

Celebrating Australian Playwriting



Australian Script Centre



Through the Mist

by Rebecca Lister

EXTRACT

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THROUGH THE MIST by Rebecca Lister

CAST (*In no particular order*)

- Marion Hamilton– elderly woman – late 70s
- Harry Kirkpatrick – Marion’s friend – also elderly but spritely

The Old Women (Gossips)

- Eileen Smith
- Dulcie Harrison
- Minnie Landers
- Alice Pyke
- Esme Carter – these five women are in their 70s – all local women who are connected to the church.
- Kathryn Rosevale– early 40s
- Phillip Rosevale– mid 40s – Kathryn and Phillip are husband and wife

The 4 Rosevale children

- Josh Rosevale – 16
- Natalie Rosevale – 14
- Max Rosevale – 11
- Jack Rosevale - 8

The Teenagers

- Alicia Hamilton
- Brian
- Kylie
- Leah – these are four teenagers who live in town and attend the same school as Natalie and Josh

The Pattersons

- Paula Patterson– early 40s – Marion’s youngest daughter – married to Dave
- Dave Patterson – mid 40s
- Melanie Peterson– Paula and Dave’s daughter - Natalie’s best friend – Alicia’s cousin
- Barbara Hudson – early 40s – old friend of Kathryn and Paula’s from school days.
- CFA worker – can be either male or female adult.
- Gweneth Wisewould – woman in her 70’s, (GP from Trentham – local hero)

Scene One

Natalie's bedroom.

Lights up briefly on Natalie. She is sitting on her bed playing with her video camera. There is loud music playing. She stands up, looks out the window, checks the time, paces. She is agitated.

Slow black out. Slow fade of music

Scene Two

Spotlight on CFA worker. He stands mid-stage

A crowd has assembled. The CFA worker addresses the crowd.

CFA: We have a missing person - Phillip Martin Rosevale, 45 years of age, last seen at 8p.m., leaving the community hall. He was wearing black jeans, a white collared shirt, black shoes and a black overcoat. His family have described his general state as agitated. He has a history of mental illness. Prior to leaving the hall he was drinking heavily. He has a history of wandering.

We need to break into teams. I want one group to head out along the Blackwood Road. According to his family this is an area he likes to visit. He sometimes heads up this way to go camping or rabbiting. The second group are to head out along the Springhill Road. The third group will go to the falls.

Make sure you are properly dressed, it's freezing out there tonight and there's a forecast for snow. Take all necessary equipment and supplies for treating hypothermia. Make sure you keep in regular radio contact. There is an ambulance standing by for when it's needed.

Let's get moving. He's been out there for over eight hours.

The crowd disperses through the audience with torches on.

Lights fade to blackout.

Come on dad! Please!

She puts the camera down and lies on her bed. Turns up the music.

Scene Four

Torches from the back of the room.

Different voices call out, “co-ee”, “Phillip”, “anybody out there” etc. After each person calls out, the torch gets turned off.

Blackout and silence.

Scene Five

Natalie’s bedroom

Natalie is sitting on her bed looking at footage on her camera..

She finds what she is looking for.

Lights down on Natalie, music down, video footage begins.

Pre-recorded video piece one: The Rosevale’s Arrival

Location: Kitchen in a house. This will become the Rosevale house.

Footage projected large for the audience.

It is dated 13/1/05

The footage has been filmed by Natalie so audience hears her but doesn’t see her.

Kathryn, Phillip, Josh, Max and Jack are looking around the kitchen.

The camera moves around the kitchen so we can see the walls, sink, table etc.

Can hear Kathryn’s voice and then the camera pans in on her.

KATHRYN: Hey Phillip, look at this!

Camera moves to look at an old stove. Kathryn is standing looking at the stove. Phillip joins her.

PHILLIP: It's an old wood stove

Max comes into view.

MAX: Do you have to chop wood for it?

PHILLIP; Yep!

Josh comes into view.

JOSH: Who's gunna chop the wood?

PHILLIP: Us.

Jack comes into view

JACK: Us?

PHILLIP: Yeah. Us men! We'll be chopping wood, carting wood, stacking wood, building up our muscles.

Phillip does a muscle man pose to the camera. Max and Jack copy him. The camera continues to pan around the kitchen.

We hear Natalie's voice

NATALIE: I thought you said it was cute.

KATHRYN: it is!

NATALIE: dirty is not cute mum!

KATHRYN: it's not dirty. It just needs a freshen up.

Phillip takes out an imaginary notebook and writes in it.

PHILLIP: Job number one, paint the kitchen.

KATHRYN: All it needs is a bit of paint and new curtains and you won't recognise it.

NATALIE: I doubt it!

The camera pans around the room

NATALIE: Where's the toilet?

PHILLIP: the toilet?

NATALIE: yeah. Where is it?

Phillip opens the door and points.

PHILLIP; there!

NATALIE: there! You're kidding aren't you?

KATHRYN: Nope.

NATALIE: God! I'm going to die here. You bring us to the coldest place on earth and then present us with an outside dunny!

Voice heard

MAX: I'm starving!

JACK: Can we go and get hot chips now?!

Footage ends.

Lights back up on Natalie on the bed.

She rewinds some more of the video footage.

Lights down on Natalie, video footage projected onto screen.

Pre-recorded video piece two: Kathryn's old house

Location: Kathryn's childhood house. (Real house in Trentham). Again Natalie has taken the footage so we hear her but don't see her.

Footage is dated 18/1/05

Kathryn, Max, Jack and Josh are standing in front of the house. Max has his bike with him. It has a flat tyre.

NATALIE: this is it?

KATHRYN: Yep.

They stand and look. Natalie films various angles of the house.

Harry, from across the road, comes over to them.

We hear his voice before we see him.

HARRY: It's not for sale!

Camera turns quickly and pans in on Old Harry

KATHRYN: Sorry?

He joins them

HARRY: It's not for sale. We get lots of you city folk up here looking for places to buy, to do up as weekenders, but this one is not for sale. Anyway you wouldn't want a house here, no way, too cold and wet in the winter and too hot in the summer. Terrible bush fires through these parts. If I where you lot I'd look further up the road. Maybe Daylesford. Yeah. You look more like Daylesford dwellers.

smiles

KATHRYN: We don't want to buy it.

HARRY: do you want to take a photo of it?

KATHRYN: No.

HARRY: Suppose you want a cutting from the garden then?

KATHRYN: No.

Awkward pause

HARRY: Well, what do want?

KATHRYN: Nothing. We're just looking. I grew up in this house.

HARRY: You did?

KATHRYN: Yep.

HARRY: Who's your dad?

KATHRYN: Jack Cullen.

HARRY: Jack Cullen! Well knock me down with a feather! You're Jack Cullen's little girl? *(Thinks for a moment)* Kathy?

KATHRYN: Yep.

HARRY: I remember you as a baby! I'm so sorry. Geez, I thought you were a group of Sunday drivers out looking at country cottages!

KATHRYN: No.

HARRY: these your children?

KATHRYN: Yep.

He shakes hands with the boys.

HARRY: Jack Cullen's grandkiddies. Who would have thought hey.

Goes to shake hands with Natalie. It's a bit awkward.

HARRY: *(to Natalie)* what are you actually filming?

NATALIE: Everything.

HARRY: You must have a long tape in that camera then.

KATHRYN: she documents things. You know, like a diary.

HARRY: right. Well make sure you get my good side then!

He plays up a bit for the camera.

HARRY: *(To Kathryn)* So, do you remember me?

KATHRYN: I think so. Harry Kirkpatrick?

HARRY: The one and only. *(To the kids)* I knew your grandfather. I was good mates with him. Real good mates

KATHRYN: You worked at the Trehwella foundry didn't you?

HARRY; You bet I did.

JOSH: Is that the place down the road where you said they made the jacks and stump pullers and stuff.

KATHRYN: yeah.

JOSH: they were famous weren't they?

HARRY: You bet. All over the world my friend.

MAX: Is that the place where that man got his arm ripped off in some sort of conveyer belt?

JACK: Gross!

HARRY: Unfortunately. We had a few bad accidents up there.

JACK: Yeah, mum told us.

MAX: And she told us about that doctor who put the needle in the mans heart,

JACK: yeah, after that bit of metal went in and how he was lying there dying and then the doctor brought him back to life.

MAX: Wish I'd seen that. It would've been so cool!

JACK: yeah!

HARRY; So, do you like a bit of the old blood and guts with your stories.

MAX and JACK: yeah!

HARRY: Well, I've got a few of those for you, believe you me!

MAX: Cool!

KATHRYN: I remember how you used to fix things for all the kids in the street.

HARRY: That's right. And judging from this bike here, it looks like it could do with a bit of fixing.

MAX: I got a puncture.

HARRY: Wheel it across the road to my place later and I'll fix it for you in two secs.

MAX: Cool!

JACK: Can I come too?

HARRY: Can't see why not. *(to Kathryn)* So you've moved back here have ya?

KATHRYN: Yeah. I've got a nursing job at the hospital.

HARRY: Right. My old mate Marion Hamilton's in at the moment. She's crook. Got some sort of infection or something. Do you remember Marion?

KATHRYN: Of course. Paula's mum.

HARRY: She lost her daughter Carmen about two weeks ago.

KATHRYN: Carmen! I remember Carmen. What happened?

HARRY: The big C. Was diagnosed one week, dead the next. Bloody tragedy.

Pause

HARRY: Anyway, let's get on with this bike. What did ya say your names were?

MAX: Max.

JACK: Jack

KATHRYN: And Josh and Natalie.

HARRY: right. Max, Jack, Josh and Natalie.

They start to wheel the bike across the street.

KATHRYN: *(Looking at the house)* Who lives here now?

HARRY: Couple from the city own it. Only come up every second weekend.

Max, Jack and Harry exit.

Kathryn and Josh open the gate and enter the yard. Natalie zooms in to the windows as the voices fade out.

Video footage ends..

Lights back up on Natalie on the bed.

She gets up and looks out the window, checks the clock, opens a packet of chips and eats some. Sits on the bed again and goes back to her camera.

She rewinds some more of the video footage.

Lights down on Natalie, music down, video footage projected onto screen.

Pre-recorded video piece three: First day of school.

Location: Rosevale's kitchen

Footage is dated 27/1/05

(Video is taken by Natalie – so again we hear her voice but don't see her.)

Kathryn is putting lunches into lunch boxes and Phillip is putting away breakfast things.

NATALIE: How do I look?

They look at her.

PHILLIP: Lose the hat.

Turns camera on herself. She is wearing old pork pie hat or perhaps an old style akubra.

NATALIE: I like the hat. What do you think mum?

KATHRYN: Do you feel comfortable?

NATALIE: People my age aren't supposed to feel comfortable.

KATHRYN: I think you look good. Individual.

NATALIE: *(sarcastically)* Great!

PHILLIP: You shouldn't have cut your hair.

KATHRYN: That doesn't help Phillip!

PHILLIP: sorry!

NATALIE: I don't care. I like it.

PHILLIP: so why did you ask for our opinion?

KATHRYN: Phillip!

PHILLIP: What?

KATHRYN: Give it a rest!

Josh, Jack and Max enter

JOSH: Time to loose the camera Nat. We gotta go.

PHILLIP: *(very animated)* Okay. Everybody got lunches, clean undies, hankie. Let's go get 'em!

JOSH: Not so up dad! You sound like a Steve Martin movie.

PHILLIP: Have a great day kids and I'll see you after school.

NATALIE: Will mum be here?

KATHRYN: I'll be at work. Afternoon shift.

NATALIE: So it's us and Mr Mom!

PHILLIP: *tries to kiss her* Have a wonderful day darling.

NATALIE: Dad!

JOSH: See youse.

KATHRYN: Yeah, see ya. Have a good day kids.

They begin to exit.

PHILLIP: Okay. See ya Max. See ya Jack. Good luck.

MAX: See ya dad.

JACK: See ya.

They start to exit. Phillip picks up the paper.

PHILLIP: Right. The nine letter word. Heaven!

JOSH: Nat! come on! Kill the camera!

Footage goes fuzzy.

Blackout.

Scene Six

At the bus stop

Alicia, Brian, Kylie and Leah are sitting on a bench waiting for the bus..

They are looking at something down the road.

ALICIA: Oh my god, that's him!

KYLIE: The one from the supermarket?

ALICIA: Yeah, the hottie! He is totally gorgeous, don't you reckon?

KYLIE: Can't tell yet.

LEAH: Who's that with him?

BRIAN: Looks like his brother.

ALICIA: Nah, it's not his brother. His brothers are little, about the same age as my brother Jason. They're going to primary school. Anyway, his dad..

Gets cut off by Brian

BRIAN: Jason's dad?

ALICIA: No dickhead, Jason's dad is my dad! Keep up.

KYLIE: Who's dad are your talking about?

LEAH: *(pointing)* his dad!

ALICIA: Thank you! At least one of youse has a brain. So anyway, I was at the supermarket with my dad....

Gets cut off by Brian

BRIAN: Who's also Jason's dad!

OTHERS: Shut up!

ALICIA: So, anyway, we're at the supermarket and my dad starts talking to their dad,

Gets cut off by Kylie

KYLIE: Who's also the hottie's dad?

OTHERS: yes!!!!

ALICIA: And he said....

Gets cut off by Brian.

BRIAN: How come your dad was talking to his dad?

ALICIA: I don't know. He just was.

BRIAN: Had your dad met his dad before?

ALICIA: I'm not sure. But anyway his wife used to go to school with my mum, and his wife is now working as a nurse at the hospital and my gran is in hospital and she told my mum and dad that his mum (*pointing down the road*) and her husband were back in town.

LEAH: Right.

BRIAN: So how come your dad knew who he was?

ALICIA: He worked it out.

LEAH: How?

ALICIA: 'Cause Gran told him.....

Gets cut off by Kylie

KYLIE: Your dad?

BRIAN: Or their dad?

LEAH: Who's also the hottie's dad!

ALICIA: Stop it or I won't tell youse!

OTHERS: Oooohhh!!

ALICIA: If youse want the info youse've gotta shut up!

LEAH: Keep telling us this fascinating story.

ALICIA: I mean it!

BRIAN: All right. Just get on with it.

ALICIA: So anyways, my Gran was telling my mum that this lady who used to live in town had moved back here with her husband and kids and she said that the kids were about our age and that they would probably be going to the same

school as us. And then dad saw this bloke in the supermarket.....

Gets cut off by Leah

KYLIE: With the hottie?

ALICIA: yeah.

BRIAN: Did ya dad think he was a hottie too!

ALICIA: Very funny.

BRIAN: I thought so.

ALICIA: So he talked to him.

LEAH: what, your dad just went up and talked to him?

ALICIA: yeah.

BRIAN: but he may not have been him, he might have been like a tourist or something.

ALICIA: Nah, dad sussed it out. He was buying dinner type food, the tourists don't buy dinner food, they buy snack food.

KYLIE: So he looked in their basket?

BRIAN: without him noticing?

KYLIE: He should be a cop.

BRIAN: Does your dad always do the shopping?

ALICIA: Not always but sometimes. Doesn't your dad?

BRIAN: Nah. Only the bottle shop.

KYLIE: so your dad is onto what's happening around town.

ALICIA: Yep. He notices everything.

BRIAN: Everything?

ALICIA: Yep. Nothing can happen in this town without him knowing.

BRIAN: Do you reckon he knows I smoke?

LEAH: Everybody knows you smoke!

BRIAN: My mum doesn't.

LEAH: Yes she does. Her dad (*pointing at Alicia*) told my mum and she told your mum.

BRIAN: Shit! She didn't tell me that. How come you didn't tell me that your mum had told my mum?

ALICIA: Hello?! I was telling my story!

BRIAN: Yeah right. (*To Leah*) Sit with me on the bus and tell me everything!

LEAH: Definitely.

ALICIA: So anyway, as I was saying before I was rudely interrupted, their dad and my dad worked out that the two little boys were about the same age as Jason and would be going to the primary school so that (*pointing*) couldn't be his brother.

KYLIE: Might be an older brother.

ALICIA: Maybe. But no one mentioned an older brother.

LEAH: So did the hottie talk to you at the supermarket?

ALICIA: No! He sort of grunted but I saw him checking me out.

BRIAN: While you were checking out his basket?

LEAH: His contents!