

Celebrating Australian Playwriting



Australian Script Centre



A Night Like Any Other

by Bruce Shearer

EXTRACT

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A NIGHT LIKE ANY OTHER

This manuscript has been written in a style recommended by a number of puppet theatre companies in consultation with the Australian National Playwrights Conference.

The play is a puppet play directed at a family audience. It is a Christmas story which parallels the birth of Jesus Christ in Bethlehem, with the birth of the child of a homeless teenage couple in almost any modern city.

On a night of celebration, when people gather to mark the birth of Jesus Christ, another baby, another special, precious baby, is also being born, also under difficult circumstances.

The play is written both as a stand alone play for performance, and as a performance accompanying a religious ceremony/service/mass. It is intended to be entirely non-denominational.

Scene 1.

SFX	ACTION/IMAGE	TEXT	INTENTION
Street noises	Jason a young man of 17 and Miranda, a heavily pregnant young woman of 15, both of whom are street kids, are walking along an inner city street, late on Christmas Eve.	Miranda: I'm growing very tired.	<i>weary</i>
Car brake sounds	They are seeking a shelter for the night, and they are lost in an unfamiliar city. Jason hugs Miranda to express his sorrow and also	Jason: I think there is a shelter nearby, I'm just not sure where. I don't know the city well enough my love, I'm so sorry! If they had only let	<i>worry</i>
Car horns	to receive comfort. They drop the meagre belongings they are carrying and hug on the city street, and then	us in to the last shelter. Surely they could have found a place for us!	
Loud heavy metal music	Jason ushers Miranda to a bench, where she sits down and rests.	Miranda: Don't worry my darling, don't worry! There was no room. It is such a busy time.	<i>comforting</i>
Footsteps	Jason holds her hand for a moment and then gets up quickly, as a woman passes by loaded with presents	Jason: Excuse me, would you mind helping us for a . . .	<i>needing</i>

SFX	ACTION/IMAGE	TEXT	INTENTION
	and children's toys. Jason tries to ask her for		
Ambulance siren	directions, but she hurries past him. Miranda takes Jason's hand and gently pulls him back down to the bench to rest.	Miranda: Sit down again and rest for a moment.	<i>calming</i>
	Jason sits down and holds Miranda's hand.	Jason: Please excuse me . . .	<i>needing</i>
	Then he leaps up again, as a young couple walk by. They skirt around his appeal and rush off.	Young man: Sorry, we're in a hurry.	<i>avoiding</i>
Footsteps	Jason holds his arms out in mute appeal.	Young woman: Yes, so sorry, we are running very late.	<i>avoiding</i>
Street noises	The young couple look back, but move forward and are soon gone, hurrying toward and then into a building along the street, from which light falls across some steps and onto the street.		

SFX	ACTION/IMAGE	TEXT	INTENTION
	Jason just stands watching them walk away for a moment. As Miranda	Miranda: I have rested now, I think I can move on.	<i>readiness</i>
Traffic sounds	begins to get up from the bench, Jason comes over to help her up. They stand still for a moment and hug one another again, then Jason gathers their bags.	Jason: Are you sure, I can walk on a bit, and keep looking, and you can rest more if you like?	<i>questioning</i>
		Miranda: I want us to stay together darling.	<i>love</i>
		Jason: Of course, my love I won't leave you.	<i>devotion</i>
Lady's stick	An elderly lady walks toward them. She is hurrying, but as she moves with the assistance of a stick, she still moves slowly.		
security alarm	Jason looks at the old woman as she approaches, but he is afraid to speak. Just as she has almost passed by, Miranda, calls softly to her.	Miranda: Please lady, can you give us directions?	<i>needing</i>

SFX	ACTION/IMAGE	TEXT	INTENTION
Brakes screech	The elderly lady, pauses as she hears the soft voice of Miranda. Then she stops. The couple move toward her to speak. The lady backs away from them uncertainly. Jason, feeling desperate steps forward to appeal to her.	Lady: Yes? Miranda: We are looking for a shelter that we think is nearby. The city is unfamiliar and we cannot find it.	<i>cautiously</i> <i>requesting</i>
Lady's stick	The lady is startled and frightened by this and starts walking away. The lady looks over her shoulder as she goes to make sure that she is not being followed. When Miranda appeals to her, she doesn't respond, just continues to move up the street, toward the building with the light, where many other people are heading. The lady disappears inside. The man and the woman sit down again and huddle together.	Jason: Please ... Lady: I know of no shelter. Miranda: Please wait a moment	<i>desperate</i> <i>cautiously</i> <i>appeal</i>