

Celebrating Australian Playwriting



Australian Script Centre



Decoupage Skin

by Michael Griffith

EXTRACT

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Music 22 seconds

They're late. My husband went to pick the boys up from their indoor cricket match, and they're late.

Perhaps they won for once and he took them to McDonald's.

Perhaps he just took them there anyway?

No, he would have called. He's good like that . . . He always calls.

In fact, all round, he's just a really good man.

So why am I fantasying that he's dead? Not just him either, the boys as well.

I can see the accident clearly. It's awful, there's this big truck, it came out of nowhere and now they're all crushed.

Don't think I'm thinking this on purpose. I'm not! It's completely involuntary . . . And there's something else. It's not a premonition either. It's not even a fear, I've tried to think it is, I try all the time, but it's not . . . It's a hope.

Lately, every time any of them are late, I imagine them dead. I even go further, I see the police at the door. Sometimes I find myself going through the scene. Rehearsing this shocked and trembled expression. I clutch the door as though to stop myself falling. I don't cry. No, not yet.

It'd be too soon to cry. I would raise a hand to my mouth though. I would stare. I'd stare right through them as if a stare alone would see their car turning into the drive.

I suppose they'd want to come in wouldn't they? The police I mean. You don't convey this sort of information on the doorstep. You sell religion on a doorstep or make a charitable donation. Not "I'm sorry Ma'am, but they're all peanut paste."

It's worse. If they're really late, I venture to their funeral. See myself sitting before their awaiting holes in this bewildered trance. This socially acceptable numb bubble that has all our combined relatives pussy footing around, struggling not to burst.