

Celebrating Australian Playwriting



Australian Script Centre



The Messenger

by Robert Jeffreys

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

THE MESSENGER

A PLAY IN ONE ACT.

CHARACTERS

ROSE: FEMALE, MID TWENTIES.

BOB: MALE, LATE TWENTIES

LIVING ROOM OF A FLAT, DSR METICULOUSLY TIDY COMPUTER PARAPHERNALIA. USR BREAKFAST BAR WITH 2 STOOLS AND EXIT TO KITCHEN PROPER. DSL SOFA AND FOOTSTOOL. US ENTRANCE DOOR WITH SECURITY SCREEN. USL EXITS TO BATHROOM/BEDROOM

ROSE IS VACUUMING, DANCING TO MUSIC, POSSIBLY 'IT'S RAINING MEN', COMES TO THE MIRROR, DUSTS IT AND THE PHOTO OF HER AND MARTIN.

ROSE: [SOUTHERN DRAWL] Masser I so sorry, you're right I never ought to behave so bad. I's ought to be wiped. No! Well at least spanked. - What I don't even like that. Well I's knows you do master. [CHANGE] You'd hate this outfit wouldn't you- well too bad- I wouldn't go out like this. - That lace top was enough of a problem. "This is my cousin's 50th there is going to be a lot of conservative family there, we are not going to the Silver Sands." Well I thought it looked fashionable, very with it. BAG READY FOR SALVOS PULLS IT OUT. What do you think? Thought so. Ah well you can't please everyone. Out it goes.

BACK TO CLEANING AND MUSIC. A KNOCK AT THE DOOR. ROSE DANCING, KNOCK AT THE DOOR, ROSE SINGING, KNOCK AT THE DOOR. ROSE TURNS OFF THE VACUUM CLEANER AND LISTENS THERE IS A KNOCK AT THE DOOR. SHE HESITATES. SHE GOES TO THE DOOR, MUSIC STILL PLAYING LOUDLY. OPENS INTERNAL DOOR, SPEAKS THROUGH SECURITY DOOR

ROSE: Hello.

BOB: Hi, I'm Bob.

ROSE: Yes.

BOB: Bob.

ROSE: Yes.

BOB: I'm Martin's friend.

ROSE: Martin's not here.

BOB: I'm from Sydney.

ROSE: Martin's in Sydney.

BOB: No.

ROSE: Yes.

BOB: When did he go?

ROSE: Yesterday.

BOB: No, I don't believe it I arrived this morning.

ROSE: It's true.

BOB: Of course.

ROSE: I'm sorry.

BOB: I shouldn't have made this a surprise visit.

ROSE: Martin gave you this address?

BOB: Yes.

ROSE: How do you know Martin?

BOB: He has done some work for us. Hope he will do some more.

ROSE: I'll just turn the music down. [MILD PANIC TURNS MUSIC DOWN] There. Sorry, I wasn't expecting anyone.

BOB: I shouldn't have come without ringing. I wanted to surprise Martin.

ROSE: He's in Sydney.

BOB: You said.

ROSE: Well that's where he is.

BOB: We have some more work we want him to do.

ROSE: We could do with the money.

BOB: A shame.

ROSE: He will be back Friday.

BOB: No. I've got to head back Friday.

ROSE: Oh. Maybe you could ring him.

BOB: Have you got his number?

ROSE: Yes. I'll get it. It's his hotel number.

BOB: That'll do.

ROSE: I can't open the door. I'm sorry. I had some trouble a little while ago and...

BOB: I completely understand.

ROSE: Sorry.

BOB: Could you write it down for me?

ROSE: Yes. Sure. [GOES TO PHONE TABLE WRITES DOWN NUMBER.] Oh, don't you have a pen?

BOB: I thought I would be seeing Martin.

ROSE: [ROSE IS LOOKING FOR A WAY OF HANDING IT TO BOB] I'll just have to unlock the door. [UNLOCKS DOOR] Here.

BOB: Sheraton again?

ROSE: Yes. It's central for him. You okay?

BOB: It's just. Nothing.

ROSE: I'm sorry.

BOB: We had lunch there with him in August.

ROSE: Sorry who are you with?

BOB: Beaumont Enterprises.

ROSE: Oh. Beaumont Enterprises have given him a lot of work...

BOB: Yes and our clients are very impressed.

ROSE: So you need to talk to him?

BOB: Yes.

ROSE: Well that's the number.

BOB: Yes. This is a bit of a rush this job.

ROSE: Sorry he is not here.

BOB: Perhaps another time.

ROSE: Did you want to ring him from here?

BOB: It could make a big difference.

ROSE: You will have to come in.

BOB: Yes.

ROSE: It's just...

BOB: I caught a taxi here from the hotel. So it will take me a while to get back.

ROSE: Yes. Well. Please come in. I'm afraid the place is a mess. I've been busy.

[BOB ENTERS]

BOB: You've got two jobs.

ROSE: Yes. Did Martin say that?

BOB: He did.

ROSE: I'm surprised he told you.

BOB: How else would I know?

ROSE: That's right but...anyway. We are trying to pay it off.

BOB: This is yours?

ROSE: It's ours.

BOB: Martin said the title for joint ownership is going through settlement today.

ROSE: He said that?

BOB: Yes.

ROSE: Now I'm very surprised.

BOB: Are you?

ROSE: I never thought he would tell anyone that. He must really trust you. He doesn't usually get that close to people. He is very proud.

BOB: He told me.

ROSE: I just find it hard to believe he mentioned that.

BOB: He did. He did. He has mentioned lots of things.

ROSE: I hope they were all nice.

BOB: They sounded nice to me.

ROSE: I'll do something special for him when he gets back.

BOB: I'm sure he will like that.

ROSE: Would you like a cup of tea?

BOB: Yes please.

ROSE: There's the phone. [EXITS TO KITCHEN]

BOB: Are you sure that it's okay? [BOB PUTS CARD IN THE CARDEX]

ROSE: Yes. If it's for work.

BOB: Did you want to talk to him?

ROSE: [ENTERS] Oh. Wait. That's awkward; I'm not to let anyone in the house.

BOB: Really?

ROSE: Yes. I promised.

BOB: Maybe I'll ring him from the hotel.

ROSE: No, that's silly you ring him. No. Yes. Could you ring him later? I'm terribly sorry. You must think me a total idiot.

BOB: That's fine. I'll ring him later.

ROSE: I'm so sorry. Martin makes such a thing about me having people here while he is away. Last time...

BOB: I thought he would be pleased with the work.

ROSE: Oh yes. Thank you very much. Oh this must seem so silly to you. I'm terribly sorry.

BOB: I don't want to be any trouble.

ROSE: No it's me. I'm sorry. Please take a seat. I'll put the kettle on. [EXITS]
You can ring a cab. Martin only drinks percolated coffee. [ENTERS] Would you like a coffee?

BOB: I only drink tea. [ROSE EXIT] [PAUSE] Martin mention what this trip was for?

ROSE: [VO] Work.

BOB: Of course. [LOOKING AT THE PHOTO]

ROSE: [VO] Isn't it with Beaumont again?

BOB: Could be. [PAUSE] I don't handle all the accounts. It must be my partner.

ROSE: [ENTERING SOMEWHAT TIDIED UP WITH CUPS, MILK, SUGAR] Shame your partner didn't tell you Martin would be in Sydney.

BOB: It's okay. I'll ring Martin when I get back to the hotel.

ROSE: Martin has a real thing about me letting people inside the flat while he is away. I even think twice about inviting my girlfriends over.

BOB: I understand. I...

ROSE: I know it is not very liberated of me.

BOB: No please...

ROSE: It's just easier. Saves all the fuss, if I can say no one was here, when he asks.

BOB: I won't mention I was here.

ROSE: I don't know what it will be like when we get married. [WHISTLE]

BOB: You're getting married?