

Celebrating Australian Playwriting



Australian Script Centre



# Pri-mates

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by Damon Lockwood

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EXTRACT

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## Set

Rocky outside surface of a domed cave centre stage. There is a small entrance at the bottom of the cave. The cave is able to be revolved 180 degrees to reveal the inside. The interior is both rocky and homely with a section being able to have images projected on to it. There is a tree with a platform next to the cave stage right. Down stage left there is a collection of rocks, bones and hides, with a cloth fire machine in the middle of it. Throughout the play the bones and hides are manipulated to represent various objects and creatures.

## Characters

### *DOUG*

A slightly more evolved homo-sapian, Doug is all about the brain, thought and rationality. He is not too comfortable in his body and is prone to odd and unpredictable eruptions usual to the repressed, unemotional man. Occasionally he has delusions of grandeur and philosophy while simultaneously getting freaked out at the thought of some one else touching him.

### *DOOG*

Slightly less evolved from his treetop ancestors, Doog is the polar opposite to Doug. He is free and open and energetic with his emotions, completely in touch with his feelings and is always ready for a hug, be it a human, a tree or the back leg of an angry dinosaur. As is sometimes the case, his dedication to his emotions has slightly stunted his intellectual growth. A happy cave man who is always ready for a dance.

## Scene One – The Evolution of DOOG

*DOOG enters on the tree platform. He is energetic and very monkey-like in his actions, excited to be alive. In between swinging from the branches and grooming himself he inadvertently strikes a piece of wood which (surprisingly) emits the sound of a drum. DOOG is stunned and a little frightened. He tries it again then hides... but nothing bad happens, and he enjoys the sound. Soon after he has turned his immediate environment in to a percussionists haven, beating everything around him and creating a very happening beat. In the final extant of his jam session he cracks himself in the head and falls down. He raises rubbing his head and looking a little sorry for himself. There is a very low rumbling sound (either by sound effect or the actor) and DOOG moves his attention to rubbing his stomach.*

DOOG: Oooh, tummy rumble...

*DOOG produces a plate or a bunch of empty banana skins. His panic rises as he discovers each banana skin is empty before he comes to last full banana. DOOG seems to realise the enormity of the situation.*

DOOG: Oooh, nanana...

*Being as careful as he can be DOOG still manages to fumble the banana and drop it on to the ground from the tree. He screams and squeals in a very ape-like fashion – what is he to do? Finally he decides to descend from the tree to retrieve his banana. When he reaches the ground he moves about very consciously on all fours, before he grabs the food and, in celebration and without realising it, stands on his back legs and beats his chest. He stops, suddenly aware of what he has done. He drops to all fours, before trying the two legged thing again.*

DOOG: Trippy...

*He enjoys it, and marches around on his two legs, miming all the things he is now able to do ie having a shower, dance, exercise, scratch two parts of himself at the same time, before placing the banana on the cave entrance, leaning against the cave and pretending to chat it up. He has accidentally discovered the outside of the cave and begins to explore it.*

DOOG: Hmmm, comfy...

*DOOG indicates to his monkey mum to come down from the trees and join him, but she is no mood to agree. Eventually she throws down DOOG'S only possession, a little knapsack. He is just about to stretch out on his new home and fully relax when there is the sound of a huge beast roar just near by. DOOG freaks and goes and hides at the side of the cave. He does not immediately see DOUG who has entered hurriedly. DOUG, very frightened, also happens to be quite heavily singed.*

## Scene Two - Grunting Introduction

*DOUG is carrying something close to a suitcase. DOUG continues to enter the space backwards from the direction he has just come while DOOG now also enters the space again tentatively with his back to DOUG. They continue to move until they back directly into each other. They jump and turn and look at each other. Moment of stillness Suddenly they both snap out of it and they jump away from each other with a mix of fear, shock and wonder. There is some interaction with them shrieking and jumping around, DOOG often being animal and aggressive to DOUG who has to find a way to protect himself, which in turn leads to him being the aggressor, not that he really knows what to do when he finds himself in this position. Chances for some WWF moves off the cave, simulated bull fight, game of slaps, DOUG hiding behind his suitcase which for a time really baffles DOOG etc. In the last throes of jumping around DOOG accidentally kicks a rock. During the following DOOG has slightly different inflections to DOUG.*

DOOG           Oooo, ow ow owie foot!

DOUG           Ah-ha, so you do speak!

DOOG           You do speak.

DOUG You speak words?

DOOG *You* speak words?

DOUG Yes that's right, I do.

DOOG Yes that's *right*, I do

DOUG That's what I said.

DOOG That's what *I* said.

DOUG Who are you?!

DOOG Who are you?

DOUG Are you just copying me?

DOOG Are you just copying *me*?

*DOUG thinks.*

DOUG I'm big and fat and stupid.

DOOG Tell me something me don't know.

DOUG Aha! Gotcha! So you're not just a parrot.

DOOG Me not parrot?

DOUG That's right, you've got enough brain power to form your own words and not just repeat everything I say.

DOOG Me know me not parrot. Parrot small, pretty, feathers, taste good in belly-

DOUG Yes, I know, I meant –

DOOG Me big, hairy, don't know how me taste. Me see how me taste.

*DOOG tries to take a chomp out of his shoulder..*

DOOG Woah, not so great. Me wonder...

*DOOG looks over DOUG with a very hungry, focused, cannibalistic glint in his eye. Throughout the following he becomes very menacing.*

DOOG Me wonder how you taste.