



# All Stops Out

by Michael Gow



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## F i r s t P r o d u c t i o n o f t h e P l a y

*All Stops Out* was first performed by the Australian Theatre for Young People at the Rocks Theatre, Sydney, in July 1989 with the following cast:

SAM Morgan Lewis  
JANE Virginia Gillard  
DANNY Chris Tomkinson  
GRAHAM Luke Cross  
JENNY Melanie Hickson  
LINDA Toni Collette  
CATH Thomasin Litchfield  
IAN Simon Stokes

Directed by Mark Gaal  
Designed by Ross Wallace  
Lighting designed by Nigel Levings

## P e r f o r m i n g R i g h t s

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## C H A R A C T E R S

SAM

JANE, his mother

DANNY

GRAHAM, his father

JENNY

LINDA

CATH, a TV journalist

IAN, a cameraman

All the other characters can be doubled or played by different actors, depending on the number of actors available.

## S E T T I N G

The action takes place in the homes of Sam and Danny, at work, on the beach and in a committal centre.



## PART ONE

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### SCENE 1

*Beach.*

DANNY: Who are you?

SAM: My name is Sam.

DANNY: Danny. What are you doing?

SAM: Reading a book.

DANNY: What for?

SAM: I like reading.

DANNY: But this is a beach. What are you reading a book on the beach for? No-one reads books on the beach.

SAM: Lots of people do.

DANNY: Oh yeah, magazines and stuff, crappy books to pass the time, but you're really reading this book, really involved in it, aren't you? How come?

SAM: I've got a lot of reading before school goes back. The HSC this year—

DANNY: You ever been here before?

SAM: No never.

DANNY: Didn't think so. Where you staying?

SAM: In a house near the lagoon.

DANNY: Oh yeah. That's our house up there. With all the glass and shit. We come here all the time, holidays, weekends.

SAM: Big house.

DANNY: Yeah.

GRAHAM, DANNY's father, comes on.

GRAHAM: I want to know if you think you're keeping up your end of the deal? Do you?

DANNY: Oh yeah.

GRAHAM: Definitely not. You've been out all day. You were out all day yesterday, all week. Not a book been opened. You will not get through this year with good results unless you work. Work hard. I thought that was understood. No?

DANNY: Yeah.

GRAHAM: Don't yeah me.



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ACT ONE

DANNY: Actually... this is Sam. We're mates. We study together.

GRAHAM: Is that so?

DANNY: Don't we?

SAM: Yes.

DANNY: This is my dad.

GRAHAM: You're on holiday here too?

DANNY: Of course he is.

SAM: Yes I am.

GRAHAM: Which is your house?

SAM: We're staying in a house near the lagoon.

DANNY: We're going to do some study now, aren't we?

SAM: Now?

DANNY: Yeah.

GRAHAM: You doing your HSC this year?

SAM: Yes.

GRAHAM: What are going to do after?

SAM: I'm going to do Arts Law.

GRAHAM: Are you? Good on you.

DANNY: He was reading a book on the beach.

SAM: The novels for English are pretty long, so I thought I'd get them read over the holiday.

GRAHAM: Terrific.

DANNY: Anyway, we'd better get stuck into it.

GRAHAM: You going to stick with Law?

SAM: Yes. I'm going to be a solicitor.

GRAHAM: Or barrister, why not? Sky's the limit.

DANNY: But you have to work, right?

GRAHAM: Your father's footsteps?

SAM: No. My father's an engineer.

GRAHAM: He'll be pleased though.

SAM: Yes he will.

DANNY: Time to work. We're going to Sam's place to read *Romeo and Juliet*.

SAM: No. I have to help Mum getting tea.

DANNY: No. You said we're going to study.

SAM: Not today. Sorry. See ya.

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## ACT ONE

*SAM goes.*

GRAHAM: You weren't going to study, were you? Have you forgotten we made a deal? You spend the morning on the beach, back for lunch and three hours study in the afternoon.

DANNY: This is a holiday.

GRAHAM: No such thing if you want to get on. I made you promise, all stops out this year. We drew up a timetable, we balanced out reading time, revision time, consolidation time, free time, television time, and we agreed you'd stick to that and in exchange—

DANNY: I could have my holiday mornings to myself, yes.

GRAHAM: We've been here three weeks and you haven't spent more than two hours at your desk. Have you?

DANNY: No.

GRAHAM: Do you understand how serious this year is?

DANNY: Maybe you shouldn't have made me stay at school.

GRAHAM: You're not stupid. You've got it in you, you're lazy, that's all.

DANNY: Maybe I should have done something else.

GRAHAM: Like what? Apprenticeship? To what? Industries that are practically dead.

DANNY: Maybe something else.

GRAHAM: Tell me, Danny, what?

DANNY: I think you should get off my back. We've just finished Christmas.

GRAHAM: When you've got that piece of paper to say you've got a place at university, I'll get off your back.

DANNY: And what'll you do if I don't get that piece of paper? Did you go to university?

GRAHAM: Don't I wish I had.

DANNY: Well, you did something with your life.

GRAHAM: That was twenty years ago. The world's getting narrower every day. Opportunities get smaller. If you don't start off on the right foot, you may as well give it away.

*They go.*



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ACT ONE

## SCENE 2

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*A suburban street.*

CATH: Now I'd like you to stand near the fence, is that alright?

IAN: Fine.

CATH: Looks alright?

IAN: Yes, it looks fine.

CATH: And open the letter really slowly, let's see your hands opening it up, then read the results, and then we'll find out how you went, okay.

GIRL: He's coming! Mum, he's coming!

*A POSTMAN approaches the GIRL.*

CATH: Ian, ready?

IAN: Tape's rolling.

POSTMAN: This what you're waiting for?

GIRL: Sure is.

POSTMAN: Good luck

*The POSTMAN goes.*

CATH: Right, good, slowly opening.

*The GIRL reads her results.*

How is it, Kelly?

GIRL: Ummm

CATH: Did what you wanted?

GIRL: No.

CATH: How did you do?

GIRL: Umm... pretty bad. Oh no.

CATH: Did you pass?

GIRL: Passed General Studies. Oh no.

CATH: So how do you feel now, Kelly?

GIRL: What am I going to do? Oh no.

CATH: You're probably feeling really let down now. How do you think your future will be affected?

GIRL: I have to go inside. I have to tell Mum.

CATH: Just one more question. How do you think your parents will accept this disappointment? Follow us, Ian, keep up. Kelly?

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## ACT ONE

GIRL: I'm going inside.

*She goes.*

CATH: 'In my beginning is my end': ironic words by T.S. Eliot that many of these students have studied. Appropriate for us as we begin this story of the major exam in young people's lives with one possible outcome. Disappointment, confusion... Ian?

IAN: Sorry.

CATH: Why did you stop?

IAN: Pretty awful.

CATH: We agreed when I gave you this job that we'd keep going no matter how upsetting it might appear.

IAN: I know.

CATH: It's part of a much bigger whole. We are here to cover all aspects.

IAN: Yes I know that.

CATH: And you stopped recording.

IAN: She was upset.

CATH: So am I. This isn't a very good start.

IAN: I'll be tougher. From now on.

CATH: Yes?

IAN: It's not that long since I did the exam myself. I felt for her.

CATH: Right. Over it?

IAN: Yes, chief.

CATH: And don't call me chief.

## SCENE 3

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*Committal centre.*

LINDA: We don't touch each other's stuff. We don't talk if the other one is lying down or reading a magazine or something. We don't talk after lights out. We do not borrow anything from the other one. We don't even ask for a lend of anything. Making sense?

JENNY: Are these prison rules or just yours?

LINDA: It's how I like things to be. It makes the day easier to get through.

JENNY: Sure.

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First published in print in 1991

by Currency Press Pty Ltd,  
PO Box 2287, Strawberry Hills, NSW, 2012, Australia  
enquiries@currency.com.au  
www.currency.com.au

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