

Celebrating Australian Playwriting



Australian Script Centre



Just Molly and Me

by Patricia Johnson

EXTRACT

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This script is distributed by The Australian Script Centre
77 Salamanca Place Hobart 7004 Tasmania Australia
email admin@ozscript.org
www.ozscript.org
ph +61 3 6223 4675
fax +61 3 6223 4678

CHARACTERS

FRANK	An Elderly Man
MOLLY	An Elderly Woman with Alzheimer's Disease
YOUNG MOLLY	Her Younger Self

FRANK is visiting his wife, MOLLY, in the Nursing Home

He will give her her midday meal.

1.

LIGHTS UP on MOLLY, sitting up in bed.
She stares fixedly -- blankly -- ahead of her.
MOLLY will not respond to anything throughout the Play,
unless it is specified.

In the half dark, VOICES OFF.

FRANK: Good day, Sister.

NURSE: Oh, hello Mr. Donnelly. You going
to be Mother Bird again today?

FRANK: Feed the little birdey, yes.

NURSE: My Goodness, she's lucky to have you.

FRANK: This tray?

NURSE: Any one, they're all the same.

FRANK: What's on the menu?

NURSE: Can't say I blame them for not coming
back after a while.

FRANK: Who?

NURSE: Not when they don't even recognise
you. You right with that?

FRANK: Is that Trifle under the custard?

NURSE: Trifle, yes, one poor old thing thinks
every visitor's the Pope. (LAUGHS)

2.

FRANK: I thought she wouldn't eat the Trifle.

NURSE: She gobbled it up yesterday.

FRANK: Gobbled it up, did she?

NURSE: (LAUGHS) Gobble, gobble, gobble.

FRANK: I thought I remembered her knocking it back.

NURSE: Take a couple of extra servies.

FRANK: Extra what?

NURSE: Servies ... paper nappies ... they all dribble, even the best of them.

FRANK: You're wearing an engagement ring, Sister.

NURSE: (LAUGHS) Old enough to know better, ay?

FRANK: No, good on you ...

FRANK comes on stage slowly, carefully holding the tray.

FRANK: That's real good ...

A SPOTLIGHT now goes with FRANK as he approaches the bed.

FRANK: Hello, dear. Beautiful day again.

FRANK will carefully put the tray on the bedside table, will kiss his wife on the forehead.

FRANK: There's Trifle. I hope she's right. And custard as usual.

3.

FRANK takes his time settling himself on the bed, before he takes up the tray and puts it on his lap.

FRANK: As I remember, you wouldn't touch the Trifle last time. But Sister said you gobbled it up yesterday. Did you?
Now.

FRANK removes the metal cover on the dinner plate.

FRANK: What have we got here?
A nice bit of corned silverside, it looks like.
White sauce's a bit gluggy, though. Out of a packet, I'll bet.

FRANK scrapes off some sauce, holds up a piece of meat.

FRANK: Mmmm. Pretty grisley, too.

FRANK puts the meat back on the plate, will proceed to try and cut it up, as --

FRANK: You won't catch me with a packet any more. No. What they charge you goes in the packaging. Or a tin that's not absolutely necessary. Though I'm having to buy the tinned tomatoes at the moment. Horrible, watery things they've got in the supermarket. I've got the new seeds in their Jiffy pots. I'm trying the little ones this year. Tiny Tims. They won some sort of a competition for the best flavour. Dreadful, isn't it? Whole generations growing up not knowing what a real tomato tastes like because they've

4.

FRANK: (contd.) only had the supermarket ones they ripen up with gas.

FRANK is not making much headway.

FRANK: By golly, that's tough.
 Wouldn't you think they'd think?
 Not everyone's got your teeth.
 (SMILES) The Ipana girl, we used to
 call you. Just to make you blush.

YOUNG MOLLY, dressed in the style of the mid-fifties, is coming on stage from out of the shadows. She will stand behind the bedhead.

FRANK: But they'll all be getting the
 silverside if all the trays are the
 same. Too right they will.
 All with their poor old false choppers.
 Not like our Ipana girl here, ay Molly?

YOUNG MOLLY: The Ipana girl they called me.
 Just to make me blush.

FRANK: I couldn't cope with this gristle,
 either.

YOUNG MOLLY: Strong teeth, strong passion.

FRANK is exasperated with the knife.

FRANK: Blunt as billy-oh to boot.

FRANK puts the knife aside.

YOUNG MOLLY: That's the young man's sign, he said.

FRANK starts to work with the fork.

FRANK: Better off shredding it.