

Celebrating Australian Playwriting



Australian Script Centre



Rated X

by P. P. Cranney

EXTRACT

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SCENE ONE 'NIGHTMARE'

MOVEMENT AND SOUND PIECE.

THE CAST, SCATTERED AROUND THE STAGE, BEGIN TO APPROACH THE AUDIENCE UTTERING RANDOM LINES FROM THE SCRIPT: THEY ARE STRUGGLING TO EXPRESS THE INEXPRESSIBLE ANGUISH OF DEPRESSION AND DESPAIR. THE SOUND MOVEMENT BUILDS AND CLIMAXES AS THE CAST STOP JUST SHORT OF THE AUDIENCE. THEY THEN DISPERSE, LEAVING MEG AND NICOLA IN POSITION FOR SCENE TWO IN THE PARK.

SCENE TWO

IN THE LOCAL PARK. MEG AND NICOLA ARE REHEARSING A SCENE FROM 'ROMEO + JULIET'. MEG IS JULIET, NICOLA IS ROMEO, STRETCHED OUT DEAD ON THE PARK BENCH.

MEG What's here? A cup, closed in my true love's hand?
Poison, I see, hath his timeless end.
O churl! drunk all, and left no friendly drop
To help me after? I will kiss thy lips.
Haply some poison yet doth hang on them
To make me die with a restorative.

MEG KISSES NICOLA.
Thy lips are warm!'

MEG MOVES TO KISS HER AGAIN AND NIC SQUIRMS.

Keep still, you're dead.

STEVEN ARRIVES. HE'S SEEN THE KISS.

STEVEN Ha! I knew it'd happen sooner or later. You two have finally turned lezzo.

MEG Shut up, smart arse. It was a stage kiss.

STEVEN Yeah ...? What stage is that where you stick your tongue down her throat? Eh? I saw you slip it in. Everyone in the park could see.

MEG Shut up, Steve. You're being a dickhead.

NIC Yeah, shut up Snotty.

STEVE Don't you talk. You were getting off on it. I could tell.

NIC In your dreams.

MEG For your information, it's Juliet's death scene from 'Romeo and Juliet.'

NICOLA Meg's auditioning for the school production.

MEG I was thinking of it.

STEVEN Ah, why don't they just show the movie. Heaps better.

NICOLA Yeah, like, you'd know. You're such a sensitive connoisseur of theatre and the arts and stuff

STEVEN Drama's for sissies. Besides, maybe I'm not a 'connosewer', but at least I'm not a high school drop out.

MEG Don't start.

NICOLA I'll have a better job soon. I don't care. School sucks.

STEVEN And so does Shakespeare.

MEG He understood human nature. He was a genius.

STEVEN You've just got the hots for Leonardo DiCaprio.

MEG Are you jealous?

NIC I'd never kill myself for any guy.

STEVEN You just wait till you meet the right man.

NIC Then I wouldn't have to kill myself. I'll die from old age first.

STEVEN Just as I thought. You have turned lezzo.

MEG Steven: don't be so ... homophobic.

STEVEN Homophobic! Wow, the word for the day! You probably don't even know what it means.

NIC If you're in one of you're moods, just leave us alone.

STEVEN You wouldn't know what it means that's for sure. 'Price check on Homophobic.'

NIC Piss off. Meg has to rehearse.

STEVEN Piss off yourself, Checkout Chick.

NIC Homophobic.

STEVE I am not. I'm not scared of gays or dykes. I don't hate 'em. Though I think I'd kill myself if I turned out to be one.

NIC You wouldn't have the guts to kill yourself.

STEVE Just try me.

MEG I don't think killing yourself is about being brave or not.

STEVEN What about your Romeo and Juliet? They were brave enough to die for each other.

MEG They were in love. That's different.

STEVEN So. I've got a lot of good reasons to top myself.

MEG Oh, bring out the violins.

NIC Stop moaning will you. Just go ahead and kill yourself.

HE PULLS OUT A BOTTLE.

STEVEN Yeah, what do you reckon? Poison myself like your Romeo? Or did he stab himself?

MEG He poisoned himself when he thought [that Juliet was dead...]

STEVE Yeah, whatever. Cheers.

HE STARTS SCULLING FROM THE BOTTLE.

MEG Hey, Snotty. Don't be such a bloody idiot. Stop it.

MEG PULLS THE BOTTLE FROM HIM, KEEPS HOLD OF IT.

NIC Aw, let him go. He'll just make himself sick.

MEG You can die from alcohol poisoning.

NIC Not him. He doesn't have the guts to go that far.

STEVE I do so.

MEG Yeah, maybe, but not here. I don't want you chucking up on us while you cark it.

STEVE Then I'll have to stab myself to death.
MELODRAMATIC Hand me my knife.

HE SNATCHES NIC'S NAIL FILE.

STEVE A nail file? What am I supposed to do with this?

MEG Keep filing till you hit your heart.

NIC We'll be here forever. He doesn't have one.

STEVE POINTS THE FILE AT NIC, LIKE A KNIFE

STEVE Be quiet, or I'll give you a taste of my dagger.

NIC That's right. A dag would carry a dagger.

STEVE Oh, you're really hurting me. I think I'll throw myself off this tall building.

HE STEPS UP ON THE BENCH

STEVE Look down there! The people look so small, like ants.

MEG They are ants, you wanker.

STEVE Oh, no! Then it's the ants who look like people. Farewell cruel world!

THE TWO GIRLS PLAY ALONG.

MEG Oh, my god! Look up there, there's a man on that ledge. I think he's going to jump.

NIC Yeah. Great! It's Snotty. Jump! Snotty, Jump! Jump, Jump!

MEG Hey, mister, why do you want to kill yourself?

STEVEN Because my best friends keep calling me Snotty!

NIC Yeah, Jump, Snotty, jump!

STEVEN Ahhh!

HE FALLS FORWARD OFF BENCH. THE TWO GIRLS CATCH HIM, THEN LOWER HIM TO THE GROUND. THEY ALL FALL DOWN.

STEVE Thank you. You saved my life. You are my true friends.

NIC I was trying to save the ants.

MEG Listen, if you want to practice your stage diving, do it somewhere else will you? I have to rehearse.

STEVE Yeah, well, thanks, you stopped me making history: the first suicide inspired by *Romeo and Juliet*.

NIC Too late Snotty. It's been done.

STEVE Bullshit

NIC No. Some guy and a girl committed suicide

watching a video of the movie. In America.

STEVE America. That'd be right. They have to do everything first.

NIC Whatever. Look, I gotta go, Meg. I've got an appointment with Jason. See ya.

STEVEN See ya, Cola. Thanks again for saving my life.

NIC Ha! Before anyone can save your life, you'll have you get one first!

NIC EXITS.

STEVE Bitch!

MEG What's with you two lately?

STEVE It's not me. She's the one who's changing. Haven't you noticed?

MANAGES TO GET HIS FLASK FROM MEG

MEG We're all changing. It's a long time since primary school, you know. Like, you weren't an alcoholic back then.

STEVE Get off my case, Nutmeg. I'm fine.

HE DRINKS FROM THE BOTTLE AND OFFERS HER SOME

Hey: who's Jason?

MEG (SHRUGS 'DUNNO') I've got to get home.

STEVE Good luck with your audition.

MEG Thanks. See ya. (EXITS)

STEVE Yeah. See ya. Parting is such sweet sorrow, and all that shit.

KEEPS DRINKING.