

Celebrating Australian Playwriting



Australian Script Centre



One Day This Will All Be Yours

by Peter McAra

EXTRACT

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This script is distributed by The Australian Script Centre
77 Salamanca Place Hobart 7004 Tasmania Australia
email admin@ozscript.org
www.ozscript.org
ph +61 3 6223 4675
fax +61 3 6223 4678

ONE DAY ALL THIS WILL BE YOURS

Setting

Pete Bullock, successful Gold Coast hinterland sewage pumpout contractor, lives with wife Marge and arts student son Jamie in his lovely Nirvana Waters home. But he has a few problems:

#1 For thirty seven years, he slaved to build a business to hand on to his kids. Ten years ago, elder son Michael disappeared. Now younger son Jamie tells Pete he wants to be ‘a poet, not a shit carter.’

#2: Pete’s just had a run-in with Council’s health inspector following a spillage outside - of all places - the mayor’s house. His contract, his business, is under threat.

#3: His heart. His doctor’s told him he has to stop work yesterday. Or else.

Cast

Pete Bullock (59) - successful sewage pumpout contractor

Marge Bullock (50s) – his wife

Jamie Bullock (22) – university student - arts

Maria Martinelli (20) - university student – accounting

Cheryl Smith, (50s) – cleaning lady

Kate Smith (21) – her daughter

Michael Bullock (30s) /Ghostly Figure - Jamie’s elder brother

Casting Notes

PETE BULLOCK: A self-made man who made big money from his sewage pumpout business, starting from humble blue collar origins, and urged along by his wife.

MARGE BULLOCK: An ambitious girl from a blue collar family. Now nouveau-riche, she tries to hide her past by cultivating a skin-deep layer of refinement.

JAMIE BULLOCK: Naïve student, spoiled by a sheltered life of affluence.

MICHAEL BULLOCK: Busy, successful man of the world, and prodigal son.

MARIA MARTINELLI: Hardworking accounting student bent on a professional career.

CHERYL SMITH: Battling blue collar single mother.

KATE SMITH: Bright, rebellious feminist arts student.

Set

All scenes except Scene 5, Act 2 (night meeting in park)* are set in the lounge of the Bullocks' prestige waterfront home.

*[this scene could be front-of-curtain]

ACT 1

Scene 1

Evening. PETE BULLOCK, dressed in working clothes, enters. His wife MARGE BULLOCK bustles in the background.

PETE: What a bloody cow of a day! (*Flops onto sofa*).

MARGE: You look even worse than usual. Another disaster?

PETE: Get me a beer. Can't talk till I get a beer.

MARGE: Who do you think I am? Oh, of course. Silly me. I'm your unpaid barmaid. (*Gets beer from bar fridge, opens it and passes it to PETE*). There you are. Now go on. Dump the lot on me.

PETE: Just a major international disaster, love. Nothing much. Par for the course when youse run a sewage pumpout business.

MARGE: Not another disaster? After last week. That illegally overloaded truck hit the little old lady in the Morris Major.

PETE: Worse than that, love

PETE: (*Takes hearty drink*). First, I went to the doctor this morning on my way to work. News wasn't good (*pats heart*). I'll come to that later. Then this afternoon – this bloody new driver. Hooks up the pump outside this fancy house in Grange Beach. There's a bit of a blockage. Turns out later it was a plastic teddy bear, would you believe? Some kid must have flushed it. So this bloody idiot gets out of the truck, leaves the pump running. Next thing, the hose bursts. Shit everywhere.

MARGE: Stop!

PETE: What? I've just-

MARGE: If I've asked you once, I've asked you a million times. Do **not** use the S word in this house. Ever.

PETE: You weren't too fussed about it when I started the business.

MARGE: That was thirty seven years ago. One has moved on a little since then. (*Gestures at surroundings*). One wishes one's bloody husband would get that into his extremely thick skull.

PETE: I gotta use it. The blokes wouldn't understand me if I-

MARGE: That's out on the job. One is talking about what we do when in our glorious waterfront mansion. How many times do I have to remind you, mate? We're Nirvana Waters society.

PETE: It's the only word a bloke **can** use.

MARGE: You could say '**mess** everywhere.'

PETE: Youse run a sewage pumpout business, shit happens. Like it says on them T shirts.

MARGE: Those terrible T shirts! Outlawed in Nirvana Waters, one would hope. Ought to be completely banned.

PETE: The old S word. It's what got youse all this lot. (*Gestures at surroundings*).

MARGE: If you'd had to put up with what I've had to put up with over the years. When you gave me that first Mercedes, every time I drove into the bowlo it was, 'Here comes Queen of the S again.' Then I went and did all those courses. Quilting. Macrame for the Boudoir. Cooking For Your Celebrity Guest. Got to be president of the social club. But some of those old boilers have got pretty long memories.

PETE: Youse didn't used to worry about where a bloke earned a quid. Long as there was always plenty of biccies in the biccy jar. It was 'When can we recarpet the guest room? When can we do another cruise? When can I get a new Merc?'

MARGE: I just said we've come a long way since then. So we do not want any more talk about T shirts with disgusting writing on them, thank you very much.

PETE: Funny you should say that. I was thinking of getting a few printed specially. Give them out to the blokes at Christmas. You know, the company logo-

MARGE: Company logo? I didn't know we had a company logo.

PETE: I've got this artist bloke working on it. Something like a truck with a hose out the back. Palm tree leaning over the truck.

MARGE: Why? For God's sake? The last thing we want to do is – draw attention to the business.

PETE: Green, they call it. Put a picture of a tree on something, it makes it Green, see. And everybody likes Green. Specially the council. Remember the last council elections? And the council's the place where we get our bread and butter, don't forget.

MARGE: Why couldn't we paint the trucks black? Do the runs in the middle of the night. But you want to go and tart them up so everybody notices. Great!

PETE: Nah. If youse really want to know, it was the council's idea. Sean, the young health and environment bloke. My boss, you could say. Our contract's up for renewal pretty soon. Everything's image these days, he reckons. Youse have gotta have a brand.

MARGE: Our business has to have a **brand**?

PETE: Yep. I bought Sean a beer last week. Bit of groundwork for the new pumpout contract. Talked about what a bloke'd have to do to get his contract renewed. Then Sean really got going. There's this big thing these days, he reckons. Brand premium.

MARGE: Brand premium?

PETE: Yeah. Youse can charge more for something if it's got a brand, right?

MARGE: Bullsh - Rubbish!

PETE: Come on, love. Ya Merc. Ya dresses. Ya handbag. Dior and all that. The soap youse buy for ya shower, not that anybody's ever gonna know. Ya shampoo. Even ya bloody peanut butter. Youse don't ever buy the cheapest, do youse?

MARGE: Well no, but-

PETE: So **we're** going to get a brand. For when we bid for the next contract, right? So we don't have to be the lowest bidder any more. And T shirts for the blokes is branding.

MARGE: Well – **nice** T shirts, then.

PETE: Right. Dior of course. Nothing but the best for Pumpout Pete's crew. And the big palm tree painted on the trucks. The hard part now is to come up with the tag line. I thought of one

Keep our planet neat and green.

Call Pumpout Pete and his happy team.

MARGE: Yuk! Even I could do better than that. And I can't even bear to think about it.

PETE: It'll- Oooh! (*Clutches heart*).

MARGE: You were going to tell us about your day, remember?

PETE: Oh, yeah. Well, like I said. The doctor reckons I've got this dicky heart. Could pop off tomorrow if I don't pull back a bit. Then this bloody new driver. Turns his back for a second. Then – sh- mess everywhere.

MARGE: Must you?

PETE: Grange Beach. Of all places. And guess whose house. The mayor's. And her with three young kids. Had Sean on my back all afternoon. Er – mess running down the gutters, he reckoned. Right into our Nirvana Waters. A major health hazard, he kept saying. Reckoned the ratepayers'd be banging on his door in droves. 'Better lift your game, Pete,' he said. 'And just a friendly warning. New contract time soon, don't forget.'
(Finishes beer, gestures with empty bottle).

MARGE: Alright, Lord Muck. Don't get up. Your bloody barmaid'll get it for you. Seeing it's a medical emergency. *(Gets him another beer).* And what's all that got to do with this – branding nonsense?

PETE: Simple. If the council says branding, we do branding.

MARGE: Not real good timing, this new contract. Your heart and everything.

PETE: Right. I just need to take things a bit easy. Doctor's orders.

MARGE: So how did you sort it all out?

PETE: Got old Barry to go down. The mopping up expert. Doing it for thirty years. He wasn't all that happy. Just before knock-off. Had to lean on him a bit. Ugly. I could feel my blood pressure heading for the moon. Don't know how much more of this I can stand.

MARGE: You could just take it a bit easy, for starters.

PETE: That's not how I built this business. Like I said. Time for young Jamie to start getting a bit involved.

MARGE: But you know what he always says. All that poetry nonsense.

PETE: Yeah. Sad. It was the university that done it.

MARGE: Rubbish! He was bright all through school. Reading all those weird books. He was just cut out for the university.

PETE: Now look what's happened. Doc says I gotta get outa the business before I drop dead. Could be tomorrow, next week-

MARGE: Don't you dare drop dead! *(Pause).* The Bowlo's Ball's in April. You've gotta partner me. And the next lot of cruises. Widows have a terrible time on cruises. Blokes run a mile when the word gets out.

PETE: We've been trading on getting Jamie to take over ever since Michael up and disappeared.

MARGE: Michael! I loved that kid. Like he was my-

PETE: Yeah. And he was real keen on the business. Working alongside his old dad. Took the reins for a bit now and then.

MARGE: Then, one day, without batting an eyelid -

PETE: That's enough of that. I don't need any more reminding about the Michael thing, thanks.

MARGE: Well, you've got to face reality. He's gone.

PETE: Yeah. So it looks like we've gotta get to work on Jamie.

MARGE: Maybe we could-

PETE: I've tried everything. And he always comes back with the same thing. 'I'm a poet, Dad, not a shit carter.'

MARGE: That word!

PETE: I have to say what he says, don't I? I've told him the money's good. I've gone on about the house, the trips, the cars, our places on the Gold Coast. 'One day all this will be yours, son.' I musta said that a hundred times. And all he ever says is 'It's not about money, Dad. It's about art.'

MARGE: We've got to think of something.

PETE: We've tried everything. Dropped hints since he was about ten. Tried to get him to drive a truck round the block. Early one Sunday morning. Get a taste for it. But he just never wanted to know.

MARGE: Well, then. *(Pause)*. Girls?

PETE: Girls?

MARGE: If he had a nice girlfriend, and she just nudged him in the right direction-

PETE: How do we know she'd nudge him? Don't forget Narelle.

MARGE: Narelle. What a disaster. Thank goodness it only lasted a few weeks. No. We want a **nice** girl.

PETE: Why a nice girl?

MARGE: What nice girl wouldn't want - all this? *(Gestures)*.

PETE: I dunno. Girls these days. It's all - dresses and trips and getting on reality shows and flashing a bit, isn't it?

MARGE: Rubbish! It worked for you, didn't it? If I hadn't taken you in hand, you'd have been-

PETE: You were extra special, love. One in a million.

MARGE: Thanks. I was. And it was still a tough job.

PETE: Do you know anything about where Jamie's- er -at? With girls, I mean. Not counting Narelle. Poets – they mightn't be – well, you know. All them – university teachers. Weird. Them poetry dos in the School of Arts. Blokes dressing up funny. Not a good influence on a young bloke. And he was never into footy - knocking about with the blokes.

MARGE: He's – fine. Just shy. After Narelle, you'd have to say once bitten, twice shy.

PETE: Bitten? Was she into-

MARGE: No, Einstein. I mean Narelle wasn't the best introduction to girls.

PETE: No.

MARGE: And the business. From having to cop all the sh - mess about his dad's job. All his life he's suffered. His first day at kinder, this kid tipped a potty on him. A full one. The teacher said she was sorry and all that. I think it scarred him for life.

PETE: Right. So he's just shy, then? Too shy to catch a girl?

MARGE: I'm sure that's it. I reckon after that day, he crawled into this little shell, and never came out.

PETE: Came out?

MARGE: I didn't mean it that way.

PETE: Oh. So?

MARGE: We give him a bit of a helping hand.

PETE: But how?

MARGE: I've been thinking. Run a bit of an ad in the local rag. (*Thinks aloud*). Wanted. Nice girl. To go on dates with bright, goodlooking but very shy university student, 22. View possible permanent relationship. Fantastic longer term prospects for waterfront living, affluent lifestyle.

PETE: Affluent? That's not-?

MARGE: No, mate. It means rich. (*warming to the idea*). I'll get the lounge all sorted. Some nice flowers. Get a maid in for when I do the interviews – a couple of afternoons should do. She can wear one of those little white hats – a frilly white apron. Serve tea. Those little cakes with lots of technicolour icing. Petty something. Ah, yes. Petty fives.