

Celebrating Australian Playwriting



Australian Script Centre



Borrowed Time

by Stephen House

EXTRACT

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Characters

Fella, Boi and Marcus – 3 men of around 65 - 70 years old

Sheila, Glenda, Laydi and Heaven – 4 women of around 65 - 70 years old

Set

In a large room somewhere in the present

Several chairs and a small table with a single phone

A wall unit with some booze bottles / glasses / magazines / Glenda's handbag

A large chandelier / hanging ornate light

Downstage centre 4th wall (characters look into a wall mirror at times)

Style / Design Notes

Consider glamour, celebrity - but also desperation and faded beauty

Costumes should reflect the above

Music / sound

Music is an element of the play and should reflect the above

An underscore may hover in the background in sections of the play

Dance / movement creeps into the play at times

ACT 1

MUSIC

LIGHTS SLOWLY UP

SHEILA BOI AND FELLA STAND / SIT / PACE

GLENDIA IN AN ELABORATE DRESSING GOWN IS AT THE

MIRROR COMBING HER THINNING HENNA DIED HAIR

A LITTLE BACK MARCUS IS READING AND LAYDI IS DOING
HER NAILS

HEAVEN IS SITTING VERY STILL WITH HANDS FOLDED AND
STARING AT NOTHING

MUSIC FADES TO LOW

SHEILA It just goes to show.

GLENDIA Sure does.

SHEILA The way it is.

FELLA Just is, hey?

SHEILA Yep... just is.

SILENCE

SHE LAUGHS AND SPINS IN DELIGHT

PACES THE ROOM / MUSIC UP / MUSIC FADES OUT

SHEILA No limitations.

FELLA Not a single one.

GLENDIA It's what I always said.

FELLA You did Glenda.

GLENDIA But now isn't then.

LAYDI It might be again.

MARCUS Now is actually always the result of then.

GLEENDA You reckon, do you?

BOI I agree with Marcus.

SILENCE

GLEENDA I don't think I slept a wink again last night

BOI Stress probably; stress always has a way of...

GLEENDA Not really.

SHEILA Take a nap.

GLEENDA You take a nap.

SILENCE

SHEILA Well you're the one who said you were tired.

BOI You did actually.

GLEENDA Whatever.

SILENCE

I am happy for you Sheila.

SHEILA I know you are Glenda.

SHE WALKS TO FELLA AND TOUCHES HIS FACE LIGHTLY

I know you are.

SHE DRAPES HERSELF IN A WHITE FUR STOLE THAT SHE
PICKS UP FROM A CHAIR AND PARADES

How does this look?

BOI Gorgeous.

GLEND A Actually, it's not that gorgeous at all.

SHEILA No?

GLEND A The killing animal crap is fucking cruel.

SHEILA I know it is, but I have a trunk of them and...

GLEND A So what?

SHEILA You use to have a trunk of them too.

GLEND A Yep.

SHEILA And we'd all throw them on at the drop of a hat. String of pearls, big platform shoes, and off we'd go. Remember how we would strut around in...

GLEND A Actually, I changed my way of thinking, and smeared mine with red paint.

BOI Actually, you did too; quite publicly if I remember rightly.

SHEILA Yeah, and what a fuss you made over it.

GLEND A Well I meant it.

SHEILA I never doubted that you did.

HEAVEN IS VERY METHODICALLY STROKING HER LEG
OVER AND OVER YET NOT OVERTLY

GLEND A WANDERS NEAR HER AND WATCHES HER

GLEND A Barbaric, self serving and fucking cruel.

SHEILA Ok, Ok. And I don't look fat in this dress?

BOI Fat?

LAYDI Fat!

SHEILA Yes, you pair of parrots; fat.

FELLA And a bit of meat on the old frame isn't such a bad thing at our age.

BOI Our advanced age.

SHEILA You said you liked me thin Fella.

FELLA Thirty five years ago I might have said that.

SHEILA And now?
HE DOESN'T RESPOND
Now Fella?

GLEND A Go on, for Christ sake Fella; just tell her now.

FELLA Now, I like you anyway at all sweet cake.

GLEND A Sweet cake.

BOI Actually, quite advanced when you weigh it all up; if you do like a bit
of a graph; like what we've had, and what's to come.

FELLA Not me.

MARCUS Me either. Middle age I call it.

LAYDI Exactly honey.

GLEENDA Well I'm not waiting around here for fucking ever.

SHEILA Busy schedule Glenda?

GLEENDA Maybe I have.

SHEILA Do you still do that oldie's thing?

GLEENDA I did that oldies thing, once Sheila. Once!

SHEILA Don't snap.
SILENCE
MIRROR STUFF

MARCUS That's the past.

LAYDI No it's not. She did that recently.

GLEENDA Did I Laydi?

LAYDI I'm only saying that it's not the past. I'm not making anything of it.

HEAVEN ALMOST TO HER SELF / LAUGHS
The Oldies thing.

SHEILA Well I don't know about you lot, but I feel fantastic.

GLEENDA Oh, and I wonder why?

BOI You know why Glenda.

THEY GO ABOUT THEIR STUFF
HEAVEN MOVES VERY SLOWLY AROUND THE ROOM
SHE GIGGLES OR MURMERS VERY SOFTLY AT TIMES. THE
OTHERS LOOK AT HER. SHE SITS

GLEENDA I give it two weeks, and then I'm gone.

BOI Gone?

GLEENDA Stop repeating everything anyone...

SHEILA Gone where?

GLEENDA Home, of course.

HEAVEN To the Oldie's thing?

GLEENDA No Heaven; not to the bloody oldies thing. You do Boi; you keep repeating everything that anyone...

FELLA His short term memory's all fucked up, I'd say.

BOI Not really.

GLEENDA It's driving me crazy. I just wait now.

HEAVEN EXITS

SHEILA Where exactly is home now Glenda?

GLEENDA Sorry?