

Celebrating Australian Playwriting



Australian Script Centre



# The Same Paige

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by Anna Bennetts

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EXTRACT

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# **The Same Paige**

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## The Same Paige

PAIGE: An average looking woman  
GLADYS: A born-again Christian woman dressed conservatively in a suit and pearls  
ZARA: A very intense American woman  
STAR: A youngish woman dressed flamboyantly with a scarf around her head  
BRUCE: A man

A GROUP OF THREE WOMEN (GLADYS, ZARA AND STAR) SIT FROZEN IN A SEMI-CIRCLE AROUND A SMALL TABLE ALL HOLDING PIECES OF PAPER CONTAINING THEIR WRITINGS.

SOMEWHERE ON THE STAGE IS A LARGISH OBJECT COVERED WITH A SHEET.

PAIGE: Hi, is this the women's writers' group?

THE WOMEN SEEM TO COME TO LIFE, BREAKING OUT OF THE FREEZE TO SHUFFLE THEIR PAPERS AND WELCOME PAIGE TO THE GROUP.

ALL: A new member!!!

GLADYS: A new member, welcome, welcome, take a seat.

PAIGE: Thanks.

GLADYS: What's your name?

PAIGE: I'm Paige.

GLADYS: Well Paige, you're very welcome. Can I ask you what sort of writing you do?

PAIGE: Lately, mostly performance stuff – screen and stage plays

STAR: Screenplays!

ZARA: Stage plays!

GLADYS: Excellent and what do you hope to get out of coming to the group?

PAIGE: Well I've written a play ...

ZARA: Wow! A play!

STAR: That's great!

PAIGE: Ah, yeah, and... well, when you're writing for performance...

GLADYS: Writing for performance!

PAIGE: Yes, when you're writing for performance it really helps if you can hear the words read aloud... not just in your own head... so to speak.

STAR: Right... not just in your own head.

ZARA: Right.

GLADYS: Well that's excellent Paige.

STAR: Excellent.

GLADYS  
& STAR Great!

GLADYS: I think the group will be perfect for you... Let me tell you a bit about us... This is a *women's* writer's group.

ZARA: That means it's for women only.

GLADYS: That's really the only rule. You can bring any writing you like – poetry, prose, performance, prosaic – anything at all - and we read each other's work.

ZARA: And give each other feedback...

GLADYS: ... in a very supportive manner.

ZARA: It's very informal.

GLADYS: It's really quite normal.

ZARA: You can even bring your journal.

GLADYS: Shall we make a start?

ZARA  
& GLADYS: Yes.

GLADYS: Zara, do you have anything to share with us today?

ZARA: As a matter of fact, I have.

GLADYS: Excellent.

ZARA: It's a short story based on a real-life experience that happened to me back in the States.

STAR: Fantastic!

GLADYS: Go ahead.

ZARA STARTS TO READ AS IF THIS IS THE MOST PROFOUND PIECE OF WRITING KNOWN TO HUMANITY. BEFORE SHE BEGINS, SHE HOLDS UP A PICTURE OF AN ENDANGERED SPECIES – THE MONKEY LORET – INITIALLY SHE'S VERY NERVOUS.

ZARA: Exhibit 1 – the monkey Loret... Look at his eyes... Look at his nose... Look at his mouth... Look at his little ears... Look at the fur on his cheeks... Look at his eyes... Quizzical maybe – questioning? Could you hurt this face? Could you hurt his eyes? Could you rip the fur from his skin? No, no, no, no, no, no, no, oh – a thousand times no!

AS THE NERVOUSNESS SUBSIDES SHE READS WITH EXTREME PASSION AND INTENSITY – ALMOST AS IF AT ANY MOMENT SHE MAY BREAK INTO TEARS.

Yet that's what they do. Every day thousands of these little endangered species die and for what? When I read the article about the way people in China eat the monkey loret my stomach turns, I feel sick, my eyes begin to water and bile rises in my throat... I want to scream, I want to cry, I want to vomit, I want to yell no no, no, nnnnooooooooooooooooooooo!

AFTER THE INTENSITY OF THE LAST SPEECH SHE NEEDS A MOMENT TO COMPOSE HERSELF BEFORE SHE BEGINS AGAIN, THIS TIME WITH AN EXTREME LOOK OF DISDAIN ON HER FACE.

But then I remembered back in the States before I became strict vegan and my boyfriend Chuck and I drove through the drive through at MacDonalds. Chuck ordered the chicken nuggets and I remember thinking maybe I could order the chicken nuggets too. I remember thinking sure I'm a vegetarian but one or two chicken nuggets couldn't hurt. Wrong!!! As we got to the speaker and I heard the cheery voice of the MacDonalds attendant again I thought NO!!!...