

Celebrating Australian Playwriting



Australian Script Centre



# Flora and Fauna

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by Emily Gregory-Roberts

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EXTRACT

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CHARACTERS:       Nurses: Sally Smith, Robert, Lizzie  
                      Patients: Chloe, Malcolm, Eva, Jan  
                      Mum (Chloe's mum)

*A psychiatric hospital. The walls are coral colour and the trimmings are dusty pink. Everything else on stage throughout the play is white (except the Christmas decorations). The nurses are dressed in distinct uniforms.*

*Malcolm sits in the group room singing along with the Humphrey Bear theme song that is playing on TV. A whiteboard with the date (23<sup>rd</sup> December), weather (fine and sunny), menu and group times written on it remains on stage throughout.*

*LIZZIE, CHLOE and MUM enter group room.*

LIZZIE: Okey dokey Chloe, welcome to Flora Clinic. My name's Lizzie. I'm one of the nurses here. I'm sooooo nervous. I'm new here at Flora Clinic. This is the first time I've taken people on a tour of the hospital. Oh I probably shouldn't have told you that. I'm supposed to sound really professional. Oh god, I've forgotten what I'm meant to tell you. Oh that's right: the mission statement of Flora Clinic. Our mission statement is "to provide quality psychiatric care by facilitating healing, health and growth within a personalized and caring environment". Okey dokey, now for your orientation. I love that word orientation. It sounds like oreos, you know, those American biscuits. They're great, aren't they?. Okey dokey, orientation. This is the group room. It's basically a TV room but it's also where group therapy is on twice a day. Down there are patients' rooms.

*[They move to a nurse's desk where Christmas decorations are up.]*

This is the nurses' station where get your medication. You've met Sally Smith, haven't you?

MUM: Yes

CHLOE: Yes

LIZZIE: She's the NUM which stands for Nursing Unit Manager.

SALLY SMITH: Yes, I'll be keeping a very close eye on Chloe. The doctor has informed me that she's put Chloe on blue alert. Do you know what that means?

MUM: No.

CHLOE: No.

MUM: What does it mean?

SALLY SMITH: Well each patient is put on either blue, brown or green alert. Blue alert patients require the most monitoring, brown is next, and green alert means they can come and go from the hospital as they please. We use colours, not numbers, so the patients don't get the idea that they're in the "dummies class" if they're on blue alert. If it were up to me, everything would be out in the open, but there are powers that be.

LIZZIE: Okey dokey...Moving on... Sally, which room is Chloe in?

SALLY SMITH: The acreage.

LIZZIE: *[to CHLOE]* Okey dokey, that's the big room next door...

*[Chloe and Mum follow Lizzie to Chloe's room, a big room containing a single hospital bed.]*

LIZZIE: Here's your room.

MUM: Thank you

CHLOE: Thanks.

LIZZIE: Ok now you need to give me anything you have with you that you've thought of using to hurt yourself. It's just so we keep you safe.

CHLOE: Okay, ummm. Here's my phone charger, my mirror, and some nail scissors. I tried to break that perfume bottle and I couldn't, but you can take it if you want.

LIZZIE: Yes we probably should take it. We also need to take anything smaller, such as hair clips.

CHLOE: Oh. Here we go.

LIZZIE: Okey dokey. That's all I need from you at the moment. Thanks Chloe. I'll let you settle in.

MUM: Thanks

CHLOE: Thanks

*[LIZZIE exits]*

MUM: Lie down. I'll unpack your stuff.

CHLOE: It's alright. I'll do it so I know where everything is.

MUM: Okay. Do you want a cup of tea?

CHLOE: No thanks.

MUM: Is there anything you want?

CHLOE: Nope.

MUM: Okay, I'll go then. Call me if you want to, at any time. I'll call you later tonight. Goodbye darling.

*[MUM kisses CHLOE goodbye]*

MUM: Goodbye.

CHLOE: Bye.

*[MUM exits. CHLOE curls up on her bed and starts to cry]*

*Nurses' desk. SALLY SMITH and ROBERT behind desk. There are no flowers on the desk.*

SALLY SMITH: Malcolm! Malcolm, here's your dinner.

*[MALCOLM enters]*

MALCOLM: Why do I have my meals up here on the unit?

SALLY SMITH: You know the answer to that Malcolm. I've told you before. You're on a fluid restriction diet and if you eat with the others in the dining room, you pinch their drinks.

MALCOLM: My tummy really hurts.

SALLY SMITH: What have you eaten today?

MALCOLM: Just my cereal for breakfast and some tomato pasta for lunch.

SALLY SMITH: Well that shouldn't do anything.

MALCOLM: It really really really hurts. Oh I also had a Snickers bar.

SALLY SMITH: Where did that come from?

MALCOLM: The toilet.

SALLY SMITH: What do you mean?

MALCOLM: I got it from the vending machine and I had it in my pocket and when I sat down on the toilet it fell in.

SALLY SMITH: And you ate it out of the toilet???