

10,000 beers

a play

By

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Cast

ACTOR 1 (DOUG)

ACTOR 2 (TOBY)

ACTOR 3 (REED)

ACTOR 4 (LEN)

Time

A weekend. Summer.

Friday morning to Monday morning.

2007.

Setting

Australia.

Adelaide airport.

Various locations around Melbourne.

Lights up.

The four **ACTORS** stand on stage facing the audience.

They are naked.

Long pause.

Longer pause.

Eventually:

ACTOR 1: Okay.

PAUSE.

ACTOR 2: Okay.

PAUSE.

ACTOR 3: Okay.

PAUSE.

ACTOR 4: Right.

ACTORS 1, 2 AND 3 ARE COVERING THEMSELVES WITH THEIR HANDS. ACTOR 4 IS NOT.

ACTORS 1, 2 AND 3 LOOK AT ACTOR 4.

ACTOR 4: What?

ACTORS 1, 2 AND 3 LOOK AT THEIR HANDS. ACTOR 4 REALISES, HE COVERS HIMSELF.

ACTOR 4: Any idea what we do now ?

PAUSE.

ACTOR 1: Some clothes ...

ACTOR 2: Could be good.

ACTOR 3: Yep, clothes.

ACTOR 2: Good idea.

ACTOR 1: Yeah.

ACTOR 4: I was actually thinking about food.

ACTOR 1: Clothes.

ACTOR 4: Sure. Clothes are good too. Then food.

LIGHT COMES UP ON A BOX AT THE BACK OF THE STAGE.
ACTOR 4 NOTICES THE BOX.

ACTOR 4: Excuse me. (BEAT) Oi.

ACTOR 1: Not right now. We're kind of busy.

ACTOR 4: But ...

ACTOR 2: He said not now.

ACTOR 3: We're ...

ACTOR 1: Busy.

BEAT.

ACTOR 4: There's a box.

ACTOR 1: A what?

ACTOR 4: A box.

ACTOR 2: Where?

ACTOR 4: Over there.

ACTOR 1: (NOT LOOKING) Where ?

ACTOR 4: (POINTING) There.

THEY TURN AND LOOK AT THE BOX. THEY TURN BACK. BEAT.

ACTOR 3: So?

ACTOR 4: It might have clothes in it.

ACTOR 2: The box?

ACTOR 4: Yeah.

ACTOR 1: Why?

ACTOR 4: It might. (BEAT) Or we could go put it over our heads.

ACTOR 3: How would that help?

ACTOR 2: We'd still be naked.

ACTOR 4: But at least we wouldn't have to look at them looking at us.

ACTOR 3: Reverse anonymity.

ACTOR 1: Whatever that means.

BEAT.

ACTOR 3: Okay. On three.

ACTOR 1: You mean we're actually going to go for the box?

ACTOR 2: Beats standing here.

ACTOR 2: Okay.

ACTOR 3: Right.

BEAT.

ACTOR 2: Who counts ?

ACTOR 1: I do. And on three. (BEAT, THEN QUICKLY) One two three !

THE FOUR **ACTORS** RACE TO THE BOX. ACTOR 3 DUMPS THE CLOTHES ON TO STAGE – IT DOES INDEED CONTAIN CLOTHES.

THE ACTORS START TO PULL ON BOXER SHORTS, JEANS AND RUNNERS.

ACTOR 4: I've only got one shoe.

ACTOR 1 PICKS UP A LONE SHOE AND THROWS IT AT **ACTOR 4**. IT HITS HIM.

ACTOR 4: Ouch. (BEAT, THEN NOTICING IT'S THE MISSING SHOE) Oh, ta.

THE FOURS ACTORS ARE NOW DRESSED IN JEANS AND RUNNERS.

ACTOR 2: We're missing something.

ACTOR 4: No, I found my shoe.

ACTOR 1 SLAPS ACTOR 4 IN THE CHEST.

ACTOR 4: Ow. (REALISING) Oh.

ACTOR 3 FINDS FOUR IDENTICAL POLO SHIRTS: BLACK, WITH A WHITE TRIM ON THE COLLAR AND A PIRATE LOGO ON THE CHEST.

HE HOLDS ONE UP AGAINST HIMSELF. IT IS TOO SMALL. HE THROWS IT TO ACTOR 4.

ACTOR 3: This is for you.

ACTOR 4 PUTS ON THE SHIRT. IT FITS PERFECTLY. ACTOR 3 PULLS ON ANOTHER SHIRT.

ACTOR 2 IS PULLING ON A SHIRT. IT DOESN'T FIT.

ACTOR 1: I think that's mine.

ACTOR 1 AND ACTOR 2 SWAP SHIRTS.

THE FOUR **ACTORS** RETURN TO THE FRONT OF THE STAGE. THEY STAND FACING THE AUDIENCE AGAIN BUT NOW FULLY DRESSED.

ACTOR 1: Okay.

ACTOR 2: Okay.

ACTOR 3: Okay.

ACTOR 4: Right. How do we look ?

ACTOR 2: Pretty good.

ACTOR 3: Black's a good colour.

ACTOR 4: A very good colour.

ACTOR 1: You can say that again.

ACTOR 4: A very good colour.

ACTOR 2: Very funny.

ACTOR 4: Thanks Toby.

ACTOR 2: What did you just call me?

ACTOR 4: Your name. Toby.

ACTOR 2: And how do you know my name?

ACTOR 4: It's on the back of your shirt.

ACTOR 2 SPINS AROUND. ON THE BACK OF HIS SHIRT WE SEE "TOBY".

ACTOR 3: He's right.

ACTOR 2: Toby ?

ACTOR 1: Not sure.

ACTOR 4: I like it.

ACTOR 2: Toby ?

TOBY: Toby.

ACTOR 4: It's a good name. Got character. I like it.

TOBY: Toby.

ACTOR 2: Toby. (TO ACTOR 3) What about you?

ACTOR 3 SPINS AROUND. ON HIS BACK IS "REED"

ACTOR 1: Reed.

ACTOR 4: Is that a first or a last name ?

REED: First.

ACTOR 4: I never heard of anyone called Reed before. Reed Brown, Reed Smith. Sounds kinda of –

REED: Last.

ACTOR 4: That makes more sense. John Reed, Gary Reed, Stephen –

REED: Both.

ACTOR 4: Reed Reed ? That really doesn't –

ACTOR 1 SPINS AROUND. ON HIS BACK IS "DOUG".

ACTOR 3: Doug.

ACTOR 4: That's good. As in "Dougie", "Dougie Boy", "Dougo".

DOUG: Just Doug.

ACTOR 4: Okay, "Just Doug".

DOUG: Doug.

ACTOR 4: Okay, "Doug".

TOBY: (TO ACTOR 4) That just leaves you ?

BEAT.

ACTOR 4: I don't need to look.

TOBY: Why not?

ACTOR 4: Know it already.

DOUG: Yeah – and what is it ?

ACTOR 4: Percy !

TOBY: Percy.

ACTOR 4: Short for Percival.

DOUG: No one's actually called Percival.

ACTOR 4: Yes they are. That fullback. From South Africa. Percival Montgomery.

DOUG: He didn't call himself Percival either.

ACTOR 4: That's why I shorten it to Percy.

TOBY: Percy ?

DOUG: No.

ACTOR 4: Yes.

DOUG: Let's check.

ACTOR 4: (BACKING AWAY) No need to check. It's Percy.

DOUG: Reed.

REED GRABS ACTOR 4. HE PICKS HIM UP AND SPINS HIM AROUND. ON THE BACK IS "LEN".

DOUG: Len.

BEAT.

ACTOR 4: Len ?

DOUG: Len.

ACTOR 4: You mean as in short for Glen.

DOUG: As in short for Leonard.

ACTOR 4: Leonard ?

DOUG: Yep.

ACTOR 4: No one's called Leonard – apart from serial killers and –

DOUG: You, Len.

ACTOR 4: Are you sure it doesn't say Percy?

DOUG: Len.

ACTOR 4: But that's not fair. I didn't get to choose.

TOBY: Nether did we.

ACTOR 4: But that's different.

TOBY: Why?

ACTOR 4: You all like your names.

TOBY: It's not that bad.

ACTOR 4: You have it then. Percy.

DOUG: We're not going to call you Percy.

ACTOR 4: Alright – Clint.

TOBY: Clint ?

ACTOR 4: As in Clint Eastwood.

TOBY: I can see the resemblance.

ACTOR 4: Higgsy, Webbo, Davo – you gotta let me be Davo?

BEAT.

DOUG: Len.

BEAT.

ACTOR 4: Macca?

DOUG: You want to come or not ?

ACTOR 4: Come where ?

DOUG: Accept your name or you'll never know.

LEN: Len ?

DOUG: Len.

REED: Wait. Something's missing.

TOBY: What ?

LEN: Percy !

DOUG: (TO **LEN**) I won't tell you again.

REED: Something.

A CAN OF BEER IS THROWN ON STAGE – **DOUG** CATCHES IT.

ANOTHER CAN OF BEER IS THROWN ON STAGE – **REED**
CATCHES IT.

ANOTHER BEER – **TOBY** CATCHES IT.

ANOTHER BEER IS THROWN TOWARDS **LEN**. **REED** INTERCEPTS IT.

LEN: (TO REED) Hey!

REED: Don't see your name on it.

LEN: Come on. Don't play around with a man's beer.

DOUG: Man. I don't see no man.

LEN: Come on.

REED SMILES. HE HANDS **LEN** THE BEER.

DOUG CRACKS OPENS HIS BEER.

DOUG: One.

DOUG TAKES A SWIG.

REED CRACKS OPENS HIS BEER.

REED: Two.

REED TAKES A SWIG.

TOBY CRACKS OPENS HIS BEER.

TOBY: Three.

TOBY TAKES A SWIG.

LEN CRACKS OPENS HIS BEER.

LEN: What comes after three ? (BEAT) Just kidding. Four.

TOBY TAKES A SWIG.

DOUG: Chant.

ALL: Pirates, Pirates, Pirates –

LEN: Pi – rrrraates.

LEN GIVES A “PIRATE LIKE LAUGH”.

THEY ALL LOOK AT HIM.

TOBY: What was that ?

LEN: The Pirate laugh. It’s my speciality.

DOUG: Now we can start.

LIGHTS CHANGE.

DOUG: Friday.

LEN: Adelaide.

REED: Airport.

TOBY: Seven a.m.

LEN: Sparrow fart.

DOUG: Pre-sparrow fart.

TOBY: The challenge.

REED: Twenty six men.

LEN: Twenty seven. Ryan brought his mate.

TOBY: Is that allowed ?

REED: Thought it was player's only.

TOBY: Is that allowed ?

LEN: He played one game.

TOBY: Against who ?

LEN: Barossa. Came on at half time. When Pete keeled over.

TOBY: Did he ?

LEN: You remember ? After Pete's bucks' night.

TOBY: Ryan's mate ? Did he ?

LEN: Came on at Tight head. You remember ? Reed ?

REED: Don't remember anything from that game.

LEN: Blind?

REED: Concussion.

LEN: (TO **DOUG**) You remember. Ryan's mate. Came on at Tighthead. Against the Rams.

TOBY: Only half a game.

LEN: Still played though.

DOUG: It's alright. I okayed it. Twenty-seven. Roll call.

AS THEY CALL THE NAME THEY BECOME THAT CHARACTER.

DOUG: Pete

TOBY: Joey Duffy

LEN: The Prophet

REED: Brown Dog.

DOUG: Ando.
TOBY: Grego
LEN: Bevo.
REED: Gully.
DOUG: Timmy Smith
TOBY: Ryan
LEN: Ryan's mate.
REED: Ears.
DOUG: Legs.
TOBY: Handbag.
LEN: The Hamster
REED: Special.
DOUG: Pommy Bastard.
TOBY: Gaz.
LEN: Graham.
REED: Goose.
DOUG: The Fuse.
TOBY: Stucci
LEN: Mickey Moore
REED: Reed
DOUG: Doug
LEN: Len
TOBY: Toby
DOUG: The challenge.
REED: Ten-thousand

LEN: Beers.
TOBY: And twenty-seven –
DOUG: Men. In one weekend.
LEN: Including the Friday.
DOUG: One weekend.
LEN: One *long* weekend.
DOUG: One –
LEN: *Longish* ?
DOUG: weekend.

DOUG LOOKS AT LEN. BEAT.

LEN: One weekend.
DOUG: Which makes it three hundred beers per man.
LEN: Roundabouts.
REED: A century –
TOBY: Each day.
LEN: Actually it's a bit more. One hundred and two. And a half.
DOUG: A century.
REED: Per day.
TOBY: Impossible.
LEN: Some would say.
DOUG: But it can be done.
REED: Has been done.
LEN: Will be done.
DOUG: Mad Monday ?
REED: Stuff that.

TOBY: This is Wild Weekend.
DOUG: Very Wild Weekend.
LEN: Very fuckin' Wild Weekend.
REED: Watch out Melbourne.
ALL: The Pirates are coming !

LIGHTS CHANGE.

LEN: Doug ?
DOUG: Yep.
LEN: Don't make me sit next to the window.
DOUG: Why not ?
LEN: I don't want to sit next to the window.
DOUG: Why not ?
LEN: I don't like sitting next to the window.
DOUG: Why not ?
LEN: I don't really like flying ?
DOUG: Is that so ? (CALLS) Hey boys.
LEN: There's no need to tell everyone.
DOUG: (CALLS) Guess who doesn't like flying ?

LAUGHTER FROM THE REST OF THE TEAM.

LEN: (TO **DOUG**) Thanks.
DOUG: A pleasure.
TOBY: (HANDING OUT BOARDING PASSES) Boarding passes.
LEN: (GETTING HIS) Fifteen A. Window seat. Great.

LIGHTS CHANGE. SOUND OF PLANE TAKING OFF.

LEN: (IN SEAT, TERRIFIED) Oh God, please don't let me die.

TOBY: (NEXT TO HIM, POINTING OUT WINDOW) What's that down there Lenny ? Looks like an ant. No, it's a car. Wow. We must be really high up. How high do you reckon we are Reed ? Ten thousand feet.

REED: More.

TOBY: Fifty thousand ?

REED: More.

TOBY: One hundred thousand ?

REED: Probably.

TOBY: Shit. That's a long way up. Imagine if we crashed from this high up. You reckon they'd be anything left ?

REED: Nothing -

DOUG: much.

TOBY: A cinder

DOUG: Or two.

REED: Ash.

DOUG: Not much.

LEN: Would you guys -

TOBY: Hope they checked the plane this morning. Hey Reed, how often do you reckon they check these planes ?

REED: Not often enough.

DOUG: Hardly ever.

TOBY: (TO **LEN**) That's why the tickets are so cheap. They don't check the planes.

LEN: Would you just -

DOUG AND REED TAP THEIR BEER CANS TOGETHER.

LEN: Shit ! What's that ?

DOUG: Sounds like -

REED: a rattle.
LEN: A rattle ? Shit.
DOUG: That can't be good.
TOBY: What causes a rattle ?
REED: Bolts.
DOUG: On the wings.
TOBY: When they get –
REED: Loose.
LEN: Please, just –

DOUG AND REED TAP THE CANS TOGETHER LOUDER.

LEN: Shit !!!
DOUG: Can't be good.
REED: Loose –
TOBY: Bolts.
DOUG: Definitely not
REED: Good.
LEN: I –

DOUG AND REED TAP THE CANS TOGETHER LOUDER STILL.

LEN: Fuck !!!
TOBY: What's that ?
DOUG: That's not a rattle anymore.
TOBY: That's a
REED: shaking.
LEN: Shaking!
TOBY: That's bad.

REED: Shaking is definitely worse than a rattle.

DOUG: Really fuckin' bad.

LEN: You gotta – (HOLDING HIS MOUTH)

TOBY: Fuck Len. We're going down. And I never got to tell you how much –

DOUG: He really loves you.

REED: You're looking a bit green there Len.

LEN THROWS UP LOUDLY ON TO THE SEAT IN FRONT OF HIM.
THE OTHER BOYS LAUGH.

DOUG: And we have a winner. First spew on tour goes to –

REED, DOUG AND TOBY: Lenny !

TOBY: (IMITATING HOSTESS, APPEARING BESIDE **LEN**) Excuse
me sir. That's what the sick bags are for.

REED, TOBY AND DOUG LAUGH AGAIN.

LIGHTS CHANGE. MORE BEERS ARE THROWN ON STAGE. THEY
OPEN THEM TOGETHER.

DOUG: (SIPS) Seventy-three.

REED: (SIPS) Seventy-four.

TOBY: (SIPS) Seventy-five.

LEN: (STILL QUEASY, A SMALL SIP. GRIMACE) Seventy ... six.

LIGHTS CHANGE.

REED: Hotel.

TOBY: Not sure if Hotel is a very accurate description.

LEN: Hovel.

TOBY: Hole.

REED: Shit

TOBY: hole.

LEN: I think something just moved.

TOBY: Where ?

LEN: In that corner

REED: Probably your spew from the plane.

TOBY: It's chasing you.

LEN: Very funny.

DOUG: Shut your gob. Thirty bucks a night. What do you expect ?

LEN: Palatial splendour.

DOUG: Smart arse.

LEN: How many to a room ?

DOUG: Four.

LEN: Can you fit four in this room ?

DOUG: Four.

LEN: Bags the bottom.

DOUG: On top.

LEN: I – Heights. Like on the –

DOUG: Top.

TOBY: Watch out Doug. He's a got a weak bladder too.

LEN: Very weak.

DOUG: (TO **LEN**) Don't even think about it. Reed, round 'em up.

REED: (CALLS) Ten minutes. Downstairs.

LEN: Where's my toothbrush ?

TOBY: That's not the question you want to be asking.

LEN: What question do I wanna be asking ?

DOUG: (HOLDING UP TOOTHBRUSH) Where's your toothbrush been?

BEAT.

LEN: Oh shit boys.

REED: Now he's getting it.

LAUGHTER. LIGHTS CHANGE.

DOUG ADDRESSES THE TEAM.

DOUG: Alright boys. This is it. You know the drill. Ten thousand. We don't go home till we've drunk every single one of them. King hit any bloke and fuck any chick that gets in your way. That includes you Prophet.

LAUGHTER. LIGHTS CHANGE.

TOBY: The Prophet is Roy.

LEN: Called Prophet as in "Prophet of Doom."

DOUG: Because no matter how well things are going –

REED: How many points we're up

TOBY: Ten

DOUG: Twenty

LEN: One hundred.

TOBY: The Prophet will always predict

REED: Impending doom.

DOUG: We would often be subjected to his

TOBY: words of wisdom

REED: In the huddle

DOUG: After another Pirates five pointer.

LEN: Usually scored by The Tobster.

DOUG: (TO **LEN**) He didn't score that many.

TOBY: (TO **DOUG**) Yes I did.

REED BECOMES **ROY**.

ROY: Careful boys, we can still lose this.

LEN: Prophet. We're thirty six points up.

ROY: I know.

LEN: With three minutes to go.

ROY: I know.

LEN: Bit hard to lose it from here.

ROY: Yeah but –

TOBY: And then his stock phrase –

ROY: You never know.

DOUG: Another odd thing about Roy.

LEN: He never touched a drop.

DOUG: Not even after the Grand final.

TOBY: Not a lot to celebrate, thanks Doug.

DOUG: (TO **DOUG**) Watch it.

LEN: No one knew why.

TOBY: That's why he's always so -

ROY: Depressed.

TOBY: And why at the end of his –

LEN: Pre-weekend

TOBY: address

LEN: Doug issued to Prophet

TOBY: the following ultimatum:

DOUG: (TO **ROY**) I see you take one sip of lemonade this weekend Prophet and they'll be fishing you out of the Yarra come Monday.

LEN: Roy just nodded –

TOBY: Sagely.

ROY NODS.

LEN: If he had the –
DOUG: Temerity
TOBY: to pipe up.
LEN: He might've said.
ROY: "It'll all end in tears."
TOBY: But The Prophet realised –
LEN: This wasn't the time.
DOUG: Or the place.
TOBY: And no one would've listened anyway.

LIGHTS CHANGE.

DOUG: (FINISHING SPEECH) And as you walk the streets of Melbourne this weekend.
TOBY: Walk? More like crawl.
DOUG: Hold your head up. Remember – you're Pirate. And you've got lots to be proud of. We've got a great club and we had a great season.
LEN: Not really.
DOUG: Did you say something Leonard ?
LEN: Just sayin'.
DOUG: Sayin' what ?
LEN: It wasn't really great.
DOUG: What – are you Roy now?
LEN: It was good. But it wasn't really great. If you know what I mean.
DOUG: I'm not sure that I do.
LEN: Well, it would've been great – if we won the comp. But we didn't – win ... the ... comp. We came second.

DOUG: Thanks for reminding us. (CALLS) What's the count ?

REED: One hundred and twenty six.

DOUG: Who says Len takes us to one hundred and thirty? On his lonesome.

LEN: Oh shit. No Doug.

DOUG: Yes Len.

LEN: I'll spew. Again.

DOUG: Probably.

LEN: I'll die.

DOUG: Hopefully.

LEN: Oh shit Doug.

DOUG: You keep whinging, you'll be using that toothbrush all weekend.

REED: (TO AUDIENCE) Len was right. It wasn't a great season.

LEN: Coulda been.

TOBY: Shoulda been.

REED: Minor premiers,

LEN: undefeated,

DOUG: all year.

TOBY: No. Not all year.

REED: One more game to win and we would've been great. But ...

LEN: (TO AUDIENCE) The story of the game as told by –

DOUG: Reed.

LIGHTS CHANGE.

REED: (TO AUDIENCE) It was the Grand Final, against Old Collegians. Everyone wants to win a Grand Final but when you're playing against those pricks as well –

TOBY: You really want to win a Grand Final.

REED: Game was tight. They played well. Much better than when we thrashed 'em in the semis. We were –

LEN: Over confident.

DOUG: Not sure that's the word.

LEN: I said it before the game. There was a feeling all we had to do was turn up.

REED: Whatever the reason it was tight. And with just a few minutes to go they were up.

TOBY: Only by two points. Drop goal would win it.

REED: We still believed –

LEN: We could win it.

REED: That was one of the good things about our team this season. Self-belief.

DOUG: We believed we would win – and we did.

REED: But we were two points down. We got a scrum on their twenty two. Good spot for a drop.

LEN: I called "Special" which is the call for a drop goal.

REED: "Special" as that's the nick-name for Brodie. The fly half who'd be kicking the drop goal.

TOBY: We called him "Special" because some guys thought –

REED: He had tickets on himself.

DOUG: Thought he was really

LEN: "Special."

REED: Len is just about to put the ball in the scrum when we hear:

DOUG: "New call."

REED: It's Doug. He's the flanker. Open side.

DOUG: "New call. Red Dragon."

REED: That's a forward move. I pick up at No.8, break wide, drawing their scrumhalf and openside

DOUG: And then pass back inside to me.

LEN: I didn't like it.

DOUG: It was on.

LEN: It was risky.

DOUG: It was on.

LEN: Definitely not fool proof.

DOUG: It was on!

REED: And "Special" had been kicking pretty well. He could've knocked it over from there.

TOBY: It's only two points.

LEN: A drop goal would win it.

DOUG: (TO **LEN**) And that's why they're all watchin' "Special." Because they know that's what we're gonna do.

REED: Doug was right. Fullback had even drifted over. There was no-one covering behind the scrum.

LEN: For the record –

TOBY: I still didn't agree.

REED: Doug's the captain.

DOUG: New call. Red Dragon.

LEN: He's the boss. So I just put the ball in.

REED: The ball is fed in and the hooker –

LEN: We call him Ears.

TOBY: Self explanatory really.

REED: gets a good clean strike and the ball comes back through the scrum to my feet. I know what's on. I wait, one second – two. I feel a tap on my bum from Len and he breaks blind, which is the signal for me to break open. I pick up. Their open side's taken it but not their scrumhalf. He comes at me. I lift my knee.

TOBY AND DOUG MAKE THE SOUND FX.

REED: It crunches into his shoulder. And he falls away. Their Number 8 – big Islander - is slow off the mark. I stride past him, leave him standing at the scrumbase. Now I've just got their flyhalf coming across.

TOBY BECOMES THE FLYHALF. HE MOVES ACROSS TO TACKLE REED.

REED: He's small too –

TOBY: But determined.

REED: Brave cunt. I try to palm him but he comes in too low. Hits me around the ankles. I start to go down.

DOUG: But it's okay. I'm there. Right behind him. I call for the ball: "Reed."

REED: I pop it up for Doug.

DOUG: And now I've got it. And just the line in front of me. The plan's worked beautifully. I'm gonna score the winning try. The Premiership is coming home. I can taste the celebratory beer.

REED: But then their blind winger appears.

TOBY: From nowhere.

LEN: Shit.

TOBY: Where the fuck did he come from ?

DOUG: Don't worry. I see him.

REED: He's quick.

DOUG: Not quick enough.

LEN: Pretty quick.

DOUG: Ten metres to go. I'm there.

REED: But it's okay. Since he's gone in for Doug, the blind winger has left -

LEN: The Tobster.

REED: unmarked.

LEN: Twenty five tries in the season already.

REED: Comps leading tryscorer.

LEN: By a mile.

REED: Toby cuts in so he's right on Doug's shoulder.

TOBY: Doug just needs to pass to me and I'm over. Untouched.

DOUG: But I don't need him. I'm there.

REED: Len is watching all this from back of the scrum. He's still there –

LEN: holding on to their openside flanker,

REED: Their Captain – (BECOMING **COL**) Col Whelan.

LEN: best player in the comp - so he can't go back and help. Got my hand low, on his shorts – so the ref can't see. Col's punching me in the face. Trying to get free. But I don't care. This is the fuckin' Grand Final. Who cares if I can't see for a month ?

REED: Between the punches Len sees –

TOBY: Their winger

LEN IS NOW THEIR WINGER.

REED: Coming across. Doug ball in hand, steaming for the line –

DOUG: Five metres.

REED: And Toby.

TOBY: Perfectly in support.

LEN: Doug can fart the ball to him from there.

REED: Their winger -

LEN: is almost on Doug.

DOUG: Four metres.

REED: But it's okay -

LEN: Toby's there.

REED: Doug just has to pass.

DOUG: Three metres.

REED: Winger's closing. Why doesn't he

LEN: Pass!

TOBY: Maybe he hasn't seen me.

REED: He's seen you.

LEN: Then why doesn't he -

TOBY: Pass.

DOUG: Two metres.

REED: "Pass Doug."

LEN: "Why doesn't he pass ?"

TOBY: "Give me the ball !"

REED: The same thought goes through –

LEN: All three minds –

TOBY: Simultaneously.

LEN, REED AND TOBY: "Doug – pass the fuckin' ball !"

DOUG: One metre.

REED: He reaches out –

DOUG: I can taste the beer

LEN: He's going to make it.

DOUG: Dripping from that silver cup.

REED: And then the strangest thing happens. It's like time stops.

LEN: Everything is frozen.

TOBY: I'm screaming for the ball – but my voice is trapped in my throat.

REED: I'm yelling for Doug to pass – but no sound comes out.

DOUG: I'm inches from the line – all I have to do is put the ball down -
but my hand won't move.

LEN: And I'm sure Doug is going to score – so I'm smiling – between punches.

TOBY: Then time speeds up again.

REED: And their winger hits Doug with the best tackle I've ever seen.

DOUG: The impossible tackle.

REED: The perfect tackle.

LEN TACKLES DOUG.

TOBY: And Doug goes down.

LEN: And because he's reaching out –

REED: The ball jars free

TOBY: And bounces over –

REED: the dead ball line.

TOBY: The referee

LEN: blows his whistle.

REED: Game over.

TOBY: We ...

ALL: Lose.

LIGHTS CHANGE.

REED: But no one's thinking about that at this point in time.

DOUG: Everybody's looking forward to getting out –

TOBY: On to the streets.

REED: Seeing what mischief –

LEN: Awaits.

REED: The city's calling for us –

DOUG: The pubs.

TOBY: The clubs

LEN: The beers.
REED: The bars.
DOUG: The girls
LEN: The beers
REED: The bouncers
DOUG: The fights
LEN: The beers.
DOUG: In the team,
REED: the tight-knit group,
TOBY: the energy
DOUG: the excitement
TOBY: the hunger -
DOUG: You can feel it. It's almost –
REED: Real.
TOBY: It's just like before –
LEN: The Grand Final.
REED: Len skulls the four beers. Spews after the
REED: First –
TOBY: Second
LEN: And fourth.
DOUG: And the Pirates - set sail.
ALL: Pub crawl !

BRIGHT, FLASHING LIGHTS. LOUD DRIVING MUSIC.

TOBY: The story of the
REED: Pub Crawl

DOUG: As told by –

LEN: The Len-Dog, The Len-Monster, The Len-ster.

DOUG: Toby.

TOBY: We start at The Exchange in Port Melbourne. It's a nice place. Upmarket, cosy. Not the sort of place that would usually let in twenty seven noisy rugby players from Adelaide – but when we push past the sole bouncer at the door at 3pm Friday arvo – no one's arguing. One schooner each. No shots, nips or chasers yet. Long night ahead. Gotta pace yourself. Next it's across the road to The Local. The Local where ?

WE HEAR "KHE SANH" BY COLD CHISEL.

TOBY: Someone finds the video jukebox and puts "Khe Sanh" on. Bit early for that.

LEN: What's the count ?

REED: Three hundred and nineteen.

TOBY: Next it's back across the road to The Pier then around the corner to The London. Don't stay long at either. They're a bit posh and the boys don't feel comfortable. Also the beer's expensive and comes in bloody small glasses. "Pot" – more like a thimble.

LEN: South Aussie beer makes Melbourne beer look like midgets.

DOUG: Bit like you.

TOBY: So we're off around the corner, and turn into a back street. This is a smart move from Doug, unlike the Grand Final. Keeping twenty seven blokes off the main drag. No doubt we'll be conversing with the cops at sometime tonight - but the later we

TOBY: (CONT) can put that off to – the better. It's gone six and the boys are a bit peckish so we hit the souvlaki joints along Bay Street. (TO PETE) "Hey Pete, don't know why you bother shovin' it down. It'll just be coming back up again soon enough." Pete ends up eating two with extra chili. Don't want to be near him in an hour or two. Then we're at The Rex. Better. Bit of space, relaxed. Wall of pokies. Few boys get rid of their change. The golden rule I find on a pub crawl is if you see pokies in a place, you're okay. No pokies, no way. Usually. Friendly barmaid. Looks like my mum. I think for a mo about asking Reed to tell Doug to ditch the rest. Let's just stay here. But no chance of that. Doug has all this planned down to the *nth* degree.

Prepared for this more than he did the fuckin' Grand-final. This is no second rate adventure. This is the Oedipus fuckin' Rex of pub crawls and there's no rest till we reach St Kilda – wherever the fuck that is.

LEN: What's the count ?

REED: Six hundred and seventy three.

TOBY: Pete throws up his first souvlaki at Chequers Inn and his second at The Rose. Money well spent. By the time we hit The Prince Alfred some of the boys are getting toey and the Jägers start to flow. Bit early. Gone seven ? That's okay then.

LEN: How many beers are Jagers worth again?

REED: Twenty.

TOBY: Then Len puts The Angels on.

WE HEAR THE ANGELS – “TAKE A LONG LINE”. THE BOYS FORM UP IN A LINE AND BEGIN TO JUMP TO THE MUSIC.

LEN: (SPEAKS) This is it folks. Over the top.
(SINGS) He was sellin' postcards from a paper stand
Whiskey bottle in his withered hand
He put his finger on a photo from an old magazine
And saw himself, in the shadow of a dream

They found him with his head inside a tin-pot crown
Told him his feet stank and took him downtown
Called him agitator, spy, a thief
Shut him up in solitary third degree

ALL: (SINGS) Take a long line, take a long line, take a long line
Reel him in...

TOBY: Have a Jäger or two myself, Reed calls it –

REED: One thousand.

TOBY: And we're well on the way.

WE HEAR IRISH FOLK MUSIC.

TOBY: Then we're in a place called the Sloaney Poney. Shit Doug. What are we doin' here ? There's a sign on the door saying “No Papparazzi”. How about “No fuckin' drunk footyheads”. The bitch at the bar won't serve us and I've got a feeling the manager's calling for back up. Worse still there's some Irish folk band playing. Hotfoot it out of there and we're in The Palace Hotel.

IRISH MUSIC FADES.

TOBY: This is better. The Palace is stop twelve and we're pretty well on schedule – eleven players have already spewed. That's the idea. Twenty seven players – twenty seven pubs – twenty seven spews. Had a quiet one myself. But I'm not letting on yet. It was only a half'a so it doesn't really count. Next we're out of Port Melbourne – finally – and into South Melbourne.

REED: Unlucky thirteen is the Market Inn –

DOUG: full of more fuckin' Irishmen

LEN: but at least they're not playing banjos.

TOBY: Around this point – Len and Reed have a conversation.

LEN: Reed ... can I ask you somethin' ...

REED: Sure Len.

LEN: You drink as much as us.

REED: Yep.

LEN: Beer for beer.

REED: Yep.

LEN: Just as much.

REED: That's right.

LEN: But you never seem to get pissed. Why is that ?

BEAT.

REED: I have no idea.

BEAT.

LEN: Right. (BEAT) Thanks for the chat Reed.

REED: No problem Len.

TOBY: Then it's up to The George and a little footbridge over the tram line. This is tricky and I'm not really sure if Doug's thought this through. Par for the course. Twenty seven players plus one narrow footbridge equals shit happens. Boys start climbing over

the rails, hanging over the highly electrified tram lines, jumping up and down – testing the bridge builders’ craft. Then Joey Duffy calls out:

LEN PLAYS JOEY DUFFY.

JOEY DUFFY: Hey Reed, how many beers for hanging off the tram bridge ?

REED: Minus five hundred.

TOBY: But Joey does it anyway.

JOEY HANGS OFF THE BRIDGE.

TOBY: The tram is fast approaching and Joey’s hanging on by his fingers. It looks like the tram will either collect the Duffster – or have an unticketed passenger sitting on top for the rest of the trip. But just before it gets ugly Stucci and Mickey Moore pull Joey up.

REED AND DOUG COMBINE TO PULL JOEY BACK ON TO THE BRIDGE.

JOEY DUFFY: What’s the count ?

REED: Almost one less.

JOEY SETS OFF LIKE A ROCKET, TEARING AROUND STAGE.

TOBY: Joey gets up and sets off like a rocket down the steps and across the road, he nearly collects a taxi and ricochets off a (CONT) parking sign into the Railway Hotel - stop fourteen. As we walk in I look up and see a palm tree on the pub sign: “What the fuck is that doing there?” I spew again at The Railway and this time I can’t keep it covert.

DOUG LAUGHS.

TOBY: Don’t know what Doug’s laughing about. Held out longer than most of them. Len’s already spewed four times.

LEN: Three !

TOBY: Next it’s up the road to the next stop. It’s a long way and the boys are flagging. (TO **DOUG**) “Hey Doug, how much further Doug? Boys are pretty tired.”

DOUG: (TO **TOBY**) Shut up pretty boy and keep walking.

TOBY: Just asking a question. Isn't there anywhere closer?

DOUG: No, there isn't. So shut your mouth.

TOBY: I play it cool. If I put on much more of a stink Doug'll probably start walkin' us round in circles. We trudge on in silence. Except for Joey Duffy.

LEN BECOMES JOEY DUFFY AGAIN, DODGING CARS WHILE HE MAKES AIRPLANE NOISES.

TOBY: He's out in the middle of the road, dodging cars, making airplane noises, doing his best impersonation of Shawn Mackay.

TOBY: Finally we reach it. The Gunn Island Hotel –

LEN: Where's the fuckin' Island ?

DOUG: (RAISING FIST) Right here.

TOBY: More shots and Jägers. Some of the boys are doin' it pretty hard. Then it's up the road – again - and word goes round we're finally in St Kilda. Stop sixteen. Only eleven to go. The pub's called The Saint but it does not live up to its name. Firstly Walshy – our out centre, but big for an out centre, almost like a forward –

DOUG BECOMES FUSE.

LEN: We call him Fuse.

FUSE: Because I've got such a short one.

LEN: King hits this local.

TOBY: Outta nowhere. One minute he's standing there sipping his pot and the next he's standing over this prick, breathing fire.

FUSE: Only one thing I hate more than a cunt. A Victorian cunt.

THE FUSE LETS GO WITH A PUNCH.

TOBY: So we're outta there quicksmart and the next bit of drama – Joey Duffy's plane imitation finally goes askew and he gets cleaned up by a taxi.

LEN PLAYS JOEY DUFFY GETTING HIT BY THE TAXI.

TOBY: He bounces straight back up.

JOEY DUFFY: What happened ?

TOBY: You got hit by a taxi.

JOEY DUFFY: (PLEASED) Yeah. Hey Reed, how many points for that?

REED: Minus one thousand.

JOEY DUFFY: Yeah. Shit eh. Did I break anything ?

TOBY: (CHECKING HIM UP AND DOWN) Don't think so.

JOEY DUFFY: Don't think so either.

TOBY: He's too pissed to feel it anyway. Before I know it we're into The Prince of Wales. They're playing The Oils.

WE HEAR "I DON'T WANNA BE THE ONE" – MIDNIGHT OIL.

TOBY: Internally something strange has started to happen. I don't feel drunk anymore. The more I drink the more sober I become. Every beer is making me sharper, clearer, bringing the eyes back into focus. I'm experiencing a rare phenomena called – "Reverse inebriation". Call it Reed.

REED: Fifteen hundred.

TOBY: I feel like I can do anything. Slay any dragon, fuck any chick, win any Premiership. Fuck Collegians, fuck the Pirates – I'll win the

TOBY: (CONT) comp by myself next year. The Toby team, the Toby Machine. A team of fifteen fuckin' Tobys. We'll blitz the world. Thrash anyone. Destroy all comers. I am invincible.

TOBY JERKS TO THE MUSIC.

TOBY: (SINGS) I'm an innocent victim, I'm just like you
We end up in home units with a brick wall view
I can't believe the perfect families on my colour TV
If I don't make it to the top it'll never bother me

ALL: (SINGS) And I don't wanna be the one
And I don't wanna be the one

TOBY: But my revelry is rudely cut short when I find myself at the bar next to the Prophet, who in the middle of all this celebration is far from happy. Surprisingly.

REED PLAYS ROY.

TOBY: How's it going Proph ?

ROY: Okay.

TOBY: Don't sound too happy there buddy.

ROY: Sorry.

TOBY: What's up? Season's over. Can't prophesise any more losses.

ROY: Just thinking.

TOBY: About what ? (TO AUDIENCE) Stupid question.

ROY: When I was five.

TOBY: Yeah ? Long time ago.

ROY: You'd think so. But it seems like yesterday.

TOBY: Why's that ? (TO AUDIENCE) Why the fuck did I ask ?

ROY: It was just before Christmas. And I was looking for pressies, you know ?

TOBY: Sure.

ROY: I knew Mum kept some in the cupboard so I snuck into her room and slid open the door. It was a huge old cupboard, wood veneer, you know ?

TOBY: Sure. (TO AUDIENCE) Somebody shoot me.

ROY: Inside was this big piece of cardboard with little farm animals stuck to it. I knew I should've waited. I knew she'd find out, but I couldn't help myself. I had nothing you see ? And I just wanted something. Something special - for me.

TOBY: Sure. (TO AUDIENCE) It was about this time I wish Prophet had stuck to the lemonades.

ROY: So I took a horse, a few cows, a little pig – and I started playing farm right there on my mum's bedroom floor. Didn't even like playing farm, but that's what I did. It was only a few toy animals – a few cheap pieces of plastic. But I felt something I hadn't felt for a long time.

TOBY: What was that Roy ?

ROY: Happy.

THE OTHER NOISE FADES AND THERE IS SILENCE.

ROY: Mum came home soon and found me with the animals. She dragged me out of the house, on to the street, ripped down my shorts and slapped me hard. Again and again. She was still drinking then. She kept screaming at me: "Little thief, little thief." I was crying. My sister came out – she was crying to – yelling at Mum to stop. So Mum slapped her across the face. Hit her so hard she knocked her onto the footpath. My sister just lay there, breathing, softly. Too shocked or stunned to move. And then Mum looks at me and she says: "Well I hope you're happy. You've ruined Christmas." (BEAT) Soon after that, my kitten died.

BEAT.

TOBY: Shit. What do you say to that ? So I just walked away leaving the Prophet sitting alone. Suddenly I didn't like The Prince of Wales that much anymore.

LEN: Hey Tob-ster, Doug says we're going.

TOBY: Thank Christ for that. There's ten more stops but I'm not really in the mood anymore. Our Odyssey has become a long march and I just want to get to the end.

LEN AS JOEY DUFFY STARTS TO LIMP. DOUG AND REED SUPPORT HIM.

TOBY: Joey Duffy starts to limp, maybe he has broken something, so we take turns to carry him. Fuse king-hits somebody else –

FUSE: Only thing I hate more than a Victorian cunt is a West Australian cunt.

THE FUSE PUNCHES SOMEONE, THEN IS DECKED IN RETURN.

TOBY: and gets king-hit himself.

FUSE: Who did that ?

TOBY: He wants revenge –

FUSE: (BRANDISHING GLASS) I'll track down the cunt who did it. Sort him out – nicely.

TOBY: But Doug isn't playing. He laughs. Reed calls it –

REED: Two thousand.

TOBY: but I ain't even listening. We walk around the corner to The Espy but the line's so long to get in we don't even bother. The last nine pass in a blur. Village Belle, Red Eye Bar, some shit place

called Greasy Joe's, The Elephant and something, another pub called The George, Barkly Hotel. And finally Doug called it:

DOUG: Twenty seven. Last stop.

TOBY: And the pub crawl was over. Last thing I remember is ending up at some burger place in St Kilda. Or was it in Fitzroy. Maybe it was Fitzroy St in St Kilda. Pete had recovered by then so he had a triple with the lot -

ALL: Extra chili.

TOBY: I didn't order anything. I just sit at a window – next to The Prophet, who's on the phone to his mum –

ROY: (TEARY) I love you Mum.

JOEY DUFFY HOPS AROUND ON ONE LEG, DODGING TRAFFIC.

TOBY: Watch Joey hop around on the road outside, playing dodgem cars with one leg, thinking: "Where the fuck am I and who are these people ?" (SUDDENLY) Joey, watch out !

SOUND OF CAR BREAKS SCREECHING.

LIGHTS CHANGE.

REED: Saturday.

DOUG: Around noon.

LEN: I'm in the foyer with the Hamster, Ryan, Ryan's Mate and Ando. We're itching to get back out there.

TOBY: There's a piece of paper stuck to the motel noticeboard.

DOUG: A little pirate logo.

LEN: And the words:

REED: "Current score."

TOBY: And the number:

REED: "2176."

LEN: It's so we know where we're up to in case any boys get some sneaky ones in and Reed needs to add them on.

DOUG: Over two thousand. Not even Saturday arvo. Not bad.

TOBY: We head out to the local

LEN: for a bit of recovery.

DOUG: Roll call.

ONCE MORE THEY BECOME THE CHARACTERS BUT THIS TIME
WITH LESS ENTHUSIASM.

DOUG: Pete

LEN: The Prophet

REED: Brown Dog.

DOUG: Ando.
TOBY: Grego

LEN: Bevo.

REED: Gully.

DOUG: Timmy Smith

TOBY: Ryan

LEN: Ryan's mate.

REED: Ears.

DOUG: Legs.

TOBY: Handbag.

LEN: The Hamster

REED: Special.

DOUG: Pommy Bastard.

TOBY: Gaz.

LEN: Graham.

REED: Goose.

TOBY: Stucci

LEN: Mickey Moore

REED: Reed

DOUG: Doug

LEN: Len

TOBY: Toby

REED: We're two short.

LEN: Bit of trouble last night after we got back.

TOBY: Joey Duffy wouldn't stop jumping around so his roomy, Walshy –

LEN: Fuse.

DOUG: King hit him.

LEN: As if he hadn't done that enough last night already.

TOBY: Probably not a good idea to put those two together.

REED: Then it got nasty.

TOBY: Hotel management got involved.

DOUG: Golden tour rule.

TOBY: One of the few.

DOUG: Just common sense. "Don't shit where you sleep."

TOBY: More like if they kick us out we lose our deposit.

DOUG: (TO TEAM) Joey and Fuse are in lock-down.

TOBY: At the hotel.

LEN: In the same room.

TOBY: That'll be interesting.

DOUG: We get to the beer garden.

REED: Pull up some tables.

LEN: A few quiet ones.

DOUG: And we watch the cricket.

LEN: On the telly.

REED: And a great calm falls over the team.

DOUG: There's something great about watching the Aussies play cricket. Their superiority is so immense, their victory so inevitable - it's like order being restored to a dis-ordered world. Whoever they're smashing – the Indians, the Darkies, the Poms – there's a feeling that whatever shit is going down in your life, you can forget about it – even if just for a few hours. While Punter, Pup –

LEN: and Mr Cricket -

DOUG: Flog the living daylights outta some no-hopers. All is at peace on earth – and the Aussies are sitting right where we should – right at the top of the shit-pile.

LEN: After awhile the good natured banter kicks in.

REED PLAYS BRODIE.

BRODIE: Hey Doug – saw what you pulled last night. Did you drop her back to the zoo this morning ?

DOUG: Saw what you dragged home Special. Nothing to boast about there.

LEN: As I said – good natured.

TOBY: You hear Collegians are in town.

DOUG: Is that so ?

TOBY: Yeah, Timmy Smith saw 'em last night. At one of the pubs. Col Whelan was there, and the rest of 'em.

LEN: Collegians ? Let me at 'em. Pack'a cunts. I'll take 'em on. By myself. Bit a Pirate revenge. Where are they ?

REED: The Lenster - settle.

BEAT. LEN SITS.

DOUG: Collegians ? Really ? (CALLS) Anyone else see 'em ?

SILENCE.

TOBY: It's true. They were there.

DOUG: Well that's nice. At least you'll have some mates to hang out with.

LAUGHTER.

REED: Then the conversation took a curious turn.

LEN: Hey Doug-ster.

DOUG: What is it now Leonard ?

LEN: Why do we come to Melbourne ?

DOUG: Why do we come to Melbourne ?

LEN: Yeah. Why do we come to Melbourne ?

TOBY: Yeah Doug. Why do we come to Melbourne ?

BEAT.

DOUG: You know why.

LEN: Do I ?

DOUG: Yep.

BEAT.

LEN: Remind me.

DOUG: Reed.

REED: We come to Melbourne because - we always come to Melbourne.

LEN: Yeah, but why ?

REED: Drop it Len.

TOBY: What Reed ? Fair question.

DOUG: Cheaper.

LEN: What do you mean ?

REED: Len.

LEN: The hotel ? They got plenty of shit hotels in Sydney. The beers ? Some of the prices they charge us last night – and you get it in this pissy little cup.

DOUG: The flights – fuckhead.

LEN: Yeah ?

DOUG: Yeah. Cost three times as much to fly to Sydney.

LEN: (BEAT) Oh, right.

DOUG: Now shut up and let me watch the cricket.
BEAT.

REED: (TO AUDIENCE) That wasn't exactly true. My brother knows a travel agent. Get us cheap tickets to Sydney. Even cheaper than Melbourne. Doug knew that. I told him. Months ago.

TOBY: There was another reason why Doug keeps coming to Melbourne.

REED: A reason not everyone needs to know.

TOBY: Turns out he has an old girlfriend here.

REED: An old love.

LEN: Doug loved someone ?

REED: Once.

TOBY: Her name was:

BEAT. THEY ALL LOOK AT **LEN**.

TOBY: Her name was:

BEAT. THEY ALL LOOK AT **LEN**. THEY ALL SHOVE **LEN** INTO THE SPOTLIGHT.

ROSIE: Rosie.

DOUG: Nice ... name.

ROSIE: We worked together for a while just after Doug finished school.

DOUG: It was only a couple of months.

ROSIE: But it meant a lot to Doug.

DOUG: We only went out a few times but I always had the feeling there was something between us –

ROSIE: Something important.

DOUG: That Rosie was the girl for me. I know it's crazy.

REED: Not that crazy.

DOUG: But I felt something for Rosie I've never felt for anybody else.

TOBY: Something hard.

DOUG: Shut it Toby.

LEN STEPS OUT OF THE LIGHT.

LEN: So what happened ?

DOUG: She moved to Melbourne.

LEN: You keep in touch ?

DOUG: No, but I wish I had. All I know is she moved to Melbourne.

DOUG GOES BACK TO WATCHING THE CRICKET.

LEN: How long ago was this ?

REED: Five years.

LEN: That's a long time. She could be –

TOBY: Married.

LEN: With three kids.

TOBY: Three ? Maybe two.

REED: Doug was thinking all that while he watched Hughesy notch another tonne. But he didn't say –

LEN: Anything.

TOBY: We just sat –

REED: And watched the cricket.

LEN: Come to think of it - no one said much.

TOBY: The quiet before the storm.

LEN: And very soon.

REED: It was night.

LIGHTS CHANGE.

DOUG: Hotel.

REED: Carpark.

DOUG AND REED STAND FACING EACH OTHER. BEAT.

DOUG: Again.

SUDDENLY **REED PUNCHES DOUG HARD IN THE CHEST. DOUG FLINCHES. BEAT.**

DOUG: Again.

REED PUNCHES DOUG HARD IN THE CHEST AGAIN. DOUG TAKES A STEP BACK, STEADIES. BEAT.

THEY FACE EACH OTHER ONCE MORE.

DOUG PUNCHES REED HARD IN THE CHEST. REED DOES NOT MOVE.

REED: Again.

DOUG PUNCHES REED HARD IN THE CHEST AGAIN. AGAIN REED DOES NOT MOVE.

REED: Again.

DOUG PUNCHES REED AS HARD AS HE CAN IN THE CHEST, GROANING WITH EFFORT AS HE DOES. REED FLINCHES.

DOUG IS PLEASED.

LEN IS WATCHING.

LEN: What are you boys doing ?

DOUG: Warming up.

LEN: For what ?

REED: Big night.

DOUG: Gotta warm up, just like a game.

BEAT.

LEN: Can I have a go ?

DOUG AND REED LAUGH.

LEN: What's so funny ?

REED: You don't want a go.

LEN: Tougher than I look.

DOUG: No you're not.

LEN: (TAKING UP STANCE) Try me.

REED: I'm not gonna hit you.

LEN: I can take it.

DOUG: No you can't.

LEN: Can too.

BEAT.

DOUG: Alright Reed. Hit him.

REED: No Doug.

DOUG: Hit him. Just a softy. Little love tap.

LEN: No bloody love tap. Hit me. Proper like.

DOUG: Go on Reed. You heard the man.

REED: No.

DOUG: Hit him. And no holdin' back. (ASIDE TO **REED**) Let the little shit have it. Teach him a lesson.

LEN: That's right Reed. Don't hold back. I'm ready.

REED: No you're not.

LEN: Drop the attitude Reed. Just fuckin' hit me.

REED: If you say so.

REED SQUARES UP TO LEN. BEAT.

LEN: Again.

DOUG AND REED COLLAPSE LAUGHING.

LEN: What's so funny ?

DOUG: He hasn't hit you yet.

LEN: So ?

DOUG: So you can't say 'Again' till he hits you the first time.

LEN: Big diff.

DOUG: No, it's a little diff – but it's still a diff.

LEN: What am I meant to say then ?

REED: How about: "Ready Set Go."

LEN: Okay. I'll say that then.

DOUG AND REED LAUGH.

LEN: I said I'll say it. "Ready Set –

DOUG: "Clobber me."

LEN: Shut up Doug.

DOUG: Don't tell me to shut up you little prick.

LEN: Let's just do this.

DOUG: Okay. Let's do it. Reed, hit him.

LEN: Yeah. Hit me.

REED: You say so.

LEN AND REED SQUARE UP AGAIN. LEN TENSES, CLOSING HIS EYES TIGHT,

LEN: Ready ... Set ... Go !

REED COLLAPSES LAUGHING AGAIN.

LEN: What's so funny ?

REED: You just look funny.

REED IMITATES LEN.

DOUG: Fuck this. I'll hit him.

DOUG GOES TOWARD LEN.

REED: Hold on Doug. He's not –

DOUG HITS LEN HARD IN THE STOMACH. LEN IS DRIVEN BACK. HE STAGGERS BACKWARDS AND SINKS TO HIS KNEES.

REED: set.

LEN SLUMPS TO THE GROUND. PAUSE.

REED: (TO **LEN**) You okay ?

PAUSE.

LEN: Shit Doug. I think you've killed me.

LIGHTS CHANGE.

TOBY: It's Saturday night.

REED: And that meant

DOUG: one thing –

LEN: (WEAK) The Crown

TOBY: Casino.

BRIGHT LIGHTS. MUSIC.

REED: Still two down.

TOBY: Duffy and Walsh ?

DOUG: We got back to the hotel and they'd scarpered.

LEN: Jail break.

TOBY: Shit. Where'd they go ?

DOUG: Who knows ?

REED: They'll turn up.

LEN: In one piece ?

DOUG: Whatever happens, remember - brought it on themselves.

TOBY: This was it. Crown Casino. Saturday night. The high point of our trip. No one was going to let –

DOUG: Two dickheads –

LEN: Drag us down. What's the count ?

REED: Three thousand four hundred and twenty five.

LEN: Shit ! How we get there ?

DOUG: With lots of elbow power from -

LEN: The Lenster.

TOBY: The Tobster.

DOUG: The Dougster.

REED: Reed.

DOUG: Pirates, set sail.

ALL: Pirates Pirates Pirates

LEN: Pi - rrrraaaates !

LEN DOES THE PIRATE LAUGH. REED, TOBY AND DOUG LOOK AT HIM.

LEN: (TO THE BOYS) What ?

TOBY: (TO AUDIENCE) I ticked off three thousand four hundred and twenty six, seven and eight and I was in there –

LEN: Blackjack

REED: Roulette

TOBY: Poker

DOUG: Pokies.

TOBY: While I was busy blowing a lazy hundred on Caribbean Diamonds, Doug was nearby digging for

DOUG: Golden Nuggets –

DOUG SITS IN THE GLOW OF A POKIE MACHINE. TOBY APPROACHES AS CASINO MAN.

CASINO MAN WATCHES **DOUG**. PAUSE.

DOUG: Do you mind mate ? I'm playin' here.

CASINO MAN: Not at all.

DOUG: No, that means ...

CASINO MAN: What ? What does it *mean* ?

DOUG: (BEAT) Forget it.

BEAT.

CASINO MAN: The people in this country are cruel. Hard. (BEAT) No, cruel.

DOUG: That so.

CASINO MAN: It 's the weather, the climate. It's so blazingly hot, so fierce – burns away any kindness. (BEAT) Any goodness? Any kindness.

DOUG: Whatever you reckon.

BEAT.

CASINO MAN: You look like my son. Are you him ?

DOUG: Am I who ?

CASINO MAN: My son. You look just like him. He had dark hair, just like –

CASINO MAN GOES TO STROKE DOUG'S HAIR. DOUG KNOCKS HIS HAND AWAY.

DOUG: Look mate, you're kind of creeping me out.

CASINO MAN: I apologise. I don't mean to. It's just ...

BEAT.

DOUG: (STANDING) I'm gonna find another machine.

CASINO MAN: (GRABBING DOUG) Please.

DOUG: What ?

CASINO MAN: I need your help. You have to get me out of here.

DOUG: The door's over there.

CASINO MAN: I can't leave. I've been here for three days. I've lost fifty thousand dollars but -

DOUG: Mate, you're twisting –

CASINO MAN: Someone has to take me out. Walk me through the door. You need to do it. Will you ? Please ? I have to get out. Please !

BEAT. **DOUG** LOOKS AT THE MAN. HE TAKES THE MAN'S HANDS OFF HIS ARM.

DOUG: Like I said, the door's over there.

CASINO MAN GRABS HIM AGAIN.

CASINO MAN: Please.

DOUG: Take your hand off me cunt – or I'll put your face through that poker machine.

CASINO MAN RELEASES **DOUG**.

LEN: Meanwhile Reed was in the -

REED: Sports Bar.

TOBY: Away from the tables. And the noise.

REED: I don't really like to gamble.

TOBY: And he was about to have a very interesting encounter.

DOUG IS NOW **COL WHELAN**, WEARING A BLUE AND GOLD POLO SHIRT. HE APPROACHES **REED**.

COL: Reed.

REED: Col.

COL: Heard you boys were in town.

REED: Heard you were too.

COL: Shout you one.

REED: I've got thanks.

COL: Maybe later. (BEAT) You boys had a good season.

REED: We did.

COL: Could've been great but good all the same.

REED: You boys were too good on the day.

COL: Not sure that we were.

REED: What the scoreboard said.

COL: Coulda said different.

REED: Bounce of the ball.

COL: Not sure it was. That last move. Your captain.

REED: Doug.

COL: Doug. Had a man outside.

REED: Didn't see him.

COL: On his shoulder. Hard to miss.

REED: Didn't see him.

COL: Or did he just not like the thought of your pretty boy winger being the match winner ?

BEAT. **REED** LOOKS AT COL.

COL: Fair enough. (BEAT) You still enjoying your rugby ?

REED: Course.

COL: I mean - at Pirates ?

REED: Why wouldn't I be ?

COL: Playing with a captain, like that.

REED: Doug's the captain Col - he's also my mate.

BEAT.

COL: Sure. It's just ...

REED: What's your point ?

COL: We could do with someone like you.

REED: You got a Number 8. That Islander boy.

COL: Lome's okay. Bit old now, bit fat. Won't train either. Other boys don't like it.

REED: Nothing you can't handle.

COL: Slow too. Saw how you went past him in that final move. You were half way to the try line and he still hadn't lifted his head out of the locks' arse.

REED: That's cause Len was holdin' on to him.

COL: No, he was holdin' on to me.

THEY LAUGH.

COL: That's what I mean. You're not only a good Number 8 - good bloke as well.

REED: You too. Except on the field. On the field you're a cunt.

COL: Take that as a compliment.

REED: Your choice.

COL: Yours too.

REED: What are you tellin' me Col ?

COL: Just think you'd look good in blue and gold next year.

REED: Black is a good colour.

COL: Blue and gold are better.

REED: My Mrs reckons I look pretty good in black.

COL: And we'll look after her too. Jen, my Mrs, she runs a group for all the player's wives and girlfriends. They have a great time.

REED: Good to hear it.

COL: I'm not convincing you one little bit am I ?

REED: Nup.

BEAT.

COL: One more thing.

REED: Always is.

COL: State caps. How many of those you got ?

REED: Never been good enough.

COL: Come off it. Everybody knows you're the best Number 8 in the comp. Everybody.

REED: If I was - they'd pick me.

COL: That's not how it works. You know that. Collegians got two men on the selection panel.

REED: You saying it's rigged ?

COL: Just sayin' if you were playing for us ...

REED: Yeah ?

COL: They'd be nothing holding you back.

BEAT.

REED: Right.

BEAT.

COL: Will you at least think about it ?

BEAT. **REED IS SILENT.**

COL: Stupid bastard. (LEAVING) Enjoy your night Reed.

REED: You too Col.

COL EXITS.

LEN: About an hour later we get the call to pull out.

TOBY: But we only just got here!

DOUG: Hate this place. Table's are all rigged. Beers watered down and over-priced. Full of chinks too.

REED: That's how Doug explains it. But I sense there's something more. (TO **DOUG**) Boys are having a good time. You sure you want to leave ?

DOUG: Something came up.

BEAT.

REED: It's a boy's night. Why do you want to go chasing skirt?

DOUG: Got some new information. Fitzroy.

BEAT.

REED: (CALLS) Alright boys. We're movin' out. Fitzroy.

LEN: Fitzroy ! Why the fuck do we want to go to Fitzroy ?

DOUG TURNS TO LOOK AT **LEN**.

DOUG: Problem Leonard ?

LEN: No skip. Just saying – 'Fitzroy. Be great to go to Fitzroy.' (TO AUDIENCE) As soon as we get on the tram heading north I know they'll be trouble. Fitzroy and the Pirates go together like –

TOBY: Shit and saliva.

REED: With a dog piss chaser.

LEN: Stuck up University chicks, door bitches and over eager bouncers. To make matters worse – the Duffster and Fuse still haven't turned up. And sure enough first place we hit – it's on.

TOBY: The story of "The Punch".

REED: As told by

LEN: Lenny. Len. The Lenster. The Len-monster. The Lentologist. Leonard ?

BEAT.

DOUG: Len.

LEN IS JUBILANT.

LEN: Yes ! The Lenster. The Len-monster. The Lentologist.

DOUG WATCHES HIM. **LEN** REALISES **DOUG** IS WATCHING. HE STOPS. HE TURNS TO **DOUG**.

DOUG: Well. Get on with it.

LEN: It's not important how it starts. All you need to know is we're trying to get into this pub called The Evelyn where a crappy band's playing and the fuckhead at the door let's half of us in – then brings down the shutters. You don't do that. Let us all in – or none of us. That's the way to do it. Don't cut us off half way – especially when we're not even that pissed –

LEN HICCUPS.

LEN: Well most of us - or whoever is the one the shutter comes down on, might take it personally. And the Pirate who takes it personally this time is Bevo. Well actually it's Gully who the axe falls on – Bevo's already in – but when he sees a fellow member of the Tight Five getting shafted – he returns to the scene of the crime.

TOBY BECOMES BEVO. DOUG BECOMES THE BOUNCER. THEY FACE UP TO EACH OTHER.

LEN: A nasty stand off between Bouncer and Bevo ensues. Usually being stared down by Bevo would be enough for any Bouncer to re-think his chosen profession. But not this prick. This isn't The Havey. This is hard core. This guys the bouncer who fuckin' ko'ed David Hookes into the next life – and then some. And his knuckles are itching for it.

BEVO: What's the problem ?

BOUNCER: Think we've got enough of you boys in already.

BEVO: Is that what your opinion is it ?

BOUNCER: It is.

BEVO: Well, you know what they say about opinions.

BOUNCER: No. What ?

BEVO: Opinions are like arseholes. Everybody's got one.

BEAT.

BOUNCER: Is that what they say ?

BEVO: That's what they say.

LEN: The Bouncer is smiling but I can see the punch coming. It starts in the big toe on his right foot. It quivers up through his foot into his ankle, his calf, his knee - and then into his other leg. Then it pumps up through his thighs, into his balls and then his guts. His

face is changing colour now, getting redder and redder. Steam starting to boil. Then it's in his chest, his shoulders – then there's a little ripple and it's in his arms, his biceps, his forearms, his wrist, his fingers. They start to coil, closing into a fist of solid metal and the fist begins to rise.

THE BOUNCER PUNCHES BEVO - IN SLOW MOTION.

LEN: Bevo doesn't see it coming. It collects him square on the jaw and lifts him off his feet. It's like a pump action shottie and Bevo feels the full impact. He floats gracefully, gently through the air before he slams with a thud into the pub wall. He stays there for a millisecond – maybe two – still, peaceful – and then gently slides down the wall forming a pool of warm soft goo on the floor. The Bouncer's smile widens. He wipes his hands, brim full of satisfied.

BOUNCER: That's what you get when you open your mouth.

LEN: He looks down at what remains of Bevo – pleased with his handiwork. He never even sees Reed coming.

REED IS BESIDE THE BOUNCER.

LEN: There is a look on Reed's face that I've never seen before – and I never want to see again. Cold, hard, brutal. He taps the Bouncer on the shoulder and the Bouncer turns to face Reed. The Bouncer smiles again.

BOUNCER: "So, you want some – "

LEN: He never finishes the sentence.

It will be known forever more simply as "The Punch." Reed's right fist hardly moves. An inch. Maybe two. But there is such an explosion of power that you can almost hear the air pop with the rush. It's awesome, terrifying but beautiful at the same time. A punch of that speed and fury is truly a thing of elegance. The Bouncer sees it coming but has no time to react. Reed's fist hits him under his jaw and it's like the Bouncer's face just dissolves around Reed's knuckles. For a split second it's like Reed's punch slices right through the Bouncer's skull, like an oar cutting through the crystal smooth surface of a lake - and as Reed's fist cuts through, the Bouncer's features are left to try and re-assemble themselves as best they can.

After the initial impact the shattered pieces of the Bouncer's face have time to form themselves into one final expression.

He looks at Reed with a mixture of surprise, admiration, wonder. Then he goes down – like a sack of shit.

No one moves, for a long time. And when they do, they move slowly and full of awe. After "The Punch", once they've scraped up what is left of the Bouncer and tipped it in the bin outside, our

reception at The Evelyn is somewhat more cordial. We could stay. Matter of fact we could do anything we want. Drink gratis all night, raid the till, screw all the barmaids. Free range. We all have just witnessed something very special. Something great. A moment of majesty. But -

LIGHTS CHANGE.

DOUG: (TO **REED**) She's not here.

REED: (CALLS) Movin' on.

LEN: We move on. Which turns out to be a good move as the next place is full of hot chicks.

TOBY: (LOOKING AROUND) Nothing below an eight.

LEN: Bit intimidating really -

TOBY: who start to edge towards ten as we hit the half way mark.

REED: (OPENS BEER) Five thousand. Half way home.

WE HEAR A LOUD CHEER.

LEN: Five thousand and one -

TOBY: Two.

LEN: Three. First one to oblivion wins.

TOBY: I'm already there.

LEN: I find myself next to a leggy blonde at the bar. I must be pissed, very pissed, because I decide to try and chat her up. TO **BLONDE**) My name's Len. (BEAT) Well actually it's Glen but everyone calls me Len. (BEAT) I mean is it that hard to add the "g". It's just one syl - bal - lyl. Glen not Len. But still they call me Len. Probably because they know it pisses me off. (BEAT) You right for a drink - coffee, tea, me ?

THE BLONDE TURNS AROUND. IT'S **REED**.

LEN: Len, it's me. Fuck off.

LEN EXITS.

REED: Later on I find myself out the back ...

LEN, NOW **ROSIE**, APPEARS IN THE COLOURED SPOT. HE'S JOINED BY **TOBY**.

TOBY: You been waiting long ?

ROSIE: Only a couple of hours.

ROSIE TURNS TO LOOK AT HIM.

ROSIE: Nice shirt.

TOBY: My Mum bought it for me.

ROSIE: (POINTING AT LOGO) What's that ?

TOBY: Pirate.

ROSIE: You're not on some Footy tour are you ?

TOBY: Course not. (BEAT) Yes.

ROSIE: Stay away from me.

TOBY: (MOVING AWAY) Pity. I was just starting to like you.

ROSIE: Could be worse.

TOBY: (COMING BACK) That so ?

ROSIE: Some of the guys on Footy tours they have their names on the T-shirts. Drongo, Dickhead, Dipstick –

TOBY: You mean like that ?

TOBY TURNS AROUND.

ROSIE: (READING SHIRT) Toby.

TOBY: Don't I feel stupid.

ROSIE: At least you don't have your mobile number as well.

TOBY: Mobiles ?

ROSIE: Helps with the "chicks".

TOBY: Does it ?

ROSIE: Say you're in a pub and you see one of the

TOBY: Woodville Wankers ?

ROSIE: Yeah – and you like the look of Drongo or

TOBY: Dipstick.

ROSIE: No need to say hello. Just write down his number –

TOBY: And give him a call.

ROSIE: You boys are missing out.

TOBY: Oh we could've done it.

ROSIE: But you stopped them ?

TOBY: That's right.

ROSIE: Urged restraint ?

TOBY: Absolutely. Your basic name is far more classy.

ROSIE: Seriously ?

TOBY: Doug, the Captain, just hasn't thought of it. But as I soon as I tell him – those numbers'll be on. In a flash.

ROSIE: Look forward to it.

TOBY: I'll bet. (BEAT) So if you had your name on your shirt, what would it be?

DOUG: (ENTERING) Rosie ? Nice ... name.

ROSIE LOOKS AT DOUG.

DOUG: It's Doug. Doug Murray. From Adelaide. Remember – we worked at The Exeter.

ROSIE: Douglas ?

TOBY: Douglas. Nice.

DOUG: (TO **TOBY**) Shut it.

TOBY: Doug's our Captain. You remember ? Mentioned him earlier.

ROSIE: You did.

DOUG: Captain of the Panorama Pirates. Undefeated –

TOBY: Runners-Up.

DOUG: (TO ROSIE) So you living here now ?

ROSIE: Around.

DOUG: Still working behind the bar ?

ROSIE: When I have to. I'm trying to finish a degree.

TOBY: Yeah ? What –

DOUG: type of degree ?

ROSIE: Law.

TOBY: Impressive.

DOUG: Very. Tell you what – I'll get you a drink and you can tell me all about it.

ROSIE: It's okay. I'm already in the queue.

DOUG: Be waiting a long time. They're not serving out here.

TOBY: Makes sense.

DOUG: I'll get you one out front. Franjelico on ice. That's your drink isn't it ?

ROSIE: Good memory.

DOUG: Not the only thing that's good. Well ?

BEAT.

ROSIE: Sure. Toby ?

DOUG: No. He ...

TOBY: Thanks skip. Love one.

ROSIE LOOKS AT DOUG. BEAT.

DOUG: Won't be a sec.

DOUG EXITS.

TOBY: That was ...

ROSIE: icky.

TOBY: Douglas ?

ROSIE: Douglas. I should've twigged. Especially when you mentioned the Woodville Wankers.

TOBY: Panorama Pirates.

ROSIE: Not much difference really.

TOBY: Not much. So you're the famous Rosie ?

ROSIE: Famous ?

TOBY: Doug has been looking for you.

ROSIE: Nice. (BEAT.) I'm going to go.

TOBY: Douglas is getting you a drink.

ROSIE: You have it.

TOBY: He'll be pretty pissed off.

ROSIE: But I won't be here to see it – will I ?

TOBY: True.

BEAT.

ROSIE: We worked together at this shitty pub. Anyway, he got this fixation on me. Started waiting for me after work – even when he wasn't on shift.

TOBY: Icky.

ROSIE: Very. In the end I had to leave the pub. That – or take out an AVO.

TOBY: Sorry to hear that.

ROSIE: Last thing I want is for all that to start again.

BEAT.

TOBY: Go. I'll cover for you.

ROSIE: Thanks.

ROSIE STARTS TO LEAVE. BEAT.

TOBY: Would you have taken down my number ?

ROSIE STOPS.

TOBY: If it was on my shirt.

ROSIE: No.

TOBY: Sorry. Stupid -

ROSIE: Very. Presumptuous too.

TOBY: Not sure what that means – but it doesn't sound good.

ROSIE: It's not.

ROSIE STARTS TO LEAVE. BEAT. SHE STOPS AND COMES BACK.

TOBY: If you're going, you better –

ROSIE: You come to Melbourne much ?

BEAT.

TOBY: I could.

ROSIE PULLS OUT A PEN. SHE WRITES HER NUMBER ON TOBY'S HAND.

ROSIE: Use it. (BEAT) And don't give it to him.

TOBY LOOKS AT HER.

ROSIE: I'm serious. I don't want Douglas calling me. Only you.

TOBY NODS. BEAT.

ROSIE EXITS.

DOUG RETURNS WITH THE DRINKS.

DOUG: Here we are.

TOBY: She had to go.

DOUG: Where ?

TOBY: Don't know. But she did give me a quick blowjob in the toilet first.

DOUG MOVES IN.

TOBY: Settle. Her phone beeped and she said she had to go. Told me to say goodbye.

DOUG: Did she leave a number ?

TOBY: No.

DOUG: Fuck !

BEAT. **DOUG** SUDDENLY COMES TO **TOBY**.

DOUG: I swear Toby – if you're fuckin' with me – I'll fuckin' –

TOBY: I'm not fuckin' with you Doug. That's what happened. She was sitting here, waiting for you – then her phone went and she said she had to go.

DOUG: And she didn't leave her number ?

TOBY: Not unless she gave it to the barman to give to you.

DOUG: And that's all ?

TOBY: Apart from the blowjob.

DOUG: Fuck ! (BEAT) I swear Toby. If you are –

TOBY: I'm not. Just fuckin' chill out. Maybe she'll come back.

DOUG: Fuckin' hope so.

TOBY: Good.

BEAT.

DOUG: Alright. I'll see you out front.

TOBY: Be there in a sec.

DOUG: (LEAVING) Fuck, who drinks Franjelico ?

BEAT. **DOUG** SKULLS THE FRANJELICO.

LEN: Six thousand !

DOUG RAISES HIS FIST AND WALKS OFF.

LIGHTS UP ON **REED**.

REED: Sunday morning – I go to the gallery. Before he died my father once told me that was a good place to go to think. So I go to the

gallery. I wander through the big, silent rooms full of huge paintings in golden frames. Landscapes, water paintings, oils. In one room I find a massive picture. So big it almost covers a whole wall. There's a soldier on horse back – leading a charge into battle. He's on a white horse, bright red uniform, raised sword - glinting in the sun. To the right there's his second in charge, riding close behind. The leader is looking straight ahead but his captain isn't looking in front of him. He's looking straight at the leader. There's an expression on his face – admiration, blind faith, love. I look at the picture for a long time. Wonder what happened to them – the leader and the follower ? Do they win or lose, live or die, kill or be killed? (BEAT) Then I left the gallery.

LIGHTS CHANGE – SHIMMERING, THE SURFACE OF A LAKE.

REED: Afterwards, I wandered through a park. I wasn't sure where I was going. Just somewhere. I found a bench, next to a lake. Still, silent. And I sat down and stared at the water for a very long time. So deep, blue, quiet. (BEAT) I sat there for what seemed a long time. Then I got up and walked back to the hotel.

BEAT.

TOBY: Sunday is
 DOUG: Better known as
 LEN: Silly Sunday.
 TOBY: Stupid Sunday.
 REED: Very fuckin' stupid Sunday.
 DOUG: Sunday
 LEN: is about drinking.
 TOBY: Friday was the
 DOUG: Pub crawl.
 TOBY: Saturday was the
 REED: Cricket
 TOBY: Followed by the Casino
 REED: Fitzroy

LEN: "The punch"

DOUG: And something more.

LEN: But Sunday is about drinking.

REED: Very serious drinking.

TOBY: Very serious fuckin' drinking.

LEN: Because we haven't done any of that.

TOBY: Yet.

DOUG: Roll call.

AGAIN THEY BECOME THE CHARACTERS, WITH EVEN LESS ENTHUSIASM.

DOUG: Pete

REED: Brown Dog.

DOUG: Bevo

LEN: Dickhead.

TOBY: Cockbreath.

LEN: Wanker.

TOBY: Doug is a -

DOUG: Very funny, fuck faces.

LEN: Go easy Doug. I woke up feeling like shit. I can't remember whether something happened with the tall blonde –

REED: Or not.

LEN: Hey Tob-ster, did anyone come home with me ?

TOBY: Don't fuckin' ask me. Don't even know how I got here.

REED: To make matters worse –

BRIGHT GLARING LIGHT. THE BOYS COVER THEIR EYES.

DOUG: It's forty fuckin' degrees.

LEN: It's one of the lovely little secrets that the tourist brochures like to omit about lovely little Melbourne.

TOBY: It gets hots.

LEN: Stinkin' fuckin' hot.

REED: And it's a dry heat.

LEN: Stinkin' fuckin' dry.

TOBY: In Bris-vegas or Sydney you'd get a nice storm or cool change at the end of the day –

DOUG: (TO **TOBY**) As if you'd know.

REED: Some relief.

LEN: But not Melbourne.

REED: It just gets hot.

LEN: Stinkin' fuckin' hot.

TOBY: And at night –

LEN: It just gets hotter. Next day –

TOBY: You do it all over again.

REED: Except of course when it's raining.

LEN: I feel like shit – and it's only gonna get worse. The note on the board says

TOBY: Six thousand

DOUG: Two hundred

REED: and twenty three.

LEN: Is that it ? No late additions. (BEAT) Shit. Nearly four thousand to go and it's Sunday. (CALLS) What happened to the boys last night?

DOUG: They faded. Like you.

LEN: We start at the local.

TOBY: Place we watched the cricket.

LEN: And thankfully Stupid Sunday starts with –

DOUG: Stupid sixty.

LEN: As in minutes. As in one hour.

TOBY: Reed calls out the rules.

REED: (CALLS) Stupid sixty.
CHEER FROM THE BOYS.

REED: For the next hour only, you wear stupid headwear – each beer counts ten.

CHEERING.

REED: You don't wear a hat – or anything else

LEN: Starkers ?

REED: Each beer counts one hundred.

LOUDER CHEER.

LEN: Century. I'll go for that.

DOUG: Please don't.

TOBY: Well, go on then.

LEN: Not now. Bit later.

DOUG: Please don't.

LEN: We all do it we'd hit ten thousand in no time.

DOUG: Please don't.

DOUG WALKS AWAY.

LEN: (NOT TO **DOUG**) Fuck off Doug. (CALLS) Hey, Fuse and the Duffster turn up yet ?

TOBY SHAKES HIS HEAD.

LEN: Shit. Hope they're alright.

DOUG: They won't be when I get a hold of them.

LEN: "Special" finds some traffic cones on the road outside.

TOBY BECOMES SPECIAL.

SPECIAL: These count as stupid headgear ?

REED: Can't get more stupid.

REED NODS.

LEN: Reed gives the nod and we're on the way. And I suddenly realise these pissy little pots could work to our advantage. Drink two of these in the time it takes to drink a schooner. Four of them in the same time as a pint. But they all still count as one drink –

REED: Or ten.

TOBY: Or one hundred.

LEN: Tobster and I put on a hat –

LEN AND TOBY PUT ON TRAFFIC CONES.

LEN: And we're in to it.

LEN AND TOBY START SKULLING POTS OF BEER. REED TALLIES, DOUG WATCHES.

REED: Six five.

LEN: So is everybody else, except Doug.

LEN AND TOBY KEEP SCULLING.

REED: Six six. (BEAT) Six seven.

LEN: Why isn't Doug drinking ?

REED: Six eight.

LEN: Then Penna gets his gear off and we're really flying.

LEN AND TOBY KEEP SCULLING.

REED: (GETTING FASTER) Seven thousand. Seven five. Eight thousand. Eight five.

LEN: (DRUNK NOW) Why isn't Doug ...

REED: Nine thousand. Nine five. Nine six. Nine seven. Nine eight. Nine nine. Hour's up.

TOBY: (ALSO VERY DRUNK) What's the count ?

REED: Nine thousand, nine hundred and eighty one.

LEN: Twenny t' go.

TOBY: (ALSO VERY DRUNK) No. Nine - teen.

LEN: (KICKING SOMETHING ON THE GROUND) Who's that ?

TOBY: (TAKING A GOOD LOOK) Penna.

LEN: Who's gonna put his clothes back on ?

DOUG: (CALLS) Right. Back to the hotel.

TOBY: What ?

DOUG: I said – back to the hotel.

TOBY: Not goin'. I'm just getting' started.

DOUG: Hotel. Now.

TOBY: Fuck off Doug. What are we gonna do there ? Sit around and jerk off – like you.

DOUG: Toby – I've spoken.

TOBY: And I'm speakin'. Me and the Len-ster, the Len-monster, the Len-tologist are just warmin' up. Getting' ready for a big one. We're headin' out. Aren't we Len ?

LEN: Ass-solutely.

DOUG: Len, can it.

TOBY: We'll be canning it. Won't we Len. We'll be canning it and glassin' it and shakin' it – maybe even pumpin' it. What you say boys – who's kickin' on with me ?

LEN: Me.

DOUG: He can't even stand up.

TOBY: He won't need to – will you Len ? The action will all be horizontal where we're goin'.

DOUG: Where's that ?

TOBY: You know where Doug. Little place called Fitzroy.

BEAT.

DOUG: Anything happens, I won't be there to bail you out.

TOBY: Only trouble we'll be getting' into Douglas – is the trouble you'd like to be getting' into.

BEAT.

DOUG: Well, you boys have a good time –

TOBY: Oh we will. Won't we Len ? We'd be having an even better time if -

DOUG: If what ?

TOBY: You'd passed the fucking ball.

DOUG: Like I said. I didn't see him.

LEN: Toby or their *whinger* ?

DOUG: Toby.

TOBY: I was right there.

LEN: Doug – he was on your *soulder*. He was *sceaming* at ya.

DOUG: I didn't see him. Tell 'em Reed.

TOBY: (TO TEAM) Here we go. (IMITATING **REED**) "Alright boys. You heard Doug. He's been a great captain. Led us all season. Undefeated. Couple of points off winning the Grand Final. He didn't see Toby. And that's an end to it."
Bullshit Reed and you know it. He did fucking see me. He knew exactly where I was. And who he was. And that's why he didn't pass. He didn't want me to score the winning try. Didn't want me to be the hero. The legend. The man who won Pirates the Premiership. If it had been someone else - Reed, "Special", even Len – Doug would've passed. But not me. He couldn't bear watching me score the winning try. Couldn't bear it more than losing the Grand Final. He knew it. All of us knew it. But we didn't say it. None of us. And that's why the boys from Collegians are drinking the sweet nectar of victory, parading the fuckin' Premiers Cup around Melbourne tonight – and not us ! Because Doug didn't pass !

BEAT.

LEN: Fuck Doug – is *thas* true ?

DOUG LOOKS AT **TOBY**. FOR A MOMENT IT SEEMS HE WILL EXPLODE. BUT THEN WHEN HE SPEAKS HE IS VERY CALM.

DOUG: I didn't see him.

DOUG EXITS. BEAT. **TOBY** STAGGERS OFF THE OTHER WAY.

LEN TURNS TO FOLLOW **TOBY**.

LEN: Hey Reed – you comin' ?

LIGHTS FADE ON **REED**.

LEN: (TO AUDIENCE) I'm really pissed. This isn't the sort of pissed you get after one session. This is the sort of pissed it takes days to build up. This is the real thing, far gone, la la land. I'm so pissed I'd shit myself and wouldn't notice – or care. I am fuckin' blind. We go to Fitzroy - I think. Back to that place where Reed nearly killed that bouncer. Then some place else. Then – I have no fuckin' idea where I am. It's like the whole world is suddenly made of ice cream and I'm swimming in an ocean of raspberry ripple. Then I look up and Toby's surfing towards me on a caramel swirl wave. I take a bite out of his surfboard – it's Rocky Road. Then Special floats in on a submarine which is made out of liquorice – and I'm just about to take a big chunk when I'm sucked into a whirlpool of mint chocolate chip – swirling me down and down and down – till I'm sitting on the bottom of a sea of vanilla beans. A fish swims past – it's made of butterscotch and almonds: "Hi fishy." (AS FISH) "Hhhheeeellllllloooo tttthhhheeee Lllleeeennnnssstttteerrr." I swim after the fish and suddenly I'm standing on the shores of an island on a beach of vanilla treacle under trees made of mars bars and jelly beans. Then I hear a voice. It says: "You have to pay for those?" "Pay for what?" The voice gets angry. "You have to pay for those?" "But I don't understand, pay for what?" "The ice creams dickhead." I suddenly look around – I'm in a gelato store holding four fast melting double cones in my hands. (BEAT) "I don't have any money."

LIGHTS NARROW TO A SPOTLIGHT ON **LEN**.

LEN: At some point I stagger back to the room. I push open the door and – alright ... Looks like the Tobster's got lucky. Rosie's come through with the goods. But then I notice there's other boys in the room. Bevo, Gully, Ears, The Hamster – what are they doing here? Then I look down at the bed. She's struggling, kicking her legs. I don't think she's enjoying this. I go to speak: "Hold on

LEN: (CONT) boys, she's ..." but then Bevo moves out of the way and I see who's on the bed. It's Toby. He starts screaming. Reed is

pinning him down – face first - and Doug is down the other end. Doug's ripped Toby's dacks off and he's ... he's ... Toby's struggling. He's yelling but it's muffled through the mattress. Toby keeps kicking but Doug just keeps going. The other boys are laughing, pouring their beers all over Toby. Somebody brushes past me and goes out the door. It's Reed. After awhile Doug stops and he picks up a plastic bag from the table. What's he got in that ? No Doug, not that. Not ... He takes it out of the bag and smears it all over Toby's face. Toby tries to yell but it just goes into his mouth. I want to say something, do something. Scream, shout, stop them. But I can't move. Then Doug turns to look at me – this insane look on his face: "Come on Len, join in." The last sound I hear before I pass out is Toby. Crying.

LIGHTS FADE. BLACKOUT.

LIGHTS UP - BRIGHT.

THE FOUR MEN STAND ON STAGE FACING THE AUDIENCE – IN EXACTLY THE SAME POSITIONS THEY WERE AT THE START.

LONG PAUSE.

DOUG: Monday. (BEAT) Monday.

LEN: Melbourne

REED: Airport.

TOBY: Seven a.m.

LEN: Sparrow fart.

DOUG: Pre-sparrow fart. (BEAT) You hear about Duffy and Walsh ?

TOBY: Nuh.

DOUG: They found two boogie boards and one bright spark thought it would be good to oil them up and surf down some escalators.

REED: How'd they go ?

DOUG: Duffy lost six teeth. Walsh broke his collarbone.

BEAT. **DOUG** PUTS HIS HAND TO HIS MOUTH.

DOUG: You reckon they got those sick bags on the plane ?

LEN: Every seat.

TOBY, REED AND LEN TURN TO LEAVE.

DOUG: Hey. We're not done.

DOUG THROWS LEN A BEER. HE TOSSES ONE TO REED AND ONE TO TOBY.

DOUG CRACKS OPENS HIS BEER.

DOUG: Nine thousand, nine hundred and ninety seven.

DOUG TAKES A SWIG.

REED CRACKS OPENS HIS BEER.

REED: Ninety eight.

REED TAKES A SWIG.

TOBY CRACKS OPENS HIS BEER.

TOBY: Ninety nine.

**TOBY TAKES A SWIG.
BEAT. THEY ALL LOOK AT LEN.**

LEN LOOKS DOWN AT HIS BEER, HE LOOKS UP AT THE AUDIENCE.

THE LIGHTS SLOWLY FADE.

END PLAY.