

Celebrating Australian Playwriting



Australian Script Centre



Salt Creek Murders

by Melissa Reeves

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

CHARACTERS

NELLIE

MALACHI

JANE AND ANNE

JOHN AND TROOPER

TRACKER

This play was first produced by Mainstreet Theatre Company on the third of August, 2002, performed by Cathy Adamek, Lancho Davey, Sally Hildyard, Steve Mouzakis, and Ken Radley, directed by Tom Healey

SCENE ONE

FROM UTTER DARKNESS, A CONFUSINGLY SLOW FADE-UP ON A COUPLE TUSSLING AND WRITHING TOGETHER ON AND OFF THEIR FEET. IT IS NOT APPARENT FOR A WHILE WHETHER THEY ARE ENGAGED IN A STRUGGLE OR AN EMBRACE. AS THE LIGHT SLOWLY LIFTS IT BECOMES CLEAR IT IS THE LATTER. EVENTUALLY THEY PULL APART, LOOKING AT EACH OTHER, A LITTLE PUFFED. THE MAN MOVES TO THE FRONT OF THE STAGE AND LOOKS OUT, AS THOUGH THROUGH A WINDOW

NELLIE Get away from the window.

MALACHI Why?

NELLIE Come away.

MALACHI There's no-one out there.

NELLIE Come away

MALACHI Just scrub and salt

NELLIE You come away from there

MALACHI I love the smell of salt

NELLIE You can't smell salt

MALACHI I can

NELLIE You're wicked

SHE PULLS HIM BY THE ARM AWAY FROM THE WINDOW AND TRYS TO CHECK THAT NO ONE IS OUT THERE FROM A SAFE DISTANCE

MALACHI I'm telling you there's not a soul
out
 there

NELLIE CONTINUES TO PEER ANXIOUSLY THROUGH THE WINDOW FROM A FEW FEET AWAY

 Go on then, if you're going to, take
a
 proper look

HE PUSHES HER RIGHT INTO THE WINDOW. NELLIE FREEZES

NELLIE He's coming

MALACHI Where

NELLIE By the Woods Well road
MALACHI Where
NELLIE Look
MALACHI That's not him
NELLIE It is him
MALACHI That's Devaney's black-fella
NELLIE No it's him. He's got the girls cases
with him
MALACHI Where's the girl...
NELLIE You know it's him
MALACHI He's miles away
NELLIE He can see us
MALACHI He can't see a thing from there
NELLIE There's the girl. Look, there's the
girl
MALACHI Where?
NELLIE Get out from the window

HE WRAPS HIS ARMS ROUND HER INSTEAD

...Malachi

MALACHI Come here
NELLIE No....He's seen me. He's seen the
white of me. Get away

SHE TRIES TO PUSH HIM AWAY

Malachi..

MALACHI SLIDES DOWN HER BODY AND EMBRACES HER ROUND THE
WAIST FROM THE FRONT. NELLIE STARES OUT THE WINDOW LIKE A
RABBIT CAUGHT IN THE HEAD LIGHTS

NELLIE He's seen me...

MALACHI IS NUZZLING INTO HER BELLY

He's seen me...

MALACHI Smile at him

NELLIE I can't

MALACHI Go on smile at him

HE BITES INTO HER STOMACH

NELLIE He's reached the gate. Malachi, he's reached the gate

MALACHI Wave to him..

NELLIE I can't

MALACHI Wave to him

NELLIE SMILES AND WAVES OUT THE WINDOW. MALACHI CARRIES HER BACKWARDS ON HIS KNEES

NELLIE Oh that was stupid...that was stupid. Why would I wave to him...I never

wave
to him

MALACHI sshh

NELLIE Waving like a queen out her carriage window..I'd never do that, not if I didn't have something to hide, not if I didn't have a black haired succubus clinging on to me like a crab...

MALACHI shh

NELLIE He knows about us. He looks at me daggers.

MALACHI STARTS UNDOING HER SKIRT

What are you doing. What are you doing

SHE DOES IT BACK UP AGAIN. HE STARTS UNBUTTONING HER BLOUSE

I've got to go

MALACHI He's got the horse to put away

MALACHI The natives set great store by their
burial practices.

JANE I should get these cases-

MALACHI They put it up a tree.

JANE Put what up a tree?

MALACHI The body. First they smoke it, then
they take off it's skin like it was
pants and a cardigan, and they prop
the poor remains in a tree, looking
out to the ocean.....

HE PAUSES FOR EFFECT

 It's not wise to go bird-watching in
the Coorong.

JANE Why do they do that?

MALACHI Why? I don't know Miss...

JANE Macmanamin. Jane Macmanamin. I should
very much like to see one of those
burial trees Mr.Martin.

JANE EXITS WITH THE CASES. MALACHI ABSENT-MINDEDLY
SQUASHES THE FLY.

