

Celebrating Australian Playwriting



Australian Script Centre



# Debt

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by Gabrielle MacDonald

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EXTRACT

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## SHANE

Craig's first big mistake was the car. Full on. Seriously. I mean, the pair of them, Craig and Mel, didn't have two bucks to rub together. And if they did, they shot them straight up their arms. I've never been a junkie myself – more a booze man if you get my meaning. But those two. Shit. If they couldn't get smack it was morphine or benzos or whatever they could lay their hands on. Gutter junkies. I mean, you hate to say it, hate to even think it of your own brother – but that's what they were. Fucking pathetic. I mean, don't get me wrong – I'm no saint. No. 'Specially not back then. If I had two bucks to rub together they went straight down me throat. And I'm not talking steak and three veg. Different now. But I'm not meant to be talking about now. About me now. About my miraculous transformation. I'm meant to be telling youse all about Craig.

About how it started with him and that fucken car. It's like that, you know, like a film or an ad where one small decision starts a whole thing rolling. Like that car insurance ad where the guy leaves the hand brake off and next thing you know he's totalled the entire fucken shopping centre. Well, if you ask my opinion, and I know you're not, well not really – but here you are and I'm in the light and you're in the dark. So you must want to know. Something. Well, in my opinion, that's Craig to a tee. The hand brake. And the shopping centre, the what do they call it on the news, the 'collateral damage?' Well, that's us. The three sitting here in the light.

So, Craig comes to me and at first I think he's come to hit on me for money. But no – he's got a great idea. So he goes

*Mate – I couldn't ask you a favour could I? Na na na na na – not cash. You idiot. You're me brother. I wouldn't hit on you when I know you're doing it tough too.*

*Na, mate – I've had this fucken great idea. It's for Mel. Mel and the baby. There's this bloke Les, you might of met him at the Ink Spot. Great bloke.*

*And Les runs that car joint up on the Nepean Highway. You know the one? Well, fucken straight up, no deposit, I can buy us a car! How great is that?*

*Now I know you're gonna say a car's expensive to run and all, but I've looked all over the one he's offered me and it's a fucken beaut. Small bit of rust, but the engine's fucken perfect. It's just the thing we need. Cause Mel, well, she's getting along mate and I reckon she'll be heading off to the hospital in about a month and we can hardly catch a tram. No fucken way. Only the best for my Mel and did I tell you I had a dream and it's for sure it's a boy and we're gonna call him Rex. Na na na na na, not like a fucken dog. It means king. Our little king. 'Cause he is gonna be king of the fucken world.*

*Taxi? No way mate, they cost a fucken arm and a leg. Na, this car's a fucken winner. Black Cortina. I look fucken excellent behind the wheel. Les took one look and he's gone like 'fuck – you look like king fucken shit sitting back there behind the wheel'. Yeah, don't brush up too badly I don't. Na. Old Craigie boy's comin' back, comin' back up Fitzroy Street with mag wheels.*

*So what I need you to do, right, is just sign this paper here. Na na na na na it'll be right as rain mate – you're just the signatory or something. Yeah, like if for some reason I can't – but I will mate, I will. I'll never miss a payment. I fucken swear to you.*

So did I sign? Look, I never said I was Einstein did I? Na. Collateral damage, that's what I said. Fuck. I mean. He was my brother.

## **MEL**

My reasoning goes like this; what goes around comes around. And: he was a fucken idiot. No. Full on. Am I talking about Shane or Craig? Both really. Shit. I wish I'd met their mum. I swear. Talk about collateral damage.