

Celebrating Australian Playwriting



Australian Script Centre



A Lost World

by Evan Watts

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

SCENE ONE

Danni is huddled in an armchair, her legs up under her chin. She is wearing an oversized jumper she has pulled over her legs (hiding a pair of old tracksuit bottoms). She's rocking in the armchair. Her face is blank. She's staring at the TV. From the door up left (bathroom) the sound of running water can be heard. The sound of water stops. Danni turns the TV off. Danni looks off (doorway up left). Ruth's voice is heard through the doorway.

Ruth's Voice: I can say this now. I can admit it to myself - and you. I haven't forgotten you in this whole equation.

Danni looks back toward the TV. Ruth appears in the doorway her body and head wrapped in towels. Danni stops rocking.

Ruth: I'm not proud of it but the fact is I'd given up hope. All these years and not a single word. Nothing. Not a murmur. It's little wonder I'd begun to suspect the worst. One minute Len's proposing marriage and the next - poof - vanished into thin air.

Long pause. Ruth stares at Danni. Ruth disappears back into the bathroom. Danni looks off momentarily. Danni rocks.

Ruth's Voice: I knew what people were saying. 'What's a nice guy like him doing with a cold fish like her.' I heard them. They meant me to hear. 'It wouldn't have been his idea - the marriage.' That's the sort of thing they were thinking - and saying. 'And when he came to his senses and realised what he'd got himself in for he did a runner'.

Danni (*to herself*): It's the sort of thing I was thinking.

Ruth's Voice: "What sort of a life is he going to have with her." What kind of sex life to be precise.

Danni (*shouting*): Mum! Not that again.

Ruth enters. She is now dressed in a full length dressing gown. She continues to dry herself. Danni stops rocking.

Ruth : That's what they were thinking. They didn't have the courage to say it to my face but I knew all the same. That's all they think about. What goes on behind closed doors, that's all they're really concerned with. I mean it's not my fault. Not my fault I've never... that I can't... it doesn't mean I can't enjoy... I won't pretend. I won't do that. I won't lie like that with a man. I mean... You know what I mean. And it's not as if I don't feel anything. I can derive a certain kind of pleasure... *and give it too*. Let's not forget that. I've got a few tricks up my sleeve, more than just a few. I'm a regular magician.

Ruth exits up right (Her bedroom). Danni turns the TV on. She draws her knees up under her jumper again but remains still.

Danni: *(to herself)* : You're good at making them disappear.

Ruth's Voice: Sexual pleasure doesn't only live in the body. The body's only part of the story. The body's not the be all and end all. The body receives just as many signals as it sends - maybe more.

Danni *(mimicking her mother)* : 'The brain is the largest erogenous zone.'

Ruth's Voice: People - men especially - forget, the brain is the largest erogenous zone.

Danni *(shouting)* : Maybe that's because they're thinking with their dicks.

Ruth's Voice: You're not watching the television are you? *(Pause.)* Is that the television I can hear?

Danni *(more to herself, turning TV off)* : It's just the voices in my head.

Ruth's Voice: I'm an optimist. The eternal optimist me. Who would've thought that one day I'd get a call to say he was coming home.

Pause.

Danni: You got a call?

Ruth's Voice: No one would've held out as long as I did.

Danni: When was this?

Ruth's Voice: What dear?