

Celebrating Australian Playwriting



Australian Script Centre



# DIY

---

by Steve Taylor & Kevin Densley

---

## EXTRACT

© 1995 Steve Taylor & Kevin Densley



This script is distributed by The Australian Script Centre  
77 Salamanca Place Hobart 7004 Tasmania Australia  
email [admin@ozscript.org](mailto:admin@ozscript.org)  
[www.ozscript.org](http://www.ozscript.org)  
ph +61 3 6223 4675  
fax +61 3 6223 4678

## DIY - Synopsis.

DIY is not set in any particular time or place.

C-Man, retired to a deck-chair with his newspaper, is disturbed by the arrival of B-Man who begins to build a strange structure nearby. The two, who are initially at loggerheads, "build" a relationship over time and eventually collaborate on the construction.

"Building", of various kinds, is one of the themes of this absurdist piece, with boxes being a central motif: B-Man "picks-a-box" which determines his fate, the two protagonists have a "box-in" match to settle their differences and, ultimately, they get "boxed in" by their structure.

An idiosyncratic use of language is an important part of the world of the play.

DIY has a cast of two and can be staged in smaller spaces, depending on the design used for the structure which the characters build during the course of the play.

DIY was nominated for the 1996 Wal Cherry Victorian Arts Centre Play of the Year Award and produced by La Mama, Melbourne in March, 1998.

Running Time: 120 minutes.

Audience: General adult.

*have not letter*

**CHARACTERS:**

BMAN ("B" Man - or "Building Man")

CMAN ("C" Man - or "Chair Man")

**NOTES:**

D.I.Y is not set in any particular time or place.

The building of the structure, which takes place as the play progresses, is integral to the action.

The final shape of the structure should be cubic, however it may change its form at various times - looking as if it will end up as one thing, but then transforming into another configuration.

The structure should not be skinned or shelled, but should consist of a framework of beams, braces and cross members. As the play progresses the density of the framework within the structure should increase.

The materials used to build the structure can consist of virtually anything: timber, steel, plastics, etc. Combinations of types of materials can obviously be used - it's really up to the ingenuity of the designer.

The tools used by the characters in the building process might be traditional: hammers, saws, screwdrivers, etc. However there is the possibility of devising some special, new, strange and exotic tools for them to work with as well - perhaps some tools could be assembled just before they are actually used - a "jack", for example, or other lifting device which might consist of many wheels, pulleys and other moving parts.

The actual process of building should be as visually interesting as possible. For example - when there are lengthy periods of building without dialogue, these should be choreographed. Naturally, the design will, to a large extent, dictate the types of building activities required, but an effort should be made to ensure that such things as "five minutes of continuous hammering" are avoided and variation of action emphasised.

The language of the play features many combination words - the pronunciation of these can be achieved phonetically. "Skewed" words are also used - similar sounding words to those which would be expected in a sentence or situation, but giving an alternate/oblique meaning.

CMAN SITS DOWNSTAGE LEFT, ON A FOLDING OUTDOOR LOUNGE,  
HE IS READING A NEWSPAPER.  
(NOTE: CMAN SHOULD BE POSITIONED, AND THE STAGE LIT, BEFORE THE AUDIENCE  
STARTS TO ENTER THE SPACE)  
THERE IS A LARGE BOX SITUATED AT CENTRE STAGE,  
AFTER A TIME BMAN ENTERS FROM STAGE RIGHT, WALKING BRISKLY.  
HE CROSSES BEHIND THE BOX, STOPS, THINKS, AND TURNS BACK TO LOOK AT IT,  
HE THINKS AGAIN, THEN CONTINUES ON HIS WAY AND EXITS STAGE LEFT,  
AFTER A TIME HE MORE SLOWLY ENTERS FROM ANOTHER DIRECTION.(If the stage  
layout allows multiple entry points)  
HE LOOKS AT THE BOX THEN LOOKS AT CMAN, HE SQUATS TO GET A DIFFERENT  
VIEW OF THE BOX THEN MOVES AROUND IT IN A SEMI-CIRCLE, MAINTAINING HIS  
DISTANCE TO GET OTHER PERSPECTIVES,  
HE LOOKS AT CMAN AGAIN, THEN EXITS.  
AFTER A TIME HE ENTERS PURPOSEFULLY FROM ANOTHER DIRECTION AND  
APPROACHES THE BOX,  
HE WALKS AROUND IT, PEERING IN, HE THEN EXAMINES THE EXTERIOR CLOSELY  
BEFORE LOOKING ABOUT THE SURROUNDING AREA AS IF "CHECKING OUT THE  
TERRAIN,"  
HE LOOKS AT CMAN AGITATEDLY THEN EXITS STAGE RIGHT,  
ALMOST IMMEDIATELY HE ENTERS FROM STAGE RIGHT COMING ABOUT A THIRD OF  
THE WAY TOWARDS THE BOX.

BMAN           Precuse me, (CMAN TURNS FROM HIS PAPER AND LOOKS AT BMAN),  
                  Is that your box?

CMAN           Nurp. (HE TURNS BACK TO HIS PAPER)

BMAN, PLEASED WITH THIS NEWS, EXITS STAGE RIGHT, HE RETURNS AFTER A  
BRIEF MOMENT,

BMAN           You're sure it's not your box?

CMAN           Yarp.

BMAN           You're sitting in close proximetres to it.

CMAN           Nurp. Not mine. Don't want it. Nil to do with it.

BMAN           Then, I can claimine it?

CMAN           Suit yourself.

BMAN EXITS.  
AFTER A TIME HE RETURNS WITH SOME WITCHES' HATS WHICH HE PLACES IN A  
LARGE PERIMETER AROUND THE BOX.  
HE STANDS BACK, SURVEYS THE AREA AND BECOMES DISSATISFIED WITH THE  
POSITION OF THE BOX.  
HE GOES TO THE BOX AND TRIES TO PUSH IT FORWARD, UNSUCCESSFULLY.  
HE EXITS AND RETURNS WITH A HARNESS AROUND HIS CHEST.  
HE ATTACHES THE HARNESS TO THE BOX AND STRAINS TO PULL IT TO A NEW  
POSITION. EVENTUALLY HE DRAGS IT A METRE OR SO FORWARD.

HE WALKS TWO LAPS AROUND THE OBJECT, STUDYING IT CLOSELY, THEN LAYS DOWN ON THE GROUND CLOSE TO IT, AS IF SHELTERING UNDER A BUSH. AFTER A TIME HE BECOMES UNHAPPY WITH THIS ARRANGEMENT. HE GETS UP, FRUSTRATED, WALKS ONE LAP IN THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION AROUND THE OBJECT AND THEN BALANCES ON TOP OF IT. AFTER A TIME THIS PROVES TO BE UNSATISFACTORY. HE SHAKES HIS HEAD, GETS DOWN, RAISES THE OBJECT TO HIS CHEST AGAIN AND MOVES IT TO ANOTHER PART OF THE STAGE. HERE, HE LAYS DOWN ON HIS BACK AND RESTS THE OBJECT ON HIS CHEST. AFTER A TIME THIS BECOMES UNCOMFORTABLE AND HE STRUGGLES TO HIS FEET, STILL CLUTCHING THE OBJECT. HE MOVES TO DOWNSTAGE RIGHT, PUTS THE OBJECT ON THE GROUND AND SITS ON IT, THOUGHTFUL. AFTER A TIME HE GETS AN IDEA AND WALKS ACROSS TO PICK UP THE GUIDE BOOK. HE FLICKS THROUGH THE FIRST FEW PAGES, SWIVELS THE BOOK AT VARIOUS ANGLES TO CHECK OUT DIAGRAMS, AND WITH A SMILE OF SATISFACTION SPREADING ACROSS HIS FACE, LETS OUT AN EXPRESSION WHICH CONVEYS HIS NEW-FOUND UNDERSTANDING.

BMAN           Mmmmm!

CMAN           (LOOKING BACK, ANNOYED) Shhhht!!

EMAN PUTS THE BOOK DOWN, GOES TO THE OBJECT AND MOVES IT CLOSER TO CENTRE STAGE. HE MAKES SOME FINAL "DELICATE" ADJUSTMENTS TO ITS POSITION AND THEN, CONTENT WITH HIS WORK, RUBS HIS HANDS TOGETHER AND EXITS STAGE LEFT.

HE SOON RETURNS FROM THAT DIRECTION CARRYING BUILDING MATERIALS. HE DUMPS THESE BESIDE THE BOX, THE NOISE MOMENTARILY DISTURBS THE PEACE OF CMAN, WHO LOOKS UP OVER HIS PAPER, BUT NOT IN THE DIRECTION OF BMAN. BMAN EXITS AND RETURNS WITH MORE MATERIALS. ON HIS WAY BACK HE DROPS A HEAVY ITEM. THE NOISE CAUSES CMAN TO LOOK TOWARDS BMAN WITH ANNOYANCE. BMAN DUMPS HIS SECOND LOAD AND EXITS. HE SOON RETURNS WITH MORE MATERIALS. ON HIS WAY BACK THIS TIME, HE ACTUALLY BUMPS CMAN WITH A LONG LENGTH OF MATERIAL. CMAN TURNS TO BMAN, VERY AGGRAVATED.

CMAN           Precuse me!

BMAN           (QUICKLY AND APOLOGETICALLY, EAGER TO GET ON ABOUT HIS BUSINESS) Oh! Precuse me!

BMAN THEN DUMPS THESE MATERIALS AND EXITS. HE SOON RETURNS WITH SOME TOOLS AND STARTS WORK ON HIS CONSTRUCTION. HE CONNECTS PIECES TO THE "CORNERSTONE". THIS FIRST TASK INVOLVES A LOW LEVEL OF NOISE. STILL, HOWEVER, IT MOMENTARILY DISTURBS CMAN, WHO LOOKS BACK OVER HIS SHOULDER WITH SOME ANNOYANCE. BMAN EMBARKS ON VARIOUS OTHER TASKS. AFTER A TIME BMAN BEGINS ANOTHER TASK, WHICH IS QUITE NOISY. CMAN IS MORE IRRITATED THAN BEFORE. HE LOWERS HIS PAPER AND SWIVELS AROUND ON HIS SEAT TO SEE WHAT IS GOING ON.

HE EXITS AND RETURNS, MINUS THE HARNESS, NOW WEARING INDUSTRIAL GOGGLES AND GLOVES - HE WALKS "SURGEON LIKE", WITH HANDS HELD UP IN FRONT OF HIS CHEST.

HE ARRIVES BEHIND THE BOX, LOOKS IN, AND PURPOSEFULLY TAKES OUT, IN TURN, TWO IDENTIFIABLE ITEMS (eg. door knob, tap) WHICH HE PLACES ON THE GROUND. (These items can be used later in the building process)

HE THEN REACHES IN AND TAKES OUT AN UNRECOGNIZABLE OBJECT. HE STUDIES IT BRIEFLY, IS BAFFLED, AND PUTS IT ASIDE. LATER ON THIS OBJECT IS ALSO USED AS PART OF THE STRUCTURE.

HE REACHES IN AGAIN AND PULLS OUT A TATTERED LOOKING GUIDE BOOK. HE FLICKS THROUGH IT, STOPPING BRIEFLY TO FOLD OUT AND LOOK AT ITS CENTRAL PICTURE.

EMAN (EXCLAIMING) Ah! A home-box!

CMAN (TURNS, LOOKS AT HIM SHARPLY AND HOLDS HIS RAISED MIDDLE FINGER TO HIS LIPS, PALM FACING INWARDS, IN A SILENCING GESTURE) Shhhht!

EMAN GOES BACK TO THE START OF THE BOOK, READS THE FIRST PAGE AND LETS OUT AN EXCLAMATION OF SURPRISE.

HE TURNS ANOTHER PAGE AND LETS OUT A GRUNT OF CONSTERNATION.

HE SWIVELS THE BOOK AROUND, EXAMINING A DIAGRAM FROM DIFFERENT ANGLES. HE SURVEYS THE BOX AND ITS SURROUNDS, COMPARING ITS POSITION WITH THAT SHOWN IN THE DIAGRAM.

WITH CONSIDERABLE ANNOYANCE HE PUTS THE GUIDE BOOK BACK IN THE BOX AND EXITS.

HE RETURNS, WITHOUT GOGGLES AND GLOVES, WEARING THE HARNESS.

HE ATTACHES IT TO THE BOX AND DRAGS IT, WITH GREAT EFFORT, BACK TO ITS ORIGINAL POSITION.

EXHAUSTED, HE EXITS.

AFTER A TIME HE RETURNS, MINUS THE HARNESS, CARRYING A BAG WHICH CONTAINS A THERMOS.

HE TAKES THE BOOK OUT OF THE BOX, SITS ON THE GROUND AND STUDIES THE FIRST COUPLE OF PAGES INTENTLY WHILE TAKING OCCASIONAL SIPS OF LIQUID FROM THE THERMOS CUP.

HE THEN FLICKS THROUGH THE REST OF THE GUIDE BOOK IN A RANDOM WAY.

AFTER A TIME HE PUTS THE BOOK DOWN, EMPTIES HIS CUP, REPLACES IT ON THE THERMOS AND PLACES THE THERMOS BACK IN THE BAG.

HE GETS TO HIS FEET AND LOOKS INSIDE THE BOX.

HE REACHES DOWN AND AFTER A STRUGGLE, DURING WHICH HE ALMOST

"DISAPPEARS", HE PULLS A LARGISH OBJECT OUT OF THE BOX. (It is the "cornerstone" of the construction, at least half a metre in height, and has lots of holes, gaps and connecting points.)

INITIALLY HE HOLDS THE OBJECT TO HIS CHEST, SNIFFS IT AND EXAMINES IT IN SOME DETAIL.

THEN HE RAISES IT A LITTLE HIGHER AND LOOKS UNDERNEATH. HE HOLDS IT IN CERTAIN POSITIONS TO SEE THE PLAY OF LIGHT OFF IT AND, WITH A BIGGER EFFORT, RAISES IT HIGHER STILL AND SITS IT ON TOP OF HIS HEAD.

AFTER SOME TIME IN THIS POSITION THE OBJECT GETS UNCOMFORTABLE AND HE GROWS DISSATISFIED.

HE LOWERS THE OBJECT TO HIS CHEST, WALKS TO ANOTHER AREA OF THE STAGE, AND PUTS THE OBJECT ON THE GROUND.