

Celebrating Australian Playwriting



Australian Script Centre



# Turnstiler

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by Simon Hall

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EXTRACT

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**Characters:**

SUPER a supervisor  
E109 an employee  
MIN young woman  
LEON Min's boyfriend

WARD older man  
MIN older woman

RICKY played by LEON actor  
LUX played by E109 actor  
VICTORIA played by young MIN actor  
FUBS played by SUPER actor

**Set:**

An empty space, then later a flat with door, window and chairs, then later an empty space.

**Other requirements:**

A hat with a special badge	A newspaper	A plastic bag
Metallic siren noise	Morning bird song	A picnic rug
Screeching train noise	A sink	
Sunlight	A packet of biscuits	
Lovey-dove music	A sledgehammer	
Two ice creams	A brochure	
	Seagull noise	

SUPER *and* E109 *onstage.*

SUPER ...through the chute. Understood?

E109 Yes.

SUPER You measured for your uniform?

E109 No.

SUPER Well get moving then. Clock-in's tomorrow at 0600 hours. On the peak. Throw you into the deep end.

SUPER *disappears.*

E109 Thank you.

E109 *puts on a hat with a special badge and starts taking tickets.*

E109 Thank you thank you thanks.

SUPER *reappears and watches* E109.

E109 Thanks yep OK yep ta yep yep thanks ta ta ta OK thank you thank you thank you yes thanks thanks yep yep OK ta yep ta yep yep yes ah yes thank you yep yep ta thanks thanks thanks ta OK thanks ta thanks yep ta OK yep thanks ta thanks yep ta ta thanks yep ta thank you OK thanks ta yep yep thanks yep OK thanks yep ta *(etc...the queue is infinite yet invisible. E109's thanking continues while he is at the turnstile as a layer beneath the dialogue. It ceases only when indicated. E109's responses are slotted into his rhythmic patter.)*

SUPER E109, watch your presentation. Look how you're standing. Are you going to stand like that? No. You need to use your body. Confidence.

E109 OK...yes.

SUPER As turnstiler, you are in a position of authority. Representing the company. The turnstiler is our front line, our face. First thing the customer sees. So stand that way. Confidence.

SUPER *disappears.*

E109 Alrighty.

*A young woman, MIN, enters in queue. She reaches the turnstile and gives E109 her ticket. They touch hands. E109 ceases thanking. Silence. Pause. E109 looks up, MIN drops her hand and goes through turnstile, exits.*

E109 Thanks.

*Beat. E109 starts thanking. SUPER reappears.*

SUPER                    You see this? You know what this is?

E109                     Ah...

SUPER                    ‘S a rubber band. Blue. A blue rubber band. We use it to bundle the Thursday tickets. Blue for Thursdays, red for Wednesdays, green for Friday, yellow every second Monday and plain on the weekends. The company, E109. Everything. Everything is counted for. The company does not miss a cent. Not a roople. You understand me?

E109                     So’m I meant—

SUPER                    No, no, you’re not meant to do anything. That’s not your job. Someone else does that. Stupid. Stupid question.

*Pause.*

SUPER                    You know E109, I’m a bit like this rubber band. Stretch me too far and I snap.

E109                     Alrighty.

SUPER                    You understand me? Stupid bloody questions. Don’t need them, don’t want them. You have any other comments to make?

E109                     No. No I don’t think—

SUPER                    Well don’t. Think. Don’t think. Don’t think. No time to think.

E109                     S...Sorry. I won’t—

SUPER                    E109, concentrate. Look at that queue. The customers. Speed, speed, speed. Efficiency.

*SUPER disappears as MIN enters at end of queue.*

MIN                      Hallo again.

*MIN & E109 touch hands. E109 stops thanking.*

E109                     H...Hi. Hi.

MIN                      You always look so miserable.

E109                     No, no, I’m not.

MIN                      They ever give you a break?

E109                     Eleven hundr...a couple of hours.

MIN Well, I'll probably see you tomorrow.

E109 OK, sure, yes.

E109 *starts thanking.* MIN *goes through turnstile and exits.* SUPER *appears.*

SUPER Four minutes to break E109.

E109 OK, thanks.

SUPER *pauses to watch* E109.

SUPER So. How you finding it? You finding it boring? Is it getting boring?

E109 No, thanks. Not too—

SUPER It will. It'll get pretty boring. I'm telling you. Pretty boring—you got a girlfriend yet?

E109 Ah...

SUPER I got a girlfriend when I started. Doing your job I was. Not long after she became my wife. We almost had a son. Then she died.

E109 Oh.

SUPER Yep, oh. Got her ticket. But she helped. Relieved the boredom. Without her...well I wouldn't be here. Would I? Where I am. Supervisor—Uggh! You smell something?

E109 No.

SUPER You sure? God. What is that? Lift up your shoes, show us the soles. No. No. Nothing there.

E109 Maybe...

SUPER What? Speak up!

E109 Maybe you stepped in—

SUPER Pwoarr. No it's not your shoes, E109. Urggh rank—give you some advice. I like you. You don't say much. That's good. If you want to move on in the world keep it that way.

MIN *enters queue.*

E109 Alrighty.

SUPER You don't understand. Do you, E109?

MIN Hallo.

E109 *stops thanking.*

E109 Ah...

SUPER When'd you last brush your teeth?

MIN Excuse me?

E109 Ah...

SUPER Get some freshener—Take her ticket then come on.

MIN *hands E109 ticket.*

E109 T...Ta

MIN And thank you

SUPER Breath smells like horse dung. (*vomit gag*) Dry retch.

MIN You having a break?

E109 *stops thanking.*

E109 Yes. Y—

SUPER Two minutes. No. Take it early. Freshen up the air.

MIN *goes through the turnstile. E109 & MIN move together.*

SUPER Got a joke for your girlfriend.

MIN Oh I'm, we're not—

SUPER Why should you never, eh? You listening ?

MIN I'm just—

SUPER Why should you never kiss a chicken? 'Cos it's got fowl breath—you like that? Eh? You like that?

E109 Yes. Yes.

MIN No.

SUPER Made it up on the spot—wit. Wit. It's the key. That and not opening your mouth.

E109 & MIN *move aside. SUPER disappears*

E109 I shouldn't really talk.

MIN Why?—your breath doesn't smell. Who's the bog-face?

E109 Supervisor.

MIN Do you get paid to do this?

E109 Yes. Yes. Well a job's a job you know.

MIN Isn't it boring?

E109 They're hard to get.

MIN Mmm yes. I suppose—you heard of Tonga?

E109 No.

MIN They don't have jobs. The Friendly Islands. It's very relaxed. You don't have to do anything, just eat fruit all day. Pick it off the trees. That's the only work you do, pick fruit. There's no jobs really. Most of the time it just falls from the trees. Sounds pretty nice hey?

E109 Yes.

MIN No turnstiles in Tonga—you been overseas?

E109 No.

MIN Where would you most like to go? Anywhere. Anywhere in the whole world?

E109 Ah...Tonga.

MIN No, where do you dream going? If you could choose just one place. Anywhere.

E109 Um...

MIN Anywhere.

E109 Well...I—

MIN Zanzibar.

E109 Ah—

MIN Or Iceland. It's got these volcanoes. And ice, and lots of other things. Or, or Morocco?

E109 Y—

MIN Fez, what about Fez? It's this really old medieval...it's like a maze. Or there's this city in Iran, this city that's just one giant temple with pink tiles on these huge domes. Everyone who's