

Celebrating Australian Playwriting



Australian Script Centre



# Junk Rooms

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by Stephanie Briarwood

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EXTRACT

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# Junk Rooms

Stephanie Briarwood

A shabby boarding room, it is night. Neon light from a window falls across the room. There are several assorted lamps placed around the room. A woman, Jenny, is dragging an arm chair to another area of the room. She is wearing a black arm band, it is made from the leg of black pantyhose. She sits momentarily in the chair, she is not satisfied and adjusts it further. When she is satisfied with the chair's position she sits and lights a cigarette.

*(Long pause.)*

Harry is the beginning.

In the beginning there was Harry.

Of course that depends on how far back you wanna go. Whether there is a definitive beginning, or a gradual march towards... how about simple human psychology. Was I born with a defective gene? Predestined? Well I can tell you there were no warnings or hints. No prior convictions. So for my purposes Harry was the beginning.

I don't think he is to blame –

He was just my portal, the window I opened to let it in.

It didn't happen quickly. No. I stared out the window for ages before I undid the latch and let it in.

Hammer. Smack. Scag. .H'. The white train. Heroin.

*(Beat)*

I'd expected... I don't know... umm. Sleazy, slimy, greasy, granny bashers. Child molesters - I believed all the propaganda I'd seen. Junkie trash - toothless zombies, ripping people off.

Of course it was... in the end... ultimately true... in the end...

Those stories are all about the end, the sometimes prolonged end of an addicts life.

*(Pause)*

*(She turns on a lamp)* I turn this one on first. I like to leave it on for a while. Till the shadows and my mind go dark. Then I switch the others on.

*(A long pause)*

See it's dark.

Here.

This is my end, I'm slowly disappearing into the void of this room.

Harry will be here later. Harry and his pharmacy come every second night. But you'll not see our beginning that was seven years ago. We no longer like each other and our connection... is addiction. A lot can happen between two people when there's a substance sharing the relationship. And ours was not even monogamous between the three of us. But when you're numb and stoned and at the end, those things don't hurt like they can.

Harry's addiction is me. And it doesn't seem to matter whether I like him or not.

Whether I'm willing or not. And I can tell you I've run the gam met.

*(She shivers)*

He's good looking.

Most people think he is – especially women. Stella says he has 'fatal mojo'. I don't know what that means... 'Mojo'... but I think it means deadly good looks. You don't always understand Stella's words, but the meanings are crystal clear.

Even she lowered her eyelids to check him out.

He's walking sex - melt in your mouth, hot buttered toast - certifiable spunk!

He has this way of lifting his chin in your direction. AND hands... hands that caress everything - his face. Your face. Cigarettes - food - door handles. Telephones - and how he holds a syringe, well – *(She feels sick and weak)*

I'm weak. Weak as a kitten.

I've had a lot of time to think... lately... I mean really think. Thoughts that follow a pattern. A frightening pattern. A pathway. For years my thoughts have been random - cloudy images - pinging like some maniac channel surfing. And then switched off completely in fuzzy nod land.

*(She rolls a cigarette)*

I want to tell you everything but it's unlikely that I can - or even that I know everything.

But if I could get all this black clottedness out of me – with honesty - and it won't be pretty at times. Who am I kidding it won't be pretty in any places –

But if I could get it out.

Tell you.