

Celebrating Australian Playwriting



Australian Script Centre



Bullets with Dragonfly Wings

by Stephen Carleton

EXTRACT

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BULLETS WITH DRAGONFLY WINGS

CHARACTERS

Ethan

Shane

Glen

Temika

Danielle

Faith

Tonya

Hannah

Chorus The chorus acts and speaks as one unit, except when referred to otherwise, for plot/structural purposes.

4 Voices Chorus members who have individual lines

Musicians Can be part of chorus

SHANE Off you go together. Square bears.
TONYA Just because you've got no friends - there's no need to take it
 out on us.
SHANE Oh, no! You hurt me! Glen, mate, my heart is breaking!
HANNAH Let's go.

(Hannah drags her off)

SHANE Man. What a cack. Hey that funeral thing was cool, eh!
GLEN Yeah. Got us out of legal studies.
SHANE What a weird way to go. It'd hurt, eh?
GLEN Can't be a very good driver.
SHANE I reckon. Whaddya wanna do now?
GLEN When's lunch?
SHANE Twenty minutes.
GLEN Let's go have a smoke. No point going to class now.
SHANE Anyone looking?
GLEN Nuh.
SHANE Cool. Come on.

(They exit)

CHORUS *(spoken)* As you can see the school yard contains the usual
 states of adversity.
 Wherever there's people there's those who can't handle the
 concept of cultural diversity.
 Is prejudice something we learn from our peers, our parents, our
 media and schools?
 Or is it a natural thing that occurs when we're unhappy with
 conditions and rules?
 Do we learn to be cruel like we learn maths and science? Is it
 pointless to try and deny it?
 Can we change if we want to, and challenge our peers when it's
 safer to just remain quiet?
 It's easy from here to stand back and judge. None of us want to
 be told
 How to behave or what to think. Let's watch our story unfold.

Scene One

(Special school assembly - a service for a student who has recently killed himself. An older boy, whom the characters in this play do not necessarily know personally. It is the end of the service and the school band is playing a commemorative song.)

CHORUS *(sung)* Seventeen years and his life's snuffed out. Ended it in his Dad's car.
The school says it was an accident. Pushed his luck a bit far.
Fell asleep at the wheel. Didn't know the road curved. Reached over to take off his coat.
Some say it was an accident. But some say his Mum found the note.

A cloud has descended over us all. That could have happened to me. That could be my Mum bent over in grief. My car that's wrapped round a tree.

My mind that snapped when things got too much. My friends all wondering why.

Wondering what they could have done to prevent a young life from whispering by.

(song ends)

VOICE 1 I heard he got a hard time at home.

VOICE 2 I heard he got it at school.

VOICE 3 I heard exam pressure got to his head.

VOICE 4 I heard he just wasn't cool.

CHORUS We might never know why he did what he did - what made him act with such haste.

The only thing everyone agrees upon now is that it was a sickening waste.

(Bell rings. The crowd starts to disperse.)

ETHAN You going to the funeral?

TEMIKA Nah. I didn't even know him.

FAITH My sister did. He was in her class.

DANIELLE Same with my sister. She reckons he was a loser anyway.

FAITH Danielle!

DANIELLE Well she does.

FAITH Your sister thinks everyone's a loser. Doesn't mean he deserves to die.

DANIELLE I never said he did.

FAITH Do you think you could not be a cow for just one day?

DANIELLE What's your problem, Faith? All I said was my sister thinks the guy was a dork. It's not as if she went around telling him or anything.

ETHAN The guy's just died, Danielle. Give him a break.

TEMIKA With friends like your sister, no wonder the guy topped himself.

DANIELLE Anyway, no-one knows for sure that he killed himself.

ETHAN Yeah, right. So you may as well slag him off anyway.

TEMIKA Talk about respect for the dead.

DANIELLE He was probably gay.

FAITH Danielle!

ETHAN Is there any logical connection between being gay and being dead, Danielle?

DANIELLE My sister -

ETHAN If every person your sister thought was gay tried to kill themselves half the school would be in intensive care.

TEMIKA Half of it is.

FAITH The other half should be.

TEMIKA What a hole.

FAITH I reckon. There's Shane and Glen. Quick. Let's get out of here.

(The four exit as Shane and Glen enter, following Tonya and Hannah - wolf-whistling at them and generally harassing them.)

TONYA Grow up, Shane, you little runt.

SHANE What are ya gonna do? Sit on me?

TONYA You wish.

HANNAH Leave her alone, Shane. Why don't you pick on someone your own - *(realises she has not said the right thing)*

SHANE My own what?! My own size! *(hoots of laughter)* Yeah, right!

HANNAH Come on, Tonya. Let's go.