

Celebrating Australian Playwriting



Australian Script Centre



Percival P. Paper and the Recycling Riot

by Bruce Shearer

EXTRACT

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SYNOPSIS

The play deals in a humorous vein with the more serious issue of recycling. The paper inhabitants of an office are brought to life and given a voice as to what should occur when they have outlived their conventional usefulness. Percival P Paper and Cornelia Cardboard give voice to their continued usefulness and after Percival's initial prejudices are overcome, combine to force the tyrannical Malpractice Mainmongrel of Monopolizing Megalomaniacs to introduce recycling into the 5000 floors of the building, by organising a recycling riot in which the entire building is engulfed in paper.

PERCIVAL P. PAPER AND THE RECYCLING RIOT

Scene 1.

(PERCIVAL IS ON A SHELF IN A PAPER WAREHOUSE. WHILE THE NARRATOR SPEAKS, PERCIVAL STANDS UP FROM THE PILE OF PAPER HE IS LYING ON.)

NARRATOR

Percival P. Paper was the youngest son of a long roll of paper going back reams and reams into the distant past. He was an up and coming young fellow whom his family had always thought would be destined for a place in the house, anybody's house really. Even a position in cabinet and there were many fine filing cabinets from which to choose.

(PERCIVAL LOOKS PROUDLY UP AT HIS ANCESTORS, CONTRACTS, CERTIFICATES AND PUBLIC NOTICES ON THE WALL.)

Many members of his family were very famous. He had contracts, certificates, and public notices for ancestors. Percival himself had a wide white smile and was very enthusiastic indeed about his future.

(PERCIVAL GIVES A WIDE, WHITE PAPER SMILE)

PERCIVAL

What a background I have in the paper business. What a family! Cousin contract, Nanna notice! I just can't wait to find out what sort of grand and important document I'll become.

(PERCIVAL SINGS AND DANCES)

IT'S MY FAMILY TREE, MY FAMILY TREE
WELL TAKE A LOOK, CAN'T YOU SEE
IT'S MY FABULOUS, FABULOUS PEDIGREE
THAT SETS ME APART, THAT MAKES ME, ME

THE NAME IS PAPER, PERCIVAL P.
YOU COULD NOT POSSIBLY KNOW
HOW IMPORTANT I WILL BE
ABOUT THE PLACES I WILL GO
AND THE PEOPLE I WILL SEE
ALL BECAUSE OF MY FAMILY TREE

IT'S MY FAMILY TREE, MY FAMILY TREE
WELL TAKE A LOOK, CAN'T YOU SEE
IT'S MY FABULOUS, FABULOUS PEDIGREE
THAT SETS ME APART, THAT MAKES ME, ME

NARRATOR

Yes, Percy's future appeared to be assured. He had an excellent pedigree, only the best. He was manufactured from the best Australian hardwood, bleached in chlorine and absolutely lily white. He sat in the warehouse and waited expectantly for his glorious future to be revealed.

PERCIVAL

I've been waiting for at least five minutes. It can't be long now, I just can't wait.

(A LARGE HAND REACHES OVER AND GRASPS PERCIVAL AND THE OTHER SHEETS AT THE SAME TIME AND PLACES THEM IN A CARDBOARD BOX FOR DELIVERY. PERCIVAL FLATTENS HIMSELF AGAINST THE OTHERS, GRINNING AND CRYING OUT WITH EXCITEMENT.)

PERCIVAL

My career has finally begun. I'm on my way to the top!

Scene 2

(PERCIVAL IS DROPPED ON A BENCH WITH A LARGE SIGN ABOVE THE BENCH READING STATIONARY DEPARTMENT MISSPELLED.)

NARRATOR

Percy had been purchased by Monopolizing Megalomaniacs, who specialised in takeovers and property development. Their 5000 story office was right in the middle of the best part of town. Percy was very pleased, he felt he was really going somewhere, and he was, the stationery department.

PERCIVAL

The stationery department, this is terrific! I bet a lot of certificates started off here.

(SUDDENLY A LARGE HAND RIPS OPEN THE CARDBOARD BOX, PERCY ARRIVED IN AND THROWS IT AWAY.)

CARDBOARD BOX

Ahhh!

(PERCIVAL JUMPS IN SHOCK)

PERCIVAL

Oh goodness gracious.

(UNCERTAINLY)

It's only waste paper I suppose.

(LOOKS AROUND AND RELAXES)

Yes, that's all it is.