

Celebrating Australian Playwriting



Australian Script Centre



The Entrepreneurs

by Pauline Hosking

EXTRACT

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CHARACTERS

BLOM

RICHARD

PENNY

ERIC

JESS

HOPEFUL

CECILY WOOLBRIDGE

ANNA

UNCLE BERNIE

SIMONE O'REILLY

FLOOR MANAGER

The play is written to be performed by 7 actors with these parts doubled: HOPEFUL/UNCLE BERNIE/STAGE MANAGER; JESS/CECILY; ANNA/SIMONE O'REILLY.

The cast can be reduced to 6, by cutting Anna and placing Cecily behind a screen in Scenes 10 and 12.

The poem quoted by Blom on pages 17, 31 and 42 is "Ulysses" by Alfred, Lord Tennyson.

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SCENE ONE

[A STUDIO CONTAINING A DOUBLE FUTON, DESK, COMPUTER ETC. BLOM IS SITTING AT THE COMPUTER DRESSED AS AN ARCHETYPAL WRITER, DRINKING TEA AND SMOKING FURIOUSLY. HE TYPES FIFTEEN CHARACTERS. PAUSES. TYPES A FEW MORE. LIGHTS ANOTHER CIGARETTE. TYPES FIVE CHARACTERS VERY SLOWLY. PAUSES. THE FRONT DOOR SLAMS]

RICHARD: [CALLING FROM OFF-STAGE] Giddy, Blom!

BLOM: [GROANS. HE TENTATIVELY TAPS THE KEYBOARD TWICE]
[ENTER RICHARD IN HIGH SPIRITS]

RICHARD: My agent says it's almost, almost, absolutely 90% certain there'll be some work coming up in a month. Or two. April at the latest. Was I chuffed! Once more the boyish good-looks of Richard Donahue, QUOTE "One of Australia's least exploited natural resources" UNQUOTE will flood the T.V. screens of the nation.

BLOM: What's the job - animal or mineral?

RICHARD: Say again?

BLOM: I'm wondering what you are this time. A talking telephone? A cute and cuddly washing powder? Or is it a repeat performance as Charles the Cocker Spaniel?

RICHARD: [IN THE VOICE OF CHARLES THE COCKER SPANIEL]
"When my master comes home grumpy, it's up to me, Charles the Cocker Spaniel, to make him smile. Ruff, ruff!"

BLOM: One of your meatier roles.

RICHARD: Weak joke, Blom, very weak. How's the.....how's the.....?

BLOM: Book coming along?

[BLOM TRIES TO HIDE THE COMPUTER SCREEN]

Don't touch my---

RICHARD: Two lines more than yesterday. That's progress.

BLOM: I've got a block. All writers have them, okay?
Besides, it's freezing in here.

RICHARD: Freezing?

BLOM: Bloody Melbourne weather.

RICHARD: It's February.

BLOM: [SHRUGS]

RICHARD: Penny not home yet? Oh, that's right - staff meeting Tuesday. Samovar brewing? I still think it's a mistake starting your book with the main character shooting himself.

[EXIT RICHARD INTO KITCHEN]

BLOM: No, no! The hero's father shoots himself in the first chapter. The hero doesn't die until the final page. The beginning and end work. It's the bit inbetween I can't get right.

[RICHARD ENTERS WITH A MUG OF TEA]

RICHARD: That job I might get, maybe, definitely in a month or two...it is another commercial. A dancing plum in a yoghurt ad. Makes you puke, doesn't it? I've got heaps of talent. So have you. I wish, just once, we could come up with some amazing idea which would earn us megabucks and make us famous.

BLOM: In the paper the other day it said Australia need entrepreneurs. Bright young men and women with bright ideas. We've had a few bright ideas.

RICHARD: Yeah. Like those Portable Window Packs. A bag of sand and a lighter. Make your own glass.

[THEY BOTH SNIGGER]

BLOM: And what about our plan to pebble-mix the Dandenongs?

RICHARD: No more unsightly fallen leaves! One day, Blom, we'll have a genuine Eureka-type idea that'll stop the traffic.

BLOM: One day, Richard.

RICHARD: Yeah, one day. One day, Blom.

BLOM: Yeah.

RICHARD: Talking about megabucks, when's the rent due?

BLOM: Friday.

RICHARD: The tobacco jar on the fridge is empty.

BLOM: Mmmm?

RICHARD: What happened?

BLOM: The 2.33 at Caulfield. A dead cert that's still running.

RICHARD: How many weeks is that we owe?

BLOM: Enough to make a midnight flit very attractive. I feel guilty.

RICHARD: Not on my account. "Never take the risk not to take the risk" - Richard Donahue, 1996. The question is, how will Penny react?

BLOM: The thought had crossed my mind.

RICHARD: Next time it crosses, grab ahold. I'm daily impressed that you and Penny are still together after - it must be - eighteen months? What does she see in a morose begger like you?

BLOM: Genius.

RICHARD: And possibly your endearing humility. You must have charisma or something. Our lives revolve around you. I clean the house. Penny goes to work and cooks the meals. You stay home and create, and smoke foul-smelling cigarettes. Yuck!

BLOM: Writing takes time. And space. Besides, there's none of this sexist shit between Penny and me. I'm happy with the situation and so is she.

[FRONT DOOR SLAMS]

PENNY: [OFF-STAGE, SCREAMS, THROWS BOOKS AT THE WALL]

RICHARD: Penny's home early.

BLOM: Yeah. How about another cup of tea? We got any biscuits?

RICHARD: Your wish is my command.

[PENNY RAGES IN]

PENNY: Bloody kids! I hate bloody kids!

RICHARD: Hi, petal.

[EXIT RICHARD INTO KITCHEN]

BLOM: Had a good day?

PENNY: Whinging weasily faces. Little paws clawing for attention. My turn...help me...me....meeeeee!
How I hate teaching Grade One!

[ENTER RICHARD WITH TEA AND BISCUITS]

I can't stand it anymore. I don't think I can finish the year.

BLOM: You'll be right. [TO RICHARD] Aren't there any iced volvos?

RICHARD: No wonder you owe the dentist heaps. Try a Ripple.

PENNY: That chauvenistic pig-Principal! I had this great idea for Open Day. A kid's circus. Something creative for a change. Something imaginative. I planned every detail.

RICHARD: Shot you down in flames, did he?

PENNY: I'm resigning. At the end of this term I'm going home to the farm.

BLOM: Sweetheart.....

PENNY: At school no one listens to me. No one cares. At home I'm trapped in a relationship with a guy who is definitely showing signs of wear. Hairline cracks are visible in the facade. Blom,