

Celebrating Australian Playwriting



Australian Script Centre



Precipice

by Tommy Murphy

EXTRACT

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This play was first presented by Cranbrook School Music and Drama Department at the NIDA Playhouse, Sydney, on May 3rd, 2007.

It was directed by Robert Wickham with the following student cast:

ALAN

Artin Tsambazis (Year 7), Bogart Phillips (Year 9), Christopher Au (Year 11).

FINN

Nicholas Howe (Year 7), Emrys Quinn (Year 9), Jack Walker (Year 11).

JAMES

Arthur Rothery (Year 7), David Larter (Year 11)

YUSEF

Ben Sheen

JEREMY

Tom Fisher

SAM

Simon Elder

ANTHONY

Tom Erskine

ANNA

Oliver Robertson-Smith

BRONWYN

Simon Jones

IAIN

BJ Jarrett

KEN

Timmy Maxwell and Harry Dennison (understudy)

HELENA SNOWBALL

Matthew Rossi

HENRY SNOWBALL

Andrew Jones and Hugh Radojev (understudy)

The action of the play occurs in four simultaneous locations. Each place belongs to a different moment in time. The locations share characters but at different ages. The scenes are continuous. When a new scene begins, the preceding scene arrives at a moment of silence but does not stop or go dark.

1 **HARBOUR ROCK - PART ONE**

1

A rocky ledge, Nielsen Park, Vaucluse, Sydney. The harbour water is many metres below. Four Year 7 boys emerge on top of the sandstone cliff in swimwear. They are Alan, Finn, James and Yusef. Alan wears a sun protection T-shirt called a rashie.

JAMES

This?

FINN

Yeah my cousin comes here. This is the spot.

ALAN

Pretty high.

YUSEF

Nice view.

ALAN

Postcard.

JAMES

Can see this from my house.

ALAN

Me too.

FINN

Yeah.

JAMES

Good angle of the bridge but.

FINN

Boarders' dorm at school has the best angle.

YUSEF

So what are we waiting for?

FINN

Dunno.

JAMES

Yeah.

YUSEF

Yeah.

Yeah. **FINN**

Does your cousin jump Finn? **ALAN**

Yeah. **FINN**

It's high. **ALAN**

I think it will be all right. **YUSEF**

Yeah if your cousin does it. **JAMES**

Yeah. **FINN**

Yeah. **YUSEF**

Yeah. **ALAN**

Who'll go first? **JAMES**

We should probably check first. See those rocks? **ALAN**

You'll clear them. **FINN**

The wind could push you back. **ALAN**

Still clear them. **YUSEF**

Yeah. **ALAN**

Yeah. **FINN**

Yeah. **JAMES**

ALAN
What's the nearest hospital? What, it'd be Saint Vinnies?

JAMES
Yeah.

FINN
Yeah.

ALAN
Yeah.

FINN
Ambulance would have to come up New South Head Road. Could take a while.

YUSEF
No one's going to need an ambulance.

JAMES
No.

FINN
No.

ALAN
No.

JAMES
Alan...

ALAN
Yeah?

JAMES
I don't think you should wear a rashie. We're almost in year eight now.

FINN
Yeah.

JAMES
Yeah.

ALAN
[I] Don't want to get sunburnt, James.

FINN
Does your Mum tell you to wear it, Alan?

ALAN
Finn? Are you being mean to me?

Yeah, don't be slack, Finn. **JAMES**

I thought we were picking on him. **FINN**

No. **JAMES**

Oh. **FINN**

Maybe someone should go down and check those rocks. **YUSEF**

Yeah. **JAMES**

Yeah. **FINN**

Yeah, I'm going to stay here. I'll watch from here. I'll bird's-eye the rocks and stuff. See that? Is that...? That's seaweed; or is that a rock? Someone should check. **ALAN**

Seaweed. **FINN**

It's moving. **JAMES**

Is it? **ALAN**

Yeah. **JAMES**

We'll check. **FINN**

Moving like seaweed. **YUSEF**

How many, um... Have there been any like shark attacks in the harbour? **ALAN**

No. **YUSEF**

Yeah. **JAMES**

No. **FINN**

Yeah. **JAMES**

Not since they put in nets like around at Nielsen. **YUSEF**

No net here. **JAMES**

There's no sharks in the harbour. **FINN**

Some. **JAMES**

No. **FINN**

Yeah. The yachts would scare them off. **ALAN**

Yeah. **FINN**

Yeah. **YUSEF**

Yeah. **ALAN**

Come on. **YUSEF**

Yusef and Finn exit. James lags.

Alan, the rashie isn't acceptable. Okay? It's baby. **JAMES**

We'll see. **ALAN**

I say things for your own good, Alan. Like the time I told you not to let your Mum buy the spring-free trampoline with the safety net. Remember? You thanked me for that. **JAMES**

I can't do tricks on it anyway. **ALAN**

JAMES

You don't try.

ALAN

How come I cracked my head open then? That was trying a back-flip, James.

JAMES

You worry too much.

ALAN

I missed Christmas lunch getting stitches because of your advice, James.

JAMES

Not my fault.

ALAN

We'll see who jumps first, James.

JAMES

Okay then.

James sprints off the edge of the cliff and hurtles through the sky toward the water below. Alan rushes to see the splash.

Alan remains, pondering the jump.

2 **ANNA AND ALAN BREAK UP - PART ONE**

2

A girl's bedroom. ANNA is in Year 9. She is sitting on her bed. Her boyfriend, Alan, is also in Year 9 and standing in her room.

We also still see a younger Alan in action on the cliff.

ANNA

You can like sit down if you want, Alan.

ALAN

Anna, are you sure your parents are okay with me being in your room?

ANNA

Um, yeah. They don't care. So long as I have the door open, I'm allowed to have you in here.

ALAN

So, ah, thanks for inviting me over.

ANNA

We're going out, Alan. It's not like you're not going to come over.