Celebrating Australian Playwriting

Australian Script Centre

The Emotional Anatomy of a Relationship Breakdown

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EXTRACT

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THE EMOTIONAL ANATOMY OF A RELATIONSHIP BREAKDOWN

Annabelle and Christopher have broken up.

As they circle each other and ride the rollercoaster of emotional changes inherent in the ending of a relationship, there is somehow a method in the madness and the ex-lovers have battled their way through, some universal balance is restored!

Characters:

Female:
Annabelle 1
Annabelle 2
Annabelle 3

Male:
Christopher 1
Christopher 2
Christopher 3

All characters are on stage for the entire show. There is a circling of all the characters around the set, with the 3 facets of Annabelle and the 3 facets of Christopher engaged in activities, which rotate and interchange. The voices represent the different versions of truth and the different emotional landscapes explored as lovers come apart during a relationship breakdown.

A means of exploring what we say, what we mean, games we play and the shifting and see-sawing dynamic of the power relationships and all of the different ingredients implicit in a relationship breakdown.

The characters don't actually look at each unless in dialogue with each other or directed otherwise.

SCENE 1

The first Saturday night after the break up.

ANNABELLE 3: There has only ever been three ways to get his attention

ANNABELLE 2: One. Sex.

ANNABELLE 1: It has nothing to with him, or her. Or the 'them' of them.

ANNABELLE 3: The cats in my head are screaming again. I feel them itching and clawing their way out. Desperate, dangerous, dark. /

ANNABELLE 1: / Long dark hair. Young. Nothing to do with her or him or them.

ANNABELLE 2: Two. Literature.

ANNABELLE 1: She's beautiful. They're 'in love'.

ANNABELLE 3: Running in circles. No Sleep, no peace. Scratching at the edge of my sanity. Cacophony.

ANNABELLE 1: Lush lips. Long legs.

ANNABELLE 3: Stinking, scratching, fucking.

ANNABELLE 1: Forever. He said. Till death. For ever and ever and ANNABELLE 1 & ANNABELLE 3: ever and ever and …

ANNABELLE 2: Three. Death.

SCENE 2

ANNABELLE 3: Four ways to commit an act of suicide in ascending order based on degree of difficulty:

ANNABELLE 1: 1. Swallow 10 packets of Panadol. 48 to a pack. Capsules not tablets.

ANNABELLE 3: 2. Suspend skipping rope from ceiling. Place neck in noose. Wear appropriate eveningwear.

ANNABELLE 1: 3. Drink one litre of draino. ANNBELLE 2: Big Kev brand draino, not generic supermarket crap. *Beat.* Add lemon cordial.