

# Tender

by Nicki Bloom



Currency Press,  
Sydney

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## **CHARACTERS**

SARAH, late 20s

MICHAEL, early 30s

YVONNE, mid 50s

PATRICK, late 50s

## **SETTING**

The action takes place in the living room and in the gardens.

The gardens should be created largely with lighting effects. Like the twilight in dreams.

## 1. RECKONING

*Music builds and builds then abruptly falls away.* SARAH. MICHAEL.

SARAH: Back  
You're back  
You're/

MICHAEL: Fine.

SARAH: What was/

MICHAEL: There?  
Nothing  
Not much  
OK. It's OK.

SARAH: Is it?  
You're/

MICHAEL: Fine.

SARAH: You look shaken.

MICHAEL: I'm OK.

SARAH: Things are really/

MICHAEL: Fine.

SARAH: You're not/

MICHAEL: Not hurt. You?  
You're dirty  
You've got leaves and  
Bits of grass all over you. Mud  
You're wet.

SARAH: I've been waiting  
The undergrowth  
Is damp  
It's late  
I've been worried.

MICHAEL: You worry too much.

SARAH: About you.

MICHAEL: How long was I gone for? How long was I away?

SARAH: A while.

MICHAEL: Exactly  
How long exactly?

SARAH: I don't know  
I wasn't keeping time  
I was too worried to be keeping time  
I can't look  
You can't expect me to be  
Looking at my watch  
When I'm looking for you  
I couldn't see you  
You went too far away  
I was trying to see you

*Pause.*

What was there  
Was there anything there?

MICHAEL: Not much  
A few sticks and stones  
The harbour wall  
Plants  
Moonlight.

SARAH: People?

MICHAEL: Not that I could see.

SARAH: But those noises.

MICHAEL: What noises?

SARAH: You heard them  
People. Close.

MICHAEL: No.

SARAH: Before. You did.

MICHAEL: It was nothing  
People far away  
Out in the city.

SARAH: They sounded close.

MICHAEL: Noise travels in the dark.

SARAH: Are you sure things are really/

MICHAEL: Fine.  
SARAH: There's nothing out there?  
No danger?  
MICHAEL: Nothing  
Just us  
Just you and me and some trees  
That lunking mass of harbour  
Plants and rocks and sticks and fruit bats  
Not dangerous things.  
SARAH: No. Not dangerous  
Are you sure there wasn't/  
MICHAEL: I'm sure.  
SARAH: I could have sworn those noises were close.  
MICHAEL: They weren't  
There's nothing here. You and me.  
SARAH: That's nice  
I mean if there's nothing else  
And you're OK  
And me too.  
MICHAEL: The way the night was meant to be.  
*They look at each other and smile.*  
SARAH: What now?  
MICHAEL: We should probably go.  
SARAH: Oh. Now?  
MICHAEL: It's late.  
SARAH: Not so late.  
MICHAEL: It's dark.  
SARAH: Not so dark.  
MICHAEL: You're scared.  
SARAH: Not so scared  
I mean with you here  
I'm not.  
MICHAEL: We shouldn't be here.  
SARAH: We're not in anyone's way.  
MICHAEL: No/