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# PALACE REVOLUTION

by Jodi Gallagher

EXTRACT

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*NOTES*

An ellipsis at the beginning or end of a line indicates an overlap.

JAKE: is mid-fifties. A Maoist student revolutionary in his youth, he is now a writer, radio commentator and management theory consultant.

CAMILLA: once Jake's wife, left him in the 70s to live with a female lover and explore separatist lifestyles. Now alone, she lives in the bush on her independent income, practising goddess rites on the weekends and selling home-made gourmet marmalade at markets, occasionally publishing articles on obscure but influential feminist literary theory and empowerment.

SIMONE: their daughter. Late twenties, she works as a human rights advocate. She's just returned from an unspecified south-east Asian country - her first overseas posting. Very close to Jake, her overseas trip has disillusioned her.

ALEX: their son. Mid-twenties. Works as a chef, also has a considerable amount of computer expertise. Avowedly non-political on the surface, his convictions have been brought to the surface by what he considers his father's betrayal of the ideals of his youth and the anti-globalisation movement.

The action takes place over roughly three days in Melbourne, 2002.

**ONE**

*A room, filled with books and stacks of magazines. An attempt at realism is not required, in fact is positively discouraged . A workspace with one comfortable chair, and a desk. Stacks of papers on the floor around the desk - the papers should give the impression that they haven't been moved for some time, yellowing and curling at the edges - newspapers, magazines, photocopied articles. There should be room for some sort of neutral space to represent the few other locations. Into this space walks Simone, a young woman in her twenties. She carries a large, overstuffed backpack, looks tired and in need of a long hot shower. She removes the backpack, starts to flop into the comfortable chair, checks herself and sits on the floor next to the pack. She sits for a few moments too long, very still, staring at nothing.*

*Alex, her brother, also twenties, enters. He sits in a chair and watches her. Nothing is said for a while.*

ALEX: Simone.

**THERE IS NO REACTION.**

ALEX: Simone.

**STILL NO REACTION.**

ALEX: Simone.

*WITH AN EFFORT, SIMONE LOOKS AT HIM. HE SMILES. BEAT. THE FOLLOWING CONVERSATION SHOULD MAKE NO REFERENCE IN ANY WAY TO THE PRECEDING.*

SIMONE: Hi.

ALEX: Hello yourself.

**BEAT. ALEX LIGHTS A CIGARETTE.**

SIMONE: Still relying on Western medical technology to counteract your slow suicide?

ALEX: Absolutely. Another dissolute, bourgeois hedonist just waiting to be saved by the State. I'm counting on a lung transplant from a farmed baby.

*BEAT*

SIMONE: He's not home?

ALEX: No.

*BEAT.*

ALEX: I thought you had to stay for two years?

SIMONE: Yes.

ALEX: At the risk of stating the obvious, only been one.

SIMONE: You're too fond of risk.

ALEX: Possibly.

*BEAT.*

SIMONE: So ask your questions.

*BEAT.*

ALEX: You're home in time for the launch.

SIMONE: God bless all who sail in her. What launch?

ALEX: His book.

SIMONE: What is it this time? *The Third Way and How It Can Help Organise Your Home Office?*

ALEX: You're out of touch.

SIMONE: Probably. New guru?

ALEX: Old manuscript.

SIMONE: Really? After all this time?

ALEX: At last. So he says.

SIMONE: Don't you believe him?

ALEX: I'm not sure.

SIMONE: He wouldn't tell you.

ALEX: No. I think he has something up his sleeve.

SIMONE: Presto. What?

*BEAT.*

ALEX: How are you?

SIMONE: Do you have a job yet?

ALEX: Yes.

SIMONE: Congratulations.

ALEX: Classic French. South Yarra.

SIMONE: Even better.

ALEX: Mountains of butter. Oceans of cream.

SIMONE: Fabulous.

ALEX: Dead flesh by the truckload.

SIMONE: Marvellous.

ALEX: Not a word of protest?

SIMONE: Would you listen?

ALEX: No.

SIMONE: Then no.

ALEX: You've become very pragmatic.

SIMONE: I have.

*PAUSE.*

SIMONE: Did I miss anything?

ALEX: The institution of the new world order. Again. The resurgence of evil, premodern, primitive forces. We were under constant threat of invasion from the north by weeping women and children who must be stopped at all costs, and thousands of British backpackers whom, mostly, we seem to welcome. The corruption of our youth by hardened professional activists, taking advantage of our luxurious universities to proselytise anarchy and lawlessness. The great melee of Melbourne. The day the stock exchange never opened its doors, and they welded down the manhole covers. Rude slogans were daubed on a McDonalds. Corporate art was deliberately defaced. Pies have been known to be thrown. Anarchy. And the budgie carked it.

SIMONE: Were you there?

ALEX: It was very sad. We buried him in a shoebox.

SIMONE: At the casino.

ALEX: I love a parade.

*BEAT.*

SIMONE: I got some of the news.

ALEX: You had to be there.

SIMONE: I would have been.

ALEX: I have little doubt of it. Your lot were there.

SIMONE: Why were you there?

ALEX: This is the longest conversation we've had in years.

SIMONE: Pragmatism.

ALEX: Working miracles.

*BEAT.*

ALEX: No doubt you got the other news. The news that happens in important places.

SIMONE: Yes. That news we got.

ALEX: Consequences?

SIMONE: Not obvious ones. It took longer to get through customs. I think I may have an ASIO file.

ALEX: Everyone who's anyone.

SIMONE: I suppose I would have had one anyway.

ALEX: I'm sure he's been rehabilitated. Moved from the red filing cabinet to the true blue.

*BEAT.*

ALEX: You look older.

SIMONE: Thanks very much.

ALEX: Bound to happen.

SIMONE: I know it. I could feel it happening.

ALEX: Shock to the system?

SIMONE: I suppose so.

ALEX: How the other half lives. After all our privilege.

SIMONE: Wandering around, wondering how to spend our valuable time.

ALEX: Instead of building a brick veneer on the moral high ground,  
with pine drawers for the silver spoons.

*PAUSE.*

ALEX: Are we going to sit and wait for him?

SIMONE: We are. Aren't we?

ALEX: Usually. Certainly you usually wait.

*BEAT.*

SIMONE: This time I'm not going to wait.

ALEX: Why are you back early?

SIMONE: I smell. I'm taking a shower.

*SHE EXITS.*

**TWO**

*ALEX REMAINS IN THE CHAIR. HE REACHES FOR THE BACK PACK, AND IS JUST OPENING IT WHEN JAKE ENTERS - FIFTIES, CARRYING A BRIEFCASE, VERY COOL IN A CERTAIN FRENCH NEW WAVE FILM KIND OF WAY. WEARING SUNNIES. THAT KIND OF THING. ALEX DROPS THE PACK. JAKE PUTS DOWN THE BRIEFCASE, PICKS UP THE BACKPACK - LOOKS INTERROGATIVELY AT ALEX.*

ALEX: I'm running away to join the circus.

JAKE: It wouldn't surprise me.

ALEX: I wouldn't dream of trying to surprise you.

JAKE: You wouldn't succeed if you did.

ALEX: Are you sure?

*BEAT.*

JAKE: Quite sure.

ALEX: The fruit doesn't fall far from the tree.

JAKE: Who does it belong to?

ALEX: Guess.

JAKE: I'm not in the mood for this.

ALEX: No?

JAKE: No.

ALEX: The other apple.

JAKE: Simone?

ALEX: Yes. She's in the shower.

JAKE: I'm not ready for her.

*BEAT*

JAKE: Did she say why she came home early?

ALEX: No.

JAKE: Did you ask?

ALEX: Yes.

JAKE: She didn't want to tell you?

ALEX: Apparently not.

JAKE: She'll tell me.

ALEX: Undoubtedly.

*BEAT.*

JAKE: Any calls?

ALEX: Only for me.

JAKE: Shouldn't you be going to work?

ALEX: Shortly.

JAKE: How shortly?

ALEX: Not quick enough for you. I'm gainfully employed. (*BEAT*)  
Keeps me off the streets.

JAKE: I'd like to talk to her.

ALEX: I'm not stopping you.

JAKE: It'd flow better without you.

ALEX: I wouldn't dream of interrupting your flow.

JAKE: For fuck's sake.

*PAUSE.*

ALEX: I'm having someone over for dinner.

JAKE: Tonight?

ALEX: I didn't know Simone would be here. As we've discussed.

JAKE: You have an early shift?

ALEX: No.

JAKE: You said you were going to work.

ALEX: I lied. I've taken the day off. The great Australian sickie. It's the only thing all sides of politics agree on. None of your theories will ever erode that basic right. *(BEAT)* My guest is important. I was hoping you'd be here.

JAKE: Someone you want me to meet?

ALEX: Absolutely.

JAKE: Planning to settle down?

ALEX: You could say that.

JAKE: And you want me to meet her? How old-fashioned.

ALEX: I'm a traditional kind of guy.

JAKE: I wouldn't dream of missing it.

ALEX: Excellent. I do have to shop, however. For the meal.

JAKE: We get to try some of your artery clogging cuisine?

ALEX: I'll go all out. For my guest, and now for Simone. Even with a vegetarian option.

JAKE: Time?

ALEX: Later. My guest arrives at eight. Late.

**ALEX EXITS. JAKE SITS IN HIS CHAIR.**

**THREE.**

*SIMONE ENTERS, SEES JAKE SITTING IN THE CHAIR. GOES TO PICK UP HER BACKPACK WITHOUT SPEAKING TO HIM. HE PICKS IT UP BEFORE SHE CAN REACH IT. THEY STAY LOOKING AT EACH OTHER FOR A COUPLE OF BEATS, UNTIL SIMONE SITS ON THE FLOOR - REACHES FOR THE BACKPACK. JAKE GIVES IT TO HER, SHE REACHES INTO IT, FINDS A COMB, BEGINS TO COMB HER HAIR.*

JAKE: Shower good?

SIMONE: Alex told you?

JAKE: Feel better?

SIMONE: I do. A bit.