

Celebrating Australian Playwriting



Australian Script Centre



# Dividing up the Past

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by Bruce Shearer

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EXTRACT

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## **SYNOPSIS**

Sarah and Trevor lived together for five years at which time they separated. Sarah moved out taking what she needed at the time and leaving a lot of her possessions behind. She returns a year later to pick up the rest of her things and to divide up joint possessions.

They have both embarked on new lives, yet neither has completely put the past behind them. The division of joint property, put off for so long, stirs the memories of the relationship, each article reminiscent of a time or place.

In the past Trevor and Sarah have been part of a trio of folk singers with Sarah's brother Martin. In dividing up their property, they find the guitar they used to use which reminds them of the songs they used to sing. In the course of sorting out their belongings and what is left of their relationship, they reminisce by singing each of the songs they wrote and used to sing when they were a trio of student buskers.

Sarah and Trevor are drawn together by shared memories, but kept apart by past experience and their new and very different directions.

## **SETTING**

The play is set in a large spare room filled with dusty boxes of books and old opportunity shop style clothes and furniture.

## CHARACTERS

### SARAH CARNABY

Sarah is an ambitious young woman in her late 20's. She is in her second year of a Bachelor of Science degree. Sarah is determined to take charge of her life rather than just floating along. She is passionate, emotional and unsure whether she has done the right thing. Sarah is dressed in the latest fashions.

### TREVOR WENTWORTH

Trevor is an accountant in his early 30's who has taken many years to gain his degree. He was a student throughout the relationship with Sarah. While engaged in a new relationship, Trevor is unsure whether the previous one is really over. Trevor is wearing scruffy old clothes.

# DIVIDING UP THE PAST

## Scene 1

(SARAH AND TREVOR ENTER THE SPARE ROOM, A DARK BOX ROOM FILED WITH OLD FURNITURE AND BOXES FULL OF BOOKS.)

TREVOR This is it.

SARAH (LOOKING AROUND)

Yeah, this is it.

TREVOR Almost a year to the day.

(SARAH IS STILL GAZING AROUND)

You've taken your time.

SARAH I had my reasons.

TREVOR (TREVOR WALK'S OVER TO AN OLD CARTON AND KICKS IT.)

There's just this crap to divide up and we can go about our business.

SARAH Fine.

TREVOR (PEERING INTO ANOTHER BOX.)

It's not worth two bob the lot of it.

SARAH (SARAH ACTUALLY STARTS HEARING WHAT TREVOR IS SAYING.)

Not worth two bob?

TREVOR No.

SARAH There's some lovely old stuff here!

TREVOR Well at least you're half right. It is old.

SARAH (PICKS UP AN OLD PRINT LEANING AGAINST A WALL.)

We loved this stuff.

TREVOR Not me.

SARAH (SARAH LOOKS OVER AT TREVOR FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE SHE ENTERED THE ROOM.)

You said you did.

TREVOR (LOOKS BACK AT HER.)

Yeah, well we said plenty.

SARAH Yes.

(THERE IS SILENCE FOR A FEW MOMENTS.)

TREVOR Why has it taken you so long?

SARAH I just couldn't bring myself to come around.

TREVOR So you left me here living amongst the crap and the memories.

SARAH I don't know, it seemed so dark and lonely and sad.

TREVOR Okay for me though.

SARAH You wanted to stay here!

TREVOR Not necessarily, I just wasn't prepared to leave.

SARAH Isn't that the same thing.

TREVOR Not exactly.

SARAH We would have been happy to move here.

TREVOR No.

(THEY BOTH LOOK AWAY FOR A WHILE.)

SARAH It seems like such a long time ago.

TREVOR Yesterday.

SARAH Well yesterday may seem like a long time ago to you, but to most people....

TREVOR This, it seems like yesterday.

SARAH You haven't opened the door in all that time?

TREVOR I got all our joint junk and I threw it in here and shut the door.

SARAH No wonder it's so damp and musty in here. It's probably all ruined.

TREVOR You can't ruin junk.

(SARAH STOOPS OVER A BOX OF OLD PLATES AND GLASSES THEN TURNS AROUND.)

SARAH Has Roslyn been in here?

TREVOR She opened the door and looked in once or twice.

SARAH She didn't come in?

TREVOR No.

SARAH Wasn't curious?

TREVOR It looks like a bomb hit a tip, why should she be curious?

SARAH She looks like the curious type.

TREVOR She isn't.

SARAH Just a little bit nosy?

TREVOR No!

(SARAH RUMMAGES CASUALLY THROUGH AN OLD TEA CHEST.)

SARAH Where's my antique pepper grinder?

TREVOR What pepper grinder?

SARAH You know very well. The one we argued about buying for about three hours before I bought it.

TREVOR I think in the case of that article, antique meant old and useless.

SARAH You'd know I suppose.

TREVOR It was an outrageous take. That guy saw you coming from so far away...

SARAH I'm well aware of your opinion. Where is it?

TREVOR It could be anywhere.

SARAH Anywhere?

TREVOR It's probably here somewhere.

SARAH It better be!

(PAUSE)

TREVOR I'm surprised you're interested in this stuff.

SARAH It's half mine.

TREVOR But on Alistair's salary?

SARAH (SLOWLY) It's his salary.

TREVOR Yours too.

SARAH No!

TREVOR But you are studying.

SARAH Yes.

TREVOR Any part time work?

SARAH No, I'm really too busy.

TREVOR I see.

SARAH You do not!

TREVOR I think I see the situation rather well.

SARAH You've got no idea, you and your stupid conclusions.  
You really...

(TREVOR PUTS HIS HANDS UP IN ORDER TO STEM THE  
COMING TIRADE.)

TREVOR Let's just try and maintain an icy civility shall we.

SARAH I've had enough of your insinuations.

TREVOR I've had enough of you, full fucking stop. We could have got this  
over and done with a long time ago.

(THEY BOTH PAUSE FOR A WHILE.)

SARAH (CURTLY) Then shall we start.

TREVOR Yes.

SARAH (WALKS OVER AND CLUTCHES A LARGE FLUFFY CUSHION  
TO HER CHEST.)

This is mine.

TREVOR (TREVOR STEPS ACROSS AN OLD CARTON AND GRASPS  
THE OTHER END.)

It most certainly is not.