

Celebrating Australian Playwriting



Australian Script Centre



Family Running for Mr Whippy

by Catherine Zimdahl

EXTRACT

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This script is distributed by The Australian Script Centre
77 Salamanca Place Hobart 7004 Tasmania Australia
email admin@ozscript.org
www.ozscript.org
ph +61 3 6223 4675
fax +61 3 6223 4678

FAMILY RUNNING FOR MR WHIPPY

(A weathered picket fence, frames the stage. A hills hoist with clothes pegged onto it to dry, but the clothes are all frozen in one direction. The sound of howling wind. A table, chairs, a flywire door. The characters still, Mum at the line reaching up pegging the clothes. Against the frozen wind, Dad bent over the wheelbarrow, the Boy under the table, asleep like a dog. The Girl sits at the table.)

The Girl: It's like this, it's er, like this, um, it's like this, if you stop, it's dangerous, it's wrong, you shouldn't, you mustn't, you don't but you do. But if you sit for a bit and listen. It's like this, I think it is, you must know, here, in here, he's there, she's there, they're there, over there, in here, in my head, every day, every night, all of them, the lot, here, he's there, like this.

(The howling wind dies down.)

The Girl: See.
See the brown brick hands, the terry towelling hat, the blue singlet, the grey dust, the grey boots, the grey work trousers, the stony silence, heavy as houses, pushing barrows of oh I don't know, can you see it?
So I say everyday, every night.
Do you want a cup of tea?

Dad: Eh?

The Girl: A cup of tea?

Dad: Oh. Yeah.

The Girl: And then the song starts-

Mum: (singing) So farewell my own true lover
We may never meet again
for the carnival is over
I will love you til-

The Girl: Mum do you want a cup of tea?

Mum: Oh. Yes. That would be lovely.
I'll make it you sit down.
Dad, do you want a cup of tea?
Dad?

Dad: Eh?