

Celebrating Australian Playwriting



Australian Script Centre



# Hover

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by Emilie Collyer

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EXTRACT

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# Hover

A play for two actors  
by Emilie Collyer

## **Characters:**

CARL

TRINA

Both characters are in their late twenties to early thirties.

## **Setting:**

An excavation site. Ideally on sand. It is littered with debris – items that have been dragged up from the sea and dumped there, bits and pieces of rubbish and miscellaneous found objects. Bits of wood and chain and metal, scraps of clothing, possibly a suitcase, rope, shoes – a mixture of old and new, rubbish and treasure. There should be some indication of where the water is. A sense of abandonment permeates, perhaps even a layer of dirt over some things.

In the space there is also a scaffold on which sit the beginnings of a structure – it is the recreation of a rock face/cliff under the sea on which a ship is being reconstructed. It needs to be wide enough for two people to climb up and sit on top of. It is referred to as scaffold throughout the course of the play for practical purposes.

Part one takes place late afternoon. Parts two and three progressively later into the night until the play ends just before dawn.

## **Time frame:**

The play is divided into three parts. They all take place at the same location over three nights.

Within each section, the action takes place over the course of a couple of hours. There should be some indication of time passing throughout each section.

## Hover

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*It is night time.*

*CARL is huddled on top of the scaffold. He is frightened and his breathing reflects this. TRINA is down below. She is dressed as for a nightclub - a skimpy dress and thigh length boots. She is moving or dancing, in her own world. She can take on the rhythm of CARL's breathing in her movements but the two are not consciously sharing the space. She speaks the following as part of her dance. It is a mantra that she will continue during each of the transitions of the play. It is a murmur, directed to herself. It need not be entirely audible.*

TRINA: Mary. Mary Celeste. Eliza. Joanna. Rosebud. Maria. Caroline. Medea. Mine ... mine ... Mercury. Rosetta. Harlequin. Jemima. Balanced on the rock shelf. Waiting. Waiting. Lily. Zephyr. Empire. Teazer. Here lies ... washed up ... push it over. Set it off. Mine. Waiting. She is ... she is ...

*The sound and movement build to a climax as CARL gets to his feet on the scaffold. This triggers an awareness in TRINA of a presence in the space. She picks up a piece of wood and swings it.*

### **TRANSITION**

*CARL descends from the scaffold. TRINA puts work clothes on over the dress and boots.*

### **PART ONE**

*TRINA and CARL are both on the ground. CARL has a camera.*

*It is late afternoon/early evening.*

CARL: So what will happen with all of this? (*the debris*)

TRINA: They'll clear it away. Store some of it. Some of the wood pieces might prove valuable. Useful at other sites.

CARL: And the rest?

TRINA: Rubbish.

CARL: I've grown so fond of it.

TRINA: Worthless. People's junk. Chucked away. No historical value.

CARL: I think they're my favourite.

TRINA: They'll be destroyed.

CARL: Why not just put it back? Out there, where it came from.

TRINA: It's against regulations. This is all part of an official excavation site now. Has to stay accounted for. No matter how useless it might have been.

CARL: Do you ever take anything?

TRINA: That would be breaking the rules.

CARL: But if it's going to get destroyed anyway ... just a little thing. For sentiment.

TRINA: If I did that on every job I'd have a warehouse of filthy bottles and single shoes.

CARL: It's very clear to you isn't it. Your job.

TRINA: It was.

CARL: You're really disappointed aren't you.

TRINA: I was the only one who didn't write the guy off as a complete crank. I actually sat down and read his journal. Over a hundred pages. Everyone else thought he was nuts. There was never even an official shipping route that went through here.

CARL: But you thought there was something in it?

TRINA: A hunch. So much for giving someone the benefit of the doubt.

CARL: Don't give up though. There must be loads to do down here. Whole coast-line to work through. I'm sure you'll find something. I hope you find something else. If not this ship. May-be there's another, just waiting out there for you to discover.

*TRINA shakes her head.*

TRINA: This was the one. Good night Irene. You know they're blasting out there where we've been looking.

CARL: The rock shelf?

TRINA: It's amazing. Under water caves. You should see it.

CARL: So why?

TRINA: It's unstable. There was a small cave in.

CARL: While you were—?

TRINA: Last time I was out. No big deal. But enough for them. Now it's on the diving map. Too risky to leave it like that. So looks like I was the last person to see it as it is and it was the last place to see me.

CARL: What do you mean?

TRINA: I'm moving on.

CARL: Another project?

TRINA: I've resigned.

CARL: What?

TRINA: I've had enough. Need a break. It's not ... this was it, you know, and I can't ... I'm over it. Couldn't come up with the goods. *Beat*. What about you?

CARL: I don't know. Floating. I've got a bit of personal stuff going on. So, yeah. I'll miss this. It's been nice. A nice job. Cruisy. Peaceful down here. I like it. *Beat*. Will they pull that down right away? (*the scaffold*)

TRINA: Don't see why not. There's no magic ship going to be reconstructed on it. No reason for it to stay. Then again it might sit there until it rusts down into the sand. Once sites are low priority they drop off the urgency scale.

CARL: I might keep coming down. For awhile. Until it goes.

TRINA: Okay.

CARL: You'll be around? Finishing off, documenting, filing?

TRINA: Filing?

CARL: I imagine you'd have to ... wouldn't you have to?

TRINA: It is a big part of the job. Yes. Well observed. And I'm a mean filer. Probably should have stuck to it. So yes, I have to file. But it mostly takes place in the office. The filing.

CARL: Well I know. Of course. But I just wondered if you'd be ... if I'll see you.

TRINA: I doubt it. I really ... it's time to move on. For me. There's no reason to hang around.

CARL: Well. It's been nice meeting you Trina.

TRINA: And you. You did good work. Fast, efficient. Nice shots too. I'll make sure they have your name. For any more jobs that come up.

CARL: And what will you do? I mean, do you have any idea?

TRINA: Filing's not a bad option. Desk job. Get back to some books. But no. I don't know yet.

CARL: Well good luck. And if you want to, I mean, you've got my card. I'll be around. Here.

*Pause.*

TRINA: Carl, Your work's beautiful. Really. You have a real ...

CARL: Outlet.

TRINA: Gift.

*Pause.*

CARL: Thank you.

TRINA: So you've got the cheque. We're all done?

CARL: Yes. Thanks.

TRINA: All right.

CARL: Do you want to—?

TRINA: I'm going to do a final once over. Make sure everything's sorted.

CARL: Do you need a hand?

TRINA: No. Thanks.

CARL: Okay. See you then.

TRINA: Ciao.

*CARL exits.*

*TRINA looks around, slowly. Then climbs the scaffold and sits on top.*

*CARL enters, looks for TRINA. He has an envelope.*

*Beat.*

TRINA: Lost something?

CARL: *(startled)* Shit.

TRINA: Up here.

*He looks.*

CARL: I'm not here to help. I know you don't need that. I just ... Here. This is for you *(the envelope)*.

TRINA: What is it?

*CARL takes the envelope over to the scaffold and throws it to TRINA. She opens it and pulls out a number of photographs.*

TRINA: We've got what we need.

CARL: I thought you might like these. Just for you.

TRINA: What are they of?

CARL: Here. Down here.

TRINA: No they're not.

CARL: They are. They're ... arty.

TRINA: *(looks closer)* Oh. God. They're extraordinary.

CARL: Mucking around with light, shapes, developing.

TRINA: This one's like a map. An aerial map, one of those topographical things. And this one's ... a river. And this, the scaffold, it's a castle. They're ... Thanks.

CARL: I wanted you to have them. Didn't want you to go away without ... well from here. With nothing.

TRINA: Thank you. *Beat.* Want to come up?

CARL: Heights aren't really my thing.

TRINA: Bad?

CARL: I get this woozy thing. Stair wells. Mountains. I fainted at the top of an escalator once.

TRINA: Ouch. Did you get sucked down into one of the cracks?

CARL: Lucky someone was with me. Otherwise, yeah, I'd be a very flat Stanley today.

TRINA: I can't even imagine it. I love it up here. If I could go any place it would be up and up. Dance through the sky. From one star to another, leaving nothing but stardust in my wake. Flying, on and on forever, out to where I might never come back.

*Pause. Then suddenly:*

Shooting star!

CARL: You should really let me take your photograph.

TRINA: I should do a lot of things.

CARL: I'm going to keep working on you.

TRINA: Go crazy.

CARL: You might even start to enjoy it.

TRINA: I wouldn't hold your breath.

CARL: I'm a patient man.

TRINA: *(refers to a photograph)* Doesn't look like you need permission. Is this some sort of joke?

CARL: What?

TRINA: When did you take this?

CARL: One afternoon. Late. The light was nearly gone. So it's silhouette.

TRINA: It's still me. I told you not to. I asked you.

CARL: I couldn't resist. I'm sorry. You can have it. I'll destroy it. The negative, if you want.

TRINA: Why couldn't you resist?

CARL: Look at it. Look at you.

TRINA: But I don't ... do I look ... like this?

CARL: Amazing isn't it.

TRINA: So why would you want to destroy it?

CARL: I don't. But if you want me to I will. Do you want me to?

TRINA: It's not me. This sort of thing. Not who I am.

CARL: Who are you?

TRINA: Don't be perverse.

CARL: It has something of you. It's beautiful.

TRINA: Shut up.

CARL: But it's not the whole package. You're another thing entirely.

TRINA: And what's that?

CARL: *Beat.* Look up again. Up to your world. Any more stars?

TRINA: Couple of million.

CARL: And what about them? What are they?

TRINA: *Beat.* My father used to say that whenever you saw a shooting star it was actually an angel, zooming towards earth on their magical speed-of-light-mobiles coming down to take someone's soul back up to heaven.

CARL: A dead person?

TRINA: Of course a dead person.

CARL: Nice.

TRINA: Better than just being dead.

CARL: Suppose.

TRINA: Although I don't know what would happen with someone like you. Being scared of heights and all, they might not take you. You might have to stay here.

CARL: That's not fair.

TRINA: I'd send you a post card.

CARL: 'Heaven's nice. Weather is great. Food wholesome. Wish you were here.'