

Celebrating Australian Playwriting



Australian Script Centre



A Thing Called Snake

by Stephen House

EXTRACT

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SCENE 1

THE ROOM. HIM

IN ONLY BOXER SHORTS.

A PIECE OF OLD WOOD, BRUSHES AND TUBES OF OILS ARE IN THE ROOM. A HAUNTING SOUNDSCAPE.

HIM Coming down with a crash like fucking fuck. GATHERS HIS SENSES AND COMES TOO. So out there on the street, just before, my mate ... that I've been hanging out with forever, he says to me ... I did it on a crucifix. What? What do you mean a ... crucifix? Last night, and the night before, what I did, what I'll probably be doing tonight too. CHURCH BELLS CHIME Wow! A crucifix! Fucking wow, I say. Man! Am I blown away by your creativity, your ingenuity, your amazing fucking crazy desperation. Yeah wow! And it works the crucifix thing? I ask him. Yeah! Like a charm. They fucking love it. It's who I am. What I am. Got to keep one step ahead, he says. That's what it's all about ... round here. And then he drags on the roach we're sharing and stares into my face. His breathe smells like ... cough medicine ... aspirin ... bleach. You are not a well boy! Tears come into his bloodshot eyes. Fuck man! Don't cry! I'm sick too. Looking for more and more; shaking and weak and needing something to buck me back up. I smile at him about the crucifix thing, understand why he would; touch a weeping gash on his face. Remember a time ... another time. Laughing and running and escaping together from all that bad crap ... my little mate ... and the fucking dreams, and us just being, and hanging out. I laugh. He attempts too. Then his eyes glaze over and he falls down into a crater of last nights spew. Fuck man, roll away from that shit! Yeah ... that's the way. I got to lean on the wall for awhile, take deep breathes. I'm not feeling fabulous either boy. Fabulous am I fucking well not. He gasps. Hey buddy I say; kneel and touch him. He moves, makes a gurgling noise from the back of his throat. Eyes roll; surviving. I wipe some gunk from the corner of his mouth, kiss his cheek; taste his salty tear. His eyes lock with mine then fade off to blank. I drag him away from the spew, turn him on his side, and then head back here to this room with the oils I bought and an old bit of wood I found. Beautiful this bit of wood; buckled from weather and wear and years and damage. I know she would see it's beautiful too. Fuck ... I know. I think of her. I think of her. I really do think ...

ENTER HER

IN BLACK AND HIGH RED HEELS

HIM ... of her! I was thinking of you ... just then baby --- just that very ---

HER And now I'm here.

HIM We said no!

HER Fuck no! SHE GOES TO KISS HIM.

HIM No!

HER I'm fragile and ready to shatter.

HIM You are so beautiful when you're falling apart.

HER Am I?

HIM Yep.

HER And I am really, really falling apart ... right now sweetie.

HIM So fucking beautiful!

HER Sexy sweetie boy! SHE GRABS HIM ROUGHLY, KISSES HIM THEN TAKES OUT A LIPSTICK AND TOUCHES UP

HIM You came!

HER And came and came --- and ---

HIM You said --- that you ---

HER I said I wouldn't. Wow fucking wee!

HIM You fucking did.

HER Yep. Boom boom!

HIM Baby!

HER Boom?

HIM Please go!

HER Come back with me sweetie boy.

HIM We said no!

HER Fuck no.

HIM No!

HER I forgot from times before.

HIM Before and before. You said --- that we ---

HER I just thought to hold you ... and your voice.
We could maybe --- talk about ---

HIM No!

HER Surviving for fucks sake!

HIM SHOUTS Just go!

HER BEGINS TO LOSE IT. We could just --- talk about---

HIM HE HOLDS HER. Hey come on. We will get better and grow again.

HER Tell me what you think of me ... when you're sweating and hurting
and walking down those roads.

HIM BEGINS TO PLAY. Boom boom!

HER Hunting and crying and car lights in your face.

HIM SHOUTS AND JUMPS. Boom, fucking boom!

HER LOUDER Tell me what ...how you think of me. Tell me then I'll go. I promise.
SILENCE THEN SHOUTS Just fucking tell me you would you!

HIM Ok ... Ok. I think of you ...

HER Of only me? ... Sweetie? ... Sweetie? Have you been out there with him?

HIM He really is Jesus ... now.

HER You guys are so fucking ... fuck! I don't know.

HIM I think about him --- up there ---

HER Me! Just think about me and me and only me. Boom boom!

HIM Up there in that skanky, danky little room right now as we speak.

HER Me!

HIM Strapped up there. And it makes me think, --- it really makes me ---

HER Tell me what you think of me!

HIM I do think of you ... all the time.

HER Really?

HIM Yep.

HER You and me?

HIM Yes! SHOUTS Boom fucking boom!

HER SHOUTS Yes!

HIM Flying high in the sky.

HER SHOUTS Yes!

HIM Lying back in the sand and staring up --- to the ---

HER To the heavens above!

HIM Watching. Just watching ... and her ...her up there. HE PLAYS LIKE A SOARING BIRD Whoosh ... Whoosh.

HER Everyday!

HIM I will never ever forget that day.

HER Me too! SHOUTS Sweet boy!

HIM Sshh.

HER Sshh what?

HIM The old man who owns the rooms --- he's out ---

HER SHOUTS. Fuck that old man.

HIM Baby!

HER Why do you keep coming back?

HIM Why?

HER SHOUTS Why?

HIM Sshh ... You know ... why.

HER I know, I know.

HIM He'll be in here in a minute ... really!

HER Wow wee!

HIM You have to go.

HER Just like that?

HIM You do know.

HER I do.

HIM We gotta work it all out first. How it all is ... now.