

Celebrating Australian Playwriting



Australian Script Centre



# Platform

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by Patricia Cornelius

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EXTRACT

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## CHARACTERS

<b>JOSH</b>	A trainspotter in the true sense of the word. He is 16 and obsessed with trains.
<b>THERESE</b>	17 years old. Looks and dresses like a boy.
<b>BARNIE</b>	17 years old. Looks tough. He is paper boy.
<b>DANIEL</b>	17 years old. A clean cut, studious boy.
<b>HOA</b>	16 years old. Very petite.
<b>ANITA</b>	17 years old. Extremely studious.
<b>NICK</b>	19 years old. Very conservative. Works in a bank.
<b>BILLY</b>	16 years old. Looks sporty. An uncertain boy.

PLATFORM can play with eight characters only but there is the potential for a chorus of boys and girls of any age.

## **PLATFORM**

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A train platform. It is a particularly ugly station. It has no stylish features. In fact, it appears at first glance like a public urinal. It is covered in graffiti; some of which are indecipherable symbols, others, more recognisable like a ban the bomb symbol and an Aboriginal flag in the shape of a heart. The written graffiti appears abstract, it is black or red and it scrawls violently across the station. There are three advertisements above a bench seat. One poster advertises private medical insurance for a family who are Anglo Saxon, middle class and happy. Another poster advertises sports shoes. It is an Anglo Saxon boy wearing runners which appear to enable him to leap way into the air. The third poster advertises a womens magazine. There is a blonde woman on the cover whose breasts are almost falling out of her dress.

Music drives the play. It is eclectic and works to shift the feel and keep, or slow down the pace of the short scenes that make up the play. The music will sometimes be huge, contemporary, at times discordant. Sometimes it will be sparse, perhaps the simple sound of a solitary instrument.

The play opens to choreographed sequences which establish the daily routine of the station. At times the passengers appear as if lined up in the chorus of a musical. Sometimes there is no-one on the platform and the train arrives and departs as usual. There may be a solitary figure, someone who is late and catches the train just on time, or a couple of figures waiting at opposite ends of the platform. The train platform is a place of daily routine, a lonely place, a dangerous place, a place of quiet. All it's qualities are revealed.

The music fades and the platform becomes still and deserted apart from Josh who stands on the edge of the platform watching trains come in and out of the station. Their lights flicker across Josh's face. He is transfixed. It is very early in the morning. He looks at his watch.

**JOSH**            You're late. You're at least three minutes late. Where are you? I didn't get up at five in the morning to be stood up. You're meant to be here. Don't let me down. I want to see you. You've got to come.

Barnie enters wheeling his bike. A tyre is flat and he curses and kicks at the bike. Bags for newspapers lie across the bar of his bike.

Daniel enters and stands with his head buried in a book and his school bag slung over his shoulder.

- BARNIE** (to Daniel) You're early. You've got to be early. Shit! **(He kicks out at his bike again)** You fucking useless bit of junk. You've made me late. Shit! Shit! Shit!
- DANIEL** (quietly) You're not late. I am early. I'm going in early. I've got the computer booked.
- BARNIE** (overlapping Daniel) I'm not going at all then. Fuck it. I'm not going. You haven't seen me, you hear me Bertoncello. You haven't seen me.
- DANIEL** You're not late.
- BARNIE** (overlapping) I can't get home and back in time. Fuck it! Fuck... it.

**Barnie is too busy cursing to hear him.**

**Therese is suddenly there standing on the platform. She is straightening herself up, clearly having slept in her clothes and only just woken up. Barnie's cursing moves directly onto Therese.**

- BARNIE** You are such a slut. Look at you you slag.
- THERESE** Get fucked.
- BARNIE** You look like... like a rag. I wouldn't even snot on you. I wouldn't wipe my arse on you.
- THERESE** Get fucked.
- BARNIE** You slut, you slag, you.... Fucking hell, I'm late. **(He kicks at his bike)** All because of this useless piece of shit.

**Nick and Anita enter and stand next to Therese. Nick has his arm around Anita's shoulders. She is bowed over with the weight of him. Her head is down.**

- NICK** I'll pick you up at school. I'm finishing early. Wait for me outside the double gates as soon as school finishes. I'll be there right on the bell so come straight from class.
- ANITA** I've got an extra class this afternoon.
- NICK** But I've got the afternoon off.
- ANITA** I know, but I've got this class.
- NICK** Skip it.

**ANITA** I can't. Mr Johnston is giving his time as a favour to us. He's helping us so we're better prepared for the exam.

**NICK** Go next week.

**ANITA** I can't.

**NICK** I've got this one afternoon off.

**ANITA** I can't.

**NICK** What's the problem. You can go next week.

**ANITA** I can't...

**NICK** I'll pick you up at the double gates.

**THERESE** Hi Anita.

**ANITA** Oh, hi Therese.

**THERESE** Haven't seen you for awhile.

**ANITA** No, I've been busy.

**THERESE** How's things?

**ANITA** Good. Yeah, good. How are you?

**NICK** **(overlapping)** Ok. I'll pick you up as soon as the bell goes.

**A train pulls into the station and the doors open with a hiss. Hoa is standing in the doors as they open. She leans her head out and spots Therese.**

**HOA** Therese! Therese! Over here!

**BARNIE** **(From the platform)** You haven't seen me Bertocello. Right? Tell him you haven't seen me.

**Therese excitedly joins Hoa in her carriage. They embrace warmly. Billy also share their carriage. He sits opposite Hoa. He continually spins a basketball in his hands. The train departs.**

**HOA** Here, I've brought you some breakfast.

**Hoa offers Therese a paper bag. Therese takes a sandwich from the bag. A bite has been taken from it.**

**THERESE** Someone's bit it.

**HOA** Me. It was my breakfast.

**THERESE** Won't you be hungry?

**Therese eats hungrily.**

**HOA** And here's your homework.

**THERESE** I love you. You made mistakes in mine didn't you?

**HOA** You'll get eighty-five percent exactly. It's quite hard making them wrong.

**THERESE** For you. Some of us have no trouble. It's good for you to know how most of us feel

**HoA pulls out a make-up pouch. She applies some lipstick with easy precision.**

**HOA** What do you think?

**She quickly wipes her mouth clean and applies another shade.**

**HOA** Do you like this better?

**She immediately wipes her mouth and again applies a new lipstick.**

**HOA** This is me. This is definitely me.

**THERESE** That's the one you always use.

**Billy leans forward watching HoA intently.**

**HOA** (to Billy) You right Stanford?

**Billy is oblivious to her address.**

**HOA** Excuse me Stanford, can I help you?

**Billy finally responds.**

**BILLY** The tangerine is a better shade for you. Perfect for your skin.

**The train slows and the girls quickly get up and leave.**

**Billy is still for a moment and then he also gets up. He picks up a lipstick which HoA has left behind on the seat and puts it in his pocket.**