

Celebrating Australian Playwriting



Australian Script Centre



Passion

by Tony Nicholls

EXTRACT

© 1999 Tony Nicholls



This script is distributed by The Australian Script Centre
77 Salamanca Place Hobart 7004 Tasmania Australia
email admin@ozscript.org
www.ozscript.org
ph +61 3 6223 4675
fax +61 3 6223 4678

ONE: DREAMS OF THE ROOD

A CHURCH.

STILLNESS.

A LARGE, CRUDELY MADE, WOODEN CROSS, CENTRALLY PLACED, SOFTLY SPOTLIT.

VOICES: (OFF) Passion!

INSTANTLY THE ACTING AREA FLOODS WITH ALL THE PEOPLE AND ACTIVITY OF A TV STUDIO AND/OR SOUND STAGE. CAMERAS APPEAR, LIGHTS ARE MOVED OUT, SNAPPED ON, ORDERS ARE CALLED ETC ETC. OVER THIS, PUNCTUATED WITH DRUM BEATS, IS HEARD:

Strong emotion!

DRUM

Frenzy!

DRUM

Rage!

DRUM

From the Latin verb patior!

SUDDEN LOUD SLAM OF A DOOR.
SILENCE. ALL ACTORS FREEZE.

(SOFTLY) To suffer...

SHIMMER OF CYMBALS

ECHO: (FADING OUT) Suffer, suffer, suffer...

LIGHTS FADE BUT THE CROSS REMAINS IN A SPOT.

A YOUNG MAN, GARY, ENTERS QUICKLY, BREATHING HARD. HE CROUCHES BEHIND A PEW, LOOKING BACK IN SOME ALARM AS IF HE IS BEING PURSUED.

PAUSE. HE RELAXES A LITTLE.

HE TURNS TO SEE WHERE HE IS. IT IS OBVIOUS HE HAS SELDOM BEEN IN A CHURCH BEFORE. HE DOESN'T NOTICE THE ACTORS, WHO ARE NOW IN SHADOW, BUT ONLY LOOKS AT THE CROSS.

WARY BUT CURIOUS, HE WALKS DOWN THE MAIN AISLE.

AS GARY SPEAKS, HIS WORDS ARE PICKED UP BY THE ECHO.

GARY: What am I doing here?

ECHO: Doing here, doing here..

GARY: I shouldn't be in here -
 ECHO: Being here, being here..
 GARY: I'm a fool, I shouldn't have run - but it's cool in here -
 ECHO: School in here...
 GARY: What am I doing in here?!
 ECHO: What are you doing in here?

HE STARTS AT THIS, WONDERING IF HE HEARD ARIGHT, THEN SHRUGS THE IMPRESSION AWAY, TURNS BACK TO THE CROSS.

DRUMBEAT.

A SHAFT OF LIGHT STRIKES THE WOMAN WHO HAS APPEARED IN THE DOORWAY THROUGH WHICH GARY ENTERED. THE ACTORS' HEADS TURN SHARPLY TOWARDS HER BUT OTHERWISE THEY REMAIN FROZEN.

WOMAN: 'Listen - !
 ECHO: Listen, listen, listen..

THE WOMAN MOVES TOWARDS THE CROSS AS SHE SPEAKS. SHE IGNORES GARY WHO DOESN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO.

WOMAN: In the dead of night
 When the world was sleeping
 There came to me a dream..'
 ECHO: Dream, dream, dream...
 WOMAN: 'Methought I saw the Tree itself
 Lifted on high, ablaze with light..!
 ECHO: Light, light, light...

WOMAN: A beam of brightest wood, a beacon clad
 In overlapping gold, glitt'ring gems
 Fair at its foot, and five stones
 Set in a crux, flashed from the crosstree
 And thus to me it spoke...!'

GARY: Look -

THE WOMAN CUTS HIM OFF WITH AN IMPERIOUS GESTURE THEN POINTS TO THE ACTORS WHO COME TO LIFE, RESUMING THEIR EARLIER TASKS AND SPEAKING IN UNISON:

ACTORS: 'Back through time my mind travels
 Back to the wood where I was hewn,
 Struck from my stem by strong foes,
 Wrought into a rack for wrongdoers..'

GARY TURNS AS IF TO LEAVE.
 THE ACTORS FREEZE AND GO SILENT.

WOMAN: (SHARPLY) Don't.

GARY STOPS. THE WOMAN POINTS. THE ACTORS RESUME: