

blue gold

a play

in one act

by

Alex Broun

email: abroun@bigpond.net.au

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Characters

THE DISCIPLE

GAIL LIMES 50s

KEN LIMES her husband, 50s

SPRUCE An Executive, 30 – 40s

READING His assistant, 30s

RACHEL His secretary

Setting

An underground cave

An office in the city

Time

The present.

1. A cave, deep underground. Blue light shimmers.

DISCIPLE: Deep beneath the earth the body shimmers. The body glows. The body speaks – and I listen. Here in this sacred space – gouged out over millions of years deep within the rock, carved in ages from sand and stone - the body and I are one. Nothing separates flesh from form. The body from my body. The body whispers. The body teaches. The body warns. Something is coming. A shadow, a sceptre, a night cloaked demon. It creeps towards the body and the body calls to me for succour, sacrament, salvation. The body calls on me for sacrifice, allegiance, blood. It calls on me for rescue. The body speaks and I hear.

LIGHTS CHANGE.

2. Office, city.

READING and **SPRUCE**.

SPRUCE: So, how'd we go ?

READING: Okay.

SPRUCE: And ?

READING: Five.

BEAT.

SPRUCE: Say again.

READING: Five.

BEAT.

SPRUCE: That's good.

READING: Yes.

SPRUCE: Very good. Do they ...

READING: No.

SPRUCE: Sure ?

READING: Three.

SPRUCE: Really ?

READING: At the utmost.

BEAT.

SPRUCE: Well, that is fucking fantastic news. (BEAT) You gotta love this country.

READING: Do you ?

SPRUCE: Australia – where the strong look after themselves and the weak can fuck off.

READING: My sentiments precisely.

READING TURNS TO GO.

SPRUCE: Reading ?

READING STOPS.

READING: Yes ?

SPRUCE: You told them three.

READING: I did.

SPRUCE: And they have no idea it's ...

READING: No.

BEAT.

SPRUCE: Let's make sure it stays like that.

READING: Of course.

SPRUCE: Show them in.

READING EXITS. SPRUCE ALONE.

READING RETURNS WITH GAIL AND KEN.

READING: Here they are.

SPRUCE: Welcome, welcome.

READING: This is Mr and Mrs Limes.

GAIL: Gail.

KEN: Ken.

SPRUCE SHAKES THEIR HANDS WARMLY.

READING: This is Mr Spruce.

SPRUCE: Gregory, please.

KEN: That's a type of goose ain't it ?

GAIL: Ken. Haven't been here two minutes and he's calling you a "goose".

KEN: No, it's true.

SPRUCE: Your husband's right Mrs Limes.

GAIL: Gail.

KEN: Told you. Goose.

SPRUCE: But this was a very special type of goose. During the war –

GAIL: Which one ?

SPRUCE: Two. The Americans were trying to get supplies across the ocean to their troops in Europe but slight problem. Torpedoes. So Howard Hughes –

KEN: Who ?

SPRUCE: Hughes.

GAIL: You know silly ? Leonardo di Caprio played him in that movie.

KEN: Which movie ?

GAIL: The Terminator. Go on Greg.

SPRUCE: Gregory. Hughes' plan was to build a giant flying boat to haul in the supplies.

GAIL: Flying boat ?

KEN: But if it's flying – in the air - it's a plane ain't it ? Not a boat.

SPRUCE: They called it a flying boat because of its size. Wing span - 320 feet - tail over 80 feet.

GAIL: That's big.

SPRUCE: Made entirely of wood. They needed all the iron for the war.

KEN: The "wooden goose" ? Thought that was a horse.

GAIL: So it was a success ?

SPRUCE: Why do you say that ?

GAIL: Well they must've got the supplies. They won didn't they.

KEN: Bloody hope so.

GAIL AND KEN LAUGH.

SPRUCE: Actually it was a flop.

GAIL: Really ?

SPRUCE: Never got off the ground. Too big.

KEN: Pity.

GAIL: Sad. Very sad.

BEAT.

READING: Once.

SPRUCE: What ?

READING: It did fly. Once.

GAIL: Really ?

KEN: The goose takes flight ?

GAIL: When ?

SPRUCE: (TO **READING**) Please.

READING: On the 2nd of November 1947 at Los Angeles Harbour, Hughes and a small engineering crew fired up the eight radial engines for taxi tests. But then with Hughes at the controls, and thousands watching from the shore, the giant bird started gliding across the surface. It went faster and faster until suddenly – miraculously – it took off. The flying boat lifted 33 feet above the earth and flew one mile in less than a minute at a top speed of 80 miles per hour before making a perfect landing. This “trial” run is now looked upon as a great moment in aviation history. Many thought the flight was an accident but when the chief designer asked Hughes whether he meant to lift it off the water, Hughes replied, "You'll never know." And to this day – no one does.

BEAT.

SPRUCE: Scintillating.

KEN: Didn't know they had a harbour.

GAIL: Who ?

KEN: Los Angeles.

GAIL: Probably nicked it. Crafty buggers.

KEN: (TO **READING**) Maybe he flew it that once just to show the bastards he could.

GAIL: That's right. Good old Leo. He showed them.

KEN: Stuck it right up their left clacker.

KEN AND GAIL LAUGH AGAIN. BEAT.

READING: After the historic event, the "Spruce Goose" was returned to its large, specially designed hangar. As ordered by Hughes, it was constantly maintained and kept in flight-ready condition, including monthly run-ups of its engines – but it never spread its wings again.

KEN: (TO **READING**) So that was it. One quick turn over LA harbour and the goose was no more.

GAIL: Where is it now ?

READING: The aircraft was moved in 1992 and now resides in a newly constructed facility at the Evergreen Aviation Educational Center in McMinnville, Oregon. To this day, it is still the largest aircraft, in terms of wingspan, ever to fly. Howard Hughes died in 1976.

BEAT.

SPRUCE: Lovely ... story Reading. Thanks.

KEN: So what you're telling us is - all in all this goose was a bit of a turkey.

KEN AND GAIL LAUGH AGAIN.

KEN: As a flying boat – it's goose was cooked.

KEN AND GAIL LAUGH AGAIN.

GAIL: Oh stop it Ken.

KEN: As Golden Geese go – it was a goner.

KEN AND GAIL LAUGH AGAIN. BEAT.

GAIL: Ken please. I'm wetting myself.

KEN: (TO **SPRUCE**, SUDDENLY) So let's just hope your little scheme doesn't turn out to be a similar load of crap.

SILENCE.

SPRUCE: Shall we get down to business ?

KEN: Didn't come down here to La La Land to hear story about non-golden geeses. Or any other varieties.

SPRUCE: Our apologies for wasting your time.

KEN: Cause we know all about golden geese. Got one of our very own haven't we ?

GAIL: Ken.

SPRUCE: Of course, well -

KEN: Well what fuck face ?

GAIL: Charming.

SPRUCE: What you have is a very valuable commodity ?

KEN LOOKS AT SPRUCE IN MOCK SHOCK.

KEN: Do I ? Do I really ? A valuable commodity. Well fuck me.

GAIL: Please Ken. That word.

KEN: No love. We come down here and he treats us like – like fuckin' idiots. We have to listen to some cockamamie about geeses and now he's gabbing on about valuable commodities. We may come down from somewhere people really work for a living. But we're not two bit hicks you hear me ? We didn't come down in the last shower.

BEAT.

READING: It's a drought.

KEN: What ?

READING: You couldn't have come down in a shower. Because there hasn't been any. It's a drought.

KEN: Are you trying to be funny ? (TO **SPRUCE**) Is he trying to be funny ? Or are just hoping to piss me off even more ?

SPRUCE: I'm so sorry Mr Limes. We've wasted your time so much already. Especially after flying you all this way.

GAIL: He's right Ken. They did pay.

KEN: So what ? Bloody hour to the airport, then the bloody plane was late. Wait around for an hour – another hour and a half on that shit box they attempted to call a plane. You want goose ? That piece of shit was a goose alright. And then forty minutes in some cab with a dark skinned fuckwit who thought he was still in downtown Kabul. Been quicker to drive.

BEAT.

SPRUCE: How's the hotel ? Tried the spa yet ?

KEN: Oh, smooth movin' shit for brains but we haven't been there yet. Took us so long to bloody get here we were running late for the whole reason we came in the first place.

SPRUCE: Well, when you do - enjoy the French champagne. It's on us.

GAIL: I'm sure it will be lovely. Thank you.

KEN: Oh good. Champers. Sitting in the jacuzzi, in the nuddy, with all the other red faced wankers. You got some little French maid to wipe our arses for us too ?

BEAT.

SPRUCE: Perhaps we should just get to it.

GAIL: I think that might be best. It's the flight. Plays with his blood pressure.

KEN: Don't apologise for me.

GAIL: (SUDDENLY ANGRY) Well it does you stupid old git.

KEN IS SHOCKED INTO SILENCE. BEAT.

GAIL: (TO SPRUCE) Excuse us.

BEAT. **SPRUCE** TAKES OUT A MAP. HE OPENS IT ON THE DESK.

SPRUCE: If I may.

GAIL: Oh that's nice. A map of our property.

KEN: Where –

GAIL HOLDS UP A FINGER SILENCING **KEN**.

SPRUCE: Now, if you look in this area you'll see the shading –

KEN: How –

GAIL HOLDS UP A FINGER SILENCING **KEN** AGAIN.

GAIL: Do go on Gregory.

SPRUCE: The shading indicates –

KEN: I –

GAIL HOLDS UP A FINGER SILENCING **KEN** AGAIN. SHE MOVES TOWARDS HIM FORCING HIM DOWN IN HIS CHAIR. BEAT.

GAIL TURNS AND COMES BACK TO **SPRUCE** SMILING.

GAIL: Please. Go on.

SPRUCE: The shading indicates the area of what we have discovered.

GAIL: It's quite big isn't it ?

SPRUCE: Now what we'd like to do today is to put in place the arrangements for the utilising of the resource.

GAIL: That sounds nice.

SPRUCE: To do that we require your permission.

GAIL: Of course. Where do I sign ?

KEN IS BUSTING TO SPEAK.

SPRUCE: (LAUGHING) I think I'd be in a little trouble if I didn't explain some of the details to you beforehand.

GAIL: Oh that won't be necessary. I'm sure you know what you're doing.

KEN SQUIRMS IN HIS CHAIR, KICKING THE GROUND WITH HIS FOOT.

SPRUCE: (HOLDING UP REPORT) Don't you want to know how we'll handle the extraction, the filtration, the environmental impact study.

GAIL: Details.

SPRUCE: It's all here.

GAIL: Then I can read it later. Where's the pen ?

KEN SQUIRMS MORE VIOLENTLY IN HIS CHAIR. HE KICKS THE GROUND HARDER WITH HIS FEET.

SPRUCE: (OPENING CONTRACT) Can't argue with a woman her knows her mind.

GAIL: Next to the crosses.

KEN CAN'T HOLD IT ANY LONGER AND LETS OUT A LOUD SCREECH.

KEN: Priiiiice !!!

BEAT. **GAIL** TURNS TO HIM.

GAIL: Did you say something ?

KEN: (BEAT) Price.

BEAT.

GAIL: My braindead husband – for perhaps the first time in his life – has come up with something worthy to say. I guess I should ask. How much will you be paying us ?

SPRUCE: It's right here in Schedule 3. \$200 a megalitre.

GAIL: \$200. That sounds like a lot. Very generous.

SHE PICKS UP PEN. **KEN GOES WILD SQUIRMING AND KICKING.**

GAIL: (TURNING TO HIM) What ?

KEN: Graham Fletcher paid \$450 last Thursday.

GAIL: Did he ?

KEN NODS.

GAIL: What have you got to say to that Mr Spruce ?

SPRUCE: Your husband raises a good point Gail. I believe a few farmers in the area have paid a similar price but once your resource is made available to the market – the price will come down considerably.

READING: The market will be flooded.

READING LAUGHS. THEY ALL LOOK AT READING. READING STOPS LAUGHING. BEAT.

SPRUCE: It may drop even further to \$100 or even \$50 a megalitre, which is what is paid in other parts of the country. But that's entirely our risk. If it does drop under \$200 we'll still pay you the agreed figure. Either way – you win.

GAIL: And if it stays above \$200.

SPRUCE: It won't.

GAIL: But if it does ?

SPRUCE: Well, we keep the excess. But as I said – we are taking the risk. And of course there are considerable costs involved in the extraction – drilling, filtering, transport. We'll be covering all those.

GAIL: Still \$450 to \$200. That's quite a gap.

SPRUCE: Our calculations are accurate. And very fair – if I may say - (SHOWING PAGE IN CONTRACT) Schedule 7 - to all parties. And

if I may add it was our technician who discovered the resource in the first place. If he had never happened on your property you'd still be walking around out there not knowing what was laying just beneath your feet.

BEAT.

GAIL: I'm detecting a hint of smarm Greg. And I don't like smarm. One little bit.

SPRUCE: I assure you. My comment was smarm free.

GAIL: That sounds a bit like smarm too.

BEAT.

SPRUCE: \$250.

GAIL: \$400.

SPRUCE: \$275

GAIL: \$400.

SPRUCE: \$300 – and I really can't go any further without discussing it with the board.

BEAT.

GAIL: (SMILING) Done.

SPRUCE: You drive a hard bargain Gail.

GAIL: That was some very costly smarm.

SPRUCE: I'll watch that in future.

SPRUCE ALTERS THE SCHEDULE.

SPRUCE: If you could just initial the change.

GAIL INITIALS.

SPRUCE: And a signature.

GAIL RAISES HER PEN. BEAT.

SPRUCE: Something wrong.

GAIL: How much ?

SPRUCE: We just agreed - \$300 per megalitre.

GAIL: How much is down there ?

SPRUCE IS SILENT. BEAT.

READING: I believe the figure is in schedule 11.

GAIL: Which is where ?

READING SHOWS IT TO HER.

GAIL: 3 megalitres. All this trouble for 3 megalitres. Won't even be a grand.

READING: It's not megalitres.

GAIL: No ?

READING: The figure is in gigitalitres.

SPRUCE: See the little g.

GAIL: How much is a gigitalitre ?

READING: 1000 megalitres.

GAIL: One thousand. But that means

READING: Your cut is a little over nine hundred thousand.

GAIL: Nine hundred thousand what ?

BEAT.

READING: Dollars.

KEN NODS AND SMILES.

GAIL: Fuck me ! Give me the bloody pen.

GAIL GRABS FOR THE PEN BUT IN HER HASTE SHE FUMBLES IT AND IT FALLS UNDER THE DESK. SHE DIVES DOWN TO GET IT AS DOES KEN.

GAIL: Shit ! Where is it ?

KEN: I don't know.

GAIL: Well fucking find it Ken. This silly wanker wants to give us a Million bucks.

THEY CRAWL AROUND LOOKING FOR THE PEN.

THE DISCIPLE ENTERS FOLLOWED BY RACHEL.

RACHEL: I'm sorry. I tried to stop him.

THE DISCIPLE WEARS WHAT LOOKS TO BE A HESSIAN BAG TIED AT THE WAIST WITH ROPE. HIS FEET ARE BARE.

HE MOVES AROUND THE ROOM, SPRINKLING WATER FROM A WOODEN CUP, BLESSING THE ROOM.

DISCIPLE: Body shimmers. Body glows. Body listens.

READING TRIES TO SHEPHERD HIM OUT OF THE ROOM.

READING: I'm sorry. This is a private meeting.

THE DISCIPLE KEEPS BLESSING. GAIL LOOKS UP.

GAIL: Oh shit.

KEN: What ?

KEN LOOKS UP. BEAT.

GAIL AND KEN: It's him.

SPRUCE: Do you know this man ?

GAIL: Yes.

SPRUCE: How ?

KEN: He's our son.

GAIL AND KEN: Wayne.

THE DISCIPLE MOVES AROUND THE ROOM, CONTINUING TO BLESS.

DISCIPLE: Body shimmers. Body listens. Body glows.

READING: What's he doing ?

GAIL: Blessing.

SPRUCE: Blessing what ?

GAIL: Don't mind him – he's a bit ... At school they called him "Looney Limes".

KEN: Or "Weird Wayne".

GAIL: Take your pick. I'm not sure where he gets it from. My side of the family's always been perfectly sane. Not sure about Ken's. There was one Uncle ...

KEN: Your Aunty Wallaby wasn't that flash.

GAIL: It's been a terrible strain. I can't tell you. Every time you hear a police siren you think they're coming to tell you that your psycho son has just decapitated seventeen of his classmates.

READING: Very stressful.

KEN: (FINDING PEN) Got it.

GAIL: Quick Ken. Sign the fuckin' thing.

KEN SCRAMBLES TO HIS FEET. HE GOES TO SIGN THE CONTRACT BUT AS HE DOES THE DISCIPLE COMES OVER TO THE DESK, STILL

BLESSING, AND POURS HIS CUP OF WATER ALL OVER THE CONTRACT.

DISCIPLE: The Body weeps.

GAIL: Oh shit Wayne !

KEN: (STILL TRYING TO SIGN) I can't sign. Pen won't work.

SPRUCE: (TO **RACHEL**) Quick. Make another copy.

RACHEL PICKS UP THE SOPPING CONTRACT AND EXITS.

DISCIPLE: The Body cries. The Body whispers.

READING: What is he talking about ?

KEN: Who knows ? Weirdo Wayne.

GAIL: (TO DISCIPLE) Ssssh Disciple. Hush now.

READING: Disciple ? Did you just call him ...

KEN: It's a nickname. You know like "Lofty".

DISCIPLE: The body speaks of the shadow that looms. The Body guides. The Body beckons.

SPRUCE: Who is this Body ?

GAIL: Elle Macpherson ?

DISCIPLE: (KNEELING) All must give succour to the Body. All must bend in prostration.

SPRUCE: Your son worships Elle Macpherson ?

GAIL: Many have.

KEN: Understandable really. Top sort.

DISCIPLE: There are those among us who seek to harm the Body. To bleed the Body. To devour the Body.

GAIL: I think he means the Paparazzi.

KEN: Very nasty.

DISCIPLE: But to those night cloaked demons we say - death, venom, the eternal scorching of flesh, face and bones.

GAIL: Definitely the Paparazzi.

DISCIPLE: To those who seek the Body's blood – we say: Give unto them our blood. Our flesh. Our bones. Give unto them – life.

READING: Did he say knife ?

GAIL: I thought it was life.

THE DISCIPLE PRODUCES A KNIFE.

GAIL: Then again -

SPRUCE: What's he planning to do with that ?

KEN: Shave ?

GAIL: Very rugged – our Wayne.

THE DISCIPLE BLESSES THE KNIFE. HE THEN TRACES IT ACROSS HIS BODY.

DISCIPLE: To the body I commit my body.

SPRUCE: What's he doing now ?

KEN: I should've thought that was pretty obvious.

DISCIPLE: To its life I commit my life.

READING: Aren't you going to stop him ?

GAIL: Well, you know – kids of today. Have to let them make their own mistakes.

KEN: Can't molly-coddle them.

DISCIPLE: To its heart I commit my heart.

READING: At least try.

KEN: (VERY HALF HEARTED) Stop Wayne stop. (BEAT) Nup. He's determined.

GAIL: Oh well. Stand back. Don't want to get blood on your shoes.

DISCIPLE: To its spirit – I commit my spirit.

READING: What about our carpet ?

KEN: Splash of red with the brown. It'll go nicely.

GAIL: Take it out of our cheque.

THE DISCIPLE HOLDS UP HIS WRIST DRAMATICALLY.

DISCIPLE: (A CRY) To it's blood I commit my blood.

THE DISCIPLE IS JUST ABOUT TO SLIT HIS WRIST.

SUDDENLY **READING** RUNS TO **THE DISCIPLE** AND THEY STRUGGLE. EVENTUALLY HE DISARMS HIM. HE PINS HIM TO THE GROUND.

SPRUCE: Was he about to ... ?

KEN: Certainly looked like it.

GAIL: (TO **READING**) You shouldn't risk your life like that ? When he had the knife against your – I thought "Oh dear, he's got you now."

READING: I just saved your son's life.

GAIL: Still, next time – think. Is it really worth it ?

DISCIPLE: Brothers and sisters I call to you.

KEN: (TO **SPRUCE**) How's that new copy going ? Signing finger is getting itchy.

READING: Will you please explain what is going on ?

KEN: Of course. We're waiting for you to bring us a new copy of the contract so we can sign it and you nice men can give us our money.

GAIL: Cash'd be good.

DISCIPLE: I am slain and need avengement.

READING: I meant with him ?

GAIL: Oh we've been through all that. "Looney Limes".

KEN: Avengement ? That's not even a word.

SPRUCE: It seems a particularly developed form of lunacy. The sack cloth, the blessings, the "Body".

KEN: Just a bit of harmless fun really.

GAIL: Youthful hi-jinks.

DISCIPLE: Sons and Daughters – I am vanquished. Defend me.

SPRUCE: Who is he calling to ?

KEN: Search me.

READING: "Sons and daughters" ?

GAIL: Wasn't that an old TV show ?

KEN: That's right. Pat the Rat.

GAIL: No, she was on prisoner.

KEN: All the same really.

KEN: Yeah.

DISCIPLE: (STRUGGLING VIOLENTLY) Children of the Body – death to the night cloaked demon.

SPRUCE: Children of the Body ?

GAIL: Another TV show.

KEN: It's about Elle's love child.

GAIL: Children. There's three. They're Hispanic, Greek and Afghan.

KEN: No, Afghan's the dog. A person's Afghanian.

GAIL: Is that so ?

KEN: I believe so.

RACHEL RE-ENTERS WITH THE NEW CONTRACT.

RACHEL: Here we are Mr Spruce.

KEN: Here she is.

GAIL: Good old Rachel. Grab the pen love.

SPRUCE INTERCEPTS THE CONTRACT.

SPRUCE: Not until you tell us exactly what is going on.

THE DISCIPLE BELLOWS AND TRIES TO BREAK AWAY FROM READING, WHO JUST MANAGES TO RESTRAIN HIM.

KEN: It's all show really.

GAIL: Bark really is much worse than his bite.

SPRUCE: (HANDING CONTRACT BACK) Thanks Rachel. We won't be needing this. And you can cancel the Limes hotel booking. They're heading straight back to the airport. By bus.

RACHEL HEADS FOR THE DOOR.

KEN: It's because of the cult.

GAIL: (ANNOYED) Ken.

KEN: He's gonna find out sooner or later.

SPRUCE: Cult ?

KEN: Children of the Body.

GAIL: COB - for short.

KEN: They live out on the property.

READING: They ? How many are in this cult ?

KEN: Twenty.

GAIL: That's a fib Ken.

KEN: Fifty.

GAIL: They're quite nice. Really. No trouble at all. Except for the sheep.

SPRUCE: Sheep ?

KEN: Slit their throats mainly. And gut them. Not sure in which order.

GAIL: Then they hang their carcasses from the trees.

KEN: After they've smeared the wheat silo with their entrails.

GAIL: Trying to predict the future I think. Like in Ancient Rome.

KEN: Bit of a pong, if I don't say ? Mid-summer. You couldn't believe how much a half gutted sheep can stink.

DISCIPLE: The Body is watching.

SPRUCE: For gods sake would someone please tell me what the bloody Body is ?

KEN: You're not too bright are you city boy ? The body is the bloody water.

SPRUCE: What ?

KEN: Listen up dumbskull. Your valuable commodity. He spends all his time down there worshipping it.

SPRUCE: He worships the water.

KEN: Not any water. That bloody underground lake.

SPRUCE: Why ?

KEN: I don't know. Ask him.

DISCIPLE: The Body is listening.

GAIL GOES TO THE DISCIPLE. SHE STROKES HIS FACE AND HAIR, CALMING HIM.

GAIL: Because he thinks it's God. Don't you silly ?

SPRUCE: The water in that cave is God ?

GAIL: Well it's not that strange really, when you think about it. He's never seen that much water – except on telly. We've never taken him to the beach and there's no pool in town. So when he went down there and saw all that shimmering blue gold – cool and soft – deep beneath the earth. Well, you can understand how he felt. Where we live - that much water might as well be God. Be closer than we ever get to it.

SPRUCE: So what do we do then ?

GAIL: About what ?

SPRUCE: Him.

READING: (TO **SPRUCE**) Hold this. I've got an idea.

READING HANDS SPRUCE THE KNIFE. SPRUCE TAKES READING'S PLACE, PINNING THE DISCIPLE TO THE GROUND – KNIFE TO HIS THROAT.

READING EXITS.

BEAT.

RACHEL: Mr Spruce ?

SPRUCE: Yes Rachel.

RACHEL: You've got Mr Lachlan coming in at 11.

SPRUCE: Push him back till Noon.

RACHEL: Yes sir.

BEAT.

RACHEL: So, first time in Sydney Mrs Limes ?

GAIL: For awhile.

RACHEL: Any plans ?

GAIL: Bit of sight seeing tomorrow. The Rocks. Maybe some shopping.

KEN GRUMBLES.

GAIL: If I can drag Ken along.

RACHEL AND GAIL LAUGH.

RACHEL: So, married is he ?

GAIL: Ken ? Bloody hope so.

RACHEL: No silly. Your son.

GAIL: Only to that bloody underground lake.

RACHEL AND GAIL LAUGH AGAIN.

READING RETURNS. HE CARRIES A GLASS OF WATER.

READING: The body believes.

THE DISCIPLE SEES THE WATER AND FREEZES.

READING CARRIES IT SLOWLY TO THE TABLE AND PLACES IT DOWN GENTLY.

THE DISCIPLE WATCHES IT FOR A MOMENT. BEAT.

SUDDENLY HE RUSHES TO THE DESK AND PROSTRATES HIMSELF

IN FRONT OF THE GLASS OF WATER.

DISCIPLE: The body is born. The body dies. The body lives again.

READING: Water – be thy god.

KEN: That was pretty clever.

GAIL: Not too hard to see who's the brains of this operation.

SPRUCE: Well done Reading.

READING: Thank you sir.

KEN: Now can we just get that thing signed –

GAIL: And we'll be on our way.

SPRUCE: (MOVING AWAY) Of course – once we've worked out the deduction for removing the sheep gutters.

KEN: The what ?

GAIL: He means the Children dear.

KEN: Stuff them. Send in a bloody Swat team. Bit of tear gas. Bang, bang, bang.

RACHEL: You're going to shoot your children ?

GAIL: Not our kids darling. The Body's. (REFERRING TO **THE DISCIPLE**) We've only got the one.

SPRUCE: Not that easy Ken. We send two thousand cops out there – one of them stumbles on the Body. We got a whole world of trouble.

RACHEL: Whose body ?

GAIL: On the farm love. We found it in a cave.

RACHEL: Were the kids there when you found it ?

GAIL: No, they came later.

RACHEL: Oh. Right.

KEN: It's our land. Bloody thing belongs to us.

SPRUCE: Government may not see it like that. They might want a say in how the Body gets divvied up.

RACHEL: You're going to divide up the body ?

GAIL: Bloody hope not. Ken's right. Belongs to us.

KEN: What do we do then ?

SPRUCE: I know a Private firm. Very efficient. Discreet. I've used them before.

KEN: How much ?

SPRUCE: How many Children ?

KEN: Fifty. Give or take.

SPRUCE: (THINKS) Half a mill.

RACHEL: The Body has fifty kids ?

GAIL: At least.

RACHEL: But how did they survive in that cave ?

GAIL: They weren't always in the cave love. They were up top too – smearing sheep intestines on the silos.

KEN: Who pays for that ?

SPRUCE: I'll take it out of the settlement.

KEN: What does that leave us ?

SPRUCE: They're your Children.

KEN: Not ours. (REFERRING TO **THE DISCIPLE**) His.

RACHEL: They're your son's kids ?

GAIL: His and the Body's.

RACHEL: Busy body.

DISCIPLE: (SUDDENLY) Silence ! The Body speaks.

SPRUCE: (TO **KEN**) We have a deal ?

DISCIPLE: I said silence !

SPRUCE: Reading.

READING GOES TOWARD THE DISCIPLE. THE DISCIPLE KNOCKS THE KNIFE FROM HIS HAND.

DISCIPLE: The body speaks. Listen.

SILENCE.

RACHEL: What exactly are we listening to ?

GAIL: The glass of water.

DISCIPLE: Silence.

SPRUCE: I can't hear anything buddy.

DISCIPLE: The Body speaks.

SPRUCE: Oh yeah. And what does it say ?

DISCIPLE: (LISTENS) A number.

SPRUCE: Number of the local looney bin ?

DISCIPLE: The number is ... the number is ...

SPRUCE: Reading. Get him the phone book.

DISCIPLE: Three. No, not three. Five.

SPRUCE: I've had enough of this. Rachel – call security. This man in trespassing.

GAIL: (PICKING UP KNIFE, TO **RACHEL**) Wait one sec darling.

RACHEL STOPS.

KEN: What else does the Body say son ?

DISCIPLE: The Body is sending me a vision.

SPRUCE: I'll give you a vision. You in a strait jacket, zonked to the eyeballs, strapped to a table with electrodes on your balls.

THE DISCIPLE VIBRATES AS IF AN ELECTRIC SHOCK IS ENTERING HIS BODY. SUDDENLY HE IS STILL.

SPRUCE: Shit.

DISCIPLE: I see a hand. A man's hand.

GAIL: Who's hand ?

DISCIPLE: It emerges from a cloak. A night cloak.

KEN: What's he talking about ?

RACHEL: It's like a clue. In a crossword.

GAIL: You think so ?

RACHEL: Cloak is like a coat and night means dark. Like black.

DISCIPLE: A night cloaked demon.

RACHEL: And the demon. That's a man. So you're looking for a man in a black coat.

KEN: (EXAMINING **SPRUCE'S** COAT) Like this coat ?

SPRUCE: This suit is charcoal grey.

KEN: Looks pretty black to me.

SPRUCE: Rachel.

RACHEL: Sorry Mr Spruce.

DISCIPLE: The hand writes a number. Five – and then a letter. G.

GAIL: G as for Gigalitre.

KEN: Or goose.

SPRUCE: Rachel – call security now or you're fired.

RACHEL: Yes Mr Spruce.

RACHEL HEADS FOR THE DOOR.

GAIL: Better fired than dead sweetie.

DISCIPLE: Now the hand returns. The night cloaked hand and - the number changes.

SPRUCE: He's making it up.

DISCIPLE: The number is now ... The number is now ...

KEN: Go on son.

DISCIPLE: Three.

GAIL: (TO **SPRUCE**) You cheating bugger.

KEN: The goose is cooked.

SPRUCE: Come of it. You said it yourself. "Looney Limes".

GAIL: Better than greedy Gregory.

SPRUCE: He's making it up.

KEN: So you're telling us that if we got someone else out to measure the water they'd come up with 3 gigalitres – not five ?

GAIL: And you wouldn't be trying to rip us off a couple of million bucks. ?

SPRUCE: Gail, Ken. Trust me.

BEAT. GAIL AND KEN ADVANCE TOWARDS HIM.

SPRUCE: Stop. It was Reading. He did it. He changed the figures.

READING: (INDICATING HIS BROWN SUIT) Night cloaked demon ?

KEN: Even if he did – it was only because you told him.

SPRUCE: But you said it yourself. He's the brains of this operation. Not me. Dumb as a goose – that's me.

GAIL: Say that again.

SPRUCE: If anyone was going to come up with this – it had to be him.

GAIL: He may have a point.

KEN: (TO **READING**) What've you got to say for yourself ?

READING: Why are you looking at me ? (REFERRING TO **THE DISCIPLE**) Ask him. He's the one with the visions ?

KEN: It was just a one off. Beginners luck.

GAIL: No Ken. Let's give him a chance. After all – he is our son. What do you say darling ? Chief Disciple of the Body. Which one was trying to diddle us ? Was it the goose or the gander ? Speak.

THE DISCIPLE SHAKES AGAIN VIOLENTLY.

GAIL: It's working.

RACHEL: Can't wait to see who did it ?

THE DISCIPLE STOPS SHAKING.

DISCIPLE: I see ... I see ...

GAIL: What son ?

DISCIPLE: The Body shimmers. The Body gleams.

KEN: Bugger. He's back in the cave.

DISCIPLE: The Body glistens.

GAIL: Wait a sec.

DISCIPLE: The sun warms the Body.

KEN: Sun ?

DISCIPLE: The Body crested with white.

RACHEL: Waves !

DISCIPLE: The Body tumbles on sand.

GAIL: The beach !

DISCIPLE: The Body is surrounded by rock.

KEN: A harbour !

DISCIPLE: Something moves across the Body. Skimming, skipping, faster and faster.

RACHEL: A pebble ?

DISCIPLE: A shadow, a shape, a form.

KEN: What form ?

DISCIPLE: Now it rises above the Body. Then dips back, then rises again.

GAIL: What is it ?

DISCIPLE: Now it soars.

RACHEL: It's a ...

DISCIPLE: It spreads its wings.

GAIL: It's a plane !

DISCIPLE: Boat.

RACHEL: Boat ?

KEN: A magnificent flying boat.

GAIL: With a night cloaked demon – at the controls.

KEN: Looks like this black sheep needs a good gutting.

BEAT.

SPRUCE: Shit.

SPRUCE RUNS OUT THE DOOR.

KEN: Go get him Gail.

GAIL: Sick 'im Ken.

KEN AND GAIL SPRINT AFTER HIM.

THE DISCIPLE, READING AND RACHEL REMAIN. BEAT.

RACHEL: Coffee anyone ?

BLACKOUT

3. The cave. Blue light shimmers.

THE DISCIPLE watches the water alone. Beat.

DISCIPLE: The Body is silent. The Body is at peace. The Body rests.

READING ENTERS. HE STANDS LOOKING AT THE WATER. BEAT.

READING: It really is beautiful.

BEAT.

DISCIPLE: Yes. It is. (BEAT) Did you bring it ?

READING COMES FORWARD. HE CARRIES A SUIT BAG AND BRIEFCASE.

READING: Here.

THE DISCIPLE TAKES THE SUITBAG. HE OPENS IT AND STARTS TO CHANGE OUT OF HIS SACK CLOTH.

DISCIPLE: And the ...

READING TAPS THE SUITCASE.

DISCIPLE: Well done.

READING: Couldn't have done it without you.

THE DISCIPLE CONTINUES CHANGING. **READING** LOOKS AT THE WATER.

READING: It really is extraordinary. Almost seems a pity ...

DISCIPLE: What ?

READING: Think about it. Here it's been for over a million years – maybe more - collecting drop by drop. Growing little by little as each rain seeped through the stone and earth. Silent, patient, still. At first it was just a puddle, then a pond, then a lake – then this ... incredible vast body. And then one day someone comes along, sticks a giant pipe in and ...

DISCIPLE: You're not going all spiritual on me now ?

READING: No High Priest – that's your department.

DISCIPLE: You mean Disciple ?

READING: Or is it Child ? Spoilt child ? (BEAT) You still think they'll sign the new contract ?

DISCIPLE: After witnessing my mystical gaze – they'll do anything I say. Dad's even started asking me to pick his horses for him.

READING: Any winners ?

DISCIPLE: Couple of thirds.

READING: The local amateur dramatic society all gone home.

DISCIPLE: Except for the barber. Got a bit carried away. Wandering around with sheep intestines draped around his neck.

READING: Cost you much ?

DISCIPLE: Didn't even have to pay them in the end. They loved it. Director said it's the best work they've done in ages. They're planning to do a sheep's blood Macbeth for Chrissie. Even keeping the gutted sheep as props.

READING: That'll get the punters in.

DISCIPLE: Not to mention the Health Authorities.

THE DISCIPLE TURNS AND COMES TO STAND ALONGSIDE READING. HE IS NOW WEARING AN EXPENSIVE BLACK SUIT.

READING: Mr Night Cloaked Demon I presume.

WAYNE: At your service.
BEAT.

WAYNE: When do they start pumping ?

READING: As soon as the trucks arrive.

WAYNE: How long does it take to pump 50 gigalitres of water ?

READING: Not sure. Lot longer than it would take to pump five.

WAYNE: Or three.

READING: That was always Spruce's problem. He just never thought big enough.

WAYNE: Unlike us.

THEY HOLD HANDS AND STAND LOOKING AT THE WATER.

READING: So Mr Limes – how does it feel to be looking at nine million dollars?

WAYNE: It's feels good Mr Reading. Very very good.

READING: The Body shimmers.

WAYNE: And we see.

READING: The Body speaks.

WAYNE: And we hear.

READING: The Body gives.

WAYNE: And we take.

A SMILES GROWS ON THEIR FACES. LIGHTS FADE.

END PLAY.