

Celebrating Australian Playwriting



Australian Script Centre



Write-Off

by Greta Harrison

EXTRACT

© 2000 Greta Harrison



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

Prologue

This prologue can be improvised to suit the situation. Characters can feel free to go off on tangents or talk about equally as pointless subjects that are a bit more topical. While the house lights are still up and the audience is still filing into the theatre. (WAIT until most of the audience has arrived though) two young men, BOB and SAM, who have entered with the audience move to take their seats. They are talking, about to sit down when they see a nice comfy couch on the stage. During this sequence, it doesn't matter if the audience is still moving around and talking.

BOB: Go on I dare you

SAM: I would if you would

BOB: You wouldn't

SAM: I would, would you?.

BOB: I will.

SAM: So will I.

(They both sit down on the couch. BOB bounces up and down a couple of times.)

BOB: Ahhhhh.

SAM: I could handle this.

BOB: Don't go much on the upholstery though.

SAM: I would've thought you'd be a brown corduroy man?

BOB: No I'm more into florals or paisley.

SAM: Oh... kind of Laura Ashley-esque then? *(Long pause, they sit and watch the audience coming in. Suddenly remembering something.)* Whenever You Need Somebody!

BOB: Wha?

SAM: Whenever You Need Somebody. That was that other hit that Rick Astley had.

BOB: Apart from Never Gonna Give You Up?

SAM: Yeah, I knew I'd remember.

BOB: How does it go again.

SAM: *(Pause, SAM is going over the tune in his head, he sings pretty badly)*
Whenever you neeeded some-bod-e-e, I'll bring my love to yo-ou.
You don't have to say you want me. I just want to be with yo-ou.

BOB: Oh yeah, that was before he grew his hair long and tried to become a serious artist.

SAM: Did he do that, or was that Jason Donovan?

BOB: No Jason lost his hair... after he lost Kylie.

SAM: *(Sadly)* Oh. *(Pause)* I saw him when he was down here you know, in concert.

BOB: *(Excited)* Jason Donovan came here?

SAM: No, Rick Astley.

BOB: Oh. *(Pause)* How was he?

SAM: Well he was OK. But he was no Feargal Sharkey.

BOB: That goes without saying. You know they reckon he was a cleaner at the recording studio when they discovered him and made him into a star.

SAM: Who, Feargal Sharkey?

BOB: No, Rick Astley.

SAM: Well there's hope for us all then.

BOB: *(Pause, leaning back)* Not much of an audience eh?

SAM: It's not a bad effort.

BOB: Couldn't bring a few more friends then?

SAM: Ease up. They look like a lovely audience, *(Indicating a girl at the front)* especially her.

BOB: Yeah, that's fine, but some of these theatre types actually have to break-even.

(As audience members continue coming in, BOB and SAM can make some spontaneous remarks like. 'I like his trousers'. They could flirt with girls, or if they see friends they could wave to them.)

BOB: So why do you reckon people come to these things?

SAM: To what?

BOB: The theatre? Is this, like the brooding intellectual crowd?

SAM: Do we look brooding and intellectual?

BOB: Well why do you go then?

SAM: I only go when there's nothing on telly like tonight.

BOB: But what about *(Insert cheap trashy TV series that patrons are missing tonight by coming to the theatre here, eg. Survivor) ?*

SAM: Oh shit I thought that was tomorrow. Are you recording it?

BOB: Nah, I don't have a video, remember the red cordial incident?

SAM: Don't know anyone else who's recorded it do you?

BOB: No, I think you're the only one who watches that shit.

SAM: Bugger. *(To audience)* Has anyone here recorded *(Survivor)* tonight?
(If no one responds SAM tries again louder) Oh please, someone must've, cause it's the final and I have to find out what happened.
(If still no responses, SAM is really pissed off If someone actually has taped the program, SAM is ecstatic, asks if they will let him borrow tape, gets their phone number, asks them out.) Shit, I wish I hadn't come now.

BOB: Well, this was your idea, I thought you were friends with whatshisface, the lighting guy. *(Waves to the technical booth)*

SAM: Yeah, he's a legend. But .. but he keeps dragging me to these things.. I thought you said you knew the writer.

BOB: Not really. She went to my primary school - was picked on a lot.

SAM: Mmm, I don't even like the theatre.
(Long pause: The play's DIRECTOR appears at the back of the stage, talking to one of the cast members, he/she looks slightly perturbed).
Unless they get their gear off.

BOB Well that goes without saying.

SAM: I can't stand anything with the slightest hint of audience participation.

BOB: Oh don't even get me started. I mean you come to watch a show, and the last thing you want is to be singled out by some smart-arse actor and find yourself up on the stage.
(Long pause. They realise for a moment that they are themselves on stage. The DIRECTOR can vaguely be heard at the back of the stage saying something like. "Well I don't care, find someone who can do something").

BOB: I tell you what I don't like.

SAM: What?

BOB: `Theatre People' *(Looking at the DIRECTOR who is making big arm gestures)* They're too..... *(BOB makes big arm gestures)* dramatic.

SAM: Mmm. *(Long pause)* What red cordial incident?

BOB: Huh?

SAM: Red cordial incident. Had something to do with you no longer being the proud owner of a video cassette recorder. What, I spose you spilled cordial on it, or something?

BOB: No, no, no. Didn't I tell you?

SAM: Nah.

BOB: Hit a Cottees delivery van.

SAM: What, with your video?

BOB: *(Annoyed)* No, with the Hyundai.

SAM: Oh. *(Suddenly confused)* Huh?

BOB: I'd let my insurance run out you see, so I couldn't afford to pay for the repairs. So I pawned the VCR.

SAM: Ah. *(Pause)* Shit eh?

BOB: Goes without saying. *(Pause)* I don't even like red cordial.

SAM: *(Glancing upstage)* So when is this supposed to start then?

BOB: Pretty soon I'd reckon.

The DIRECTOR moves downstage, looking quite annoyed and distressed. This has never happened before. This is his/her play, and for some reason these losers have decided to sit on the stage and wreck everything.

DIRECTOR: *(To the Audience, trying his/her best to be casual)* Hi everyone. It looks like we should be starting in a few minutes, um, we're, we're just trying to sort out a few technical hitches. So just talk amongst yourselves for a moment. *(To the other two, almost whispering, aware that the audience is most likely not talking amongst themselves)* Hi, um what's happening?

SAM: Who are you?

DIRECTOR: Oh I just directed this play and we kind of need you to move, like now, so that we can get it started.

BOB: You directed this?

DIRECTOR: Yes now-

SAM: Is it any good?

DIRECTOR: What?

SAM: The play.

DIRECTOR: *(Politely)* Well, maybe if we were able to start you could see for yourselves.

BOB: That goes without saying. *(Director looks offended)*

SAM: *(Giggling inanely)* It's OK, he's just having a lend of you. Aren't you Bobby-boy?

DIRECTOR: *(Trying to usher them off)* OK.

SAM: Yeah you've got to watch Bob here. He's a bit of a trickster.