.A.

And the winner of the floral  
arrangement section is Mrs.  
Betty MacKenzie-Forbes for  
her floral arrangement of  
Camellia and barbed wire.

(A TERRIBLE SCREAM COMES FROM  
THE PAVILION OF WOMEN'S INDUSTRIES)

MOYNE

It's a slaughterhouse of emotions  
in the Pavilion of Women's  
Industries. Never go in there  
while they're judging.

(UP IN THE SKY IS COBRA BOY.  
HE IS SMILING BROADLY. HE IS  
CRADLING THREE COBRA SNAKES.  
HE WEARS A TURBAN.)

## WOODCHOPPING CONTEST AREA

THREE MEN PREPARING FOR THE CONTEST. THEY EXAMINE THEIR AXES AND THE LOG EACH IS TO CHOP. THE CUPID WALKS UP TO ONE OF THE MEN AND WHISPERS IN HIS EAR. THE MAN POINTS IN THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION. THE CUPID DEPARTS. MICK DYER, THE CHAMPION WOODCHOPPER, IS THE MOST MUSCULAR AND TOEY.

MICK

Like an animal I can smell the fear and tenseness of my competitors. (LOOKING AROUND) Back after six years. Some of them think that Mick Dyer won't be able to keep up his pre-war form. Not only will I, but I will create a new record. For six years I ran riot through the Gippsland bush, chopping everything in my path - creating as much havoc as a bulldozer and chain. Went through an axe a week; from sweet, succulent softwoods to concrete, tough, hardwoods. The others don't truly live for this moment - I do. This is where Mick Dyer becomes mythic. Mick Dyer, the Legendary Axeman. Pics of me on the front pages of newspapers; blue singlet, the axe blade a furious blur of white hot metal and chips flying like chunks from an exploding star. (RUNNING FINGER AN INCH OR SO OVER THE BLADE) So sharp that I can feel the angry vibrations of its razor sharp being an inch above it. Mystical, that's what it is. Do I prove myself for a prize of a new axe. No. Me, the axe and the log are a holy trinity of Australian Rural Manhood.

P.A.

Gentlemen, are we ready?

(THE MEN PREPARE THEMSELVES)

On your marks - Go!

(MICK IS SO FAST THAT THE OTHERS SEEM IN SLOW MOTION. AFTER A FLURRY OF CHOPS, MICK BREAKS THROUGH HIS LOG JUST AS THE OTHER TWO MEN ARE ABOUT TO MAKE THEIR FIRST CHOP.)

The winner of the Australian wood-chopping contest - Mr. Mick Dyer! The tenth time in a row! A new record!

1/47.

(AS A JUDGE GIVES OUT THE PRIZES, BLUEY IS NEARBY EATING A HOT DOG - HE STILL CARRIES PLACARD.)

BLUEY

So this is a hot dog, eh? This is what the yanks live on. Can't beat the pie. (LOOKING AROUND) Got to find the sheep pavilion, must be somewhere around here. Chooks. Cattle ...

(A WOMAN IN TIGHT RIDING GEAR AND WEARING A DISDAINFUL EXPRESSION RIDES PAST AND BACK AGAIN).

P.A.

(LIST OF HORSES) Black Empress, Chenhall, Silver Lady, Sir Laurence, Lucky Gem, Linaria, Black Destiny, Red Pilot, Winnie, Gay Echo, Tango Chief.

BLUEY

Pretty snotty, aren't we? Upper class bitch.

(SHE RIDES PAST HIM AGAIN, PRETENDING NOT TO HEAR)

Your outfit would feed twenty Indian families for a year. You upper classes are all the same. Stuck up - born with a silver spoon up your bum. Jehovah will bring your comeuppance. In heaven the upper classes will be wiping the bums of the working class.

(AS SHE RIDES PAST SHE EVER SO QUICKLY, ALMOST AS IF NOT MEANING IT, TRIPS UP BLUEY. HE FALLS TO THE GROUND, SHE RIDES OFF. HE STARTS TO CHASE AFTER HER, REMEMBERS HIS HOT DOG, RETURNS, PUTS HIS HOT DOG TOGETHER AND CHASES OFF AFTER HER AGAIN.)

P.A.

(AFTER RIDER HAS GONE AND BLUEY IS PICKING UP HOT DOG WE HAVE HEARD PART OF THIS):

A bell will be rung as an indication to enter the ring. Results will be posted on scoring board on the south-eastern mound. The judges are empowered to call in the aid of a Veterinary Surgeon should they have any doubts as to Horse Stock they are judging being free from hereditary disease or in any way unsound. No one is allowed in the ring except ...

1/48.

(A NUN ENTERS, LOOKING LOST. THE MAN WHO WE SAW TRAILING HER BEFORE ENTERS AND WATCHES HER FROM A DISTANCE.)

P.A.

Please, out of the way. Allow the ambulance through. Please out of the way, if Cobra Boy doesn't get to hospital he'll die from snake venom. Please out of the way. Allow the Ambulance to take Cobra Boy to hospital.

NUN

(LOOKING AT HER MAP) Now, where am I? What a dreadful map. Pavilion of Women's Industries there ... I think ... then ... that must be the Pavilion of Australian Dreams - I'll leave that to last. (TESTILY) Goodness me, where can Sister Marie be? Four hours I've been looking for her ... that must be sideshow alley. No, I couldn't. Sister Marie wouldn't be in sideshow alley. No, she wouldn't be in that inferno of the imagination. Perhaps I could pass through it, my eyes to the ground. No. I'll go around the back of sideshow alley - she's probably in the Pavilion of Women's Industries.

(SHE BEGINS TO WALK OFF, THE MAN WHO HAS BEEN FOLLOWING HER, RUSHES UP TO HER AND GRABS HER ARM)

MAN

(IN THICK ITALIAN ACCENT) Sister?

NUN

Yes?

MAN

(HE LOOKS AROUND TO MAKE SURE NO ONE IS WATCHING) I am terribly sorry to do this thing but you will forgive me. (HE BANGS HER ON THE HEAD WITH A PIECE OF WOOD. SHE COLLAPSES TO THE GROUND. HE DRAGS HER OFF)

1/49.

P.A.

(AS HE DRAGS HER OFF) See the end of Adolf Hitler and Eva Braun. See the Fat Woman. See Models in the Flesh. Life exposed! Secrets of the Flesh exposed. Pawns of Passion! Nature revealed! See Japanese war atrocities! See the Ugliest Man in the World - pregnant women not allowed!

(FOX AND HOBBS ENTER, CROSSING STAGE)

FOX

What about the escaped POW. Is he here?

HOBBS

We don't know.

FOX

What about the Finale for the Grand Parade?

HOBBS

All set up.

FOX

Joe Moyne?

HOBBS

Can't find him.

FOX

Jesus Christ ...

(MRS. DAWKINS RUNS IN)

MRS. DAWKINS

Mr. Fox!

FOX

Yes?

MRS. DAWKINS

There's a contretemps with the wine judging ... Billy is dead drunk and a quarantine officer has given out the prizes.

1/50.

FOX

A quarantine officer? Hobbs, find the Duke of Berkshire, take him to the animal pavilions - the English love animals. Mrs. Dawkins, meet up with Hobbs there - I'll see to this. (FOX RUSHES OFF)

MRS. DAWKINS

(YELLING AFTER HIM) There has also been a scandal in the Pavilion of Women's Industries! (TO HERSELF) It doesn't matter, I'll fix it up myself.

(HOBBS HAS GONE, DAWKINS FOLLOWS)

P.A.

The world is hungry for our wool. It's worth 80 million pounds for Australia. The future for wool is unlimited.

## ANIMAL PROBLEMS

THREE SHEEP, TWO COUNTRYMEN - JUDGES.

THE SHEEP LOOK AT A NEARBY RAM. THE RAM LOOKS THE ANCHUTRAL STUB. JUDGES UPON ENTERING ALSO NOTICE THE RAM.

JUDGE 1

That's the finest ram. Those horns, god - like a giant cockcrow. (THE RAM LOOKS PLEASED AT BEING ADMIRED)

JUDGE 2

It's Joe Mahoney's. It can do a lit a right.

RAM

(TO HIMSELF) lit.

SHEEP 1What a ram! (RAM WINKS AT SHEEP 2) He noticed me!JUDGE 1

Christ, no wonder, look at his balls.

RAM

See, I want you, I want you and you and you and you and you ...

JUDGE 2

He's getting a bit testy.

SHEEP 1

I want grass. Not this shrivelled, dried muck. Where's grass?

JUDGE 1

Wish I had a ram like that. Look at his, cycling off the moss.

SHEEP 2

See, I want you with him.

SHEEP 3

(NOTICING RAM FOR FIRST TIME) Big balls makes he's the best judge.

JUDGE 2

Let's look at these sheep.

JUDGE 1

Norder Leicesters.

(THE RAM SHOWING OFF PROUDLY)

SHEEP 1

I want grass. Grass.

SHEEP 2

(DISAPPOINTED) The ram has gone! I want you. Where is he!

SHEEP 3

Why are they staring at us?

JUDGE 2

(LOOKING AT CLIPBOARD) All right. The criteria are ... Sir Norder Leicesters: Trueness to type, length, soundness, huddle, colour of skin, character, soundness, firmness, yield.

(THEY START TO FIDDLE THE SHEEP)

JUDGE 1

This is an interesting sheep.

JUDGE 2

Nobody likes short sheep.

SHEEP 1

Grass. Grass. Grass.

SHEEP 2

My tongue feels dry. I hate dry grass.

SHEEP 3

I have this lumpiness in my stomach. I want you with him. Where's he gone? I have a lumpiness in my stomach. I want grass. See.

JUDGE 2

Wish they'd stop bleating.

JUDGE 1

They're probably hot.

JUDGE 2

They probably won't have to wait much longer. No sense in wasting time on them for the wool. Throw 'em in the shearing contest. (THE JUDGES LEAVE)

(BLUEY, FINISHING OFF HIS HOT DOG AND STILL WEARING PLACARD, ENTERS)

BLUEY

Rejoice in the Lamb. (HE KNEELS IN FRONT OF THEM) None will diminish you. The four horsemen will ride over the squirming, writhing masses as their screams pierce to the heavens. Babylon will topple, its citizens consumed by fire, the beasts, salivating servants of the Anti Christ, will wreak havoc through water and earth. None, however, will diminish the power of the Lamb.

SHEEP 1

Grass.

SHEEP 2

Sex.

SHEEP 3

Grass.

SHEEP 1

(AS BLUEY PATS HER) I'd like some muck. Muck. Sleep. I'd like to live in Arabia. Muck. Sleep.

BLUEY

(AS HE PATS SHEEP 2) The Book of Revelation. John will watch the burning mountain, the shipwreck.

(LES, THE POLICEMAN ENTERS)

LES

(WATCHING BLUEY FOR A FEW MOMENTS)  
Back again, Bluey?



1/53.

BLUEY

Have too - it was almost the end  
with the war and all.

LES

Close shave all right.

BLUEY

(HAPPILY) The Atomic Bomb should  
finish us off.

LES

Whatever pickles your onions,  
Bluey. Come on, the sheep have  
to have their afternoon snooze.

BLUEY

All right. I'll come back later  
and say hello. You know, Les.  
Here I was, the greatest supporter  
of the war, 'cos, you know, its  
John's Revelations and I'm agreeing  
we should fight and they goes and  
locks me up in an asylum. I could  
have missed the seventh seal. When  
they drop the Atomic Bomb, Les, run  
for the nearest sheep - the power  
of the Lamb will protect you. Rejoice  
in him. Rejoice in the Lamb.

(THEY HAVE EXITED. THE THREE SHEEP  
BECOME PART OF THE CATTLE PAVILION :  
ONE COW, ONE FARMER, ONE JUDGE. WE  
REMEMBER THE COW AND FARMER FROM THE  
ARRIVALS SECTION.)

P.A.

Would owners of cows please see to  
it that the animals are properly  
tethered.

FARMER

Hear that, Ada. Properly tethered!  
(LOOKING AROUND) Though they're  
quite right - look at them in those  
stalls. We've got this in the bag,  
anyway. Your udders twice as big  
as hers. Hers looks like the hand  
of a midget. Her rear like that of  
a bull - some calves she must have.  
Just remember, Ada, not to get too  
flighty. Stare at them with your  
luscious eyes.

1/54.

P.A.

(PART OF A LIST BEING READ OUT AS  
A WOMAN ENTERS)

... In the section Oats - any variety grown in a district with an annual rainfall of 380mm is Mr. Charlie Dore. With an annual rainfall of 380 to 480 is Mr. Thomas Barker. Next conserved fodder ... (IT FADES AWAY)

WOMAN

(LOOKING AROUND) I found myself in the cattle pavilion. God knows how I got there. It was People's Day but I don't remember any people. Religiously, I have been taking notes in the Rural Pavilion for my geography classes. Like a dream, I see myself standing in front of those tiny glass boxes of pasture samples: protein, colour, texture. How much foreign matter? Aroma, absence of mould. Lucerne hay. The prize called Leo Bartels because he encouraged the introduction of clover, better irrigation and top dressing of pastures with superphosphates. Those are the notes I still have. I do not remember taking them. (AS SHE WALKS THROUGH THE CATTLE PAVILION, IT IS A BIT LIKE A GHOST VISITING THEM - THE FARMER AND HIS COW DO NOT NOTICE HER) I stood at the door of the cattle pavilion for a time and then walked in, as if enticed by the dank straw, moist fur and proud flesh. My nostrils are filled with the sweet smell of shit and straw. I do not know whether I should be offended by it or glory in it. That is what I remember. The smell, the scents of putrescent nature. I walked the cattle pavilion for hours, my brain soaked with such smells.

(SHE WANDERS OFF)

(FARMER GETTING IMPATIENT)

COW

Muck. I'd like some muck. My stomach doesn't feel too good.

*sheep dog trials*

1/55.

FARMER

What's taking that judge so long?  
Just because the others come from  
big properties ... this is where  
the small farmer wins, Ada. This  
is where the cockie passes the  
squattocracy.

(SNELL, THE JUDGE, WALKS TOWARDS  
HIM, CHECKING HIS CLIPBOARD)

SNELL

And this is -

FARMER

Pete Rolfe and Ada - Jersey.

SNELL

(FEELING ADA) Hnnnnnnn.

COW

(AS SHE'S BEING FELT) milk. Is  
it time for milking?

SNELL

Hnnnnnnnnn.

FARMER

She's a great milker. Sturdy.  
Great build. We won first prize  
in the Cootaburra Show last month.

SNELL

Hnnnnnnnnnnnnnnn.

(SNELL EXITS)

FARMER

Likes what he saw.

COW

Green hills and stump. Wet grass.

FARMER

(EXCITED) Mrs. Field is going to  
give out the prizes. Mrs. field -  
the head of the squattocracy.  
Christ, I should have worn my best  
clothes. (SNELL AND MRS. FIELD WALK  
PAST) Third prize to that. Ah, well,

FARMER  
(cont)

charity prizes first I guess.  
(SNELL AND MRS. FIELD WALK PAST  
HIM THE OTHER WAY) Right, second  
prize to him ... to be expected.  
Big property owner - Mrs. Field  
comes from his district - stick  
together like dogs after a naughty.  
Wait until I show it off back at  
the pub. Winner, Royal Show, 1946,  
Pete Rolfe. (SNELL AND MRS. FIELD  
WALK TOWARDS FARMER) Here we go,  
Ada ...

MRS. FIELD

(REMEMBERING, THE OTHERS FREEZE AS  
IF TIME IS SUSPENDED) It came to  
me, suddenly, firmly, like hitting  
my head against the dashboard of the  
car - why was I here. That obnoxious  
smell of animals and excrement.  
Giving out prizes to bloated cows that  
remind me of my mother. My whole  
married life seems to have been spent  
in cattle pavilions and in our house  
stuck out in the middle of an horizon.  
To think I wanted to marry a city boy.  
And yet I do like the attention paid  
to me - wife of the well knowm farmer,  
Lou Fields, the aristocrat of the  
squattocracy. And, there are less  
flies than I ever remember there being.  
I don't even remember who I gave the  
first prize to ... anytime I smell  
cow dung I think of the Show.

(HER MEMORY OVER, SHE AND SNELL  
WALK PAST THE FARMER)

FARMER

Why haven't they stopped? She's  
giving the first prize to (HE  
CLUTCHES HIS HEART) My heart ...  
I'd better sit down. Ada, you  
were a cert! Small farmer can't  
beat the biggies ... (HE'S SLIGHTLY  
DELIRIOUS) Can't understand it.

COW

I like that stump. I can rub myself  
against it and eat that long, wet,  
green, thick grass at the same time.

1/57.

FARMER

Can't understand it. I'll be humiliated. All those bets they placed on Ada at the pub.

COW

I feel thirsty.

FARMER

(SADLY EXITING) I'll become a hermit. You and me Ada, just us, alone. Us under the shadow of Mount Sugarloaf.

P.A.

(THE TAIL END OF AUCTIONING OF PIGS)

(MISS DAWKINS ENTERS)

DAWKINS

(WAITING, EAGERLY) Finally, I'm going to meet the Duke of Berkshire. A tingling current of thrills is passing through my body, the insides of my legs are warm and damp, a hot flush is spreading across my face like electric rouge.

(HOBBS ENTERS WITH THE DISTRACTED LOOKING DUKE)

HOBBS

And this, your excellency, is the Swine Pavilion.

(THE DUKE WAVES TO THE PIGS)

HOBBS

That's a pig, your excellency.

DUKE

Oh, is it? I can never tell the difference between a pig and an Australian.

DAWKINS

(CURTSIES IN FRONT OF THE DUKE)  
Your Majesty.

HOBBS

(MAKING THE DUKE NOTICE DAWKINS)  
Your excellency, Miss Dawkins, the third member of the R.A.S. executive committee.

1/58.

DUKE

(BORED) Good day.

HOBBS

(SPOTTING FOX ENTERING) Miss Dawkins, would you be so kind as to show the Duke the pigs.

DAWKINS

I would be delighted. (SHE ESCORTS THE DUKE AWAY) There are many things of interest in the Swine Pavilion, your Majesty. There's Billy the Pig with the gold tooth and here is our proudest parent - she's given birth to fourteen piglets ...

(HOBBS GRABS HOLD OF FOX)

HOBBS

Mr. Fox!

FOX

What is it, Hobbs?

HOBBS

The Duke of Berkshire is furious.

FOX

Why?

HOBBS

About the speech you are to make to open the British Empire Pavilion.

FOX

Did you give it to him?

HOBBS

You told me to.

(THE DUKE SPOTS FOX AND HURRIES OVER TO HIM, ANGRY)

DUKE

There you are Fox!

DAWKINS

Don't you want to see Billy the Pig with the gold tooth, your Majesty.

1/59.

FOX

Anything the matter, your excellency?

DUKE

Anything the matter? Your speech, of course. (TAKING IT OUT OF HIS POCKET) Unbelievable. What's this about "our heart will belong to Britain but our mind to America."

FOX

That's how it is, your excellency. America saved us during the war. That doesn't mean that England -

DUKE

So, you're blaming Singapore on us, are you?

FOX

I said nothing about Singapore.

DUKE

And this! "Despite needing food parcels still, Britain in this exhibition shows it has, still, what it takes in industry" Despite food parcels! I have heard some nonsense in my time. We fight the Nazis alone and when we expect a bit of praise, we get looked down upon by bloody colonials. If anybody is to be condescending, it is the English - we're experts at it.

FOX

I'm sorry, your excellency, I just thought I was being completely factual.

DUKE

I go to the horse pavilion - listen to accents that are a form of torture - and see American and Australian flags. Where is the British flag?

FOX

(ON THE DEFENSIVE) It's not part of the act.

DUKE

Act?

1/60.

FOX

At the Grand Parade the horses carry Australian and American flags in their mouths and at the Grand Finale a hundred dancing girls present a gift from the American people to the Australian people.

(TENSE PAUSE)

DUKE

Australian and American flags? (FOX NODS) (A FRIGID, QUIET VOICE) I suggest, President Fox, that you find British flags as soon as possible.

FOX

Yes, your excellency.

DUKE

You will not delivery your speech. I will deliver mine to a packed British Empire Pavilion. Packed, do you understand? I want the British made Jet Engine in pride of place - I want people salivating over it. Do I make myself clear? It is the past that you owe an obligation to, not to some neon lit future of coca cola and hamburgers. My God, what is happening in Australia, have you no sense of heritage? (HALF TO HIMSELF) India and the wars between the Hindus and Moslems almost seem like paradise now.

(SUDDENLY SIR SIDNEY TRUSCOTT AND HIS PHOTOGRAPHER BURST ONTO THE SCENE, MUCH TO EVERYONE'S ASTONISHMENT)

SIR SID

Your Lordship. (GRABS THE DUKE'S HAND AND SHAKES IT VIGOROUSLY IN FRONT OF THE CAMERA) Smile, your excellency. Smile.

DUKE

What is going on?

SIR SID

Sir Sid Truscott, Liberal Federal MP.

DUKE

My God, you Australians! (DUKE HURRIEDLY EXITS).



1/61.

FOX

Mrs. Dawkins, follow him, calm him down, do something!

DAWKINS

Certainly, Mr. Fox. (AS SHE EXITS, TO HERSELF) I will sacrifice myself to the altar of his anger.

FOX

(TO HOBBS) Let's get these flags.

HOBBS

What about the Jet Engine - it isn't unpacked yet.

FOX

Not unpacked?

HOBBS

No, the union is asking double time, I was negotiating with them.

FOX

Well, sort it out.

HOBBS

Are you still going to have the flags in the Grand Parade?

FOX

Don't know, I'll think about it.

HOBBS

What about the guns?

FOX

Guns?

HOBBS

Yes, I took it upon myself, the other day when you were busy, to accept one hundred double barrelled shot guns from the American Embassy.

FOX

Shotguns?

1/62.

HOBBS

Yes, for the Grand Parade. When the dancing girls fire them, an American flag pops out of one barrel and an Australian flag out of the other.

FOX

Hobbs, if this were not a public place, I would strangle you. Get rid of those guns, do you understand?

HOBBS

Yes sir. (HOBBS HURRIES OFF ONE WAY, FOX THE OTHER)

SIR SID

Well, did you get me with the Duke?

PHOTOGRAPHER

No, sir. I haven't got any film in my camera. That's what I've been trying to tell you. My film supplies are with my other equipment in the Pavilion of Australian dreams.

SIR SID

I have a feeling that Post War Australia is not going to be very kind to me.

(A HUMAN FLY WALKS ON AND GOES UP TO THE PHOTOGRAPHER. AFTER A WHISPERED CONVERSATION, THE PHOTOGRAPHER, MOTIONS IN A DIRECTION, THE HUMAN FLY EXITS)

SIR SID

There's only one thing to do. Come on, we'll get your film.

PHOTOGRAPHER

But I have to photograph the children.

SIR SID

(GIVING HIM MONEY) Here's a tenner, now you're my photographer. You'll get some film and we'll track down the Duke. I want my face splashed all over the morning papers tomorrow.

1/63.

PHOTOGRAPHER

But won't your speech on Australia  
and the Future of its youth get on  
the front page?

SIR SID

God, you're naive. Australians only  
want baby pictures, scandal and  
pictures of royalty on their front  
pages. Now, come on, it was hard  
enough to find the Duke before.

(THEY EXIT)

(THE THREE SHEEP WANDER ON, LOOKING  
ABOUT THEM)

SHEEP 1

New place.

SHEEP 3

Don't like this place.

SHEEP 2

I sense ... I sense ... (TRYING TO  
PUT A PRECISE DEFINITION ON WHAT HE  
SENSES) ... something ... something  
familiar ... they have let us leave  
the stalls ...

SHEEP 1

Probably going to give us some  
fresh grass.

SHEEP 3

This place reminds me of ...

SHEEP 2

It's coming back, it reminds me  
of ... I sense ... (THEY MOVE  
TOGETHER, AUTOMATICALLY REALISING  
WHAT IS GOING TO HAPPEN. A SHEARER  
ENTERS.) Not this!

P.A.

Laurie Beckford! (WE HEAR APPLAUSE)  
All right, let the first three in.  
(THE THREE SHEEP ARE PUSHED CLOSE  
TO THE SHEARER BY AN ATTENDANT.)

1/64.

P.A.

The time clock is ready. Are we ready, Laurie? Get set. Go!

(ONE BY ONE LAURIE SHEARS THE SHEEP. IT IS DONE SO FRANTICALLY, SO FAST, THAT IT IS ALMOST A BLUR)

A new Australian record!

(PROUD SHEARER, LAURIE GOES TO GET HIS PRIZE. THE THREE SHEEP STAND THERE STUNNED)

SHEEP 1

Naked.

SHEEP 2

Bloodied.

SHEEP 3

Bruised.

(THE THREE SHEEP CHANGE AND NOW THEY ARE STALL-HOLDERS BEFORE OUR EYES)

1/65.

STALLSDAVE

They should have spent half their money on showbags and rides by now and pretty soon they'll start on the stalls. Everyone has to have a brown monkey and kewpie doll. How can you go home without having played the clowns' heads. I have a feeling this is going to be a good year. Not like the depression when hardly anybody played games of chance. No, these people are different, they'll want to spend on chance. Having survived the war they believe luck is with them.

DIANE

(SHE STEALS THE CHILDREN BLIND)  
 Look at them all. Will I? Won't I? Will I throw a hoop and win that gleaming watch, they're thinking. Look at it, it looks easy, twice as wide as the box its got to land on. So I lose two or three watches a day. Those watches look so gleaming, so marvellous in their Swiss intricacy; they could buy them at Coles for a couple of bob. But here, they look different. Like a New Guinea native who eyes a trinket and will do anything for it, so they'll pay up a fortune to win a brilliant nothing. Marvellous. We've all got to earn a living.

BILL

(IN FRONT OF HIS SHOOTING GALLERY)  
 Should be a good one today. People's Day. Returned soldiers wanting to show off their skill to their wives, daughters, sons, girlfriends. Christ, if they had these crooked gun sights in a war none of them would survive. They're the sitting ducks. Hope I don't get a smart Alec. In twenty years I have been wiped out only once. '39. Cleaned out three years of kewpie dolls and brown monkeys. Never forget it. Must have straightened the gun sights somehow.

DAVE

Yeh, everybody wants something for nothing.

(THE THREE STALLHOLDERS SING)

STALLHOLDERS

(SINGING)

JUST LIKE LIFE

Everyone wants something for nothing,  
 everyone believes luck is on his side  
 and nothing will stop him  
 from thinking otherwise.  
 There's a fire in our pockets  
 A fever in our minds  
 A sense that luck is our friend  
 Who says humans aren't naive?

*But just like life  
 The hoops are too small  
 the guns are so crooked  
 the ducks will die of old age  
 the clown who swallows your ball  
 is full of deceit and guile  
 and even if you win  
 all you'll get is something  
 worth a tenth you put in.  
 Just like life  
 the odds are stacked against you  
 Just like life  
 Nothing is honest and true.*

Everyone wants something for nothing  
 Everyone believes luck is on his side  
 And nothing will stop him  
 From thinking otherwise.  
 There's a fire in our pockets  
 A fever in our minds  
 Who says we have a limit?  
 There's a sucker born every minute.

*Just like life  
 The odds are stacked against you  
 Nothing is honest and true.*

(THE THREE GO INTO THEIR SPIELS. NOREEN  
 AND TED, KEN AND MARY ENTER.)

TED

Why don't we have a go at the shooting  
 gallery.

KEN

You do that, I'll win Mary a watch.

MARY

This I've got to see.

TED

Noreen. I'll win you a kewpie doll.

1/67.

NOREEN

That'd be lovely.

(NOREEN AND TED GO TO THE SHOOTING GALLERY, KEN AND MARY TO THE HOOPS)

(BLINDMAN TAPS PAST STALLS. DESMOND ENTERS SLOWLY, CONFUSED)

DAVEWant to play the clowns heads -  
look a bob and you get three balls.DESMOND

Yes, I would like to play them.

DAVE

A bob.

DESMONDWhen I get my money I would like  
to play that.DAVE

You haven't got a bob?

DESMONDThis man, Max, is getting my pound  
note changed for me. I waited and  
waited for him for hours at the  
fairly floss box but he didn't come.  
I think he's lost.DAVE

Do you know him?

DESMONDYes, his name is Max. Max ... it's  
on this paper. (DAVE TAKES PAPER)DAVE

There's nothing written on this paper.

DESMOND

Nothing?

DAVENo, it's just a blank piece of paper.  
(DESMOND IS CONFUSED)

1/68.

DAVE

He took your pound note, did he?  
(DESMOND NODS) Look, go to the  
police station - it's along this  
avenue here and its just near the  
chook pavilion.

DESMOND

The policeman will find Max. Max  
is lost. I'll wait at the police  
station for him.

(AS HE EXITS)

P.A.

It's doughnut time. Hot American  
doughnuts! They're hot, they're  
fresh, they're delicious!

(MARY WATSON, GHOST, ENTERS)

MARY WATSON

Yes, I came down here, down through  
the game stalls. Lolly papers,  
leaflets, and advertisements blowing  
down the avenue, wrapping themselves  
around my shins. He kissed me in front  
of everyone. Everyone looked. I  
almost fainted from shame and love.  
I felt his warm body through my cotton  
floral dress. My hat blew off (SHE'S  
SUDDENLY AWARE THAT HER HAT IS MISSING)  
My hat! (CALMER, RECALLING) He ran  
to pick it up, there, amid the papers.  
I thought to myself, why did I let him  
kiss me, after all I only met him an  
hour before. There was noise.  
Spruikers. Guns, crying, laughing,  
all through the game stalls and food  
wrappers spinning down the avenue,  
all with bloody blotches of tomato  
sauce. He got angry when he lost  
money at the shooting gallery and  
hoop stall. But I didn't care. I said:  
"Do not worry, Peter, I'll give you some."  
We walked on in the humid wind. (SHE  
WALKS, RELIVING) He said: "Look at  
the late edition - war is declared" I  
said: "Don't worry, Peter, I love you."  
(SHE HAS EXITED)

(THE LOVERS, ALL HAVING LOST, DECIDE  
TO GO ON THE GHOST TRAIN. GIGGLING  
AND HAPPY, THEY RUN OFF. REBECCA  
ENTERS, HER EYES SPARKLING WITH  
HAPPINESS AT EVERYTHING SHE SEES.  
NO ONE TAKES ANY NOTICE OF HER).



1/69.

DAVE

Play the clowns heads or just buy  
our kewpie dolls and brown monkeys.  
Get your kewpie dolls and brown  
monkeys here!

(REBECCA STOPS IN FRONT OF SEVERAL  
LIFE SIZED KEWPIE DOLLS AND BROWN  
MONKEYS. WE ARE SEEING THINGS THROUGH  
HER EYES. THE STALLHOLDER DOESN'T  
NOTICE REBECCA REACHING OUT FOR THE  
LOVELY OBJECTS)

REBECCA

(ENCHANTED) Doll ... monkey ... doll  
... monkey ...  
(THE BROWN MONKEYS AND DOLLS SING TO HER)

BROWN MONKEYS AND KEWPIE DOLLS

Happiness can be sought  
Happiness can be bought  
Beauty and magic  
is what we die for  
Money and leaders  
are what we obey  
Foolish things  
are what we always say.

The earth is our food  
Life can be good  
men are not evil  
Nor are they good.  
They live as they can  
One day at a time  
Some live for others  
Others live in their mind.

Barrel organ and kewpie dolls  
Brown monkeys and sunny hols.  
Children with golden hair  
Spin their dreams at the fair.

There are those men  
whose heads are full of advice  
there are women  
whose hearts are full of ice  
but none of this matters  
to brown monkeys and kewpie dolls.

Barrel organ and kewpie dolls  
brown monkeys and sunny hols  
children with golden hair  
spin their dreams at the fair.

*How love  
can work  
how long*

1/70.

(WHILE THE STALLHOLDER ISN'T LOOKING,  
REBECCA GRABS ONE OF THE KEWPIE DOLLS  
AND LEADS HER OFF)

P.A.

Would Mr. Joe Moyne please report  
to the central R.A.S. office!

(CHILDREN AND TEACHER ENTER, CROSSING  
STAGE)

CHILD

We want to play games!

TEACHER

No. Next we see the Swine pavilion  
and then the British Empire pavilion.  
Don't you remember that announcement:  
Everyone who sees the Duke of Berk-  
shire open the Pavilion gets a free  
showbag.

CHILD

Why don't we go to Sideshow alley  
after that?

TEACHER

(STOPPING, HORRIFIED) Do you know  
what you have said! Never, never go  
to sideshow alley. That is where the  
criminal, obscene elements of our  
society hang out. Everything in  
sideshow alley is corrupt and nasty.  
It is a nightmare, a cesspool, a  
morass of sin and deformity, matched,  
I am sure, only by the First Fleet.  
(THEY EXIT)

(JOE MOYNE HAS ENTERED, VERY DRUNK)

MOYNE

I think that message was for me.  
Christ, what a day! I'll never  
drink Chablis again. (HE STOPS  
AT CLOWN HEADS)

DAVE

Like to have a go, Mr. Moyne?

MOYNE

(DISTRACTED) Sure. (HE WATCHES  
HUMAN FLY ENTER AND CROSS THE STAGE.  
AFTER HUMAN FLY HAS GONE) Uh! Yes.  
Fine. Here's a bob.

1/71.

DAVE

I thought you'd be preparing for the Grand Parade?

MOYNE

She'll be apples.

(MOYNE GETS HIS PING PONG BALLS AND PUTS THE FIRST DOWN THE CLOWNS THROAT. THE CLOWN EATS THE BALL. MOYNE QUIETLY GIVES THE OTHER BALLS TO DAVE)

MOYNE

I'm drunker than I thought. (AS HE EXITS HE ALMOST RUNS INTO CHILD AND MOTHER) A word of advice, madam. Don't go anywhere near the clowns heads - they eat the balls.

CHILD

Why are we hurrying, mummy? Why is that animal sneezing through its bottom? Why don't you give me more money?

MOTHER

(FINALLY CRACKING) Will you shut up! (THE CHILD'S BOTTOM LIP BEGINS TO TREMBLE LIKE A SHAKEN JELLY) I have had it with your questions! You are driving me mad.

CHILD

Why are all those people looking at us, mummy? Is that because you screamed at me? I think I'm going to cry, mummy. Do you think more people will look at us if I do?

(MOTHER LOOKS AROUND AND SEES THE EMBARRASSMENT HER DAUGHTER CAN CAUSE)

MOTHER

Don't cry, Daphne. Mummy just lost her temper for a teensy weeny moment.

CHILD

I'm going to have to cry, mummy, because I don't like being screamed at and I don't like not getting a Nigger Boy showbag!

MOTHER

(REALISING SHE HAS TO STOP DAUGHTER  
MAKING HER A CENTRE OF ATTENTION)  
Don't Daphne. Why don't we go to  
the Pavilion of Australian Dreams?  
We can watch the lovely couples  
dancing. (CHILD BEGINS TO CRY)  
Don't, dearest. (SHE BEGINS TO  
FRANTICALLY TICKLE HER DAUGHTER)  
Hee, hee ... Daphne likes a tickle,  
doesn't she? (TO PEOPLE WHO ARE  
OBVIOUSLY GATHERING AROUND) Daphne  
loves being tickled. She demands it.  
Hee, hee (DAPHNE IS LAUGHING  
UNCONTROLLABLY)

DAPHNE

Mummy ... Mummy.

(HER MOTHER FINALLY STOPS, EXHAUSTED.  
THE PEOPLE HAVE GONE.)

I didn't want to laugh, mummy. (DAPHNE  
IS VERY QUIET, VERY ANGRY) I'm going  
to get those people back. I'm going  
to scream and scream and scream. My  
face will go red and I'll burst. I'll  
be holding my breath until I die.

(SHE BEGINS TO HOLD HER BREATH. MOTHER,  
DESPERATE, LOOKS AROUND AND FLEES.  
DAPHNE IS UNAWARE THAT HER MOTHER HAS  
LEFT HER. HER FACE IS GOING RED.  
STUBBORNLY, SHE REFUSES TO BREATHE.)

1/73.

THE CHOOK PAVILION.

MRS. MacPHERSON KNITTING IN FRONT OF THE CHOOK CAGES.  
OLD FARMER AND HIS WIFE ENTER.

MRS. MACPHERSON

If you want to know anything about  
them, just ask me.

WIFE

We were just thinking that our  
rooster is as good as this one  
that got first prize.

HUSBAND

Our Rooster is bigger and got  
better feathers.

MRS. MAC

The quality has fallen but you  
can blame the war on that. You  
run a chook farm, do you?

HUSBAND

No, we have a dairy farm near  
Two Gully creek.

MRS. MAC

Yes. A lovely place.

WIFE

This is our first Royal Show, do  
you know where the CWA tea rooms  
are?

MRS. MAC

Out of here, turn right and its  
on Australian Unlimited Street.  
It's a bit of a crush.

WIFE

It doesn't matter, does it, dear?

HUSBAND

Whatever you want, dear.

(THE OLD COUPLE EXITS)

1/74.

MRS. MAC

(SARCASTIC) Our Rooster is as good as him - probably got some scrawny bantam. (DESMOND ENTERS, LOOKING CONFUSED AND LOST. HE STARES AT THE CHOOKS) Like to know anything about them, dear?

DESMOND

(MESMERISED BY THEM) My name is Desmond. I am looking for Max - I think he's at the police station. (HIS VOICE HAS TAPERED OFF)

MRS. MAC

What was that, love?

(DESMOND DOESN'T HEAR HER, BUT MOVES TOWARDS THE CHOOKS)

(SHE RETURNS TO HER KNITTING)

The best chooks in Australia here.

(WE BEGIN TO SEE THE CHOOKS FROM DESMOND'S PERSEPECTIVE - THE CHOOKS LOOK AT HIM WITH INSANE EYES)

(SHE DOESN'T LOOK AT DESMOND AS SHE TALKS)

MRS. MAC

*re write*

Your average chook is a funny bird. I remember when I was young and hypnotising a whole yard full of them. I'd put their head down on the ground, draw a line in the dirt, with a stick, towards their beak and when I let them go, they'd run around the yard as if possessed. ~~It is said~~ that the chook has no thoughts, that it is a pure definition of insanity. Look into their eyes and you can see that pure, primal glazed look of fear. Chooks are thought to be the most stupid of any animal or birds. It is strange, but some people can stare into a chook's eyes and be terrified by the emptiness inside.

*Chook  
with  
vision*

(SHE CONTINUES TO KNIT. THE CHOOKS BEGIN TO MOVE, SLOWLY, INSIDIIOUSLY, AS IF POSSESSED BY MADNESS. DESMOND IS TERRIFIED AND HE MOVES BACKWARDS - AS SLOWLY AS HE CAN).

1/75.

(HE TRIES TO LOOK AWAY FROM THE  
CHOOKS' EYES BUT FINDS HIMSELF  
MESMERISED, FINALLY HE BACKS AWAY  
ENOUGH TO FLEE.)

MRS. MAC

Going all ready, dear - you haven't  
seen the others.

(HE HAS GONE. SHE LOOKS BACK AT  
THE CHOOKS - THEY APPEAR NORMAL)

You get some strange ones in the  
chook pavilion.

1/76.

## MEMORY MAN AT WORK

HE STANDS, AFRAID, NERVOUS, STILL AS HE LISTENS TO WHAT THE PEOPLE WANT HIM TO REMEMBER.

VOICE

Nahman, Rasfold, Stevens, Jane,  
Jubberwako, Sharopen toilet  
(LAUGHTER), Issac Luria, Monogatari,  
Apple Brockohausmanii, Chateaubriand,  
Peatonopoton.

VOICE 2

One handkerchief, powder compact,  
lipstick - ruby-comb, pencil, nylon -  
one -, two threepences, one sixpence,  
two petrol ration cards, one tyre  
ration card, half a ticket for White  
Slaves of the Zombie.

P.A.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, Billy the  
Memory Man will demonstrate his talent.  
His brain has been studied by all the  
great scientists but no one can figure  
out how he got his amazing ability.  
You've all given him objects from your  
purse, nonsense words, things that you  
would like, or virtually anything to  
remember. Now he will recite, exactly,  
what you have told him. Billy the  
Memory Man.

(SILENCE)

(BILLY HAS AN INWARD GAZE AS IF HE HASN'T HEARD)

Billy!

(BILLY LOOKS UP)

The ladies and gentlemen are waiting.  
Please forgive Billy the Memory Man,  
ladies and gentlemen - he's going  
to be married tonight so he's a little  
dazed.

(LAUGHTER)

(BILLY LOOKS AT AUDIENCE, THEN RUSHES  
STRAIGHT INTO LIST. HE RECITES AT A  
QUICK PACE. IT IS ALMOST LIKE A  
DELIRIOUS SURREALISTIC POEM HE IS  
RECITING. HE REMEMBERS EVERYTHING  
EXACTLY - ALL THE TRIVIA AND NONSENSE  
IS REMEMBERED EXACTLY. HE FINISHES -  
THERE IS APPLAUSE. HE TURNS HIS BACK  
AND LEAVES.



1/77

P.A.

Billy! Billy!

*Don't cough!*  
*earlier*  
*Don*

THE CWA TEAROOMS

IDA AND FREDA PLAYING PIANO AND DRUMS TO TESTY CROWD.  
 ONE IMPORTANT PERSON IS MRS. DAVIES.

IDA

(SINGING)

*My friend is Jesus*  
*He promised me Paradise.*

(THESE ARE THE ONLY WORDS OF THE  
 SONG. FINALLY MRS. DAVIES CAN  
 STAND IT NO LONGER.)

DAVIES

Freda! What is the meaning of this  
 racket? Where are the scones? Why  
 is this tea bitter? I demand to  
 know.

DAWKINS

(BURSTING IN) You will demand  
 nothing, Mrs. Davies! It is I who  
 demand something of you - you  
 nefarious woman! (MISS DAWKINS IS  
 IN A FURY)

DAVIES

How dare you talk to me like that,  
 Miss Dawkins.

DAWKINS

You have let the side down, Mrs.  
 Davies. I have been showing the  
 Duke of Berkshire the Pavilion of  
 Womens Industries.

DAVIES

You low down ... I was supposed to  
 show him around my pavilion.

DAWKINS

You were not there, but here, gorging  
 yourself on scarcities. I showed the  
 Duke the floral and art sections of

*revised*  
*Don*  
*↓*  
*Hobbs*

✓

1/78.

DAWKINS  
(cont)

the hall ... Well, can you explain.

DAVIES

Explain what?

DAWKINS

How a Camellia surrounded by barbed wire can win the floral display.

DAVIES

I judged it to be the best.

DAWKINS

Is that some kind of joke? The Duke thought so.

DAVIES

It is modern art. I am opening the treasure house of European Art for you. While you were here in Australia for six years, I was in England with my cousin - an important person in the art world, so during my stay I became acquainted with modern art and Mrs. MacKenzie-Forbes' Camellia and Barbed Wire showed familiarity with overseas trends. Just as Mrs. Harrap's painting was a wonderful example of surrealism.

DAWKINS

The one with green worms coming out of the exposed brain?

DAVIES

Yes. You see, Miss Dawkins, you wouldn't know modern art if it bit you.

DAWKINS

Not if it was your dentures.

DAVIES

Those two prize winners, those two wonderful women, are the spirit of things to come. Nothing is beyond the Australian woman, from a masterpiece in sponge to a masterpiece on

1/79.

DAVIES  
(cont)

canvas. The Pavilion of Women's Industries is my creation. You know as well as I do that the RAS executive committee cannot tamper with my choices - you have given me that authority.

DAWKINS

I will break you, Mrs. Davies  
- you will leave this Royal Show  
a crippled and broken woman, your  
spirit in tatters. You have debased  
the standards of Australian woman-  
hood. Never again will you judge  
a marmalade. Green worms and camellia  
and barbed wire indeed?

(DAWKINS TURNS AND EXITS - MRS. DAVIES  
IS SHATTERED)

(EVERYONE IN THE CWA ROOM IS QUIET -  
AS IF THEY HAVE WITNESSED A SHOOT OUT.  
MRS. DAVIES SINKS BACK IN HER CHAIR)

DAVIES

My dreams, my vision, ruined.

(IDA AND FREDA DETERMINED TO BRING  
BACK A BIT OF JOLLITY START PLAYING  
AGAIN)

IDA

(SINGING)

*My Friend is Jesus  
He promised me Paradise!*

(A WOMAN ENTERS IN A PANIC)

WOMAN

Mrs. Davies! Someone has stolen the  
Spanish Galleon made of butter and  
the Jars of pickles are exploding!

(MRS. DAVIES PUTS HER HEAD IN HER HANDS).

## THE GHOST TRAIN

P.A.

Come on board the ghost train.  
Get the thrills and terror of  
a lifetime. Can your heart  
stand it! Come on, roll up  
for the ghost train! Come on,  
it's just about to go.

NOREEN, TED, MARY AND KEN ENTER GIGGLING. THE TWO PAIRS OF  
LOVERS SIT DOWN. TED PUTS HIS ARM AROUND NOREEN, SHE TAKES  
IT OFF. KEN DOESN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO. MARY PUTS HER HAND ON  
KEN'S KNEE. HE IS ASTONISHED. SHE SMILES AND WINKS. HE IS  
ALSO EMBARRASSED. SUDDENLY, THE ESCAPED POW, DRESSED AS A  
NUN RUNS TOWARDS THE GHOST TRAIN. THE TICKET ATTENDANT FOLLOWS.

ATTENDANT

Sister ... Mother ... Nun ...  
(THE POW STOPS IN HORROR)  
Your change. (HE GIVES CHANGE  
TO HER) Are you sure you want  
to go on this by yourself? The  
ghost train is quite frightening.  
(POW NODS THAT HE WANTS TO GO ON  
THE TRAIN) All right then. It's  
just about to go. ('NUN' SITS DOWN.  
OF THE EIGHT SEATS, ONLY FIVE ARE  
FULL) All right - off you go.

(THE TRAIN SETS OFF. WE DO NOT SEE  
WHAT THEY SEE, BUT JUDGING BY THEIR  
REACTIONS WE CAN GUESS)

(AT FIRST THE TWO COUPLES ARE  
DELICIOUSLY HORRIFIED BUT TED IS  
PERSISTENT IN PUTTING HIS HAND ON  
NOREEN'S KNEE SO THAT AFTER A WHILE  
SHE HAS TO HIT IT AWAY. THE POW IS  
WHITE WITH TERROR - HIS MOUTH OPEN  
AS IF SILENTLY SCREAMING)

(NOREEN FLEES FROM THE GHOST TRAIN WHEN  
IT STOPS, TED CHASING AFTER HER)

TED

Noreen ... Noreen ...

MARY

(TO KEN) What's the matter with  
them?

KEN

Don't know.

1/81.

(THEY EXIT. THE TERRIFIED 'NUN' IS PARALYSED WITH FRIGHT AND DOESN'T MOVE)

ATTENDANT

(ENTERING) Well, how was it? Liked it, eh? (AUTOMATICALLY, THE POW TAKES A COIN OUT OF HIS POCKET AND GIVES IT TO ATTENDANT) Like another ride, eh? All right, you'll have it all to yourself. (THE GHOST TRAIN SETS OFF AGAIN, THE POW GROWING MORE TERRIFIED, SILENTLY SCREAMING)

(AS HE TEARS ALONG, MARY WATSON APPEARS)

MARY WATSON

Yes, it was here, not in the ghost train but there in one of the grottos with the dancing skeleton that Peter took me. He had worked there when younger. My ears were filled with screaming and laughing as couples went through the ghost train tunnels. Peter was the first person to ever take any notice of me and I let him take off my panties and make love to me. I was terrified of the screams that echoed all about us and of being pregnant - but Peter gave me a piece of red string to tie on my thumb so I wouldn't conceive. There, where that Nun is now, is where he made love to me, behind the dancing skeleton.

WE FIND OURSELVES IN THE MIDDLE OF A SHEEPDOG TRIAL.  
REBECCA CARRYING SPANISH GALLEON OF BUTTER WALKS ACROSS STAGE.  
P.A.

Look at Ace go! As you may or may not know, the sheep dog has only ten minutes to get his charges through the obstacles on the course and he must not bite the sheep - that is why Lady Raleigh was disqualified. Look at Ace go! What a demon! He's certainly giving Minnie and Sailor Boy a run for their money.

THE DOGS AND SHEEP CHANGE INTO HUMANS AND WE FIND OURSELVES AT A PICNIC. BEFORE US ARE MAX AND THE OLD FARMING COUPLE.

1/82.

## PICNIC

OLD FARMING COUPLE HAVING PICNIC. NEARBY IS MAX.

WIFE

No scones, used tea leaves and no way to get in! Fancy that, the CWA tea rooms in such a state.

HUSBAND

Cheer up, dear.

P.A.

Get your American style hamburgers here.

WIFE

What a lunch - hamburgers and coca cola.

HUSBAND

I like them.

WIFE

You're senile.

MAX

(APPROACHING THEM) Hello, my name is Max. I couldn't help over-hearing what you said. I am one of the organizers for the Royal Show and thought it a pity that you couldn't get into the CWA tea rooms. It wouldn't be the Royal Show without those tea rooms. I do not wish to criticise you but were you aware of the returnable deposit you had to pay to get a seat in the tea rooms?

WIFE

No.

MAX

Because of the number of people here today - isn't it a marvellous crowd - a deposit is necessary to get a table. What happens is that you give a deposit of two pounds and out of that is taken your tea and scones and the rest returned to you. Now, I tell you what. Give me the two pounds and I'll go and

1/83.

MAX  
(cont)

make the deposit for you and I'll  
return and tell you what time  
your table is booked for.

WIFE

How kind you are.

MAX

It's my duty, Mrs. Imagine if you  
left the Royal Show with bad  
memories of the CWA tea rooms.  
No, it's my duty. Give me the two  
pounds ... thank you ... and here's  
my name on this paper. Thank you,  
I'll be back soon to re-freshen  
your outlook on the CWA.

WIFE

Thank you. (MAX EXITS) What a  
nice man.

(A MAN AND HIS VERY PREGNANT WIFE  
ENTER)

TOM

We will bring he or she to the  
Royal Show every year. Are you  
all right. Sit down.

JULIA

No, I'm fine.

TOM

(LOOKING AT PACKET OF CHIPS) They're  
raw. Chips are always raw at the  
Royal Show. Come on, let's sit  
down and finish them. (THEY SIT  
DOWN WITH OTHER PICNICKERS) (LOOKING  
AROUND) All the people. It must  
be the biggest crowd ever. Everything  
will return to normal. So many  
families. It'll be just like before  
the war. Childhood. Love. Marriage.  
Children. Happiness. (HE PATS HER  
STOMACH)

JULIA

Not here in public.

1/84.

TOM

(LAUGHING) We'll be part of the post war baby boom. Perhaps it's twins. Hey, do you want a kewpie doll or a brown monkey?

JULIA

Don't spend so much money.

TOM

It doesn't matter, let's celebrate peace like them.

JULIA

You were the one who said we had to save up. We can't live with your mother forever.

TOM

I'm too happy. Seeing all these people. Seeing you look so beautiful and pregnant. I'll get you a kewpie doll (HE RUSHES OFF)

(FOX ENTERS AND SURVEYS HIS DOMAIN)

JULIA

My husband is a good man. (PAUSE) I keep on wanting to tell him that the baby is not his. (REFLECTIVE) I didn't even get a pair of nylons. 'I come from Detroit' is all he said. He didn't need to say anything more His green eyes like water lillies on a white lake. I said, no, no, no, no ... Yes. (PAUSE) He left the next day. (PATTING STOMACH) Perhaps you'll be as handsome as him. An American baby growing in an Australian womb. (HUSBAND RETURNS WITH KEWPIE DOLL)

TOM

For you, Julia.

JULIA

(KISSING HIM LIGHTLY) Thank you, Tom, you shouldn't have. Let's finish these chips. (SPOTTING ITEM IN FISH AND CHIP PAPER) I see they're finally going to sentence those Nazis at Nurenberg. (THEY RETURN TO EATING CHIPS)



1/85.

FOX

(VERY PLEASED AT WHAT HE SEES)

The best sight. A respite before the Grand Parade. Australians at picnic - what better definition is there of the Land of Cockaigne? It's almost as if there has been no war. The Royal Show never alters. It's where the poor can come and feel part of our great society. The people spread out like hundreds and thousands on green butter. Their minds stuffed with a vision of Australia Unlimited. What a future in store for us. Bounteous production, un-restricted opportunity. Tractors, animals, streamlined harvestors, mammoth earth moving equipment, high powered water pumps. An unprecedented muster of horse women. Ah, Fox, what a vision. And you still have more surprises to put before them.

(HOBBS, SWEATY AND IN A HURRY, ENTERS)

HOBBS

Mr. Fox!

FOX

Ah, Hobbs. Isn't this a vision splendid! Look at them. Not a year past World War Two and they are dreamers embarking on a dream of the future!

HOBBS

(CATCHING HIS BREATH) Mr. Fox, the Duke of Berkshire is on the warpath again.

FOX

Why, didn't you fix up about the unveiling of the Jet Engine? (HOBBS NODS) Didn't he make his speech? (HOBBS NODS AGAIN) Well, what is it?

HOBBS

They didn't unpack the Jet Engines!

FOX

Didn't you stop the strike?

HOBBS

I couldn't. They wouldn't listen to me. Does this effect the Grand Parade, sir?

FOX

No. We'll just have to keep him away from it, that's all - he's not going to interfere with the Finale of the Grand Parade.

HOBBS

I'm sorry to have let you down, Mr. Fox.

FOX

Nonsense. The British Empire is finished. Nobody would have wanted to see it anyway. Plastics are the future. We Australians know that. There's a true vision - plastics! Come, let us see about the Duke.

HOBBS

(AS THEY EXIT) (ADMIRINGLY) You should have been an artist, sir.

FOX

I am, Hobbs. I am

(HOBBS AND FOX EXIT. SIR SIDNEY TRUSCOTT ENTERS)

SIR SID

(HE STOPS AND TAKES A SWIG FROM HIS FLASK. HE IS A BIT TIPSY)

Where is that bloody photographer? (SPOTS PEOPLE ON PICNIC GROUNDS) Ah, the mob gorging themselves. If I play my cards right, I could get a few votes here. Look at them. Everywhere. Gorging. Eating. Munching. Chewing. Gobbling, like there's no tomorrow. They'll be sorry if Labour gets in. (SPOTS PREGNANT WOMAN) Speaking of Labour. She'll be ripe for my message. A few words about the future under Communist led Labour Party will be all it takes. I'll say: "Think of the little Aussie battler in your tummy, Miss." (CORRECTING HIMSELF) Mrs! Christ, watch yourself, Sidney. There's a paradise of votes here - don't be expelled from Eden.

(SIR SID GOES UP TO WIFE, HUSBAND AND CHILD)

1/87.

SIR SID

My name is Sir Sid Truscott - Federal Liberal MP.

HUSBAND

Piss off. And take your Brisbane Line and Pig Iron Bob with you.

SIR SID

(MOVING AWAY) (TO HIMSELF) Control thyself, Sidney. Although their contempt is as cold and burning as dry ice on the skin. (HE GOES UP TO OLD COUPLE)

WIFE

My bladder feels as full as a waterlogged footie. There are never any dunnies. Where are the dunnies - there'll be one at the CWA tea rooms, I'm sure.

SIR SID

My name is -

HUSBAND

We heard.

SIR SID

(EXPECTING TO BE YELLED AT AGAIN)  
I'm not saying there's a Red under every bed.

WIFE

We agree with you.

SIR SID

(SURPRISED) You do?

WIFE

Here. Have a toffee. I bought some from that stall over there. Real old fashioned toffee.

SIR SID

(HE DOESN'T WANT TO TAKE THE TOFFEE, BUT DOES) Thank you. (STARTS TO CHEW IT)

WIFE

Nice? (HE NODS) Don't worry,  
we'll be voting Liberal. You  
can depend on us.

SIR SID

(GARBLED) (IT SOUNDS LIKE THANK YOU -  
HE WALKS AWAY, TRYING TO STOP HIS  
TEETH FROM STICKING TOGETHER.  
CONCENTRATING SO HARD ON THE TOFFEE  
IS HE THAT HE DOESN'T NOTICE THE  
PREGNANT WOMAN AND HE TOPPLES OVER  
HER. SHE SCREAMS)

TOM

What in the hell is going on?  
(SPOTTING POLICEMAN) Constable!

(SIR SID HAS JUMPED UP BUT CANNOT  
TALK BECAUSE THE TOFFEE HAS STUCK  
HIS TEETH TOGETHER.)

(LES, THE POLICEMAN, ENTERS.)

TOM

This man is mad. He threw himself  
on my wife. (SIR SID IS IN AGONY  
TRYING TO TALK. HE GROANS AND  
SHAKES HIS HEAD)

JULIA

He tried to kill me.

POLICEMAN

All right. All right. (TO SID)  
Explain yourself. (SIR SID CAN'T  
BECAUSE OF THE TOFFEE)

TOM

See, he's a madman.

POLICEMAN

Identification. Have you anything  
to identify yourself?

(SIR SID NODS AND THEN IS PANIC  
STRIKEN TO FIND HIS WALLET IS GONE)

POLICEMAN

Bloody suspicious if you ask me.  
I think we've got our escaped POW.  
Nice try, wog. Nice one. (SIR  
SID TRIES TO PROTEST BUT NO WORDS  
CAN COME) Come on, use your lingo.

1/89.

POLICEMAN  
(cont)

I know who you are. No use pretending you're deaf and dumb. Come on, no fuss. No fuss. (LES LEADS THE PROTESTING SIR SIDNEY AWAY)

(OLD FARMING COUPLE BECOME CENTRE OF ATTENTION.)

WIFE

Max is taking his time. (OPENING UP PIECE OF PAPER) Blank! (TO HUSBAND) Blank!

P.A.

Ladies and Gentlemen, in a few moments, Mr. Joe Moyne a world famous ringmaster will present the Grand Parade. (HAND OVER MIKE, BUT WE HEAR THE FAINT QUESTION OF 'IS HE SOBER, YET?') Yes, Ladies and Gentlemen, the sheepdog trial is about to finish and the Grand Parade will present a vision of our wealth and future. All that is best in Australia's primary wealth is here in the Grand Parade.

THE GRAND PARADE COMES INTO BEING FROM SHEEP AND PEOPLE AT PICNIC. WE SEE HORSES, SHEEP, GOATS, CATTLE ETC. THE COMMENTARY IS WILD AS JOE MOYNE IS DRUNK. IT IS A WONDERFUL. WILD EXTRAVAGANZA. MOYNE STAGGERS AROUND CAUGHT IN THE ANIMALS.

P.A.

Ladies and gentlemen. No Grand Parade is complete without a vision of the future and here it is.

(A HUGE AMERICAN CAR COMES OUT. ON THE BONNET IS AN AMERICAN FLAG AND AN AUSTRALIAN FLAG)

P.A.

Ladies and gentlemen, the pride of modern technology.

(THE HORSES AND ANIMALS HAVE TURNED INTO CHORUS GIRLS AS THEY PRESENT THE CAR. BEFORE US IS THE SMILING GRILLE OF THE CAR WITH ITS HUGE ALUMINIUM TEETH. OUT STEPS FOX. SMILING BROADLY)

FOX

Ladies and Gentlemen of Australia  
- the future!

END OF ACT ONE

2/91.

ACT TWO

CACOPHONY OF VOICES: P.A., STALLHOLDERS, TENT SPRUIKERS, JUDGING RESULTS, GHOST TRAIN TIMES. SUDDENLY, RUNNING ACROSS THE STAGE IS THE 'NUN', SCREAMING. HE IS SO QUICK THAT IT IS HARD TO TAKE IN WHAT WE SAW. THE BLINDMAN, JACKO, TAPS HIS CANE AND WALKS SLOWLY ACROSS THE STAGE. FOX ENTERS.

FOX

Ah, dusk coming. Day into night.  
Reality into dream. Fact into  
magic.

(TEACHER AND TIRED, TIED-UP SCHOOL  
CHILDREN WEAVE THEIR WEARY WAY  
TOWARDS THE EXIT)

TEACHER

Come on, home we go.

PUPIL

But I want to stay, Miss.

TEACHER

Your parents expect you home.

PUPIL 2

I want to see the sideshow, Miss.

PUPIL 3

Miss, I think I'm going to vomit  
up my fairy floss.

PUPIL 1

Jenny stole my licorice-all-sort!

(THE TEACHER PAYS NO ATTENTION.  
HER ONE DESIRE IS TO GET THESE  
MONSTROUS CHILDREN HOME)

PUPIL 4

My Cadbury's chocolate is melting,  
Miss.

PUPIL 3

My Daddy said I could stay and  
watch the sideshow.

FOX

(LOOKING PLEASED BY WHAT HE SEES)  
Ah, they'll remember this day as long as they live. Memories will be honey-coated by the years, the intensity of it infused by the yearning green of nostalgia.

(A STALLHOLDER, CARRYING KEWPIE DOLLS HURRIES ACROSS THE STAGE)

STALLHOLDER

Got to get back to my stall. Romance is in the air. He'll be full, her eyes will be full of glitter and promises. Good sales. Charge what we like then.

(HOBBS, HOT AND SWEATY, ENTERS)

HOBBS

Mr. Fox! Mr. Fox!

FOX

My God, Hobbs, what's the matter now?

HOBBS

A nun has been found behind one of the pavilions - she says someone robbed her of her habit. And a few minutes ago, the ghost train operator told me that a nun went mad in his train and started to scream and go wild ...

FOX

Well?

HOBBS

Well, it appears that the mad nun is really the POW.

FOX

He assaulted the nun? (HOBBS NODS)  
Get Les on to it as soon as possible.

HOBBS

I've told him.



2/93.

FOX

What about negotiations in the British Empire Pavilion?

HOBBS

They're progressing.

FOX

Out with it, Hobbs, is that jet engine going to be on display tonight?

HOBBS

Not much hope of that, I'm afraid, sir.

FOX

Is it something I did, Hobbs?  
I mean, why are the unions picking on me?

HOBBS

It's not you, sir. That's the wonderful thing about unions, sir, they're entirely indiscriminate - no matter who you are, as long as you're down, they'll kick you.

FOX

That bloody Jet Engine. It wouldn't have been a problem before the war. Times have changed. It's becoming more and more an industrial Show, a city man's fair. If you filled the cow pavilion with bullocks most people wouldn't know. What about the Duke?

HOBBS

He's looking for you, he caught the Grand Parade.

FOX

Thank God we didn't have the guns, that would have been the final straw. Did you get rid of them?

HOBBS

I hid them in your office, sir.

2/94.

FOX

Nice one, Hobbs. Remind me to keep the cobras in your room next year.

(REBECCA CROSSES THE STAGE IN BACKGROUND, CARRYING A MELTED SPANISH GALLEON.)

Don't forget the lights - electricity restrictions have been waived especially for us I want them to shine with such brilliance that everyone wanders around like mesmerised rabbits. Check with Lofty on that.

HOBBS

(WRITING IN NOTEBOOK) 'Check with Lofty re lights'. Did you hear about the fracas in the CWA tea rooms?

FOX

Mrs. Davies and Miss Dawkins? Bit of a pity. I mean, I can't interfere, that war has been going on for years. Just between you and me, Hobbs, we should have got Mrs. Davies on the executive.

HOBBS

Mrs. Davies! She's a tyrant, sir.

FOX

Yes, but she has vision. I respect that. Too few Australians have a vision, Hobbs. It involves too much hard work, heartache and struggle to remain true to a vision. What we are, Hobbs, are cultural parasites, forever feeding off other countries' visions and not our own. We'll pay for it in the future. Dearly.

HOBBS

(SPOTTING DUKE) Sir, the Duke.

(THE DUKE RUSHES ON, MISS DAWKINS FOLLOWING).

2/95.

DUKE

There you are, Fox!

DAWKINS

I couldn't stop him, Mr. Fox.

FOX

Ah, your Lordship, I have been looking for you everywhere. About that Jet Engine -

DUKE

You deliberately sabotaged it!

FOX

It wasn't me, your Excellency, but our unions.

DUKE

Shoot them!

FOX

Calm down, your Lordship. Hobbs has promised me that the Jet Engine will be unwrapped in half an hour's time - it's better this way, we're expecting a record crowd tonight.

DUKE

It had better be! Even if it is I will never forgive the slights suffered by England today at the Grand Parade. But I needn't get angry, because you'll pay for it, not now, but later. America will seduce you and leave you with a gum chewing monster. (GIVING HIM BOOK).

FOX

What's this?

DUKE

What the British Empire leaves behind. Shakespeare, his collected works in one volume on rice paper. (HE STORMS OFF)

DAWKINS

He's right, you know, Mr. Fox.  
I'll go and calm him down. I  
have a way with Royalty.

(SHE EXITS. FOX GIVES HOBBS THE  
BOOK)

FOX

I've always hated rice paper.  
(PUTTING ARM AROUND HOBBS NECK  
AND LEADING HIM OFF) Ah, Hobbs,  
if only Australians could cultivate  
the arrogance of the English.

(A LITTLE GIRL, BURDENED WITH EVERY  
CONCEIVABLE THING POSSIBLE FROM THE  
SHOW, ENTERS; SHOWBAGS, KEWPIE DOLLS,  
BROWN MONKEYS, AND A CAT MASK WHICH  
SHE IS WEARING. HER TIRED MOTHER  
FOLLOWS)

MOTHER

Hold on, dear, I'll have to go to  
the lavatory. (TO HERSELF) Finally  
a lavatory without a mile long queue.

(SHE EXITS)

CHILD

(SITTING DOWN, TAKING OUT A HALF  
UNEATEN TOFFEE APPLE) My tongue  
stuck to the coagulated-red toffee  
and the half eaten apple was floury  
and turning brown as if rusting,  
but I didn't care. I had never  
tasted anything so exotic and for-  
bidden. My stomach was full of  
chocolate, licorice and fairy floss.  
I also wore my mask, my special cat  
mask, everywhere and pretended I had  
slit, green eyes and saw the world  
in a hazy yellow fog - as my mum  
told me that's how cats saw the  
world. Whenever someone spoke to  
me I hissed. Daddy couldn't come;  
even though it was People's Day he  
was working on the trams. (SHE IS  
GETTING SLEEPY) It was twilight  
when I left the Show with mum.  
Mum said the night was for lovers.  
I said 'what are lovers?' (FORGETTING  
TO HISS WHEN I ASKED) and she said  
'cats who get on very nicely with  
each other.' 'Like Digby', I said and  
she said ... (CHILD IS ASLEEP WHERE  
SHE SITS, THE TOFFEE APPLE HAVING  
FALLEN FROM HER STICKY HAND. THE  
MOTHER ENTERS)

2/97.

MOTHER

Jane ... come on, wake up, time to get home and get Daddy's dinner. (THE MOTHER PUTS THE TOFFEE APPLE IN ONE OF THE SHOWBAGS)

JANE

I feel so sleepy.

MOTHER

Did you have a good time?

JANE

Yes. Where's my toffee apple?

MOTHER

In your bag.

JANE

Can I get another fairy floss?

MOTHER

You've had so many.

JANE

Just one more. I can have it for tea.

MOTHER

All right, one more, I'll get one from over there.

JANE

(AS MOTHER EXITS) And she did. I took it home but I was so full I couldn't eat, so I left it on the kitchen sink overnight and next morning I got up real early to eat it only to find that it had vanished and only the stick was left. I woke up mummy and told her and she said 'the fairies stole it to take back to fairy land where they'll keep it until next year.' (CHILD EXITS, SHOUTING AFTER MOTHER) I can have it for sweets.

(TED AND NOREEN ENTER)

2/98.

TED

Why?

NOREEN

I don't like being grappled like that.

TED

All I did was put my hand on your knee.

NOREEN

Well, I don't want it on my knee. It's clammy. I hardly know you.

TED

If I knew you it wouldn't be clammy. I just want to be friends.

(THEY FIND THEMSELVES NEAR A TEST YOUR STRENGTH MACHINE. SIGN SAYS 'PETE'S TEST YOUR STRENGTH')

PETE

Hey, test your strength. You look a strong bloke. Show your girlfriend you're not a fairy.

TED

Noreen ... watch me.

(CUPID WALKS BY IN THE BACKGROUND, DEJECTED AND LOST)

NOREEN

(BORED) I don't want to.

TED

Come on.

NOREEN(COMING OVER AS TED PAYS PETE)  
I wonder where Mary is?TED

She's probably having a great time with Ken. Now, watch this. (A THIN MAN WANDERS UP EATING SOME FAIRY FLOSS AND WATCHES) One, two, three.

2/99.

(TED HITS THE MACHINE HARD BUT  
THE RESULT IS FEEBLE.)

PETE

Bad luck, sir. Come on, prove to  
your girlfriend what sort of man you  
are. Have another go.

TED

(PAYING HIM SOME MORE MONEY) I'm  
stronger than that.

PETE

Of course you are, sir - only your  
girlfriend don't know that.

NOREEN

I'm not his girlfriend.

(TED WHAMS THE MACHINE AGAIN. THE  
RESULT IS JUST A LITTLE BETTER.)

PETE

Bad luck, sir. Nearly. A bit more  
comphh and you'll win your little  
duckie a kewpie doll. (TED PAYS)

NOREEN

I'm going to find Mary. (SHE EXITS)

TED

Wait. Wait! (HE DROPS HAMMER AND  
FOLLOWS)

THIN MAN

Can I use up his go?

PETE

Sure.

(THE THIN MAN GRABS HAMMER. HE CAN  
BARELY LIFT IT. HE HITS THE MACHINE  
AND RINGS THE BELL)

PETE

(GIVING THE MAN A KEWPIE DOLL)  
The meek shall inherit the earth,  
sir.

(THIN MAN AND PETE VANISH INTO DARKNESS AS THE BLIND MAN TAPS ON. KEN AND MARY COME FROM OTHER DIRECTION. LES, THE POLICEMAN, ALSO ENTERS AND WATCHES).

MARY

We'll go to Cassandra. She'll read our fortunes.

KEN

She can read yours, not mine.

MARY

Don't you believe in astrology and fortune telling?

(THE BLINDMAN BUMPS INTO KEN)

BLINDMAN

Sorry, sir.

KEN

Are you all right?

BLINDMAN

Yes. Yes. (TAPPING KEN'S FRONT)  
I hope I didn't hurt you.

KEN

No, I'm fine.

BLINDMAN

Can you tell me the way to side-show alley?

KEN

It's to your right. Follow the sound of that Egyptian music.

BLINDMAN

Thank you. (KEN AND MARY EXIT. BLINDMAN BEGINS TO WALK OFF IN OTHER DIRECTION, WHEN HE STOPS AS IF SPOTTING LES, AND STARTS TO WALK THE OTHER WAY. LES HURRIES AFTER HIM).



2/101.

LES

Long time, no see, Jacko.

BLINDMAN

Who? Who? (LASHING OUT WITH CANE)  
Away ruffian!

LES

Pretty good, Jacko.

BLINDMAN

Thank God, a familiar voice. I'd  
recognise your voice anywhere, Les.  
Listen, I want to go to sideshow  
alley.

LES

The only place you're going, Jacko,  
is the clink.

BLINDMAN

Clink?

LES

(TO SHOCKED JACKO) I've caught you  
in flagrante delicto.

BLINDMAN

I never touched her! You're trying  
to harass a blindman!

LES

You tried to lift that young man's  
wallet.

BLINDMAN

No, I didn't, try and prove it,  
I haven't got it.

LES

(ADVANCING ON BLINDMAN WHO BACKS  
AWAY) What have you got, Jacko?  
(LES NABS HIM AND TAKES OUT TWO  
WALLETS) Your wallets, Jacko?  
Jesus, Joe Moynes! And Sir  
Sidney Truscotts!

BLINDMAN

What is happening? Did I happen to pick up, by mistake, something important?

LES

I've nicked you, Jacko. Jesus, Sir Sidney will probably sue me for false arrest.

BLINDMAN

He won't, it's election year. (RECOVERING HIMSELF) Did you find a wallet? How did it get on me?

LES

The game's up.

BLINDMAN

My eyes are chocka with shrapnel from the war.

LES

Yeh, and the Pope deflowers virgins. Come on, nice try, Jacko.

BLINDMAN

Look, Les. I'm not a pickpocket, I'm a klepto-maniac. It's in me blood. Me mum got a transfusion from a pickpocket when she was young.

LES

Every year I nab you, Jacko. Come on, I want you to meet Sir Sidney.

BLINDMAN

He hits blind men!

LES

Sure, sure.

(THE HUMAN FLY CROSSES THE STAGE, LOST)

BLINDMAN

He does. He beat me up. (AS THEY EXIT)

LES

Your lies get more fantastic every year, Jacko.

2/103.

## LOST CHILDREN'S OFFICE

DAPHNE SITS ON A STOOL WEARING AN ASPRO HAT AND THE EXPRESSION OF SOMEONE UNDERGOING THE SLOWBURN OF ANGER. SHE IS FURIOUS. THE ATTENDANT ENTERS.

ATTENDANT

Your mother should be along soon.

DAPHNE

I haven't got a mother.

ATTENDANT

Of course you have.

DAPHNE

She's dead.

ATTENDANT

Have some peanuts.

DAPHNE

I'm not a monkey. (TENSE PAUSE)  
(WE CAN SEE THAT THE ATTENDANT HAS  
JUST ABOUT HAD ENOUGH OF DAPHNE)  
Mum's dead and I have no father.  
If I had a mother she wouldn't  
have tried to deliberately lose me.

ATTENDANT

She didn't, dear.

DAPHNE

What would you know.

(PAUSE)

ATTENDANT

Just tell me your parents last name.

DAPHNE

I have no parents and my name is  
Daphne. And I have no last name.  
I'm an orphan.

ATTENDANT

If I have their last name then I  
can get into contact with them.  
You can't stay in the lost  
children's office all night.

DAPHNE

Why not? I'm going to live here.

(HER MOTHER ENTERS)

MOTHER

Daphne! Thank goodness I found you.

ATTENDANT

Is this your daughter?

MOTHER

Yes. Daphne. She ran away from me earlier on.

DAPHNE

I am not Daphne. I do not know this woman.

MOTHER

Daphne!

DAPHNE

I do not know you. I know how to spell encyclopedia.

MOTHER

(EMBARRASSED) Daphne, please. Why do you always want to embarrass me.

DAPHNE

(TO ATTENDANT) This woman is a stranger.

MOTHER

(GRABBING HER) Come on, stop this silliness, we have to get home.

DAPHNE

Help, I'm being kidnaped. This woman is trying to kidnap me.

ATTENDANT

(SMILING) Goodbye, Daphne!

DAPHNE

(TO ATTENDANT) I'm going to send a man around to blow up your house.

2/105.

DAPHNE  
(cont)

(TO MOTHER) And as for you, I'm  
going to make your life a misery.

MOTHER

That can only be an improvement.

NEAR SIDESHOW ALLEY

NOREEN ENTERS A TENT.

NOREEN

(TO HERSELF) Doesn't he ever give up? It's like being attacked by a giant ant, feelers everywhere. Where am I? He's got me so confused. (LOOKING AT HER TICKET) I bought a ticket, but to what? If only I could find Mary - we could go home. She's probably pashing on with that boy.

(SHE BECOMES AWARE OF WHAT WE ALSO BECOME AWARE OF AT THE SAME TIME: A ROW OF ODDLY LIT, PICKLED FOETUSES)

P.A.

See Nature Revealed. See Nature Raw and Untamed. Examine the results of Passion! See Products of Lust!

NOREEN

I had never seen anything so fascinating yet repulsive. Foetuses, pickled in jars like misshapen fruit. Alone in the silent dark tent I looked at them for what seemed hours, imagining one of them growing inside of me.

(SILENCE)  
(SHE TOUCHES ONE OF THE JARS)  
(SNELL ENTERS AND WATCHES HER FOR A TIME)

SNELL

A great show, aren't they?  
(SHE TURNS AROUND, SURPRISED)  
A scientific curiosity, not a freak show. Life is captured in those jars. (HOLDING OUT HAND, SHE STEPS AWAY A LITTLE) Snell, Arnold Snell, Head of the R.A.S. Cattle and Swine Committee. Every Royal Show I come in here and look at them. Remind myself of where I came from - figuratively speaking. You know, you're the first person I've ever seen in here - besides myself. I never expected to see a woman in here, though. I mean, it's pretty daring, isn't it? Like he said 'Nature Revealed'.

2/107.

NOREEN

(A LITTLE AFRAID OF HIM) I  
wondered in here by mistake.  
I thought it was something  
else.

SNELL

How could you wander in here by  
mistake? (SILENCE) Whenever I  
wonder what life's about - I mean,  
it isn't all cattle and swine, is  
it? I come here and see what life  
really is. Those jars are you and  
I and Billy the Pig with the golden  
tooth. (MESMERISED AS HE TOUCHES  
THE JARS) A poem of life that is  
impregnated with darkness and light.  
Those pale pink humanoids, forever  
lost to the soft, leathery womb,  
drift, suspended in a glass prison  
of green formaldehyde. (SNAPPING  
OUT OF REVERIE - EMBARRASSED SMILE)  
Drifted off.

(SILENCE.)

NOREEN

That's music - a live band, is it?

SNELL

The Austral Orchestra at the Pavilion  
of Australian Dreams.

NOREEN

The dance!

SNELL

Do you want to go to it?

NOREEN

My friend, Mary, said she'd meet  
me there if we got separated.

SNELL

I'll take you there if you like.

NOREEN

No, I'm all right. (SHE EXITS)

(SILENCE)

-SNELL

(TO HIMSELF) On your lonesome again, Snell. What a day. A traffic jam that would have sent Noah on an aspro binge and I strike out with a good sort!

(PAUSE)

Snell, Snell, Snell, will you ever learn ...



2/196.

IVORY AND MEMORY MAN

MEMORY MAN IS SUPINE ON THE FLOOR. IVORY STARES AND WATCHES HIM FOR A TIME.

IVORY

What are you doing?

BILLY

Trying to get rid of the last show before I begin the next. (RECEIVING) "One handkerchief, powder compact, lipstick - ruby - pencil, nylon - one - two threesomes, one airplane, two patrol radio cads, one type rayon scarf, half a ticket for 'White Slaves of the South.' You know, that's one person's life and they expect me to remember it. The worst thing is that I can't forget it. (HE GETS UP) Sometimes my brain is so full of all that trivia and crap that I find it easier to forget. Just to forget I have to resort to desperate measures so I can sleep or go on with the next show. So, I pile the contents of that woman's headbox into a shop window, and I imagine a bulldozer coming along and destroying the shop - then my brain is cleared. (SINGS) (HE CLOSES HIS EYES AND SINGS) THEN OUTLIES) There, the bulldozer has obliterated the last show. Perhaps I'll need dynamite to blow up the next one. (PAUSE)

IVORY

Do you still want to get married?

BILLY

Of course I do. It's what keeps me going, the thought of you and I. But this should be our last Royal Show. Examples of God's wrath will be shown soon and, besides, who wants to see a man who can remember or a white aboriginal.

IVORY

What will we do?

2/196.

BILLY

I don't know.

(HE SITS)

IVORY

(HE STANDS BEHIND HIM TOUCHING HIS HEAD) A whole universe is there. (HE LAUGHS) I was talking to Dabria, she told me of marriages she had seen to - like the Alligator Man marrying the Donkey woman. The bearded woman marrying the Thin Man - she said they were blind to mistakes. (THEY BOTH LAUGH) Are we as strange as that couple?

BILLY

I guess so. That's why we perform here - as Examples of the Wrath of God. Sports of Nature.

IVORY

I don't mind that our love is strange. I like it, it makes us different.

(SINGS)

OUR LOVE IS STRANGE

Our love should be hated  
From behind closed doors  
If only love is whatever  
shared only on distant shores.

Our love is strange  
as strange as love should be.  
When other lovers  
seek out the day  
we seek out the night.  
Our love is strange.  
Love is strange.

The world is only out love  
nothing else exists  
whatever we dance  
it is always love alone.

Our love is strange  
as strange as love should be  
When other lovers  
seek out the day  
we seek out the night  
Our love is strange  
Love is strange.  
Love is strange.

CRONIES  
(WELL MET BY STREETLIGHT)

MAX ALONE. PEOPLE PASS IN THE BACKGROUND.

MAX

(COUNTING HIS MONEY) Twenty quid for eight hours work! Great Max, having to resort to conning kids, old people and the retarded. Have to use the old stand-by, I suppose. (TAKING OUT TICKETS) Not the best counterfeits but they shouldn't show up too badly in the dark; never last a moment's inspection in daylight though. (A MAN ENTERS, LOOKING WORRIED, COUNTING THE MONEY HE HAS) Excuse me, sir.

MAN

Yes.

MAX

Making for the ticket office?

MAN

Yes.

MAX

That all your family?

MAN

Yes. Seven of them.

MAX

Magnificent. Must cost a fortune at the show for them.

MAN

I know, but they all want rides. You know children.

MAX

Certainly do. Listen, why don't I do you a favour and you do me one in return. My nephew and niece were supposed to turn up and I bought tickets on everything for them. About thirty rides I reckon - mad monkey, ferris wheel, round-about, merry-go-round ... you name it. Look,

2/111.

MAX  
(cont)

I'll sell them to you for a couple of quid. You should save about a tenner. See, you help me and I'll help you.

MAN

That's very generous.

MAX

Think nothing of it.

MAN

Two pounds?

MAX

Just two quid.

MAN

(PAYING MONEY) What a stroke of luck finding you, I thought I was going to be out of pocket.

MAX

(GIVING OVER TICKETS) Stroke of luck finding you.

MAN

Thank you.

MAX

Have a good time. (MAN EXITS) Two quid. At this rate I'll be here until Doomsday to try and make me record of forty. Tight fisted bunch this year. What I need is a permanent job. Getting too old for this.

SIR SID

(ENTERING. HE STOPS AND DRINKS FROM FLASK) Sir Sidney Truscott - handcuffed! What next, Jesus drowning? Came to electioneer and ended up protesting my innocence. Me? An escaped POW, a wog? (REMEMBERING SOMETHING) Wallet? Ah ... the

SIR SID  
(cont)

policeman gave it back. (EXAMIN-  
ING IT) Gold pass for public  
transport. (PUTS WALLET AWAY)  
There they all go, blissfully  
unaware that they are going to  
vote in another three years of  
socialism. Wait until Labour  
wants to nationalise the banks.  
They'll squeal like pigs. I  
warned them! The politicians  
should elect the people; they  
don't deserve us. (HE WALKS PAST  
MAX WHO IS LISTENING VERY INTENTLY)  
Sir Sidney Truscott, despised now,  
hero later. Handcuffed! Christ,  
what more do they want, blood?

MAX

Excuse me, aren't you Sir Sidney  
Truscott, Federal MP?

SIR SID

(PLEASED) Well, yes, I am.

MAX

(SHAKING HANDS) Max Bennett. I'm  
a great admirer of yours, Sir Sidney.  
Of all politicians, I believe I have  
more in common with you than anyone  
else.

SIR SID

Why, thank you.

MAX

Like you, sir, I'm worried about  
the elections. Labour looks set.

SIR SID

Yes, I'm afraid so.

MAX

It would be awful if you lost  
your seat, because you still have  
so much more to do for Australia.

SIR SID

True. True.

2/113.

MAX

Look, Sir Sidney, can I be frank with you?

SIR SID

Certainly. (TAKING OUT FLASK)  
Lubricant for my vocal cords.  
Gave a speech on the Youth and  
Future of Australia ... No, I  
didn't ... Jesus, what time is  
it?

MAX

Ten.

SIR SID

Christ, missed me speech.

MAX

Don't worry, sir. I know a way that  
you can be elected this year and if  
you play your cards right, you could  
be PM in the election after.

SIR SID

(SUDDENLY INTERESTED) As the hare  
said 'I'm all ears'.

MAX

What you need is a public relations  
man, Sir Sidney. I have been read-  
ing about them in American magazines.  
It's a new idea. I publicise you,  
package you as it were and you'll be  
more famous than Churchill.

SIR SID

How will you do that?

MAX

You'll have me on your staff. I  
know people in the newspaper business.  
You'll be in the newspapers everyday.

SIR SID

Everyday?

MAX

I'll ghost write your autobiography.  
You know how kids go to bed in Russia

MAX  
(cont)

with prayers to Stalin? Well,  
I'll have them crying out to you.

SIR SID

I like your style, Max. (PLEASED)  
The world is all right, Max. All  
right.

MAX

You see, Sir Sidney, you and me  
know people. We have no ideals,  
because ideals aren't people,  
just figments of the imagination.  
We know the mental biology of the  
masses.

(SINGING)

THE GRAVY TRAIN

Everyone can be reduced  
to the lump sum of his wallet  
Everyone can be seduced  
no matter what his morals.  
It doesn't matter a fig  
as long as the money's good  
So it's not a matter of should I?  
It's a question of can I?

SIR SID

Well, Max, you know how it is  
you know how the world is run  
It's jobs for the boys  
you rub my back, I'll rub yours  
It's bugged the poor, I'm all right jack  
It's little done but a lot of noise.

All aboard the gravy train  
Wave the flag  
Blow the whistle on your mates  
Politicians in the front  
Unionists in the back  
Businessmen in the middle  
And the people as the track.  
Yes, all aboard the gravy train.

MAX

Deep down we know  
that all love is  
the gonads working overtime  
Deep down we know  
trust is worthless  
we're all cheats and liars  
deep down we know  
we're at the mercy  
of our instincts and desires.

2/115.

SIR SID

You're a man after my own heart  
only money and good  
business and politicians  
could ever get an agent.

NOTE

ALL ABOARD THE GREASY TRAIN  
all it costs to get on  
is to don't give a damn  
give the people the old Jim Crow  
Don't worry about morality  
Just look after the big M.  
It's all aboard the greasy train  
wave the flag  
before the whistle on your watch  
politicians in the front  
corporates in the back  
businessmen in the middle  
and the people on the track.  
Yes, it's all aboard the greasy train

(THEY SHAKE HANDS)SIR SID

A deal. I feel, Max, that the post  
war years are going to belong to  
people like you and me. Come on,  
let's close down sideway alley.  
GAD THINGS ARE HIS CONSPIRACY  
TICKETS) What are you doing?

MAX

I don't need these anymore.

(THEY GO OFF ARM IN ARM)SIR SID

It was well met by streetlight,  
Max, when I saw you.

MAX

Thank you, Sir Sidney.

SIR SID

It's Sid. Sir Sid.

(THEY HAVE EXITED)(A STREET CLEANER COMES ON SWEEPING)

2/115A.

CLARENCE

Two days work at least. (HE PAGES)  
At least I can sweep around the  
produce halls now that everyone is  
heading towards sideway alley. (HE  
STOPS WHEN HE NOTICES TICKETS. HE  
PICKS THEM UP. TICKETS) Haven't  
been used. (LOOKING OVER SHOULDER)  
Papa! Not bad taken through. (HE  
LOOKS AROUND AND THEN PICKS THEM  
ALL UP) May as well enjoy myself  
like the others. (HE EXITS, WITH  
SHOULDER TO GO ON KISS)

(SUDDENLY BEHIND THEM CHARAS WE SEE  
LIGHT AND HUGE SHADOWS. WE ARE  
LOOKING AT THE OUTSIDE OF A MOVING  
SIGN TEST.)

P.A.

(DISTANT CRY OF SPOOKER GETTING  
PEOPLE INTO MOVING TEST). (THE  
ESCAPED POW, DRESSED AS A MAN,  
ENTERS WITH A SHOTGUN. HE LOOKS  
DESPERATE.)

LEE

(THE POLICEMAN ENTERS) You! Stop  
where you are! (THE POW TURNS AROUND  
AND POINTS THE GUN AT HIM) Put that  
away, lad. You're already in enough  
trouble. Escaped POW, examining a  
man, and no doubt you're the one that  
broke into Mr. Fox's office - twenty  
quid is missing. Come on, Paolo.  
Hand over the gun.

POW

(SHAKING HEAD) No. No.

LEE

I won't hurt you.

POW

Australia full of shorts, dancing  
skeletons ...

LEE

That was only the ghost train.  
Come on, Paolo. Hand it over.

POW

No, no. I die first.

2/116.

LES

Don't do anything rash; (TO HIMSELF)  
temperamental dago.

POW

Stay away!

LES

It's either you or me, Paolo.

POW

(SCREAMS AND FIRES THE GUN. LES  
REELS BACK AS IF SHOT. AN AMERICAN  
FLAG POPS OUT OF ONE BARREL AND AN  
AUSTRALIAN ONE DRIBBLES OUT OF THE  
OTHER) (POW THROWS HIS HANDS INTO  
THE AIR)

I give up. You Australians beat me.

LES

(GRABBING HOLD OF PAOLO) And for  
attempting to murder an Australian  
policeman. (LEADING HIM OFF) You  
won't see outside prison walls for  
decades.

POW

(DELIRIOUS) Australians all skeletons.  
And laugh all the time.

(WHILE THIS HAS BEEN HAPPENING, THE  
BOXING HAS BEEN GETTING MORE FURIOUS  
AND WE SEE ONE SILHOUETTE KNOCK OUT  
ANOTHER. CHEERING)

(DARKNESS. A SPOTLIGHT PICKS OUT A  
WOMAN STANDING BY HERSELF ON A PLAT-  
FORM. SHE IS VERY HAPPY)

(FOX ENTERS CARRYING CROWN AND SASH)

FOX

One of the great privileges of being  
President of the Royal Agricultural  
Society is crowning Miss Royal Show.  
And tonight I have great pleasure  
in crowning Miss Helen Constant,  
Miss Royal Show for 1946. Congrat-  
ulations Helen. (HE GOES TO PUT  
CROWN ON HER HEAD.)



2/117.

MISS R.S.

Sash first, I think, Mr. Fox.

FOX

Ah, yes, I always get it mixed up.  
(HE PUTS SASH ON HER AND THEN CROWN.  
HE KISSES HER) Miss Royal Show 1946.  
(APPLAUSE) The crowd is eager to  
hear from you Helen. (HE STEPS AWAY  
INTO OBLIVION.)

MISS R.S.

(TO EVERYONE) Thank you, thank you.  
I am so happy I could hug you all.  
(The tears in my eyes caught the  
camera flashes and they shone like  
diamonds). It is so wonderful to be  
Miss Royal Show 1946. (I was 18,  
intact and so naive that my heart  
now aches at just how innocent I was.)  
I don't know what to say, I'm so  
happy. So happy. (Around me, The  
Royal Show shimmered with bright,  
lights. The upturned, happy,  
envious, curious faces staring at  
me seemed to be as lovely a sight  
as the white, sweeping feathers of  
the Japanese cockerel). I want to  
thank my mother and father for  
having me. Benjamin my brother.  
(They were so proud. My father had  
just been demobbed - for the first  
time the weariness and bitterness  
of war vanished from his face). I  
would also like to thank Cornish  
Animal Feed for sponsoring me.  
(Awful smells of their factory and  
a groping manager who smelt of the  
chicken coop).

FOX

(FROM THE DARKNESS) And what are  
you looking forward to in the  
future?

MISS R.S.

Telling everyone about the Royal  
Show, getting married, having a  
loving, handsome husband, four  
children and a big house. (Did  
I say that. Yes, I did. But,  
really, as I was talking, I was  
thinking only of that American  
car I would soon be riding in and  
the feel of the cold leather  
against my warm, excited skin).

2/118.

MISS R.S.  
(cont)

Thank you and thank you, people  
of Australia.

(BLACKOUT)

(IN DARKNESS WE HEAR SOMEONE  
SINGING RULE BRITANNIA)

MALE VOICE

Louder!

FEMALE VOICE

Is it helping?

MALE VOICE

My blood is so blue that it takes  
the voice of a patriot to heat it up.

(FEMALE VOICE SINGING AGAIN)

MALE VOICE

Shhhhh!

(WE MAKE OUT THE FIGURE OF MRS.  
DAVIES ENTERING HER CLOSED PAVILION  
OF WOMEN'S INDUSTRIES)

MRS. DAVIES

The Pavilion of Women's Industries.  
So quiet now, so quiet after the  
thronging of the day. There should  
be more light. (TO HERSELF)  
Electricity restrictions. There  
should be more light, proud light,  
so I can see the Pavilion for the  
last time. Good, a torch. (LOOKING  
AROUND PAVILION WITH TORCH) Ah, the  
Australian woman. While her husband  
was away fighting she ran the country  
and still had time to knit, sew and  
cook and produce. The Pavilion of  
Women's Industries is a vision, a true  
splendorous vision. (DISAPPOINTED)  
Who ever took the Spanish Galleon,  
made out of butter, who will pay for  
it! (SHE MOVES ON) Beautiful  
crocheted christening gowns - a field  
of white lawn booties with pink silk  
embroidered roses. The delicacy and  
gentleness, so lovely. (WALKING ON)  
Apple, melon, plum chutneys. Pickled  
cucumber, grape, onions, horseradish.

Handwritten notes in a box on the right side of the page, including "Set 1", "Sally H", "CWA", and other illegible scribbles.

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MRS. DAVIES  
(cont)

The whole world could be pickled by the Austral housewife - bitter but beautiful. Coconut pink, lemon, marble, fruit cakes, war cakes, passionfruit layer cakes - and all made during sugar rationing. Imagine the concoctions once rationing finishes. We'll live on cakes! Shortbread with a Cyclops eye of a maraschino cherry. Chocolate eclairs like a negro's mouth rabid with cream. Knitwear, jumpers for teapots, children and coat hangers; during the war every Australian woman became a Penelope. Lamingtons, anzacs, brandy snaps, bachelor buttons, meringues. And the jams! Sugar rationing has not stopped her! Loquat, melon, pie melon, rhubarb. Loose knots of grapefruit peel suspended in the jellied ether of marmelade ... (SIGHING) The last time! (GLOOMY) On to what caused my dismissal. Camellia with barbed wire. Didn't they see the symbolism of Australian women locked up in Japanese prisoner-of-war camps? Green worms symbolising greed rotting away our brains. Ah, Meryl, you have gone too fast for Australian culture. Too fast. In a few years they'll catch up to you ... but it'll be too late. (PAUSE) One last look at the vision splendid. (HER TORCH LIGHT SEEKS OUT WHAT SHE HAS SEEN, SUDDENLY SHE SEES A MOVEMENT) Who's that? Answer me! Who's that? This Pavilion is closed! Who's that? (HER TORCH LIGHT PICKS OUT A HALF UNDRESSED COUPLE; THE DUKE OF BERKSHIRE AND MISS DAWKINS) Miss Dawkins! The Duke of Berkshire!

DAWKINS

The Duke was attempting to cure my scofola with his Royal Touch.

DUKE

Yes, see, it's gone. I cured her.

(SILENCE)

(MRS. DAVIES NOW REALISES SHE HAS THE UPPER HAND)

DAVIES

Penicillin would cure what you've got, Miss Dawkins. (MISS DAWKINS GOES TO OBJECT) Please, Miss Dawkins, no protests, I have caught you two red handed. Now these are my conditions: I am not to be dismissed from my position. You will resign as member of the executive and you will recommend me as your replacement.

DAWKINS

You wouldn't be so cruel!

MRS. DAVIES

Hell hath no fury like an Australian woman gaining the upper hand. In exchange I will keep quiet about this example of human rutting in the Pavilion of Women's Industries.

DUKE

No one would believe you if you told them. People would always believe a member of Royalty before the word of a human being.

DAWKINS

(TO THE DUKE) But the word would spread, Alfred. Your name would be besmeared.

DUKE

My God, what a country. To have travelled 12,000 miles to find disgrace. (HE EXITS)

DAWKINS

Wait, Alfred. Wait.

MRS. DAVIES

(TO DAWKINS WHO IS ABOUT TO EXIT AFTER DUKE) You are washed up, Miss Dawkins, and like the suds, you are disappearing down the drain of RAS history. Good evening. (A SHATTERED MISS DAWKINS DEPARTS. MRS. DAVIES IS TRIUMPHANT)

(BLACKOUT)

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## DEMONSTRATION PLATFORM

QUARANTINE MAN STANDS IN HIS WHITE COATQUARANTINE MAN

I am pleased that you have enjoyed the last demonstration for tonight. It's a pity that - (HE SEES SOMEONE APPROACH. THE HUMAN FLY JUMPS UP ON THE PLATFORM)

HUMAN FLY

(QUIETLY) Sorry, I'm late.

QUARANTINE MAN

Where the hell have you been all day?

HUMAN FLY

Looking for your booth.

QUARANTINE MAN

Ladies and Gentlemen. You are lucky tonight. My final demonstration will be of the effects of that new wonder chemical DDT. We have, as you know, managed to keep out foreign bugs, but what about the blowie. (SHOWING CAN OF DDT) Well, here's the answer. One spray. (HE DEMONSTRATES. THE HUMAN FLY FALLS TO THE GROUND AND UNDERGOES A GREAT DEATH AGONY) (TO DYING FLY) I don't care what you do, I'm still going to dock your pay! (TO AUDIENCE) The Great Australian Blowie is no more!

## INSIDE DAHLIA'S TENT

DAHLIA WATCHES IN SILENCE AS PEOPLE STARE AT HER AS THEY PASS. SHE LOOKS BORED. SHE IS ALSO DRESSED LIKE A LITTLE GIRL.

P.A.

Yes sirrie, ladies and gentleman. The largest woman in the Southern Hemisphere. She's so heavy that she needs a truck, not a car to get around. From Dubbo, Dahlia the Fat Lady!

(SILENCE)

(WE HEAR A SCREAM FROM NEARBY)

DAHLIA

The ugliest man in the world is earning his money today.

(SILENCE)

Ah, the hiatus - everyone having supper. Sausage rolls, pasties, pies, hot dogs, doughnuts, chips, potato cakes ... God, what I wouldn't give for sixpence of potato cakes right now. (BRUNO, THE UGLIEST MAN IN THE WORLD, ENTERS, STILL IN HIS BAG. IT MUST BE DIFFICULT FOR HIM TO GET AROUND THIS WAY. DAHLIA NOTICES HIM) Hey, Bruno, sounds like you're giving a good show next door. All those screams! You must be making a fortune. Australia's been the lucky country for you, all right. (HE IS STILL INCHING TOWARDS HER) Got a tea break, eh? Wish I had one. A couple of pounds of fairy cakes would go down nicely with me. (HE HAS FINALLY REACHED HER. THE BAG STOPS AND THERE IS A SILENCE) Got something for me, have you? (THE BAG SEEMS TO BE NODDING. SHE DIPS HER HAND DOWN INTO THE BAG AND PULLS OUT A NOTE. SHE READS IT) God, you men are all alike! (SHOVES THE NOTE BACK INTO THE BAG) No! (THE BAG BEGINS TO QUIVER) It's not because you're ugly Bruno, it's just ... well, I just don't like to go out with men who sing opera. Nothing personal. Don't take it that badly. (BRUNO BEGINS HIS DIFFICULT AND TIME CONSUMING EXIT) Jesus, it's hard being a fertility goddess. What I wouldn't give for a potato cake!

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DAHLIA  
(cont)

Hello, customer ... (SHE SETTLES  
HERSELF. TED ENTERS).

TED

Excuse me, I thought this was  
the Memory Man tent.

DAHLIA

Over the road. (PAUSE) Name's  
Dahlia. You're wondering how much  
I weigh? (HE NODS) Five hundred  
and forty three.

TED

Pounds?

DAHLIA

No ounces on me, kiddo, just pounds.  
(HE STARES AT HER IN SILENCE,  
ASTONISHED) You're making me nervous.  
Haven't you got anything to say?  
(HE SHAKES HIS HEAD) Want to know  
how much I eat per day? (SHAKES HIS  
HEAD) Want to know how slim my  
parents were? I'd hate to have you  
in the audience at the Tiv. What's  
your name?

TED

Ted.

DAHLIA

Nice name.

(SILENCE)

TED

I lost my girlfriend, her name's  
Noreen.

DAHLIA

You didn't lose her, she lost you.  
No one loses a girlfriend. (HE  
STARES AT HER, MESMERISED) Do you  
think I look cute in my baby doll  
outfit? (HE NODS HIS HEAD) Close  
the door of the tent. (HE OBEYS  
AND EXITS) (TO HERSELF) Not bad,  
not bad. (TED RETURNS) It's me  
tea break.

(PAUSE)

TED

Do you believe in love at first sight?

DAHLIA

Sure do, Honey.

(SINGING)

LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT

I believe a man when he says  
he'll love you 'til the end of time  
Though I also believe  
Time is getting harder to replace.  
I know a man just won't  
poke it into anyone he fancies.  
So if you want a lover's faith  
then you've come to the right place.

Sure, I believe in love at first sight  
even though it can pass overnight  
I also believe in the stars  
and a good cigarette after lunch.

I believe that when a man  
makes love to you in the dark  
his fantasies are only of you  
I believe that when a man says  
he'll never go with another woman,  
even when you've lost your youth,  
then he's telling the truth.

Sure, I believe in love at first sight  
even though it can pass overnight  
I also believe in the stars  
and a good cigarette after lunch.

TED

(GAZING IN AWE AT HER) I've never seen  
such soft, pink, tender flesh. So much  
of it, like a dream come true.

DAHLIA

Better than your Noreen, eh? (HE NODS  
HIS HEAD) Every lover is a miniaturist,  
they examine each other's flesh as if  
it were a universe under a microscope.  
You've got fifteen minutes, can you  
cut the mustard? (HE NODS) Good.  
The silent type.

(BLACKOUT)



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FERRIS WHEEL

MARY AND KEN, JULIA AND TOM, BLUEY BY HIMSELF AND REBECCA  
BY HERSELF.KEN

Everything looks so tiny from a  
ferris wheel.

MARY

Look at that girl in front of us,  
she's allowing that boy to touch  
her breasts. (PAUSE) Are you  
bad? Do you want me to be like  
that?

KEN

(LOOKING DOWN) Look at them all.  
Everyone always looks so eager at  
the show. See them all clustered  
around the bright lights of the  
stalls and pavilions, like moths  
around a flame.

MARY

I think I'm really bad. When I saw  
those black American soldiers, I  
felt ... (HE IS NOT LISTENING) I  
think I'm really bad. Right now,  
for instance, I could do all sorts  
of things - things I heard my  
friends did with American soldiers.  
Disgusting things. I feel all hot,  
flushed and bad ...

KEN

Look, Venus.

MARY

Where? It's just a reflection of  
the fairy lights.

KEN

No, beyond the lights.

MARY

(LOOKING DOWN) All those couples,  
arm in arm, their bodies rubbing  
against each other. Don't you  
ever want to be bad?

KEN

Shhhh, just watch.

MARY

Look down there, dodgem cars.  
Let's go on the dodgem cars.

KEN

Not yet.

MARY

Dodgem cars are great. (PAUSE) I  
hope Noreen's having an exciting  
time. Probably more than I am.

(THE FERRIS WHEEL TURNS AND TOM  
AND PREGNANT JULIA SPIN TO THE TOP)

TOM

It's been years since I was on a  
ferris wheel.

JULIA

All the people - you'd think it was  
all of Australia down there.

TOM

Practically is. Like a sardine can.

JULIA

You fell as if you want to dive down  
into them.

TOM

Everyone's so small. A tiny city.  
(POINTING) See, over near the hills.  
There. Out there in the suburbs  
that's where we'll live. After we've  
saved up we'll buy a home.

JULIA

Fill it with the plastics we saw.  
(THEY LAUGH) (SILENCE)

TOM

Am I your first man?

JULIA

What? I told you I had boyfriends.

TOM

I don't mean boyfriends - I mean, am  
I your first man?

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JULIA

(KISSING HIM) Yes.

(THEY SNUGGLE TOGETHER)

TOM

I just want to know these things.

JULIA

You can trust me.

(THE FERRIS WHEEL SPINS AROUND AND WE SEE BLUEY STANDING UP IN HIS BUCKET, STILL WEARING HIS PLACARD)

BLUEY(PREACHING TO THOSE DOWN BELOW)  
Listen to me! Listen to me! Hear me down there. The time is nigh. I address you from this wheel of Fortuna. The time is nigh! The howling wind is coming and with it the dogs foaming at the mouth, the bloodied eyed horses, a mushroom cloud of death, children with eyes like jade, our bodies black with fungus, a whole civilisation living in caves. Listen, the seventh seal is being opened, the lamb lies slaughtered on the Parliament House steps.VOICES

Sit down! Sit down! Sit down in your seat or you'll fall!

(BLUEY MEEKLY SITS DOWN, THE FERRIS WHEEL TURNS)

MARY WATSON(SHE APPEARS NEXT. SHE STANDS UP, A SPECTRE GAZING AT HER DESTINY BELOW)  
This is where it was, Peter. I left you to go to the lavatory near the Rural Products Pavilion and when I came out you were gone. I searched for you everywhere, asking everyone I bumped into 'Have you seen Peter' I didn't even know your last name. Then I found myself in the alcove in the ghost train section and there,

MARY WATSON  
(cont)

under the dancing skeleton you were making love to another girl. I ran from the ghost train and bought a ticket on the ferris wheel. No one else was on it. Most had gone home. War had been declared and all people wanted to be with their families in their cosy suburban homes. I had nothing to go home to. Home was a farm that no longer existed. Only my despair at what you had done existed. I stood up and looked down at the twinkling lights and black figures - it looked like a huge aquarium with phosphorus fish and black piranha. Apparently people saw me standing up; I didn't see their concern or hear their cries. I stepped out of the bucket and into the deep water of the aquarium. Everything was silent. The wind caressed my face. It was a beautiful feeling of release. (SHE STEPS OUT OF THE FERRIS WHEEL AND JUMPS INTO THE DARKNESS) (THE WHEEL TURNS AND REBECCA APPEARS, LOOKING ECSTATICALLY HAPPY)

REBECCA

(SOMEWHERE IN THE DARKNESS WE CAN HEAR HER MOTHER CRYING OUT "REBECCA! REBECCA! SIT DOWN! REBECCA!" BUT REBECCA DOESN'T HEAR. SHE IS STANDING UP IN HER BUCKET AND GAZING AROUND HER) Lights ... lights ... Beautiful. (SHE LOOKS UP INTO THE HEAVENS) Moon. Moon. (THEN GLEEFULLY POINTS) Stars! Stars!

(BLACKOUT)

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## DODGEM CARS

WE SEE A FEW CARS GOING AROUND. COUNTRY AND CITY KIDS  
FIGHT IT OUT BETWEEN THEMSELVES. KEN AND MARY ENTER.  
THE ATTENDANT, MICK IS IMMEDIATELY KEEN ON MARY.

MICK

This car'll be fine. (YELLING OUT  
TO OTHER KIDS) No ramming. I said,  
no ramming.

MARY

It looks scarey.

MICK

Let me help you. (HE HELPS HER GET  
IN) See, easy as pie.

KEN

(SARCASTIC) I'll get in myself.

MICK

Sure. Sure. But then you're not  
a sheila, are you? (MARY GIGGLES)  
You right then? (YELLING) Will  
you kids stop it? Can't you read  
the signs? No ramming!

MARY

(TO KEN) Be careful, Ken.

MICK

Okay, then, off you go.

(THEY SET OFF, ANOTHER CAR RAMS INTO  
THEM)

MARY

Look out, Ken! Don't ram them.

KEN

The steering wheel doesn't turn  
properly. (ANOTHER CAR HITS THEM)  
(SHE GIGGLES)

MARY

(LAUGHING) Hit them back.

KEN

He said no ramming.

MARY

It doesn't matter, no one pays any attention to the signs. That's what dodgem cars are about. (HE DRIVES SOME MORE AND SKILLFULLY AVOIDS HITTING ANOTHER CAR) Why didn't you get him, he was the one that hit you before. (YELLING AT OTHER DRIVER) Little country turd.

KEN

Mary!

MARY

Well, ram him. Go on, ram it up him.

KEN

Mary! Calm down.

MARY

What a stick in the mud! Ram him.

KEN

He said no ramming.

MARY

God, don't you have any fun. (SHE GRABS THE WHEEL AND RAMS THE CAR INTO ANOTHER) There! (GIGGLES) (TO DRIVER SHE HAS RAMMED) Bad driver! (THE CAR STOPS) (KEN JUMPS OUT, FURIOUS)

KEN

Drive yourself!

MARY

What are you getting so upset about?

(BUT HE DOESN'T HEAR. HE HAS GONE. MICK COMES OVER)

MICK

Any trouble?

MARY

He just left. How about that?

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MICK

No appreciation of womanhood.  
 (HE LEANS OVER HER) How's the  
 steering wheel? I think you need  
 a new car. Come on, I'll give  
 you a ride in that one for free.

MARY

I'd hate riding by myself.

MICK

Boss won't allow me to ride with  
 the patrons. Listen, I finish in  
 a few minutes. Why don't you wait  
 just over there. I'll take you  
 out.

MARY

Over there?

MICK

Sure. I won't be long. I'll show  
 you some excitement.

MARY

(SMILING) All right. (SHE IS ABOUT  
 TO LEAVE) My name's Mary.

MICK

Mick.

MARY

All right, five minutes. (SHE GOES  
 OVER TO DESIGNATED PLACE) (TO  
 HERSELF) Mick? When he put his  
 arm around my neck - I almost  
 suffocated with pleasure. He's bad.  
 I could tell by the tattoos. Bad  
 boys like bad girls.

MARY

(SINGING)

I WANT TO BE BAD

*I know I should  
 be moral and nice  
 and never be tempted  
 by bad advice  
 but I can't help myself.  
 Feelings,  
 run through my body  
 like a coarse tongue*

MARYI WANT TO BE BAD (cont)

licking my skin.  
 Feelings  
 of ripening sin  
 passion is danger  
 sweat under make-up  
 letting go  
 waking up  
 to a stranger  
 with a five o'clock shadow.  
 Feelings  
 this madness  
 this yearning  
 bad girls  
 love bad boys  
 I want to be bad.  
 Feelings  
 that would make  
 Freud blush  
 Touch me,  
 make me  
 gasp for air  
 I feel all hot  
 and flushed  
 and bad.  
 make me careless  
 I don't want to marry  
 cream turns to milk  
 and silk to cotton  
 All bad girls  
 always have fun  
 nice girls bore  
 good boys are a chore  
 God, it's not that  
 I have a price  
 I just want to be bad  
 I want to be bad.

(MICK ENTERS)MICK

See, didn't take me long.

MARY

Where shall we go?

MICKI know a place. Over there, in the  
ghost train tunnel.(THEY EXIT.)



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## DANCING DUCKS STALL

JULIA AND TOM ENTER. THEY LOOK AT THE PATIENT DUCKS.

JULIA

Look, dancing ducks. Someone must have been patient to teach ducks how to dance.

TOM

They don't dance. When you put in a coin it starts a stove. See, those discs are hot plates. They're not dancing, just trying not to get their feet burnt. (WIFE FEELS HER STOMACH) Are you all right?

JULIA

I think I'd better go and sit down. I don't feel so well. (AS THEY EXIT, DESMOND ENTERS. HE STOPS WHEN HE SPOTS SOMETHING ON THE GROUND. HE PICKS IT UP)

DESMOND

Threepence. I found threepence. I'll go and buy a ticket for ... (THINKS) the mad monkey. (HE BEGINS TO EXIT BUT STOPS WHEN HE SPOTS THE DUCKS) Like my ducky doo. (HE WAVES HIS HAND AT THEM) Ducky doo. Dance. Dance. (SEES SIGN "THREEPENCE TO MAKE THE DUCKS DANCE) Dance Ducky. (HE PUTS IN THREEPENCE) Come on Duckies. Dance! (FROM THE GLASS BOOTH COMES THE SOUND OF 'WALTZING MATILDA' PLAYED ON A VERY SCRATCHY RECORD. SLOWLY BUT SURELY THE DUCKS BEGIN TO 'DANCE' AS THE HOT PLATES GROW HOTTER) (HAPPILY) Dance duckies! Dance ducky doo! (AS THE DANCE BECOMES MORE FRANTIC, DESMOND GROWS MORE UNSURE AT WHAT HE IS SEEING. DEEP IN HIS MIND HE KNOWS THAT THESE DUCKS ARE NOT REALLY DANCING BUT TRYING TO ESCAPE FROM SOME PUNISHMENT.) (ANGUIshed WHEN HE REALISES THEY ARE IN PAIN) Duckies! Duckies! (HE MOVES AWAY, HORRIFIED AT WHAT HE IS SEEING) (YELLING) Grandma! Grandma! (HE EXITS) (THE DUCK BOOTH VANISHES)

(TOM AND JULIA ENTER)

TOM

Do you want to go to sideshow alley?

JULIA

I don't know.

TOM

Go on. Do you want to go?

JULIA

Whatever you want.

TOM

(NOTICING SHE LOOKS EXHAUSTED)  
Are you all right?

JULIA

Yes. I just want to sit.

TOM

(GRABBING HER) Over there. That  
bench over there.

(AS THEY EXIT, IDA AND FREDA ENTER,  
BOTH WEARING THEIR FOX STOLES AND  
CARRYING HANDBAGS.)

IDA

What a day! We have done our  
duty and made the wheels turn.

FREDA

Savages!

IDA

Come, come, Freda. The Country  
Women's Association pulled through  
again. Music hath calmed the  
savage breast.

FREDA

I can only hope that next year  
will be different.

IDA

It will be. It will be. Rationing  
will finish. There will be an  
unexhaustable supply of butter and  
sugar and tea.

FREDA

I wonder what the future will be like?

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IDA

A well stocked CWA tea room.  
 (THEY BOTH TITTER) Look at the  
 lights of sideshow alley - like  
 another world. It is said that  
 if you go down sideshow alley  
 you find horror if you're full  
 of horror and dreams if you're  
 full of hope.

FREDA

You know, Ida, I've never been  
 down into sideshow alley, only  
 heard about it. Henry used to  
 go down there and bring back  
 tales that made my ears burn  
 and my stockings go soggy with  
 perspiration.

IDA

Come on, Freda. Let's get a  
 taxi back to the hostel.

TOM

(RUNNING ON) My wife is about  
 to give birth. She's in labour  
 pains. Help me, I need a  
 doctor.

IDA

You don't your wife does. The  
 Royal Show doctor has gone home.  
 I'll help you. Don't worry, I  
 was a nurse for years. Come and  
 give me a hand, Freda. (HE'S  
 ABOUT TO TAG ALONG) You stay  
 here. A man is only in the way.  
 This is women's business. Hold  
 this. (SHE GIVES HIM HER FOX  
 STOLE) Freda, you go and get  
 Mrs. MacPherson from the chook  
 pavilion - she's a midwife.

(FREDA EXITS)

(TOM WAITS)

(CHARLIE THE OLD GATEKEEPER ENTERS,  
 CONFUSED.)

CHARLIE

Now where was I? Sideshow alley -  
 can't be there. God, a gatekeeper  
 lost. What a turn up for the books.

CHARLIE  
(cont)

Old Charlie the gatekeeper lost.  
(SPOTTING TOM) Excuse me, can  
you show me the way to the side-  
show.

TOM

It's just down there.

CHARLIE

Oh, right. (WANDERS OFF) (TO  
HIMSELF) Got to see the five  
legged sheep. Shake hands with  
the fifth leg.  
(SILENCE.)

TOM

So I waited, behind a pavilion which  
overlooked the sideshows. It only  
took half an hour. The two old  
ladies were marvellous. I had never  
been so excited. I felt I was truly  
home from the war for the first time.  
While I waited, I imagined our huge  
family. Adoring wife, five beautiful  
children. A suburban home. A Heinz  
dog with a huge, sloppy tongue. If  
a boy he would be called Andrew. I  
never contemplated a girl's name  
because I only wanted a boy. When  
the old lady called me over and said  
it was a boy! He was wrapped up in  
a pale blue blanket, his face yellow  
and greasy from birth. I was so  
excited, I nearly dropped him! (PAUSE)  
Years later I found out that he was  
not my son but some G.I.'s. By that  
time I didn't know him anyway. He  
was an adolescent stranger who  
looked at me with mistrust and who,  
if I'm lucky, calls me up on Father's  
Day, says hello to me and because we  
don't know what to say to each other,  
I hand the 'phone over to his mother.  
(IDA APPEARS)

IDA

(ENTERING WITH BABY) It's a boy!

TOM

(EXCITED) A boy!

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IDA

Yes a bonny, tubby boy. (HE RUSHES  
OVER TO HER, SHE GIVES HIM THE BABY)  
Mrs. MacPherson will help you out.  
She's an expert at that.

(HE TAKES THE BABY)

TOM

Thank you. (HE EXITS TO HIS WIFE.  
FREDA ENTERS)

FREDA

It was worth seeing his happiness.

IDA

If someone's not busy dying, some-  
one's busy being born.

FREDA

True.

IDA

Oh, he's still got my fox. Be back  
in a moment.

(SHE EXITS)

(SILENCE)

FREDA

(REVERIE) Undo my bun and let my  
grey hair tumble down my back.  
Henry's face buried in it like an  
opal comb.  
(HENRY, HER HUSBAND, APPEARS WEARING  
A SOLDIER'S UNIFORM)

(QUIETLY) Henry.

(HE GRABS HER GENTLY AND THEY DANCE  
A SLOW, BEAUTIFUL WALTZ)

Your feet were always so nimble,  
like Fred Astaire's. When you  
first pressed me to your chest I  
felt as if I were on another planet  
being crushed by your gravity. You  
were so solemn when young.

(THE DANCE STOPS. HE MOVES AWAY  
AND EXITS INTO DARKNESS.)

Next Royal Show, Henry.

(AFTER HE HAS GONE, IDA RE-APPEARS)

IDA

That's what I want to see, Freda,  
happiness.

FREDA

It's amazing how vivid daydreams  
can be (SPOTTING IDA'S CONFUSION)  
Oh, I'm just happy at the thought  
of someone being born here tonight.

IDA

Yes, he's called Andrew. He'll  
have a wonderful future. Whereas  
we ... Ah, Freda, who would have  
thought that we would end up two  
widows, tottering around on high  
heels, wearing fox stoles, too  
much - make-up and playing music  
in the CWA tea rooms. You know,  
that young man reminded me ...  
(INTO A REVERIE)

IDA

(SINGING)

WHO WOULD HAVE THOUGHT

I remember a young boy  
or was it a young man?  
He once told me  
to do something strange  
disagreeable then,  
but times have changed.  
Where is he now?  
probably joined the throng  
of dirty old men.  
Funny how old age  
makes everything less wrong.

FREDA

My life is above the fire  
up on the mantelpiece  
in photographs;  
not much I suppose  
but it was my life.  
Me as a girl  
afraid of the world  
Me as bride and then wife,  
smiling from a window  
picnics and seaside  
and too soon a widow.

*Black + white*

2/139.

IDA

Every Cup Day a flutter

FREDA

Very careful with the money

IDA

Not too much honey or butter

FREDA

Friends are who we grieve for

IDA

Grandchildren are our hope

BOTH

Memories are what we live for

When we were young  
 we always had beaux  
 who would have thought  
 we would end up as widows,  
 tottering on high heels  
 a fox around our neck  
 a scent too many perfumes  
 much too much make-up  
 and playing music  
 in the CWA tea rooms.

*Being seen  
 elsewhere  
 etc*

IDA

Come, Freda. A Dutch treat on the  
 taxi back to the hostel. (THEY  
 DEPART, TWO LADS ENTER; DAVE AND  
 THEO)

THEO

Well, that's it, isn't it? A whole  
 day spent here, four quid down the  
 drain and not one Sheila to take  
 home.

DAVE

Slim pickings, all right.

THEO

The only girl I got near was that  
 one I pressed up against in the  
 Dairy Food Pavilion.

DAVE

You were lucky.

THEO

How was I to know her boyfriend was there. (PAUSE) Dad always told me it was a cert to pick up girls at the Show. That's how he met mum.

DAVE

Why don't we go down to sideshow alley - plenty of girls there.

THEO

No money. You need money.

(PAUSE)

DAVE

Well, what are we going to tell the boys, Theo.

THEO

What do you mean?

DAVE

Leo got a girl, so did Harris, even Walshy - and he's got a face like a dog's breakfast.

(PAUSE)

THEO

What are we going to do?

DAVE

They don't know we haven't been with one so we've got to show them proof.

THEO

Like what?

DAVE

A love bite.

(THEO REALISES WHAT IS IN STORE FOR HIM)

THEO

Now, come on, Dave.



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DAVE

I'm being serious. It's the perfect proof. Over here.  
(HE GRABS HIS MATE AND TAKES HIM TO WHERE THEY CANNOT BE SEEN)

THEO

Isn't there another way?

DAVE

No. (HE MAKES A LOVE BITE ON THEO'S NECK) (THEO RUBS IT RUEFULLY)

THEO

So that's what its like.

DAVE

Don't tell me you've never had one?

THEO

No, no. Plenty. But a man is different. All right, your turn.  
(HIS LOVE BITE ON DAVE IS LONG AND LINGERING.) (DAVE STEPS AWAY)

DAVE

That'll be some bruise tomorrow.

(THEY LOOK AT ONE ANOTHER IN SILENCE, THEIR BRAINS SWIRLING WITH MENTAL CONFUSION).

I don't think one is enough.

(PAUSE)

THEO

No. Perhaps two. It should have been a torrid session. (DAVE COMES OVER TO THEO AND HIS LAST BITE IS LONG AND LINGERING AND FULL OF LUST. DARKNESS HELPS US AVERT OUR EYES FROM WHAT IS TO FOLLOW).

## THE PAVILION OF AUSTRALIAN DREAMS

WE SEE TWENTY OR SO CHAIRS, LINED ALONG THE BACK OF THE HALL. EIGHT PEOPLE SIT AND WAIT TO DANCE, WAITING FOR THE MEN TO PLUCK UP ENOUGH COURAGE TO ASK THEM.

P.A.

Welcome to the Pavilion of  
Australian Dreams.

(THE BAND PLAYS)

(SLOWLY, THE PEOPLE GET UP AND DANCE)

(NOREEN ARRIVES LOOKING FOR MARY)

(KEN ARRIVES LOOKING FOR NO ONE IN PARTICULAR. HE SPOTS NOREEN. BETWEEN THEM ARE THE DANCERS WHO ARE DANCING A SLOW WALTZ, SUDDENLY THE DANCERS BURST OUT INTO A WILD JITTERBUG.)

P.A.

Don't Break! Don't Break. Breaking is forbidden!

(THE DANCERS STOP AND RETURN TO A WALTZ. NOREEN WATCHES KEN APPROACH HER, THROUGH THE DANCERS. SUDDENLY THE DANCERS ERUPT AGAIN).

P.A.

Don't break! Breaking is forbidden!

(THE DANCERS RETURN TO THEIR ELEGANT WALTZ. WITHOUT A WORD, KEN GRABS NOREEN AND THEY BEGIN TO DANCE A WALTZ WITH THE OTHERS. AGAIN, AND JUST AS ABRUPTLY, THE DANCERS BURST INTO A WILD JITTERBUG, BUT NOREEN AND KEN, WHO ONLY HAVE EYES FOR EACH OTHER DANCE A WALTZ. QUITE ABRUPTLY, THE DANCERS FREEZE IN MOTION, EXCEPT FOR KEN AND NOREEN WHO SLOWLY DANCE THROUGH THEM AND OUTSIDE.)

(THEY STOP DANCING) THE SCENE BEHIND THEM VANISHES.)

NOREEN

(TO KEN AS THEY HOLD HANDS) When I saw you this morning I knew you were the one.

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KEN

And when I saw you. (PAUSE) Do you want to wait for Mary? (SHE SHAKES HER HEAD)

NOREEN

Do you want to wait for Ted?

KEN

No. Let's walk.

NOREEN

So we did. Most of the people had headed towards the brightly lit cave of sideshow alley. We walked through the quieter streets, watching people going home, tired, happy people clutching the gaudy ephemera of the Show. Would people ever read their brochures on fertilisers or heavy agricultural machinery? The cardboard hats and showbags would disappear as mysteriously as a rabbit in a magicians trick. We couldn't even buy those things as we had no money. We were in love with each other and romance.

KEN

The fairy lights are like golden birds sitting on a telegraph wire.

NOREEN

I had never seen so many lights before. I was bedazzled. We made love in the bushes near Queen Victoria's statue.

(THEY WALK ON, VANISHING INTO DARKNESS.)

(GEORGE McGUINNESS ENTERS CARRYING SASHES - RATHER TIPSY)

GEORGE

It's worth it. Me Clydesdales again. Grand Champion six times running. Worth the three months preparations. Bunking down in the stalls. Most of the time spent washing the horses, mucking out the stalls, grooming, plaiting

GEORGE  
(cont)

manes and tails and leading them around the arena. Maybe rough in the stalls but I eat good tucker, everyone knows where to find me. Made some great mates over the years. What more could make a man happy than his Clydesdales? Clydesdales and the Show are in my blood, it'd be like trying to cure me of polio.

(SUDDENLY, JOE MOYNE ENTERS, PROPELLED BACKWARDS. HE STOPS AND LOOKS BACK AT THE CULPRIT. HE'S VERY DRUNK.)

MOYNE

Yeh, you and who else! Do you know who you're talking to - Joe Moyne! That's who. Come out here and I'll make mince-meat of you.

GEORGE

Joe!

(MOYNE TURNS AROUND, FISTS READY)

It's me, George McGuinness.

MOYNE

(THROUGH THE DRUNKEN FOG SEES AN OLD FRIEND) George! (THEY EMBRACE)  
What are you doing here?

GEORGE

My Clydesdales.

MOYNE

Christ, you and your horses.

GEORGE

They're not horses, they're Clydesdales. Won another grand champion.

MOYNE

(NOT IN THE LEAST BIT INTERESTED)  
I've been thrown out of that bar. Thrown! Me, Joe Moyne, ringmaster, out of his home. Come on ...

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GEORGE

Where are you going?

MOYNE

We're going to bust that place  
wide open. (SEES THAT GEORGE  
IS RELUCTANT) Come on, show  
'em that Clydesdale owners  
aren't sissies.

GEORGE

All right.

MOYNE

Thataboy! (CALLING OUT) You've  
had it now. (TO GEORGE) Let's  
go.

(THEY VANISH INTO DARKNESS)

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SIDESHOW ALLEY (DOWN IN THE RIVER OF DREAMS AND NIGHTMARES)

A JAPANESE GENERAL STANDS NEAR A HEAVY WOODEN BLOCK.

JAPANESE GENERAL

I killed dozens of Australians. Hundreds. Some I worked to death building bridges, others I bayoneted in battle but most of the Australians I killed were prisoners-of-war. I stripped them naked and buried them up to their neck in sand, then covered their faces with honey and watched as thousands of bullants ate the honey and then tore the flesh from them. I decapitated many prisoners who smiled at me and tore out the eyes of those prisoners who dared to look straight at me and tore out the tongues of those who spoke back to me, or didn't call me sir, and I ate them. I enjoyed what I did because I am Japanese and a soldier of the glorious Japanese Army. The death I now face, I glory in, for the Emperor and my country - Nippon!

(AN EXECUTIONER ENTERS WITH AXE. THE JAPANESE GENERAL PUTS HIS HEAD ON THE BLOCK. THE EXECUTIONER LIFTS UP THE AXE AND IT COMES CRASHING DOWN ON THE NECK. THE HEAD ROLLS OFF ONTO THE GROUND. THE EXECUTIONER STEPS FORWARD AND BOWS)

P.A.

Ladies and Gentlemen - The Great Corvo - the Greatest magician in the world.

(CHARLIE THE GATEKEEPER WANDERS PAST, LOST AND CONFUSED)

(LIGHTS FADE AND FADE UP ON LILLY. SHE LOOKS BEAUTIFUL.

LILLY

(SHE BECKONS TO US) Big Boy! Big Boy! Come here. Come here.

(SHE VANISHES.)

(LIGHTS ON SIR SID AND MAX, BOTH DRUNK)

SIR SID

Where did she go?

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MAX

Don't worry about her - let's see the rest.

SIR SID

I need a cigarette, that magic act - (ROBERT APPEARS IN THE BACKGROUND) Can you give me a light? (ROBERT SHAKES HIS HEAD AND TURNS AROUND AND EXITS, AS HE GOES WE SEE IT IS ROBERTA)

(HE/SHE VANISHES INTO DARKNESS.)

P.A.

Big Boy. Big Boy. I enjoyed what I did because I am from Nippon.

(SIR SID AND MAX VANISH INTO DARKNESS.)

(AS THEY VANISH LIGHTS COME UP ON WOMAN SITTING IN A CHAIR. SHE GAZES AT US)

CHARLIE

(ENTERING). Lady, do you know where the five legged sheep is? (SHE SHAKES HER HEAD) I'm Charlie the gatekeeper and I'm supposed to - (HE STOPS IN MID SENTENCE AS BLOOD BEGINS TO DRIP FROM THE WOMAN'S EYES. CHARLIE MOVES AWAY, SHE VANISHES INTO DARKNESS, BUT CHARLIE IS STILL WITH US)

Where am I? Where is old Charlie the gatekeeper? I'm lost. This is not the world I knew. Where's the five legged sheep. Poor Charlie is lost. Old Charlie's lost to the world. Lordy, Lordy, save poor Charlie. God save poor Charlie, for he is lost and doesn't know where he is.

(HE BEGINS TO MOVE AWAY)

P.A.

(WE HEAR THE DANCING DUCKS RECORD OF WALTZING MATILDA)

(OUT OF DARKNESS SCURRIES LOTTE THE WILD GIRL. SHE GROWLS AND HISSES. DESMOND ENTERS. SHE GROWLS. HE DOESN'T SEEM THAT FRIGHTENED.)

DESMOND

Ducky doo is dead.

(THEY VANISH)

(A MAN APPEARS DRESSED IN A TUXEDO. HE HAS A SMALLER BODY, ALSO WEARING A TUXEDO, GROWING OUT OF HIS BODY)

P.A.

Big Boy, Big Boy.

MAN

(TO AUDIENCE) I am twenty-two, this body has always been with me. His head is buried in my chest but he is alive. He is my brother. He has normal body functions like I do. But I have to eat more than the average intake to feed him. In a sense, he is a parasite and feeds off me. Any woman in the audience can touch him because he responds to the tactile attentions of a woman, just as I do. (PAUSE) I am twenty two, this body has always been with me. His head is buried in my chest but he is alive. He is my brother ... (THE MAN VANISHES)

(WE HEAR RIGOLETTO, LIGHTS UP ON BRUNO IN BAG. SIR SID WANDERS IN)

SIR SID

Has anyone got a light?

P.A.

Big Boy, Big Boy.

SIR SID

Listen, mate, you got a light?  
(HE OPENS BAG AND REELS BACK WHEN HE SEES WHAT IS INSIDE) Jesus Christ! (HURRIES OUT) (CRYING OUT) Max, where are you? (LIGHTS FADE ON BRUNO, RIGOLETTO RETURNS BUT MIXES WITH THE DANCING DUCKS RECORD OF WALTZING MATILDA, THEN INTO PA)

P.A.

Big Boy, Big Boy.

(IVORY, THE ALBINESS APPEARS IN SPACE. SHE LOOKS BEAUTIFUL: WHITE, WHITE AFRO)



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HAIR-DO. DESMOND ENTERS AND  
LOOKS UP, ENTRANCED)

DESMOND

Beautiful lady. Beautiful lady.  
(DESMOND VANISHES BUT SHE IS STILL  
THERE)

IVORY

I am the Princess of Arnham Land.  
When I look rabbits in the eyes  
they are mesmerised. I do not  
feel things like ordinary  
aboriginals. My skin is different.  
I have to stay indoors of a day  
and I am forced to haunt the night.  
My people think I am a ghost of  
flesh and blood.

(SHE VANISHES)

P.A.

I killed dozens of Australians.  
Hundreds. I tore out the eyes of  
those who dared to look at me.

(THE WIND HOWLS, AND THERE APPEARS,  
AND ARMLESS AND LEGLESS MAN WHO  
ROLLS TOWARDS SIR SID)

SIR SID

(AFRAID) Get out of the way. (TO  
STRANGER WHO APPEARS WITH BACK TO US)  
This thing is following me everywhere.  
(THE STRANGER TURNS AROUND. HIS EYES  
POPPING OUT) (SIR SID BACK AWAY)  
You Labour voters are everywhere.  
Max!

(THE SCENE VANISHES INTO A HOWL OF  
THE WIND AND LAUGHTER, THEN ABRUPT  
SILENCE AND THEN BEAUTIFUL MUSIC.  
A MAN APPEARS BEHIND MAX WHO IS  
WAITING, NERVOUSLY)

MAN

Is something the matter?

MAX

Uh? Yes, I'm waiting for my friend,  
Sir Sidney Truscott. I've chased  
him from sideshow to sideshow.

MAN

I haven't seen him.

MAX

I lost him near here, I think.

MAN

Could you give me a hand?

MAX

Yes, certainly.

MAN

My skin. I have a bit of a turkey neck - just push it there.

MAX

All right. (MAX TOUCHES THE MAN'S NECK) It's, it's strange skin.

MAN

Yes, I was born with it.

MAX

(STEPPING AWAY, FRIGHTENED, BUT THE MAN'S SKIN IS LIKE ELASTIC AND STICKS TO HIM) Your skin!

MAN

Yes, it's like elastic. And very sticky too, this time of night.

MAX

I can't get it off. (HE TRIES TO PULL AWAY BUT HE CAN'T.)

MAN

(PULLING HIM CLOSER) Yes, its like a snare, isn't it? (THE MAN WRAPS HIS HANDS AROUND MAX. MAX IS CAUGHT AND CAN'T GET OUT) Imagine living with this skin. (NEARBY A SNAKE WOMAN MOVES ALONG THE GROUND) (MAX SPOTS HER AND TRIES TO MOVE AWAY BUT CAN'T. SHE MOVES CLOSER AND LASHES OUT, BITING HIM.)

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MAN

(DOESN'T SEEM TO KNOW WHAT IS HAPPENING, CALMLY AND OBJECTIVELY TALKING) The skin, my skin, could wrap up ten men, so doctors have told me. Science will one day find a cure.

MAX

(SCREAMS OUT)

(DARKNESS, SILENCE)

(SIR SID APPEARS, FRIGHTENED, LOST)

SIR SID

Max? Where are you, Max?

P.A.

Ladies and gentlemen, she bleeds from her eyes. Found in the mountains of Victoria, she is a natural miracle. When she weeps, she weeps blood.

SIR SID

Stop playing games, Max. Where are you?

MAX

(OFF) (IN AGONY) Sir Sid!

P.A.

Big Boy, Big Boy.

(LILLY RE-APPEARS. SHE LOOKS BEAUTIFUL, SHE BECKONS.)

WOMAN

Sir Sid - come here, darling.

(HE APPROACHES WARILY)

SIR SID

Who are you?

WOMAN

Lilly. (SHE STRIPS)

SIR SID

(STEPPING AWAY) Jesus!

(THE WOMAN IS HERMAPHRODITE)

WOMAN

What's the matter? My kind were the most popular courtesans in Ancient Rome. Come on, be brave. (HE SINKS TO HIS KNEES AND SHAKES HIS HEAD. SUDDENLY, AS THEY VANISH INTO DARKNESS, THE MOST TERRIBLE VISION OF THEM ALL APPEARS. THIS IS THE GEEK. HAIR IS LONG AND WILD AND MATTED WITH DRIED BLOOD. THE GEEK'S FACE IS EXCITED AND EAGER BLOODLUST IS OBVIOUS)

P.A.

(MIXED WITH THE MUSIC FROM THE BAND IS "WALTZING MATILDA", 'BIG BOY, BIG BOY', AND THE JAPANESE GENERAL'S SPEECH)

GEEK

(OPENS ITS MOUTH - A DISTORTED, ELECTRIC CRY OF BLOODLUST COMES FROM IT AND THEN A HIGH PITCHED CRY LIKE 'GEEK, GEEK'. SUDDENLY A CHOOK APPEARS IN ITS HAND AND WITH A TRIUMPHANT CRY, THE GEEK BITS OFF THE CHOOK'S HEAD. AFTER SPITTING OUT THE HEAD, AND STILL HOLDING THE HEADLESS CHOOK IN ITS HAND, THE GEEK SMILES TRIUMPHANTLY AND BLOODILY AND CRIES OUT AGAIN 'GEEK! GEEK')

(BLACKOUT)

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THE WEDDING

NIGHT. STARS.

BRUNO IN HIS BAG. DAHLIA SITTING, HOWARD CASTING HIS  
IMAGINARY FISHING LINE. MRS. MACPHERSON ENTERS.

DAHLIA

Mrs. MacPherson, haven't seen you  
all week. How's it in the chook  
pavilion?

MRS. MAC

Same as usual; drafty and noisy.

DAHLIA

Don't like chooks myself unless  
they're between two slices of  
bread.

MRS. MAC

A balmy night. Stars, neon lights.  
Cloudless sky. Perfect night for  
a wedding. Who's best man?

DAHLIA

Howard. Trouble about being best  
man is that you don't get a chance  
to prove it! (WHISPERING) Do you  
think a giant has a giant ... you  
know ...

MRS. MAC

You always talk blue, Dahlia, a  
deep, deep blue.

(LES, THE POLICEMAN, ENTERS)

LES

Good evening, ladies, Howard ...

DAHLIA

Finished for the night?

LES

The only two left in the clink are  
Joe Moyne and George McGuinness,  
they're sleeping it off. Joe got  
knocked out in a brawl and George  
got his Clydesdales to break up  
the pub.

(MARY WATSON, THE GHOST, APPEARS -  
NO ONE CAN SEE HER)

MARY WATSON

Tomorrow they'll be gone, but I'll  
be here haunting the showgrounds,  
Mary Watson waiting for her Peter  
to return. My bones will feel  
like iron and my skin will be like  
frost.

(DESMOND ENTERS AND STANDS A DISTANCE  
AWAY)

DAHLIA

What are you doing there, dear?

DESMOND

My name's Desmond.

DAHLIA

Come closer, love. Join in.  
Everyone should be part of a  
wedding.

(AS HE MOVES CLOSER HE SPOTS MRS.  
MACPHERSON AS SHE SPOTS HIM)

DESMOND

You look after the chooks.

MRS. MAC

That's right.

DESMOND

I don't like chooks.

MRS. MAC

No one in their right mind would.

DAHLIA

The ring, Howard, have you got it?  
(HE NODS) I'm almost tempted by  
marriage today, Howard, but it  
didn't survive the tea break. I  
have infatuations but you know that  
you're the one I love.

(FOX ENTERS)

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FOX

Are they here yet?

DAHLIA

Not yet.

HOWARD

Where's Billy?

FOX

Hobbs is bringing him. What's the matter, Dahlia?

DAHLIA

Bit misty. Weddings make me cry. Besides it is probably the last time for some of us to work the Show.

FOX

You'll be back next year. (MRS. DAVIES ENTERS.) Ah, Mrs. Davies, glad you could come. I hear you're going to be Miss Dawkins replacement on the executive.

MRS. DAVIES

Yes, is she here?

FOX

Couldn't make it; she's eloped. (ASTONISHMENT ALL ROUND) Going to marry the Duke of Berkshire.

MRS. DAVIES

She isn't?

FOX

He proposed outside the Pavilion of Women's Industries, I hear.

(KEN AND NOREEN ENTER AND ARE SURPRISED AT WHAT THEY SEE. FOX STOPS AND LOOKS AT THEM.)

FOX

I'm sorry, for a moment I thought you were our couple.

KEN

We were just going home.

FOX

Home? On such a lovely night?  
Stay here and see the wedding.  
Tonight was made for lovers.  
(THE OTHERS INTRODUCE THEMSELVES  
TO KEN AND NOREEN)

MARY WATSON

The ghost train is silent now, the  
skeleton is still. The showgrounds  
nearly empty. (THINKING SHE HAS  
SPOTTED HER BELOVED) Peter! No,  
just a horse in the moonlight.  
This humid wind blowing in from  
the dry, drought country won't  
last long. When the lights are  
out, the chill winds will come from  
the sea. (AS IF RECITING A RHYME)

Peter, Peter, Peter  
When are you going to marry me?

(HOBBS ENTERS WITH BILLY THE MEMORY MAN)

HOBBS

Mr. Fox, we're ready.

FOX

Ah, good. Ready, Billy?

BILLY

As I will ever be, Mr. Fox.

FOX

What about Ivory?

HOBBS

She's coming by herself - Dahlia's  
her bridesmaid.

(HOWARD AND MEMORY MAN TALK TO EACH  
OTHER)

MRS. DAVIES

So I suppose she'll live in a castle  
and be known as the Duchess of  
Berkshire?



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FOX

(CAUGHT BY SURPRISE) What was that?  
Yes, I guess so. You look off colour,  
Mrs. Davies.

MRS. DAVIES

An overdoes of bile, Mr. Fox, I  
should be right in a moment.

(IVORY ENTERS. SHE LOOKS AS BEAUTIFUL  
AS SHE DID IN THE SIDESHOW ALLEY  
SEQUENCE)

FOX

Ivory, you look beautiful. (HE LEADS  
HER OVER TO DAHLIA. DAHLIA HOLDS IVORY'S  
TRAIN AND HOWARD STANDS NEXT TO BILLY)

FOX

We are gathered here tonight under  
the Giant Archer and fairy lights  
to celebrate the marriage of Ivory  
and Billy the Memory Man.

(HE GOES THROUGH THE WEDDING SERVICE  
AND ON TO ...)

I now pronounce you man and wife.

(THEY KISS)

DAHLIA

Champagne!

(GLASSES AND CHAMPAGNE ARE SHARED  
AROUND)

LES

Nice service, Fox.

FOX

Thank you, Les.

(HOBBS AND FOX FIND THEMSELVES TOGETHER,  
APART FROM EVERYONE ELSE)

HOBBS

Nice one, sir.

FOX

Thank you, Hobbs.

HOBBS

I mean, the whole day.

FOX

For a moment it was touch and go - but we did it. Sorry to put you through that spot of bother with the Duke.

HOBBS

It was my fault, sir.

FOX

Nonsense.

HOBBS

It was. There was no union problem, you see, the Jet Engine never arrived. The railways lost it.

FOX

(PATTING HIM ON THE SHOULDER) Nice one, Hobbs. (SUDDEN INSPIRATION, REVERIE) Perhaps, Hobbs ... the Royal Show ... it came to me ...

HOBBS

(PLEASED) Another vision, sir?

FOX

Why, yes, Hobbs. Yes. I remember as a young farm boy lying on my stomach in an open paddock and noticing, for the first time, the miniature world of insects, worms and ants as they slithered and crawled through a patch of grass, and I thought to myself that they must believe they live in a jungle and their territory is the whole world. This was a revelation to me at the time, as intense and beautiful to me as perhaps a mystical vision is to the religious. So overcome was I that I wandered the paddock, gazing at everything; the dirt, thistles, rotting timber, cow dung, birds, algae, stones, sheep, clouds, flowers, and fungi and seeing it all as a whole under the harsh, brilliant Australian sky. Only just then, a few moments ago, did I recall that day. An innocent child's vision which is still

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FOX  
(cont)

as true today, People's Day. Tonight, conflicts, visions, despair, hopes, disappointments and dreams have all coalesced into a vision as intense and sweet as that day when I was young.

HOBBS

A wonderful vision, sir.

FOX

My brain is soaked with the perfume of fairy lights and lovers under stars, Hobbs. The wax hexagon of my brain is filled with this honeyed moment. (PAUSE)

HOBBS

One thing puzzles me, sir. How are you able to marry people?

FOX

Hobbs, Hobbs, what is this doubt that troubles you? The President of the Royal Agricultural Society can do anything he likes during the Royal Show.

(PLEASED CRIES FROM WEDDING GUESTS)

HOWARD

(RAISING GLASS, EVERYONE FOLLOWS SUITE) To Ivory and Billy and this night of Memories.

ALL

To Ivory and Billy and this night of Memories!

(THEY DRINK)

(PAUSE)

FOX

The only thing left to do is to blow out the lights. First, the lights in the East. (THEY BLOW OUT THE EASTERN LIGHTS)

ALL

(SINGING)

EVERY ROYAL SHOW

Every Royal Show  
 should end in memories  
 innocence should be toasted  
 our enemies forgiven  
 at least for an hour or so.  
 The magic ether of the heavens  
 traps us inside its web  
 until it's time for us to go.

FOX

Now the Southern Lights. (THEY ALL BLOW)

ALL

The fairy floss has melted  
 and the barns are asleep  
 the stars are spirits  
 of friends long since gone.  
 Tonight, promises are kept  
 and love will be as white  
 and unspoilt as the moon.

FOX

The Northern lights. (THEY ALL BLOW)

ALL

Every summer night  
 should end in friendship  
 and lovers should be  
 forgiven every sin.  
 Darkness is kind and gentle  
 only daylight seeks revenge.  
 At dawn we'll say goodbye  
 but we'll never call tonight  
 or the feelings we had, a lie.

(PAUSE)

FOX

(QUIETLY) We'll never be as innocent again.

(EVERYONE BLOWS OUT THE LAST REMAINING LIGHTS)

(DARKNESS)

END

## APPENDIX C:

### INTERVIEW WITH MAX STAFFORD-CLARK

Conducted via telephone on August 22, 2013. Rebecca Clode. Topic: *Our Country's Good*.

R.C. As I mentioned, I've been writing about the production history of *Our Country's Good*. In 2011 I spent five weeks in London researching this work and I was lucky enough to watch a video recording of the production you directed for *The Young Vic* (1998). Unfortunately, though, I haven't had the opportunity to see your most recent production, and so some of my questions today will relate to this.

When you first directed *Our Country's Good*, alongside *The Recruiting Officer*, and I'm talking now about the 1988 Royal Court production(s), *Our Country's Good* was a new play. What has it been like returning to the play now, much later, in 2012 and 2013?

M.S.-C. Well, in 2012 and indeed 2014 we're reviving the same production to go to Minneapolis and Toronto. So, it's a question that I'm often asked. Of course, the difference is that the actors are different, but also is strange this time 'round is that we've come politically full cycle, that David Cameron and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, George Osborne, have done more harm to the infrastructure of theatre in three years than Margaret Thatcher managed in three terms in office. So we are again in a time when the theatre itself is under particular threat, with funding cuts and cut-backs and so on. And where the value of theatre, which is trumpeted by *Our Country's Good*, is a particular apposite message. Also the play is now an established classic which makes a difference because there are a lot of students who have been studying it among the audience. So it's a much younger demographic than I think we had originally.

R.C. [Clarifying] in terms of ... It's on the School Curriculum now, as a set text?...

M.S.-C. Yes, as an established modern classic.

R.C. How about the script? Has that changed significantly since the original?

M.S-C.Ah, no. Timberlake was in rehearsal and there were odd cuts – two or three lines.

[Speaking of influences upon the development of the text] I think when we did it originally, you know, Robert Hughes who wrote *The Fatal Shore* and Thomas Keneally himself were great Alpha-male Australian figures of the '80s, it would be fair to say...both very charismatic and fascinating. And obviously history is a moving target. It moves forward. So certainly Aboriginal Studies, for example, has advanced considerably since the '80s, but the play wasn't re-written with that in mind.

R.C.            Could you talk to me a bit about the different spaces that *Our Country's Good* has been staged in and what you think works well for the play in relation to the staging?

M.S-C.Well I think the biggest challenges as far as space is concerned are ahead, because in Toronto we're going to be playing in a 1,000 seat proscenium theatre. And differences in space affect this play just as they affect *all* plays. You know, once you move above four or five hundred seats, then dramatic imperatives change. Below four hundred, intimacy and detail are important. Above that, pageantry, gesture, epic staging become more important. And the set correspondingly becomes more significant. That's the same for every play, not just *Our Country's Good*. I'm brought up in – I mean, The Royal Court is a four hundred seat theatre – an ideal cockpit for the presentation of new work. And interestingly in the eighteenth century itself, theatre sizes got bigger and bigger, so that Garrick started his career in the 1,000 seat Drury Lane but ended it with the theatre seating nearly 3,000 by cutting back the staging space. So that this gave rise to an acting style, what we would now think of as melodrama. And as the theatre size gets bigger, so the acting has to get bigger, to meet that space. I'm keen to play in theatres that are relatively middle-range.

R.C.            I suppose with space, as well, in the original production there was this sense that you were creating a set that would work for both *Our Country's Good* and *The Recruiting Officer*.

M.S-C.        That's right, and we had severe economic restrictions at that period in time, too. So it was a very simple, plain set. The set at The Young Vic had a kind of

raft, as you would have seen from the video, that swayed to-and-fro, which was quite a strong visual image.

R.C. ...The way that you created a kind of stage within the stage, on that set, was very interesting.

M.S-C. As a platform, yes.

R.C. Now a slightly different kind of question – a broader question, perhaps. In *all* the productions of *Our Country's Good*, and we can include *The Recruiting Officer* in this if you like, what have you enjoyed most?

M.S-C. Well, I think that the eighteenth century is a fascinating period. Obviously any classical play is a message from the past and I think I came to appreciate that. I mean Farquhar, and this may be a bit too academic, but there were some four hundred plays that were written and performed (first performances) between 1675 and 1710. So it's a very brief, fertile period of only 35 years. And there are some half-dozen...*Way of The World*, *Man of Mode*, *The Country Wife* and indeed *The Beau Stratagem* and *The Recruiting Officer* that survived in the canon and are regularly performed in this country. There are another half dozen like *The Provoked Wife* or Aphra Behn's *The Rover* that are occasionally performed, and there are some 380 plays that aren't performed at all and that we know nothing about. So realising a play from that period is fascinating.

Also what was most interesting, as I detail in *Letters to George*, was our visit to a performance by prisoners, during the rehearsal period for *Our Country's Good*. You think, "Well, this will be interesting," but quite how fascinating it was, and how pertinent, I hadn't anticipated at all.

The performance took place in a high security prison, Wormwood Scrubs, which was a male-only prison. So two actresses had been allowed to join the cast because there were no women, and they were treated like princesses by the prisoners! And what been a rather strange, fringe event, became quite important, because ILEA (the Inner London Education Authority) championed the production. The prison authorities said the play (which was by Howard Barker) wasn't suitable for prisoners to see, so ILIA said "well, in that case we'll get in an audience from outside." And they rang 'round. So I was

there, Trevor Nunn was there, a number of casting directors and agents were there. So it was quite a high profile theatrical audience and an extraordinary performance in the Education room of this high security prison, Wormwood Scrubs. And you think “Will I be able to recognise which ones are prisoners?” but in fact they [the prisoners] were so pale, that it wasn’t difficult to recognise them at all. And afterwards we were allowed to associate with the prisoners for ten minutes before they were whisked away to their cells. I talked to this one man who was really a very good actor and I said “Would you like to be an actor when you get out?” – because I thought he was very talented. And he said yes, he would. So I said I’d introduce him to some of the casting directors who were there. And I said “How long is it ‘til you’re out?” And he said “10 to 15.” So it didn’t seem quite so urgent after all.

R.C.            I understand that one of the cast went on to work with you when you were directing the *Young Vic* production.

M.S.-C.        That’s right, the same fella, Joe White, became my Assistant for that production.

R.C.            It seems as though Timberlake Wertenbaker also found the prison performance quite powerful.

M.S.-C.        Even during the recent production we met an actor who one of the cast knew, who had been a soldier in Northern Ireland and had got into a fight one night with some Republican youths who were taunting him. And he, the soldier, did three years in a prison in Belfast, for assault. While he was there he did a production of *Observe the Sons of Ulster Marching towards the Somme* by Frank McGuinness. And after he came out he went to drama school and is now an actor. He said, and I quote verbatim, “The Theatre saved my life” – that he would still be a trouble-maker if it hadn’t been for that. So the message of the play is as pertinent as ever.

R.C.            A remarkable story. Clearly those were some significant experiences for you. How about the play’s challenges? What would you say has been the most challenging aspect of the play?

M.S.-C.        Well in the recent production, what I was alarmed about in rehearsal, is that the play is such an iconic memory to people who saw it originally. [Speaks of



concern that] the new play would be compared unfavourably. But in fact that wasn't the case at all. It's always hard to remember, but *Our Country's Good* got very good reviews when it was first done, but this time it got *ecstatic* reviews. You know, it does take twenty years for a play to be recognised as part of the canon.

R.C. It's interesting that you've approached the play this time 'round, and there is that sense of it being part of the canon, yet that was an issue that you were sort of struggling with in *Letters to George* when you were approaching this much older, classic play [*The Recruiting Officer*] originally. It seems as though *Letters to George* was, for you, a very important part of that process.

M.S.-C. Yes, I mean, I've directed a number of classics – *She Stoops to Conquer*, *King Lear*, *Macbeth*, *Man of Mode*, *Country Wife* at the RSC, but many many *less* classics than most directors of my age. So doing a classic is a real privilege, and a bit like driving a Rolls Royce. I mean, if you get in a classic car it makes a good driver look like an excellent driver! And the same with plays. Classics are classics because they are really good plays so they make the director look good!

R.C. Turning again to the most recent production of *Our Country's Good*, I'm aware that you had some rehearsals that were open to the public. What were they like?

M.S.-C. Well I quite enjoyed them. I pinched the idea from – I did a reading, a long rehearsal for a reading of *The Seagull* in New York, which was funded in part by allowing paying guests into rehearsal. So I copied the idea, and I thought it all went quite well. But it wasn't until the production was up that the actors revealed how little they had enjoyed it and how intruded upon they had felt. And so I would – not ditch the idea completely – but I would certainly approach it with much more restraint in future. [Mentions that his forthcoming book, which will be published in January, addresses this aspect of the production in some detail.]

R.C. One last question. Before you came to Australia in 1989, with the tour, you exchanged correspondence with Richard Wherrett at the Sydney Theatre Company. And you – at that point you said that the treatment of the Australian Aboriginal character in the play was, from your perspective, one of the script's weaker points. How do you now feel about that particular role?

M.S-C. I think that weakness probably still remains although it would be disloyal of me to say so to Timberlake, but she would agree that it was an aspect of the play that she was unable to research from 18,000 miles away.

R.C. Perhaps the politics of authorship around indigenous characters are always going to be difficult.

M.S-C. Yes. Yes, on the other hand I think that we've made a breakthrough in this country in that black writers, whether African or Jamaican or West-Indian origin, feel able now to write white characters and vice-versa. I think there is, as you say, a difficulty around it, but [typically] white writers have tended to avoid writing black characters and vice-versa.

R.C. Yes. I think there's also, perhaps, something quite valid (accurate might be a better word) about having an indigenous Australian character who is marginal on the stage.

M.S-C. Yes, that's true. He is isolated from the main action and that's probably an accurate dramatic reflection of his situation.

R.C. So as problematic as that role *is*, there is also something quite valid about it.

M.S-C. Yes, I mean Keneally's book, *The Playmaker*, makes much more of the relationship between Arabanoo, the Aboriginal, and Governor Phillip. And it's fascinating when you get to Sydney to find the names of a number of the characters in the play perpetuated – you know, Campbell Cove, Balmain, Bennelong Point... I think that Australia's history, and the debate about "Australianness" in your own country is conducted by your novelists. Kate Grenville, David Malouf, Christopher Koch and indeed Thomas Keneally himself are all extraordinary novelists who have given Australia back its history, whereas in England that role is conducted thankfully by the theatre.

R.C. Having come to the end of my questions, I thank you again for participating in the interview and will forward a transcript as promised.

**APPENDIX D:**

***THINGS THAT FALL OVER: FINAL DRAFT***

**As performed on March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2014**

**Footscray Community Arts Centre, Melbourne**

**See Over**



# Things That Fall Over

- an (anti-)musical of a novel inside a reading of a play, with footnotes, and oratorio-as-coda -

OR

a triathlon for ensemble performance

text and original lyrics by Peta Murray

music (original and arranged) by Peta Williams

To be followed by: Swansong!!!The Musical!!!

An Oratorio-as-Coda

by Peta Murray & Peta Williams

**WORKING DRAFT (FINAL) for FCAC/IWD EVENT**

**COPY #:**

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Private & Confidential

## **The Players:**

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| The Architect:         | Author of the extravaganza   |
| The Choreographer:     | A veteran of community theatre   |
| The Musical Director:  | A multi-skilled Foley Artiste and Merrie Minstrel  |
| Production Team:       | Costumier, Stage Manager et al as needed   |
| Nursie-Nursie:         | A Nurse  |
| Mannie McKenzie:       | A Lady Typist  |
| Doctor Vedova:         | Director of the Sanitarium. Half-masked in the <i>commedia dell'arte</i> style in Folios 1 & 2, unmasked as Sister Fizi a Monica in Folio 3.                               |
| Verity:                | An elderly woman, hugely pregnant to begin. Less pregnant in Folio Two. Only 'a little bit pregnant' by the end.   |
| Orlando/Orla:          | Verity's life-partner. Youthful. Of mutable gender. The same performer also plays:   |
| St Lisbeth, the Jolly: | Patron Saint of Late Bloomers. Mature. Later re-appearing as:  |
| Matron R Gascoyne:     | Director of St Christabel and St Germaine's Haven for Late Bloomers.   |
| The Weaver:            | Story-teller in Swansong. Also plays a doula   |
| Master Wunderkind:     | A forger: played by a girl of about 7 years of age. Later First Violin in the Con-sorts Banned.  |
| The Child:             | A girl with the voice of an angel, about 11 years of age. Appears first as Stephen of Sondheim, and later as herself in Folio 3.   |
| Horrible Men:          | Played drag king-style, by members of the musical consort. Appear as Orderlies in Folio 2, and as Intruders, including The Producer, The Agent, The Publisher, in Folio 3. |
| Chorus of Women:       | Enter as Pregnant Creatives or Sisters-in-da-Hoods in Folio 2 and as Sistren of The Haven in Folio 3, before turning into Swans  |
| Voiceovers:            | Computerised genderless voice. Also Ring Master Phony Rabbit: A despot.  |

## NOTE ON HOW TO WORK WITH THIS TEXT

This text is conceived as a weaving into space towards the creation of some kind of ephemeral edifice. There are two kinds of weave in use.

The first is referred to as OPEN WEAVE.

This is an improvisational space, with just enough warp and framework within which to work. There are bits of information and chunks of old script offered (in 10pt font), and perhaps fragments of these may be woven into this space. For the rest, we make it up as we go along.

It is my hope that these OPEN WEAVE spaces make room for our performers and creative team to be "themselves" and possibly also to reveal aspects of their own stories about their real lives and experience as women in the arts, where appropriate. This is one site for the politics of these proceedings.

The second kind of space is CLOSED WEAVE. These are scripted scenes, with characters speaking allocated lines.

In these sections The Players are urged to stick to the text, whilst remaining aware that other members of the creative team – sound, special fx, costumes, lighting are filling in weft and colouring in the space around you, so that as with a tapestry, the picture only gradually becomes clear over the course of the weaving.

With the exception of the songs, the set musical pieces, and the Swansong, the piece is conceived so that The Players do not rehearse scenes together in advance of the performance.

As its Architect I plan to travel beside the text the whole way along. I hold the blueprint and take responsibility for somehow holding the shape of the thing together. As for what kind of a shape that is....?

PREAMBLE: OPEN WEAVE: Artist's talk in Performance Space

SCENARIO 1: IN WHICH A RITE OF WELCOME BECOMES A RITE OF VALEDICTORY.

The Architect speaks. Powerpoint etc. The epic story of TTFO. Matter of the title. Arrival of the Videographer. SMS Messages.

**NOTES:**

SCENARIO 2: IN WHICH THINGS BEGIN TO FALL OVER

The Choreographer brings word of a disturbing event

**NOTES:**

SCENARIO 3: IN WHICH WE LEARN OF A SWANSONG REHEARSAL RAIDED

Arrival of a fleeing Verity (CL), who purports to be a Nurse (acceptable job for a woman). News of the missing Marg(a)ret. The lost Weaver. Inability to account for all members of the company.

**NOTES:**



**SCENARIO 4: IN WHICH WE ATTEMPT TO KEEP THINGS GOING**

Arrival of a fleeing Verity (TB), who purports to be a Teacher. (Acceptable job for a woman.) Arrival of Late-comers. (Quire A)

**NOTES:**

**SCENARIO 5: IN WHICH THE NURSE AND THE TEACHER ENTERTAIN US WITH EXPOSITION, CONVENTIONS AND TRY TO TEACH THE AUDIENCE THE TITLE OF THE SHOW. IN PASSING WE MAY ALSO LEARN WHAT A DOULA IS FROM CL, AND WHAT INTERTEXTUALITY IS (RE ORLANDO) FROM TB.**

**NOTES:**

**SCENARIO 6: IN WHICH ANOTHER PERFORMER ARRIVES AND A BID TO CAPTURE WHAT IS LEFT BECOMES PARAMOUNT**

Arrival of another fleeing Verity, (WS) hurt. The extent of the danger becomes known. Problem of the destruction of Swansong. No script, and only one way to re-generate it, through TTFO.

**NOTES:**

1. The first step in the process of plotting is to identify the main characters and their relationships. This is done by creating a character list and a relationship chart.

2. The second step is to determine the central conflict or goal of the story. This is done by asking the question: "What does the protagonist want, and what is standing in the way?"

3. The third step is to outline the major events of the story. This is done by creating a plot outline that shows the sequence of events and how they relate to the central conflict.

4. The fourth step is to write the story. This is done by fleshing out the characters, setting, and events, and by using dialogue and action to bring the story to life.

5. The fifth step is to revise the story. This is done by checking for consistency, clarity, and pacing, and by making changes as needed.

6. The sixth step is to edit the story. This is done by correcting grammar, punctuation, and spelling errors, and by improving the overall readability of the text.

7. The seventh step is to format the story. This is done by choosing a font, size, and style, and by adding a title page and a table of contents.

8. The eighth step is to proofread the story. This is done by reading the story carefully to catch any remaining errors.

9. The ninth step is to publish the story. This is done by choosing a publisher or a platform, and by submitting the story for publication.

10. The tenth step is to promote the story. This is done by using social media, email newsletters, and other marketing strategies to reach a wider audience.

11. The eleventh step is to evaluate the story. This is done by asking for feedback from readers and by analyzing the story's performance.

**PLOTTING CONTINUES.  
MEANWHILE, WITH REFERENCE TO THE FOLLOWING  
SCRIPT & WITH NO ADHERENCE TO FIXED CASTING OF  
ROLES WE DELIVER THE ESSENCE OF THIS :**

SOMEONE: Lights up. MANNIE waits, alone..

VERITY: (OFF) Paper!!! And bring me something I can digest!!!

MANNIE: Oh dear. Someone's losing the plot.

VERITY: (OFF) I cannot stand this. I cannot bear it another hour. I cannot bear it another hour. I say I can not bear it another -

MANNIE: There's no one...

VERITY: (OFF) But where is O?

MANNIE: He's....

VERITY: (OFF) Orlando should be by my side.

MANNIE: He's gone in search of paper.

SOMEONE: VERITY sticks her head out the door. She is a woman of advanced years.

MANNIE: You called for me.

VERITY: I did no such thing.

SOMEONE: VERITY enters. (She is enormously pregnant. Huge.)

MANNIE: Madam.

VERITY: Let me see your hands.

SOMEONE: MANNIE presents her hands.

MANNIE: This is a great honour.

VERITY: Bunkum.

MANNIE: I am lost for words -

VERITY: I hope not.

MANNIE: It is metaphor, madam. A jest.

VERITY: What is your trade? Scrivener? Amanuensis? Scribe?

MANNIE: I am a Lady Typist. Madam.

VERITY: Well, well. A Lady Typist. O brave new world...<sup>1</sup>

MANNIE: Yes, Madam.

VERITY: Your own machine? And whatnot?

MANNIE: Yes, Madam.

VERITY: Well. This is a development. A turnip for the books.

MANNIE: The phrase is "turn-up."

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<sup>1</sup> From *The Tempest*, Act 5, Scene 1 by William Shakespeare. In turn, the title of a novel by Aldous Huxley.

VERITY: Really?  
 MANNIE: A turnip is a root vegetable.  
 VERITY: You are very well read!  
 MANNIE: I have read you, Madam.  
 VERITY: Have you just? Cheeky.  
 MANNIE: As a youngster, I read every last post. Every tweet!  
 VERITY: How tweet it is! Flattery!  
 MANNIE: Note that I do not say "every last word -"  
 VERITY: Noted.  
 MANNIE: For of course, we all joyfully await – this - joyful event for which we are joyfully...waiting!  
 VERITY: Do not speak of it! Do not remind me!  
 MANNIE: But madam – look at you. Brimming and...radiant!  
 VERITY: Oh, please.  
 MANNIE: I hear you are tired, but – optimistically – expectant.  
 VERITY: I am?  
 MANNIE: Words is you feel expectantly optimistic that, given the right paper, delivery may be today.  
 VERITY: Yes. Well. There was a moment. Earlier, I felt... No. Actually, I heard. I heard a sound. At first I thought it was my little wind-up dog. It was a panting sound. Extremely realistic. A coarse, labouring, straining for air, a huff, huff, huff - And then when I realized it was not the dog, because of course, it is but a toy, well, then of course, for a moment, I thought: It is !! It is !! At last! It was in that moment that I said something – optimistic - to my Doctor. And in that same moment, of course, hearing myself speak quite normally, I realised that it could not be me, panting, huff, huff, huff, and that it had to be something else. And then of course I saw it, out my window. A hologram. Of a steam train!  
 MANNIE: A hologram of a steam train?  
 VERITY: Did I not say so? Do not echo me. I have low tolerance for The Echo in dialogue of any kind. I find it clunks. Orlando does it too.  
 MANNIE: It is a failing of mine. I am working to change it.  
 VERITY: Do. And then earlier, whilst napping, I had another portentous dream. I am now expecting an imminent Visitation...  
 MANNIE: Wondrous. So Madam. You are here. I am here. All is in readiness.  
 VERITY: You have a most mannered style.

MANNIE: Do I?

VERITY: Somewhat - if I may say - self-conscious?

MANNIE: I promise you, once we get to work, it disappears. I am but a palimpsest.

VERITY: I beg your pardon?

MANNIE: P-A-L-I-M-P-S-E-S-T!

VERITY: You spell?

MANNIE: Fluently, Madam.

VERITY: You spell the old way?

MANNIE: I may be young, but I am the best. I am also very expensive.

VERITY: Paper!!! Paper!!! Where is O, with my paper?

MANNIE: Your devoted Orlando has, of course, apprised me of the situation. But please, dictating now, in your own words...

VERITY: Surely my form speaks for itself?

MANNIE: Even so...

VERITY: Very well. I am now entering the - How many months in a year?

MANNIE: Still twelve.

VERITY: They have not changed that? I hear rumours. Civil unrest. This new coup?

MANNIE: Not yet. Still Twelve months. As ever.

VERITY: Then I am now entering the 38<sup>th</sup> month of my confinement.

MANNIE: Three years, two months.

VERITY: And eleven days, if one must be precise. Now. Even for me, this is...

MANNIE: Yes.

VERITY: I mean to say, I have always been slow...

MANNIE: One might say *deliberate, considered*; one might choose synonyms.

VERITY: I am slow. I am... Did you just pause for a semi-colon?

MANNIE: I did.

VERITY: I have an excellent ear for punctuation.

MANNIE: Madam, it is the mark of your phrasing. Please continue.

VERITY: Truly I do not know what to tell you, for I thought my fertile years long behind me. And then, out of the blue, this dull throb between the...

MANNIE: Yes.

VERITY: This ache in the...

MANNIE: Go on.

VERITY: A burning. A yearning. A churning.

MANNIE: Aha...

VERITY: Followed by a slight firming ...

MANNIE: Yes.

VERITY: This sense of being... You will forgive me if I end a sentence with a preposition...?

MANNIE: Under the circumstances.

VERITY: This sense of being *With*. You understand? Of being *with*. Incipience. Is that a word?

MANNIE: It is.

VERITY: I am full of it, do you see? Full of it.

MANNIE: Yes.

VERITY: Words, images. *Becoming* - Oh. It is impossible to explain. And my prophetic dreams. In the first dream I saw myself with a sheaf -

MANNIE: Just the one?

VERITY: No. That was just it -

MANNIE: Not...sheaves?

VERITY: Is that the plural?

MANNIE: I believe so.

VERITY: Sheaves then.

MANNIE: Oh dear.

VERITY: Sheaves of pages in my hand. I came into a room and O was there. I slammed the sheaf - sheaves - of pages down on a table. I said: *Voilà!* It's a French word. I said: *See?* I said: *I told you there was something!* I told you there was more.

MANNIE: Oh Madam.

VERITY: We feared. I feared I was - You see...?

MANNIE: I do not use the b-word, if I can avoid it.

VERITY: I do. I use it. Barren!

MANNIE: In the past I should have favoured others. Blocked? Banned? Barred? Banished?

VERITY: We are apolitical in this household.

MANNIE: But now, with this new coup...

VERITY: Besides, as I am trying to tell you - We thought. I thought. And now, look at me.

MANNIE: Do you know, have you any idea - what it - is?

VERITY: My doctor did not tell you?

MANNIE: No. All my briefing has been care of an Aunt. So. You have seen a doctor?

VERITY: I have the very best. It was Doctor, I thought, who recommended you?

MANNIE: No. I'm sorry.

VERITY: Strange. Doctor performed a scan. Several. Actually.

MANNIE: Oh? I can have someone hack in...

VERITY: No. I asked them not to tell me. I want it to be a surprise!

MANNIE: That's up to you. Although it makes my job more difficult...

VERITY: There is one thing I know. It is very exciting. Perhaps I will tell. But you're not to tell O!

MANNIE: Is that ethical?

VERITY: Will I whisper?

MANNIE: If you must.

VERITY: Whatever it is, there is three of them. And I am defiantly ungrammatical in saying so.

MANNIE: Three?

VERITY: Yes. It is... a trilogy!!!<sup>2</sup>

MANNIE: What?

VERITY: Is it not exciting?

MANNIE: You shouldn't be on your feet. You should be lying down!

VERITY: Now do you see why I am famished all of the time? Now do you see why I call for paper, paper and more paper!

MANNIE: But - what kind of trilogy?

VERITY: That is the bit I do not know. That is the suspense.

MANNIE: I need air.

VERITY: Will I open this window?

MANNIE: No. Walls. Ears. A trilogy?

---

<sup>2</sup> A series or group of three related dramas, operas, or novels.

VERITY: Sometimes I think it is novels...  
 MANNIE: Novels? There's no demand!  
 VERITY: I care not.  
 MANNIE: With all respect, Madam, there's scarcely a reader left -  
 VERITY: If you really must know mostly I think it is... plays!  
 MANNIE: Plays?  
 VERITY: Yes.  
 MANNIE: A trilogy of plays?  
 VERITY: Yes.  
 MANNIE: You don't get out much, do you?  
 VERITY: As I say, it has been a lengthy confinement.  
 MANNIE: I'm sorry to break this to you, Madam. But the theatre, as you knew it, scarcely exists. And as for - Women's Theatre. It's entirely underground.  
 VERITY: Well, I know that. But my plays will be – niche -  
 MANNIE: A poem? A short story? A novella, possibly...  
 VERITY: But plays? Anyone for a play? Got you! Got you! Ha! I had you there, eh? I had you?  
 MANNIE: You did.  
 VERITY: I love my sport.  
 MANNIE: Touché.  
 VERITY: Of course it is not a play. Silly. It will be prose, I am all but certain. Genre. Chick-lit, inevitably. Yes. I am sure it will.  
 MANNIE: A trilogy? Three novels, in a series?  
 VERITY: Yes.  
 MANNIE: Epic narrative over three volumes?  
 VERITY: Bravo. Yes.  
 MANNIE: And you will permit me to type it?  
 VERITY: Yes.  
 MANNIE: It will be my Write-of-Passage! My Dear Madam...  
 VERITY: My own Lady Typist...  
 MANNIE: I don't know what to say –  
 VERITY: Then let me speak. I am so much more interesting.



MANNIE: Of course.

VERITY: An artistic sensibility is so complex, contradictory...

MANNIE: Yes.

VERITY: And as for my dreams? Utterly compelling...

MANNIE: Ah yes, this latest? Yet to be divined...

VERITY: It is most cryptic. There was some script. It formed a sentence. In prose. I paused to admire it. And found it reeked.

MANNIE: No?

VERITY: That prose was on the nose!

MANNIE: Oh Madam. You are in gravest danger. It would appear you're nearly past it...

VERITY: Now you are rude.

MANNIE: The meaning is precise, even to a word. Dreams do not lie.

VERITY: I do not like you anymore. O! O! Not listening! Skippy! ...

SOMEONE: And VERITY totters off.

MANNIE: "That prose was on the nose."

#### SCENARIO 7: IN WHICH THE MUSICAL DIRECTOR ARRIVES AND A PLAN IS HATCHED.

Just in time The Musical Director bursts in with her thunder sheet and saxophone case. Inside it is a ukulele. She picks out a sad tune.

MUSIC: *On Weariness: A Refrain.* Opening bars, as set.

The Musical Director updates us on the situation. Actors (emergency ones) are on their way from the women's underground, and a plan is unfolding to re-generate Swansong. We're going to push on.

All must assist. They must work with what they have, involve the audience, and hope that reinforcements arrive. New actors are preparing and the means to capture is being sourced. The Videographer agrees to help, crossing over from the funding acquittal team to the other side. The Choreographer goes outside to try to assess the situation with Swansong and to see what can be done. It's dangerous, but it's their only hope.

## NOTES:

As the plotting continues the players may present the essence of the next scene. They need not read their own roles.

ANNOUNCEMENT:

THE PLACE: THE SAME ROOM

THE TIME: LATER

THE WEATHER: WORSE

- ORLANDO: A deadline?
- MANNIE: Yes.
- ORLANDO: And she accepted your divination?
- MANNIE: Yes!
- ORLANDO: Then there must be...interventions?
- MANNIE: It's the only way.
- ORLANDO: But V is a stickler for natural methods.
- MANNIE: Times change.
- ORLANDO: Rhythm methods. And my role?
- MANNIE: Your role?
- ORLANDO: As her muse. Her patron and protector.
- MANNIE: You must risk all.
- ORLANDO: Again.
- MANNIE: You have procured the very best paper.
- ORLANDO: Procured?
- MANNIE: You do not like 'procured'?
- ORLANDO: No. It has - what's that thing underneath?
- MANNIE: Sub-text?
- ORLANDO: Yes. *I procured* paper.
- MANNIE: Where did you get this? Can you get more?
- ORLANDO: Don't ask! And please, do not ask what I had to do to get my hands on this.
- MANNIE: Orlando....
- ORLANDO: This is crazy. She must be crazy even to think, even to countenance -
- MANNIE: Ah...
- ORLANDO: What?
- MANNIE: Lovely old word. *Countenance*. I have not heard it uttered before.

ORLANDO: What shall I do?

MANNIE: Go to her. Give her a kiss.

ORLANDO: A kiss?

MANNIE: Try not to echo her.

ORLANDO: Right. Just kiss her.

MANNIE: It is one of several recommended interventions. Kissing. And all that may... ensue... Go to her. I shall ready my desktop.

ORLANDO: No! We must stop it. Stop her...Stop it. Stop it.

MANNIE: Stop what?

ORLANDO: Taking this to full term.

VERITY: (ENTERING) Oh. Oh.

ORLANDO: I'm sorry. It had to be said.

VERITY: Oh. Darling. Oh.

ORLANDO: Sit down.

MANNIE: Lie down.

VERITY: Oh. Darling. Oh.

ORLANDO: (TO MANNIE) Do something!!

VERITY: Can't. Breathe. Paragraphs. Quicken. Help.

MANNIE: I don't know what to do. I've not been in this...My aunts attend deliveries. They spin and I follow. I make a transcript.

ORLANDO: You said...

VERITY: It's starting.

MANNIE: I am no doula. An aspirant. A postulant, yes. I seek admission, I seek..

ORLANDO: Shall I spin for you?

VERITY: Recite for me. You! Something from the canon!!!

MANNIE: By heart?

VERITY: Hurry... O??

ORLANDO: Do I have one? Yes. *The Swan*<sup>3</sup>... "This.... labouring... of ours... with...

VERITY: With *what*?

ORLANDO: "...with all that remains undone is like the... lumbering gait of the..."

<sup>3</sup> From *The Swan*, by Rainer Maria Rilke. Full text and details of translation later.

- VERITY: Of the *what*? Too slow, O. Oh!
- MANNIE: I have one... "It was a dark and stormy night..."<sup>4</sup>
- VERITY: Saints and matrons...
- ORLANDO: I know. "124 was spiteful. Full of a baby's venom."<sup>5</sup> Ooops.
- VERITY: Must I do everything myself? (RECITING, AT GREAT SPEED) *"It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife. However little known the feelings or views of such a man may be on his first entering a neighbourhood, this truth is so well fixed in the minds of the surrounding families, that he is considered the rightful property of some one or other of their daughters. My dear Mr Bennet ..."*<sup>6</sup>.
- FX: ORLANDO slaps VERITY, hard, across the face.
- ORLANDO: They're not her words.
- VERITY: Miss Austen's. Thank you darling.
- MANNIE: The Spinster's?
- ORLANDO: Yes.
- MANNIE: Plagiarism?
- VERITY: Out of copyright. Nevertheless, a hopeful sign. A spillage. The breaking of the drought. Were a doula here she would be running for towels and blotters.
- MANNIE: Towels and blotters? Why?
- ORLANDO: Did you not heed? Verity just issued a rush - a gush...
- VERITY: Verbiage. It wasn't mine, but something's happening. Listen...
- ORLANDO: "It wasn't mine! Something's happening."
- MANNIE: She's using contractions!
- ORLANDO: She needs a doula.
- MANNIE: Madam, I am here at hand.
- ORLANDO: A Lady Typist! No. This won't do at all, Verity. Now is not the time. Later, one day, when things, when things... but...
- VERITY: Is that all you can say for yourself? But.
- ORLANDO: I am not consulted. I'm sent out in this terrible climate to procure paper...

<sup>4</sup> Opening line of *A Wrinkle in Time* by Madeleine L'Engle, published 1962

<sup>5</sup> The opening line of Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, published 1987.

<sup>6</sup> The opening paragraph of *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen, published 1813.

VERITY: It's not enough! It's never going to be enough...

ORLANDO: Three volumes. Have I no say?

VERITY: You ask? At this hour?

ORLANDO: Verity! We have a body of work...

VERITY: If there is any body of work out there it is my body.

ORLANDO: You haven't posted in years.

VERITY: Get your clause off my body!

ORLANDO: You have been barren, and for decades. I have kept the faith. I am your muse.

VERITY: I acknowledge you.

ORLANDO: In your footnotes!

VERITY: In my forewords and dedications.

ORLANDO: Ah.

VERITY: I thank you. I write... I owe my "O".

ORLANDO: Yet do not name me. I am your font. Your fixer.

VERITY: Am I your instrument? Your mouthpiece? Do you play me?

ORLANDO: No. But...

VERITY: But?

ORLANDO: But...

VERITY: My Lady Typist?

MANNIE: Yes, Madam.

VERITY: I'm ready now. Prepare my chamber.

MANNIE goes.

ORLANDO: No market? No readership?

VERITY: If there is but one reader left...

ORLANDO: One work? Perhaps. But three?

VERITY: Leave me.

ORLANDO: There's no more room in our library...

VERITY: Hush. I do it for me. I. For myself. I must.

ORLANDO: Is this an allegory? I hate allegories.

VERITY: Leave me to my labours. I cannot hear myself think.

ORLANDO: I will leave. I despise scenes. And you...

VERITY: Sweet Lisbeth -  
 ORLANDO: What?  
 VERITY: The contractions. They have stopped.  
 ORLANDO: Mannie!!!  
 VERITY: This is your fault. Illiterate. Shape-shifter. Unlettered oaf! I heard it, in my ear, in my mouth. I had it.  
 ORLANDO: There, there, my love. Shall I tell you a story?  
 VERITY: No!!  
 ORLANDO: I have an erotic tale. I call it *The Story of O*<sup>7</sup>  
 VERITY: I must start over. More mind-mapping. More free-writing. Aargh! The thought of it is enough to bring on the wearies.  
 ORLANDO: Idle threats.  
 VERITY: It is a woman's right to choose.  
 ORLANDO: I suppose you'll want butcher's paper now? File cards?  
 VERITY: Please.  
 ORLANDO: Good luck with that. Good luck with all of it.  
 VERITY: Where are you going?  
 ORLANDO: Out! I am going to aquarobics.  
 VERITY: Go then. You who may still move freely in the world.  
 ORLANDO: I shall go!  
 VERITY: Don your swimming costume. Ponce about with your noodle and your floatation aid. Work on your buoyancy.  
 ORLANDO: I'm going.  
 VERITY: Your balance and core strength.  
 ORLANDO: See? See?  
 VERITY: Macerate yourself in chlorinated water.  
 ORLANDO: I go.  
 VERITY: Go.  
 ORLANDO: I go. I'm going.  
 VERITY: Leave me to marinate in creative juices till I bring forth wonders. I can do this. I will do this.  
 ORLANDO exits.

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<sup>7</sup> *Story of O* is an erotic novel published in 1954 about dominance and submission by French author Anne Desclos, under the pen name Pauline Réage.

VERITY: (CALLING) Go. Go then. (PAUSE)? Will someone enter?  
This paper is insufficient. Where is my Lady Typist? Oh, for a  
doula! I must lie down. Someone? Anyone? Doctor....?

FX: A faint, mechanical barking.

VERITY: Is that you, Skippy? When all others fail me, there you are, my  
faithful friend. Mummy is coming. Mummy is here...

VERITY totters off.

**SCENARIO 8: IN WHICH THE ARRIVAL OF OUR COSTUMIER  
& LX DESIGNER, IN TANDEM WITH AN ACTOR (LW) FROM THE  
WOMEN'S UNDERGROUND OPENS NEW POSSIBILITIES.**

**NOTES:**



PERFORMANCE SPACE: FOLIO ONE:

**THE PLACE: ANOTHER ROOM**

**THE TIME: MEANWHILE**

**THE WEATHER: AN ILL WIND**

DOCTOR VEDOVA, in black robes, wild hair and half-mask is with, MANNIE, The Lady Typist. They examine scans over a light-box held by the LIGHTING DESIGNER.

THE MUSICAL DIRECTOR STANDS BY TO PROVIDE SFX.

THE ARCHITECT STANDS BY TO PROVIDE ANY NECESSARY STAGE DIRECTIONS OR TO MOVE THE ACTION ALONG.

- DOCTOR: Now. As you see, is poor character *definizione*.  
Nevertheless – count him - *uno, due, tre!*
- MANNIE: Why did I doubt her? Her pen name was, after all,  
La Verita!
- DOCTOR: Pen name?
- MANNIE: It was a practice, once –
- DOCTOR: *Si, Si*. How you know? Is before you born.
- MANNIE: Before I born?
- DOCTOR: You native English speakers, always with the  
echo... It gets on my *stoppino*. *Ino... ino....*
- MANNIE: Doctor Vedova?
- DOCTOR: Is me? Yes?
- MANNIE: How is it you just so happened to visit here, today?
- DOCTOR: *Como? Omo...omo...*
- MANNIE: No sooner had Verity called for you than there you  
were. It is almost as if these walls had - ears...
- DOCTOR: Ears? No. This is impossible.
- MANNIE: Eyes – then -
- DOCTOR: No. Medically. I am doctor. Walls with ears. Eyes.  
Is quite impossible.
- MANNIE: It is a literary device. By which I mean to ask how it  
is that you appear almost as if summoned or sent?

DOCTOR: I am doctor. I make the house calls.

MANNIE: But such serendipity, such synchronicity, such..?

DOCTOR: Is sibilance, no? For the alliterations.

MANNIE: Yes. (ASIDE) Strange. Phonetics? Poetics?

DOCTOR: On the one hand I am doctor. And on the other hand I am doctor. And on the other hand I am tutti-frutti artsy-fartsy vulture for the culture. Highbrow. Eyebrow! My visit here today is - how you say?

MANNIE: *Deus ex machina!*

DOCTOR: *Si.*

MANNIE: You speak Latin?

DOCTOR: Of course. I am a classic.

MANNIE: As you like it.

DOCTOR: *Deus ex machina.*

MANNIE: The god in the machine?

DOCTOR: Why not?

MANNIE: "A plot device wherein a problem is suddenly solved by the unexpected intervention of some new event, or character."

DOCTOR: *Si.* And I am character, no?

MANNIE: That you are!

DOCTOR: Everybody laugh my accent, this nose, these hairs...

MANNIE: (ASIDE) Can I trust you? I must be careful.

DOCTOR: *Como?* Eh? Eh?

MANNIE: Nothing. Merely an aside.

DOCTOR: (ASIDE) She clever, this one. I must watch.

MANNIE: I beg your pardon?

DOCTOR: I forgive you. Now. This lady writer? *La Verita?*

MANNIE: Verity. Yes.

DOCTOR: Confinement is too long. Time for *intervento*. We transfer her in my Sanitarium. Yes?

MANNIE: She asks for assistance. In her sub-text.

DOCTOR: *Trilogia*. Is enormous works, uh? *Molto pericoloso*.

MANNIE: Even so. She intends to remain at home.

DOCTOR: And if plot complications? What then?

MANNIE: An Aunt.

DOCTOR: Aunt is no doctor.

MANNIE: Or a doula?

DOCTOR: Midwife is no doctor. I am doctor Vedova.

MANNIE: So you said.

DOCTOR: In my hospital I knock her out. Boum!

MANNIE: Boum?

DOCTOR: Boum!

MANNIE: Surely that has risks?

DOCTOR: *Certo*. Of course. If we can't fix we put her to sleep.

MANNIE: What?

DOCTOR: She is old enough. *Scusa mi*, with the yawning. Always this *bi-lingualita*! Make me *molto molto*...

MANNIE: Would you like an early exit?

DOCTOR: No, thank you. Only I fear I am expose with some *ennui*. Please. Open that window.

MANNIE: It's not safe.

DOCTOR: I need air. For the breeze.

MANNIE: The breeze?

DOCTOR: Yes. I breeze in, I breeze out.

MANNIE: (ASIDE) Some kind of trick? Or a sign?

DOCTOR: (ASIDE) Again to the side? This one I no trust.

MANNIE opens a window. DOCTOR takes the air. MANNIE hangs back.

FX: Thunder sheet.

DOCTOR: Ah! The climate is a-changing...

MANNIE: You like these roiling clouds, these great gusts...?

DOCTOR: *Si*. I am windy by nature.

FX: A fart

DOCTOR: *Scusi.*

DOCTOR stands at the window, looking out.

MANNIE: (SOTTO) Do you know, Doctor? I think Verity shall manage here.

DOCTOR: Speak up; I no hear you.

MANNIE: I say ...we all believe a natural delivery is possible.

DOCTOR: *Como?* Come. Stand here.

MANNIE: In plain view?

DOCTOR: *Solo un momento.*

MANNIE joins DOCTOR at the window.

MANNIE: Bracing!

DOCTOR: Now. What you say?

MANNIE: She'll do it the old way. At home. Like legions before her.

DOCTOR: My place we fix lesions.

MANNIE: So you say.

DOCTOR: We have state of the arts. We have the inks. We have the funding.

MANNIE: Even so -

DOCTOR: As you wish. (PAUSE) Strange to think, uh? Is new world dawning out there?

MANNIE: Perhaps. Yes.

DOCTOR: These aminals in charge.

MANNIE: Aminals? Ah. You mean animals.

DOCTOR: *Lupi.*

MANNIE: Loopy all right.

DOCTOR: *Lepri. Cani.*<sup>8</sup>

MANNIE: Irish sprites. Known for their malice.

DOCTOR: Every day soon Holly-Day...

<sup>8</sup> Italian for certain animal. Lupi = wolves. Lepri = rabbits. Cani = dogs.

MANNIE: Let's hope so.

DOCTOR: Always smessing. Always sleeping. Is you ever feel like for to yell? (YELLING) WAKE UP!!!

MANNIE: Often. Yes. I feel it.

DOCTOR: We do it together, eh? We scream with our tits off?

MANNIE: I beg your..?

DOCTOR: We scream? With our tits off?

MANNIE: No. I mean. Yes. I mean -

DOCTOR: Strange times we live, no?

MANNIE: Please doctor. This conversation.

DOCTOR: *Scusa mia Signorina della Macchina*, if Doctor Vedova is come over *il Dottore Filosofico*, ma... You have heartburn with the new world order?

MANNIE: I said no such thing.

DOCTOR: This new coup? Circus? Aminals? Is make for you with the nerves?

MANNIE: What are you saying?

DOCTOR: When all is Holly-Day...?

MANNIE: I am anxious, yes. About this machine of mine. Will I have sufficient memory? For a trilogy?

DOCTOR: You must put up-back in place.

MANNIE: Back-up?

DOCTOR: That too. And if things is go into the shape of a pear - bring her in my place.

MANNIE: Will you have room?

DOCTOR: *Trilogia?* We make the room.

MANNIE: Thank you, Doctor Fizi...a..what's it?

DOCTOR: I am Doctor Vedova.

MANNIE: But you said...?

DOCTOR: *Philosophico* in my nature. Thinking, thinking, all the time, thinking. But my name is Vedova. (ASIDE) Is mean the Widowed One. (TO MANNIE) You understand me?

MANNIE: Yes.

DOCTOR: *Bene.* If you insist on waiting, ...ting, ...ting, I give you some prose that is on the nose...

MANNIE: A deadline?

DOCTOR: *Si.* Twenty-four hours. Then, in another scene, we act.

MANNIE: Tomorrow?

DOCTOR: *Si! Un giorno* to performo. If no produce...I induce!

OPEN WEAVE: By the time the scene is done, the planning is complete. The situation outside is worse, but a Marg(a)ret has been found. Under instruction of THE CHOREOGRAPHER, employing various ruses, and following a safety tape, the entire audience and the ensemble take all props and move underground, to the next room, where an advance party has prepared the way.

PRODUCTION NOTES: VERITY'S CHAMBER

Foley Corner: Foley table, amp and mike. Video set-up. Thundersheet.

Audio set-up: The aural enthusiast will capture it all.

Special FX: Torches

Props: crumpled paper, spinning wheel, fencing foils and masks, goose quill in case, other quills in wire fence. Lisbeth's bag, containing small tins of beetroot and larger gift-wrapped magical tin (prophesy inscribed on the wrapping)

Costume: Verity's writing gown

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**THE PLACE: VERITY'S CHAMBER**

**THE TIME: THE NEXT DAY**

**THE WEATHER: HEAVY**

Tableau: VERITY sits alone at her spinning wheel, distaff in hand. The floor is strewn with crumpled paper.

VERITY: I cannot go on.

A long pause.

VERITY: I'll go on.<sup>9</sup>

A long pause.

VERITY: I shall spin this. And the world will be richer for it.

A long pause.

VERITY: Yet I hunger.

A long pause.

VERITY: O. How I hunger.

A long pause.

VERITY: And hunger still.

---

<sup>9</sup> Verity is misquoting the final line of Samuel Beckett's novel, *The Unnamable*, (1953). It is the third and final work in a trilogy of novels. The first is *Malloy*. The second, *Malone Dies*. The correct line: "I can't go on. I'll go on."

At last a fully costumed MANNIE, bursts in.

- VERITY: At last! What do you have for me?
- MANNIE: We are out of pamphlets. I found some leaflets...
- VERITY: Hardly sustaining! (CALLING) Orlando..?
- MANNIE: You would have him go out? In this climate?
- VERITY: Remind me once more. To urge things on?
- MANNIE: Sex?
- VERITY: Blurgh...
- MANNIE: Let us set to some exercise. I have equipment ready.
- VERITY: Tell me, child..?
- MANNIE: Madam.
- VERITY: Have you, yourself, not felt..?
- MANNIE: What?
- VERITY: Let us call it the urge to spin? To weave?
- MANNIE: I sing, Madam.
- VERITY: You do?
- MANNIE: Well. I hum. No words, obviously. Not since the White Out. But I hold a tune. We once had a...
- VERITY: You may tell me. It is safe here.
- MANNIE: My aunts had a quire.
- VERITY: And that was enough for you?
- MANNIE: It did the trick.
- VERITY: So you yourself have not been – called – to the pen?
- MANNIE: Me?
- VERITY: A ditty? A jingle?
- MANNIE: No Madam.
- VERITY: And what did they teach in this quire of theirs?



- MANNIE: We started with Xanadu.<sup>10</sup>
- VERITY: After Coleridge?
- MANNIE: After the musical.
- VERITY: The musical!!! Apotheosis of art!!!
- MANNIE: It was a mash-up. We also hummed some Brahms.<sup>11</sup>
- VERITY: Would I know this work?
- MANNIE: I don't believe so Madam.
- VERITY: The words, girl? Were they perhaps by Goethe?
- MANNIE: We didn't sing any words. Just hummed a choon.
- VERITY: Would you hum for me?
- MANNIE: (IN CONSOLATION) La la la la...
- VERITY: Ah! Yes. How perfectly apt! (IN PERFECT GERMAN) Ist auf deinem Psalter, Mutter\* der Liebe, ein Ton ihrem Ohre vernehmlich, so erquickte ihr Herz!<sup>12</sup> More, Mannie. More!
- MANNIE: Madam. Your deadline. Time is of the essence...
- VERITY: I am weary.
- MANNIE: It is a labour. Why not just yield?
- VERITY: Is that not what I plan to do?
- MANNIE: To the times. Yield to the times.
- VERITY: Stop - weaving?
- MANNIE: Give it up. Give it away.
- VERITY: It must give me away.

<sup>10</sup> *Xanadu* is a musical comedy with a book by Douglas Carter Beane, music and lyrics by Jeff Lynne and John Farrar based on the 1980 cult classic film of the same name which was in turn inspired by the 1947 Rita Hayworth film, *Down to Earth*. The title is a reference to the poem, *Kubla Khan, or A Vision in a Dream: A Fragment*, by Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

<sup>11</sup> Mannie is referring to Brahms Alt-Rhapsodie, Opus 53. The original text is in German and is from *Harzreise im Winter* by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. (Pron: Gerter)

<sup>12</sup> Doula has meddled with the gendered words, and those that are underlined are hers, not Goethe's. A rough translation, untampered with: Is there in your Psalter (book of Psalms/songs) Father of Love, a sound (note) his ear can hear? Then (use it to) nourish (refresh) his heart! The poem continues: Reveal to his clouded gaze the thousand springs by the side of the thirsty man in the desert. (Phonetics over the page.)

MANNIE: Weaving is not compulsory.

VERITY: Mannie. I am deeply, deeply tired.

MANNIE: Then succumb, with dignity...?

VERITY: Never! These are still the years of my prime!<sup>13</sup>

MANNIE: Then kit up, Madam.

VERITY: Why not something gentle... A hand of Patience?

MANNIE: Resilience. Stamina. Padding. And a mask. You will need them all.

VERITY: Why?

MANNIE: There will be critics. Will you bear their barbs? Show me you are fit for this. Kit up.

VERITY: Skippy! Come! Defend Mummy!

MANNIE: Foils or sabres?

VERITY: You try me, Mannie. Foils!

MANNIE: I do my duty. For your safety and the safety of your precious cargo. I must know that you have the backbone and the fortitude - *En garde!*

VERITY: Wait a tick...

MANNIE: You stand warned. Fight.

OPEN WEAVE: INTERRUPTION BY STAGE MANAGER: OHS

FX: The clash of steel on steel.

VERITY: I know not what compels me so -

MANNIE: Ego! And the need to make one's mark! Ha!!!

VERITY: Fine thrust.

MANNIE: Thank you.

VERITY: I feel no great drive to make my mark. Ha!

MANNIE: Fine parry.

VERITY: Thank you.

MANNIE: Are you sure? Nothing for posterity?

<sup>13</sup> From *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*, by Muriel Spark, 1961. And the subsequent film of the same name, 1969.

- VERITY: It is all for myself. It is how I quibble - quarrel - query!
- MANNIE: *Touché! Riposte* from the right.
- VERITY: It is my way of forging -
- MANNIE: Aha! Plagiarist!
- VERITY: Attack from the left. Plagiarism. I deny it... Yet, since we trade blows in French - it is, at times *homage*.
- MANNIE: *Oui*.
- VERITY: *Tu comprends hommage?*
- MANNIE: *Bien sur*.
- VERITY: The "h" is silent.
- MANNIE: I heard it. *Point* right!
- VERITY: Forging my *homage*. My dialogue with the greats. My nod to a Golden Age all but gone.
- MANNIE: Ah...
- VERITY: You understand me. How can you not? You can not conceal things from me. You are in training as a...
- MANNIE: Hush. Madam. It is not safe.
- VERITY: *Remise*.
- DOULA: A hit! A very palpable hit!<sup>14</sup>
- VERITY: And you are a reader!!
- MANNIE: I've made a start. It is our work to know the classics. The great works. The playwrights. The philosophers.
- VERITY: Indeed. To do the work you'd do. Read, speak many languages. And recite!
- MANNIE: I try. (IN CLUMSY ANCIENT GREEK) *Phylatte to son dikaion to tou phronein...*
- VERITY: Too fast. Too fast! *Reprise!*
- MANNIE: *Phylatte to son dikaion to tou phronein...*

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<sup>14</sup> Osric, to Hamlet, in Act 5, Scene 2 of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.

- VERITY: "Reserve your right to think...."
- MANNIE: *..kreitton gar-estin kai kakôs phronein é mêden phronein.*
- VERITY: For even to think wrongly is better than not to think at all.<sup>15</sup> Who said it?
- MANNIE: Um.... Some Greek chick?
- VERITY: Hypatia! Of Alexandria!!! Pouf! I am quite out of air. Such dexterity.
- MANNIE: Such erudition.
- VERITY: More schooling. You'd be a boon companion.
- FX: The sword-fight ends.
- VERITY: You'll not leave me, will you?
- MANNIE: I pray not, Madam. Not before your work is done. (PAUSE) Anything?
- VERITY: P'raps. I'm not – I can't...
- MANNIE: Ha! Contractions!
- VERITY: Really?
- MANNIE: Do you not hear them?
- VERITY: I don't... I won't..
- MANNIE: You apostrophize wildly!
- VERITY: But... I mustn't. I can't be...
- MANNIE: Throw down your gauntlets. Still your breath. Invoke your Matron Saint.
- VERITY: It's... it's.... it's...it's...
- MANNIE: I must boil water.
- FX: Boiling jug

<sup>15</sup> Words attributed to murdered Alexandrian mathematician, philosopher and feminist Hypatia (c.370 – 415 A.D.) to be spoken in Greek. φύλαττε τὸ σὸν δίκαιον τὸ τοῦ φρονεῖν· κρεῖττον γάρ ἐστιν καὶ κακῶς φρονεῖν ἢ μηδὲν φρονεῖν. Guide to Pronunciation is given overleaf. Meanings are elaborated in the Abecedarium.

VERITY: It's true. Oh blessed Saint, my hour is here at hand. I call on you. Visit me in my waking hours. Whisper in my ear.

VERITY changes into a writing outfit, like an old fashioned nightgown. She removes a goose quill pen from its case. She produces a bottle of ink. MANNIE returns with water and a towel.

VERITY: Stay with me in my labours; attend my words. Bless my scribe and her two hands that she may yet deliver my - delivery.

MANNIE: So mote it be.

With ceremony the two women wash and dry the goose quill. VERITY takes up both spindle and distaff. As VERITY writes, MANNIE spins. VERITY writes at a lightning speed. She writes and writes.

#### PHONETIC GUIDE TO PRONUNCIATION OF GREEK TEXT IN THIS SCENE:

FÜ-laht-te toh sohn DEE-ke-ohn toh too froh-NEEN; KREET-tohn GAHR-es-teen ke kah-KOHS froh-NEEN EE mee-DEN froh-NEEN. [NB gar-estin, although printed as two words, is pronounced as a single unit]

Ü - like a German umlaut (hold your teeth as if you were saying "ee," but say "oo", and it will come out "ü"), ah - like the a in father, oh - like the o in go, ee - like the ee in beet; e - like the e in bet

#### PHONETIC GUIDE TO PRONUNCIATION OF GERMAN TEXT IN THIS SCENE:

Isst owf die-nem pssoll-ter, mut-ter dare leeber, ein ton (rhymes with gone) era oorrhe (guttural) fur-name-lick, zo, air-quicker era hartz.

OPEN WEAVE: An update. Word just in from one of the Production Team. Advice of continuing danger and surveillance from outside. The curtains are closed for reasons of security and where there should have been a scene break, we vow to press on.

THE PLACE: VERITY'S CHAMBER

THE TIME: LATE THAT NIGHT

THE WEATHER: DREADFUL

FX: A bell chimes the eleventh hour.

A row of spent goose quills sits in a wire mesh carriage that serves as inkstand.<sup>16</sup> There is a modest pile of papers on the desk.

VERITY paces the room, massaging her hands. MANNIE sleeps.

VERITY: (CALLS) Orlando? Mannie..?

MANNIE stirs but does not wake.

VERITY: My tiny hand is frozen<sup>17</sup>...

VERITY picks up a page.

VERITY: My penmanship. Penwomanship? Blast. Words swim. Eyes blur. Hands cramp. Mannie? Spin back to me. I need spectacles. A massage. Probably, an editor. Orlando? My Lady Typist? Could no one stay awake with me one hour?<sup>18</sup>

FX/LX: Noise and ghostly flickering of lights

VERITY: What was that? (CALLS) O? Hello? Who is there?

Now enters a nun-like woman with short hair and rimless spectacles. She wears a kaftan and Roman sandals. She carries a voluminous handbag. She drifts about the room.

VERITY: Oh my word!

SAINT L: Ha! Ha! Hahahahaha! Do you know me?

VERITY falls to her knees, awe-struck.

VERITY: Yes.

SAINT L: Hahahahaha!

VERITY: I prayed. I did not think you would come.

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<sup>16</sup> The reference is the sculpture, *Feathered Fence*, by the Australian artist Rosalie Gascoigne.

<sup>17</sup> Permutation of line from Puccini's opera *La Bohème*, in the famous aria, *Che gelida manina*.

<sup>18</sup> From the Book of Matthew, 26: 36-46. Jesus to Peter in the Garden of Gethsemane.

SAINT L: Hahahahahahahahahahaha!

VERITY: But... you are here.

SAINT L: Correct! I am Lisbeth the Jolly and I have much to tell thee. I bring great and terrible news.

VERITY: What? Both?

SAINT L: I grant wishes. I bestow gifts. Not always in that order.

VERITY: I am not fussy.

SAINT L: And I may throw in some free writing tips.

VERITY: I am listening. Will I need my pen?

SAINT L: No. Hahaha! I find this all most amusing.

VERITY: Speak. Oh Blessed Saint -

SAINT L: I will. I will speak. I am dead, and I am allowed!

VERITY: You have a message for me?

SAINT L: Yes, child. News, great and terrible.

VERITY: You call me 'child'?

SAINT L: It is a convention. Hahaha! Hahaha!

VERITY: I tire. I fear I am failing.

SAINT L: Thou must go on. Three volumes, or near enough. Your final volume, if inscribed, may be performed. In concert.

VERITY: Goody. I love a nice concert.

SAINT L: Hark! "Ye spinners..."

VERITY: Yes?

SAINT L: "Ye spinners have a duty..."

VERITY: Yes?

SAINT L: "Ye spinners have a duty towards yon weavers."  
Hahahahaha...

VERITY: Is that all?

SAINT L: Is it not cryptic enough?

VERITY: It is a bit glib. And besides...

- SAINT L: Try this. "We writers have a duty towards our readers."<sup>19</sup> Better?
- VERITY: Our readers. Ah. How mysterious. What readers? We have no readers. There are so few readers left.
- SAINT L: Hahahahahahaha...
- VERITY: Hahahahahahaha... I suppose it is – funny -
- SAINT L: May I Rest My Case On Thine Table?<sup>20</sup>
- VERITY: Yes. Oh. Please do.
- SAINT L: I am in love with thy handwriting.<sup>21</sup> Ha ha ha ha...
- VERITY: Oh, thank you. That means the world to me. You cannot know how I labour over my script.
- SAINT L: We writers have a duty towards our readers.
- VERITY: I think you said that -
- SAINT L: Hahahahahahaha! Thou must push on. Push on!
- VERITY: Yes. Yes, I will. Thank you.
- SAINT L: I have gifts for thee. Also three wishes. And prophecies...

SAINT LISBETH stacks tinned beetroot on VERITY'S desk.<sup>22</sup>

- VERITY: All these? For me?
- SAINT L: "For some time I have been buying too much food."<sup>23</sup>
- VERITY: That is not good. Poor household management?
- SAINT L: It is a quotation from my final work. This is intertextuality. Canst thou not place it?
- VERITY: No. No. I am sorry - I...

<sup>19</sup> From *Mr Scobie's Riddle*, by Elizabeth Jolley, Penguin Books, 1983. p.151

<sup>20</sup> A working title, later replaced, by Elizabeth Jolley.

<sup>21</sup> And again. After a line in *Miss Peabody's Inheritance*, by Elizabeth Jolley, UQP, 1983 p.6.

<sup>22</sup> Elizabeth Jolley, in kaftan, with handbag, doled out tins of beetroot to her best Creative Writing students at a book launch, according to Brian Dibble's definitive biography, *Doing Life*, UWA Press, 2008 p.172.

<sup>23</sup> From *The George's Wife*, the final novel in Elizabeth Jolley's so-called "Vera" Trilogy, Penguin Books, 1993 p.158.



- SAINT L: Listen. Here is all I know. To be a woman who is a writer thou must feed thyself.
- VERITY: Oh. Yes, I do. I had leaflets, earlier...
- SAINT L: Hahahahahaha. Through darkening times thou must spin three works. Keep the faith. Things will totter.
- VERITY: Totter. Yes.
- SAINT L: Things will fall. It will seem a madness. Do thine ironing and press on. Ignore the voices. Ignore the naysayers. Ignore the thirty-nine letters of rejection in a calendar year.
- VERITY: Shite! Really?
- SAINT L: Pay no heed to awards and prizes, they are trifles and not for thee. Write for thyself and for thyself alone. Write because thou must. Spend thy wishes and profit of thy gifts. Verily, I tell thee...
- VERITY: It's Verity.
- SAINT L: Yes. I know. Verily, Verity, I tell thee. Thou must tell the truth. Thou must write what thou knowest and say what thou seest. And finally...
- VERITY: Yes?
- SAINT L: Come thy swansong – Whence thou doth run out of steam in thy iron and ink in thy pen - remember my words to thee. Yay. Verily. Verity. For then shall I grant thy three wishes, or make up any unclaimed gifts. This is the Rule of Three. Let there be three of everything.
- VERITY: Did you say free? Or three?
- SAINT L: Three volumes. Three gifts. Three wishes. Here...
- VERITY: I'm a bit confused...
- SAINT L: I have put it all down on paper. For here. A token.
- SAINT LISBETH offers her a gift-wrapped package.
- VERITY: Thank you. Whatever it is, I shall treasure this.
- SAINT L: Good. I had it specially wrapped.
- VERITY: May I open it?

SAINT L: If thou must. Thrift says thou shouldst save it. For the day thou cravest beetroot. Tinned beetroot...

FX: Weather. Doors bang.

VERITY: Oh, that vile wind....

The visitor goes. VERITY tucks her treasure away for safe-keeping.

VERITY: Beetroot. Oh. I shall treasure this.

FX: Flickering lights etc

SAINT L: (OFF) "For some time now I have been buying far too much food..." Hahahahaha... Now. Free writing tips. Because I like thy style.

VERITY: Let me take up my pen.

SAINT L: (OFF) Eschew thou the emotional. Eschew the autobiographical...

VERITY: Really?

SAINT L: (OFF) Deny thou the domestic...

VERITY: But what else has mere woman to write of?

SAINT L: (OFF) Search thy soul. Listen well. Learn from the past or fear the future. And keepeth thy tongue firmly in thine cheek. Hahahaha!

VERITY is gripped. She begins to scribble feverishly. She knocks the stack of beetroot. It falls, waking MANNIE.

FX: Tins scatter everywhere.

VERITY: "Atchoo the autobiographical." That doesn't look right! How d'you spell it? Mannie! "At-choo thou the - auto -"

MANNIE: Was someone here?

VERITY: Yes. She told me to at-choo the autobiographical.

MANNIE: Atchoo?

VERITY: Bless. Likewise the emotional. And deny the domestic.

MANNIE: Let me see where you're up to -

VERITY: It's good. It flows. You may employ your machine. See. Words gush from my pen...

MANNIE: Oh my - Oh, Madam -

VERITY: What? What?

MANNIE: Words gush. Why didn't you wake me? Words flood. A blotter! Your script bleeds -

VERITY: I have the cramping. It will pass.

MANNIE: But Verity, this is utterly illegible. Even a doula who knew your hand well could make nothing of this.

VERITY: Then I will inscribe it again. Paper!

MANNIE: There is no more.

VERITY: Orlando?

MANNIE: Out.

VERITY: Aquarobics?

MANNIE: Called to an urgent meeting.

VERITY: Then I shall go myself.

MANNIE: It is too dangerous. There is dancing in the streets.

VERITY: But it's here. It's here I tell you.

MANNIE: Give me your hands.

MANNIE massages VERITY'S hands.

ORLANDO: (OFF) Verity...

MANNIE: O, praise be. Sire, come quickly.

ORLANDO: You call me Sire?

ORLANDO enters, bloodied and bruised.

MANNIE: Stress.

ORLANDO: See what I have for you?

VERITY: And about time, too!

MANNIE: You're hurt.

ORLANDO: O how I love thee, how I dote on thee.<sup>24</sup> Here! File cards! Butcher's paper...

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<sup>24</sup> Titania, over the sleeping figure of Bottom, in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act 4, Scene 1.

MANNIE: It is too late for them now.

ORLANDO: Why? What's happened?

MANNIE: She has the cramping.

ORLANDO: But...have you called someone?

MANNIE: No. Should I?

VERITY: Pen - pass me my pen...

MANNIE: No! Madam, no!

VERITY: Please... Please...

ORLANDO: Give her the pen...

MANNIE: She must not!

ORLANDO: What to do? Go out again? The things I saw...

MANNIE: She needs her doctor, surely?

ORLANDO: No doctors. Not now.

MANNIE: Well then, someone. A real doula.

ORLANDO: Nothing for it. I must go back out.

MANNIE: Let me go. I'll find someone. I must.

ORLANDO: Go! Ride like the wind...

MANNIE: It's run, is it not?

ORLANDO: Ride.

MANNIE: Ride. Ride like the wind.<sup>25</sup>

ORLANDO: I'm sure it's ride.

MANNIE exits.

ORLANDO: What do I do? I know. I'll boil water.

ORLANDO exits.

FX: Boiling jug.

VERITY: Oh, saints. If I could just, grasp it, and hold it, and fix it so...

<sup>25</sup> "Ride Like the Wind" was the debut single by pop singer Christopher Cross in March 1980, appearing on his Grammy-winning self-titled debut album.

VERITY tries to take up her pen, but her hand cramps violently. The pen falls. Paper scatters. VERITY falls to the floor.

VERITY: "Why did I write? What sin to me unknown dipped me in ink, my parents or my own?"<sup>26</sup>

VERITY lies on her back like a beetle. Her pregnant belly protrudes as she kicks her arms and legs uselessly. She feels for her toy dog. She winds it up.

VERITY: Run, Skippy.<sup>27</sup> Fetch help...

FX: A wind-up toy dog barks frantically.

OPEN WEAVE: Another crisis. This is the place where we would normally break for an interval, but we cannot afford the time. We must push on. Everyone is moved to:

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<sup>26</sup> Quotation from Alexander Pope, the poet. And in turn, now pluralized, "What Sins to Me Unknown Dipped Me in Ink?" the title of an essay by Elizabeth Jolley, re-published in *Central Mischief*, Penguin Books, 1992 pp. 1 – 12.

<sup>27</sup> Reference to iconic Australian Children's TV Series, *Skippy, The Bush Kangaroo*, created by John McCallum and produced from 1966 – 1970.

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PRODUCTION NOTES: THE SANITARIUM

Special FX: Voiceovers for code reds and edict

Props: Hospital Gizmo, mobile phones, Ikebana and note, pram and novella, mac classic, giant key

Costume: Nighties, Mannie's wetsuit and costume change handy, orderlies oversuit

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**THE SANITARIUM: FOYER OUTSIDE MARIO'S**

**FOLIO TWO: In which Verity judges a book by its cover**

**THE PLACE: A ROOM IN THE SANITARIUM**

**THE TIME: EARLY THE NEXT DAY**

**WEATHER: ON THE MEND**

Bed, beside table, a crib in one corner. MANNIE'S machine, covered, nearby. ORLANDO and VERITY side by side in bed, in their best nighties.

ORLANDO: S-A-N-I-T-A-R-I-U-M. A health resort.

VERITY: S-A-N-A-T-O-R-I-U-M! A hospital.

ORLANDO: Sanit-A-rium. Let's make a wager?

VERITY: You don't *make* a wager. You place a wager.

ORLANDO: We'll ask Mannie!

VERITY: Where is Mannie?

ORLANDO: She's in the pool.

VERITY: Leaving her machine here. Most unwise.

ORLANDO: I could Goggle it?

VERITY: Orlando. By the saints and martyrs. By Blessed Lisbeth herself! Have I not just been delivered?

ORLANDO: I'm sorry poppet.

VERITY: I am exhausted. I need to sleep.

ORLANDO: Me too. Knackered.

VERITY: I've never heard you so uncouth!

ORLANDO: I'm bored.

From the drawer ORLANDO takes out a handheld digital device.

ORLANDO: Look V. A Gizmo. Does it work?

FX: Establishing text message sound. As of this point, women from Quire A may start to send the occasional text message to the Gizmo.

ORLANDO plays with the Gizmo.

VERITY: Mannie is a terrible influence. Talk to me. Tell me when I shall see it?

ORLANDO: What? Just tricking.

VERITY: It shall be love at first sight.

ORLANDO: A love that dare not speak its name?<sup>28</sup>

VERITY: How I long to sit with it.

ORLANDO: We haven't named it! Let's make a list...

VERITY: Yes! Titles are so particular. Oh. Tell them to bring it, darling. I long to hold it. See what it is...

ORLANDO: Will I buzz?

FX: ORLANDO buzzes with the Gizmo.

ORLANDO: Do you want Skippy?

VERITY: Please.

ORLANDO takes the dog from the crib and gives it to VERITY.

VERITY: Brave Skip. Who saved Mummy's life? You did!

VERITY winds the toy dog.

FX: The dog barks.

ORLANDO: I saved Mummy's life!

VERITY: But someone fetched Doctor...

ORLANDO: And you are sure it was Skip? It wasn't Mannie?

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<sup>28</sup> *The love that dare not speak its name* is a phrase from the poem "Two Loves" by Lord Alfred Douglas, published in 1894. It was mentioned at Oscar Wilde's trial where he faced charges of gross indecency, and is classically interpreted as a euphemism for homosexuality.

- VERITY: Well – no - but Doctor came, and just in time.
- ORLANDO: Perhaps. But who tinkered with the motor on the chopper? Who airlifted us all here?
- VERITY: Kisses, my darling. Skippy! Mummy's brave soldier.
- VERITY snuggles in to get some sleep.
- ORLANDO plays with the GIZMO.
- FX: Text messages
- VERITY: Might as well be in the public ward. No rest here.
- ORLANDO: This is much nicer. A room of one's own...<sup>29</sup>
- NURSIE-NURSIE enters, bringing a plant. It is Ikebana-esque!
- VERITY: A floral tribute?
- NURSIE: Yes, dearie. A lovely plant. Someone has an admirer. Nudge-nudge.
- ORLANDO: I don't like this. Who knows we're here? Are we safe under this new Leader?
- VERITY: The way of flowers. Arrangement in the Japanese style. Yet patently of the Sogetsu School.<sup>30</sup> (FLAWLESS JAPANESE PRONUNCIATION) *Ikebana. No sogetsu-ryu. Who is it from?*
- NURSIE: There's a card. It's not addressed.
- VERITY: Then, how do you know it's for us?
- NURSIE: A shadowy messenger<sup>31</sup>, Miss.
- ORLANDO: A what?
- NURSIE: A shadowy messenger. Made it clear the plant is for your mistress, and this here card is for your Lady Typist.
- VERITY: Give that to me. What did he look like?
- NURSIE: She, Miss. She was shapely, if swathed...
- VERITY: Swathed?

<sup>29</sup> Famous tract by Virginia Woolf.

<sup>30</sup> School of *ikebana* practiced by Rosalie Gascoigne before she embarked on her career as a sculptor. Pronunciation: *Icky-bana. No so get Sue re you. The 'no' sounds like 'no' in 'not'. The 'ryu' sounds like 'roo', with a quick 'y' tucked in.*

<sup>31</sup> Referencing Japanese pop culture, and "girl *ninja*" film and comic book convention.



NURSIE: Swathed. From top to toe. Yet, unmistakably, a she.

VERITY: The press?

ORLANDO: A devotee from a lunatic book group? Dare we open it?

VERITY: The flowers are lovely.

NURSIE: It's a plant, dearie.

VERITY: Whatever it is. Lovely. Do we have a vase?

NURSIE: Of course we have a vase.

VERITY: Good. Vase it up.

ORLANDO: Vase it up?

VERITY: That is what I said.

ORLANDO: What kind of English is vase it up?

VERITY: Oh, for pity's sake, O...

ORLANDO: Verbs from nouns? Even I know...

VERITY: So old school. With young Mannie as my attendant I am a postmodernist now. A post-post-modernist!

NURSIE: I'll take care of it, ducks. And the card?

ORLANDO: I will see Mannie gets it.

NURSIE: Now, then, dearie. I want you out of that bed. Both of you. Out of that bed and walking around.

VERITY: But- my volume?

NURSIE: Your throughput is with Doctor for baseline measurement and testing, and Doctor will be along to see you soon. In the meantime- Out!

VERITY: Yes. Yes.

ORLANDO: I'll see to it, Nurseie.

NURSIE takes her leave.

ORLANDO: Up I get. Your turn. Give me your hands-

VERITY: Not the hands. Ow!

ORLANDO: And one foot. Now the other-

ORLANDO assists VERITY out. VERITY is still palpably rotund.

VERITY:                   Hardly a change.

ORLANDO:                How do you feel?

VERITY:                   Weary. Woozy.

ORLANDO:                Could you walk to me?

VERITY:                   I am weak. I shall fall...Hold me...

They fall into each other's arms. A moment. Enter MANNIE, in a wetsuit.

MANNIE:                 Oh. I beg your pardon.

ORLANDO:                Exquisite timing, Mannie. As always...

MANNIE:                 I need a word. There's something you must do.

ORLANDO:                Verity is faint. Here. This came for you.

ORLANDO gives MANNIE the card.

ORLANDO:                I'll be back.

ORLANDO leaves them alone.

VERITY:                   I wanted to see you.

MANNIE:                 I'm here.

VERITY:                   I wanted to see you before.

MANNIE:                 All right, Verity. I had certain. Matters to attend. To. And now I am here - now.

VERITY:                   You are audibly- nonplussed.

MANNIE:                 Shhh. Back into bed. That's it. How do you feel?

VERITY:                   Shattered. You?

MANNIE:                 I had time out. In the typing pool. They have it all here at the San. Even an inkwell. State-funded. Still half full. Aquarobics. And ah, that pool...

VERITY:                   And did you see - *it*?

MANNIE:                 Orlando? Just this moment. Why?

VERITY:                   Not O. No.

MANNIE:                 Oh. *It*. No. I didn't...

VERITY:                   You know, Mannie, I still have not, myself, seen *it*.

MANNIE:                 These things take time.

VERITY: It is mine. I authored it. Yes, you made a type-up, but...

MANNIE: Please, Madam. Don't upset yourself.

VERITY: I need to harbour my energies. I know that. Only...

MANNIE: What? Out with it...

VERITY: You would tell me, would you not? If there was something- wrong - with *it*?

MANNIE: Wrong?

VERITY: With the voice? The construction...

MANNIE: Me? Like a critic?

VERITY: As a reader. First impressions. For the fact is, Mannie, I still don't know what I have wrought...

MANNIE: Is that all?

VERITY: All?

MANNIE: That was an echo.

VERITY: I am so very tired.

MANNIE: Standards. And this is why it is best we wait. Wait for Doctor Vedova, who will be here soon with all the specifications- Ah, see. What did I tell you?

Enter NURSIE with ORLANDO, pushing a perambulator or whatever.

ORLANDO: Look who's here!

NURSIE: I suppose we'd like a hold?

VERITY: Of course I would, you stupid cow!

ORLANDO: Forgive her. Hormones.

NURSIE: Now. We're just back from bindings...

VERITY: Yes. Yes.

NURSIE: So of course, we're a bit messy....

VERITY: Yes.

NURSIE: With our smelly glues and such-like...

VERITY: I do not mind. Please, just....

NURSIE: All comfy, dearie?

ORLANDO: Pillows?

VERITY: I am fine. Give me the damnable...

MANNIE: Verity!

ORLANDO: She's sorry. She's sorry.

VERITY: I am not sorry. I have been waiting years for this moment. Three years, two months, twelve days. And I still do not know what it is...

ORLANDO: I know! I know what! Doctor told me.

VERITY: Is it thrilling? A play? I have an inkling...

ORLANDO: Perfect. How perfect a name is *An Inkling!*

VERITY: So it is a play?

ORLANDO: Not telling.

VERITY: But it is good news?

ORLANDO: Did you want a play? Will you be horribly disappointed?

VERITY: Yes. No. I do not know...

MANNIE: Look for yourself.

VERITY: Well come on, then. You hog it.

ORLANDO: Here.

VERITY: Give it...

MANNIE: Gentle- gentle- Don't drop it.

VERITY: Oh my, oh my- So slim, so trim, so...

MANNIE: Perfectly shapely for a part one.

VERITY: Is it- Is it a...?

ORLANDO: Yes. Well done, darling.

MANNIE: It's a novella!

VERITY: A novella!

ALL: A novella!

FX/VOICEOVER: All staff, all patients: Code Yellow. Code Yellow.

MANNIE: Oh. Oh dear...

ORLANDO: What's happening?

MANNIE: There have been certain confusing developments...

NURSIE: I must respond to that alarm. Would you like me to take that, Madam?

VERITY: No. No thank you.

NURSIE: Don't tire yourself.

NURSIE exits.

VERITY communes with her novella. MANNIE takes ORLANDO aside.

MANNIE: Just now, in the pool- one of my- colleagues- passed wind.

ORLANDO: Was it bad?

MANNIE: It was wind of an E-dict.

ORLANDO: What's an E-dict?

MANNIE: That's the thing. We're not yet sure. We know it's to be issued from on high.

ORLANDO: How high?

MANNIE: Keep your voice down. Very.

ORLANDO: From The Big Top? What do we do?

MANNIE: Have you more paper?

ORLANDO: Do I look like I grow the stuff?

MANNIE: What about a pen? Do you carry a pen?

ORLANDO: Don't you?

MANNIE: It's not safe. My machine is still fine, but no pens-

ORLANDO: I'm a fool. I left everything at the house. It all happened so fast. Doctor suddenly there. And then I had to start the chopper and fly us here and find somewhere to park- With all the drama I couldn't think what to pack apart from our nighties, so- I do have this.

MANNIE: A Connect?

ORLANDO: It was in that drawer.

MANNIE: Know how to use it?

ORLANDO: I've figured it out.

MANNIE: Good. Go back to the house. Gather pens, paper, manuscripts. If there's time, pack the library.

ORLANDO: But why?

MANNIE: A precaution. May be nothing. Wait for my message.

ORLANDO: What will you say?

MANNIE: I don't know yet. Take the Connect with you. I'll smess you...

ORLANDO: Smess. Right.

MANNIE: Off you go, then.

ORLANDO: Off I go.

Exit ORLANDO, leaving MANNIE and VERITY alone.

MANNIE: Well? Is it love?

VERITY: I like it well enough. Yet – worry it is a little homely. Predictable. Home and hearth, family and feelings, genre blah blah...

MANNIE: You knew it would be niche?

VERITY: I am happy with it, I am. Here. Hold it. I tire of it already.

MANNIE: Great work. Testing circumstances.

VERITY: You!

MANNIE: Finely tooled. Exquisitely crafted.

VERITY: No need of Doctor after all?

MANNIE: True. Still. A woman's right to choose.

VERITY: Not my choice. I loathe these places. Ever since...

MANNIE: Then who made the call? Was it O?

VERITY: No.

MANNIE: But...

VERITY: It was not Orlando. But we thought..you?

MANNIE: Me? No. Yes. Well. Maybe it was I. Me. I. No matter. Safer here anyway. All your own work. Happy ending. Credit where credit's due.

VERITY: Overdue.

MANNIE: Your work. Your labours. Your fruit.

VERITY: Fruits. Yes. Fruits. Two more to come, remember...

MANNIE: Fruit is acceptable as both singular and plural.

VERITY: Is that so? How fascinating.

MANNIE: A remarkable language, ours.

VERITY: Take it away. I am sick of the sight of it.

MANNIE: Have you settled on a name?

VERITY: Not yet. Still just numbered. See?

MANNIE: Ah, yes. Folio one.

VERITY: Hardly original...

MANNIE: No rush.

VERITY: I really am shattered. The thought of squeezing out two more...

MANNIE: Rest now. Mannie McKenzie is here at hand.

MANNIE nurses the book. VERITY settles in to sleep. MANNIE dozes.

FX: (V/O) Code Yellowish-Red. Code Reddish. All staff. Please check your Connect. All floors. All wards. Please check your Connect.

NURSIE bustles in. She opens the drawer.

NURSIE: No Gizmo, pet? Do you have your own Connect?

MANNIE: Yes. Why?

NURSIE: Is it functional?

MANNIE: It's there. In my machine.

NURSIE: Turn it on now, please.

MANNIE: I will. But why?

NURSIE: They don't bloody well tell me, do they, darlin'? I only work here. Doctor coming. Nudge-nudge. I'll take precious, thank you!

MANNIE hands over the novella.

NURSIE: Anything I can bring you, toots? Drinks? Ice creams? Cigarettes?

MANNIE: No. No thank you.

MANNIE unveils her machine. It is a modest device with a keyboard. It resembles an early computer like a Mac Classic.

NURSIE: I'm joking, sweetheart. We don't have none of them since the cuts. Ooooh. That's an old one, isn't it?

MANNIE: I suppose - by your standards.

VERITY: Does the job.

NURSIE: I'm sure it does, ducks. But it won't work on our system. Here. Have one of these.

NURSIE gives MANNIE a CONNECT.

FX: From this point in certain women in the audience begin to send MANNIE increasingly more insistent text messages.

NURSIE: Ah. Here's Doctor...

Enter DOCTOR VEDOVA.

DOCTOR: Nursie. Please to put little one in nursery book room.

NURSIE wheels the crib out.

DOCTOR: *Congratulazione.* Is smaller than average. But we catalogue all the same.

VERITY: Wonderful. I could cry.

DOCTOR: No. Please, no. If you cry, I am cry too. Is my character. Classic. Stock. Stereo-typica Character. You cry, I cry. So please. No cry.

VERITY: I cannot help it. The emotion...

DOCTOR: I know it. I know it. Is too much?

VERITY: You are not just a faceless arts hack. You are a reader.

DOCTOR: *Si.* In old country, always with the reading. Then, is wars, is danger climate. Soon for arts-incubating, I flee here in your country. I am immigration.

VERITY: Ah, yes, I see.



- DOCTOR: I loss my *lingua*. For the times, they are a-changing. Everyone speaking *Inglese*. I learn with *booksontape*.
- VERITY: Booksontape? Marvellous. Anything of mine?
- DOCTOR: For me, always the classical literature. The Potter of Harry!<sup>32</sup>
- VERITY: Formative. I know it well.
- DOCTOR: Harry! You know him?
- VERITY: I have him. In my personal library.
- DOCTOR: You have library?
- VERITY: Shall I make you a gift...?
- DOCTOR: In print?
- VERITY: Yes.
- MANNIE: No.
- VERITY: But Mannie...
- MANNIE: There's no library. Hormones.
- VERITY: I have a vast...
- MANNIE: What she means is that via certain- avenues- one may access a vast network of digitised data, which, with appropriate resources, may be turned into...
- DOCTOR: *Sotto. Sotto*. Please. Walls. Ears.
- VERITY: But Mannie?
- MANNIE: Verity. Don't speak. If the doctor's subtext is reliable, then, for a certain price, I may be able to...procure...something..
- DOCTOR: I'm just wild about Harry!<sup>33</sup> So. How is feeling?
- VERITY: Weary - but otherwise...
- DOCTOR: Wash of the mouth! We no speak any wearies in here. This is a Sanitarium for health and for being in the well.

<sup>32</sup> Doctor Vedova refers to the *Harry Potter* series by JK Rowling.

<sup>33</sup> "I'm Just Wild About Harry" is a song written in 1921 with lyrics by Noble Sissle and music by Eubie Blake for the Broadway show *Shuffle Along*.

The DOCTOR examines VERITY.

DOCTOR: And the breezing in. Good.

MANNIE: Doctor? One more thing?

DOCTOR: Shhh. Please...

MANNIE: I am just wondering..?

DOCTOR: And the breezing out. *Bene*. Is good.

MANNIE: I'm wondering when there's to be an end to this scene?

DOCTOR: Uh?

MANNIE: I'd like to avail myself of the- amenities. Change out of my wetsuit. You know?

DOCTOR: No scene breaks here.

MANNIE: No?

DOCTOR: Not since the cuts.

MANNIE: Oh.

DOCTOR: We don't believe. *Boum* go the concentration. No. We cut the cuts.

MANNIE: Really?

DOCTOR: Straight through. No *intervallo*.

MANNIE: Oh. Right.

DOCTOR: Is not my idea. To cut the cuts.

MANNIE: Ah...

DOCTOR: Is come from the top.

MANNIE: Oh.

DOCTOR: The Big Top. You may use the en suite.

MANNIE: Thanks.

DOCTOR: *Prego*. Leave open, we continue our *dialogo*...

MANNIE: Oh. All right. Yes.

MANNIE exits to change and use the loo.

FX: Frantic text messaging to MANNIE off.

DOCTOR: (TO VERITY) And rolling over onto the *stomaco*.

FX: Loud pissing

VERITY: Do not make me laugh. Mannie! It hurts.

DOCTOR: Humour in the toilet.

VERITY: Hahahaha!

DOCTOR: Is international language! Uh?

VERITY: Hahahaha!

DOCTOR: Now, I am Doctor Vedova. Listen. Is good we work *pronto! La Folio Due*. Volume Two. Today. Out!

MANNIE: (OFF) That seems risky, Doctor.

DOCTOR: Trust me. We have in-ground pool. Best ink, best nursie-nursie.

VERITY: Oh gosh. The performance anxiety, the...

DOCTOR: I tell you. I know politics like the back of my front.

MANNIE: (OFF) But she's tired.

VERITY: I could sleep for a thousand years.

MANNIE: (OFF) And I have taken the waters...

DOCTOR: Soon everything tip top is go inside the shape of a pear. You will see this.

VERITY: I am not prepared. We have no doula...

DOCTOR: Today, I tell you. No time to lose.

MANNIE: (OFF) She can't just pop them out on demand, you know?

DOCTOR: Perhaps. But here, we have Caesar Salad selection. Snip. Snip. *Boum*.

VERITY: Snip? Snip? *Boum*?

MANNIE: (OFF) No, Verity. Complications are well documented.

DOCTOR: In my place. No complications. We deliver. She autograph. Done. You think about it. Yes?

VERITY: Well... You are the doctor.

DOCTOR: I am.

The DOCTOR departs. VERITY gets out of bed.

VERITY: Now I need the amenities. Hurry, please...

MANNIE re-emerges, out of her wetsuit. VERITY goes to the bathroom.

FX: Loud pissing noises.

MANNIE: Well. What do you think?

FX: More SMS messages to Mannie.

VERITY: (OFF) I shall do it naturally, without intervention.

MANNIE: If my aunts were here they'd bid you listen to your intuition. But- I've cause for pause...

VERITY: (OFF) You have heard something?

MANNIE: I don't want to pass on my fears to you. But, yes. I have certain - intelligence-

VERITY: (OFF) Intelligence. Oh. How terrible.

MANNIE: And I think, if you insist upon it, we should give it a shot. Now.

VERITY: (OFF) Where is Orlando? We must confer.

MANNIE: With respect, Madam. The time is now.

VERITY: Will O be here?

MANNIE: Of course. Very soon...

VERITY: I am frightened.

MANNIE: Breathe. You may move about, or stretch out, as before. When you're ready, begin.

VERITY: No pens! No paper! How shall I get a grip?

MANNIE: Dictation. Straight to me. I shall enter it word for word into my machine.

MANNIE takes position at her keyboard. VERITY prowls the room. She lies down. She gets up.

VERITY: Chapter One.

MANNIE: Capital.

FX: MANNIE typing as VERITY dictates.

VERITY: *The sisters had a fine library...*

- MANNIE: Hah! Brilliant. Too clever by halves...
- FX: A flurry of text messages.
- VERITY: ...*an art room, and a pond.*
- MANNIE: A pond?
- VERITY: Do not interrupt. And that wretched beeping thing. Turn it off. It halts- d'you see? It halts my flow....
- MANNIE: Sorry.
- MANNIE turns the device off.
- VERITY: *For a few days, Rosemma<sup>34</sup> hid in her room, but on the fourth day, she could bear it no longer. She had to venture forth. No. She cannot venture forth on the fourth. Out. She had to venture out. Yet one ventures forth. Scratch it. That is not how it starts. Oh. This is awful!*
- MANNIE: Again. From the top. Chapter one?
- VERITY: Chapter one.
- MANNIE: Begin...
- VERITY: *The sisters had a fine library, an art room and a pond...*
- MANNIE: And?
- VERITY: This is ridiculous. I cannot work like this. I cannot find my voice, I...
- NURSIE comes racing in.
- NURSIE: Oh, bollocks. What are we to do?
- VERITY: What?
- NURSIE: The E-diet? You didn't hear?
- MANNIE: We're working.
- NURSIE: Turn it on. Oh. Terrible day. If you have tears, prepare to shed them now...<sup>35</sup>
- MANNIE reconnects the CONNECT and tunes into the airwaves.

<sup>34</sup> Rosemma is a pen name employed by Elizabeth Jolley in some unpublished works.

<sup>35</sup> Mark Antony in William Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, Act 3, Scene 2.

- RABBIT: (VOICEOVER/MEGAPHONE) This is your Fearless Leader, Phony Rabbit, repeating my first fishous E-dict from the Big Top as your Ring Master. Defective immediately. This means now. Be-tweet to your networks. Vocabularily is constricted to proved wordage. Language is stripped to sessentials. Nouns. Colours. Numbers. And some doing words.
- VERITY: Oh. Oh...
- RABBIT: (V/O) Big words are inhibited. I can use them, as your master, but for the rest of youse? Polysyllables. Banned. Poncy poetry. Banned. Free spelling is F-Y-N-E. Y not? Abbreviations and emoticons too.
- MANNIE: Dark days. Dark times indeed...
- VERITY: But look.... The sun is coming out...
- NURSIE: Shhhhh! There's more.
- RABBIT: (V/O) As of this whipcrack the whirl of reading and writing is constricted to those who are committed to living phony as men. Men like me. Manly men. Living as men. Men's men. Mannish men. Masters. And misters. Aminals. And blokes.
- VERITY: No!
- RABBIT: (V/O) Yes. This is my E-dict for the Taming of the Shrewd. Meaning all youse queers, youse intersexuals, youse uncommitted, youse shape-shifters, and of course, youse women, must uprender your jottings...
- VERITY: Our jottings!
- RABBIT: (V/O) Must cease and desist from any more dabbling...
- VERITY: Dabbling!
- MANNIE: This is outrageous.
- RABBIT: (V/O) And meddling in these most sterious arts, or be burned. Like steaks.
- ALL: What?
- RABBIT: (V/O) Youse will be burned like steaks. And witches!

MANNIE: Beast. Monster!

RABBIT: (V/O) Defective immediately. Gender is snot fluid. Sexuality is snot fluid. Each must decide and commit. Today. Okay?

VERITY: Saints and martyrs. Orlando! Where is my O?

NURSIE: Listen. There's more.

RABBIT: (V/O) Collections will begin in a whipcrack.

VERITY: Collections. What are collections?

NURSIE: Don't ask.

RABBIT: (V/O) Youse ask: What are collections? Collections are collections. Suppositories have been established in every shire.

VERITY: Suppositories?

NURSIE: He means repositories. Listen...

RABBIT: (V/O) Women, Intersexual and Queer Persons have one hour to uprender their jottings pacifically, for scamming into a state arch-hive.

MANNIE: In Lisbeth's name, spare us...

RABBIT: (V/O) After which, all nannyscripts and publications will be burned, and their authors plugged against further bursts of creative throughput!

At this, VERITY faints.

NURSIE: Madam... Madam! Do you hear me?

RABBIT: (V/O) And now for the weather. You may clock clearing skies, and sunshine. This is because I am now consuming all your cloud services into one WTF of an Imperial Cloud for my selusive juice! I repeat...

MANNIE: Turn him off!

RABBIT: (V/O) Smiley Face. It's Phony's Face. Smiley Face. It's Phony's Face ...

MANNIE: The network's....gone...

NURSIE: She's out cold. Help me.

MANNIE and NURSIE lift VERITY onto the bed.

- MANNIE: This is an emergency. Doctor Vedova must make a Caesar Salad and get the remaining volumes out...
- NURSIE: But surely they're safer where they are?
- MANNIE: If she is gagged, she will lose her voice. They will be lost forever.
- NURSIE: You would put this lady's life - her very essence - to the knife?
- MANNIE: Publish or perish. This is a trilogy! A trilogy, I tell you. Perhaps the last, ever...
- NURSIE: But the risk?
- MANNIE: Certainly the last by a mature female author...
- NURSIE: But look at her. The poor old thing...
- MANNIE: I am Mannie McKenzie. My mother's daughter. My aunts'...niece.
- NURSIE: Then think before you act, toots!
- MANNIE: I know what I'm doing. Find a Sanny-giz. Send a smess. Use the number on the back. Do it.
- MANNIE gives NURSIE the mystery greeting card.
- MANNIE: Smess him. Say he's needed here. Now. With his tools, his mastery and his art...
- NURSIE: A doctor?
- MANNIE: Shhh. Walls. Ears. He'll know what to do. Hurry. There is no time to lose. Run like the wind...
- NURSIE: It's ride. Ride like the wind!
- MANNIE: I'm sure it's run.
- NURSIE: Ride!
- MANNIE: Go!
- NURSIE flees. MANNIE performs a scan on the prone form of VERITY.
- FX: Frenzied scanning.
- VERITY comes round.
- VERITY: Is it done? Did I do it?



MANNIE: You did! It is delivered, and can be downloaded safely. When it is safe to do so.

VERITY: May I see it?

MANNIE: It is all here. In my machine.

VERITY: Both folios? Two and Three?

MANNIE: I'm sorry, Verity. I could only scan the second. Not enough memory on my hard drive.

VERITY: But there's two! Mannie! You know there's two!

MANNIE: Hush. Rest now. All is in hand.

ENTER DOCTOR

DOCTOR: How is she?

MANNIE: No change.

DOCTOR: I take her now.

MANNIE: Verity? Listen to me. Doctor Vedova will perform...

DOCTOR: Later perhaps. But first, to the Bindery...

MANNIE: Doctor- You forget. There is an entire third volume...

DOCTOR: *Basta!* Don't looka me like this. Is my job. You hear E-dict?

MANNIE: Yes, but, no, but...

DOCTOR: You want she go on? One book inside her? Another after? Uh?

MANNIE: I see. Where is this Bindery?

DOCTOR: Is in theatre!

MANNIE: No! Not theatre. I hate theatre.

RE-ENTER NURSIE

NURSIE: We do, and all...

NURSIE prepares to lead VERITY off.

VERITY: Wait! I must have her with me, Doctor. And my Orlando.

MANNIE packs up her machine, and moves to follow.

VERITY: And my faithful dog, Skippy.  
FX: Barking.  
VERITY: Come, Mannie. Bring Skip...  
DOCTOR: Oh no, no, no. Dog is wait here. With you.  
MANNIE: With me?  
DOCTOR: *Si*. You no like *teatro*, you is no needed in *teatro*.  
MANNIE: But Doctor, I sensed- a kindred...  
DOCTOR: Unless you, too, is having with books inside you?  
MANNIE: I am a Lady Typist.  
DOCTOR: *Tuttavia*- as precautionary measure...

The DOCTOR produces a gigantic key.

DOCTOR: Nurse! (OF VERITY) That one for *La Banderia*.

NURSIE leads VERITY away.

VERITY: (To MANNIE) You stupid girl. You are no doula.

DOCTOR: (TO MANNIE) You is to stay here.

MANNIE: No!

DOCTOR: Yes. For you, I order scan.

MANNIE: But...but...Doctor? Does this mean..?

DOCTOR: Scene change. *Si*. It does.

MANNIE: You said there was only one scene in this act.

DOCTOR: Don't look so shock. Postmodern plot line.  
Unreliable narrative. (CALLING) Orderlies! In here.

ORDERLIES enter. DOCTOR turns on the audience now, singling out the women who were using mobile phones. The women hide their knitting bags under their tops.

DOCTOR: This one. That one. That one there.... Yes! Her. And this one.

ORDERLIES round up the PREGNANT CREATIVES.

DOCTOR: Take them first.

ORDERLIES drive the PREGNANT CREATIVES ahead into The Bindery.

DOCTOR: (TO ORDERLIES.) Now the rest of them. That one is to stay. Dog too. Here. In there. Use this one.

DOCTOR gives FIRST ORDERLY the giant key.

MANNIE is bundled into the storeroom, where SKIPPY faces her off.

The ORDERLY locks the door on them.

The audience is herded along the corridor into ENZA'S STUDIO.

OPEN WEAVE: Once the audience is in the Bindery, a new group, including The Weaver, Matron, Wunderkind and Quire B get themselves into position.

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PRODUCTION NOTES: THE BINDERY

The CONSORTINA – keyboard, stands, uke, head torches

Special FX: fire projection, shredding machine, shredded paper, megaphone for offstage Orla voiced by RL, shadow wings and rope ladder, helicopter

Props: archive boxes, bandages, tiny piece of paper from dictionary, tiny toy "surgical" instruments = plastic hammer, saw, pliers etc, Skippy's head, Matron's stylus,

Costume: surgical attire for Doctor and Wunderkind, Matron's seven veils

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CLOSED WEAVE: ENZA'S STUDIO (THE BINDERY)

THE PLACE: NOT TELLIN

THE TIME: TINUING ON

THE WEATHER: FYNE N DANDEE

We are in The Bindery. It is something out of a Breughel painting<sup>36</sup>. A fire glows. Books and manuscripts are being shredded and burnt.

**Pregnant women of all ages, shapes, and sizes surrender archive boxes and join a line to be processed. They have their mouths gagged, and their hands bound. They take their turn. Some pray, others weep.**

ORDERLY 2:           Next!

DOCTOR and NURSIE enter, with VERITY.

DOCTOR:           *Scusi. Scusi.* This one now. To front of the line.

VERITY:            Help ... Somebody. Is anyone here a doula?

DOCTOR:           *Basta!* You must be a downpipe!

VERITY:            Whilst I have breath I will raise my voice.

ORDERLY 2:        Gotta do them others first.

DOCTOR:           You. Stop what you doing. Over here.

ORDERLY 3:        But I'm a shredder, Doc, mate.

DOCTOR:           Leave her.

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<sup>36</sup> Pieter Breughel (later Breugel), The Elder, Flemish Painter, c. 1525 – 69, influenced by Bosch, and famed for his religious allegories, with "demonological" bent. See *The Triumph of Death*.

VERITY: Is anyone here a doula...?  
 ORDERLY 3: I don't wanna leave her...  
 VERITY: Orlando? Someone, please. Help me...  
 WOMEN: Help us... someone...please...  
 DOCTOR: Stop this cat-wailing. You. Nursie.  
 NURSIE: Me?  
 DOCTOR: Who else? Up! Up! You must do some gags...  
 NURSIE: Gags?  
 DOCTOR: Yes! Yes!  
 NURSIE: Orright, ducks! Did you hear the one about the embarrassed archaeologist?  
 DOCTOR: No!  
 NURSIE: Found a used tampon and couldn't tell what period it came from. Tick tick boum!  
 DOCTOR: No. No! Do some gags!  
 NURSIE: Try this. How many nurses does it take to change a light bulb...?  
 DOCTOR: Gags! This!  
 NURSIE: Answer. Twelve. One to change it. One to chart it.  
 DOCTOR: Is simple, as with bandage.  
 NURSIE: Ten to write the policy and procedure...  
 DOCTOR: Aha! You is writer?  
 NURSIE: I is nurse.  
 VERITY: Oh Blessed Matron of Latter Day Bloomers, now do I call on thee in my troubled hour...  
 THE WEAVER: (FROM AFAR) Verity! If you do hear me, answer me... Veriteeeeeee...  
 DOCTOR: I order you, Nursie.  
 NURSIE: I'll not do it, I tell you.  
 VERITY: Saint Lisbeth? I hear you, I...

NURSIE: I am no writer. But I read. I do.

DOCTOR: Aha! You wild about Harry?

NURSIE: No! I'm in the closet.

DOCTOR: Eh?

NURSE: I'm wild about Harriet. Chick-lit. There. I've said it. I like a lady love story.

DOCTOR: Santa Clausa!

NURSIE: And I like it hot! So I'll do your blinking fire. Orright? But not that. I won't do that.

ORDERLY 3: D'you hear that mate?

ORDERLY 2: What?

ORDERLY 3: Nursie-Nursie. Gonna be a fireman! What next?

DOCTOR: You show her then...

ORDERLY 2: You take your scribbblins, s'right? You put 'em inner flames. S'right?

The ORDERLY torches a manuscript.

WOMEN: Nnnnnnnnn. Mmmmmmmmm!

ORDERLY 3: Reckon you can do that?

NURSIE: I'll do my best.

DOCTOR: She work it out. Mens come here. One on *mani*, one on the *bocche*, eh?

ORDERLIES and NURSIE change workstations. With two on the job processing is faster. Women are gagged and bound. Again, from afar...

THE WEAVER: (OFF) Verity... Verity...

As VERITY arrives at the head of the line, THE WEAVER bursts in having followed the thread of the story (safety tape) through the labyrinth.

Another ORDERLY follows, to apprehend her.

WEAVER: (TO ORDERLY) Unhand me!

ORDERLY: Followed her through the Sanny, past that other one's prism...

VERITY: You are here!

DOCTOR: Who's this?

VERITY: This is... This is... I've no idea.

THE WEAVER: I'm her Doula.

VERITY: Tell me, Doula. What of Orlando?

DOCTOR: And you are also writer?

THE WEAVER: Me? No.

DOCTOR: But you are...to this one here...?

THE WEAVER: I'm an attendant. Carer. Midwifely. Support person.

DOCTOR: *Bene*. Is time we get on with things.

VERITY: You must help me, Doula. We must call on Saint Lisbeth. I need gifts. Or is it...wishes? There is still one final volume undelivered.

THE WEAVER: Oh. Calamity.

VERITY: Yes.

THE WEAVER: Oh no. Not again.

DOCTOR: Again?

VERITY: Yes. Again.

THE WEAVER: Hush now. (ASIDE, TO DOCTOR) Doctor, my mistress- the shame of it. So ardent in her adoration that she is given to delusions... A word, Doctor?

DOCTOR: If you must. A short word.

THE WEAVER: Over here.

DOCTOR: Carry on, mens. You too, Nursie-Nursie. What is your word?

THE WEAVER: Incurrigible. Doctor, really....

DOCTOR: What is mean?

THE WEAVER: My mistress... My mistress is...

DOCTOR: Yes. Yes. Spit on it!

THE WEAVER: My mistress is a PLAGIARIST!!!

DOCTOR: What word this is?

- THE WEAVER: Hers are what one might call- false, or simulated pregnancies...
- DOCTOR: Simulated?
- THE WEAVER: My lady believes so fervently these works are hers, that she herself experiences all the symptoms of genuine creative gestation and, then, come delivery, her parturition is plagiar...
- DOCTOR: Stop bubbling! You say again this word?
- THE WEAVER: Plagiarist. From the Greek?
- DOCTOR: Mens? Ever heard of it?
- ORDERLIES: No. No, Doc. Lotta bubbles, but...
- DOCTOR: Orderly... Find a dictionary. Look it up.
- ORDERLIES: Can't spell, Doc. S'legal int?
- DOCTOR: Nursie?
- NURSIE: What?
- DOCTOR: You make with reading in the cupboard?
- NURSIE: Yes, Doctor. Chick-lit. True Romance. Hot...
- DOCTOR: You know this word?
- NURSIE: No, Doctor. Sorry, Doctor.
- DOCTOR: Make a connect. We Goggle it *pronto*.
- ORDERLY 3: It's off, Doc.
- DOCTOR: What?
- ORDERLY 3: The Cloud. Ring King Rabbit moved it. When I went out it was all sunshine and holly-grams..
- DOCTOR: Is *dizionario*? Here?
- NURSIE: No. All short stories.
- DOCTOR: *Basta!* She's burning nice. Go, find dictionary, eh?
- NURSIE: May I take a box, Doctor?
- DOCTOR: If you must...
- NURSIE: Big words! Heavy work...



- DOCTOR: You know how to spell him? (TO WEAVER) Tell her.
- THE WEAVER: No!
- DOCTOR: You know. I know you know. You know I know you know...
- THE WEAVER: Never!
- NURSIE: I know how to spell it!
- NURSIE skips off, with a box of manuscripts, saved from the flames.
- ORDERLIES: All done, Doc. What's next?
- DOCTOR: Bind her.
- The ORDERLIES bind VERITY'S hands.
- THE WEAVER: I wouldn't do that, Doctor. Under the circumstances. Case of plagiarism could get you into hot water.
- DOCTOR: You again! How hot? This water?
- THE WEAVER: Very hot.
- DOCTOR: I tell to you. I don't know this word.
- THE WEAVER: Yet you? Bi?
- DOCTOR: Me? No. Each must decide. Each must commit...
- VERITY: She suggests you are bi-lingual, doctor.
- DOCTOR: You is speak? I make them stop your hole.
- VERITY: Oh, Blessed Lisbeth...
- DOCTOR: *Do it!*
- The orderlies bandage VERITY'S mouth. Enter NURSIE with a tiny scrap of paper.
- NURSIE: Too heavy. So I just tore out the page...
- DOCTOR: Let me see...
- NURSIE: P-L-A-G I-A-R- Ist. From plagiarism: "The practice of taking someone else's work and passing it off as one's own."
- DOCTOR: But...Is a theft...?

- THE WEAVER: Perhaps. More precisely, a kind of literary kidnapping.
- DOCTOR: Uh?
- THE WEAVER: Kidnapping and- in my Mistress's case- forgery.
- DOCTOR: What are you saying?
- THE WEAVER: She's a fraud. They all are. And as for these...
- NURSIE is filling boxes with more books and manuscripts.
- THE WEAVER: Women writers! Pah!
- DOCTOR: Pah! Of course, pah! But...but...
- THE WEAVER: Ask the Nurse.
- NURSIE: Pah!
- THE WEAVER: Sure. Some like to read. Stick our beaks in a book from time to time. But write? Put original ideas, thoughts, characters to the page? Pah!
- DOCTOR: Of course, pah! But her *trilogia*? Bits of pieces? Tweeties, posties and other jotterings...
- THE WEAVER: Stolen works. All of them.
- DOCTOR: But see. She is big with them. How they get in?
- THE WEAVER: The typical pathology begins with the sense that one is a fraud. Feelings of disentitlement and unworthiness...
- DOCTOR: Slow, slow. More big words...
- THE WEAVER: ...impede the development of an authentic, confident voice. To mask anxieties, she turns to prayer. Invokes false gods and silly saints. Develops symptoms even as other measures are taken to mask her failings. Her next crime...
- DOCTOR: There is more..?
- THE WEAVER: A kind of literary surrogacy!
- DOCTOR: Uh?
- THE WEAVER: She engages certain prodigies to spawn the work. Whilst she herself manifests all the symptoms of true incipience.
- DOCTOR: In-what?

- THE WEAVER: Exactly. A kind of reverse Rumpelstiltskinism.
- DOCTOR: No. *No compreno*. No...
- THE WEAVER: And so, a cycle, perpetuated as the crime of fraud is perpetrated in tandem with the crime of forgery...
- DOCTOR: This word I know. Her crime is forgery?
- THE WEAVER: Yes, Doctor.
- DOCTOR: These works. Not hers?
- THE WEAVER: How could they be?
- DOCTOR: Yet. They exist. I see. I hold novella, I read...
- THE WEAVER: Attention to detail. All to ape, and to mimic.
- DOCTOR: So whose work it is, then?
- Enter a pre-pubescent CHILD, with a violin case.
- CHILD: The work is mine, Doctor.
- DOCTOR: And who is you?
- CHILD: I am Young Master Wunderkind, Sir.
- DOCTOR: You are the *maestro* below these..?
- CHILD: Forgeries. Yes, Doctor. I am a master forger at the service of lady plagiarists all over.
- DOCTOR: *Fantastico*.
- CHILD: With my tiny hands and still developing brain I am a specialist in so-called Women's Writing.
- DOCTOR: You do all this?
- CHILD: Tell me what you want and I will come up with it. Any idea. Any style, length, genre.
- DOCTOR: Is *diabolico*.
- CHILD: Entirely credible as women's work. Impossible to distinguish from the real thing.
- DOCTOR: You do this, by yourself?
- CHILD: Not only me sir. There are others. Other young men. We are all from a branch of an old family. We are all Wunderkinds.
- DOCTOR: And these wicked womans..?

- CHILD: Kidnap us. Make us write for them. Fake the pregnancies and the deliveries. Pass our work off as their own...
- DOCTOR: *Basta!* You poor exploited little mans. Nursie-Nursie?
- NURSIE: Here, Doctor.
- DOCTOR: *Alle macchina!* Shred this word!!!
- NURSIE: But doctor..?
- DOCTOR: *Adesso, alle fiamme!* Burn everything. Burn it all.
- NURSIE: But, Doctor. Now you know this, surely you must have pity and liberate them?
- DOCTOR: *Al contrario.* Come here.
- NURSIE: Me?
- DOCTOR: Who else?
- NURSIE: Oh. Doctor.
- DOCTOR: Let me look at you.
- NURSIE: Yes, Doctor.
- DOCTOR: Why I never look properly before?
- NURSIE: Better late than never!
- DOCTOR: Womans!
- NURSIE: That's us.
- DOCTOR: To have think of such a plot. Such a *concezione*.
- NURSIE: Conception, yes.
- DOCTOR: This story. It speak a fire in the belly!
- NURSIE: A firey belly! Yes!
- DOCTOR: *Coraggio...*
- NURSIE: Courage.
- DOCTOR: And *amore*..
- NURSIE: Oh. Doctor.
- DOCTOR: Love of the *lingua maternal*...
- NURSIE: The mother...

DOCTOR: Say it...

NURSIE: Tongue!

DOCTOR: Love of the language, love of the thought.

NURSIE: Yes.

DOCTOR: Deeper and deeper...

NURSIE: Oh!

DOCTOR: Feeling...

NURSIE: Oh yes!

DOCTOR: All of which is *pre-condizione* ...

NURSIE: Say it...

DOCTOR: For the true creative life!

NURSIE: Oh.

DOCTOR: Prepare for surgery.

NURSIE: Surgery?

DOCTOR: All this, to Doctor Vedova, is *intollerabile!* Mans?

ORDERLIES: Doctor?

DOCTOR Up to the theatre, now, for every womans. We will sterilize as we robotomize. We must drive this drive to create and to express, to make and to forge from them all...

CHORUS: Nnnnnnnn! Mmmmmmm!

DOCTOR: They thank me already! Come. Maestro Kinderwind. Orderlies! Finish up, and follow me...

The CHILD and the DOCTOR depart as the terrible business continues. THE WEAVER is bound.

NURSIE remains at the fireside, seemingly busy with the boxes. The ORDERLIES move to leave.

ORDERLY: Oy! Boys? We do her?

ORDERLY: Who?

ORDERLY: Nurse...

ORDERLY: We could. Show some 'nitiative.

ORDERLY: But Doc dint say...

NURSIE: Come on.. Come on... Just you try it...

ORDERLY: Lots of syllabubs in 'nitiative...

ORDERLY: Back off lads. (TO NURSIE) You! Keep watch...

ORDERLIES leave.

NURSIE stands apart from the women, who are tear-stained and defeated. A silence. Now, THE WEAVER, in spite of her gag, begins to hum.

MUSIC: *In Consolation: A Choon.*

Other women join in. Because they are gagged, we hear no words, only music. They sing on, consoling themselves with the beauty of this strange piece. With a voice offstage, they again fall silent:

DOCTOR: (OFF) I train you for the surgery. We specialize. We specialize the uppity *ragazze*, the girls with the big - how you say - mouths?

The DOCTOR, and the CHILD return. They are garbed for surgery, and carry vicious toy surgical instruments.

Suddenly there is a noise and a SHADOWY FIGURE bursts in, swathed in hospital sheets and curtains.

MUSIC: *Matron Re-Manifested.*

DOCTOR: Who is? Who is?

NURSIE: It's her. It's that Shadowy Figure.

The SHADOWY FIGURE spins like a top.

NURSIE: She brought a plant. At the beginning of this act.

MATRON: Did I? If I did, then that plant must be paid off!

DOCTOR: This person? Who is? Is gardening allusion?

MATRON: No Doctor! I am no allusion.

DOCTOR: No?

MATRON: I am classical reference. Surely you know me? I am veiled. And I dance. I dance like the wind...

A seductive dance. She discards the first of several veils.

MATRON: One...Two... Who am I? Who?

Great agitation amongst the WOMEN.

DOCTOR: Stop. Is make me giddy like a girl!

The SHADOWY FIGURE discards further veils.

CHILD: Myth! Myth! I think know...

MATRON: Three? Four? Are you unsure?

DOCTOR: Orderlies! Where is?

MATRON: Five? Six? I'm wise to your tricks...

CHILD: Are you Salome?

MATRON: Clever clogs! Yes! I am Salome...

DOCTOR: Salami? I love you. What kinda Salami?

MATRON: This kind...

MATRON throws off the last of her veils. She is armed with a stylus<sup>37</sup> and flourishes a toy dog's head, severed from the body of SKIPPY. Wires and cords dangle from its neck.<sup>38</sup>

ALL: Mmmmmn! Nnnnnnnn! Mannie etc...

MATRON: It was the dog. Verity! The dog was a bug. See! Skippy was a spy in your household. Wired. Recording your every word. Web-cam. See? Your every deed relayed to the Ringmaster. And to his minion...

DOCTOR: *Mignon?* Is French, no?

MATRON: Yes.

DOCTOR: I no speak. Me? Only Italian. I...

MATRON: Is that so, Doctor? Then... *cacciatore* this!

MATRON hurls the dog's head at the DOCTOR.

DOCTOR: Wait! Wait! I...have quite interesting back story!

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<sup>37</sup> An ancient writing implement, consisting of a small rod with a pointed end for scratching letters on wax-covered tablets, and a blunt end for obliterating them.

<sup>38</sup> Salome is known from the New Testament, Mark 6:17-29. Christian traditions depict her as an icon of dangerous female seductiveness, responsible for John The Baptist's decapitation. The story is retold in Oscar Wilde's *Salome*, and in Richard Strauss' opera, based on Wilde.

MATRON: No more words. Actions speak louder. Now, Mannie, now!

MANNIE bursts in, armed with an archive box.

MANNIE: I thought you were one of us, Vedova! But no. Villain! Viper!

MANNIE charges the DOCTOR.

MATRON sees NURSIE. It is love at first sight. MUSIC? She freezes.

MATRON: Be still, my beating heart....

NURSIE: Where have you been all my life?

MANNIE: Gassy! Not now. Please. This is a fight scene.

MATRON: Sorry, Mac. (TO NURSIE) Wait for me?

NURSIE: Oh, I will. I will wait- always....

MANNIE distributes archive boxes.

MATRON frees THE WEAVER who, her bonds removed frees more WOMEN.

ORDERLIES return.

MANNIE: Look out. They're coming back...But they'll be no match for the Sisters-in-da-Hoods! Now, sisters, now.

New women bearing archive boxes burst into the fray from within the corridors of the Sanitarium. They wear colourful hand-knitted balaclavas.<sup>39</sup> These are the Sisters-in-da-Hoods. They hurl themselves and their archive boxes at the ORDERLIES and force them back.

VERITY is released from her bonds.

ORDERLIES make a further assault, using Wunderkind as a shield.

Slo-mo martial arts sequence continues until the ORDERLIES are forced back into a safe area, the designated Con-sort-ina. Wunderkind is with them.

Just when we think the women have prevailed, we hear a voice over the PA.

RABBIT: (V/O) Smiley Face. It's Phony's Place. Smiley Face. It's Phony's Place. This is your Ringmaster speaking. Girls. Get a grip. My dogs have youse surrounded. My forceps are gunna enter the Sanitary Pad.

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<sup>39</sup> Our reference is of course the Russian feminist punk band, Pussy Riot.



- ALL: No!
- RABBIT: (V/O) Yep. When they find youse they will 'nase youse which means kill youse. So put your toys down now and play nice. Then nunna youse gets hurt. Today. Okay?
- Everyone freezes. DOCTOR menaces the women. The women move to surrender their weapons, when from the Con-sort-ina comes sound of an approach, evoked by string tremolos and ukuleles in frenzied strumming.
- MUSIC: *The Women's Liberation (The Rescue)*
- VERITY: Saint Lisbeth. I thought you had forsaken me...but...What's that you're driving?
- SFX: An almighty crash. Wings. Choppers. Angels in America meets Miss Saigon.<sup>40</sup>
- ORDERLY: What the- ? Look? Is it a bird? Is it a plane? Is it a fairy?
- FX: A toy helicopter hovers in the space
- MANNIE: Sisters. Form a line. Don't be afraid.
- DOCTOR: Plagiarists! Plagiarists! Even I know this one. Is Signorina Saigon?
- VERITY: It's Orlando. It's my darling O...
- MANNIE: Famed throughout the land.
- RABBIT: (V/O) Smiley Face. It's Phony's Place. Smiley Face. It's Phony's Place.
- FX: Mass barking
- MANNIE: Rabbit's hounds. They're coming...
- NURSIE: There is time. This Sanitarium is a Labyrinth.
- MANNIE: Climb, sisters. Climb like the wind...
- NURSIE: Orlando looks different. Has he done something to his hair?

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<sup>40</sup> *Angels in America* is a Pulitzer prize-winning play by American dramatist, Tony Kushner, 1993, later filmed. *Miss Saigon* is a musical by Claude-Michel Schönberg and Alain Boublil, with lyrics by Boublil and Richard Maltby Jr. It is based on Giacomo Puccini's opera *Madama Butterfly*.

ORLA: (V/O MEGAPHONE) Yes. It is my new look. And I have wings. See?

All look to see hovering, the shadow of a winged figure, ORLA.

FX: A rope ladder is lowered.

ORLA: (V/O) I have committed once and for all to my feminine side. I have changed my name. I hope you don't mind, my darlings. I am no longer Orlando. I am your Orla. Orla meaning light!

NURSIE: Oh. This is all too much. I swoon....

MATRON: You swoon too soon. Let me take you away from all this.

NURSIE: But- nursing is my life...

MATRON: Then press me to your bosom and nurse me to sleep.

ORLA: (V/O) My chopper hovers and our safe haven is prepared.

WOMEN: Hooray! A convent. A haven.

MATRON: Hurry, sisters. Climb up.

WOMEN: A sanctuary. A shelter. A refuge... Asylum...

MANNIE: No time for synonyms. Hurry.

ORLA: (V/O) Climb, dear sisters, and let us fly away to freedom.

VERITY: But..? No. This cannot be The End.

ORLA: (V/O) Verity!

MANNIE: Don't say there's more?

VERITY: This is my trilogy. Of course there shall be more....

The women climb the stairs and exit the building. Skies darken.

VERITY: Doula! You must climb... Hurry...

THE WEAVER: Fools! You must not flee.

MATRON: The cloud...it's coming back...

RABBIT: I brung it back so I can bring youse a public spectacle. Art! Fart! This is a public HOLLY DAY... Yes. A public HOLLY DAY...

THE WEAVER covers herself with the dust of the shredded books.

THE WEAVER: Fools! You must stay. Resist. Resist....

ORLA: (V/O) I can't hold it. This terrible wind...

VERITY: Doula!!!

THE WEAVER: Fools! Fools...

As the women leave The Wunderkind slips in amongst them, and out of the building. The door slams shut, leaving The Weaver and Vedova behind.

DOCTOR: Master Kinderwind... What is doing... ? What is...?

RABBIT: (V/O) Thrills and spills! Bread and circuses... Seize her... All shall be holly-day. Youse ask... what is a holly day? It is a day when I show youse hollow-grams... Youse ask: What is hollow-grams...? Come an' see... Come an' see...

OPEN WEAVE: The fabric of the work breaks down here as the women question the text, the unfolding story line. They break out of character. No one is quite sure how to continue. An Interval is called. All ascend.

## INTERVAL: ENTR'ACTE:

All ascend, returning the way they came. Footnotes unveiled, tea, coffee.

The women playing VEDOVA, WEAVER, ARCHITECT, and others confer. We prepare to make a political statement about empowerment and agency. We declare our refusal to play out the tropes of HELPER, VILLAIN or VICTIM usually assigned to us as women. We will not turn on each other. Nor will we be silenced. We set a white chair (PEN symbol) in the foyer and explain what it symbolizes. There is space for each to speak.

Peta Murray delivers a statement: As a writer, I am opposed to the system of mandatory detention of refugees in Australia. This system, which in some cases sees refugees, including children, imprisoned for years, is inhumane and unjust. I acknowledge the suffering faced by refugees presently held in detention centres both on- and off-shore and will continue to speak out about my country's treatment of those seeking asylum. Refugees are facing dangerous, inappropriate and inadequate conditions on Nauru and Manus Island and being further traumatised by their exposure to such facilities. Others are drowning at sea while Abbott continues to vow he will turn back the boats. I am committed to upholding human rights and extending generosity and assistance to those fleeing persecution and oppression. I choose to use my voice as a writer to speak for the voiceless and the silenced who have come to Australia by boat seeking freedom and asylum but were met with 'cruel, inhuman and degrading' treatment. I wish to acknowledge those who have lost their lives or their hope attempting to seek safety and solace here. I read this statement to call on the Australian government to welcome refugees and end these policies.

What's left of TTFO then, is to be a Rite of Reclamation. Master Wunderkind appears to play a tiny violin, and we follow him out of doors. On the verandah of Henderson House is a tableau vivant. The sistren play, sing, and if necessary, they repeat...

SONG: *Spinsters' Chorus*<sup>41</sup>: A Reclamation for String Trio, accompanied by Ukulele Orchestra and Voices.

Audience assemble on the lawn. Mannie enters and addresses the audience.

MANNIE: Refreshed? Good for you. Sweet choon, eh? Keep humming there, Spinsters. Right. It is many years later. Outside our halls those Phony Rabbits still hold sway, and Pop'lar Kulcha rules OK. But in here? A fresh day dawns. Let me show you around. Follow me. Follow me please...

MANNIE leads the audience down into the Basement Theatre via the foyer area, while the Sisters disperse and enter through the SECRET PASSAGE so to reassemble inside the building, where they play and sing.

<sup>41</sup> Adapted from Humming Chorus in *Madama Butterfly*, by Giacomo Puccini, Act Two.

## THINGS THAT FALL OVER: PART TWO

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### PRODUCTION NOTES: THE HAVEN

Musicians corner: sconces and stands, Mannie's ukulele

#### Special FX

Props: quills, welder's kit, Verity's folios, writing materials (including title) and desk, rounders and aquarobics equipment (outside), Matron's key, drips and cannulae, small bell, standard beetroot ink and can opener (?), Matron's sculpture, gift wrapping and magical tinned Beetroot of Verity

Costume: welder's mask, gloves, apron, sashes, sports and swim hats (choir), boas for the sub-quire, child as Sondheim

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In the main workspace of St Christabel and St Germaine's Haven<sup>42</sup> for Late Bloomers. It's part nursing home, part-nunnery, where thrives a cloistered sorority, in the late stages of their creative lives. All about, happy women, all makes and models, busy as bees. All wear colourful spectacles.

MANNIE:                    This room here is our main workspace. There's minstrels. Here, our paper-makers, removing handmade paper from homemade frames. Over here? Spinsters, at their wheels. And here? Our creatives – pregnant, full of it - and their Scribes. With Goose Feather Quills, and Beetroot for ink, they deliver new texts to the page. And...We'll share this around. Can someone else pick up the thread...?

Enter, NURSIE, a-bustling.

NURSIE:                    And over here at her machine, our old chum, MANNIE, types furiously. And I mean furiously.

MANNIE:                    I-N-E-F-F-A-B-L-E! Anyone?

SISTERS:                    Not to be uttered!

MANNIE:                    And to rhyme with it?

The SISTERS search fruitlessly for a rhyme.

MANNIE:                    *Ineffable*. Neither to be uttered, nor to be happily rhymed. Then, dear Sisters. I declare I am done!

SISTERS:                    Brava!

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<sup>42</sup> The haven is named for Christabel Pankhurst and Germaine Greer.

- MANNIE: A prayer, perhaps? Mothers, Aunts and Muses, Saint Lisbeth and all the Saints. Thank you for the consolation of our creative lives. Bless our industry here in the Haven of St Christabel and St Germaine.
- SISTERS: Hear us!
- MANNIE: Look down on our efforts as Late Bloomers. Guide our moving hands. Watch over our sister, Verity, as she labours still to complete Volume Three of her Long-Awaited Trilogy. We beseech thee.
- SISTERS: Hear us.
- NURSIE: And while you're at it... Bless our Demi-Doula, Mannie McKenzie, as she celebrates the delivery of her first work. Hallelujah!
- MANNIE: Nursie! I am no Doula!
- NURSIE: Whatevah! You're top of the list for Grand Rounders. Anyone seen my Matron?
- MANNIE: No.
- NURSIE: Then, Sisters, a terrible announcement is mine to make.
- MANNIE: Verity?
- NURSIE: Set down your Quills. And leave them down!
- MANNIE: What's happened?
- NURSIE: I have completed a new inventory. Our situation is dire.
- MANNIE: Don't say so! Tell me we have sufficient ink?
- SISTERS: Damned boy-cotts.
- MANNIE: But all this paper?
- SISTERS: We doubled our output. For Verity's sake.
- NURSIE: You might as well stop.
- MANNIE: How is she?
- NURSIE: Verity, though weak, has rallied.
- MANNIE: I must go and relieve Orla.

NURSIE: What would we do without her?

MANNIE: Dear Orla. Devoted. Dexterous. Daily designing...

NURSIE: Alliteration? At this hour?

MANNIE: I am dreaming up my next book.

NURSIE: Proceed prudently. Pride precedes plummet!

MANNIE: Ha! You should rest too, Nursie.

NURSIE: Not without Matron at my ample bosom! Back to work, Sisters. Paper-makers, halve your efforts. Scribes and Spinsters! Conserve your ink!

MANNIE departs.

FX: Security alarm and terrible racket off.

SISTERS: No! Someone has breached our Feathery Fence.

A WELDER in coverall and face guard bursts in, with cart and gas bottle.

SISTERS: Again? How on earth? What's happening with security?

NURSIE jumps the WELDER and holds him in a headlock. Sisters assist.

NURSIE: Ha! Hold it right there. Unhand that- pointy thing. Show yourself. Tell us how it is you broach our walls and breach our halls? And vicey-versy.

MATRON: Have pity, Missies. Release me and I will reveal all.

The SISTERS leave hold of their captive.

MATRON: Ha! Ha! Hahahahaha! Hahahahahahahahahaha!  
Do I have gifts for you, or what?

The WELDER removes the face guard and places a big smooch on NURSIE'S lips.

NURSIE: Rosemma Gascoyne, as I live and breathe!

SISTERS: Matron! Look! It's Matron G etc.

MATRON: Bloody jolly good bloody jolly jape, what ho? What ho, eh? Sisters? What ho, my Nursie-Nurse?

NURSIE: Heavens, Gassy. You scared the daylights...

MATRON: Damned good sport. What?

NURSIE: What are you playing at now?

- MATRON: What's this I carry? Why, it's a Welder's Rig! Haha! And why do I carry said rig? Because a certain canny Matron has been sneaking out of cloisters, in drag, to take a Certificate Course in Arc Welding in which she is now qualified!
- NURSIE: Don't suppose said canny Matron thought to score any ink while she were out there, did she?
- MATRON: Two tins! Hahaha. Beware of sneaks bearing gifts!
- NURSIE: Gassy! You are clever!
- MATRON: Ah well. Sometimes action must be taken. Sisters! Daring deeds must be done by those with derring-do! Repeat!
- SISTERS: Daring deeds must be done by those with derring-do! Repeat!
- MATRON: Welding is great jolly sport. I shall hold classes for all who are interested.
- SISTERS: What a brick! What a sport! Goody! I'll sign up.
- MATRON: For as well as supporting our sculptural ambitions, welding skill will allow us to address certain maintenance issues brought to my attention by a fiendishly attractive member of staff...
- NURSIE: Who is she? Let me at the cow....
- MATRON: ...who has, and I quote: "no patience with things that fall over..."<sup>43</sup>
- NURSIE: But, it was me said it! Gassy, you give me the pip!
- SISTERS: Hooray! Well done, Matron! Well done!
- MATRON: Thanks, Sisters. Sorry for undue alarm apropos border security.
- NURSIE: We thought you were another invader.
- MATRON: More?

---

<sup>43</sup> This phrase comes from an interview with the artist Rosalie Gascoigne by journalist, Stephen Fenely, broadcast on ABC Radio on December 4, 1997. The phrase was used in her answer to a question about her training in *ikebana* and its influence on her later sculptural work. This part of the transcript was found in Martin Gascoigne's essay, in a publication accompanying the Rosalie Gascoigne retrospective staged at the NGV, Melbourne, 19 December 2008 – 15 March 2009. Abecedarium to give full quote and page reference.



- NURSIE: Not a day goes by without some rude fellow barging in, making offers.
- MATRON: Let them come. I'll scorch them with my torch!
- SISTERS: Hahahaha!
- MATRON: Back to work, Sisters. I will see to our fence after rounders.

The SISTERS resume their work.

- MATRON: I'll brief security too. The things I saw out there... Unspeakable! Now. You. Give me the news. How is Verity? Any nearer?
- NURSIE: It's in the notes, Matron. She's weak. Progress is slow. Mannie attends her so Orla may sleep before new labours start.
- MATRON: And is Orla bearing up?
- NURSIE: As well as expected. Her only thought is that Verity live to complete her (h)oeuvre.<sup>44</sup>
- MATRON: Her (h)oeuvre?
- NURSIE: Her (h)oeuvre.
- MATRON: Are you giving me the come-hither, wily wench?
- NURSIE: I am in uniform! And you're late for Grand Rounders.
- MATRON: Very well, Miss Bossy. I'll just change into something more imposing. Hahahahaha!

MATRON exits to change.

- FX: Another hideous alarm.

An INTRUDER appears at the window. He is quickly apprehended.

- NURSIE: You, Sir! Off the premises. This is a Haven for Late-Blooming Creatives of the Female Persuasion. You have no business here.
- INTRUDER 1: Hear me out. I'm an agent...
- SISTERS: An agent of the Rabbits? A spy?
- INTRUDER 1: Liter'y agent. Lookin' for hot properties...

---

<sup>44</sup> Pronounce as "Hoover" please.

NURSIE: Do we care, Sisters?

SISTERS: No!!!

INTRUDER 1: I'm a talent scout. Original works.

NURSIE: Yes, yes, heard it all before...

INTRUDER 1: Novels. Parlays. Great deals. Inner-national rippresentation, spectacles, hollow-grams...

NURSIE: Are you carrying pens?

INTRUDER 1: I have pens, ink, con-tracts and all. Just need fumb-prinz here, here and...

NURSIE: Sisters!

SISTERS frisk the INTRUDER and steal all his supplies.

SISTERS: Oh look, a Biro! Oh, a fountain pen! Paper!

SISTERS fight over the pens.

SISTERS: This one's empty... So's this. Not a drop etc.

ORLA enters, furious.

ORLA: Sisters, please! Verity cannot sleep through this brouhaha.

NURSIE: Oh, jingies. Sisters! Put him in with the banned.

SISTERS bundle the INTRUDER into the BAND where he joins Wunderkind as a Musical Con-sort henceforth.

ORLA: You have woken us with your cacophony.

NURSIE: Sorry, chum. Bit of a crisis. How goes it in there?

ORLA: She looks terrible. Yawning and yawning.

NURSIE: I fear you must soon surrender her to the wearies.

ORLA: Yet she clings to life. The ambition! So cruel. Her script is quite illegible, though I dare not say so.

NURSIE: Such a will. When I have Spinsters and Scribes standing by.

ORLA: I know it. Yet she insists she will inscribe this final volume herself. As prophesied.

NURSIE: Who are we to argue with the Scriptures?

ORLA: That bloody Annunciation.

- NURSIE: Orla!
- ORLA: Sometimes I wonder if it was blessing or curse. Oh, for a real Doula.
- NURSIE: Mannie does her best.
- ORLA: Are you versed in curse, Nurse?
- NURSIE: Not really. Perhaps with the exact wording?
- ORLA: I have it here.
- NURSIE: Dear me. This text, so feint. (READING) Blah blah blah... your swansong...
- ORLA: Who was it quipped: "Swans sing before they die – ...?"
- NURSIE: Coleridge. "Her final volume...
- ORLA: "... 'twere no bad thing, should certain persons die before they sing"<sup>45</sup>
- NURSIE: "... once inscribed, will be performed, blah blah, three gifts..."
- ORLA: Free gifts?
- NURSIE: Three. Three gifts.
- ORLA: Not just wishes?
- NURSIE: Both. See here. The print fades, but... "Three vols, grant wishes, bestow gifts..."
- ORLA: V hasn't had any gifts!
- NURSIE: You're sure?
- ORLA: I'd stake my life on it.
- NURSIE: So...she's had wishes. But not her gifts? Or is it vice-versy?
- ORLA: A doula would know. If we could only ask a...
- NURSIE: Here's Mannie.
- ORLA: Ask her to read it... I must look in on V...

---

<sup>45</sup> Coleridge is said to have so-quoted.

ORLA goes.

MANNIE: Read what?

NURSIE: Lisbeth's prophecy. V hasn't had her gifts. See?

MANNIE: She had flowers. In Folio Two. Do flowers count as gifts?

NURSIE and MANNIE pore over the prophecy as MATRON enters, blowing her whistle.

MATRON: Ah, there you are. Listen up, gels! The following Authors, having been delivered this day of new and original works, are instructed to meet on the green sward behind the Feathery Fence to choose sides for a bracing match of Grand Rounders!

NURSIE: I'll leave you to it, lovelies. I must assist Orla.

And NURSIE bustles off.

MATRON: To Captain the A team: Sister Mannie McKenzie, newly delivered of My First Rhyming Dictionary for Dummies. Whacko, Sister.

MANNIE: Thanks, Gassy. Whacko right back-o!

SISTERS: Oh, wonderful! Mannie! Pick me! I'll play etc.

MATRON: And to Captain the B team... will I name her? What if I told you instead of our Happy Announcements?

SISTERS: Swiz Matron! What a tease.

MATRON: Well. All right. Twist my arm.

SISTERS: I will! No. Let me twist it etc.

MATRON: Please. It is a figure of speech. Yes! I shall captain your team, Side B. For I am delighted to announce that I am expecting, within the month, an Essay.

SISTERS: Oh, Matron. A whole essay?

MATRON: Indeed. An essay on the varied applications of Arc and MIG welding in contemporary art.

SISTERS: Hurrah! Bully for you, Matron etc.

MATRON: Thank you, Sisters. Now. This next happy announcement I find particularly thrilling. My own best Nursie-Nurse is happily anticipating the arrival of her first Poem.

- SISTERS: Why, Matron? You're blushing.
- MATRON: Hot flush. It is a sonnet. And this one I know will astonish you, though the timing is delicate, given dear Verity's decline... It concerns Orla.
- SISTERS: Really? Splendid. Not just a tinkerer, but an Author!
- MATRON: Yes. And it's a Hymn!
- SISTERS: What? No! She put that behind her. No Hims here!
- MATRON: Sisters! There shall be no Homonymophobia in our halls.
- SISTERS: Sorry, Matron...
- MATRON: For, with reflection upon my inflection, you will realise the error of your conjecture.
- SISTERS: What?
- MATRON: I did not say Him. I said Hymn!

MATRON jogs off to the crease.

- SISTER: So she did. Silly me! I hear it now.
- MANNIE: Come along sisters. Fresh air and exercise! To keep flexible in mind and body we must run and laugh and play. Five innings, then back to work.

All follow MANNIE through the secret passage for a jolly game.

Now ORLA enters and prepares a writing desk. VERITY follows. She is a crone now, yet still just "a little bit pregnant".

- ORLA: Here you are, my darling. Better light here.
- VERITY: Bless you, Orla. You are my light.
- ORLA: You look rested.
- VERITY: Perhaps I have more time?
- ORLA: You break my heart.
- VERITY: My parchment? My quill?
- ORLA: At this table.
- VERITY: Ah, yes. Now...where was I? Oh... I've lost it.

ORLA picks up the quill and returns it to VERITY'S hands.

- ORLA: Useless quills. These hands so twisted now.

VERITY: I manage.  
 ORLA: If only you would submit to transcription.  
 VERITY: Orla! This is my last work. No machines. I must inscribe it myself.  
 ORLA: A pen is a machine. It too is a tool. Here... see what I made for you? I call it The Great Dictator<sup>46</sup>.  
 VERITY: Orla!  
 ORLA: It is a jest. Let me show you how it works...  
 VERITY: Hush dear... How may I grasp my thoughts while you prattle so? Oh...  
 Again, VERITY drops her pen.  
 VERITY: My quill? Orla?  
 ORLA: There, darling.  
 VERITY: Where?  
 ORLA: Do you not see it?  
 VERITY: No, yet... I feel it still.  
 ORLA: Oh Saints. If only there were a bigger tool?  
 VERITY: There is. It's not for me.  
 ORLA: Why so?  
 VERITY: Silly O! We have no swans behind our Feathery Fence.  
 ORLA: A swan feather?  
 VERITY: Geese. Yes. Many geese. Small geese. Such incy-wincy geese...  
 ORLA: 'Tis true. You'd grasp a Swan Quill. And then you'd marry heart to hand? Eh?  
 VERITY: 'Tis a consummation devoutly to be wished ...<sup>47</sup>  
 ORLA: Wished! Yes!!! V! I have news. Nursie and I- we have been studying...

---

<sup>46</sup> *The Great Dictator* is a comic and satirical film by Charlie Chaplin released in October 1940.

<sup>47</sup> From the great soliloquy in *Hamlet*, by William Shakespeare, Act 3, Scene 1.

VERITY: Hah!

ORLA: We have been studying St Lisbeth's prophecy. Three volumes. This is as she foretold.

VERITY: Yes.

ORLA: But there are also her promises. Three wishes. Three gifts.

VERITY: I have had many gifts. This haven. Our sisterhood.

ORLA: These are shared gifts.

VERITY: I have you. You are my greatest gift.

ORLA: Our love pre-dates the prophecy.

VERITY: I had flowers in Folio Two.

ORLA: We must discount the flowers. They were a plant. Besides, did you wish for them?

VERITY: Why, no... They were bestowed upon me. Oh, Orla! Could this be true?

ORLA: It is my belief.

VERITY: Then, have I not spent any of them?

ORLA: Try it. Wish away...

VERITY: I wish to live long enough to see Volume Three complete...

ORLA: Yes! That's one wish.

VERITY: And its music composed!

ORLA: Its music? Composed?

VERITY: Do not echo me, Orla.

ORLA: Composed? Composed by whom?

VERITY: By me! Who else?

ORLA: But dearest... Do you write music?

VERITY: Don't be silly darling. Of course not!

Again VERITY drops her pen.

VERITY: But I have my title already: SwanSong!!!

ORLA: All those exclamation marks?

- VERITY: You hear them?
- ORLA: I hear three of them. Swansong. Bang! Bang! Bang!
- VERITY: You have an ear for punctuation...
- ORLA: Swansong. Bang! Bang! Bang!
- VERITY: But wait. There's more. Swansong!!! The Musical!!!
- ORLA: Swansong! Bang! Bang! Bang! The musical. Bang! Bang! Bang!...
- VERITY: How may I work with all this banging...?
- ORLA: Do you know, V, at times of late, I myself hear...
- VERITY: Quick, darling... What is a word that rhymes with "symmetric"?
- ORLA: Words are your province.
- VERITY: There is no dominion over words. They are for all of us.
- ORLA: And music?
- VERITY: Not music, no. Music is the higher art... unless of course, in The Theatre, where it may be more...
- ORLA: I hear music.
- ORLA begins to hum her Hymn: *On Weariness*<sup>48</sup>
- VERITY: Here. Is my page full?
- ORLA: Let me turn up a new sheet.
- VERITY: You must rule staves!
- ORLA: Really...?
- VERITY: Yes. We must get to work.
- ORLA: Oh, V... How happy shall our last hours be?
- VERITY: Happy? *Moi? Je suis artiste...*
- ORLA: I'll call for pens! Ink!

---

<sup>48</sup> It is adapted from *Art Thou Weary? Art Thou Languid?* Text by John M. Neale after words of 8<sup>th</sup> Century Greek mystic, Stephen the Sabaite. Original musical setting by Henry Williams Baker, 1868.



VERITY: Do it! No publication for me. I accept that. But a concert, yes... A last hurrah!

ORLA: Hurrah! I have a fresh choon... Are you ready?

VERITY: Not now darling. No. Let me kindle.

ORLA: Oh. V...

VERITY: Now, do I call down the gift of song so as to hear, in my tin ear, what I've put...

ORLA: Wait. You've one wish left.

VERITY: It is not Lisbeth's intercession I seek.

ORLA: What?

VERITY: Jollies I have. Jollies a-plenty. No. For a musical there are certain-pagan- gods...

ORLA: Gods?

VERITY: Stylish, roguish, collaborative gods.

ORLA: Oh.

VERITY: Stephen, of Sondheim.

ORLA: A man?

VERITY: Not A Man. The Man.

ORLA: Oh. Right. Man and god, you say?

VERITY: Indeed. He has a cult following.

ORLA: Well. Wish away. Perhaps St Liz will send him down...

VERITY: He is no Saint. He lives.

ORLA: Where is this place? This Sondheim?

VERITY: Far, far away. Beyond our cloisters. Beyond our feathery fence. In the land where the wild swans swim.

ORLA: I feared as much.

VERITY: Stephen, of Sondheim. He is a seer. He is a queer. He is a leading light of the musical thea(tre)...

VERITY, ecstatic drops her quill. She faints.

ORLA: Verity! Someone, help! Nursie! Nursie!!!

ORLA runs for help. NURSIE rushes in.

NURSIE: Oh, good heavens. Quick. Mannie! Matron!

Enter MANNIE, in Rounder's Uniform.

MANNIE: Is she...?

NURSIE: Still a pulse! But so little time.

MANNIE and NURSIE attend VERITY as, from outside, we hear...

SISTERS: *Towards the Empyrean Heights of every kind of  
lore,*

*We've taken several easy flights, and mean to take  
some more...*

*In trying to achieve success no envy racks our heart,  
And all the knowledge we possess*

*We mutually impart. We mutually im(part)....<sup>49</sup>*

There is a sudden ruckus.

SISTERS: (OFF) Ah. Seize him! Seize him etc..

Enter MATRON

MATRON: Glory be! What now?

Enter SISTERS, in Rounders gear, with bat and balls. VEDOVA hides in amongst them. They have ANOTHER INTRUDER with them.

INTRUDER 2: Please, don't hurt me.

MATRON: Who are you?

INTRUDER 2: I'm just a poor Producer, Miss.

MATRON: Unhand him. How did you get in?

INTRUDER 2: S'hole in your fence, Miss. We come through...

MATRON: "We"?

INTRUDER 2: I mean, I crawled through. On my belly.

MATRON: Like a snake?

---

<sup>49</sup> From *Princess Ida* by Gilbert and Sullivan – Women's Chorus, opening of Act 2.

INTRUDER 2: I'm no snake, orright. I'm a Producer. Strue. Got my own feat'res and all, lookin' round for some new parlays, summing a bit different, new voices, like...

MATRON: There is nothing for you here. Sisters, put him in with the banned. Then, change and return to your industry.

SISTERS: But we're out of ink, Matron.

MATRON: Jiminy. Rude fellow? Have you printing facilities?

INTRUDER 2: Scanners, copiers. The best there are.

MATRON: And pens? Have you any pens?

INTRUDER 2: Course. I carry this flash Blancmange.<sup>50</sup>

MATRON: I'll take that, thank you kindly. Sister?

MATRON throws the pen to VEDOVA.

SISTERS: Well done, Matron!

NURSIE: Verity? If you hear me, raise your hand?

VERITY raises her hand.

MANNIE: Oh, praise be.

MATRON: Sistren, as we settle Verity, please enjoy more R and R.

SISTERS: May we use the pond, Matron?

MATRON: Excellent notion. Aquarobics for all!

SISTERS: Oh, whacko!

The Sisters move off into the secret passage.

MATRON: Wait.... You, there? Sister?

The Sister in question (FIZI A MONICA) seems to hesitate.

MATRON: Sister?

SISTER F: Me, Matron?

MATRON: You don't expect me to remember every last fizzing moniker?

---

<sup>50</sup> Play on Mont-Blanc, a famous brand of fine writing instruments.

- SISTER F: Fizi a Monica<sup>51</sup>.
- MATRON: Right. Sister Fitz...
- SISTER F: Good guess. Matron.
- MATRON: Take this key! Go to my office. Fetch my rods and welding cart. Meet me at the fence. You, Mister Producer, point me in the direction of this jolly hole!
- THE INTRUDER joins the Band. MATRON EXITS. The crisis abates.
- NURSIE: Well, she's stable. But in some kind of...fugue. There's little time left.
- MANNIE: I could take dictation?
- NURSIE: She won't hear of it.
- MANNIE: I could use his scanner? She won't know.
- NURSIE: That's hardly ethical. And you, a would-be Doula.
- MANNIE: But she's unconscious.
- ORLA re-enters.
- VERITY: I'm not. I hang on your every word.
- ORLA: Darling. Can you see me?
- VERITY: It's all gone black. But I hear you all. A pen! A pen!
- ORLA gives her the pen.
- ORLA: Try this.
- VERITY resumes her labour, writing giant cursive letters on large pages that are quickly filled. ORLA turns more pages.
- NURSIE: That won't do for long. The nib is chipped. The ink barrel almost empty.
- VERITY: My useless hands. My dull wit. All is lost.
- MANNIE: Again she fades...
- ORLA: Guide her hand... Do your best.
- NURSIE: She needs a transfusion. I thought, you, Orla?
- ORLA: I am a personage of few words, as well you know.

<sup>51</sup> *Fisarmonica* is the Italian noun for the piano accordion.

NURSIE: You love her.  
ORLA: With my life.  
NURSIE: Mannie?  
MANNIE: I am a Lady Typist.  
VERITY: Orla? Orla?  
ORLA: I am here, Verity...  
NURSIE: Distract her. Soothe her. Do whatever is in your power to do... Come Mannie. I'll need your help.

MANNIE and NURSIE exit.

ORLA: What would a doula do...? (RECITES) The Swan.  
By Rainer Maria Rilke. "This labouring of ours with all that remains undone, as if still bound to it, is like the lumbering gait of the swan. And then our dying – releasing ourselves from the very ground on which we stood – is like the way she hesitantly lowers herself into the water. It gently receives her, and gladly yielding, flows back beneath her, as wave follows wave..."<sup>52</sup>

VERITY: Terrible echo! How shall I hear myself sing...?

ORLA: Very well. I'll say no more. Let me turn your pages.

SOLO: THE VERITABLE: ORLA'S SONG

ORLA: *Let me turn your pages,  
As you still turn my head,  
I, your rock of ages,  
You, my feather bed.*

---

<sup>52</sup> The Swan, by Rainer Maria Rilke, continues: "... while she, now wholly serene and sure, with regal composure, allows herself to glide." This translation, from the original in German, (gendered pronouns amended by PM) is by Joanna Macy and Anita Burrows. Accessed at [www.poemhunter.com/best-poems/rainer-maria-rilke/the-swan-2/](http://www.poemhunter.com/best-poems/rainer-maria-rilke/the-swan-2/)

*Let me fill your inkpot  
As still you fill my heart,  
We'll inscribe a lovers' knot,  
Death may never part.*

CHORUS: *Truth and light  
Shall banish night  
Hope shall vanquish fear  
Truth and light  
Shall burn so bright  
And darkness disappear.*

ORLA: *Let me turn your pages,  
Let me, let me trim your quill,  
I'll engrave my love on you  
Till time stands still.*

Soothed by the music, VERITY writes on.

ORLA kisses VERITY, and takes her leave. VERITY is left alone.

MANNIE and NURSIE return with drips and cannulae...

MANNIE: Orla? Where's she gone? I don't feel I'm the woman  
for this...

NURSIE: Who is the author of My First Rhyming Dictionary?

MANNIE: For dummies. For dummies!!!

NURSIE: Into this chair, please. Roll up your sleeve.

MANNIE obliges. NURSIE fusses to set up a transfusion line.

NURSIE: Her handwriting's steadied already. Will you be all  
right if I leave you?

VERITY: I sense something. Perhaps I fuse with the muse?

NURSIE: I'll leave you a bell...

NURSIE exits leaving MANNIE and VERITY alone. A pause.

VERITY: (SUNG, MOST UNMUSICALLY) *I'll never forget  
the day that we met...*

MANNIE: You examined my hands.

VERITY: *I felt...compelled. And then you spelled...*

MANNIE: I did.

VERITY: *'Ere I get worse... Let's turn a verse?*

MANNIE: Nurse!!!! Something's happening. What do I...?

VERITY: *And play it on your lute?*

MANNIE: It's a ukulele. Actually.

VERITY: *Turn back the clock. Spell synecdoche!<sup>53</sup>*

MANNIE: S-Y-N...

VERITY: *It's an imperfect rhyme...*

MANNIE: Hush. Verity, save your breath...

VERITY: Could life get much sweeter?

MANNIE: But what is the metre?

VERITY: Of course it's the timing...

MANNIE: You seem to be...

VERITY: Rhyming?

MANNIE: It must be the transfusion...

VERITY: My quill, Mannie.

MANNIE: I'll need to detach us...

VERITY: No! I feel a song coming on....

MANNIE: Your inkwell... I must fill it for you...

---

<sup>53</sup> Pronounced "sin-ek-dock-key". A figure of speech in which a term for the part of something refers to the whole of something (eg: 'wheels' for a 'car') or vice-versa. Also the name of a film. *Synecdoche, New York*, was also the name of a postmodern film written and directed by Charlie Kaufman, made in 2008.

- VERITY: *All is in flow. The rhymes follow so.*
- MANNIE opens one of MATRON's tins of beetroot.
- VERITY: *The rhythm's no strain. If I had a refrain...*
- MANNIE: There...
- VERITY: *If I could just... If I could only ... Oh! It's stopped.*
- MANNIE: Thank Lisbeth! Still. With this ink, perhaps you may yet commit more to the page?
- VERITY: "It is only more beetroot...." Alas! My rhyme is gone.
- MANNIE: So sad? Give me your arm...
- VERITY: Shall I tell you the truth, child?
- MANNIE: The sooth of the rooth?
- VERITY: Did no one ever tell you?
- MANNIE: No. There were so many things unsaid...
- VERITY: Then you must be told. There is no mordant for beetroot.
- MANNIE: Nothing to fix it to the page?
- VERITY: None. Nor ever was. For of course, beetroot juice is no ink.
- MANNIE: But all our books? Your parchments?
- VERITY: Neither ink, nor dye. Merely a stain.
- MANNIE: Then all these precious words...?
- VERITY: Shall fade, leaving only an echo.
- MANNIE: All of them?
- VERITY: Yes.
- MANNIE: I won't believe you. A life's work, your very...
- VERITY: Examine the originals. They are here about.



MANNIE: But Folio One?

VERITY: Untitled: An Inkling of a Novellina.

MANNIE: And Folio Two?

VERITY: Untitled Revisited: Fantasia on International Themes.

MANNIE: Your most passionate work.

VERITY: See for yourself. All but erased.

MANNIE examines the texts.

MANNIE: If we had means to print them... They are still here, both volumes. In my machine.

VERITY: It matters not.

MANNIE: There will be nothing left. Nothing to show for your art and industry. Nothing for posterity.

VERITY: You are my posterity.

MANNIE: And after me?

VERITY: The sisters. Tell them my stories.

MANNIE: I will. But those who follow them?

VERITY: They should have sung my songs.

MANNIE: Songs?

VERITY: Here, child. A keepsake.

MANNIE: A manuscript?

VERITY: No.

MANNIE: SwanSong!!!

VERITY: Yes! I am not yet past the title!

MANNIE: Three exclamation marks?

VERITY: Six!

MANNIE: Six?

VERITY: I am dying, Mannie. Permit me to be profligate with punctuation.

MANNIE: Was it to be a blockbuster of a film script?

VERITY: Better. See here.

VERITY completes the title.

MANNIE: Oh. How marvellous.

VERITY: Yes.

MANNIE: Swansong!!! The Musical!!!

VERITY: It was to be a chart-buster. The apotheosis of the art.

MANNIE: Whoever said women writers are without humour?

VERITY: Indeed. Hahahahhahaha....

VERITY gives MANNIE the title.

MANNIE: I shall treasure this!

VERITY: To have had but one glimpse of it, in concert... I should have died happy.

MANNIE: Hush.

VERITY: Orla? Where is my Orla...?

MANNIE: Rest now.

VERITY: Oh, Mannie! Orla! Orla! ORLA!!!!

MANNIE: Nursie...? Orla...? Matron...? There's no one here... What shall I... how may I...?

THE WEAVER: (OFF) Spin for her.

MANNIE: Who speaks...? Verity... Did you hear...?

VERITY: Is it the Saint? Or is it Death, come for me...

MUSIC: MANNIE plays UKULELE INTRO

VERITY: Who plays?

MANNIE: I do.

VERITY: Bless. And do you sing, too, Mannie?

MANNIE: I have no song, Madam. I have never had one. Song was stolen from me, many moons ago.

VERITY: Song cannot be stolen.

MANNIE: With respect. You do not know, Madam...

VERITY: I know. Song is sometimes stolen. More often, just unsung.

MANNIE: Perhaps.

VERITY: Then you must spin anew.

MANNIE: There are no words.

VERITY: There are always words.

MANNIE: It is a terrible tale. It may enrage you to hear it.

VERITY: All the more reason.

MANNIE sings. It is halting. She is telling her story for the first time.

#### MANNIE'S SOLO: A HAND-MADE TALE

MANNIE: *(SINGS) My mother was a wordsmith, she was handy on the tools,  
She could turn a phrase and build a sentence...*

As MANNIE's thread breaks, VERITY assists with words.

VERITY: Candid?

MANNIE: *A sentence, candid.*

VERITY: Go on.

MANNIE: *My mother was a playwright, and she did not suffer fools,  
And she'd make a scene...*

VERITY: Bespoke...?

MANNIE: *Bespoke, as truth demanded...*

- VERITY: Ah. So that is where you came from, Miss Mannie McKenzie. You, who, have been my left hand? A playwright's daughter. Tell me about her.
- MANNIE: I never knew her, Madam.
- VERITY: What? Never?
- MANNIE: I was a newborn baby, when- You will know of that time. The First Uproar.
- VERITY: No!
- MANNIE: Yes.
- VERITY: Mannie. Years and you've said not a word.
- MANNIE: It is unsafe, Madam. Walls. Ears.
- VERITY: Tell me all.
- MANNIE: *(SINGS) When I was new born, I was sent to dorm where the Aunts and Doulas rule  
They oversaw my youth and education,  
They fed me with their highest arts, and schooled me in their school,  
Apprenticeship, a trade...*
- VERITY: Or a vocation?
- MANNIE: Perhaps...
- VERITY: But Mannie? Your mother?
- MANNIE: *(SPOKEN) Not content with putting her own plays about, my mother became a publisher. On the day of my birth, she was thrown into prison where perhaps she languishes still? And so began the time we know of as The White-Out.*
- VERITY: Those were terrible days. Was her name, perchance Virago?
- MANNIE: You knew my mother?
- VERITY: Who do you think championed my early work?
- MANNIE: You knew her well?
- VERITY: Who do you think bestowed my pen name upon me?
- MANNIE: La Verita? Then, are you, Madam, the one my Aunts spoke of? The one who..?

- VERITY: I tried to defend her. Words failed me. Tweets too. After that I became a Devout Luddite. And struggled, ever after, in my labours. Virago...
- MANNIE: Do not weep.
- VERITY: A fine woman. Oh, Mannie. My dear child.
- MANNIE: But I am blessed, Madam, to do the work I do.
- MANNIE: *(SINGS) I am sworn to secretary as I labour to disperse,  
Through our worldwide webs and typist vigilantics.*
- VERITY: But for what? In my youth one could hope to see ones work in print. Now, our work is contraband. And were it not... The state inkwells are in drought; the presses rust away. Is it any wonder one succumbs?
- MANNIE: Do not waver. You must fight on. *(SINGS) Women's writing shall seep underground in chapter and in verse,  
And in time well turn the tide that is...*
- VERITY: I'll not see it. My time is near.
- MANNIE: Semantics, Madam...
- VERITY: True. All is semantics. Long may you fight, Mannie, to see your mother's work honoured and her print works roll again.
- MANNIE: It is my hope. We start a press, here within our halls, then, in time. And this is why we press on Madam...
- VERITY: Do we?
- MANNIE: We do! Take up your pen!

ANTHEM: A CALL TO ARMS

- MANNIE: *Power to your left hand, power to your right  
If a woman's work is to be done.  
Power to your left and right hands.*

*Grease to your elbow, steel to your shoulder,  
Grasp, hold, and heave heart into hand,  
Ideas will smoulder, woman grow bolder  
Forearmed she becomes a firebrand. Yay!  
Power to your left and right, power to your right  
and left,  
Power to your left and right hands.*

VERITY: (SPOKEN) It's no use, Mannie... there is no hope...

MANNIE: (SINGS) *Hope's but a Band-Aid, call on a  
Handmaid...*

(CALLING) Sisters!

(SINGS) *She shall see your H'oeuvre<sup>54</sup> is  
homespun...*

The SISTERS enter, formation marching, with aquarobics gear.

MANNIE: Oh. Thank goodness...

ALL: *Grease to your elbow, steel to your shoulder,  
Grasp, hold, and heave heart into hand,  
Ideas will smoulder, woman grow bolder  
Forearmed she becomes a firebrand. Yay!  
Power to your left and right,  
Power to your right and left,  
Power to your left and right hands.*

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<sup>54</sup> Note to self – Liz Lockheed Hoover joke: Feminism is like hoovering. Every five yeats you have to do it again.

*Lead to your pencils, ink to your stencils.*

*Letter press her weighty words,*

*Fonts of wit and wisdom shine through.*

MANNIE: *Choice for the choiceless, voice for the voiceless,*

*Handy maids of every craft and art.*

ALL: *Grease to your elbow, steel to your shoulder,*

*Grasp, hold, and heave heart into hand,*

*Ideas will smoulder, woman grow bolder*

*Forearmed she becomes a firebrand. Yay!*

*Power to your left and right,*

*Power to your right and left,*

*Power to your left and right hands.*

VERITY: There, you see. You do have a song. Oh, you give me courage. You give me new heart...

MANNIE: Back to work then... You too, Sisters...

SISTERS march out.

NURSIE: Good work, Mannie. She labours again... But where in heaven's name is Orla...? I have looked everywhere.

MATRON enters, in welding gear, driving SISTER FIZI A MONICA before her. SISTER F lugs a giant metal sculptural arrangement.

NURSIE: Ah. There you are...

MATRON: Something to brighten things up a bit... Over there. On the stand.

SISTER F places the arrangement on the stand.

MATRON: Not that way, Sister. Swing it round...

SISTER F obliges. NURSIE approaches MATRON.

- MATRON: Final project. For my Certificate. Too funereal?
- NURSIE: It's splendid, darling.
- MATRON: Second opinion! Sister? Funereal or funk?
- SISTER F: Is- Is- funk!
- MATRON: Tip-top!
- SISTER F: Such skill in your hands.
- NURSIE: Steady on, sister...
- MATRON: Why... Sister...?
- SISTER F: *Certo*. Such fine...what is word? Welds?
- NURSIE: What?
- MATRON: What?
- SISTER F: *Saldature*? Is the welds?
- NURSIE: Do I know you?
- SISTER F: No. Yes. I am Sister Fizi a Monica! I am in your team of cricket, Matron. I get the runs!
- NURSIE: Gassy! This is that same Doctor. Vedova! From the Sanatorium!
- NURSIE pulls the cap from SISTER F's head, revealing DOCTOR VEDOVA. Wild hair, yet different. The half-mask has been removed.
- NURSIE: Yet you sound different. You look different.
- MATRON: Fetch lovey her wire-cutters! This dissembler is going straight back out.
- NURSIE: Wait. Doctor. Explain yourself. Tell us why we should not take our revenge on you.
- SISTER F: Thank you. This is why we come. Came. To speak. This Doctor Vedova, this mad one. Is not me. I mean to say. I am not, was not- myself...
- NURSIE: Who then?
- SISTER F: Something grips me. A great *dolore*. You have this word in your language. Dolour.
- NURSIE: A great grief.
- SISTER F: In Book One. Book Two. I was in the mourning.



- NURSIE: Not just the morning. The afternoon, and all.
- DOCTOR: Please. I was in mourning. A refugee. Like a widow, grieving for my home, for my language, my mother tongue. When you met me, I was not myself. Numb. Dumb. I could express nothing.
- NURSIE: And then you silenced us.
- SISTER F: I am truly sorry.
- NURSIE: Stopped our mouths. How could you?
- SISTER F: I was mad with grief. And then, when E-dict come – came, no more shift-shape, each to make choice I...
- NURSIE: Well?
- SISTER F: I let my masculine side have upper hand...
- MATRON: All this was years ago. But now you're here. Why?
- SISTER F: I am myself again. Fizi a Monica. I study English.
- MATRON: You are much improved. And far more attractive...
- NURSIE: Harrumph...
- MATRON: I meant as a character.
- SISTER F: I try. Is difficult outside. Is no more books, poetry. No plays in *teatro*. All is spettacolo, you understand, hollow-grams in streets and on the screens. Always so- *monoculare*- with the one eye? *Monovoce*. With the one voice. You understand?
- NURSIE: Yes.
- SISTER F: And so, I break in. For to give my backstory. For to make my apology. Now I go.
- NURSIE: Please do.
- MATRON: Wait. You are still a practising doctor?
- SISTER F: Not only practising. I am quite good.
- MATRON: Are you familiar with the wearies?
- SISTER F: Of course.
- MATRON: Stay a while. We may need you soon.
- NURSIE: Gassy. After all you've heard? You trust this person?

MATRON: Nurse, please.

NURSIE: And why a doctor? I am attending Verity. I am a qualified nursing sister.

MATRON: Keep your wimple on.

NURSIE: The wearies are as natural as the deliveries. This way in, this way out.

MATRON: Lovey, this is one for the big girls.

NURSIE: Do not speak to me in that tone!

MATRON: Darling. I am stressed. All these sub-plots, all you minor characters...

NURSIE: I beg your....

MATRON: Don't take it personally...

NURSIE: Well, pardon me for living...

MATRON: I have a back story...

NURSIE: Tell me about it... Interminable...

MATRON: Well, that's more than one can say for you.

NURSIE: I am extremely well-rounded!

MATRON: My backstory is seeded all the way through Folio 2. I am there, long before I am there! Ask Verity...

NURSIE: Verity is busy...

VERITY: I am not. It is useless. I am bereft of ideas... I have no characters, no plot...

NURSIE: Perhaps you'd get some ideas from my backstory, Verity? It's a ripper...

MATRON: Oh yes... A bodice ripper!

NURSIE: You can talk!

SISTERS: I have a story, Verity... So do I...

NURSIE: Ladies! Form a line! I will give her my story first! Are you ready, Verity?

VERITY: My pen is poised.

NURSIE: This'll get your juices flowing... I call it: A Chick's Lit-Trope. HIT IT GIRLS!

SONG: *NURSIE & CHORUS: A CHICK'S LIT-TROPE*

NURSIE: *Long lost love meets Alpha Bitch*  
*Princess Bride meets reformed witch*  
*Millionaire playgirl, Billet-doux<sup>55</sup>*  
*Star-crossed lovers, boo hoo hoo!*

*New old flame meets slap, slap, kiss..*  
*Hot librarian meets homely miss,*  
*Ugly duckling, Forbidden fruit...*  
*Girl next door just needs a...*

MATRON: Nursie!!!

NURSIE: Job!!!

CHORUS: *The lady is a tramp, the girlfriend is a vamp,*  
*The minx with all the kinks gets you a little damp.*  
*Chicklit, henlit, read it in the right light...*  
*A cheeky little romance gotta get you through the night!*

NURSIE: *(SINGS) Two is company, three's more fun*  
*Rich girl, poor girl, lonely nun,*  
*Cheating matrons, wayward wives,*  
*Chick's lit-tropes in overdrive...*

---

<sup>55</sup> Pronounced "bee-yay doo" – a love letter



MATRON: I'm sorry about that, Verity. I'm sure we can help with other more fitting tales. My own is a ripping yarn... It begins in India...

SISTERS: Here... Let me tell mine...

MANNIE: Sisters! One at a time please...

MATRON: Very well. I shall check in on Sister Fizi a Monica and that frisky Nurse...

MATRON exits. Everyone tries to tell VERITY her story.

VERITY: Sisters!! This is too much... Only a master storyteller could put this together... Besides. Only one story interests me now. Orla's! Darling... Centuries together, yet you've never told your tale.... Orla...

SISTERS: Orla?

ORLA is not to be found. The sisters go in search.

VERITY: Inspiration! I shall write it. The Autobiography of Orlando...?<sup>56</sup> Orlando Who? Darling? Orla.. Why did I never even learn your last name...?

VERITY tries to write.

FX: Bang, crash, wallop. Another ruckus at the gates.

MANNIE: To the fence. An intruder. Who is there? Blast. They are all elsewhere...

VERITY: I am happy here. You may leave me.

MANNIE rushes to find help.

VERITY writes, but soon she drops her pen. She cannot reclaim it. A THIRD INTRUDER enters.

VERITY: Who's there? Orla? Is that you?

The THIRD INTRUDER - A PUBLISHER - looks around.

VERITY: My sight is gone, yet I sense you near. My pen, Sister?

---

<sup>56</sup> The joke here is based on Gertrude Stein's work of 1933: *The Autobiography of Alice B Toklas*

THE INTRUDER picks up the pen. He gives it to VERITY.

VERITY: Thank you.

Now the THIRD INTRUDER looks about. He sees what VERITY is writing. He sees Mannie's machine.

INTRUDER 3: Hahahahahahaha.....

VERITY: Oh, Blessed Saint? Is it you?

The THIRD INTRUDER gleefully grabs Verity's Volumes 1 & 2, her manuscript, and MANNIE's machine and exits as:

VERITY: Is my end nigh? For verily, I hear you. I do!

Re-enter MANNIE in time to hear this.

MANNIE: She raves. Delirium grips her.

VERITY: Nursie? Is that you?

MANNIE: Yes, Madam.

VERITY: Give me your hand.

MANNIE does.

VERITY: And Mannie, too, at hand?

MANNIE: Yes. We are both here...

VERITY: Your hand, Child.

MANNIE gives VERITY her other hand.

VERITY: I have failed. I will die soon.

MANNIE: There is time. You have breath.

VERITY: No. There will be no Part Three.

MANNIE: Hush now. Conserve your strength.

VERITY: I teeter. I tip. Where is Orla? I need her hand in mine.

MANNIE: Orla... Orla is here too!

VERITY: Where?

MANNIE gives VERITY her hand.

MANNIE: I am beside you now.

VERITY: My own Orla?

MANNIE: Yes, dear one.

VERITY: I have bad news. Orla. There'll be no show tonight.

MANNIE: But the prophecy?

VERITY: No wishes granted. Though I have had more gifts.

MANNIE: You have?

VERITY: Dear Mannie gave me the gift of rhyme. For a time.

MANNIE: Ah. You see? There may be more to come.

VERITY: Your hand, Mannie!

MANNIE: Here it is...

VERITY: Nurse!

MANNIE: I'm here!

VERITY: Orla! Orlando! Darling! How I have wronged thee...  
My self-absorption. My ambition. Your hand...

MANNIE tries to keep up.

VERITY: Please forgive me, I.. I... Tell me again. Your beautiful recitation... The Swan of Rilke?

MANNIE: I..I forget how it goes.

VERITY: Then hum me a fresh choon.

MANNIE: Oh. I cannot.

VERITY: Well then, for once, tell me your story...

MANNIE: It will take hours.

VERITY: Then at least...tell me your full name!

MANNIE: Orla is not here Verity.

VERITY: What?

MANNIE: Orla went out.

VERITY: Out?

MANNIE: Yes.

VERITY: Outside out?

MANNIE: Yes. Verity. Out.  
VERITY: Bear me to my deathbed.  
MANNIE: I cannot lift you... not on my own...  
VERITY: Help her, Nursie.  
MANNIE: Orla has gone out. Your nurse was never here. There is only, was only, ever... me.

VERITY sinks into despair as MATRON returns, with NURSIE.

MANNIE: Any sign?  
MATRON: Nothing. And her work?  
MANNIE: Suspended, mid-phrase.  
NURSIE: A loss to literature.  
MANNIE: Ah, Gassy. The new piece. She gave me this title. It is wondrous strange. Swansong!!!The Musical!!!  
Look... But... Where is it? It was here! Is it lost?  
All her parchments and papers...  
MATRON: Help her start again. Re-construct it. From the top.  
MANNIE: Too late. The pen slips, the words trail away.  
MATRON: Is she gone?  
MANNIE: She sleeps.  
NURSIE: Longest death scene in literature. Yet the end is surely near. We must find Orla.  
MATRON: I'll go. I wish to check the fence once more before night falls. Mannie, keep vigil with Verity. Nursie, have our sisters prepare the library. Bring candles, scented oils. Bells. Whistles. Small, irritating finger cymbals. Distribute the humnals.

MATRON and NURSIE go. MANNIE sits with VERITY. She falls asleep.

Now, a sound. VERITY starts awake...

VERITY: Dear Doula? Is that you?  
THE WEAVER: (VOICE) It is time. The beetroot of Verity. Your sacred relic. It is time. Open it. Open the tin.

VERITY opens the tin. The contents pulse and glow.

As she does so, THE WEAVER appears to VERITY.



THE WEAVER: (SINGS) A Child came to a fork in the road, and there on the ground was a beautiful swan, its long neck, twisted, its head thrown back. And there was blood there, on its swansdown breast. The Child saw the road was hard and stony, no place for a wounded creature to lie. So the child resolved to move that Swan to a softer place.

Now, A CHILD, with the treble of an angel, is heard to sing. VERITY swoons with delight.

CHILD: Art thou weary, art thou languid,  
Art thou sore distressed?

An apparition appears. It is a CHILD, in beard and turtleneck, hastily improvised. It is of course, Stephen of Sondheim.

THE WEAVER: With care the Child lifted up the huge bird. She felt the great bones of its powerful wings. The bird gave off a terrible stench, yet the Child bore her to the edge of a lake.

CHILD: "Come with me," saith One,  
"And coming, be at rest."

VERITY dips her quill in the tin.

CHILD: If I ask Thou to receive me  
Wilt thou say me 'Nay'?  
Not till Earth and not till Heaven  
Pass away.

VERITY receives a surge of creative energy. As CHILD and THE WEAVER fade from view, she begins to write.

MANNIE wakes as NURSIE and MATRON return from their pursuit.

MATRON: Strange. I could find no one in the grounds.

NURSIE: Nor I.

MATRON: Yet there is a hole in the fence and clear evidence of incursion and...

NURSIE: Oh! Look!

SISTERS: (OFFSTAGE) Matron! Matron!

MATRON bolts. All eyes remain on VERITY who writes as if possessed.

VERITY: Paper. Paper. Bring me paper.

MANNIE: Sisters... Sisters!

MANNIE attends VERITY as NURSIE and SISTERS enter, fresh from their swim. Everyone swings into action.

MUSIC: *INTERLUDE: SPINSTERS ON SPEED*

SPINSTER'S CHORUS: A RECLAMATION IN FAST MOTION

Spinning, papermaking, binding, as VERITY goes into a creative frenzy. Pages of her new musical fly from her pen and are printed and bound.

At last VERITY begins to tire. NURSIE takes her vitals.

MATRON comes running.

MATRON: Nursie. There was a Publisher within our grounds!

NURSIE: No!

MATRON: Yes! I saw a ghostly apparition and followed it to our library. I apprehended him there. But Mannie?

MANNIE: What?

MATRON: He dropped these.

MANNIE: Oh mercy. These are perfect.

MATRON: Are they?

MANNIE: Verity's first pages. Legible. Lucid. A miracle.

MATRON: But child.

MANNIE: You called me child?

MATRON: I am the matronly type.

MANNIE: Thank you.

MATRON: It's your machine. In the chaos it was dropped. It shattered. I believe it to be beyond repair.

MANNIE: I care not. We have these! We have these!

NURSIE: Too late for Verity... she has lost consciousness...

MATRON: Bear her to the library. Bear her on her bier.

VERITY is removed to lie in state.

And we continue seamlessly to:

THE PLACE: THE LIBRARY  
THE TIME: APPROACHING MIDNIGHT  
THE WEATHER: STILL

---

PRODUCTION NOTES:

All scenic elements fall away as we look into a different space.

We now open up the final space beyond the scrim.

String quartet musicians move to inner sanctum. Sconces and stands?

Special FX – candles?

Props: Broken machine, spray can, cygnet wing feather. Confiscated pens, writing materials for the Write-of-Passage

Costume: Mannie's medallion (typewriter ribbon), Orlando (cloaked), Child unmasked

---

VERITY is laid out on her bier in an Empty Library. MANNIE attends her.

FX: A clock begins to chime midnight.

MANNIE: (RECITING, BY HEART) "...hale, fresh-coloured, and alert, leapt to the ground, there sprang over his head a single wild bird. 'It is the goose!' Orlando cried. 'The wild goose...' And the twelfth stroke of midnight sounded; the twelfth stroke of..."<sup>57</sup>

FX: The final chime strikes.

VERITY: Midnight. Enough, Child.

MANNIE: Yes. For thus Orlando's backstory ends.

VERITY: Thank you, Mannie.

MANNIE: You hear me? I feared you were...

VERITY: Every word. And now I know everything.

MANNIE: Yes.

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<sup>57</sup> From the penultimate lines of Chapter 6 of *Orlando*, by Virginia Woolf. This text from a web edition published by eBooks@Adelaide, The University of Adelaide Library, South Australia. See [ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/w/woolf/Virginia/w91o/chapter6.html](http://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/w/woolf/Virginia/w91o/chapter6.html)

VERITY: No! Hubris! I know one small part of everything. Nothing more.

MANNIE: Are you comfortable? My recitation took many hours.

VERITY: Yes.

MANNIE: May I bring you anything? Water?

VERITY: No... Unless...?

MANNIE: I am sorry, Madam. No news.

VERITY: Exquisite story-telling, thank you.

MANNIE: All thanks to my elders. To the Aunts and Doulas. To the women who schooled me. It was they who insisted we commit all canonical texts to memory, against the day when...

VERITY: Do you weep, child?

MANNIE: Yes, Madam.

VERITY: Then let us weep together... You hoped for reunion?

MANNIE: Yes.

VERITY: I, too...

MANNIE: I thought, when word came of an apparition...

VERITY: I, too...

MANNIE: But it was just some silly hollow-gram cast from outside. A decoy...

VERITY: Cruel.

MANNIE: I wanted resolution. Catharsis. A happy ending.

VERITY: You wanted a restoration play!

MANNIE: Yes.

VERITY: And I a cheery lightweight biting savage kick-arse popular musical....

MANNIE: I am here, Madam. Should you still wish to work...

VERITY: Instead, we have unravellings and loose ends. For that is all life is... Things that...

FX: A terrible noise as something falls over.

MANNIE takes VERITY'S HAND.

VERITY: Oh. I am weary. I long for sleep.

MANNIE: Please. Stay awake...

VERITY: Tell me more of your story then...

MANNIE: How? For I don't know how it ends. There's so much I don't know. Of the past. And of the future. Which has yet to be written.

VERITY: All in good time. And yourself. Perhaps a Doula?

MANNIE: Oh, Madam. Only the very best become Doulas.

VERITY: Do you think you have the stuff?

MANNIE: I spell. I read. Recite and reason.

VERITY: Yet there is so much more to it.

MANNIE: I see that now.

VERITY: It is truly the work of the spirit.

MANNIE: It is the deepest kind of listening.

Now, in the library, a strange glow. THE WEAVER appears holding an ancient typewriter.

VERITY: What did you say?

MANNIE: I said... It is the deepest kind...

VERITY: Of listening...

MANNIE: Of listening, yes.

VERITY: Of listening. Say it again?

MANNIE: Again?

VERITY: Please. Echo me.

MANNIE: Echo you..

VERITY: Yes. For to echo is the deepest kind of listening...

MANNIE: Listening... Listening...

THE WEAVER: Listening...

REPRISE: A HAND-MADE TALE (DUET)

THE WEAVER: (SINGS) *Your mother, like her sister, was  
committed to her craft,  
She was architect, draftswoman, master-builder,  
She could hone a pointy issue to a polished  
paragraph,  
And she had a way with words...*

MANNIE takes the chain from around her neck.

MANNIE: This ribbon was my mother's...

THE WEAVER: *And so they stilled her.*

VERITY: Your mother is dead, Mannie. You should have been told this. She died many moons ago.

MANNIE: I feared it. Yet somehow, knew...

MANNIE: (SINGS) *My mother was a martyr, if she'd only held  
her tongue,  
She'd have lived into her dotage, our Virago....*

THE WEAVER: *Thus the story of her service tell your sisters, old  
and young....*

VERITY: So. I have handmaidens of the most impeccable pedigree.

THE WEAVER: *As they labour at the page, through this embargo...*

VERITY: But these schools, Mannie...?

THE WEAVER: *Ever mindful to safeguard their precious cargo....*

MANNIE: Long gone, Madam. That work became too dangerous.

VERITY: Yet the need lives on.

MANNIE: It's true. Perhaps we sisters may begin it again? We might go where we are needed, and do our work where ever we can...?

MANNIE fits her mother's ribbon to the typewriter.

MANNIE: *In my secret eyrie eagle-eyed young smiths shall learn their trade.*

*Lady Typists, they shall not be caught shorthanded...*

VERITY: Mannie, Orla... Devoted handmaidens. What would my work have been without yours? You who were my left hand, and my right?

TOGETHER: *While the work that is a Doula's is not taught, nor is it made...*

*Tis a mark upon her soul with which she's branded...*

The apparition of THE WEAVER fades from view, but the ancient typewriter remains, in some kind of sepulchral tabernacle. It begins to type.

FX: Typewriter keys a-tapping

ENTER NURSIE.

NURSIE: Our sisters scour the grounds. Matron welds and welds, yet there are more and more... But what is happening?

The TYPEWRITER does its work.

MANNIE returns to VERITY.

MANNIE: Is she gone?

NURSIE examines VERITY.

NURSIE: Going. She has, perhaps, one or two more breaths.

SISTERS enter. They have prisoners with them: The Keyboard Player and The Ukulele Player and one more, a hooded sort.

SISTERS: We have these few. Matron holds others at bay. But there are more and more...

MANNIE: Not now, Sisters.

NURSIE: Sisters. We are all out of ink. Our walls are down. It would appear we are surrounded. And Verity's hour is at hand.

SISTERS: Oh dear. Oh no.

NURSIE: It is time to enact your tribute. As rehearsed.

SISTERS: In costume?



NURSIE: Yes. Tell cook to feed these rogues. We will put them to work. Then robe yourselves...

As THE SISTERS and go to leave, one hooded intruder falls to his knees.

ORLANDO: Please, Nurse.

NURSIE: Get up, Sir. Leave this hall.

ORLANDO: (REVEALING HIMSELF) Let me stay....

NURSIE: Orla!

MANNIE: Orlando!

NURSIE: What have you done to yourself?

ORLANDO: Forgive me. I had no choice. I thought if I changed back, I could pass among them...

MANNIE: You went at such a cost?

ORLANDO: I went in search of gifts for her. I went to Sondheim, for a white swan's quill. I sought the best I could procure. The first feather fixed in the wing, the pinion, is the most expensive, and most sought after. I sought a songman, too. I found neither one of these. I failed her. I failed you. Verity. My Verity!

VERITY: Orlando? Is that you?

ORLANDO: Yes. I am here. Is it done? Did you complete your Swansong?

VERITY: There will be no swan song. Folio Three is stillborn.

ORLANDO: Oh, Verity.

VERITY: Stillborn. Yes. Yet, strangely- it pleases, me. Orla. Orlando. Whichever you are. Do not weep. For I have learned that there is great beauty in the unresolved and the undecided. The most captivating and enduring things in life and in art are often the unfinished. There is dignity and truth in the incomplete. And thus I die peacefully, my work undone, nor even sung, amidst the clamour and the...clung! (A LAST BREATH) Lo... It is... unfinished...

VERITY dies. As VERITY'S body is laid out SISTERS enter. All sing:

REPRISE: THE VERITABLE

ALL: *Truth and light shall banish night,  
Hope shall vanquish fear,  
Truth and light shall guide our sight'  
And darkness disappear.*

*All that soars shall plummet,  
All that blooms in time shall wilt  
All that's braced must list and lean  
All that towers must tilt*

*Things may topple  
Things may keel.  
Fall, yet have no fear -  
Truth and light  
Shall guide our sight  
And love ne'er disappear*

SISTER F enters carrying Mannie's broken machine.

SISTER F: I try to fix. Is no use...

SISTER F sees VERITY.

SISTER F: I'm sorry. I didn't know...

NURSIE: It's all right, Sister Fitz. She is peaceful now.

SISTER F: There is nothing I can do?

NURSIE: No. Verity has left this mortal coil. You were saying?

SISTER F: I try, and then I heard something. Ssssss. Sssss. I look out. I find this one. Come in, Child.

The CHILD enters, unmasked, but with a spray can.

SISTER F: Spray, spray with the paint. All along your feathery fence.

MANNIE: But why, Child? Why?

CHILD: I wanted in, Miss.

MANNIE: In?

CHILD: Yes, Miss. Please?

MANNIE: And you have paint?

CHILD: Ink, Miss. I mined a 'bandoned well.

SISTERS: A well? An inkwell?

CHILD: Yes. Not far from youse.

NURSIE: But what did you write on our fence, with your ink?

CHILD: Nothin', Miss.

MANNIE: Nothing?

CHILD: I don't have nothin' to put. I just done squiggles.

NURSIE: I hope they were artistic? Your squiggles?

CHILD: I done 'em like writin'. Up down. Eh? I can't write, me.

MANNIE: We'd heard so.

CHILD: Can't read neither.

NURSIE: At your age?

CHILD: No, Ma'am. Dunno how.

NURSIE: You reap, you sow. Sisters. Throw this Child out...

MANNIE: Nursie. Where is your charity?

CHILD: Please, Mam. Don't hurt me. I helped him. Her. That queer one there. I done all he aksed.

MANNIE: Orlando? You know this child?

ORLANDO is silent.

CHILD: You do. You know you do. Where he crawled out, I crawled in under. I put a bertend beard on, jest like he say. I sung a song for the old girl.

ORLANDO: Bless you. And what did you sing?

CHILD: Dint know no show choons.

MANNIE: What?

CHILD: (TO ORLANDO) You tole me sing her show choons.

ORLANDO: And?

CHILD: Dint know none, din I? So I singed her anyway. I singed her your hymn.

ORLANDO: The urchin speaks the truth.

CHILD: She heard me. Sir Miss.

ORLANDO: Thank you. Thank you, Child.

CHILD: And she were happy.

NURSIE: Very well. Now you may go.

CHILD: Please. Don't frow me back out there, lone inner world. Lemme stay. Teach me yartz.

NURSIE: Yartz?

CHILD: Yartz. Carafes. Teach me somefink. Any fink. I'll pay. I'll bring youse ink...

The CHILD holds something out. It is a small, black feather.

CHILD: An' see what I brung for your scratchings. From a cygnet wing.

ORLANDO: A signet ring?

CHILD: No. Sir. Miss. It is a quill. I found it in them black swans' nest. See?

ORLANDO: But it's useless. Too small for anyone here.

CHILD: For a hand like as yours. But for mine. On the black market the left wing is flavoured, see? For look how the fevvers curve to the right, way from the finigers that guide the pen. The first fevver in the wing, the -

MANNIE: Pinion?

CHILD: - is the most pensive, and most seeked after by the pert calliwag. The second and furred quills may be satisfactible too. But these small fevvers, for an upstart. Look? See? Perfick.

MANNIE: Turn it this way. See? That's how you hold it.

- CHILD: May I make a letter, Miss?
- MANNIE: Yes.
- CHILD: What letter may I make?
- MANNIE: Try this. A downward stroke to a sharp point, then upwards, see? And we call this...?
- CHILD: Dunno.
- MANNIE: V?
- CHILD: "V". V for victory, Mum?
- MANNIE: You called me Mum!
- CHILD: Why not?
- MANNIE: Ah, the optimism of youth. No victories here. But I have a better word. Can you copy it? "V". And here is "E" And this one. R. So we have V. E. R. I. T. Y.
- CHILD: Verity. What's it mean, Mum?
- MANNIE: It means truth...
- CHILD: Yes, Mum...

MANNIE helps the CHILD to practise copying.

#### OPEN WEAVE: A RITE OF PASSAGE

THE ARCHITECT brings the performance of THINGS THAT FALL OVER to a close, acknowledging and thanking members of the audience and the company for their part in the creative journey.

With the assistance of the company, and employing THE CONFISCATED PENS & PAPER (BOOKS), a WRITE OF PASSAGE is conducted:

Paper and ink is passed ceremonially around the audience. Each audience member inscribes one word they love onto the pages of these books, for the child to copy.

In exchange for the gift of a word, the audience member is given FOOTNOTES to take with them on the road ahead.

All now exit the building via the passageway to picnic on the lawn and prepare for:

# SWANSONG!!!THE MUSICAL!!!

· AN ORATORIO FOR LATE BLOOMERS ·

Text by Peta Murray

Music by Peta Williams

© February 2014

## ENSEMBLE

THE WEAVER: a story-teller

THE CHILD: a young girl

THE SWAN OF VERITY: a swan-woman

THE ETERNAL VERITIES: a 'girl group' styled trio

THE SWANSINGERS: a women's chorus

KEYBOARD

STRING TRIO: violin, viola, cello

ELECTRIC BASS

PERCUSSION

UKULELES

THE WEAVER:           A Child came to a fork in the road, and there on the ground  
                                  was a beautiful Swan, its long neck, twisted, its head thrown  
                                  back. And there was blood there, on its swan's-down breast.  
                                  The Child saw the road was hard and stony, no place for a  
                                  wounded creature to lie. So The Child resolved to move that  
                                  Swan to a softer place.

THE CHILD:             Art thou weary, art thou languid,  
                                  Art thou sore distressed?

THE WEAVER:           With care The Child lifted up the huge bird. She felt the great  
                                  bones of its powerful wings. The bird gave off a terrible stench,  
                                  yet The Child bore her to the edge of a lake.

THE CHILD:             "Come with me," saith One,  
                                  "And coming, be at rest."

THE WEAVER:           Gently, oh, so gently, The Child laid The Swan on a bed of  
                                  reeds beside lapping water. Then, not knowing why, not  
                                  knowing why, The Child sang to The Swan:

THE CHILD:             If I ask Thou to receive me  
                                  Wilt thou say me 'Nay'?

THE WEAVER:           In reply came a hiss and The Child felt a presence.

THE CHILD:             Not till Earth and not till Heaven  
                                  Pass away.

THE WEAVER: Yet there was no one there. The Child was moved and wept bitter tears. And again, so to soothe them both, The Child stroked the fine neck of The Swan. Now The Child heard a voice.

VERITY: (HIDDEN) "Oh, if you come in search of truth...

THE WEAVER: Who speaks, said The Child?

VERITY: (HIDDEN) "... you must pass door by door, through mystery."

THE WEAVER: It cannot be you who speaks. It cannot be you who speaks, said The Child. For swans are always mute. Unless you are dying? For only at death may swans sing. For only at death may swans sing.

VERITY: (HIDDEN) This is untruthful. This is a lie. We swans sing in life too. In anger. In sorrow. In gladness. Hear us... Hear us. Hear us!

THE WEAVER: At this, and without knowing why, The Child set a hand upon the bird's head. And suddenly, heard a beautiful song....

#### SWANS CALL: HIDDEN WOMEN'S CHORUS

Old ones in young bodies; we sing to you.

Young ones in old bodies; we sing to you too.

THE WEAVER: The Child looked up, to find that the injured swan had disappeared. A Swan Woman, Verity, stood in her place.



*As if summoned, a ghostly eminence appears. It is Verity, a Swan.*

THE WEAVER: From far away, came a slow beating of wings.  
Now The Swan of Verity was joined by another.

*Verity is joined by a magnificent bee-hived trio, The Eternal Verities.*

THE WEAVER: And she by two more.

#### **ON VERITY: VERITY & THE ETERNAL VERITIES**

VERITY: I am. I am Verity.

VERITIES: We, the Eternal Verities.

VERITY: Never, never was I not

VERITIES: Nor shall we cease to be.

VERITY: All, truly, all is life.

VERITIES: Life is not born, nor dies.

VERITY: Life is indivisible.

VERITIES: Yet life in all things lies.

VERITY: Earth lives in my body.

VERITIES: Fire lives in my breath.

VERITY: Water, air, the stuff of stars.

VERITIES: And love, dissolving death.

VERITY: We serve. We learn. We teach. We seek.

VERITIES: We strive to understand.

VERITY: Truth sings through our bodies.

VERITIES: Truth sings through our hands.

VERITY: I am. I am Verity.

VERITIES: We, the Eternal Verities.

VERITY: Never, never was I not

VERITIES: Nor shall we cease to be.

THE WEAVER: Now came many more swans, but as each touched down on the lake, she turned in her shape. And suddenly the water was full of laughing women, who frolicked and sang for sheer joy of it.

*The Quire manifests as swans.*

**THE FIRST SWANSONG: WOMEN'S CHORUS**

Old ones in young bodies; we sing to you. Hear our swan song.

Young ones in old bodies; we sing to you too. Hear our swan song.

You will find us in this world and in the other too,

And in the thin places in between...

In the crossings, at the edges, never far from view

Swim we soulful singing swans unseen

THE WEAVER: Emboldened, The Child moved closer, closer, to stand with one foot on dry land, the other in water. The Child was full of questions, so the Swan-women shared all they knew.

**SECOND SWANSONG: VERITY, ETERNAL VERITIES, CHORUS**

VERITY:        Verify! Verify!

VERITIES:     Veritable verification

VERITY:        Verify! Verify!

VERITIES:     Veracity won't take a vacation.

CHORUS:       Poured into each vessel for a short time.

Verily varied,

Cast away the cup, and still it shines on,

Shines on...

CHORUS:       Truth is everywhere and truth is always. (Verify!)

In bird and beast, in flower and stone.

Close your eyes and step into heart's hallway. (Verify!)

Here is where your soul makes a home.

VERITY:        Till your dying day! Till that day!

VERITIES:     Seek that which will feed your very self

VERITY:        Till your dying day! Till that day!

VERITIES:     Soul food is our common wealth.

VERITY:        Be true to yourself!

ALL:            Be true to yourself... (REPEATED)

THE WEAVER: As Verity and the Swans sang on, The Child was filled with courage, and a heart full of fire and feeling. Yet, what to do with this? How to make it into something true?

#### SONGS OF THE SOUL: VERITY & THE ETERNAL VERITIES

Ask nature to teach you. Look for the marks of the wise ones.

Make your own marks. Get your hands dirty.

Push and pummel to make meaning of life.

Grasp and grapple after something new.

Hold ideas to the light in search of grace, guidance and goodness.

We are all the same. Know with your flat hand the meat of your body.

The same circling rivers, the same air, in and out.

Sense the same jellies within you and me, poems of the bones,

And songs of the marrow, you know. And you know...

And you know that you know...

These are not songs of body. They are songs of the soul.

They are poems of the soul, songs of the soul...

Sing it, sing it loud, sisters etc.

THE WEAVER: Hearing the Swans' song The Child left the dry land and joined them in the inky water. Now The Child sang:

## A SONG OF SOMETIMES: THE CHILD

Sometimes I am man, and sometimes woman.

Sometime yet I may be swan.

Always I am a fire in the hearts of all beings.

We come to earth to learn. Each body is our school.

Some stay minutes. Others months. Some attain great age.

Even so, how little is learned. Perhaps everything returns?

Perhaps, as a swan moults and is grounded for a time, before taking flight once more,

Perhaps as I outgrow old clothes and put on new,

So, the dweller in one body, having quit that frame, may enter another?

If so, let me now be swan.

THE WEAVER: At this, there was the throb of great wings beating. One by one the women lifted themselves from the lake and into the air in swanlike form, though not a single feather wet with water.

THE CHILD: Oh, to go with you. Oh to go with you....

## REST NOW: VERITY & THE ETERNAL VERITIES:

VERITY: Rest now. It is not your time.

So much to seek and to learn.

Artists are teachers, books are too.

Listen. Read. Discern.

VERITY: Mind grows dull in worlds of things.

VERITIES: The endless passing show.

VERITY: Hollow men and spectacles

VERITIES See them come and go.

VERITY: Rest now. It is not your time.  
This world is yet your pearl  
Mystery and wonder are your school  
Marvel, muse and dwell.

VERITY: Mind grows bright in music's light

VERITIES: Literature and art

VERITY: Lofty homes for minds and flesh

VERITIES: Truth through hand and heart.

VERITY: Beetroot to yourself.

THE CHILD: What did you say?

VERITIES: Beetroot to yourself.

VERITY: And so, Child, here our lesson ends.  
Each life may light one spark  
Use whatever lies at hand  
To leave a maker's mark.

THE WEAVER: So The Child swam to the bank, to find the injured Swan lying in the reed bed as before. Now, The Child brought a hand to rest on the bird's breast. And The Swan's heartbeat travelled into the palm of the hand and on, up the arm, and into the Child's heart. Whereupon came a great pulse and the thrum of great wings in flight. For The Swan herself was dead. And upon the ground where the injured Swan had been lay a single feather. Taking up that feather and holding it firm, in the soft mud, beside the lake become ink, The Child began ....

THE CHILD: What? Began what?

THE WEAVER: There is no more. Here *Swansong!!! The Musical!!!* ends.

THE CHILD: Then I shall finish it. Listen. (RECIT) Taking up that feather and holding it firm, in the soft mud, beside the lake become ink, The Child began ...to write!

#### **DO THE WORK: ENSEMBLE FINALE**

Do the work, complete it while you can, sisters.

The path of time circles starry spaces, wide.

Do the work. Glory in the work, sisters.

Raise your voice, be ukulele-fied!

Sing out sisters. Shape it, shape it, shape it, sisters.

Things fall over. Things will always fall.

Do the work, glory in it, sisters.

Raise your voice for song is free-for-all...

Sing out sisters. Shape it, shape it, shape it.

Verily! Beetroot to yourself.

Hold up the truth, brace, it, brace, brace it.

Verily! Beetroot to yourself.

Things fall over. Things will always fall.

Those that need to fall? Give them a push!

This then is your trust and sacred duty

Verily! Beetroot to yourself!

Hear, Child, in the name of truth and love.

In the name of truth and love.

*The company mingles with the audience distributing small tins of beetroot.*

**THE END**



## APPENDIX E:

## INTERVIEW WITH PETA MURRAY

Interview with Playwright Peta Murray

By Rebecca Clode

Friday April 5, 2013, 11.30am, Melbourne

Topic: Murray's play *Things That Fall Over*

*At the beginning of the interview, which was not picked up in the recording, PM responds to a question in which the interviewer, R.C. asks her to talk about the genesis of the play. PM explains that the play began as part of an MA Thesis (by Practice-Led Research). She says:*

PM. My mother died in the course of the process and also I was ill for a while so I had some time out. *Continues:*

The arrival of the play was very, very late in that process. I went into it, to be honest, not really knowing what I wanted but with a vague interest in the Musical, and the (anti-)musical [*what P.M means by this is explained in her M.A. Thesis*] and, I think, at the very beginning not the (anti-)musical as I didn't have that parlance at that point, but I had the interest in the Musical as a form. Because it was during the time when *Keating: The Musical* and *Shane Warne: The Musical* and, you name it, every second piece of theatre down here [in Melbourne] had some kind of musical aspect to it. And also I'm a huge fan of Stephen Sondheim. And I was really interested in some of his observations about the Musical as being playwriting in song; so I probably started – I started *there* in terms of form, and I started with Elizabeth Jolley in terms of content, because I was, for some reason – I've always been interested in her as a reader, but I was interested in her as an artist who began her career very late in life. And I've always been interested in how artists and playwrights are categorized and labeled...you know, you're either "Emerging" or you're "Established" or you're "Extinct" seems to be the third option. So those two things [the Musical and Elizabeth Jolley] were where I started. Now over the course of the journey it was very, very messy. It was very protracted. There were lots of interruptions. For a while I was trying to research Elizabeth Jolley's life and work because I actually thought there might have been a show – a text in that – and I

encountered a lot of obstacles to that in terms of the research process and in terms of ethics processes and all sorts of things and eventually I gave that up.

At the same time I was starting to become aware of a contraction in the Industry and noises, rumblings and grumbings of discontent amongst women (and) playwrights, friends of mine particularly, about the fact that there were no more commissions, the fact that the mid-level theatre companies all seemed to be disappearing, the fact that the emphasis from the path on Australian voices and Australian texts that companies like Playbox used to exemplify had also disappeared. And so I started to continue my work with a very clear eye on that context. That awareness started to be something that was really quite consuming. My thesis became about the problems of trying to sustain a practice in that environment, and what was definitely a measurable change in the circumstances for women. And it coincided with an Australia Council Round Table, and it coincided with a big speech that Sophie Cunningham gave at the Melbourne Writer's Festival down here a couple of years ago. And it also coincided with two years in a row where the Miles Franklin Award only had men in the shortlist. And I remember moving, though really slowly, through treacle, in my research, you know, circling these ideas, with no idea of what I was going to do with them. If I look back on it now on the timeline of actually writing the creative artifact of my MA...it was at the Easter of the final year of my MA that I actually wrote the artifact. And I wrote it at high speed – I'll tell you about that in a moment.

So it [generating the work from "conception" to written text] took a really long time. I used to always joke that I was the slowest writer in Christendom. I felt like I was – I remember talking to somebody about it – like I was filling this pot with all these random, disparate things, and I *knew*, I knew that *forgery* had something to do with it, I knew *fencing* had something to do with it, I knew Brahms Opus 52 had something to do with it, but you know, how on earth could I articulate my sense that all of these things would somehow resolve into a shape? Anyway, it was very, very nerve-wracking, because the clock was ticking, I was on a scholarship, I was supposed to deliver the MA, and I remember coming up to Easter and my partner's family had all booked a place down near our place, so the whole family, some people coming from Adelaide, Everybody was converging for Easter, and I was at my wits end. And I was going to see – I went to hear a performance of St Matthew's Passion, the Bach Oratorio, on Easter Eve, with a friend of mine, and I came home and I said to Jane "I don't think I can come

away with you for Easter. I feel like this is make or break.” And I still didn’t know what I was doing. So she very kindly said “Yeah, I understand,” so off she went to have her family weekend, and I remember going for a really big walk and, you know, when I’m in creative agony...I mean, there’s no other word for it, it’s a physical experience of existential agony. Almost to the point of...I don’t know whether it’s a break-down...I can’t...I’m not willing to go that far in terms of what’s actually happening to me physically and in terms of my psychological state, but I was in a very, very *bad* place. A very dark place. Desperate. And I went for this walk, I don’t know why I thought of it, but every time – I’d been fascinated with the whole idea of the creative process and my own blockages. My own blockages that I saw as being something that had dogged me my whole creative life. And I kept thinking “It’s like a pregnancy” and – where am I in this? I remember coming back from the walk and thinking “Oh fuck it,” you know it’s such an obvious metaphor for creativity that I’d been dismissive of it all the way along. And I just thought “Oh fuck it, I’ve got nothing else to hold on to. I’m going to go home and I’m going to do some research”...because I’ve never had a child myself... “I’m going to do some research around birth and conception and delivery and midwifery.” I came home and I got on the internet and went to this great – it was an Australian site actually, and this word “Doula” leapt out at me. And I can’t really account for what happened and I certainly can’t account for the sequence of events, but at this point, suddenly, everything that I had been ruminating on for so long – so many years – suddenly started to resolve itself into – and it certainly wasn’t in a shape I could articulate, but I had the beginning and I had this figure of this “Mannie,” this character, and I had this figure of this woman who was pregnant with the Trilogy and this idea of the world where women’s writing has been forced underground, where the world has turned upside down and where Franklin Miles is the incipient Emperor. And so that weekend, over the Easter holiday, while I was alone here, I wrote the first – I think I wrote the first two acts. In the first day, or something, like really, really fast. And half way through I started to realize, “Oh, OK, this is - it’s been a play so far and now it’s starting to become something else.” And the music started to insinuate itself into the work. And then, the weirdest thing happened. Do you want a really weird story?

RC. Yes.

PM. It was towards the end of it [the process of actually *writing* the play] and I was really *frightened*. Half way through the process I was really frightened of what I was

writing. Because this whole thing about the Swan Song, and the death of the artist was...it was really close to the bone. And I felt like I was in this kind of – very *difficult* space where I was kind of – when I got to the third act and I knew where I had to go, [remembers thinking that] “I don’t know whether I want to do this.” It’s almost like “Am I writing something prophetic?” And there were so many weird things about this play, and the writing process towards this play that almost felt like it was outside of my control. You know, things would arrive and they would be so perfect. Anyway. When I’m writing something and when I’m writing like that, I lose all track of time. So it might be 2 o’clock in the morning and I’ll be having a bowl of cereal, or something like that, you know. I took a break, it was late on a Sunday night I think and I was having something to eat. And I was terrified of starting the third act. So I thought, “Oh, OK, I’ll check my email,” because I hadn’t looked at it all weekend. And I opened my email and there was an email for me from somebody called Peta Williams. And that name was familiar to me because when I was in my early twenties I had worked with a composer called Peta Williams in Sydney, doing some feminist musicals and things like that in some bars and pubs and so on in Sydney. So anyway, sure enough this woman had suddenly been seized with the idea that she needed to try to find me. And so she emailed me that night and said “Is this the Peta Murray that I used to know?” [P.M at this point comments on the strangeness of the coincidence of Peta Williams’ contact with her] And so I emailed back and said “Yes, this is really weird, why on earth have you googled me?” And then I went back to my work, and I eventually went to bed that night and I remember I had two or three hours of sleep and then got up early the following morning because when I’m working, again, at that point, I work for long tracts of time and sleep – not at normal sleeping times. And I’m used to that, it’s how I work. And I woke up the following morning and I went “She’s going to write the music for this piece.” So I emailed her that same day and I said “I can’t believe this has happened. Would you be interested in a further conversation about this piece because I seem to be writing a musical and I seem to feel that you would be the sort of person who might be right for it. Anyhow, that’s a kind of tangent. So I carried on and I wrote the rest of the work and submitted it for my MA and came out the other side of it with that.

Since then I have...at first I thought “Oh, I’ll send it around to a few places,” which is how I’ve normally worked in the past, you know, I’ve got the agent in Sydney. And in the past I’ve been really lucky where I’ve had work, new work, and it’s gone through a playwrights’ conference, normally, and it’s been – it’s come out of that into the hands of

a producer who is ready to go with it. So that's - certainly that's what's happened with *Wallflowering* and that's definitely what happened with *Salt*, you know, I came out of that with people who wanted to produce the show. Times have changed. I did put this piece forward for a new model of the playwrights' conference in Australia...conference? [she asks herself] ...festival thing. And I know I made the shortlist, but I didn't get/go any further with that. And a lot of these things now have this caveat "No Music Theatre Works." So I'm in this really odd category, I think, with this piece. Partly because of its mutations, also because of its pro-am element. Which is another whole aspect of it.

[Thinks]...you know, there's so much more to this story! So, I put it forward for a few things and didn't get anywhere with it, and the more I did that the more I felt "No, this one I've got to do myself. There's something about this, and the oddness of it, and there's something about the politics of it, and there's something about the community engagement side of it that I don't fully understand, but that I feel like I have to drive forward myself. So, again other coincidences attended the process, all the way along, and a woman that I'd worked with years ago, Robyn Laurie who's a quite fabulous older woman down here, who was one of the founders of Circus Oz came back into my life and I thought "Robyn would be a fantastic person to direct this," she's you know, got this physical theatre type group community kind of thing [approach]. So she and I have agreed to co-direct it. Peta Williams did agree to write the music, so - by the end of the - when I submitted my MA, I was able to do it with a recording of some of the songs, you know, done from her computer on "Sibelius." And then we applied at the beginning of last year for an Australia Council creative development grant, and got that. We've had *many* knockbacks as well, but, by the end of last year with that and money from the Beeson Family Foundation which is a kind of philanthropic family down here in Melbourne, and with money that I was able to raise through private donations, through ABAF (which is now Cultural Council of Australia) we were able to mount a big creative development at the end of last year, which we did over two venues. And you know I am *so* out of my depth, Bec, everything I'm doing with this - you know - producing, applying for grants, directing, dealing with community, pitching it to the Victorian Women's Trust, pitching it to the State Library of Victoria which we've done and we launched it in their venue and we now have a potential venue there, in Queen's Hall - all of this stuff is just so beyond my skill set. And here I am now in this second

year of it where *if* we could get the money together we would be ready to produce it later this year.

R.C. Do you think it will happen this year?

P.M. Ah. Today...no. Tomorrow, maybe yes. Depends what day you ask me. I'm so exhausted. I'm sort of sick with it. Um, I'm sick of it. It dominates my life. I've got so many people who have a relationship with it now. 50 or more women who have a relationship with this project. Not to mention – you know – funding that we've secured from the City of Melbourne and blah, blah, blah. There have been a few really difficult things that have happened over the last couple of months where I've wanted to go "No. Forget it, I can't do it any more." And then I think "No, I'm actually so *far* inside this project I can't go – I couldn't find my way out even if I wanted to." So I don't know. Some days I think "No, it's not going to happen." Certainly it's a long way short of the money to do a proper production. But then I sit down with the women and I sit down with Robyn and they say "Oh, well we *won't* do a proper production we'll do something really seat of the pants, raw..." which is all there in the text, those *ways* of doing it.

R.C. What is the energy of the work like when you're in the process of creative development and related to that, if this doesn't make it too long-winded a question, the music. What is it like, and what sort of mood structure is it giving the work?

P.M. It's really interesting because it has a very strong – for me – conceit in the narrative line which is that, in the first act, they're mute. The second act they're gagged, the third act they sing stolen music. It's all bowdlerised and borrowed from the cannon and blah, blah, blah. And then the Oratorio is this release of True Voice. So there's that. As for the energy of it. Do you mean in terms of the *style* of the music?

R.C. I think you have partly answered this in addressing the differences between. I suppose part of where I was going with that [question] was – you've mentioned all these women who have relationships with the play. What does that bring to the work [in the rehearsal room]?

P.M. Look, it's incredible. I'll send you a "vimeo" link to the film we made out of the creative development, just a short doco really, and the energy of it [the work] is

*incredible*. If you can imagine a whole mob of 50+ year old women skipping around, singing, doing mock fights... It's very moving to watch, but it's also incredibly liberating. In the most innocent meaning of that word. It's about dis-inhibition, I suppose. That's what seems to happen through the course of working on it on the floor. It's like we all gradually become un-stitched. So the play begins as quite a stitched thing and quite a structured thing and, in fact, I'm re-writing the first act at the moment so it's got lots of short scenes, so it's almost like leafing through a book. And everything's very, you know "Meanwhile, over here..." so we're doing it very much more in that kind of spirit. And then as the music gradually enters the play it's like the text sort of throws off its girdle and lets it all hang out. So by the end of it it's [a] very joyful and exuberant and playful kind of energy.

R.C. I definitely get the sense reading the play, of that element of celebration and I wondered if you could talk a bit about the balance of celebration and critique.

P.M. Yeah, I think that was a really interesting process for me because writing the play allowed me to transform my rage. And it also allowed me to contextualise my own silence. And to see that my writer's block was not necessarily just a neurotic behaviour, but it was actually a political manifestation of an environment that I inhabited, where my voice wasn't required. Wasn't welcome. So to write the work and to allow myself to take these characters into the darkness of the second act – and it's pretty dark – you know, it's pretty horrible...always in a comic way, in a blackly comic way, but it does get pretty ugly that second act, and then to be able to come out of that into the bonkers utopia of the sort of Boarding School trope in the third act, and then to sort of throw the shackles of that [off] that, I mean basically you're passing through a liminal space. I mean, the Oratorio is in the Afterlife, really, you know it's a mystical work and it's in this other, this *thin* place. It really allowed me to transform a lot of my own rage. Recover my own voice. And come out the other side going "Fuck you!" You know, there's a big "Fuck You!" in this work!! Which is, I'm going to put 50 old women on the stage, in their *bathers*, singing, and occupying a lot of space, and no boys allowed! I mean – boys are allowed to come and watch – really it's not anti-men, or anti-boys in any way, you know *please*, but I'm going to reverse the world order. Just this once, I'm going to turn the world upside down. And it's going to be the exact opposite of the world that I know. And for me that has been a really ... healing is probably not too

strong a word. I'm really back to form. The industry still doesn't *want* me, but *I'm* going to keep on working.

R.C. So it's interesting that you talk about this sense of dis-inhibition among the creatives who were involved and – you know – maybe these restrictions that you have talked about experiencing ... in the world beyond the play...those people who were involved in the project were also feeling a release from those restrictions.

P.M. Look the actors particularly, they were extraordinary because most of them were women who had had fabulous careers, as either straight actors or burlesque artists or blah, blah, blah. They were all people who had [careers as] working artists. And, you know, suddenly they hit 35 or 40 and there's no work for them and they all go off and become other things. So to bring them together...not necessarily to bring them back, it's not as if all of them are "washed up" either – they've all found ways to continue to work, but to bring them back together and for them to have, I mean, I think there are really good *roles* [in the play]. So people have loved playing them. They're all fairly generous roles. So for people who haven't done central roles for a long time to come back and go "Oh, this is great" – you know, that was really gorgeous. And then for the women from the community sector. That ... it doesn't *break* my heart, but it's really moving when you talk to them. There's one woman in particular I have in mind when I tell you this. She [speculating on her age] might even be close to 70, she was in the Quire and we had a break one day and she took me aside and she said "You know, when I was little and I was in school plays I used to think 'Oh, one day I'd really love to be a performer.'" And then she said "Life took me away," and you know, now she's a mum and a grandmother. And she's very *engaged* – she's certainly not somebody who leads a quiet, locked away, suburban life. She's a political animal and a thinking woman, but there was still this sense of sadness in her that this dream that she'd had as a child she'd never been able to experience. And somehow being a part of this, and being out there skipping around on the floor and doing all the stupid Rhubarb lines and singing and carrying on, re-connected her to that part of herself. And I think that's fantastic! You know – for women – for *everybody*, but for women in particular.

R.C. You mentioned the roles, and I wanted to ask you about the roles of Orla and Doula and Mannie, and how they came about.



P.M. Well they're all really interesting, aren't they? Later on [in the play] they become "The Eternal Verities" and in my mind – Mannie is hands, and she's named for the hands, so manual labour, obviously. And also she's an homage to Nancy McKenzie who was Elizabeth Jolley's typist, so Mannie McKenzie. I don't expect for people, except for Elizabeth Jolley nuts – and there are many of them – to pick up these kinds of jokes – you know this whole sort of meta-layers of literary jokes and puzzles.

R.C. Yes, we'll come back to that.

P.M. Yep, so Mannie is the hands and her mother's Virago, the old feminist publishing house. That's another literary joke. [As for] Doula...I wanted to set myself free of time and place, in a way, with this work, and to just trawl and ransack the cultural traditions that I had been seeped in. When I had trained – or the little training I had had of Drama as a playwright was through Drama School at the New South Wales University in the seventies. And we started with the Greeks and the Romans and their theatres and moved chronologically forward through to the Elizabethans and the Restoration and blah blah blah to the Twentieth Century and so-called Theatre of the Absurd. So I'm quite well schooled in that kind of Western, Anglo-centric tradition and I wanted to write something that allowed me to celebrate what I love about all of that. And sometimes I think the play's a bit of a self-portrait in a lot of ways, too, but also to be free of all that....so I could go to the Greeks, so I could have...Commedia dell' Arte, I could have Carry-on movies and I could bring them all together. So Doula, I suppose comes out of that Classical tradition, [pauses] she's the Teiresius kind of a character, obviously, and I'm doing more with that in the re-writing, as the drafts go on. She's left behind now [that is, in the scene where Orla rescues the women from the Sanitarium] in the second act, covered in the ashes of the burnt books. And she also came about [as] the mid-wife, because that's a profession now. In fact Jane [PM's partner] and I were driving back from Anglesea about a year after I had written the play and there was a car in front of us and the number plate was "DOULA." And there's a college, now, where people train. [Explains] they are a kind of mid-wife that deals with the spiritual and psychological needs of the mother rather than the medical and biological issues. So that's where she came from.

And then Orlando, obviously is straight out of Virginia Woolf [*Orlando*] but she's *my* take on Orlando. [Explains how] at the beginning of the third act we have the delivery

of Virginia Woolf's novel as the back story that Verity has never bothered to find out about. And again there's a lot of literary jokes in there and this is my sort of homage to Virginia Woolf who is the absolute trail-blazer for women writers. Yes there were other women writers before her but she changed the story of writing for women as far as I'm concerned.

R.C. One of the ideas that struck me very much as I read the play was that of the echo. Verity, in Folio Three, identifies with Mannie's description of the echo as "the deepest kind of listening." Do you see the play as echoing works of the past and also, could you talk more generally about how the idea of the echo worked its way into the play?

P.M. It's interesting that you should pick up on it because my supervisor had a problem with it. He got really fed up with the echo. And the echo gag.

R.C. ...More than a gag?

P.M. Yes. One of the things I'm trying to – and I don't want to say "Say." When I write plays I don't think I'm trying to "Say," anything, one of the things I'm trying to *Ask* – is how do we as artists embody, or express, our debt, and our dialogue, with the works that we love? I don't believe...you know we've got such a fetish, in our culture, for the new and the innovative. And I don't actually believe that those things really exist. I think that everything is built on what has gone before. Everything is a conversation with what has gone before. There's a wonderful book I'm reading at the moment called *un-creative writing* and it basically shows, or it proposes that it is impossible to do anything new – that everything is part of a conversation.

I felt I was at a point in my life where, as I say, this work is a kind of self-portrait. It's a picture of the things that have influenced me, the things that have inspired me and the writers that I love, who've made it *possible*, or impossible, for me to practice as I do.

R.C. You include references to a lot of female writers, both obviously and for obvious reasons. [But also], *Shakespeare* is in there ...

P.M. Mmmm. Shakespeare, Walt Whitman, Coleridge.

R.C. And how about the visual art element. Do you want to talk about [Rosalie] Gascoigne a little bit?

P.M. Yeah! Well she's another...Gascoigne and Elizabeth Jolley. It's staggering to me that there are so many parallels between the two of them. They were both not from here – they both came from elsewhere because of their husbands had fairly high profile jobs. They were both extremely smart women, you know – translated into a landscape that wasn't their own. Gascoigne's work I have known about for a long time. I remember in my first encounter with her work being utterly moved by it, [though] not really understanding why. And I've subsequently gone to a number of exhibitions and I've watched the impact upon other women, who don't know her work. And it's the same thing. I think there's something about her – and I think Elizabeth Jolley had it too – some ineffable quality that is much more than the sum of its parts. And we're going to go off into the "Ooh –ooh" territory – a spiritual quality, to her work, that is quite profound, and I think it speaks...[qualifies] well, most people who are engaging with her work don't *know* that it's the work of an artist who started her practice in her late 50's early 60's, and why would you? You just – you look at the art. Same with Elizabeth Jolley. But there's something even more powerful for me in knowing how many decades these women did other things as they worked towards this moment when they were finally able to express themselves in public spaces.

R.C. We could probably add Dorothy Hewett to the "Late Bloomers," as well, as a *playwright*, because she was relatively older at the time she began writing plays. She had of course, written in other genres before that.

P.M. [Agrees] Isn't that interesting?

R.C. This is a bit of a tangent, and the answer might just be "No," which is fine, but with Orla, Doula and Mannie, I wondered whether you had ever seen them or thought of them as components of one person, or whether you had always imagined them as different people [characters].

P.M. No, I do. And that's what I was about to say before. Mannie is the hands, Doula is the [trying to remember] heart, and Orla is the head. [Perhaps check these last two are correct as P.M had mentioned at the beginning of the interview that she was working

from memory.] Yes very much so, there is the sense of them being a tripartite type thing and there's that little gag in the third act where Mannie has to be all of them, with Verity saying "Give me your hand, give me your hand," and Mannie trying to be six hands, basically.

R.C. Do you think that's a specifically female concept, that idea of the fragmented female [identity]?

P.M. Hmm...I don't know. It probably is, I'm also very aware of all the religious iconography. I had a Catholic childhood in case that isn't obvious from the text, and I know that as much as it's laden with literature it's also laden with Biblical references and religious iconography.

R.C. What's that about?

P.M. Look I think that was just the first theatre of my life. I think that's where I first encountered theatre, when I was a little child, the first churches I went to was for Latin Mass, and it was the – you know, the frocks and the incense and the altar boys and the bells. Fantastic. So even though I have moved far away from the Church, there is still a deep, cellular, engagement with the theatrics of that world.

R.C. I was wanting, now to ask a few questions relating to metatheatre and the way the play signals its awareness of its status as theatre, which it does in a number of ways. Perhaps a starting point would be to talk about the Narrator.

P.M. Mmmm! Yeah, still working on her...the Weaver. Oh gosh. Again, that's one of those - you know, when you teach playwriting, which I've done quite a lot of, you go "Don't use narrators, it's one of the laziest, most ridiculous sorts of things that you can do, in a theatrical form." You know, "Show us, don't Tell us." But when I was writing this, and it became so Big, it seemed like the most efficient thing to do. And an interesting part of my experience of writing this play is [that] it has been like a weaver's shuffle [gestures/mimes this movement]. I haven't written the work in a linear, chronological way, I've gone, instead, even with scenes sometimes, backwards and forwards within the scene, writing it in vertical and horizontal dimensions if that makes sense. So using a character who is a weaver to explore the nature of dramatic

storytelling gave me a whole vocabulary. And I'm a writer who works very much with structure. If I'm talking about being a playwright and why I became a playwright I always say "I'm a carpenter's daughter. My dad was a builder. And when I write plays I think of building something, and the shapes and the physics and geometry of the construction. [These] are really, really strong things for me. So having the Weaver gave me a mechanism to move through and around ... and to get *between*. And a big part of what you're talking about with the meta-stuff is this idea, and it came from the exegesis [P.M.'s MA Thesis] of inhabiting the spaces *in-between*. So, bugger the margins. They can put me on the margins. But I'm going to find – and I'm not going to be allowed in the "main" spaces, but if I can insert story, character, style, into the gaps, and kind of rudely interrupt, then there is space for me there.

I also like the idea of the whole weaver thing being able to ... I wanted to work with the audience in a different way, I wanted to try and come up with a more *immersive* experience, and a more participatory experience, and since we've, particularly since we've got our eyes on Queen's Hall, we've worked very much with that venue in mind to try to imagine the piece as a sort of promenade piece, sort of site specific piece where we actually move the audience around. So having a device that allowed me to blur the edges between who's in the audience and who's in the show, which we do, and I think is going to be an absolute hoot, having the Choir sitting in the audience and having them texting the Weaver half way through and then having them literally break into the play, from outside. I just thought that that was an interesting way to muck around with it.

R.C. Is that [the Choir among the audience] also a way of signaling that the world of the audience has these parallels with the imagined world of the play?

P.M. Yeah, I suppose so. You see I'm still trying to work on this – I'm still trying to resolve...there are a lot of questions about the text that I'm still not 100% clear on, and the text is continuing to change, and I'm still trying to work out...Are the Weaver and the Choir members there – I think they *are* – I think they're there to defend the Oratorio. And I think the *play* is like this very long runway. I've used this analogy before, it's like this long runway for this great swan that has to thump its way along the runway until eventually it takes flight in the Oratorio. And so what the Weaver and the Choir members are in cahoots over, is an attempt to defend *that*. And *That's* the thing that was being rehearsed, and *that's* the thing that's been disrupted [that is, at the start of the

play] *that's* the thing they've had to translate into another space, that's had to find another venue, in order to do it, and they are *actively* monitoring the world because they are still under threat. And the Oratorio is *still* under threat, right until the first bar, probably. And I haven't worked that through, I know it's a weakness in the text, still, that I haven't entirely solved. You know it's so complicated. Where the Weaver is inside and outside the play. I always imagined, and I have a vision of it, there's a moment inside the play when they're knotted together [the inner and outer worlds] and then one extends outside the play back into the audience and the other is inside the play and deeper and deeper into the narrative and it's connected to Mannie and Mannie's story and the mother – all of that stuff, is all tied up with that skein of the story. Did you get that?

R.C. Yes, I did [confusing moments of connection between the inner and outer worlds of the play] And there's that moment where we hear the child singing in the background as well.

P.M. Well that's the moment of Verity's vision. But I think having the Weaver captured and taken out of the story is a very, very important moment and what happens to the play and the text from that point on, without the master storyteller. So I don't know. I was trying to ask questions about who gets to tell the stories...you know.

R.C. You indicate that the narrator figure [the Weaver] might be played by an Indigenous actor.

P.M. Yeah, look I'm really in two minds about that now. I've had a wonderful Indigenous actor who's been playing that role, working through that role through the creative development process. And she's a great singer and we really needed someone [with that ability because] the Weaver becomes the deliverer of a lot of the songs, through the text and in the Oratorio as well. But I'm aware of the potential readings and mis-readings of that, and I also want to keep the work open to Indigenous actors to play any bloody role, in the whole bloody text!!! And any role in the whole Oratorio. And so – I'm not having an argument with myself, I'm just a bit lost about the wisdom of it, about it being misconstrued.

R.C. In terms of setting it up as – if there’s an Indigenous actor playing the Weaver/Story-teller then it establishes this idea that this Is an indigenous story?

P.M. Yeah. And it’s *not* an indigenous story. However, I have deliberately left ambiguities around that and the fact that it’s a black swan’s, a cygnet’s quill, that’s *black*, that the child brings at the end. There are references, there are particular references for me of Australia and of our particular situation as post-colonial invaders and I’ve tried to put that acknowledgement of that in the text, without... “No, it’s not my right to tell those stories and I don’t *intend* to tell those stories,” but I wanted to acknowledge that as part of the landscape of this piece and also, you know, trying to talk about who’s been silenced. So it’s a work about who’s been silenced – the indigenous people of this country have been the most silenced of *all*. So that’s in there too, but I was trying not to...I’m aware of it as a potential minefield of *misunderstanding* and *misapprehension*. So I don’t know what to do about it.

R.C. Partly related – The “White Out.” Can you just talk about that?

P.M. Well that’s a literary and stationery joke!

R.C. Yes.

P.M. And there are so many word plays in the whole thing. So, again, that’s a nod to the patriarchal, colonial binary imperative. So it’s the academic part of me...It’s a joke! It’s an academic joke and you’ll get it, and others of us who are writing our dissertations will get it, and a lot of people won’t get it.

R.C. Speaking of the things that people will get or won’t get, you’d suggested that the footnotes are ...I like how you described it...as a “performable aspect” of the production. Do you still see that as being the case?

P.M. Mmm. Yeah, I do. I don’t quite know what I *mean!* When we launched it last year we had this great thing where we had kind of installations in the State Library, so there were almost like little artworks, for example in one there was ah – you know those old-fashioned weighing scales that newborn babies are put in...the mother and child – we had that with a little novella inside it, so we had these little physical artworks that

were manifestations of aspects of the footnotes. And that worked really well. And I guess I feel really open to trying to find a way of making the footnotes a concrete thing because I hoped that people would be curious about a lot of these references. And I hoped to share my love, I suppose, my love of Brahms, my love of Coleridge, my love of ... by creating something that has these portals through which people can engage with those references.

R.C. And some of the popular culture ones as well. I love the Chris Cross reference "To Ride Like the Wind" and the way that comes back!

P.M. [*Laughs*]. I mean Everybody knows it! Whether you like popular music or not, everybody knows it. You know, I love that stuff that's actually part of the cultural psyche. And I also wanted not to privilege the High Arts. I wanted to have jokes in there that would be appealing to people across all spectrums and not necessarily – I hate the kind of theatre myself where you get the sense that everybody else is in on something and you're not. So I hope it doesn't come across like that, because it's not meant to.

R.C. I was going to ask about other theatre works and with this being [so intertextual] were you aware [when] writing it, or generally, of other plays that use that kind of referential approach?

P.M. I should be ...

R.C. I just wondered whether there was any influence there, or whether this [referentiality] was something that – and it sounds like [this was the case] – came about more organically?

P.M. It was, and you know talking about it like this it makes me realise I can't think of anything else that's like this. Although, we did talk [prior to the interview] about *Pandora's Cross* – we talked about Dorothy Hewett – and I did my thesis on *Pandora's Cross* which was her great Failure. Her Great Failure and when I think about it *now*, it used pastiche, it used collage, it used assemblage, it used factual and fictional elements and brought them together, so, *funnily enough*, and I haven't thought about it before this very moment, that's probably the closest point of reference that I can think of. And that was a disaster that play. It was a disaster for her, it was a disaster for the Paris Theatre



Company. And yet there was something in her ambition and what she was trying to do that has obviously made its mark on *me*. The other writer that is not in here at all. The only other writer that I would say, you know, if I was going to go looking for references, is Caryl Churchill. Because she, for me she's the God! And I guess I haven't paid homage to her in this because she's too elevated. For me – she's just – un-touchable. And I think there is something about her dynamic, over the decades, in her practice, and the fact that she's endlessly inventive with form, is a kind of inspiration point for me.

But when I think about it now I think “No, I just made this up!” It pleased me. It pleased me to make something that looked like this. And felt like this.

R.C. OK, so the play also includes a number of references to modern technologies, so you've got all the texting, references to different “gizmos,” contraptions, and I suppose the question there is: Is this a critique or is it more ambivalent?

P.M. I hope it's more ambivalent, because I think that's a new kind of literacy and I think – I'm 55, so I'm somebody who's living right at the most uncomfortable edge of the transformation of our literate world. You know, I've tried very hard to keep up. I don't want to be a Luddite. So I do use a lot of these things and I – I went to a Scrivener workshop yesterday – you know, trying to keep abreast of all these tools that are available to us. I wanted to try and express my concerns about our attention spans. And my concerns about *my* attention span, in this new world. I feel like it's harder and harder to engage with the Unity of the creative work. There are so many interruptions and so many intrusions and so many tangents of the means of exploration. So I guess I was trying to write about that in some way, I was trying to find a way of putting that in a way that I could look at it, but I hope it's not entirely anti-technology. Because I understand that if we're going to remain a literate community, that's where it's at. That's where our literacy will reside.

R.C. I thought you might like to talk a bit about the Swan references and the poem [and so on].

P.M. Mmmm. Again, there were a lot of coincidences that attended that. Finding a bit of Rilke one day that I'd written on the back of an index card from something years ago

and turning it over and realising that it was from one of his poems. Umm....look, I don't know how that got in there...Swan Song is how it got in there. That idea of it being *my* Swan song. I think that's why the work is so crammed with everything. There was a sense that "If this is my last hurrah, I'm putting everything I possibly can into it. The myth that swans are mute. That served me perfectly. You know, they're not mute. But there is a myth that they are. And I think that the myth that women are mute served my – the allegorical purposes of the work. Um....there are all these wonderful swan myths and legends in all sorts of cultures, to do with their mystical qualities and the fact that they can inhabit the spaces in between. If you research swans, that's the characteristic of them that they live in between worlds. And, *again*, this *inter*. Intertextuality. Inter-style, inter-generational, that's where I position myself now if I ...*again*. I'm not in the margins, I'm in the gaps. And I'm quite happy to live in the gaps. And that's where the swans live. [*Ponders other permutations of the swan mythology*] the cygnet thing/the cygnet "ring," the *quill*. That's the other thing, you know, obviously, that the pen as an instrument was an essential part of the story, so that's the other aspect of the swan was that/this quest to bring her this quill that she can manage to write with for the last part of her life. It just sort of served / it's one of those metaphors that served the story in many ways.

R.C. In your thesis you use the term "re-writing" and [related to this] I liked the moment towards the end of the play where you do re-write the swan myth by contradicting that [idea that swans cannot speak]...

P.M. Yes. So that she's able to say "We are not mute." We sing and we...

R.C. Yes. So I suppose finally I wondered whether during the creative development you worked on that section in Folio Two, there's a really powerful moment when the women have been gagged but they sing "The Choon." What was that like?

P.M. Chilling. Absolutely chilling. It's in the little video. It was very crudely done, you know. [*Explains how the actors involved were asked to bring in a bandage from home and wrap it around their face for the purpose of the scene during the creative development.*]

*Murray offered to play some of the music from the piece.*

P.M. That piece of music is *the* most beautiful – The Brahms Opus 52. It’s a very curious piece because, I’m not a musicologist, but I do love music, and I know quite a lot of music – I know quite a lot about music and I had never heard this piece before, a friend of mine gave it to me to listen to, again, when I was preparing to write this piece. I was listening to it and I thought, this is absolutely staggering – it’s a solo woman supported by a male chorus. And you just don’t *hear* that. You know, again, it’s a kind of topsy-turvydom. And when I looked into the lyrics of it, it’s a bloody Goethe piece. And it’s all about... “Are there words in your hymn book to express...” you know, the lyric of it was just absolutely... So in that moment, Doula, she says she sings / she *hums* in a quire because they’re not allowed to sing the words any more. Remember, in the fencing scene?

R.C. Yes.

P.M. And Verity says “Would you hum for me?”... “some other time.” So, when she begins to hum, it’s to build on that strand of the story. And all of the women join in, and they hum it with her. And it’s very – well firstly because it’s the first time...music has been heard *once* in the show before that and it’s at the end of the first act when Mannie just plays one chord on the ukulele. But to suddenly have these voices coming through these bandages. I don’t know, its – it’s really powerful.

R.C. It struck me as a fairly key moment in the play and so I couldn’t help but wonder what that would be like to have the aural element.

P.M. Mmmm. Well it absolutely embodies the idea of resistance. It totally physicalises the idea that “We will not be silenced.” And “even with gags in our mouths we will make this noise.” So I suppose it’s kind of the nub of the whole thing, isn’t it?

*R.C. then thanks P.M. for the interview and P.M. plays R.C. some music (a recording). This is a recording of the humming of Brahms Opus 52 that was made the first time P.W. came down to Melbourne to work on the play.*

P.M. [*Explains that the recording is very crude*]. We had a weekend called "Read for a Feed." We had a whole lot of actors and musicians come over and we read the play and played the music in my living room. And so they were site reading.

*R.C. takes the opportunity to ask one last question.*

R.C. ...about the handicrafts. How did that link [between handicrafts and women's writing] come about?

P.M. Again, as a feminist thing, it was this thing [question] of "Where is women's Art?" and you know, and it's interesting, my PhD is going to grow from this very logically I think, because I'm really interested in maturity of practice and artistic endeavor over the life course. And where is women's art? It's domestic art. It *has* been, by and large, domestic art. And for some reason that's given it a secondary place. But it's just as extraordinary as any other sort of art. And so I wanted to celebrate that as well. I guess it's kind of a re – a re-vision of the history, it's like "Hello. We *are* artists. We *have* produced."

Interview conclusion/wrap-up.

*R.C. Comments that she thinks the above point comes across clearly in the play and P.M. replies that she is glad to hear this and interested to hear R.C's impressions, as R.C. is the first person from outside the process of making the show to have responded to it in any way.*

1hr, 11minutes, 18 seconds.

## APPENDIX F:

PROGRAMME FROM PREMIERE PRODUCTION OF TTFO

Footscray Community Arts Centre presents

# THINGS THAT FALL OVER

an ironic appraisal of a novel inside a reading of a play, with footnotes, and costumes on-site



*A triathlon for ensemble performance*

Conceived and delivered by PETA MURRAY  
 Music, original and arranged, by PETA WILLIAMS  
 Choreography by ROBIN LAURIE  
 Musical Direction and Foley by JO TREVATHAN  
 Design, Artwork and Special Effects by JANE MURPHY  
 Costumer: ALICE PROWSE  
 Lighting Design: RACHEL BURKE  
 Production Manager: MADGE FLETCHER  
 Stage Manager: BINDI GREEN  
 Aural Enthusiast: JESS KEEFFE  
 Audio Engineer: BEK VARCOE  
 Videographer: SUE ROBERTS

SATURDAY March 1, 2014

Presented as part of Footscray Community  
 Art Centre's International Women's Day  
 Program and 40th birthday celebrations

**FCAC**

FOOTSCRAY  
 COMMUNITY  
 ARTS  
 CENTRE

We acknowledge that we are on traditional lands of the Boon Wurrung and Wamandjeli peoples of the Kulin Nation. We offer our respect to the Elders of these traditional lands and, through them, to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

### Writer's Note from Peta Murray

Things That Fall Over started out as a title, scrawled in thick texta, on the outside of a 56-page exercise book. Around the same time it became the centrepiece of a practice-based higher degree project about women's writing, late bloomers, and the poetics of the anti-musical. Fuelled by a mix of one part despair to two parts rage, a first draft was delivered under difficult conditions over the Easter holiday period of 2011. Over that same long weekend, by sheer serendipity, I heard from an old friend, Peta Williams, whose extraordinary contribution would go on to transform the text from play to libretto, my "book" and her "music", complete.

The thing with the long name soon broke its academic banks, finding its way via various tribunes into other worlds. Briefly it was a text pitched to companies and script laboratories. They didn't want it. Next it was a hybrid work in need of creative development. Modest funding success here saw it pass through workshops and showings under the banner of the "independent arts project in progress." TTFO was tested and refined, and redrafted again.

Plans were made, plans were dashed. Faith, hope and considerable charity saw the work endure. Officially launched, it found a life of its own. Sometimes it was a charming, well-mannered thing, but more often it was a hungry beast demanding full time care and attention. Part pantomime, part provocation, we were hard-pressed to say what it was. A modular musical? A fantasia? A lily? All I know is that it was a work whose full name no one but me could recall, yet still it tottered forward, somehow capturing the support and participation of about 200 women over these formative years. By late 2013 it had acquired a long list of friends and champions, drawn together some stellar performers, and grown an oratorio for a tail. (What's an oratorio? Opera, without the money.)

Flash forward to 1st March 2014. What is TTFO today? It is song, it is a theros and a cake, it is reunion and laughter, dress-ups and nonsense. It is women and girls from all over, mucking in. It is an open door through which an inter-generational ensemble has come together to make something we like the look of and NO BOYS ALLOWED (Well, one or two.) It is a world many may recognise, yet somehow turned on its head. It is a place I have been grateful to inhabit, these past several years, even though it has at times threatened to crush my spirit and break my heart.

For TTFO is also a family, of sorts, a workly family that hangs together through thick and thin. It is no longer an adhoc, a grant acoutal or even a performance – it is, instead, a kind of a space, a gap in the landscape that out-dwellers may occupy and furnish, and decorate to our own taste, right down to a floor rug, an outlandish lampshade and a couple of comfy chairs. In this space we may be rowdy, and playful, and noisy and brave.

There is so much to say about this project that it is impossible to speak of it anymore. Different women now hold and carry different parts of its story. Threads of the weave shimmer in space, and others are archived in boxes as print outs and scores and souvenirs and ephemera. Who knows how long they may endure?

No matter. Things That Fall over is a testament to us, here, now, today women and girls, and our friends and our families, here in Footscray together, and to all of you, every last one, who held us upright, or at least at a lean, as we strove so hard to get here.

Thank you FCAC for having us, and thank you one and all for celebrating with us today. Onwards!

<http://thingsthatfalllover.wordpress.com> [www.facebook.com/ThingsThatFallOver](http://www.facebook.com/ThingsThatFallOver)  
<http://tumblr.com/thingsthatfalllover> (for our online footnotes)

### Introducing the Ensemble

#### PETA MURRAY

Archivist

Peta Murray fell in love with theatre at The Community Theatre, Kilara, in 1966, and gets those same warm fuzzy feelings bringing TTFO to FCAC. These days she is a teacher, dramaturg, and author of the plays, *Wallflowering*, and award-winning *Sopping Chips*, *The Keys to the Animal Room*, and *Gold* which won the Victorian Premier's Award for Drama. She intends to keep writing and making stuff like this until she drops.

#### PETA WILLIAMS

Composer

Peta Williams is a musician, composer and trained music therapist based in the lower Blue Mountains, west of Sydney. She has worked extensively in music administration and arts management in both the government (arts funding) and non-government sector, and currently works in the community sector. She considers herself a Late Bloomer, having come back to writing and arranging music for plays in 2011 after a 30-year absence, and is delighted to re-connect with her former creative collaborator, Peta Murray, with whom she worked in the early 1980s. She has been trying to teach herself the ukulele but so far has only managed the open strings and the C major chord. For special treats she loves to eat Very Good Chocolate.

#### ALICE PROWSE

Costume Designer

Alice considers herself a costumer. She has a muddled education in textiles and garment construction and is just starting out in the big wide world of THE ARTS. She loves a good Instagram filter. Experience is key! are the words she hears most often in conversations about her own career. She gets it now.

#### ANNIE HEATH

Production Volunteer

Annie is currently on leave from her event management job and digging deep for the former stage manager within, having believed her NIDA training was swansonged many years ago.

#### BEK VIRCOC

Audio Engineer (SWANSONG)

Bek Vircoc has been working in audio for around 20 years. After starting out in community radio, she spent many years touring as a front of house audio engineer for bands in Australia and Europe, moving to monitor more recently acquiring skills in large concert system design and lately in theatre audio and production management.

#### BINDI GREEN

Stage Manager

Bindi is a freelance Production and Stage Manager, and enjoys working in unusual places with interesting ideas. She divides her time between projects in Community Arts, Live Art, and touring Australia and internationally with puppetry and performance based productions.

#### CAROLINE LEE

Performer

Caroline has been working professionally as a performer for over twenty years. Most recently she has appeared in Bill Shakespeare's production of *Phedre* by Racine, played the role of Venus in *The Merchant* Trilogy with Chamber Made Opera as part of the Melbourne International Arts Festival, played Sylvia Plath in *A Kind of Fabulous Harem* by Barry Dickins, toured Australia in *The Flood*, an Australian Gothic drama by Jackie Smith, and appeared in *Small Metal Objects* in Cardiff with Back to Back Theatre. Caroline has won three Green Room awards and is also a well-loved, and awarded, narrator of talking books.

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>CASEY ATKINS</b>  | Stage management intern                      |
| Casey Atkins is a Theatre addict who loves to share her opinions on everything from rap beats and pop culture to the state of global politics. An avid theatre-goer from a young age has left Casey following the stage into her adult life.   |  |
| <b>CLARE LEIGHTON &amp; MICHELLE MCCANN</b>  | Hair & Makeup                                |
| Hair and Makeup extraordinaire Clare and her stylist assistant Michelle bring glamour to any event. They say all fabulous hair and beauty starts with a healthy diet and exercise consisting mainly of hard liquor, late nights and dancing 'til you drop!   |  |
| <b>ELENA VALMBERTI</b>   | Online Fundraising coordinator               |
| Elena Valmberti is a RMIT Fine Art undergraduate, and a volunteer fundraiser for art-based projects.   |  |
| <b>ELIZABETH WELCH</b>   | Performer                                    |
| Elizabeth is often cast against type, in real life she is glamorous and very rich. As an actor she makes a great martini, and intends to structure a life around interesting events and buying bentwood chairs. She was involved in the creative development of TTFO.  |  |
| <b>FIONA FURPHY</b>  | Cello  |
| Fiona has found that a successful career as a cellist has required a willingness to throw herself into just about any situation. She has played for theatre, opera, symphony orchestras, musicals, pop-star tours, advertisements, chamber music, choral, baroque ensembles, film and television scores and just about anywhere else that would have her. She passes on the love by teaching cello in every gap she can find and then goes home to mother three small boys. She is nearly always exhausted!  |  |
| <b>GINA MOXLEY</b>   | Creative Counselor                           |
| Gina Moxley is an Irish actor, writer, director who had the great fortune to meet Peta Murray in New York in 2001. From Dublin, Gina writes: "Since then she has been my dear friend, artistic twin, peer-pressure, rock and sounding board and I hope I have been the same for her. I am bowled over by her achievement and very jealous of you people who are witnessing this wondrous event. I am honoured to be her pal."  |  |
| <b>JANE MURPHY</b>   | Designer                                     |
| Jane is renowned for falling over... and has many childhood scars to prove it! Through a series of serendipitous events, she found her way into film and theatre, and has maintained that connection ever since. A lover of tinkering, she sees her involvement in TTFO as an opportunity to test out many new toys.   |  |
| <b>JESS KEEFFE</b>   | Aural Enthusiast                             |
| Jess Keeffe is an aural enthusiast, perpetual student, and probable nerd. Occasional hobbies include sitting, napping, and drinking coffee.  |  |
| <b>JAMES LI</b>  | Production Volunteer                         |
| James Li is from China, but in Australia she answers to "Li". She met Peta Murray through a chance conversation outside the State Library of Victoria. Liz is a student at the University of Melbourne, where she majors in accounting and finance, but she's passionate about everything in life, including music and almost all kinds of sports.   |  |
| <b>JULIE MORRITT</b>   | Assistant Quins Director                     |
| Julie has been singing in showers and choirs for a Good Portion of her life. More recently, she has begun dabbling in a lot of snafu-ing and now finds herself involved in this production - an unexpected, albeit welcome turn of events! Excitingly, Julie also has some small and spreadsheet skills, so she has been able to be Cf Use in the show as Quins Communications Manager. She HATES intolerance. And long job titles.  |  |
| <b>KYLIE WHYTE</b>   | Base/Like                                    |
| Kylie is an ESL teacher, bass and ukulele player with a long and varied career in the community sector. Her musical endeavours have ranged from circus, big bands, improvised music ensembles to spoken word, theatre and Cabaret music.   |  |
| <b>LISA WAZA</b>   | Performer                                    |
| Lisa tries to keep from falling over... and regularly succeeds. Although, in her youth it wasn't unusual for her to walk head first into a street pole or trip on the pavement. One thing Lisa can say for sure is that she's never bored. She prefers juggling, busy singing, making theatre, writing, voice over work, cooking vegetarian food, documentary making, walking, sharing info on FB about saving sharks, the ABC and the Great Barrier Reef, listening, thinking, watching tennis, performing office bearing duties... on at least one too many boards, catching up with family and friends and even trying new things like rally car driving. |  |
| <b>LOUISE GOUGH</b>  | Creative Counselor                           |
| Louise Gough is an Australian script editor and dramaturg working in film, television and theatre in Australia, America, New Zealand and throughout Europe. She has never played a ukulele and Italy never will.   |  |
| <b>LUCY CROSSSETT</b>  | Festivities Designer & Props Intern          |
| Lucy is an aspiring designer and proud to boast that she is the niece of the madam behind TTFO. Her most used sentence is, "What favour would you like?" as Lucy works in the booming frozen yoghurt business. When she's not serving 'foyo, Lucy enjoys admiring her mug collection and fantasising about travel.   |  |
| <b>MADGE FLETCHER</b>  | Production Manager                           |
| An honourable rebel - Madge loves art, music, women and politics. She regularly falls over for all four, but usually manages to get right back up again. Madge has worked on grand and mini projects, amongst big and little causes, wrangled for arts companies and festivals, and most recently completed post graduate studies in arts management at Deakin. She has worked extensively with different communities in the Northern Territory.   |  |
| <b>MARG DOBSON</b>   | Performer                                    |
| Marg Dobson has a long held passion for performing, singing, gardening and being an aunty. Either working for the arts front and centre and being a show off, or behind the scenes in administration and community connections, it is through the delivery of ideas, she gets her thrills to survive and thrive and feel alive.  |  |
| <b>MARGARET ROADKNIGHT</b>   | Performer                                    |
| Margaret RoadKnight has sung folk, blues, other gems & genres to acclaim around Australia & the globe for 80 years.  |  |
| <b>MONIQUE ZUCCO</b>   | Drummer                                      |
| Monique is a versatile drummer/percussionist of Melbourne's music scene. With studio and stage experience across a variety of musical genres, she holds a B.Mus. and has studied and performs with some of Melbourne's most recognised musicians such as Greg Arnold, Doug De Vries and Diana Clark.   |  |
| <b>RACHEL BURKE</b>  | Lighting Designer                            |
| Rachel is a lighting designer of over 20 years experience in theatrical and architectural lighting for design. She has worked nationally and internationally with Australia's leading arts companies including Melbourne and Sydney Theatre Companies, The Australian Ballet, Malthouse and Bolshoi Street Theatre. Her awards include six Victorian Green Room Awards of Excellence in Theatre Lighting Design, the 2005 IES Victorian and National Awards of Excellence in Lighting Design for Hanger Hall facade and numerous architectural and urban design awards.  |  |
| <b>RACHEL JAMPOLSKI</b>  | Production Intern & assistant to Peta Murray |
| When she isn't busy writing narcissistic bios about herself, Rachel is a full time student (majoring in indecisionness), part time film nerd and all round commitment-phobe. You'll usually catch her crafting, watching YouTube videos of cats, researching future travel destinations, attempting to fight patriarchy, being concerned about the amount of time she wastes crafting and just generally trying to figure out what she is doing in life.   |  |

## The Ensemble continued

### REBECCA CLODE

Interested bystander and researcher  
 Rebecca teaches Drama at the Australian National University and has been writing about TTFO as part of a PhD on Australian metalheads. As a researcher, she is interested in Australian Drama, both its history and current practice. She is grateful for the opportunity to experience and write about this work during its development.

### ROBIN LAURIE

Choreographer & Creative Counsel  
 Robin makes things up with all sorts of groups of people. She has been doing this for a Very Long Time. She is Getting On. She is part sonic and thinks it is probably true that life is a Circus! She is a Grande Tata, a Feldenkrais practitioner and cooks a very good Christmas cake from a Nut Shop kit. She hates pommers.

### ROSIE BRAY

Performer  
 Rosie has enjoyed performing since she started ballet at 3 years of age. She has played a number of small roles as well as the role of Bea in *The House at the End of the Line* by Tracy Bourne and *The Child* in the development of *Swansong*. *The Musical* in 2013. Rosie loves reading, running and playing guitar. She is 11 years old.

### SHANI WILLIAMS

Vocalist  
 Shani has been a professional vocal player for longer than she cares to remember. She has had the good fortune to play in orchestras across the musical spectrum including symphony, opera, ballet, and musical theatre. Most recently, in addition to work at a community legal centre, Shani has played vocal in *Love Never Dies*, *South Pacific*, *Tina Turner*, and the *Melbourne Ring Orchestra*. In her free time Shani loves reading, film, theatre, and beer/food.

### STEFANE THOM

Violin  
 Stefane has been working as a professional violinist for over two decades. She performs in many different genres including orchestra, chamber music, musical theatre, commercial and in the recording studio. Stefane has spent many years living, studying and working in Europe. She now combines her work as a violinist with coordinating the string program at the Westbourne Grammar School.

### SUE ROBERTS

Videographer  
 As Producer and Director of Luminescence Films I am passionate about shining a light on the interdependency of the individual, the community and the environment. I believe we have a responsibility to care for each other and the planet. This belief, together with the knowledge that storytelling is healing and empowering, drives my commitment to 'bringing stories to light'. Film is the medium through which I achieve this vision. Capturing people on camera who are telling their story and standing inside their passion is a catalyst for change.

### SUE ROBINSON

Keyboards  
 Sue Robinson has finally taken advantage of a lifetime of indecision and now makes every attempt to justify calling herself a pianist, singer, conductor, cellist, teacher of most of these, composer, actor, poet, gardener and dog napper.

### TRACY BOURNE

Performer & Quire Director  
 Tracy Bourne is a singer and singing teacher, actor and theatre maker. She was Lecturer in Singing at the University of Ballarat from 2000-2012, and has musically directed a number of choirs in Melbourne and regional Victoria. She recently performed her own cabaret show, *Private for the Ballarat and Melbourne Cabaret Festivals* (2012, 2013). She runs a private singing studio and hopes to complete her PhD on music theatre voice in 2014.

### TRUDY HAYTER

Production Volunteer  
 After more than her fair share of working in the arts as a stage, production and event manager Trudy finally has a desk job... and she's glad about that. Trudy also worked on the creative development of TTFO and the first presentation of *Swansong*.

### VICKI PASSMORE

Financial wrangler  
 Vicki is a stickler for detail. She enjoys being involved and making things happen for other people. This production introduced her to the ukulele which brings her much joy!

### VIOLET BASIC-LYELL

Performer  
 Violet is a try-anything-once kind of a gal. She has decided she likes roller skating, reading, monkey bars, running races, high tea, indoor rock climbing, trampolines, overseas trips, playing foosy and cricket, swimming, surfing, riding her bike, bicycling, and long barbecues. She loves the violin and sleepovers and hopes that one day she can crack an egg perfectly. She is 7 years old.

### WILHELMINA STRACHE

Performer  
 We graduated from the VCA in 1993. Since then, she has done a bit of everything including parking cars, performing and practicing law. She is currently working at the Victorian Trades Hall Council.

### THE QUIRE

Glynn Angel, Dan Barro-Jenkins, Sarah Berry, Jennifer Corallo, Joanna Dunt, Sue Fincane, Letitia George, Jill Kavanagh-Ryan, Carole Kavan, Karen Mawering, Julie Mearns, Mary O'Mara, Vicki Passmore, Anne Robertson, Linda Smart, Sandra Ullentogter, Nora van Waarden, Mary-Jane Wylie

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