

Celebrating Australian Playwriting



Australian Script Centre



# Dole Diary

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by Van Badham

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EXTRACT

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# Dole Diary

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## **Characters:**

KIM DASH: 23.

EMMA METTERLING: 22.

LAINIE MALA: 25.

GRANT CHEESEMAN: 26.

DAVE BRODIE: 32.

## **Scene:**

The lounge/dining/kitchen area of the tatty share-house in Chippendale, Sydney in which Kim, Emma and Lainie live. It has a front door, a back door and the entrance of a hallway. Present day

## ***Production history:***

- July 21, 2000, rehearsed reading at the Belvoir Downstairs theatre, as part of the Rough Cuts/ANPC independent theatre programme, by the Naked Theatre Company.
- September 6 - September 29, 2001, at the Stables Theatre, Kings Cross (on a double bill with *The Coming of Stork* by David Williamson), by the Naked Theatre Company.

## ACT ONE

### Scene 1:

Morning. Kim's lifeless body sits on the floor. An enormous red liquid stain covers her chest from her neck to her lap. A knife rests in her hand. She is surrounded by empty bottles of wine.

Enter Emma, dressed as Snow White. She initially doesn't see Kim on the floor.

Noticing the body, Emma screams.

**EMMA:** Jesus! FUCK!

Total panic.

**EMMA:** Lainie... Lainie!

**LAINIE:** *(from her bedroom)* What?!

Lainie staggers into the loungeroom.

**LAINIE:** What is it? *(she looks at the body and also at Snow White)* I'm dreaming, right?

**EMMA:** No!

**LAINIE:** Right. *(panics)* Kim!

**EMMA:** Is she breathing?! Is she still alive??!

**LAINIE:** Get your phone -- call an ambulance!

Emma fumbles through a handbag for her mobile. Lainie approaches Kim to see if she's alive.

**EMMA:** I can't find it! It's in here but I can't find it!!! Oh my god! Oh my god oh my god!

**LAINIE:** Emma --

**EMMA:** I can't find it! It's not here!

**LAINIE:** Emma -- calm down!

**EMMA:** But she's covered in - !

**LAINIE:** Spew. Our friend the genius has *spewed* on herself. Red wine. *(rousing Kim)* You dork.

**KIM:** I'm gonna be sick...!

**LAINIE:** Oh, you've done that, baby. *(to Emma)* Would you fetch Jimi Hendrix a bucket and towel? *(to Kim)* Good morning, princess - decided to recarpet, did we?

**KIM:** Something terrible's happened!

**LAINIE:** Let's put the knife down...

**KIM:** The dean asked me about my thesis draft - and I told her that I've been working on the book. I told her I was writing a book! I've been kicked out... She kicked me out of -

**EMMA:** What's the knife for, Kimmie?

**KIM:** I'm a loser! I want to die!

**LAINIE:** You're not and you don't -

**KIM:** - you just need sleep -

**LAINIE:** *(smelling her)* - and a sound hosing down...

**KIM:** Why is Snow White here?

**LAINIE:** Because all good - drunk - dwarves are going to bed.

**KIM:** Bed...

*A momentary pause.*

**KIM:** I'm gonna be *sick*!

Kim runs for the toilet.

**EMMA:** Since when is this Kim? What the hell's going on?

**LAINIE:** When got home - I was up for ages - I thought she was in bed. She told me she had an appointment yesterday... No, Kim does *not* go out drinking all night. Not by herself. It's not her, it's an alien. No, no - Snow White's here - it's a dream. It's a *hell of a dream*, man - *I should not have had the seventh cone.*

**EMMA:** Unless she *has* been kicked out of uni.

**LAINIE:** Definitely an alien. Kim'd rather kill herself than -

Emma brandishes the knife.

**EMMA:** She's lost her scholarship, hasn't she?

The sound of vomiting from the toilet. Kim moans.

**LAINIE:** We don't know that.

**EMMA:** *(with the knife)* Lainie?!

**LAINIE:** Maybe she has, maybe she –

**EMMA:** - maybe I should take the day off work -

**LAINIE:** I'll get her sorted. I'll pump her full of gatorade and we'll know the score in no time. You go, and – uh –

**EMMA:** Book fair. Today. Me, work.

**LAINIE:** It's probably nothing -

*The sound of vomit once more.*

**EMMA:** Laine, if she's lost her scholarship we're fucked for the rent, hey?

**LAINIE:** We'll think of something... rent out the attic –

**EMMA:** We won't get anything for the attic!

**LAINIE:** For a “charming loft-style studio” we'll get sixty bucks a week.

**EMMA:** It's her study - she'll *spew*.

*An uncomfortable pause.*

**LAINIE:** You get to your book fair. I'll handle Dropout Dwarf.

Emma leaves. Lainie contemplates the knife.

**LAINIE:** Jesus, Kim – you can't slit your wrists with a *breadknife*.

End of scene.

## **Scene 2:**

The next day. A key is turning in a lock. Emma approaches the door to answer it.

**EMMA:** I love you, don't you understand?! I've loved you my entire life!

Enter Kim at the door, she heads for the fridge.

**KIM:** Steady on -- you only met her at uni.

**LAINIE:** The fog... it's lifting...

**KIM:** Fog?!

**LAINIE:** As if everything dark could really be the light.

**EMMA:** Oh John!

**KIM:** Oh right.

**LAINIE:** Oh Lord... Emma, this is the worst drivel you've brought home yet.

**EMMA:** It's getting made, though.

**LAINIE:** What as? Toilet paper?

**EMMA:** Miniseries. "The Winds of Change".

**LAINIE:** Hey, Tolstoy, you could do better than this.

**KIM:** I write prose, Laine.

**EMMA:** *(to Kim)* Did you give my regards to Centrelink?

Kim returns from the fridge with a sixpack of beers.

**KIM:** It went... brilliantly.

Kim pops open her tinnie and begins guzzling.

**LAINIE:** And if you want the really good news, the phone's been cut off. *(of the beer)* Gonna share?

**KIM:** Nope.

Lainie takes one anyway.

**LAINIE:** Hide the breadknives, Em, she's drinkin' again.

**KIM:** You know what the first thing she said to me was? “You’ll be back”. I sneezed, right, and she tells me that’s a sign I’ll find myself in the same situation again. She asks me about my qualifications and I say, “I’ve a half-completed a PhD in English Lit”, and she says: “Can you type?”. They don’t have Novelist on the databanks. They don’t have Poet and they don’t even have Writer. But they have Judge. And Member of Parliament. So I’m registered. Kim Dash, 23, unemployed Judge.

**LAINIE:** There were a few judges last week when I handed my form in.

**KIM:** Were they issued one of these?

She throws a dole diary in front of them.

**LAINIE:** Kafka kept a diary, too.

**KIM:** Kafka thought he was a cockroach.

**LAINIE:** Ah, the famous Centrelink showbag.

**KIM:** Employer Contact Certificates, and a “talk” about work-for-the dole...

**EMMA:** At least you’ll be getting an income.

**KIM:** One sixty a week is not an income.

**LAINIE:** Write a novel / prostitution? Write a novel / prostitution...?

**KIM:** I’m telling Grant tonight.

**LAINIE:** You going out?

**KIM:** He’s coming over.

**LAINIE:** Oh, man! --

**EMMA:** We put up the ad for your study, hey. We just put them in a few cafes...

**LAINIE:** -- it takes a week to get the stain off the furniture!

**EMMA:** Four people called -- they can all make interviews tomorrow.

**LAINIE:** And then there’s the smell.

**KIM:** Lainie, my boyfriend does not smell.

**EMMA:** Getting a guy would be good.

**LAINIE:** He stinks!

**KIM:** He said something dumb *once* -- you don't have to hate him forever!

**EMMA:** Um, anyway... Anyway, tomorrow morning's a good time for interviews, 'cause I don't have a promotion, and...

**LAINIE:** - If you're not rootin' your corporate redneck boyfriend, of course -

**EMMA:** Can you make tomorrow morning?

**KIM:** I'm more concerned that when Grant walks in --

**LAINIE:** Kim, he treats you like shit!

**KIM:** One word while he's here, Lainie, and that's *it!*

Kim storms out of the room. A door slams. Emma follows Kim into her room.

### Scene 3:

A couple of hours later. Kim is cooking something on the stove. Lainie is on the couch.

Emma appears. She is dressed as Little Bo Peep with an enormous hat and a crook.

**EMMA:** Okay, this job goes until seven, but I've got a dance class at eight so I'll be at the gym until then. I might come home between the gym and the class, but if I don't I'll be home about ten.

Silence.

**EMMA:** Something wrong?

**LAINIE:** You look like a... lamp.

**EMMA:** I'm Little Bo Peep!

**LAINIE:** Hey, Kim -- maybe Em can get you a job as a sheep.

**EMMA:** Gotta go -- seeya!

She darts out the door.