

Celebrating Australian Playwriting



Australian Script Centre



Multiple Choices

by Alana Valentine

EXTRACT

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'Multiple Choice' was first performed by the Australian Theatre for Young People at Wharf Studio, Sydney, on 17 July, 1985 with the following cast:

Gillian Todd	Lisa Hensley
Effie Constantinou	Emily Nevin-Crook
Joybelle Lyon	Imogen Banks
Martin Hammond Brett Shawcross Ken Todd	Bill Hibble
Peter O'Hara Blake Walsh	Adam Cook
Colin Matthews	Ben O'Reilly
Bob Thompson Gary Lennox	Carlos Romeo
Jeremy Todd Dean Miller	Daniel Cordeaux
Allison Davis	Melanie Coombs
Gabrielle Todd Fiona Miller	Soledad Cordeaux
Melissa Walker	Kirsty Meares
<i>Director</i>	Colette Rayment
<i>Lyrics by</i>	Eddie B. Bop

CHARACTERS

GILLIAN TODD

A wilful 17 year old. Passionate, tortured, entertaining Gillian exudes cool as a cucumber control. Combine an extroverted nature with maturity and intelligence and complicate it with a tragic disease.

EFFIE CONSTANTINOU

Quietly ambitious, she tends to put the needs of others before her own.

PETER O'HARA

30ish. A genuinely interested social worker who is good at his job. Textbook training and pragmatic optimism.

KEN TODD

Her father who loves her dearly, but cannot show it.

GABRIELLE TODD

Her mother who loves her dearly but thinks that no-one knows it.

JOYBELLE LYON

Gillian's intellectual equal and rival.

MELISSA WALKER

Always looking for a party

ALLISON DAVIS

A sensitive romantic

COLIN MATTHEWS

An unsuccessful romantic conquest.

MARTIN HAMMOND

Teenage Hedonist.

BOB THOMPSON

Whatever Martin reckons.

BLAKE WALSH

One of the boys but not for much longer.

JEREMY TODD

Gillian's brother.

STAGING

The play is performed as one continuous act. The stage is split into three main areas. When one area is lit, the other two are in darkness. The action alternates between these three areas.

The central area, in which Gillian delivers her monologue, call it 'Gillian's Space', is completely bare except for a bottle of spirits.

Both of the other areas change according to the requirements of each scene.

SCENE ONEGILLIAN'S SPACE

GILLIAN

(PACING AROUND M.C. FASHION)

Hi....How are you all?.....Good?.....Good....Yeah well so am I....Well, I'm alright....no need to get too excited, you know how it is....now what we're going to have right here is a little competition....yes folks it's showtime....a healthy little competition and natcherly the winner gets to down the entire contents of this little number right here....the bottle please.... Exhibit A...Hey, ho, let's go, here's the game now don't be slow....Fuck, I'm a poet and I didn't know it....now the competitors....and here's the trick bit where you'll have to use the old nogon...this is what is known in the trade as an internal conflict...I know...you were probably gettin' all happy thinking you were going to see a nice wack of violence - a few gladiators maybe....well you're not...what you are gonna see is two sides of my character have a big go at one another...

Now, I don't know if you're the same but I got this one side of me....well butter wouldn't melt in 'er mouth...never touches the hard stuff....the ultimate in consh behaviour....some call her the straightsville dill but we'll call her.....whatever you like... honestly let me tell you about this prize piece of real estate... she's the one who makes sure I take a jumper in case it turns cold....you know the type.....steers me clear of pinball parlours, pool tables, and pubs...I can't handle her whatsoever....hard-line fundu....Now hands up who's barracking for her....

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Now I got this other girl inside of me....just the opposite...
when I say total I mean TOTAL...just suddenly takes it into
her head to be full on, will fang a right and woowowooway
off into the wild blue yonder...she's not stupid or heavy just
likes to party, party, party....worry about all the shit later and
when in doubt have a tinnie....simple but nice don't you think?
....so you got the picture?.....and you're gonna be sittin' there
barracking for whichever side of my personality you reckon
should win....pretty over the top eh?.....thanks.....OK then
keep your eyes peeled so's you know which 'side' is
winning and we'll keep comin' back to me for a bit of
adjudication see?....right well I think everyone understands....
(SELECTS A MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE)....you don't?
.....you a bit of a half-wit are you.....(TRIES A SIMPLER
APPROACH).....Do it, do it, do it,....no, no, no, no , no.....
do it, do it, do it, do it,.....no, no, no, no, no....Ring a bell?....
(BLOWS KISS)....on with the show.....May the best woman
win.

SCENE TWO

A WEDDING RECEPTION. TABLES ARE SET EITHER SIDE OF THE STAGE. THE GUESTS ARE EATING. THE ENTIRE SCENE IS STYLISED AND CHOREOGRAPHED.

GILLIAN IS SITTING WITH JOYBELLE AND ALLISON AND MELISSA. THEY ARE A BIT PISSED.

MELISSA I reckon those silver things on the front table'd be worth a bit, eh, Joybelle?

JOYBELLE Yeah and did you see the gold lamps....in this coat....no worries.

GILLIAN (MOCK SHOCK) Melissa, Joybelle, how could you....the wedding presents.....I liked the look of those antique spoons myself.

THEY ALL LAUGH. THE BRIDE APPROACHES.

JOYBELLE Eh....Cool it Gillian, here comes her majesty.

BRIDE (TIPSY) Hi girls. Thanks for coming. I can see you've managed to find enough to eat.

ALLISON (POLITE) Yeah, well we'd hate to see anything wasted.

BRIDE (LAUGHS) Just help yourself.

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MELISSA We were just saying we might.

GILLIAN (GLARES AT MELISSA) You copin' with all the rels alright
are ya?

BRIDE Oh, that's fine. It's not that I'm worried about.

JOYBELLE I already gave one a stroke telling her I wanted to be a
mechanic and she said, 'Why that dear?', and I said, "Cause I
don't want to have to talk to people'. Well....that got me the
evil eye.

BRIDE To tell you the truth I'm more worried about tonight.

GILLIAN It'll be alright. He's not drinking that much.

BRIDE No....I mean (EMBARRASSED). Becoming a woman.

JOYBELLE That's tomorrow when you have to do the washing up.

BRIDE It's alright for you lot....I just hope I....you know....don't
disappoint him.

MELISSA Do you mean you and he haven't.

GILLIAN KICKS MELISSA UNDER THE TABLE. MELISSA IS RESTRAINING
HYSTERICAL LAUGHTER

GILLIAN Don't worry about it...just try and have a bit of fun.

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BRIDE Oh, I'm not totally naive.

JOYBELLE Tell us more.

BRIDE I've read up on it...have you seen that book....(BEING
SECRETIVE)....It's got a white cover....know the one?

JOYBELLE AND MELISSA ARE SHAKING THEIR HEADS IN DISBELIEF.

GILLIAN No, can't say any of us have.

BRIDE Anyway, I'd better get back. I think they're going to start the
dancing....thanks for the chat.

GILLIAN Yeah....and Fiona....Relax.

BRIDE WALKS OFF. JOYBELLE AND MELISSA ARE LAUGHING AND
CRACKING JOKES 'OH THE EARTH MOVED' ETC.

GILLIAN Come on....cool it girls.....maybe she wanted to save
herself. (LOOKS DUBIOUS)

JOYBELLE Since when did you become Mother Theresa?

ALLISON There's nothing wrong with waiting. It's better if you have a
feeling to the person.

MELISSA Yeah, but she's marrying him.

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JOYBELLE All I can say is, I wouldn't buy a car without a test drive.

GILLIAN It's still not worth embarrassing the poor girl....she'll get surprised soon enough....anyhow look what's just walked in.

THE BOYS HAVE WALKED IN AND ARE SITTING DIRECTLY OPPOSITE THE GIRLS. THEY ARE CHECKING EACH OTHER OUT.

BRIDE'S FATHER (STANDS) Get down and get with it!

THE GUESTS SIMULTANEOUSLY LOOK UP, ROLL THEIR EYES AND RETURN TO THEIR CONVERSATIONS.

THE FATHER SHRUGS HIS SHOULDERS AND SITS DOWN.

THE BRIDE AND GROOM GET UP TO DANCE. THE MUSIC IS FIRST A WALTZ BUT QUICKLY BECOMES MODERN AND ROCKY. GILLIAN AND HER GIRLFRIENDS GET UP AND STAND AT THE EDGE OF THE TABLE.

GILLIAN Check out the one with the blonde hair.

ALLISON He's so cute. Spunkorama.

MELISSA Reckon he'd be taken?

GILLIAN Yeah, probably.

JOYBELLE Not by the way he's looking at you he's not.

ALLISON Do something, Gillian. (GIGGLES)

GILLIAN Like what? (TAKES ANOTHER DRINK)

JOYBELLE Do a Fiona and flutter your eyelashes.

GILLIAN Turn it down. And lay off about Fiona. Anyway, he'll come over if he wants to.

ALL You reckon.

SONG: TIME FOR ACTION

GIRLS If you want to meet a guy
This is something you should try
Standing back and waiting is for jerks
It's easy, done quickly and it works.

If he makes you really randy
This approach is fine and dandy
A way to cut the crap and make a pass
It's stylish, effective and it's fast.

Chorus

It's a wink in the right direction
Then tell him he looks OK
If you want to get him kid you've got to say.

See they want it but they're slow

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Gotta make his ego grow
You can try it or can let him get away
That's stupid, boring, no way.

GILLIAN Well I'm sick of sitting here
 Guess I'll overcome my fear
 Someone has to show them how it's done
 It's worth it, I lose nothing, and it's fun.

Chorus

It's a wink in the right direction
Then tell him he looks OK
If you want to get him kid you've got to say.

MUSIC UNDER AS COLIN AND HIS FRIENDS RISE FROM THEIR TABLE
AND STAND EYEING OFF THE GIRLS.

COLIN I could do the girl in the pink no trouble.

BRETT She's out of your league mate, anyhow you're all talk.

GROOM/DEAN G'won. Go for it then.

COLILN Yeah, me and what army?

GARY Maybe you don't like girls, Colin?

DEAN/GROOM You want to be a virgin all your life, mate?