

Collected Short Plays

A collection of short plays
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COLLECTED SHORT PLAYS : PLAY 1

Southern Cross Swastika

Cast

HEINRICH

HERMAN

JOSEF

Setting

Bar.

Time

Night.

Production History

Southern Cross Swastika was first produced at Short & Sweet 2003 at the Newtown Theatre in Sydney. Directed by Travis Williams.

Also in 2003 the play was then produced as part of The Suction Soiree at The Friend in Hand, Glebe, Sydney. Again directed by Travis Williams.

In 2004 the play was produced as a part of “Refugitive”, two anti-war pro-refugee plays at The Cellar, Sydney University. Again directed by Travis Williams.

Southern Cross Swastika**Bar. Night.**

HEINRICH, JOSEF and **HERMAN** sit at a table. They drink beer.

HEINRICH: The Olympics were important -

HERMAN: Important ? They were magnificent.

HEINRICH: The Olympics were important in terms of our progress as a nation. They were an important step in nation building.

JOSEF: (TO **HERMAN**) You must learn to listen friend.

HEINRICH: Don't make this personal.

JOSEF: No. It is where he falls down and he needs to know it. If you had read my last pamphlet you would -

HERMAN: I am listening now.

JOSEF: (POINTING TO **HEINRICH**) Our friend here has the ability to see the bigger picture. Where our current direction is taking us. The future.

HERMAN: Really ?

JOSEF: Where as you only see the spectacle, the moment. The fun. That is why he is the Party secretary. That's why he won the vote.

HEINRICH: Joe. The election is over. I was lucky enough to win. (PATTING **HERMAN ON THE BACK**) Our friend was mature enough to accept the result with grace. Now we must move on. There is much to be done.

HERMAN: Thank you, friend.

HEINRICH: The Olympics. We all accept they were an important part of the process. Our athletes superlative performance announced to the world our true potential. What we can be.

HERMAN: Agreed.

HEINRICH: The superb facilities, the unequalled opening ceremony. It was widely accepted as the best Olympics ever.

JOSEF: To us.

HEINRICH: No. To our friends and supporters everywhere.

THEY CLINK GLASSES.

HEINRICH: But now we must take the next step. We have shown and continue to show our superiority on the sporting fields - but if this country is to develop. To be all that it can be. We have to be leaders now – not just followers.

HERMAN: But our allies –

HEINRICH: Our allies are only important in what they can do for us. How they can help to strengthen our position.

HERMAN: Dangerous talk.

JOSEF: We will never be truly great until we can stand alone. Proudly independent.

HEINRICH: True. And we have the resources and the ability to be a truly great power. But do we have the discipline. The ruthlessness.

HERMAN: Ruthlessness ?

HEINRICH: Let's look at the current situation. It's embarrassing. A distraction.

JOSEF: Agreed.

HEINRICH: And that is why tomorrow I'm going to put to the Party another solution - as it is clear the current method is not working.

JOSEF: Clear.

HEINRICH: The camps are not working. We put these ... people in there, indefinitely, and then what are we left with.

HERMAN: Tell me.

HEINRICH: A burden. On manpower, on resources. It's a question of economics. After all we must remember – we have a war to win.

JOSEF: Exactly.

HERMAN: So what is your solution ?

HEINRICH: If this country is to continue it's upwards trajectory we need every dollar channelled where it is needed most. Defence, border protection, military strength. The rest of the world looks on our land with envious eyes. We must make this country impregnable. If we don't act soon – we will be over run.

HERMAN: And that is precisely why the centres were initiated.

HEINRICH: These “centres” drain vital resources. They need to be phased out.

HERMAN: And replaced with ?

HEINRICH: Not replaced. Modified.

HERMAN: Modified ? How ?

HEINRICH: There have been conversations behind closed doors friend.

JOSEF: (TO **HERMAN**) You are not privy to all discussions.

HEINRICH: Please Josef. We are all on the same team. Let us take a step back. These people do not belong here. We have no idea for what they are responsible. What crimes they have committed ? Agreed ?

JOSEF & HERMAN: Agreed.

JOSEF: They should be sent back to wherever they came from.

HEINRICH: We do not need people like this in our country. They will not help our country prosper. Agreed ?

JOSEF & HERMAN: Agreed.

HEINRICH: We have enough problems of our own. Agreed ?

JOSEF & HERMAN: Agreed.

HEINRICH: So what do we do ?

JOSEF: We send them back.

HEINRICH: That has already proved impossible. Where these people come from is ... not somewhere we would want to live.

JOSEF LAUGHS.

HERMAN: Then they must remain here.

HEINRICH: These people are primitive. Sub-human. You only need look at their faces. Suffice to say - their genes are not in demand. As our good friend Alfred pointed out.

MORE LAUGHTER.

HEINRICH: Who knows what strange diseases they carry ? The longer they remain in our country - the more damage they can do.

HERMAN: But you said we can not send them back.

HEINRICH: There is another ... answer. There have been other unsuccessful solutions. I propose what I think will be a successful solution.

HERMAN: I am listening.

HEINRICH: Like they themselves, their society is very primitive. There are no records, birth certificates, documents – like we have. Why do you think it is so difficult identifying who they are ? Where they came from ? In most cases they do not even know. Even the ones who have already infiltrated our communities – they have only the names we have bestowed on them.

JOSEF: (LAUGHING) I believe some of them even call themselves Josef.

HEINRICH: So if they do not know who they are – then how does anyone else know ? How does anyone know who actually reached our borders ? Or already lives among us ? Or if they ... perished in the attempt ? If they do not exist, no one will notice if they ... disappear.

PAUSE.

HERMAN: How would this be ...achieved ?

HEINRICH: In exactly the same way we achieved the Olympics. With efficiency, accuracy and speed. The qualities this country has become renown for worldwide. (PAUSE) There will no longer be any need for the camps or costly, time consuming re-locations. Our problem will simply cease to ... exist.

JOSEF: Brilliant. Brilliant.

HERMAN: But it is ... How can we ... conceal ...

HEINRICH: Come, come friend. What happens within our own borders is our business – and no one else's. Did you not listen the other day at the meeting? We will not be dictated to by outsiders. In our own land – we will govern. Without question.

HERMAN: But it is ... monstrous.

HEINRICH LAUGHS.

HEINRICH: Monstrous? They are the monsters. Not us. Do you not remember the atrocities they have committed against our allies? Against us. And atrocities they already plan – right here and now - to inflict upon our very own soil. A short memory my friend, is a very dangerous thing.

HERMAN: But you would make us ...

HEINRICH: Please. Don't be so over-dramatic. They are not people. They are dogs.

JOSEF: Stray dogs.

HEINRICH: Mongrels, that infect our purity. They need to be ... eradicated. They have committed atrocities, now atrocities will be committed on them. We need no other solution.

JOSEF: It is the perfect solution.

HEINRICH: It is the final solution. And tomorrow I shall put it to the party for approval.

JOSEF: You have my vote.

HERMAN: Perhaps some ... caution.

HEINRICH: We need action, progress, growth. To rid ourselves of those who would hold us back. Not caution.

HERMAN: And the ... children?

HEINRICH: Little monsters only grow up to become big monsters.

JOSEF LAUGHS.

HERMAN: (TO HEINRICH) What are you afraid of?

HEINRICH: I am afraid of nothing. Soon we all will have nothing to fear.

HEINRICH FINISHES HIS DRINK.

JOSEF: Another ?

HEINRICH: No. I need to go over my speech. I will see you at the meeting.

HEINRICH STANDS. HE SHAKES THEIR HANDS.

HEINRICH: (HE NODS) Tomorrow.

JOSEF: Tomorrow.

HERMAN: Tomorrow.

HE BEGINS TO LEAVE.

HERMAN: Heinrich. One last question.

HEINRICH STOPS.

HEINRICH: Yes Herman.

HERMAN: When do you plan to begin this ... solution ?

HEINRICH: One facility in Poland has already been modified. Near Dachau.
Auchwitz.

HEINRICH GIVES THE NAZI SALUTE.

HEINRICH: Heil Hitler.

THEY RETURN IT.

HERMAN AND JOSEF: Heil Hitler.

**HEINRICH NODS AND EXITS. JOSEF LAUGHS AND WHACKS
HERMAN ON THE BACK. HE FINISHES HIS BEER**

AS THE LIGHTS FADE.

COLLECTED SHORT PLAYS : PLAY 2

Armistice Day

Cast

PHIL a Korean War Veteran, 70s

KENNY a young man, 20s

Setting

War Memorial in a large city

Time

Armistice Day. Dawn.

Production History

Armistice Day was first produced at Short & Sweet 2002 at the Newtown Theatre in Sydney. Directed by Andrew Matthews.

ARMISTICE DAY

War Memorial. Dawn.

PHIL, a War Veteran, dressed in suit and with medals pinned on his chest, enters. He carries a can of beer. He walks slowly to the War Memorial.

KENNY, a young man in battle fatigues, enters. He watches **PHIL**.

PHIL reaches the War Memorial. He opens the can of beer and pours a little on to the Memorial. He goes to place the beer on the ground next to the Memorial but it's too far to lean and he struggles.

KENNY moves to **PHIL**.

KENNY: Let me.

KENNY puts out his hand. **PHIL** gives him the beer and **KENNY** places it down next to the memorial.

The two men step back and stand in front of the Memorial in silent reflection. Pause.

KENNY: So, how many did you kill ?

PHIL DOES NOT RESPOND.

KENNY: Hey Grand-dad, I said how many did you kill ?

PHIL: Pardon me.

KENNY: Your hearing aid on the blink ? How many did you kill ? You know ? Wogs, Niggers, Gooks. How many did you blow away ?

PAUSE.

PHIL: I'm not sure.

KENNY: Come on grand dad. Don't be modest. You're among friends now. How many ? Five, ten, fifty. Got some nice medals there, must've killed a few.

PHIL: I was given these for acts of bravery.

KENNY: Exactly. Killing the enemy.

PHIL: Saving the lives of my fellow soldiers.

KENNY: Yeah, by killing the enemy.

PAUSE. **PHIL** TURNS AWAY.

KENNY: And what we're you packing ? Semi-automatic, automatic. SK - 47. Or did you pack the heavy artillery ? The large calibre. The big boys. Cause some real havoc.

PHIL: They carried them.

KENNY: Who ?

PHIL: The enemy. They carried SK- 47s.

KENNY: That's right. Russian Assault rifles. They had them. Bloody gooks. Gunned you down. Bet you lost a few eh ? In your own Company. Saw a few of your best mates picked off before your two eyes. Held them in your arms as they struggled for their last breath.

PHIL: I lost a few. We all did.

KENNY: Too right. Damn shame. Bloody shame.

KENNY PULLS OUT A BLACK TEXTA. HE OFFERS IT TO **PHIL**.

KENNY: Will you sign my fatigues ? Add your initials to my personal roll of honour.

HE SHOWS **PHIL** HIS SHIRT SLEEVE WHICH HAS A FEW AUTOGRAPHS ALREADY SIGNED. **PHIL** LOOKS AT HIM.

KENNY: But only if you've actually done the business. Only if you've put a few Gooks down. Every man who's sign this shirt is a certifiable Gook killer.

PHIL: You want me to sign your shirt ?

KENNY: If you've done the business. And I'd say looking at you - you have. I mean, you're talking to a fan. You and me, grand dad. We're on the same side. See, what I reckon is you done a good job right. Went to New Guinea, France, Africa -

PHIL: I served in Korea.

KENNY: Exactly Korea. The forgotten war. You went there and you did 'em in. Blew 'em away. Repelled the invaders.

PHIL: It was an internal conflict. We were defending the South.

KENNY: By killing Gooks. And now, what are they doing ? Letting 'em in. Inviting them, free of charge. Our guests. Fucking tragedy, national fucking tragedy. These gooks who you fought so bravely against are now destroying our country - from the inside.

PHIL: I fought in the war for young people like you.

KENNY: That's what I'm saying.

PHIL: I fought so they could have life.

KENNY: And I'm grateful. But now, you're great victory is being tarnished. The gooks are taking over. So I say bundle them all up. Smoke 'em up out of their little China towns, their little rickshaws - put 'em all on a boat and send 'em back where they come from. Eh, punch a few holes in the side first though, so it sinks on the way. Service to humanity.

PHIL: I fought for the people of South Korea.

KENNY: That's right - the good Gooks. But we ain't got none of them. They're all bad Gooks - ones we got here. Time to mobilise. A call to arms. Show some spirit. Spirit of the Anzacs.

PAUSE.

PHIL: What did you say ?

KENNY: Spirit of the Anzacs. You know, on the beaches ? Out of the boats, charging up the hill. Machine guns whistling all around. Taking one in the shoulder but still pounding on. Higher and higher to where the Gooks were hiding in their trenches like frightened little rabbits. Something to be proud of. Something to believe in - in the middle of all this chaos. Something pure. The birth of a nation. Anzacs.

PHIL: I don't think you know what that word means ?

KENNY: I know what it stands for but. It stands for - killing Gooks !

PAUSE.

PHIL: Do you know what today is ?

KENNY: Fucking Anzac Day.

PHIL: It's Armistice Day. Not Anzac Day. Today was when the papers were signed to end the First World War.

KENNY: Fucking big mistake that. War's not over Grand-dad. War's just beginning.

PHIL: Today is when we honour the dead. We remember.

KENNY: Exactly. Remember not to let them die in vain.

PHIL MOVES OFF.

KENNY: Hey grand dad. Where you going ?

PHIL: I have nothing more to say to you.

KENNY: Hey, just remember - you fought for me.

PHIL TURNS AND FACES KENNY. PAUSE.

PHIL: We may have made a grave mistake.

KENNY: No mistake matey. You won. You fuckin' kicked their slanty little arses - and now me, and blokes like me, are carrying on the battle. Preserving the spirit. The spirit of the Anzacs.

KENNY MOVES CLOSER.

KENNY: Listen, you're a bit past it but if you're still keen for some active duty we can let you come along. Watch some Gooks going down. And the Currymunchers. They're on our list now. For what they done. To the Towers, to our friends and allies. They're going down too. They'll be praying to Allah alright. They'll be praying to Allah for their fucking lives.

PAUSE. PHIL LOOKS AT KENNY. HE TURNS AND STARTS TO EXIT.

KENNY: Ain't you gonna sign my shirt ? Show 'em the spirit of the Anzacs.

PHIL STOPS. HE TURNS AND GOES BACK TO KENNY. HE COMES VERY CLOSE TO HIS FACE. SUDDENLY HE GRABS PHIL'S ARM AND TWISTS IT BEHIND HIS BACK.

KENNY: Hey, what's this ? Some kind of combat move. Cool.

PHIL TWISTS HARDER.

KENNY: Hey stop it Grand dad. You're hurting me. Stop it.

KENNY GOES DOWN ON TO HIS KNEES. PHIL LEANS OVER HIM.

PHIL: (SLOWLY AND DELIBERATELY) Don't- ever - use - that - word - again.

PHIL RELEASES KENNY'S ARM. KENNY SPRAWLS ON TO THE FLOOR. PHIL TURNS AND EXITS.

KENNY WATCHES HIM GO.

KENNY: Yeah ? Well fuck you too. Dropkick. Has been. Past it. Bet you didn't kill anyone anyway. Bet you were in a fuckin' office all the war. Administration, yeah that's you. Fuckin' pencil neck. Got your medals for counting paper clips. Anzac. You ain't a fuckin' Anzac's arsehole. You don't know what killing means. But don't worry - we'll show you. We'll fuckin' show you. I can say what I like. You can't stop me.

KENNY GOES TO THE BEER, HE GRAB IT AND SKULLS.

KENNY: Hey, you like that. I'm drinking your mate's precious fuckin' beer.

KENNY SQUASHES THE CAN AND HURLS IT AT THE MEMORIAL. HE BEGINS CHANTING.

KENNY: Anzacs. Anzacs. Anzacs.

HE CONTINUES CHANTING AS THE LIGHTS FADE.

END PLAY.

COLLECTED SHORT PLAYS : PLAY 3

Tel Aviv Disco Bombing

Cast

ARIEL

JULIA

Setting

Office.

Time

Afternoon.

Production History

Tel Aviv Disco Bombing was first produced at Short & Sweet 2005 at the Seymour Centre in Sydney. Directed by Katy Alexander.

Tel Aviv Disco Bombing

Office. Tel Aviv, Israel. 2pm.

ARIEL at his desk, reading. There is a knock at the door.

ARIEL: Yes.

THE DOOR OPENS SLIGHTLY. JULIA IS THERE, CARRYING A FOLDER.

JULIA: It's only me.

ARIEL: (STANDING) Julia. Yes, come in. Come in. Sit down.

ARIEL GUIDES HER TO A CHAIR.

JULIA: Please tell me I didn't miss it. Please.

ARIEL: No – you made the deadline.

JULIA: Thank you. I was fretting.

ARIEL: There's plenty of time for the deadline.

ARIEL SITS DOWN. HE PICKS UP SOME PAPERS.

JULIA: Is that it ?

ARIEL: Yes.

JULIA: (STANDING) I'm sorry. I thought you'd had time to ... Impatient. I'll come back.

ARIEL: No, it's fine.

JULIA: You've read it ?

ARIEL: Yes.

JULIA: Already ?

ARIEL: Yes.

JULIA: And ?

PAUSE. SHE SITS.

JULIA: It's good, isn't it ?

ARIEL: No, not good. Great.

JULIA: Thank you.

ARIEL: Perhaps the best story you've done since you came to us.

JULIA: I was happy.

ARIEL: First class.

JULIA: Thank you.

ARIEL: Does anybody else –

JULIA: No. I didn't tell anybody. Not even my husband.

ARIEL: Good.

JULIA: I was busting to but ...

ARIEL: Well done.

JULIA: So ... where do you think it will run ?

ARIEL: This is a cover. No doubt.

JULIA: I thought so. I don't mean to – but I did... A cover. Yes !
(OPENING FOLDER) And I've been down to see Cassandra and found some amazing photos. Look at this one of one of the ... This could be the cover.

JULIA MOVES TOWARDS ARIEL. ARIEL HOLDS UP HIS HAND.

ARIEL: Julia – I can't use this story.

JULIA: But ...you just said.

ARIEL: Cover.

JULIA: Yes cover. You said -

ARIEL: It is a great story.

JULIA: But then ...

ARIEL: A truly excellent piece of journalism.

JULIA: Then why -

ARIEL: That doesn't change the fact -

JULIA: But, I don't -

ARIEL: That I can't use it. (PAUSE) You know what is happening tomorrow ?

JULIA: How could I not know ?

ARIEL: Well ...

JULIA: How does my story affect that ?

ARIEL: Don't be so naïve.

JULIA: Pardon me.

ARIEL: We may not be the biggest paper but we are certainly read.

JULIA: I'm not saying -

ARIEL: Then how can this story have no affect ? Your words have power. Do you doubt that ? If you do then why did you become a journalist ?

JULIA: My words do have power. Our words have power.

ARIEL: Then you must understand why I can't use them.

JULIA: (HOLDING UP FILE) But this happened.

ARIEL: So you proved, conclusively.

JULIA: It's the truth.

ARIEL SCOFFS.

JULIA: You're laughing ?

ARIEL: Truth ? You want to talk about truth.

- JULIA: Why are you laughing ?
- ARIEL: Let me tell you about truth. (STANDING) Tomorrow in this city major representatives of both parties will sit down to sign a comprehensive agreement discussed and argued over for almost a year. We are the closest we have ever been to something resembling peace – after a quarter of a decade - and you want to destroy that.
- JULIA: I'm not destroying anything.
- ARIEL: What will this information do to that process ?
- JULIA: People will finally know what happened.
- ARIEL: No I'll tell you what happened. There was an attack. We retaliated. They retaliated. We retaliated again. They accepted responsibility. They apologised. We accepted their apology. It was a massive step in the process.
- JULIA: But they didn't do it.
- ARIEL: That doesn't matter.
- JULIA: Doesn't ... matter ? Aren't you Ariel Ramen ? The Editor of The Beacon. The guardian of the media's right –
- ARIEL: It doesn't matter.
- JULIA: To publish the whole story. "No prejudice. No fear."
- ARIEL: It doesn't matter who was responsible ! It's over. Those people died. Now we have the chance to stop the killing. That ... man's death has opened a window of opportunity and I will not allow you or anyone else to slam it shut. How can you consider, even for a moment, robbing us of this chance ?
- JULIA: Seventeen people died in that explosion. Including an eight year old boy. (TAKING PHOTO OUT OF FILE) Look at him. Look at his face. And you want to tell me it doesn't matter who was responsible.
- ARIEL: We have all lost people.
- JULIA: You want to tell his family -
- ARIEL: The paper, photographers -
- JULIA: Who swore they would have justice –

ARIEL: Hasn't there been enough killing ?

JULIA: That they were looking in the wrong place.

ARIEL: I just want it to stop –

JULIA: Because the people who committed this terrible act –

ARIEL: We all want it to stop !

JULIA: Who blew up a crowded family club on Saturday evening–

ARIEL: There is a ...

JULIA: Wasn't the enemy –

ARIEL: There must be ...

JULIA: It was their own people !

SILENCE. **JULIA SITS.**

ARIEL: No good will come of this.

JULIA: We have an obligation to report the truth.

ARIEL: But first you must ask yourself – what is more important ? Truth or peace ? (PAUSE) Julia, I know how you must feel.

JULIA: You have no idea.

ARIEL: I know you spent a lot of time and effort on this story.

JULIA: Six months.

ARIEL: And placed yourself in considerable danger to get the information.

JULIA: I was shot at – twice !

ARIEL: It must be very ... disappointing -

JULIA: That's one word for it.

ARIEL: To see all that go to waste.

JULIA: Yes it is. So why didn't you just stop me ? If you didn't want the story. I could've written a belly dancing feature for our new Happy Times.

ARIEL: Even I didn't think ...

JULIA: Think what ?

ARIEL: That this was ..

JULIA: Was what ?

ARIEL: Possible.

JULIA: Well now you know. You see how appalling this act was. To kill seventeen of our own people just to make them look bad. And remember - the men who ordered this are still in power. If you do this – you're letting them get away completely without blame.

PAUSE

ARIEL: Eighteen months and eleven days ago, before you came here, there was a similar blast in another part of the city. This time no one claimed responsibility. It was a minor incident. Small numbers of casualties. Only three people dead but one of them was my son. (PAUSE) I will never be able to forget the pain of losing my own child. I never want any other father to go through that. If this agreement tomorrow has the chance of saving even one father's child then I will do everything I can to make sure it goes ahead.

JULIA: It's a good story.

ARIEL: It's a dangerous story. And while this agreement holds I give you my word it will not appear in this newspaper.

JULIA: They killed eighteen people.

ARIEL: And this story will kill more.

JULIA: I could take it to somebody else. Someone who wasn't as flexible with their principles.

ARIEL: Not while you work for me.

JULIA: Then maybe I won't work for you.

ARIEL: I'm asking you not to.

JULIA: I'm asking you to print it.

ARIEL: Maybe this isn't about the truth. Maybe we've found something far more important. Life. (BEAT) Or maybe this is about something else entirely. You.

JULIA: Me ?

ARIEL: Maybe what you're really angry about is not the truth being obscured but that you'll miss out on the chance to become the journalist who uncovered the biggest scandal of the year.

PAUSE.

JULIA: Either way it doesn't change the fact that my story is one hundred percent truth.

ARIEL: Then you have a choice.

JULIA: I have a choice.

ARIEL: If you really want to I can't stop you getting this story out. What am I going to do - kill you ?

JULIA: Thank you.

ARIEL: But before you go I want to give you something. Another photograph for you to consider.

ARIEL TAKES A PHOTO FROM HIS WALLET. HE HANDS IT TO JULIA.

ARIEL: That is David. He was my son. When you look at the little boy – look at my son as well. They are now both in your hands.

ARIEL SITS. HE BEGINS TO READ.

JULIA LOOKS AT THE PHOTO. PAUSE.

ARIEL: Sorry. I have a deadline.

JULIA NODS. SHE GOES TO THE DOOR. SHE STOPS AND LOOKS BACK AT ARIEL. SHE EXITS.

THE DOOR CLOSSES BEHIND HER. ARIEL LOOKS UP. HE DROPS HIS PAPERS ON TO THE DESK AND SLUMPS BACK IN HIS CHAIR.

LIGHTS FADE.

COLLECTED SHORT PLAYS : PLAY 4

FIVE KINGS

Cast

TERRY

KEN

RYAN

STEVE

ANT

Setting

Pub.

Time

10pm, week night.

Production History

Five Kings was first produced at Short & Sweet 2005 at the Newtown Theatre in Sydney. Directed by Alex Broun.

FIVE KINGS

LX: SNAP LIGHTS UP

Five men TERRY, KEN, RYAN, STEVE and ANT - sit on bar stools.

They all wear similar blue uniforms – but there is a point of difference with each. TERRY has a jumper, KEN has a vest, RYAN has a short sleeve shirt, STEVE a long sleeve shirt – buttoned up and ANT a large padded coat.

All five men hold a schooner of beer. They stare out at the audience.

LONG PAUSE.

TERRY takes a sip of his beer.

Beat.

KEN takes a sip of his beer.

Beat.

STEVE takes a sip of his beer.

Beat.

RYAN takes a slurp of his beer.

Beat.

TERRY takes a sip of his beer.

Beat.

KEN takes a sip of his beer.

Beat.

STEVE takes a sip of his beer.

Beat.

RYAN takes a slurp of his beer.

KEN, STEVE and TERRY turn to stare at RYAN.

Beat.

KEN, STEVE and TERRY look out to the front once more.

Beat.

TERRY takes a sip of his beer.

Beat.

KEN takes a sip of his beer.

Beat.

STEVE takes a sip of his beer.

Beat.

RYAN raises his beer to his mouth. He is just about to take a sip of beer but something catches his eye – he lowers his beer.

ANT: One King.

Beat.

RYAN: How long have we been here ?

Beat.

STEVE takes a sip of his beer – looks at TERRY.

Beat.

KEN takes a sip of his beer.

Beat.

RYAN: I said, how long have we been here ?

Beat.

TERRY takes a sip of his beer.

Beat.

KEN: Six.

Beat.

STEVE takes a sip of his beer – looks at RYAN.

Beat.

RYAN: What time is it now ?

Beat.

TERRY takes a sip of his beer – looking at RYAN.

Beat.

KEN: Ten.

Beat.

KEN takes a sip of his beer.

Beat.

RYAN: Four hours.

Beat.

STEVE takes a sip of his beer – looking quickly at TERRY then RYAN.

Beat.

KEN: Yep.

Beat.

KEN takes a sip of his beer.

Beat.

RYAN: But in all that time ...

Beat.

RYAN slurps his beer.

Beat.

TERRY, KEN and STEVE all turn to look at RYAN.

Beat.

TERRY: What's your point ?

RYAN: In all that time –

STEVE: We're listening.

RYAN: Why hasn't he ...

KEN: Yes.

RYAN: Touched his beer.

STEVE, TERRY and KEN all turn to look at ANT's beer.

Beat.

RYAN takes a slurp of his beer.

Beat.

STEVE: He did.

Beat.

RYAN: When ?

TERRY: About an hour ago.

Beat.

TERRY takes a sip of his beer.

Beat.

RYAN: Did not.

Beat.

RYAN takes a slurp of his beer.

Beat.

TERRY: I believe he did.

Beat.

TERRY takes a sip of his beer.

Beat.

RYAN: I believe he didn't.

Beat.

RYAN takes a slurp of his beer.

Beat.

TERRY: Yes he did.

Beat.

TERRY takes a slurp of his beer.

Beat.

RYAN: Did not.

Beat.

RYAN takes a slurp of his beer. He takes another slurp.

TERRY: Yes (SLURPS HIS BEER) - he (SLURPS HIS BEER) - did. (SLURPS HIS BEER)

TERRY: You can tell – (BEAT) - by the level.

Beat.

RYAN: What about it ?

Beat.

TERRY raises his glass but does not drink.

TERRY: Going down.

Beat.

RYAN: Is not.

RYAN raise his beer but before he can drink - .

TERRY: Is too.

Beat.

TERRY and RYAN look at each other. KEN and STEVE are also looking at RYAN. No one moves.

Beat.

ANT: Cherries.

TERRY, STEVE and KEN's heads snap back to ANT.

Beat.

RYAN finishes his beer. He stands and slams it down on to his stool.

RYAN: I'm getting another.

Beat.

STEVE takes a sip of his beer.

Beat.

RYAN: I said, I'm getting another.

Beat.

KEN: Quiet he's gonna call it.

Beat.

RYAN: Is not ?

Beat.

TERRY: Is too.

TERRY AND RYAN are looking at each other again. KEN is also looking at RYAN.

Beat.

STEVE: (WATCHING ANT) Hey, look.

They all look to ANT.

Beat.

ANT slowly reaches down and takes a sip of his beer. He slowly replaces the glass.

Beat.

STEVE (TO RYAN) & RYAN (TO KEN): Told you.

Beat.

RYAN: Stuff this. I'm going.

KEN: Wait, he's gonna call it.

TERRY: Let him go.

RYAN: I'm going.

TERRY: Then go.

Beat.

STEVE takes a sip of his beer.

Beat.

RYAN: Maybe I won't.

TERRY: Thought you were goin'.

RYAN: Maybe I'll stay.

TERRY: No, why don't you just go ?

KEN: (STANDING, TO **TERRY**) No, he's paid his share.

Beat.

STEVE takes a slurp of his beer.

Beat.

They all turn to STEVE.

STEVE: What ?

Beat.

RYAN: Is this it ?

KEN: But if you leave now – you're out.

TERRY: No one's making him stay.

RYAN: Look at us. It's – Its -

KEN: He's paid his share.

TERRY: (PUSHING **KEN** BACK IN HIS SEAT) It's what ?

RYAN: It's pathetic. Fuckin' pathetic.

TERRY: Don't hear anyone else complaining.

RYAN: It's been three months. We sit here – night after night – every night — watching some stupid machine whirl around.

STEVE raises his beer to his lips.

RYAN: No, not even a machine.

STEVE freezes.

RYAN: Watching a man who is watching a machine.

KEN: (TO HIMSELF) He's going to call it.

RYAN: And why ? Cause someone – one of you idiots – no, one of us idiots – came up with the brilliant idea that he (ANT) knew the magical combination of when the state wide jackpot would come up.

STEVE takes a sip of his beer.

KEN: He's going to call it.

RYAN: But he doesn't know. He doesn't know when the hundred grand's going to come up because he (ANT) is a fucking idiot too. A fucking idiot who has no idea about when - or when not - the jackpot's gonna drop.

STEVE takes a sip of his beer.

RYAN: But still we sit here – night after night – putting in twenty, forty, sixty, eighty, one hundred bucks – so we can watch him, watch that fucking machine. A thousand bucks – I'm down. One -

STEVE: Actually one thousand one hundred and sixty bucks.

Beat.

ANT: One King.

RYAN: (STAGGERING OVER TO ANT) That's right Ant. One King. And one King ain't enough is it. Neither's two Kings, or three Kings, or even four Kings. It takes five Kings. And we ain't ever going to get five Kings – are we ? But still we sit here, on our fat arses, givin' away our money, drinking piss, watching these fucking machines, like the fucking idiots we are. (BEAT) Dying. That's what we are – we're fucking dying. (SCREAMING NOW) Look at us. This is our life !

Beat.

STEVE takes a sip of his beer.

Beat.

TERRY: (STANDING) As I said – no one is making you stay.

Beat.

STEVE and KEN, raise their beers to their lips, watching TERRY and RYAN.

Beat.

RYAN: What did you say ?

Beat.

STEVE and KEN take a sip of their beer, watching TERRY and RYAN.

TERRY: (TAKING A STEP TOWARDS **RYAN**) No one –

STEVE and KEN take a sip of their beers.

TERRY: (TAKING ANOTHER STEP TOWARDS **RYAN**) is making you

STEVE and KEN take a sip of their beers.

TERRY: (TAKING ANOTHER STEP TOWARDS **RYAN**) – stay.

STEVE and KEN take a sip of their beers.

Beat.

RYAN: You know what ?

STEVE and KEN take a sip of their beers.

TERRY: No, what ?

Beat.

RYAN: I've always hated you.

STEVE and KEN take a sip of their beers.

TERRY pours his beer over RYAN's head.

STEVE and KEN freeze, mid-sip.

Beat.

TERRY: Ditto.

Beat.

RYAN: I'm going to enjoy this.

TERRY: Me too.

RYAN heads for the door, TERRY slams down his beer glass and follows him.

Beat.

STEVE and KEN look at each other.

Beat.

STEVE and KEN drain their beers. They put down their glasses and quickly follow TERRY and RYAN out.

Beat.

ANT alone.

Beat.

ANT takes a sip of his beer.

Beat.

ANT: Five Kings.

FX: A LOUD ALARM STARTS TO RING

LX: BRIGHT LIGHTS BEGIN FLASHING.

ANT takes a sip of his beer.

Beat.

He smiles.

ANT: Jackpot.

LX: Lights fade.

COLLECTED SHORT PLAYS : PLAY 5

You

Cast

DEBORAH	A marketing executive, late 20s
DOMINIC	Photocopying technician, mid 20s
STRANG	Gym instructor, late 20s
ALICE	An art student, early 20s
WALTER	A music teacher, late 40s

Setting

Busy inner city cafe.

Time

Saturday afternoon.

Production History

You was first produced by Hook, Line and Sinker at Elizabeth Farm in Parramatta, Sydney in 2005. Directed by Wayne Tunks.

You

Café. **DOMINIC** and **DEBORAH**.

DOMINIC: You.

DEBORAH: Me ?

DOMINIC: Yes - you.

DEBORAH: Really.

DOMINIC: That's what it's all about.

DEBORAH: Is it ?

DOMINIC: And what I need you to understand -

DEBORAH: Hold on. I don't *need* to understand anything.

DOMINIC: I mean what I'd *like* you to understand –

DEBORAH: Better.

DOMINIC: Is that this is not a casual thing - for me.

DEBORAH: Wrong. It's not a *thing* at all.

DOMINIC: Sorry ?

DEBORAH: You're implying there is a *thing* – some *thing* – between us, and let me make it clear there is no *thing* between us.

DOMINIC: Well there is to me. And it's not ...

DEBORAH: As you said.

DOMINIC: Casual. It's more, much more than that.

PAUSE.

DEBORAH: Oh. That's sweet.

DOMINIC: Sweet ?

DEBORAH: Yes sweet.

DOMINIC: You mean you feel the same ?

DEBORAH: No, it's just sweet. You've got a crush.

DOMINIC: I told you. It's more than that.

DEBORAH: Well then you've got more than a crush.

DOMINIC: On you.

DEBORAH: Yes.

DOMINIC: But you don't have more than a crush back ?

DEBORAH: Not even less than a crush, I'm afraid.

PAUSE. **DOMINIC IS CRESTFALLEN.**

DEBORAH: (LAUGHS) Hope you're not crushed.

DOMINIC: Glad you think it's funny.

DEBORAH: Oops ! Look, it's not your fault. Your great, really great.

DOMINIC: Obviously not great enough.

DEBORAH: It's me. All me. I'm just not ready for that kind of commitment. And you know, there's the other thing.

DOMINIC: You're big on things aren't you ?

DEBORAH: We work together. Office romance. It is a bit passé.

DOMINIC: Passe ? Did you say – *passé* ?

DEBORAH: Yes.

DOMINIC: So now not only am I not a *thing* – now I'm *passé* as well.

DEBORAH: I didn't mean it like that. It's just that you're young.

DOMINIC: Not that young.

DEBORAH: Well younger than me. I need someone older now. Wiser. With more experience. Someone who can teach me things, who I can grow with . Someone like my old music teacher. Mr Maguire. I was only fourteen but I'll never forget him. That's who I need.

DOMINIC: I thought you just said you weren't ready for something right now ?

DEBORAH: Well I'm not but I might be if the right person came along.

DOMINIC: But that's not ...

DEBORAH: You. Sorry.

DOMINIC LOWERS HIS HEAD. HE BEGINS TO CRY.

DEBORAH: Dominic. What are you doing ?

DOMINIC: What's wrong ? Are tears passé too ?

DEBORAH: It's only a crush. I know you think it's more than that but it's not. I mean it's not like we even know each other. I've hardly ever said seven words to you.

DOMINIC: (THROUGH HIS TEARS) Eight.

DEBORAH: Eight then.

DOMINIC: But they meant a lot to me.

DEBORAH: "Can I have some more photocopying fluid, please ?" meant a lot to you ?

DOMINIC: But you don't understand. If we just got to know each other a bit more I know you'd like me.

DEBORAH: Dom, you're a nice guy but like – get over it.

DOMINIC: But you don't understand – I can't get over it. I haven't had a girlfriend in two years.

DEBORAH: Then maybe you should get out more.

STRANG ENTERS. HE LOOKS AROUND THE CAFÉ.

DOMINIC: (SEEING STRANG) Oh shit.

DOMINIC DUCKS UNDER THE TABLE.

DOMINIC: (WHISPERS) Don't tell him I'm here.

DEBORAH: Who ?

BUT IT'S TOO LATE. STRANG HAS SEEN DOMINIC. HE MARCHES OVER.

STRANG: Come out from there you little worm. (TO **DEBORAH**) So this is her eh ? This is what all the fuss is about. Just what I expected. A trumped up little blonde tart.

DEBORAH: And what are you – The Terminator ?

STRANG: Better than Malibu Barbie.

DOMINIC: (EMERGING FROM UNDERNEATH TABLE) Strang. What are you doing here ?

DEBORAH: That's your name ? Strang.

STRANG: What about it – Cindy ?

DOMINIC: Strang. This is Deborah. I've told you about Deborah.

STRANG: Every bloody day for the last year. I thought she was Lady Di and now I find she's nothing.

DEBORAH: Hey – I'm not nothing.

STRANG: Pretty close. How can you choose her over me ?

DEBORAH: Dominic – are you ... ?

DOMINIC: No, no ! This is all just a misunderstanding.

STRANG: No misunderstanding. Come on baby, no one else can make you feel like I can.

DEBORAH: No wonder you haven't had a girlfriend for two years.

DOMINIC: Look, I'm not gay, okay ?

STRANG: Oh my little Domino –

DOMINIC: Don't call me that.

STRANG: Stop fighting it. Jump. I'll catch you.

DEBORAH: Yeah Domino, come out of the closet. You're among friends.

DOMINIC: I can't come out of the closet cause I was never in the closet. For the last time Strang – I am not gay.

STRANG: Didn't seem like that last night.

DOMINIC: That was just a one off. I was experimenting.

DEBORAH: Domino. Kinky.

DOMINIC: Stop calling me that.

STRANG: (OPENING ARMS) Come on Domino. Come to my ever loving arms. Let The Strang Man rap you in his big bear hug.

DOMINIC: Get away from me !

DOMINIC TRIES TO ELUDE STRANG AS HE CHASES HIM AROUND THE CAFÉ.

DEBORAH: Hey Dom, two years is a long time between drinks. Maybe you should stop fighting it. He's pretty cute.

DOMINIC: But he's not you.

STRANG: Just because I don't have fake tits and a painted on tan.

DEBORAH: Hey buddy. This tan is real.

STRANG: I have a firm muscular physique, hard throbbing power and a heart that beats for just one thing – you.

DOMINIC: (CORNERED) That's great Strang. And you're nice. Really nice. But I'm sorry I just don't want you.

STRANG: (GOING DOWN ON TO HIS KNEES) Come on Domino, let me taste your love.

DOMINIC: Get away from me !

ALICE ENTERS.

ALICE: Strang. Is that you ?

STRANG: (SEEING ALICE) Oh, shit !

STRANG TRIES TO HIDE UNSUCCESSFULLY BEHIND DOMINIC.

ALICE: Strang. It is you. What are you doing here ? I thought you didn't drink coffee.

STRANG: You stalking me now.

ALICE: (LAUGHS) Of course not. Just going to the library to return my Milan Kundera novels. Saw you through the window.

DOMINIC: Who the hell is this ?

DEBORAH: Jealous now ?

DOMINIC: No. Just curious.

STRANG: See. You do care.

ALICE: (TO STRANG) Are these your friends ?

STRANG: Alice, this is Domin –

DOMINIC: Nic.

STRANG: And –

DEBORAH: Deborah. Delighted to meet you.

ALICE: Cool. (TO STRANG) I never get to meet your friends.

DOMINIC: What is she talking about ?

STRANG: Look, Alice, I'm kind of busy now.

ALICE: Oh sorry. Just wanted to know if you want me to come over later. We haven't done it in like three days and I'm really horny.

DEBORAH: Why Strang, you have been a busy boy.

ALICE: Oh, sorry. Am I being inappropriate again ? I always do that.

STRANG: Look Alice, can I just call you later ?

DEBORAH: Don't mind us, please continue.

ALICE: It's just that since I had that third orgasm with you last Tuesday I can't stop thinking about you. Oh shit ! I did it again didn't I ?

DOMINIC: But you were with me last Tuesday, till about ten.

DEBORAH: Strang – you surprise me.

STRANG: Alice please – just go.

ALICE: Okay but first – I just want to read you this poem I wrote.

ALICE TAKES OUT A SLIP OF PAPER FROM AMONG HER BOOKS.

DEBORAH: What's the name of this place ? I must come here again.

ALICE: (READING) Oh Strang, my wild stallion of love
How you do thrust me

STRANG: Please stop.

DEBORAH: Keep going honey. It's beautiful.

ALICE: What I feel for you is so intense, so profound
It's like nothing I have ever felt before
When you make love to me, so aggressive and hard

ALICE: (CONT) It's the most powerful experience of my life

DOMINIC: I thought you were gay.

STRANG: I am !

DEBORAH: Doesn't sound like it baby.

STRANG: Look Alice, this is really sweet of you but would you just – PISS OFF !

DOMINIC: Let her finish.

ALICE SMILES AT DOMINIC, SHE CONTINUES.

STRANG: Just a few more lines.
(READING) When we first did it the first time
And I saw the full extent of your love
I wondered : "How am I going to –

IN DESPERATION STRANG GRABS ALICE'S POEM AND PUTS IT IN HIS MOUTH. HE STARTS CHEWING IT.

ALICE: Wow ! He ate my poem. That's like the second most powerful experience of my life. He loved my words so much he had to have them inside him.

STRANG SPITS OUT THE POEM.

ALICE: See – I was right to love you !

ALICE BEGINS CHASING STRANG AROUND THE CAFÉ.

STRANG: (DODGING ALICE, TO DOMINIC) I can explain.

DEBORAH: We're listening.

STRANG: She works in the bookstore near my house.

ALICE: "The Cosmic Love Box"

STRANG: And then you wouldn't let me in that night –

DOMINIC: He was pounding on my door at three A.M..

STRANG: So I was walking home and I was really drunk and stoned –

ALICE: And depressed.

STRANG: And then I ran into (TO ALICE) you.

ALICE: I'm an insomniac.

DEBORAH: Of course you are.

STRANG: And I was lonely. Just so lonely – and she started quoting Joe Jackson songs to me. You know how much I love those.

ALICE: So do I.

DOMINIC: I don't care about any of this.

DEBORAH: He says quietly fuming.

STRANG: And then it just happened.

ALICE: Over and over again.

STRANG: But every single time I was thinking of you.

DOMINIC: Don't tell me that.

TOGETHER:

ALICE: (TO **STRANG**))

STRANG: (TO **DOMINIC**)) – You see how much I need you.

DOMINIC: (TO **DEBORAH**))

DEBORAH: Somebody kill me.

WALTER ENTERS, HE GOES STRAIGHT TO ALICE AND KNEELS AT HER FEET.

WALTER: Dear One, I can't bear it any longer. We must be united as one.
(PRODUCING RING) Will you marry me ?

STRANG, DOMINIC and DEBORAH: Who the fuck are you ?

ALICE: (ANNOYED) Walter.

STRANG: Who's Walter ?

ALICE: He was my Music Teacher at High School. I gave him a hand job three years ago behind the boys' dunnies and now he's like completely obsessed with me.

WALTER: It's you Alice. Only you Dear One.

ALICE: Stop calling me that.

WALTER: (PRODUCING DAGGER) If I can't have you I'll die.

ALICE: That is like so fake.

WALTER: It's from my operatic version of Romeo and Juliet – written as a tribute to you.

DEBORAH: (TO ALICE) Did you say music teacher ? Where did you go to school ?

ALICE: North Rushton. Why ?

DEBORAH: Me too. (TO WALTER) Mr Maguire.

WALTER: Oh my god - Debbie Prince. Psycho Bitch from Hell. Keep away from me.

WALTER STARTS BACKING AWAY.

DEBORAH: You can't say that anymore. What are the chances of us meeting like this ? It's fate.

WALTER: Get back.

DEBORAH: You can't deny what you felt for me any longer.

WALTER: I never felt anything for you.

DEBORAH: I saw the way you use to look at me. Wonder in you're eyes.

WALTER: I was wondering how anybody could be that stupid.

DEBORAH: Forget this little four eyes. I'll show you what a real woman can do.

STRANG: What a joke.

WALTER: Alice has an IQ of 169. She knew all of Beethoven's concertos before she was nine. That's why I love (TO ALICE) you – and why I could never love (TO DEBORAH) you. Look at that ridiculous tan – just like at school. How many kinds of skin cancer do you have ?

DEBORAH: I'll lose the tan. I'll wear a shroud. I'll turn the colour of snow. I'll do anything to be around you again. To learn from you. To worship you. To bathe in your knowledge.

WALTER: Maybe you should bathe in disinfectant first.

DEBORAH: How can you be so cruel ?

DOMINIC: (TO DEBORAH) How can you ?

STRANG: (TO DOMINIC) How can you ?

ALICE: (TO STRANG) How can you ?

WALTER: (TO ALICE) How can you ?

ALL AT ONCE:

DEBORAH: If only you'd just let me into your life. You'll see I've changed – I've grown up. I'm ready to learn now. I'll read every book in your library – three times each. If you just –

DOMINIC: How can you be interested in him ? He's like ninety seven years old. I'm just as smart as him. I know how to fix 43 different brand of photocopiers. If you just –

STRANG: My little Domino – you see what you drove me to. I had to resort to sleeping with a girl because the pain of not having you was so great. We could be magic together. If you just –

ALICE: Strang my power muscle love machine man. You can't deny the true connection that we have. The soul bonding. When you're inside me you fill me up I never want you to pull out. If you just -

WALTER: Alice – petal of wisdom. Goddess of knowledge. Mozart means nothing next to you. You are every note in my symphony. Every score in my songbook. Without you there is silence. If you just –

DOMINIC: (OVER THE DIN) Stop it. Stop it. Everybody just stop it.

THERE IS SILENCE.

DOMINIC: Okay. I know exactly where all the trouble stems from. What all our problems are.

DEBORAH: So do I.

STRANG: And me.

ALICE: I agree.

WALTER: As do I.

DOMINIC: Our problem is –

TOGETHER:

DEBORAH: (POINTING TO WALTER))

DOMINIC: (POINTING TO DEBORAH))

STRANG: (POINTING TO DOMINIC)) - You !

ALICE: (POINTING TO STRANG))

WALTER: (POINTING TO ALICE))

BLACKOUT. END PLAY.

COLLECTED SHORT PLAYS : PLAY 6

Twenty Dollars

Characters

SOPHIE - The accused

MANDY – Accuser

KYRA – Friend of Mandy, fellow accuser

CAROLINE – Sophie’s friend

TRACEY – Class clown

The Setting

School playground

Time

Afternoon.

Production History

Twenty Dollars was first produced as part of Heart Shaded Blue at the Newtown Theatre, Sydney in 2005. Directed by Wayne Tunks.

Twenty Dollars**Corner of Playground. Afternoon. SOPHIE, MANDY and KYRA.**

MANDY: You did it so why don't you just own up. Only makes it worse to lie.

SOPHIE: I'm not lying – I didn't do it.

KYRA: Yes you did. There was no one else around. Mrs Morgan said so.

SOPHIE: It doesn't matter. It wasn't me.

MANDY: Then who was it – the Refos ?

SOPHIE: I don't know. Maybe she miscounted.

KYRA: So now you're calling Mrs Morgan a liar.

SOPHIE: I'm not calling anybody a liar. I just didn't take the money.

KYRA: Then who did ?

SOPHIE: I just told you. I don't know. Now just leave me alone.

MANDY: What's wrong ? Isn't Miss Perfect so perfect anymore.

SOPHIE: Shut up.

MANDY: Just because you're class Captain you're not so special.

SOPHIE: I didn't say that.

MANDY: You think you're above everybody else.

SOPHIE: I do not. Anyway, what's this got to do with you ? Why does it matter whether I stole the money or not.

KYRA: We just don't like things getting stolen on school property. Makes everybody edgy.

SOPHIE: Or maybe you took the twenty dollars and you just want to make sure someone else gets the blame.

MANDY: (PUSHING SOPHIE) Don't you accuse us you little bitch. Not unless you're ready to back it up.

CAROLINE: (ENTERING) Leave her alone.

KYRA: Oh, it's the other ugly twin. Should've known you'd be hanging around.

MANDY: Where you find one the other won't be far away.

CAROLINE: Sorry. Are you talking about yourself ?

SOPHIE: Don't Caroline. It's not worth it.

MANDY: You can say that again.

CAROLINE: (TO SOPHIE) Sophie, what's going on ? Miss Hampden sent me to get you.

SOPHIE: Why ?

CAROLINE: You have to go to the Principal's office.

MANDY & KYRA: Ooohh ! Busted.

CAROLINE: What's wrong ?

SOPHIE: Don't worry. It's all a mistake.

MANDY: You just can't stop lying can you ?

KYRA: She should be the School Captain of Lying.

CAROLINE: What kind of mistake ?

KYRA: Tell her what you did Sophie. Tell her.

MANDY: Or we will.

CAROLINE: It's okay Soph. We'll work it out. Just tell me.

SOPHIE: (AFTER A PAUSE) I was over at the Tuckshop getting some chips and Mrs Morgan said there was some money on the counter.

MANDY: Stop pretending you didn't see it.

SOPHIE: I didn't.

CAROLINE: Forget them. Then what happened ?

SOPHIE: I got my chips and I'm just walking away and Mrs Morgan just yells at me: "Hey, give me that back." And I turned around, everybody was looking, it was really embarrassing.

KYRA: Only what you deserved.

SOPHIE: So I held up the chips and I said: "But I paid for these." And she said: "Not those. You know what I mean." And so I walked back to the

- SOPHIE: (CONT) tuckshop and I said really quietly, so she would stop yelling, “Mrs Morgan, what are you talking about ?” And she just yells – even louder – “The twenty dollars that was sitting right here on the counter. What did you do with it ?” And I told her I never saw any twenty dollars and she just says” “Give it back now Randle. Before you make it worse for yourself.”
- KYRA: Absolutely right.
- SOPHIE: And I said – “I didn’t take it.” I was almost crying.
- MANDY: How sad.
- SOPHIE: And Mrs Morgan just says: “We’ll see what the Principal has to say.”
- CAROLINE: Hate that old hag.
- KYRA: I’ll be reporting that as well.
- CAROLINE: What is it with you two Kyra ?
- KYRA: Weren’t you listening in assembly ? “When people steal things –
- MANDY: “It effects the whole school.”
- CAROLINE: Weren’t you listening. Sophie didn’t steal anything.
- MANDY: Who says she didn’t ?
- CAROLINE: She did.
- MANDY: Oh yeah, and we’re meant to believe her.
- CAROLINE: Why shouldn’t we ?
- MANDY: Because I’m sick of you two getting away with everything. Just because you’re really smart and you’re like the teacher’s pet you two get away with all sorts of stuff. Then when Kyra and I do like the tiniest little thing wrong we get totally crapped on.
- SOPHIE: That’s bullshit.
- MANDY: Says you ? Like you two walk in fifteen minutes late and it’s like “Take your seat Sophie” and when me and Kyra are just five minutes late it’s “Three more detention points.”
- SOPHIE: That’s only because she knows you’ve been smoking down the back.
- KYRA: Says you.

- CAROLINE: Look I'm sorry you get a hard time but how is getting Sophie busted going to help.
- MANDY: Maybe we might just enjoy watching.
- CAROLINE: Oh shut up. Even you're not that pathetic.
- KYRA: No you shut up Caroline. If Sophie did something wrong then she should get in trouble just like the rest of us. Don't care how many merit prizes she's won.
- CAROLINE: But Kyra this is really serious. Stealing money. She could get suspended or even expelled.
- SOPHIE: Caroline – I didn't do it.
- CAROLINE: I know Soph but if Mrs Morgan says you did.
- MANDY: Exactly. Who are they going to believe ?
- SOPHIE: (GETTING UPSET) I can't believe this. All I did was buy some chips. I never did anything.
- KYRA: Why don't you just give the money back and they might let you off with a warning ?
- MANDY: Don't help her Kyra.
- SOPHIE: How can I give the money back if I don't have it ?
- CAROLINE: Maybe they're right Sophie.
- SOPHIE: What are you talking about ?
- CAROLINE: Maybe if you give the money back they'll just give you a warning.
- SOPHIE: I can't believe it.
- CAROLINE: What ?
- SOPHIE: I can't believe even you don't believe me.
- TRACEY: (ENTERING) Hey Squophie. Did you hear ?
- SOPHIE: I know Trace. I've got to go the Principal's office. I'm coming now.
- TRACEY: No, Mrs Morgan found the twenty bucks.
- SOPHIE: You're kidding ?

TRACEY: Nah, there's like this gap between the counter and the sink and it had fallen down there. Mr Warren found it. But you still gotta go to the Principal's office.

SOPHIE: Why ?

TRACEY: I think Mrs Morgan's gotta like apologise or something.
(LAUGHING) Ha ha ! Stupid old bitch.

SOPHIE: Thanks Trace. I'll be there in a second.

TRACEY: (WALKING OFF LIKE SHE'S BLIND) Ha ha ! Mrs Morgan. Totally blind. Can't even see. (WALKS INTO WALL) Ow !

TRACEY EXITS.

MANDY: (TO SOPHIE) So you got lucky - this time.

KYRA: Yeah, we'll be watching you, Miss Not-So-Perfect.

MANDY AND KYRA EXIT.

PAUSE. SOPHIE AND CAROLINE.

CAROLINE: Hey, that's great. They found the money. That'll teach Mrs Morgan to make a big scene.

SOPHIE DOES NOT RESPOND.

CAROLINE: What's wrong Soph ? You're not gonna get busted anymore.

SOPHIE: I'd expect it from Mandy and Kyra but you. You're meant to be my friend.

CAROLINE: What ?

SOPHIE: Caro - you didn't believe me. You actually thought I took that money.

CAROLINE: No I didn't.

SOPHIE: Don't lie. I heard you. I saw the look you gave me.

CAROLINE: Soph, it's no big deal.

SOPHIE: No. You're wong. It is a big deal. (EXITING) I gotta go to the Principal's office.

CAROLINE: See you later ?

SOPHIE: (STOPPING) You know, I always used to wonder how much a friend was worth. Now I know. Twenty dollars.

CAROLINE: Don't say that.

SOPHIE: Whatever.

SOPHIE EXITS. CAROLINE ALONE.

CAROLINE: Sophie, don't. I did believe you. I did. I just thought ... Sophie ...

BUT SOPHIE IS GONE. LIGHTS FADE. END PLAY.

COLLECTED SHORT PLAYS : PLAY 7

Qwendolyn's Gambit

Characters

RAZZA	– A Rook
BRENDAN	- A Bishop
KEIRA	- A Knight
QWENDOLYN	- The Queen
PATTIE 8	- A Pawn
BELINDA	- The Replacement Queen

(PLEASE NOTE: Height is quite important in the play – QWENDOLYN and BELINDA must be the tallest, then BRENDAN, KEIRA and RAZZA. PATTIE must be noticeably smaller than the rest – can be on her knees.)

The Setting

The corner of a chessboard

Time

Sunday afternoon.

Production History

Qwendolyn's Gambit was first produced as part of Heart Shaded Blue at the Newtown Theatre, Sydney in 2005. Directed by Wayne Tunks.

Qwendolyn's Gambit

RAZZA, BRENDAN, KEIRA, QWENDOLYN and PATTIE stand on stage – **RAZZA, KEIRA, BRENDAN and QWENDOLYN** in a line – **PATTIE** in front of **RAZZA**. Their feet are rooted to the spot but they can move their upper bodies.

As the lights come up they all sway on the spot, trying to avoid something swinging above their heads.

RAZZA: Here he comes again.

BRENDAN: Ooh, he's a clumsy one this one.

KEIRA: (TO **QWENDOLYN**) Watch out he's coming for you.

QWENDOLYN: No, he's just hovering.

PATTIE: Where's he going now ?

KEIRA: (TO **RAZZA**) Over towards you.

BRENDAN: Watch out !

RAZZA: Here he comes, great clob-hoppers.

RAZZA DUCKS.

RAZZA: Ha, ha – missed me !

PATTIE: I think he got me.

QWENDOLYN: Are you sure ?

PATTIE: I think so.

KEIRA: He'll have to move you then.

BRENDAN: But was it a real touch – or just a graze ?

PATTIE: I'm not sure.

RAZZA: We'll get sure. I'm involved here.

PATTIE: I think it was a graze.

QWENDOLYN: You're safe then.

KEIRA: Is it tournament rules or a friendly ?

PATTIE: Or maybe it was a touch.

RAZZA: Make up your mind.

BRENDAN: All this uncertainty is quite off putting.

PATTIE: I don't know !

QWENDOLYN: It's okay. He's castling.

RAZZA: Castling ?

BRENDAN, KEIRA and RAZZA: Which side ?

QWENDOLYN: King's side.

PATTIE: Whew ! We can all relax then.

RAZZA: Not for long.

SLIGHT PAUSE.

KEIRA: Can anybody see ? How we doing ?

BRENDAN: Not too good. He's already lost a front liner.

PATTIE: Which one ?

QWENDOLYN: Mine.

PATTIE: Oh no – good old Pattie 5.

BRENDAN: I thought you were Pattie 5.

PATTIE: No silly – I'm Pattie 8. But don't feel too bad. We are identical.

RAZZA: Did he at least get one of theirs ?

BRENDAN: Afraid not. Gave it up without even the slightest hint of a fight.

KEIRA: He's hopeless.

RAZZA: We're doomed ! All doomed !

QWENDOLYN: Quiet now. It's early days. We all have to make sacrifices occasionally.

PATTIE: Did she say 'sacrifices' ?

BRENDAN: Fraid so.

KEIRA: (TO **BRENDAN**) Well you'd know all about those I guess.

QWENDOLYN: It's all for the greater good.

RAZZA: Don't see what's good about it.

QWENDOLYN: We make an individual sacrifice so the rest may survive.

RAZZA: It's all very well for you to talk about sacrifices Miss La De Da, because it's not you who gets sacrificed.

KEIRA: How do you figure that ?

RAZZA: Think about it – you got Rook's Gambit, Knight's Gambit and Bishop's Gambit – even Pawn's Gambit – but who ever hard of Queen's Gambit.

PATTIE: What's a Gambit ?

BRENDAN: A sacrifice – he's talking about giving up your mortal role so the rest of us may live on.

PATTIE: Don't like the sound of that.

RAZZA: Well we all do it my small friend – me, Brendan, Keira – even all eight of you. All except Miss Queen Qwendolyn.

QWENDOLYN: Do be quiet – he's about to make his next move.

BRENDAN: Probably botch it up again.

RAZZA: No I won't be quiet. It's a travesty and I'm not putting up with it.

KEIRA: Actually I have.

RAZZA: Have what ?

KEIRA: Heard of a Queen's Gambit. I believe it's quite common actually.

RAZZA: Crap.

KEIRA: It is.

RAZZA: Is not.

QWENDOLYN: I can assure you Rachel – it does exist.

RAZZA: Don't call me that. My name's Razza.

QWENDOLYN: Well Razza I can assure you – there is such a thing as a Queen's Gambit.

RAZZA: Oh yeah – how can you be so sure ?

QWENDOLYN: Because I think he's about to play it.

PATTIE: Oh Queen Qwendolyn – no. No !

QWENDOLYN JERKS SUDDENLY AS IF BEING PULLED FROM THE SPOT – SHE STUMBLES LEFT THEN RIGHT THEN EXITS STRAIGHT AHEAD AND OFF THE STAGE.

BRENDAN MUTTERS A BLESSING AND CROSSES HIMSELF.

KEIRA: Oh dear Qwendolyn – and so early in the game. (TO **RAZZA**) And you – how rude and ungrateful.

RAZZA: Steady on sister. She'll be okay. We all gotta get moved sometime.

PATTIE: Don't speak so quickly.

KEIRA: What's he's doing ? Don't leave her there.

BRENDAN: Can't he see my black counterpart ? Oh my Grace.

RAZZA: (CALLING) Hey Dumbo – get her out of there !

KEIRA: Too late – he's released his hand.

BRENDAN: And our opponents seen the mistake.

PATTIE: Oh no – Queen Qwendolyn !

THEY ALL HIDE THEIR EYES AND TURN AWAY. THERE IS A LOUD CRUNCHING NOISE FROM OFF. THEY ALL FLINCH.

BRENDAN: (MAKING THE SIGN OF THE CROSS, GIVING LAST RITES) In nomine Patris ...

PATTIE: Poor Gwendolyn.

RAZZA: That bloody idiot.

KEIRA: He wasn't even looking.

PATTIE: Noble Qwendolyn.

KEIRA: I wonder which one of us will be next.

RAZZA: Always the Rook. Once the Queen's gone – I'm next in line.

PATTIE: Regal Qwendolyn.

- RAZZA: Steady on Pattie 8 – she wasn't all that crash hot.
- KEIRA: Says you ! Bloody useless. Stuck in the corner. Hiding.
- RAZZA: I am not hiding. Just fenced in. You wait till I get out of here. I'll show them !
- BRENDAN: Quiet now sisters, Qwendolyn's passing has affected us all but be assured that in the great land Off Board there is another life – one much greater than our humble existence here – where we will all live forever - in peace and harmony.
- PATTIE: Even with the black pieces ?
- BRENDAN: Yea sister – even with them. And readily I say unto you in the great world Off Board we may all live freely with no rigid constraints to bind us.
- PATTIE: You mean no squares ? Holy shit ! Oops. Sorry Father.
- RAZZA: Sorry you're lordship but you're missing the point. We're not that upset about Qwendolyn passing –
- KEIRA: Hey ! Speak for yourself.
- RAZZA: We're upset about the fact that she passed so pointlessly – for diddly-squat –
- PATTIE: Diddly what ?
- RAZA: All because our guy is so bloody hopeless. She went to the Great Board in the sky for nothing.
- KEIRA: (WATCHING) I wouldn't be so sure.
- BRENDAN: Keira's right. Our opponent was so busy grabbing Qwendolyn he's left his whole left flank exposed.
- PATTIE: And our boy's on to it.
- RAZZA: Go on son !
- BRENDAN: He's moving fast now.
- KEIRA: The other guy doesn't even know what hit him.
- PATTIE: We may not even be needed.
- RAZZA: Go on son !

BRENDAN: He's split them wide open.

KEIRA: Our opponents pieces are shell shocked.

PATTIE: Their king is exposed !

RAZZA: Go on son !

BRENDAN: Mate in two.

KEIRA: Does he see it ?

PATTIE: Yes he does !

RAZZA: Go on son.

BRENDAN: One !

KEIRA: Almost there.

PATTIE: Two !

RAZZA: Go on son !

ALL: Checkmate !

THEY ALL CHAP AND CHEER.

RAZZA: Good on you son. Well done !

KEIRA: Don't you mean – "Good on you girl !" It was Qwendolyn who won it for us.

RAZZA: Fair call. Gotta give her that.

BRENDAN: Yea you are right sisters. She did give up her mortal life so we may all live on in peace.

PATTIE: Yep, she was a bonza chick.

KEIRA: Thanks Qwendolyn -

RAZZA: Wherever you are -

BRENDAN: Lest we forget.

SLIGHT PAUSE.

PATTIE: So, what do we do now ?

RAZZA: I don't know about you but I'm looking forward to a good kip. I'm buggered.

BRENDAN FROWNS.

RAZZA: Sorry I mean tired. Real tired.

KEIRA: For once we both agree. Let's get some sleep.

SUDDENLY BELINDA ENTERS.

PATTIE: Who's she ?

BELINDA: Hello. My name is Belinda. I am your new Queen.

RAZZA: New Queen ? We just got rid of the last one.

BRENDAN: Great King defend us !

PATTIE: What is it ?

KEIRA: Look over the other side of the board.

BRENDAN: The vanquished black pieces. They're-re-appearing. Re-grouping.

PATTIE: What's going on ?

BELINDA: For your eternal sacrifice – we are grateful.

RAZZA: Oh no !

ALL (EXCEPT FOR BELINDA): He's playing another game.

ALL THE PIECES SWAY ON THE SPOT, TRYING TO AVOID SOMETHING SWINGING ABOVE THEIR HEADS.

RAZZA: Here we go again !

THEY CONTINUE SWAYING AS THE LIGHTS FADE.

COLLECTED SHORT PLAYS : PLAY 8

The Dead Sun

Cast

KE-LO

TUNG

TWAN

Setting

Kitchen.

Time

Dusk.

Production History

The Dead Sun was first produced by Hook, Line and Sinker at the Parramatta Riverside Theatres, Sydney in 2003. Directed by Annemarie Lopez.

The Dead Sun

Fairfield, Sydney. Kitchen. 7pm.

A kettle is boiling on a kitchen bench. KE-LO enters.

She turns the kettle off and takes a cup from the cupboard. She scoops some green tea leaves into a metal strainer and holds them in a cup. She pours some boiling water onto the strainer.

She leaves the strainer in the tea for a few moments then she removes it. She picks up her tea and blows on it, waiting for it to cool. She sips her tea.

TUNG enters, unseen by KE-LO. He stands watching KE-LO. KE-LO sips her tea.

KE-LO turns and sees TUNG. Surprised, she gasps and drops her tea. The cup smashes on the floor. Pause.

KE-LO sways and stumbles towards the table. She sits. Pause. TUNG moves towards the broken cup.

KE-LO: No. Leave it.

TUNG: I should ...

KE-LO: I will do it later.

TUNG: But your back ...

KE-LO: My back is fine. (PAUSE) Sit with me.

TUNG moves to the table. He sits. KE-LO looks at him.

KE-LO: You scared me.

TUNG: Scared ? You should know my face by now.

KE-LO: Surprised. You surprised me. You appeared so ... suddenly.

TUNG: The gate was open.

PAUSE.

TUNG: No tears now. You have cried enough.

KE-LO: I think I shall never stop crying.

TUNG: You have cried enough.

KE-LO: You have been away so long ... this time. Where have you been ?

TUNG: No questions.

KE-LO: So long. Why ?

TUNG: No questions.

KE-LO: Who are you to say 'no questions' ?

TUNG: We have this time. Let us share it.

KE-LO: Share ? But what shall we do ?

TUNG: Talk. Say things that need to be said.

KE-LO: But Twan should be here.

TUNG: I came when I knew.

KE-LO: You always come when ...

TUNG: Knew that he won't ...

KE-LO: Be here. (BEAT) He has suffered too.

TUNG: You have suffered most. (BEAT) How is he ?

KE-LO: Better. He works.

TUNG: So do you.

KE-LO: He is busy.

TUNG: He was always busy. You made time for me.

KE-LO: I always made time for you.

TUNG: You loved me.

KE-LO: I loved you.

TUNG: More than anything.

KE-LO: Even more than ...

TUNG: I knew. I always knew.

KE-LO REMEMBERS SOMETHING. SHE STANDS, SUDDENLY.

KE-LO: Did you see your lilies ? I have looked after them.

TUNG: I saw them.

KE-LO: You came in through the garden. You must've have ...

TUNG: They are beautiful.

KE-LO: But the garden is so small.

TUNG: Big enough.

KE-LO: I know what they are called now. Stargazer lillies. I thought if I looked after them, kept them alive, then you would know that we were always here. Always ...

TUNG: And I do.

KE-LO: (SUDDENLY DARKER) But there is no sun now.

TUNG: It shines still.

KE-LO: Just clouds and rain. Your flowers stare up at a grey wall. The sun is dead where we live.

TUNG: But it is shining right now.

PAUSE.

KE-LO: How long will you stay ... this time ?

TUNG: More questions.

KE-LO: You have been away so long.

TUNG: I am here now.

KE-LO SUDDENLY GOES TO A DRAW. SHE TAKES OUT A SMALL BELL. SHE RINGS IT. A DELICATE TINKLE.

KE-LO: Here is your bell. Remember you must keep it by your bed. The Doctor said -

TUNG: Enough now.

KE-LO: In the night, if ever you need us, you can just ... (SHE RINGS THE BELL) We are in the next room.

TUNG: Enough.

KE-LO: I will hear the bell and come to you. I will ...

TUNG: I remember.

KE-LO: He said that if you had the puffer - you would be alright.

TUNG: And I am.

TUNG STANDS.

- KE-LO: You are leaving ? Already.
- TUNG: I have little time.
- KE-LO: But you ... Your father ...
- TUNG: Quiet now. You must listen to me.
- KE-LO: You can not leave so soon !
- TUNG: Please. You must listen.
- KE-LO: Why have you come ?
- TUNG: Because it is time.
- KE-LO: Time ? For me ?
- TUNG: No.
- KE-LO: For Twan. No - please. I can not ...
- TUNG: I am your son. It is time to -
- KE-LO: Forget. I will never forget.
- TUNG: Forgive.
- KE-LO: Who ? Who must I forgive ?
- TUNG: You must forgive.
- KE-LO: I am your mother.
- TUNG: And I am your son. And you must forgive.

PAUSE. SUDDENLY:

- KE-LO: Go. Leave here.
- TUNG: I am your son.
- KE-LO: My son would not try to take this away from me.
- TUNG: Why must I not -
- KE-LO: Because it is all I have left. All I ... have ...

SHE COLLAPSES TO HER KNEES. **TUNG** GOES TO HER. HE KNEELS BESIDE HER AND MAKES THE ACTION OF STROKING HER HAIR, EVEN THOUGH HE IS NOT ACTUALLY TOUCHING HER.

KE-LO RESPONDS TO HIS HAND AS IF HE WAS TOUCHING HER.

TUNG: You have my stargazers. You have my photos. You have my love.

KE-LO: I - can - not - bear - this.

TUNG: You are the strongest person I know.

KE-LO: I should've done something.

TUNG: You did everything you could. But now you must do the hardest thing. You must forgive.

KE-LO: For - give. Why ?

TUNG: For me. For - me.

KE-LO: Tung.

TUNG: Ke-lo.

KE-LO: Mother.

TUNG: Son.

TUNG STANDS. HE LOOKS TOWARDS THE DOOR.

KE-LO: No ! Please.

TUNG: Twan will be home soon.

KE-LO: But you must wait. You must talk to him.

TUNG: I can not.

KE-LO: He must know..

TUNG: I - can - not.

TUNG GOES TO THE DOOR.

KE-LO: Why must you always leave ?

TUNG SMILES.

TUNG: Look after my lilies. Keep them gazing up - at the sun.

KE-LO: The stars.

TUNG: The sun.

TUNG EXITS. KE-LO WATCHES WHERE HE HAS GONE. PAUSE.
TWAN ENTERS FROM THE FRONT DOOR. HE SEES KE-LO ON THE
FLOOR.

TWAN PLACES HIS BAG DOWN. HE GOES TO KE-LO AND PICKS HER
UP. HE PLACES HER BACK IN THE CHAIR.

TWAN GOES TO THE BROKEN CUP ON THE FLOOR. HE PICKS UP THE PIECES AND PLACES THEM IN THE BIN. HE TAKES A CLOTH AND WIPES THE SPILT TEA FROM THE FLOOR. HE PLACES THE CLOTH NEATLY BACK OVER THE TAP.

PAUSE. HE SITS NEXT TO KE-LO. SILENCE.

KE-LO: Our son came home today. (PAUSE) He came through the garden, past his lilies. He thanked me for looking after them. I asked him to stay ... I asked him to wait for you ... but he would not. (SMILING) He told me to keep his lilies gazing up at the stars.

TWAN: The sun.

KE-LO: The stars.

PAUSE.

TWAN: (STANDING) I will make some tea.

TWAN GOES TO THE COUNTER.

KE-LO: (SUDDENLY ANGRY) How can you be like this ? So cold. Your son returns. Your only son. He returns to us and you say nothing. Nothing ! How can you be so cold.

TWAN: Sit down my love. We will have some tea.

KE-LO GOES TO HIM. SHE BEGINS STRIKING HIM.

KE-LO: No ! I want you to say something. Our son has come back to us. Our son. I want you to say something.

TWAN SLOWLY GRABS HER ARMS. HOLDING THEM. PAUSE. WE HEAR ONLY KE-LO'S BREATHING, THEN:

TWAN: You were asleep. You were dreaming. (PAUSE) You were asleep. You were dreaming.

KE-LO MOVES AWAY FROM TWAN.

TWAN: And in your dream ...

KE-LO: I heard a ringing.

TWAN: A tiny bell ...

KE-LO: Calling me from my dream.

TWAN: You knew.

KE-LO: A mother knows. A mother always knows -

TWAN: When their child is in danger. You heard the bell

KE-LO: Through the paper thin wall between us.
TWAN: You heard him gasping for breath.
KE-LO: I rose from my bed and I ran into his room.
TWAN: You saw him on the bed ...
KE-LO: Choking and blue.
TWAN: You gave him his puffer.
KE-LO: Choking and blue.
TWAN: You placed the puffer in his mouth.
KE-LO: Choking and ...
TWAN: Soon he was better. No more choking. His was breathing again. You saved him. You saved our son.
KE-LO: blue ...

PAUSE. KE-LO LOOKS UP AT TWAN. TWAN IS SURPRISED, CONCERNED.

KE-LO: I did not hear the bell.

LONG PAUSE.

TWAN: He did not ring the bell.
KE-LO: I did not run to his room.
TWAN: We did not run to his room.
KE-LO: We slept on.

NOW THE TEARS ARE TWAN'S.

TWAN: We slept ... on.
KE-LO: But in the morning we ...

TWAN WATCHES KE-LO.

KE-LO: In the morning ... I woke up.

TWAN EMBRACES HIS WIFE. HE IS SOBBING NOW.

TUNG EMERGES FROM THE SHADOWS AT THE REAR OF STAGE,
WHERE HE HAS BEEN WATCHING.

KE-LO LOOKS UP TO SEE HIM. TUNG SMILES AND TURNS TO EXIT.

KE-LO WATCHES HIM LEAVE. THE LIGHTS FADE.

COLLECTED SHORT PLAYS : PLAY 9

Yell (ow)

Characters

SAN early 20s

LEI early 20s

Setting

A kitchen in a unit in Ashfield in Sydney's inner west.

Time

1am on a hot summer evening

Production History

Yell (ow) was a winner in Theatre 4A's Four x Twenty competition in 2004.

Yell (ow)

Kitchen, Ashfield.

I am on a steamy summer night.

LEI enters. He has been woken from an uneasy sleep and he goes to the sink and pours himself a glass of water. Pause. He sits at the kitchen table and opens a nearby packet of cigarettes. It's empty. Pause.

He gets up and goes over to a portable CD player in the corner. He finds a CD and puts it on - Aerosmith blares loudly from the speakers. **LEI** quickly turns it down.

He goes back to the table and sits, listening to the music.

SAN enters. She stands at the door watching **LEI**.

SAN: I'll never completely understand your attraction to Aerosmith.

LEI: (STANDING) Sorry. Didn't mean to wake you.

SAN: Who can sleep ?

LEI MOVES TOWARDS THE CD PLAYER.

SAN: It's okay. Leave it. I'm up now.

BUT LEI TURNS THE CD PLAYER OFF ANYWAY.

SAN: Lei, I said it's okay.

LEI: I'll put on something else O.

SAN: One ...

LEI FUMBLES FOR ANOTHER CD AND PLACES IT IN THE PLAYER. SOON WE HEAR A VIETNAMESE POP SONG.

LEI GOES BACK TO THE TABLE AND SITS.

SAN GOES TO THE SINK. SHE POURS HERSELF A GLASS OF WATER. SHE STANDS AT THE SINK LISTENING TO THE MUSIC. PAUSE.

SAN: I always hated this song.

LEI: Me too.

SAN: Reminds me of home.

LEI: This is my home.

SAN: Mine too.

PAUSE. SAN GOES TO LEI. SHE LEANS DOWN AND HUGS HIM.

SAN: Are you okay ?

LEI: (HOLDING UP PACKET) Forgot to pick up smoko.

SAN: Do you want to go for a drive ? We can pick some up at the Seven-Eleven.

LEI: Don't worry.

SAN: Or we can walk down to Parramatta Road. The BP is open 24 hours.

LEI: I smoke too much anyway these days. Go back to bed O. I'll be there in a minute.

SAN: You sure ?

LEI NODS. SAN KISSES HIM AND STARTS TO EXIT.

LEI: I thought I heard something.

SAN: (STOPPING) When ?

LEI: That's why I can't sleep. I thought I heard something.

SAN: What was it ?

LEI: Someone yelling. In the street.

SAN: Who ?

LEI: I don't know. Just someone. Probably drunk.

SAN COMES BACK INTO THE ROOM.

LEI: Can you turn that off ?

SAN TURNS OFF THE CD PLAYER. SILENCE.

SAN: I didn't hear anything. (PAUSE) What did they say ?

LEI: Just ... yelling.

SAN: Yelling what ?

LEI: I don't know. I was asleep.

PAUSE.

SAN: Do you want to come back to bed ?

LEI: Not yet.

SAN GOES TO THE SINK.

SAN: You want tea ?

LEI SHAKES HIS HEAD. PAUSE.

SAN: One ... ?

LEI: I think it was him.

PAUSE.

SAN: Are you sure ?

LEI: No.

SAN: Then what did you hear ?

LEI: A voice. I don't know. It just sounded like ... He was yelling and then there was a noise like a door slamming and then a car -

SAN: There was a car ?

LEI: I don't know. I think so.

SAN: Outside our house ?

LEI: (IRRITATED) I'm not sure.

SAN: Why would he come here ?

LEI: I don't even know if it was him.

SAN: To where we live !

LEI: I said I don't know. I was asleep and then I woke up and I heard this voice. It sounded like him. But I'm not sure if it was him, okay ? Okay ?

SAN: (BACKING OFF) Okay. (PAUSE) I'm making tea.

LEI: I thought you were going to bed.

SAN: I don't feel like sleeping now.

LEI: It's too hot for tea.

SAN: I know but I just feel like tea. You want some ?

PAUSE. LEI NODS. SAN FILLS AN ELECTRIC KETTLE AND TURNS IT ON.

SAN: So what are we going to do ?

LEI: What are we meant to do ? Nothing.

SAN: We can't just -

LEI: Would you listen to me ? I don't even know if it was him.

SAN: But what if it was ?

LEI: What if ?

SAN: Who else could've it been ?

LEI: What do you want me to do ?

SAN: I don't know ! (PAUSE) Maybe we should -

LEI: What ?

SAN: I don't know. I'm just ...

LEI: You're just what ? Say it San. Say it !

SAN: I'm just scared - alright ? I'm scared.

LEI: He's my brother.

SAN: I know he's your brother but I'm still scared. I'm sorry but that's how I feel.

LEI: What do you think he's going to do ?

SAN: I don't know.

LEI: He's my family.

SAN: And she was my cousin. That didn't stop him.

LEI: We don't know it was him.

SAN: Oh come on Lei. We've been through this.

LEI: Nobody proved anything.

SAN: They got the text messages from his phone.

LEI: It might've been stolen.

SAN: And you believe that ?

LEI: Yes - I believe that.

SAN: Then why has he been hiding from the police for the last month ?

LEI: I don't know okay ? I don't know. (PAUSE) You remember that night when we first moved here ? He came over for dinner. You made Pad Thai.

SAN: Very bad Pad Thai.

LEI: We sat at this table - the three of us - together. He was drinking that cheap chinese beer.

SAN: It was awful. Almost made you sick.

LEI: That's what I can't get out of my head. There was a time before this. Before all this ... shit happened.

SAN: And ?

LEI: It just seems ... weird. That's all. There was a time when things were normal.

SAN: Your brother was never normal.

LEI: How do you know ?

SAN: Hanging around the city all night, playing those stupid war games at the internet store.

LEI: I use to play those stupid games.

SAN: Not all night ?

LEI: Yes I did. Before ...

SAN: Before what ?

LEI: Before I met you.

PAUSE. SAN SMILES. THE KETTLE WHISTLES. SAN TAKES IT OFF AND MAKES TEA IN TWO CUPS.

LEI: Australia just never seemed to be okay for him. I don't know. When I came here everything just seemed to work out. Got into the course I wanted, found somewhere to live, met you. It just wasn't like that for Chik.

SAN: Maybe he didn't try.

LEI: He did try. The course he wanted to do - it wasn't like he thought.

SAN: You told me he never went.

LEI: He did go - he just didn't ... understand it. His English. And then he got that job at that video store and they sacked him for nothing, Because they were racist and didn't like Vietnamese. He's older than me you know that ? My elder brother and then when I start doing better than him. That's hard.

SAN: Still doesn't mean ...

LEI: Mean what ?

SAN: He had to kill Kali.

LEI: He didn't kill Kali. It was that other guy okay ? Thuy. They were just going to kidnap her and that stupid Vay has to ring the police and Thuy got all crazy. Chik didn't kill her.

SAN: That's not what the police said ?

LEI: The police are wrong, okay ?

PAUSE.

SAN: How do you know all this ?

LEI: I don't know. It was in the papers.

SAN: What paper ?

LEI: I just heard it okay ?

SAN: Who told you ?

LEI DOES NOT RESPOND.

SAN: You've spoken to him, haven't you ? You've seen him.

LEI: No.

SAN: Then how do you know he didn't kill Kali ?

PAUSE.

- LEI: Okay, he rang me. He just rang me.
- SAN: Was this before or after the police came to our home to ask you if you knew where he was ?
- LEI: Before. After. I can't remember.
- SAN: Did he tell you where he was ?
- LEI: No.
- SAN: Lei, where is he ?
- LEI: He's my brother. Okay, he's my brother. He looked after me back home. Now I've got to look after him.
- SAN: Then what did he say ?
- LEI: He told me to try Vanilla Coke.
- SAN: Why didn't you tell me he rang ?
- LEI: Because it has nothing to do with you. He's my brother. Mine. I know what he did. I know - not you. I owe him.
- SAN: What do you owe him ?
- LEI: He's my brother O.
- SAN: And what am I ? (PAUSE) Stop blaming yourself.. It's his fault - not yours.
- LEI: It's not his fault.
- SAN: People like him ...
- LEI: What ?
- SAN: People like him make it hard for us. All of us.
- LEI: What are you talking about ?
- SAN: Don't you see the way people look at us on the street ? "It's them. They're Vietnamese. They're the ones who killed that girl and put her body in the boot of her car." They ... brand us.
- LEI: That's their problem.

SAN: No, it's my problem. Even at TAFE. The way people looked at me. No one would sit next to me in class. She was my cousin and no one would sit next to me.

LEI: They'll get over it.

SAN: But I won't. Just tell me one thing. You're his brother so you should know ? Why did he park the car on our street ?

LEI: I don't know.

SAN: No Lei. Don't look away. You tell me - why did he park Kali's car with her dead body in the boot on our street ? Fifty metres from our house. Come on, he's your brother. You know him so well. Answer me. And why did he send text messages to her friends afterwards, bragging about it ? Tell me that. You know how they found out she was dead ?

LEI: I know.

SAN: Two days after she disappeared they were still using her mobile phone. They killed her and they were still using her phone. And still hanging out at that stupid internet shop. Someone saw the phone and remembered Kali had brought this shiny pink phone a couple of weeks ago. That's how they caught him.

LEI: I said I know !

SAN: Then how can you defend him ?

LEI: I'm not defending him. I don't even know if it was him outside okay ? It could've been anybody.

SAN: Then why did you think it was him ?

LEI: I didn't think it was him. I don't who it was okay ? It was just some Lebo Rev heads. That's all. Hooning their car around at two in the morning, waking everybody up. Screaming at us slapheads to go back to Cabramatta. That's who it was. It wasn't Chik at all. Okay. It was just some guys saying "Go back to Vietnamatta." It didn't even sound like him.

PAUSE.

SAN: You heard him, didn't you ? That's why you think it was Chik.

LEI DOESN'T RESPOND. HE GOES TO THE CD PLAYER AND PRESSES PLAY. THE ANNOYING POP SONG STARTS AGAIN. HE STOPS IT AND TAKES OUT THE CD. HE FUMBLES WITH THE OTHER CD COVERS, TRYING TO PUT AEROSMITH BACK IN.

SAN PURSUES HIM.

SAN: You heard him didn't you ?

LEI: (MOVING AWAY) Get out of my face.

SAN: Didn't you ?

LEI RATTLES AROUND AMONGST THE CD COVERS, SEARCHING.

SAN: (PURSUING HIM) What did he say ? Tell me Lei.

LEI: He didn't say anything.

MORE CD COVERS CLATTER TO THE FLOOR.

SAN: Tell me !

LEI: No !

ANOTHER CD COVER CRACKS AGAINST THE HARD FLOOR.

SAN: Tell me what he said or I'm picking up the phone right now. Right now !

SUDDENLY LEI IS STILL. THERE IS SILENCE.

LEI: He said "Help." Okay ? That's what he said. "Help Lei. Help me."

PAUSE. LEI AND SAN SLIDE TO THE FLOOR. THEY HUDDLE TOGETHER.

LEI: I was asleep. I heard this car stop under the window. Then I heard Chik. He yelled out: Then I heard the car door slam and the car drive away. Chik was asking his little brother to help him.

PAUSE. SAN GOES TO THE PHONE. SHE BEGINS TO DIAL.

LEI: What are you doing ? O - what are you doing ?

SAN: We have to call. We have to call before -

LEI: Put the phone down.

SAN: We have to call.

LEI: San - put the phone down.

SAN: We have to - before ...

LEI: Put the phone -

SAN: Before he -

LEI: Put the -

LEI GRABS THE PHONE. SAN CLINGS TO THE PHONE AND THEY WRESTLE.

SAN: He killed my cousin.

LEI: You don't know that.

SAN: He killed my cousin.

LEI: You - don't - know - that.

SAN: Admit it. He killed my cousin. He killed my cousin.

LEI: I don't know that.

LEI OVERPOWERS SAN AND PULLS THE RECEIVER FROM HER HAND.

SAN: He killed her. He killed Kali..

LEI REPLACES THE RECEIVER.

LEI: Get away.

SAN: Admit it. He killed her.

LEI: Go to bed.

SAN: Say it. He killed her.

LEI: I - don't -

SAN: Say it. He killed Kali.

LEI: I don't care ! Okay ? I know he killed Kali but I don't care. He's still my brother. He's still my brother and I must look after him.

SILENCE. SAN HEADS FOR THE DOOR.

LEI: O, I didn't mean it.

SAN TRIES TO GET PAST HIM.

LEI: O, I said I was sorry.

SHE KEEPS TRYING.

LEI: Please O. Listen to me.

SAN: Let me go.

LEI: Just listen to me.

SAN: Let me go !

LEI GRABS HER.

LEI: Please O. I'm sorry !!! Just listen to me.

**SAN GOES LIMP IN HIS ARMS. SHE HAS BEGUN TO CRY. LEI
LEANS AGAINST THE WALL, CRADLING HER.**

LEI: I know what Chik did was a terrible thing and I know I should hate him. I know. And I've tried - but I can't. Where we came from it wasn't like where you grew up. It was very hard. People getting killed all the time. Chik watched over me. He protected me. He saved my life so many times. Now I must watch over him. In my heart I know that is what I have to do.

PAUSE..

SAN: You remember when we first met. I was eighteen.

LEI: I thought you were about thirteen.

SAN: And I was running - I can't remember why and I fell. On that walkway, in Chinatown.

LEI: Near the Chinese lion.

SAN: My knee was bleeding and I was crying. Eighteen and I was crying. And you gave me your hankie. Your dirty yellow hankie.

LEI: I washed it first in that drinking fountain.

SAN: It was still filthy - and you gave it to me and you said. "Stop crying. Take this. It'll make it better." It will make it better. Your big eyes were so worried.

LEI: I just wanted you to stop crying.

SAN: So you gave me your filthy wet yellow hankie and I stopped crying. I didn't put it on my knee but I stopped crying and I looked at your face and I thought "He will. He will make it better." I loved you from that very first moment. I've always been in love with you. You're the One to my O. But I will walk out that door now unless you pick up the phone and tell them where your brother is.

LEI: I can't do that.

SAN: Yes you can.

LEI: I can't O.

SAN: You have to. You have to call them.

LEI: But I can't.

SAN: Then I will.

SAN GETS UP. SHE GOES AND PICKS UP THE PHONE. SHE DIALS.

SAN: (INTO PHONE) Hello ? / Yes. There's someone here who wants to report something. Hold on please.

SAN HOLDS OUT THE PHONE.

SAN: She's waiting.

LEI LOOKS UP AT THE PHONE. HE DOES NOT MOVE.

LIGHTS FADE.