

Just Once

a play

by

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This play won The Sydney Theatre Company's Youth Commission's Scheme in 1985 and was read at the Australian National Playwright's Conference later the same year.

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Just Once

was first performed by The Australian Theatre for Young People
on Thursday 17 July 1986 at The Rocks' Theatre, Sydney
with the following cast (In Order of Appearance):

ASTRADYNE:	Imogen Banks
GEORGE:	Lisa Hensley
FLETCHER:	Daniel Cordeaux
RINO:	Morgan Lewis
MAN:	Larry Turnbull
WOODS:	Mark Ferguson
YOUTH:	Felix Williamson

The production was directed by Colette Rayment
Assisted by Adam Cook
Designed by Genevieve Bluett

"There is another world, but it is in this one."

- Paul Eluard

"You know what happens ?
People go to the movies instead of moving."

**- Tennessee Williams,
THE GLASS MENAGERIE.**

Characters

RINO	thirteen
FLETCHER	his best friend, eighteen
GEORGE	Fletcher's girlfriend, seventeen
CONSTABLE MARK WOODS	a young Cop, twenty one
ASTRADYNE	a dealer, early twenties
MAN	well dressed, mid forties
YOUTH	Private School boy, late teens

Setting

Kings Cross, Sydney

Time

Summer, mid 1980s

Synopsis

JUST ONCE takes place on a hot summer city night in King's Cross, Sydney, Australia. It tells the story of three teenagers caught up in a lifestyle with no rhyme, nor reason.

The play attempts to show their anger, disappointment and frustration with the world and with themselves.

The play also explores the fantasies (and substances) they use to escape from day to day life, and shows how for some, at certain points, the only way to go is out.

Act 1**Scene 1**

Saturday Night 10pm. Summer.

SCENE: A SMALL LANE AT THE BACK OF A PUB. THERE IS A STAFF ENTRANCE TO THE PUB UP LEFT WITH SOME STEPS BELOW IT. TWO LARGE GARBAGE BINS SIT DOWN RIGHT. GIG POSTERS COVER THE WALL.

THE LIGHTS COME UP TO SUGGEST STREET LIGHT. "THE HOWARD ELIMINATORS" CAN BE HEARD PLAYING INSIDE THE PUB.

ENTER **ASTRADYNE** THROUGH STAFF DOOR, WITH AN UNLIT CIGARETTE IN HER MOUTH. SHE LOOKS LEFT, THEN RIGHT. SHE OPENS HER HAND TO REVEAL \$40. SHE COUNTS IT THEN HIDES THE MONEY IN AN INSIDE POCKET. SHE LIGHTS THE CIGARETTE AND EXITS.

ENTER **GEORGE**, ALSO THROUGH STAFF DOOR, WITH A DRINK IN HER HAND. SHE SITS ON THE PAVEMENT AND PULLS OUT TWO HITS OF SPEED. SHE PREPARES THEM ON A SMALL MIRROR. ENTER **FLETCHER** THROUGH STAFF DOOR, CARRYING TOBACCO. PAUSE. **GEORGE** KISSES HIM.

FLETCHER: Just making sure you're alright.

GEORGE: I can look after myself. What you got ?

FLETCHER: Tobacco, for Uncle Bob. Six pack of McCarver's Special Blend. He asked me to get it when I phoned him this arvo. Cost me thirty bucks ! (PAUSE) Have you thought anymore about coming up with me ? Uncle Bob says he'll give you a job too. He'll pay us fifty bucks a week each, cash. So - what do you say ?

GEORGE SNORTS TWO LINES. SHE STANDS AND LETS THE SPEED TAKE EFFECT.

GEORGE: Excellent song. (SHE WALKS TO **FLETCHER** AND INDICATES SPEED) In your considered opinion Fletcher, one line or two ?

FLETCHER: Can't you forget about that for one second ?!

**FLETCHER KNOCKS THE SPEED FROM GEORGE'S HAND.
GEORGE LOOKS AT WASTED SPEED.**

GEORGE: Brilliant Fletcher ! Fucking Brilliant ! You owe me twenty bucks.

FLETCHER: You're always out of it. I can never talk to you.

GEORGE: Out of it. I'm not always out of it. Well ... not much. Not now.

FLETCHER: Then listen to me. All I'm trying to tell you is that I want you to come to the country with me.

GEORGE: Why ?

FLETCHER: Why do you think ? It'll be just like that day in the gardens. Once you get up there, once you get that fresh air inside you, you'll forget about everything else and just worry about being happy. And I know we can be happy. (PAUSE) I want you to be with me.

PAUSE.

GEORGE: Okay. I'll come. But if I don't like it after a week I can go. No questions asked.

FLETCHER: Suit yourself. But I'll tell you now, once you get up there - you won't want to go.

GEORGE: We shall see what we shall see, Fletcher. How do we get there ?

FLETCHER: Dawn train. Tomorrow.

GEORGE: Tomorrow ?

FLETCHER: It's the quick or the dead.

GEORGE: Got enough money for the tickets ?

FLETCHER: Well, I did. The tobacco cost me more than I thought. But don't worry, me and Rino know how to fix that. I'll come and get you later. (HANDING **GEORGE TOBACCO**) Mind this for me would you ?

GEORGE: (PUTTING IT IN HER BAG) Sure.

FLETCHER KISSES HER.

GEORGE: See you soon.

FLETCHER RUNS OFF LEFT. GEORGE EXITS INTO THE PUB AS RINO ENTERS RIGHT, READING A "STAR WARS" COMIC. HE ACTS OUT THE STORY TO AN IMAGINARY AUDIENCE.

RINO: 'Star Wars. Chapter four: In battle with Darth Vader. The story so far ...' (TO AUDIENCE) We're kind of in a hurry now, so pay attention. ' Hans Solo, Chewbacca and Luke Skywalker have been captured by Imperial Forces and taken aboard the Death Star, the all but invulnerable battleship of the Empire.

THE MAN ENTERS FROM THE LEFT. HE WATCHES RINO FROM A DISTANCE.

RINO: However, our heroes have somehow managed to escape and rescue the beautiful Princess Leia from her prison cell deep inside the space fortress. But as we pick up the story, Darth Vader's Storm troopers have cornered the valiant rebels in a cell corridor. (PRODUCING A COATHANGER AND USING IT AS A LASER PISTOL) "Solo, they're getting closer." "Tell me something I don't know kid." "Quit complaining. Just get us out of here." "Aaaaaooooohhh !!!" Suddenly Hans is struck down by a fearful blast.

RINO FALLS TO THE GROUND. THE MAN SMILES AND STARTS TO MOVE TOWARDS RINO. SUDDENLY HE NOTICES SOMETHING OFF RIGHT. THE MAN EXITS.

RINO: "This looks like curtains kid." "Give me your gun." "What can you do ?" "Aaaaaooooohhh !!!" With amazing courage Luke charges at the Storm troopers, firing both pistols.

CONSTABLE MARK WOODS ENTERS. HE WATCHES RINO SILENTLY.

RINO: "You show 'em kid." Somehow Luke manages to clear a passage to a tiny metal slot in the wall of the corridor. "Quick everyone, down this chute." But before anyone can move, Luke is sucked down by a fearful blast of hot air. As Luke is propelled down the chute head first, he is horrified to see massed wreckage below. It was the garbage chute ! He speeds out of control (**RINO REELS BACKWARDS**) into the (**RINO CRASHES INTO WOODS**). PAUSE. THEN AS HE TURNS TO FACE **WOODS**) rotting carcass of a series XY Android.'

RINO LOOKS AT WOODS. WOODS LOOKS AT RINO. WOODS TAKES THE COATHANGER.

WOODS: (MOVING AWAY) Turn out your pockets.

RINO DROPS HIS COMIC AND TURNS OUT HIS POCKETS. THEY CONTAIN A PHANTOM RING, NEATLY FOLDED PIECE OF PAPER, TWO DOLLARS AND A HANKIE. WOODS SORTS THROUGH RINO'S BELONGINGS. WOODS FINISHES. PAUSE.

WOODS: Alright. Put 'em away. (INDICATING COATHANGER)
What do you use this for ?

RINO: Nothing. I was just mucking around. I found it in one of those bins.

WOODS: (CONSULTING NOTE BOOK) Then you wouldn't know anything about a Blue Laser, licence number BFG 108, that went missing from the corner of Orwell and Victoria streets at approximately 11.15 pm on Thursday January the 16th.

PAUSE.

RINO: No.

WOODS: Pellizzerro isn't it ?

RINO: How do you know ?

WOODS: We got a call from some Social Worker bloke this morning, asking if we'd seen you.

RINO: Did you really ? I must be pretty important if they're out looking for me eh ? But hold on, how did you know I was me ?

WOODS: You mean there's more than one thirteen year old boy of Greek parentage living on the streets who thinks he's Luke Skywalker ?

RINO: My name's Pellizerr - o.

WOODS: That's what I said.

RINO: So I'm Italian, not Greek. All Italian names end in I or O, like Embitti or Pellizzerro, and all Greek names end in o-u-s. Like Kaligeropolous.

WOODS: I'll keep it in mind. (WRITING IN NOTEBOOK) Name ?

RINO: But you already know it ?

WOODS: Full name ?

RINO: Rino Giovanni Pellizzerro.

WOODS: Place of residence. You do have a place of residence don't you ?

RINO: Yes. 17 Namoi Road, Matraville.

WOODS: Postcode ?

RINO: 2036.

WOODS: Phone number ?

RINO: 558 - Where's Bruce ?

WOODS: Who ?

RINO: Bruce McDonald. He's a Jack too.

WOODS: You mean Constable McDonald ?

RINO: He said I could call him Bruce.

WOODS: I don't think so. Phone number.

RINO: 558 5974. Where's Constable McDonald then ?

WOODS: He got transferred midweek. I'm his replacement. Constable Woods.

RINO: They sent him away ?

WOODS: They didn't do anything. He asked for a transfer. School last attended ?

RINO: Matraville Boys' High.

WOODS LOOKS AT RINO.

RINO: But why would he ask for a transfer ?

WOODS: Don't ask me. I only met him once. Father ?

RINO: Vincenzo Pellizzerro. But he's dead.

PAUSE.

WOODS: Mother ?

RINO: Gabriella Pellizzerro.

WOODS: Does Mrs. Pellizzerro know you're wandering around the streets alone, after ten on a Saturday night ?

RINO: I'm waiting for somebody.

WOODS: Who ?

RINO: Constable McDonald. We always meet here every Saturday night when he gets off. Didn't he even leave a message for me ?

WOODS: No.

RINO: He didn't even say goodbye.

PAUSE.

WOODS: (LOOKING AT COMIC) Thirteen eh ?

RINO: Yeah. Are you shocked ?

WOODS: I'm shocked you're still reading Star Wars' comics. (INDICATING COATHANGER) Are you sure you found this in one of those bins ? You do realise that it's a criminal offence to have this in your possession?

RINO: I was just playing.

WOODS: Being a minor I could charge you with Possession of Implement.

RINO: You could.

PAUSE. **WOODS MOVES AWAY.**

WOODS: You haven't heard of a heroin dealer called The Piper have you ? He sells in the pub. Italian origin.

RINO: No. Why ?

WOODS: A few of his clients decided to clean up their act recently, so he's -

RINO: Been giving them Hotshots has he ?

WOODS: What's a Hotshot ?

RINO: (LAUGHING) What's a Hotshot ? How long have you been a cop ?
Okay. When junkies go clean, the dealers get worried they'll turn them in,
so they get 'em. They track 'em down and inject them with bad stuff.
Junkie dies, dealer's safe.

WOODS: Yeah ...

RINO: And you guys write it off as just another O.D.

WOODS: This guy's doing the opposite, actually.

RINO: How ?

WOODS: The stuff he's selling isn't bad - it's too good. Sort of like an introductory
offer.

RINO: Oh yeah, like chips !

WOODS: Chips ?

RINO: When they first come out the packets are really really full. But after a few
weeks, they don't give you as many. The bag's just full of air.

WOODS: Something like that.

RINO: I hope you get him. Dealers deserve it.

**ASTRADYNE ENTERS, HANDS IN POCKETS. SHE SEES WOODS,
TURNS AND EXITS.**

WOODS: Wait here.

**WOODS EXITS, RUNNING AFTER ASTRADYNE. RINO
WATCHES THEM GO. GEORGE ENTERS FROM THE PUB.**

GEORGE: (ENTERING) G'day Rino. How are you ? Hey, Georgie girl's got a present
for you. (FINDING VOUCHERS IN HER BAG) One Big Mac. And one
large Coke.

RINO TAKES THEM SILENTLY.

GEORGE: Don't I get a thank you ?

RINO: Oh sorry. Thanks George. Where you been ?

GEORGE: Oh you know. The usual. First I rolled up to Information but that was full
of rockers, so I went down to Vienna but that skinny DJ plays the worst

GEORGE: (CONT) music. I couldn't dance to one song. So then I decided to come up here. Bought a few lines off Astradyne, talked to the locals. This is the life eh Rino ? Rage all night. Sleep all day.

RINO: Yeah, this is the life.

GEORGE: Would you cheer up ? What's the matter ?

RINO: Bruce is gone. He asked for a transfer.

GEORGE: Heavy.

RINO: He told me he was getting sick of the streets. Wanted to work somewhere where he wasn't reaching for his gun every thirty seconds. Wanted some scenery in his old age. I didn't think he meant it.

GEORGE SNIFFS.

GEORGE: I don't know about scenery. Everything looks pretty scenic to me just at the moment. Unfortunately this moment could becoming to an abrupt halt any tick of the clock, thanks to Fletcher the Fantastic. Shepherd of the Streets or what ? That new Jack hassle you did he ?

RINO: He asked me where I lived. I had to tell him Matraverse. If he rings up there, Mum'll tell him to get me back. I don't want to go back. My mum's a bitch !

GEORGE: Hey, it's okay Rino. He's not gonna ring up your mum. He's just trying to put the shit up you.

RINO: I wish my dad was still alive.

GEORGE: Don't do it to yourself Rino. They couldn't send me home even if they wanted to. Somebody else lives there now. See, my mum - Have I ever told you about my mum Rino? Let me tell you about my mum. For starters George isn't short for Georgina you know ? Nope. Mum always wanted a boy, and George was my dad's name, so she just named me after him and pretended I had a dick. George Senior thought it was all a bit weird but he wasn't around too much. Can't really blame him. Then one day George Senior came home and said he was pissing off to Indonesia, with somebody else. Mum just lost it. She got this huge knife out of the kitchen drawer and started chasing George Senior all around the house yelling "If I can't have you, nobody else will. " George Senior got away, just, with a little help from George Junior, and as for mum it was "lights on but nobody's home" time. Now being a good, hysterical, abandoned de-facto, she should have just hit the bottle, right ? But no, she couldn't even do that right. She hit the

GEORGE: (CONT) cakes instead. Now you may think an alcoholic's pretty gruesome, but you should see a foodaholic. I remember, I came home from school, I was doing Second Form at Petersham Girl's High, and there she was, sitting at the kitchen table, using the knife to cut up this humungus Black Forest cake from the Patisserie up the road. There was another one on the table and two empty boxes of Sarah-Lee Apricot Pull Aparts under her chair. I asked her if there was any news on George Senior. I don't even think she heard me. She just kept stuffing that cake into her gob, chocolate icing in her hair, brown shit all over her face. I mean she was pretty flipped out about him, but it was tough on me too. Did she ever think of that ? No way. She added new meaning to the word pathetic. Everyday when I got home from school, I was still going then, I liked it - all those books, she'd still be sitting there, chomping away. She hadn't moved, except to go to the fridge. She was up to cold baked beans straight from the tin when I left. I didn't say goodbye, didn't think it was necessary. Then I came up here. Seemed the thing to do. Everybody else does. I never went back. Some shit worker came and told me she was dead last year. Heart attack , kidney failure, something like that. The shit worker wanted me to cry. I laughed. Don't know what happened to George Senior. I miss him. Jesus ! Somebody turn me off !

UNNOTICED BY **GEORGE** AND **RINO**, **ASTRADYNE** ENTERS AND CONCEALS HERSELF BEHIND SOME GARBAGE BINS. **WOODS** ENTERS, HOLDING THE COATHANGER.

GEORGE: He's in a hurry.

WOODS WALKS QUICKLY TO THE RIGHT SIDE OF THE STAGE AND LOOKS OFF. HE THEN WALKS QUICKLY BACK TO THE LEFT SIDE OF THE STAGE AND LOOKS OFF.

GEORGE: (TO **WOODS**) Lost something have you ?

WOODS: Are you with him ?

GEORGE: Yeah. He's staying at my place.

WOODS: (TO **RINO**) Listen, I'll let you off with a caution this time, but if I find you in Possession of Implement again I will charge you. Now I don't know how Constable McDonald ran things but believe me, I will charge you. Understood ?

RINO: Yes.

WOODS: Now move along. The both of you.

WOODS EXITS INTO THE PUB.

GEORGE: (CALLING AFTER **WOODS**) Don't say hello then.
(TURNING TO **RINO**) You alright ?

RINO NODS. **GEORGE** HUGS **RINO**.

GEORGE: Don't worry Rino. They can't get you today. That's all that counts. Well anyway, I'd better be going. I've got to find Astradyne before things start to turn nasty. You know what they say when you speed through the day.

ASTRADYNE: (STEPPING FORWARD) I'm here.

RINO: Astradyne !

GEORGE: Tell me Astradyne, is this just a phase or have you always hidden behind garbage bins ?

ASTRADYNE: Only when I have to.

GEORGE: Got any trips ?

ASTRADYNE: There's no trips going. I do have some speed.

GEORGE: But speed's so boring.

ASTRADYNE: I can remember when you thought speed was wonderful George. I can remember when I sold you some in the loo at the train station. I came back for a piss three hours later and you were still there, scrubbing the last of the hand basins with your tooth-brush. Speed was far from boring that night, George.

GEORGE: Maybe, but it's boring now.

ASTRADYNE: I do have something new.

GEORGE: What ?

ASTRADYNE: Ecstasy. You don't know bliss till you've had some of this.

GEORGE: How much ?

ASTRADYNE: It's a little more expensive, but then the best things in life don't come cheap.

GEORGE: How much ?

ASTRADYNE: Thirty bucks.

GEORGE: Give us two. Pay you tomorrow.

ASTRADYNE: You know the rules.

GEORGE: I'll pay you first thing tomorrow. I swear.

ASTRADYNE: When I get the money, you get the stuff.

GEORGE: But I'm one of your best customers.

ASTRADYNE: Can't run a business on promises.

GEORGE: Astradyne.

ASTRADYNE: I said no.

GEORGE: Bitch.

**GEORGE MAKES A GRAB FOR ASTRADYNE'S POCKET.
ASTRADYNE CATCHES HER HAND AND BEGINS TO TWIST IT
SLOWLY.**

GEORGE: Let me go !

ASTRADYNE: Let me go, what ?

GEORGE: Let me go, please.

ASTRADYNE RELEASES GEORGE.

GEORGE: You're not the only dealer in the world you know ? I'll find someone else.

ASTRADYNE: Have fun.

GEORGE EXITS INTO THE PUB.

RINO: God Astradyne !

ASTRADYNE: Temper, temper. Who's the new Jack ?

RINO: Constable Woods. Bruce is gone.

ASTRADYNE: Good. He hassled me shitless.

RINO: He was only doing his job.

ASTRADYNE: And I'm only doing mine.

RINO: Oh and how is business ?

ASTRADYNE: Gets better everyday Rino. Everyday.

PAUSE.

RINO: Guess where I've just been.

ASTRADYNE: The movies.

RINO: How did you know ?

ASTRADYNE: Just lucky.

RINO: Guess what to see ? "Return of the Jedi." The third chapter in the Star Wars trylogy.

ASTRADYNE: That's trilogy.

RINO: Whatever. You see I was talking to Michael, at the News stand, and he said it was better than Star Wars and that I should try and see it. So I did.

ASTRADYNE: Where'd you get the money ?

RINO: The Coathanger Kid doesn't pay.

ASTRADYNE: Is there anything you can't get into ?

RINO: Yeah. A Lamborghini Contage. They've got this special double locking system.

ASTRADYNE SMILES. SHE TURNS AWAY FROM RINO AND TAKES A COMIC OUT OF HER COAT POCKET. SHE READS.

RINO: Astradyne. What are you reading ? (PAUSE) Can I have a look ? Please. I'm not gonna run off with it. (PAUSE) Give you a look at Star Wars.

ASTRADYNE: Alright. But not for long. I've got to get over to Bondi and make some deliveries.

RINO GRABS FOR THE COMIC.

ASTRADYNE: Uh - uh. Show us your hands first. (**RINO DOES SO.**)
They pass. Just.

THEY EXCHANGE COMICS.

RINO: "Return of the Jedi in Words and Pictures Volume One" ! Hot !

ASTRADYNE: You like ?

RINO: I like. Where did you get it ?

ASTRADYNE: Jag brought it back from London. He travels a lot
in his line of work. Paid five pounds fifty for it,
that's nearly thirty bucks Australian. Found it in
this little op. shop just off Trafalgar Square.
Can't even buy it in the bookshops anymore.
Limited Edition, Collectors' Special.

RINO: Astradyne. Could I borrow it ?

ASTRADYNE: Rino, I'm not stupid.

RINO: Please. I'll take good care of it.

ASTRADYNE: (AFTER A PAUSE) Collateral.

RINO: What ?

ASTRADYNE: Insurance. In case you scarpa.

RINO: I'm not going to scarpa.

ASTRADYNE: Just in case.

RINO: What do you want ?

ASTRADYNE: What have you got ?

RINO: My Star Wars comic.

ASTRADYNE: It's a start.

RINO PULLS OUT HIS POSSESSIONS.

RINO: My Phantom Club ring.

ASTRADYNE: Getting better. I know people who'd kill for one of these.

RINO: But then they wouldn't be able to wear it with pride.
The Ghost Who Walks doesn't approve of violence. The
Man Who Cannot Die swore on his father's skull to
devote his whole life to the destruction of piracy, greed and -

ASTRADYNE: Cruelty. Collateral.

RINO: You can have my McDonald's vouchers.

ASTRADYNE: Still valid ?

RINO: Yeah, they don't expire till next month. George only gave 'em to me tonight.

ASTRADYNE: Excellent. Always have a strong need for a feed.

RINO: Can I have the comic now ?

ASTRADYNE: What about your Greg Chappell autograph ? I know
someone who'd pay heaps for that.

RINO: My Greg Chappell autograph ! But my dad gave me that.
He got it the day Greg Chappell scored his last double
century for Australia. It's the most important thing I own.

ASTRADYNE: More important than a genuine, one hundred percent, fully
imported "Story of Return of the Jedi in Words and Pictures
Volume One" ? I mean Greg Chappell's retired anyway. What good
is it now ? (PAUSE) Look, Rino, I like you. You're a good kid, and
since I'm feeling in such high spirits tonight, I'm going to make you
an extremely generous offer - never to be repeated. You hand over
the autograph and I'll let you keep the Jedi mag.

RINO: For good ?

ASTRADYNE: That's right. I'll keep the other stuff too, of
course. I mean I'm not that generous. You could
save up for the rest of your life and still not have
enough money to go to England and purchase one of
those. Most likely you wouldn't find one anyway.

RINO: Yeah I know, but my dad's autograph.

PAUSE. **ASTRADYNE** SNATCHES HER COMIC BACK.

ASTRADYNE: Sorry. Changed my mind. Deal's off.

RINO: But I'm still thinking about it.

ASTRADYNE: No. I can't swap it. It was a present from Jag.

RINO: Please. I'll give you two dollars too !

ASTRADYNE: Deal. You're a hard man Rino. You twisted my arm.
A man to fear in big business one day.

RINO: When you're hot, you're hot. (HANDING OVER MONEY)
Here's the two bucks.

ASTRADYNE: And the autograph.

RINO: (HANDING OVER AUTOGRAPH) And the autograph.

ASTRADYNE: Ta. Nice doing business with you Rino. And just a
word of advice. I'd keep that mag to myself if I
was you. Word gets out you've got something as
valuable as that, and it'll be open season.

RINO: Don't worry, I won't tell anybody.

ASTRADYNE: Good boy. Check ya.

ASTRADYNE EXITS INTO THE PUB AS **GEORGE** COMES OUT.
THEY PASS - SILENTLY.

GEORGE: No luck. This Italian guy was selling but he wouldn't
take credit either. You should've seen him. He was
so ugly. Suzie says to say hello.

RINO: Who's Suzie ?

GEORGE: You know Suzie. Black hair. Crashes at the squat some nights.

RINO: You mean that smackie you've been hanging around with ?

GEORGE: I haven't been hanging around with her ... that much.

RINO: I don't think she's a very good influence on you George.

GEORGE: Oh handle it Rino. Suzie's okay. I mean what do you know ? I've been with her when she's done some, and she's alright. Don't know why everyone raves about smack so much. She just spins out for a couple of hours, that's all. Watch'a got ?

RINO: "Return of the Jedi in Words and Pictures Volume One" ! Pretty incredible eh ? Guess where it comes from ?

GEORGE: The Intergalactic Bypass Comic Bookshop.

RINO: No. It comes from London. In England. Astradyne really didn't want to give it to me, but I outsmarted her. I had to give her my Greg Chappell autograph but. You know ? The one dad got me.

GEORGE: Now how could you do that Rino ? He'll turn in his urn.

RINO: No he won't. He would've done the same thing. This comic's worth fifty bucks you know.

GEORGE: Is it ? Well I think you better go and tell Michael that pretty quick then. He's got a couple of boxes full. Flogging them off for fifty cents each.

RINO: Fifty cents ?

GEORGE: (LOOKING AT COMIC) Yep, this is the one alright. "Return of the Jedi" in 3-D, braille etc etc. Look, it even says fifty cents up here in the corner. Someone's scribbled over it. Sorry kiddo, but it looks like you've been well and truly Astradyned.

RINO: Shit. My dad's autograph. I wish Fletcher had been here. He would've stopped me.

GEORGE: Fletcher ? I don't know what good he would have done. He's pretty clumsy around things of value.

RINO: Why do you give Fletcher such a hard time ?

GEORGE: I don't give him a hard time. I'm going to the country with him aren't I ?

RINO: Are you ?

GEORGE: Yeah. We're catching the dawn train to Belling. Tomorrow.

RINO: Tomorrow ?

GEORGE: For one week's trial. If I'm not completely satisfied, I can come home. Hey, can you imagine me in the country ? George bailing the hay. George milking the cows.

RINO: I think it would be quite nice. Lots of sunshine, and natural food of course.

GEORGE: Yeah, it'll be a change. But I'm gonna miss this place. Look around you. I mean, what is everybody going on about ? It's great. It's exciting. Where else can you stand real quietly and watch a whole world of people go by ? Like that blonde lady at the Workers'. Did you see her leather jacket ? It must be so expensive. And those French bouncers outside Alladin's Lamp, with their bow-ties and long sleeves, so you can't see all the tats. And that dero with the flagon of Rose who always falls into the fountain. And where else can you sit under a thirty foot high neon Coke sign and count the flashes ? Eighty a minute: on off, on off. But then you wouldn't know what I'm talking about. You've never walked down Darlington Road, five a.m. on a Saturday morning, sun coming up, totally off your face. Shit ! I just remembered something. Who am I going to score off in Bellingham ? Does Astradyne do Mail Order ?

RINO: I don't think so.

GEORGE: This is going to be a very long week.

RINO: If you decide to come back, will Fletcher come back too ?

GEORGE: I don't know. He's pretty stuck on this going to the country crap.

RINO: I'm gonna miss him.

GEORGE: Yeah. Fletcher's a real cutey. But he has gone a bit overboard. I mean, it's like we're married or something.

RINO: But you'll stay for the week.

GEORGE: I'll try. (PAUSE) Now don't you go telling Fletcher about any of this.

RINO: I won't.

PAUSE. **GEORGE STANDS.**

GEORGE: So, you gave your dad's autograph away did you ?

RINO: I already told you that.

GEORGE: That the same dad who used to beat you up every night in your happy family home in Marrickville ?

RINO: Matraville.

GEORGE: Same diff. The same one that got blown away in that hold up.

RINO: Shut up George ! Just shut up ! You know he was. My dad didn't have it easy. He had to work fifty two hours a week at the White Wings factory and he got paid shit money. The only way he could keep it up was going down the Royal every day after work. And when he got home he was all hot and tired from too much beer, and so he took it out on us. We didn't have anything when we came to Australia. He got us everything. I even had a proper uniform, just like the other kids. We were happy. But now look where I am. Stuck in this shit hole.

GEORGE: Well if it's so fuckin' bad here why didn't you all stay in bloody Wogland with the rest of the Dagoes ?

RINO: Because he thought we'd have a chance in Australia.

GEORGE: Shit. Sorry Rino. I'm just hanging out, that's all. Hey, I just remembered something. (RUMMAGING THROUGH HER BAG) I pinched some Sera's yesterday. I know I did. Please let there be some left. Please. Aha ! (EMERGING WITH SERAPAX) That should keep me going. (SHE TAKES ALL OF THEM. A SIGH, THEN:) Is that why your dad did that robbery ? To get money for you guys ?

RINO: They're not sure. But I think so. All we know is he left work at lunchtime, and that he stopped off at the Royal on the way to the bank.

GEORGE: How do you know that ?

RINO: When they shot him, he was drunk. (PAUSE) That's where my dad met Greg Chappell you know ? At The Royal. He came in after his magnificent innings.

A **YOUTH** ENTERS FROM THE PUB, DRINKING A SCHOONER. HE LOOKS AT **GEORGE**. **GEORGE** LOOKS AT HIM. SHE STANDS AND ADJUSTS HER CLOTHING, TEASES HER HAIR. **RINO** WATCHES IN SILENCE.

RINO: What are you doing ?

GEORGE: First time for everything.

RINO: George !

GEORGE: Why not ? He's quite cute.

RINO: But you're not a prostitute.

GEORGE: He doesn't know that. And besides, where else am I going to get sixty bucks ?

RINO: Are you that desperate ?

GEORGE: Yes. It's my last night.

RINO: What's Fletcher gonna say ?

GEORGE: What Fletcher doesn't know won't hurt him, and he's not gonna know - is he Rino ?

RINO: God George ! Hope you enjoy yourself.

GEORGE: Read your comic.

THE **YOUTH** LOOKS TIMIDLY AT THE GROUND. HE GLANCES BACKWARD, THEN LOOKS UP TOWARDS **GEORGE**. SHE LOOKS AT HIM. **GEORGE** APPROACHES THE **YOUTH**. THEY GIVE EACH OTHER THE SLOW ONCE OVER.

GEORGE: Want a girl ? (THE **YOUTH** DOES NOT RESPOND.) Hey. Perving costs. What are you staring at ?

YOUTH: Nothing ... much.

GEORGE: Aren't you a bit young to be hanging around here ?

YOUTH: You're not one to be talking.

GEORGE: Maybe.

CARESSING HER HAIR, **GEORGE** PARADES AROUND THE **YOUTH** IN A CIRCLE.

YOUTH: (TURNING AS SHE TURNS) What sort of things do you do then ?

GEORGE: Oh, I can do lots of things. Some new, some not so new. I have a wide range of activities.

YOUTH: Oh, and uh, how well do you do these ... activities ?

GEORGE: I haven't had any complaints yet .

YOUTH: You mustn't charge much then.

GEORGE: How much you got ?

YOUTH: I need to know prices first.

GEORGE: Forty for lip service. Sixty for the real thing.

YOUTH: Sixty ! That's a bit steep isn't it ?

GEORGE: Don't worry. You'll get your money's worth.

YOUTH: Reckon you can take all of it ?

GEORGE: Promise you won't come in my mouth.

THE YOUTH GRABS GEORGE. SHE WRESTLES FREE.

GEORGE: Money first.

THE YOUTH TAKES SOME MONEY OUT OF HIS SHOE AND PEELS OFF SEVERAL NOTES. HE HANDS THEM TO GEORGE.

GEORGE: Ta. Follow me.

YOUTH: Where we going ?

GEORGE: To the Hotel. Around the corner. We can't do it in the middle of the footpath now can we ?

YOUTH: Okay, but no funny stuff. My mate Geoff's waiting for me in the pub.

GEORGE: Don't worry. I run a legitimate business.

YOUTH: I hope so. For your sake.

THEY MOVE OFF RIGHT.

RINO: George. Don't.

GEORGE: I'm a big girl now Rino.

YOUTH: Who's the wog ?

GEORGE: Just some ethnic who didn't have the cash.

THEY EXIT RIGHT. THE **YOUTH** GIVES **RINO** THE FINGER.

RINO: (DOING ITALIAN SALUTE) Pusti ! Fung-gooli Kisscha !!

PAUSE. **RINO** OPENS UP HIS COMIC AND ONCE AGAIN PERFORMS TO AN IMAGINARY AUDIENCE.

RINO: 'On the bridge of the Death Star, the rebel hero Luke Skywalker and the Imperial villain Darth Vader are locked in a fearsome light sabre duel. (BREATHING) "You are strong Skywalker, but I am stronger." "There is good in you Darth. Work on that good." With the speed and agility of a wamp rat Darth Vader swipes violently with his sabre. (BREATHING) "Uuuhh!" Our hero is taken by surprise and the light beam cuts through his wrist, severing his hand. Luke screams: "Aaaahhh !" And his hand, dripping with blood, flies down the energy shaft and out to space. (**RINO** HURLS THE COMIC AWAY. PAUSE. HE RETRIEVES IT.) Suddenly Luke hears a tiny voice in his head. It is the voice of Yoda, Master of the Jedi Knights. It says - '

FLETCHER: (OFF, SINGING) "Little Boy Blue come blow your horn, the sheep's in the meadow, the cow's in the corn."

FLETCHER ENTERS LEFT.

FLETCHER: (STILL SINGING) "Where is the boy who looks after the sheep ? He's under the haystack fast asleep." (SPEAKING) G'day Rino. How they hanging ?

RINO: I like that song.

FLETCHER: (SINGING) "Under the haystack fast asleep."

RINO: Will you teach it to me please ?

FLETCHER: Sure. Tomorrow okay ?

RINO: Tomorrow ?

FLETCHER: Yeah, tomorrow.

RINO: I only know one nursery rhyme. Would you like to hear it ?

FLETCHER: Not now. I've gotta -

RINO: (DANCING, SINGING) "Ring around the rosies, a pocket full of posies. A tissue ! A tissue ! We all fall down."

RINO FLOPS ON TO THE GROUND. PAUSE.

FLETCHER: Not much of a nursery rhyme.

RINO: I know. That's why I want to learn yours. What time tomorrow ?

FLETCHER: What time tomorrow what ?

RINO: What time tomorrow are you going to teach me that song ?

FLETCHER: I don't know. Tomorrow alright !

RINO: Alright.

FLETCHER: You seen George around have you ?

RINO: No. No I haven't.

FLETCHER: Bitch. Whadd'ya got there ?

RINO: (GIVING FLETCHER COMIC) "Return of the Jedi in Words and Pictures Volume One."

FLETCHER: Return of the Jedi. Great. What happened to Star Wars ?

RINO: Oh ... I got bored with that one. I threw it in the bin. Bought this one brand new, off Michael. Only cost me fifty cents.

FLETCHER: Sounds like a real bargain.

RINO: It was.

FLETCHER: (HANDING COMIC BACK) You're weird you know that ? Ripping off cars and reading comics.

RINO: You rip off cars too.

FLETCHER: Who cares ? As long as they don't catch you. (PAUSE) Listen, Rino, what are you doing now ?

FLETCHER LOOKS AT RINO. PAUSE. SUDDENLY RINO REALISES.

RINO: Oh no ! No way Fletcher.

FLETCHER: What ?

RINO: I'm not doing it !

FLETCHER: Doing what ?

RINO: I'm not rolling no one ever again. All that trouble last time and he turns out to be a reject from Matt Talbot !

FLETCHER: We did okay.

RINO: Seventeen cents, an empty flagon and an out of date bus rail return to Liverpool is not what I call doing okay Fletcher.

FLETCHER: Yeah yeah, but I got it all worked out this time. We'll clean up for sure.

RINO: What do you need the money for anyway ?

PAUSE.

FLETCHER: Me and George are going to the country, and I need some money for the train.

RINO: The country. Great. When you going ?

FLETCHER: Dawn. Tomorrow.

RINO: Dawn. Oh.

FLETCHER: Come on. You gotta help us out. I've only got enough for one ticket.

RINO: Then why don't you go by yourself ?

FLETCHER: Piss off !

RINO: I was just asking a question.

PAUSE.

FLETCHER: I can't go by myself.

RINO: Why not ?

FLETCHER: I don't know. (PAUSE) You see a couple of weeks ago, me and George took a walk down to the Botanical Gardens. We found this really nice spot and we lay down in the grass, among these really weird orange flowers. Just me and George. And you know how long we lay there ? Two whole hours. And it was great. I mean, looking up at the blue and white with the smell of all that nature right inside you, you could just forget about everything. Astradyne, the Jacks, lock up. George even forgot about her bloody stuff. We were in a brand new world and all I wanted to do was listen to her breathing and smell those flowers. And then I started thinking, if it's this good here – what would it be like right out in the middle of the country ? Without the skyscrapers bearing down on you, nagging you about all the people and all their problems. So all I wanted to do was get out of the city. Get out to Bellinggen.

RINO: So why don't you ?

FLETCHER: I'm not finished yet fuck ya. The week after, I went down to the Gardens again, by myself, to make sure I wasn't making the whole thing up. And you know what ? It wasn't the same without George. The flowers smelt all dead and the grass kept itching. Bloody squat kept popping up in front on my eyes. No. George has to come with me. Uncle Bob's won't be any good without her.

RINO: It sounds nice this Bellagen.

FLETCHER: Better than nice. But then of course, I've never been there.

RINO: I'm gonna miss you.

FLETCHER: Don't cry. (GRABBING COMIC) Give us a look at the mag.
(READING) 'Luke Skywalker was amazed to discover that Darth Vader was actually his own father, the famed Jedi knight supposed dead.' Want it back ? Gonna have to catch me first.

**RINO CHASES FLETCHER AROUND STAGE. MUSIC STARTS UP
IN THE PUB AND FLETCHER DANCES AS THE CHASE CONTINUES.
ENTER WOODS. RINO COLLIDES WITH HIM. PAUSE.**

WOODS: I thought I told you to move along. Where's that girl you said you were staying with ?

FLETCHER: (SMILING) So, you're the new pig are you ? How do you do Mr. Piggy ? Welcome to the market.

RINO LAUGHS.

WOODS: Aren't you a bit old for that sort of thing ?

FLETCHER: I'll take this.

FLETCHER GRABS WOODS' CAP AND TOSSES IT TO RINO.

FLETCHER: Eh Rino. Catch.

WOODS: Hey. Give that back. That's Police property.

RINO PUTS WOODS' CAP ON.

FLETCHER: What are you selling ? Smack or dope ?

WOODS: Give it away.

FLETCHER: Or are you looking for some dinner ? I know what pigs like. (HOLDING UP GARBAGE BIN) Oink oink.

WOODS: Look, I've had just about enough of this.

FLETCHER: Oink oink ! Hey Rino. Oink oink.

FLETCHER GETS DOWN ON HIS HANDS AND KNEES AND STARTS CRAWLING AROUND THE STAGE "OINKING", ACTING LIKE A PIG. RINO JOINS IN, LAUGHING. WOODS WATCHES SILENTLY. SUDDENLY HE GRABS FLETCHER AND DRAGS HIM TO HIS FEET. RINO FREEZES.

WOODS: That's enough !

FLETCHER: This is my friend Rino. Are you into little boys ?

WOODS: Now you just watch it mate.

FLETCHER: Oi !

FLETCHER SPITS IN WOODS' FACE. WOODS HURLS FLETCHER INTO THE GARBAGE BINS. HE CHARGES OVER AND PICKS FLETCHER UP AGAIN.

RINO: Don't Constable Woods. He didn't mean it. Don't hit him again. Please.

PAUSE. WOODS DROPS FLETCHER. FLETCHER IS STILL.

WOODS: He went too far.

RINO: (TRYING TO ROUSE **FLETCHER**) Fletcher. Fletcher.
(TO **WOODS**) You've knocked him out.

WOODS: Jesus ! We'd better get him down to Casualty. You won't say anything will you ?

RINO: What did you have to hit him for ? It was only a joke. Bruce used to laugh.

WOODS: How was I meant to know that ?

RINO: He was going to the country, to Bellagen, and now you've -

FLETCHER: (SITTING UP) Bellinggen. Not Bellagen, you stupid dago.

RINO: Fletcher, you're alive !

FLETCHER: 'Course I'm alive. Take more than one fuckin' little piggy to hurt me.

WOODS: Listen, Fletcher, if you keep this quiet I can help you out.

FLETCHER: Well, did you hear that ? Now this is a switch. A Jack's trying to bribe me.

WOODS: I'm not trying to bribe anyone. I've just got some friends near Tamworth, maybe they -

FLETCHER: Well I'm not going anywhere near Tamworth am I ? So just fuck off !

WOODS: You can't talk to a Policeman like that.

FLETCHER: This bump on my head says I can do anything I bloody well like mate.
(CALLING) Police brutality ! Police brutality !

WOODS: What did you expect me to do with both of you crawling around going "Oink oink" - join in ? I won't be called names. Not by you. Not by anyone !

FLETCHER: Kiss my arse.

WOODS: If you weren't a minor I'd charge you like that. Bloody welfare regulations. I can haul you over hot coals for playing with a coathanger but I can't touch you for calling me a pig.

FLETCHER: That's smelly pig.

WOODS: Why don't you two just go wherever you're going ? I've got enough to worry about. (**FLETCHER AND RINO DO NOT MOVE.**) Well go on. Go home !

RINO: Constable Woods, we are home.

SUDDENLY THERE IS THE SOUND OF CRIES FROM INSIDE THE PUB. THE MUSIC STOPS ABRUPTLY. THEN WE HEAR BREAKING GLASS, FOLLOWED BY A LOUD CHORUS OF "Oi ! Oi ! Oi ! Oi ! Oi!"

WOODS: What the bloody hell is it now ?

WOODS EXITS INTO THE PUB.

FLETCHER: You stupid little shit ! Why d'ya have to tell him about me going to the country ?

RINO: I thought you were dead. Anyway, he said he was going to help you.

FLETCHER: I don't want nobody's help, okay ?

RINO: Why not ?

FLETCHER: Because I want to make my own mistakes.

RINO: Why ?

FLETCHER: Because I do that's all ! (PAUSE) You remember how I told you about that day in the Gardens ? Now that wouldn't've been the same if some shit worker had driven us down there in a Deaf and Dumb bus and made us enjoy ourselves. The thing about it was we found that place by ourselves. We did something right, and so we had it good for a while. I'd hate it if Woods told me how to live in the country, even if he was right. I've got to find out for myself, and then if I fuck it up I've got no one to blame but Fletcher, okay ? (PAUSE. **FLETCHER** HOLDS HIS HEAD) Shit.

RINO: Are you alright ?

FLETCHER: Leave me alone. (HE SITS. PAUSE.) Hey, we fucked him up good and proper eh ? Did you see the look on his face ? He thought'd he'd killed me. He was shitting himself.

RINO: I know. (STANDING ON BIN, IMITATING **WOODS**) "Jesus ! We'd better get him down to Casualty !"

FLETCHER: What a dickhead. What a fucked up little piggy. He's worse than the ones my old man used to have, and you know what they used to do don't you ? They used to run around the pen all day going oink oink, oink oink.

THEY BOTH START BEING PIGS AGAIN, CRAWLING AROUND, "OINKING".

RINO: I don't like being a pig.

FLETCHER: Who does ? Oink oink.

RINO: I want to be an Ewok instead.

FLETCHER: Be an Ewok then. See if I care.

FLETCHER OINKS. RINO EWOKS. ENTER GEORGE AND THE YOUTH LAUGHING. THEY LOOK AT FLETCHER AND RINO. FLETCHER SEES THEM AND STOPS OINKING. HE STANDS. RINO KEEPS "EWOKING".

FLETCHER: Cut it Rino ! (TO **GEORGE**) I hope this isn't what it looks like.

YOUTH: Bloody oath it is mate. Best sixty bucks I ever spent.

FLETCHER: Fuck you !

FLETCHER GOES FOR THE YOUTH. THEY SCUFFLE.

GEORGE: Leave him alone Fletcher ! His mate's in the pub.

FLETCHER: Fuck you too !

FLETCHER SPITS AT HER.

YOUTH: (CALLING) Strewth. Hey Geoff ! Get out here ! This dickhead's gone berserk.

GEORGE: (CALLING) No. It's okay. (TO **FLETCHER**) Go for him again and you can forget about the country.

PAUSE. FLETCHER PACES.

GEORGE: (TO YOUTH) Hey come on. You don't need your mate. We don't want to start a fight now do we ? We had such a nice time and now you want to spoil it all with a nasty little punch up.

YOUTH: He started it. Bloody westie !

GEORGE: I know he did. But you see he can't help himself. It's his condition. Listen, come over here. (SHE TAKES THE **YOUTH** ASIDE, WHISPERING)

GEORGE: (CONT) He's got a brain tumour. It causes him to freak out on occasion. They say he won't last another week.

YOUTH: You're kidding. Still, it doesn't give him the right to freak out at me.

GEORGE: I know, poor boy. Now you go off with your friends. We'll see that the westie is taken home and locked up for the night.

YOUTH: Okay. (CALLING) Hey Geoff. I'm okay. (TO **FLETCHER**) And wait till you hear what she did !

THE **YOUTH** EXITS QUICKLY INTO THE PUB.

FLETCHER: Fuckin' private school shithead !

GEORGE: (TO **FLETCHER**) What the fuck do you think you were doing ? You could have got us all killed. Didn't you see the size of his mate ? He was huge.

FLETCHER: You slut. How could you do it ?

GEORGE: Easy. Wank wank - money in the bank.

FLETCHER: But I'm getting the tickets.

PAUSE.

RINO: One for the road eh George ?

FLETCHER: What ?

GEORGE: I needed some money for Astradyne. Just one last time.

FLETCHER: But you're not gonna need that stuff in the country.

GEORGE: We're not in the country yet Fletcher.

FLETCHER: You promise this is the last time ?

GEORGE KISSES HIM. FLETCHER PUSHES HER AWAY.

FLETCHER: Go and get your stuff. I'll come and get you later.

GEORGE HEADS FOR THE PUB DOOR.

RINO: Astradyne's not in there. She went over to Bondi to make some deliveries.

GEORGE: When's she gonna come back ?

RINO: I don't know.

GEORGE: Never around when you need her.

RINO AND GEORGE: Bitch.

GEORGE EXITS.

FLETCHER: Can you imagine what she'll be like in the country ? Special. Bloody special. You gotta help me.

PAUSE.

RINO: Alright. What do I have to do ?

FLETCHER: That's the stuff Rino. It's no big deal. I've got it all worked out. This time we knock off a queen.

RINO: How do I fit in ?

FLETCHER: You, Rino old mate, are going to be the cute little pillow biter.

RINO: Thanks.

FLETCHER: Don't worry. You'll be fine. I know what these types of guys like, and believe me, they like you.

RINO: They do ?

FLETCHER: Yes, they do. You see, you're the cute little cow and all the big beefy bulls are on heat.

RINO: It's not funny.

FLETCHER: Just think. George won't have to live in this shit fight anymore.

RINO: But I live here.

FLETCHER: That's different. You belong here. Hey, the Daring Duo, together again. Up we climb -

RINO: And down we go. Rino -

FLETCHER: And Fletcher -

TOGETHER: Never say no !

FLETCHER: Come on, we better get a move on. What with Robin Woods stalking around all over the place. Do you remember the plan ?

RINO: Yeah. (**RINO DEMONSTRATES**) First you hide behind the bins like this.

FLETCHER: And you ?

RINO: I stand here and look hurt, so that somebody'll come help me, like this.

RINO ACTS HURT.

FLETCHER: No, don't look hurt this time. You've gotta be a cute bum remember ?

RINO: Yeah.

FLETCHER: Well, be a cute bum.

RINO: Right now ?

FLETCHER: Yeah. Right now.

RINO WALKS AROUND STAGE LIKE A BOY GIGOLO.

FLETCHER: Forget the walk. Just stand still. Okay, next.

RINO: When a suitable victim comes along, you jump out and zap him with your light sabre, like this.

RINO DEMONSTRATES. FLETCHER PULLS OUT A FLICK KNIFE AND SPRINGS IT OPEN.

FLETCHER: And what a fine light sabre it is.

RINO: Then you nick off with his money and you and George go to the country.

FLETCHER: Exactly. Now what's the main thing you've got to remember ?

RINO: Make sure the Gay Boy's got a lot of money.

FLETCHER: Now do you remember the signal for pigs ?

RINO HUMS THE "STAR WARS" THEME.

FLETCHER: Okay okay. Just let me get behind the bins.

FLETCHER HIDES HIMSELF BEHIND THE BINS. PAUSE.

RINO: Fletcher ?

FLETCHER: (APPEARING) Yep ?

RINO: How do I make sure the Gay Boy's got a lot of money ?

FLETCHER: Make him take out his wallet ?

RINO: Oh.

FLETCHER HIDES AGAIN.

RINO: Fletcher ?

FLETCHER APPEARS AGAIN AND MOVES TO RINO.

FLETCHER: What ?

RINO: How do I make him take out his wallet ?

FLETCHER: Get him to pay first of course. You okay now ?

RINO NODS. FLETCHER HIDES ONCE MORE. PAUSE.

RINO: Fletcher ?

FLETCHER: (STANDING) What is it now ?

RINO: May the Force be with you.

BLACKOUT.

END ACT ONE.

Act 2**Scene 1**

The back of the Pub, twenty minutes later.

LIGHTS UP TO REVEAL **RINO** WAITING, AS AT THE END OF ACT ONE. **FLETCHER** IS STILL CONCEALED. LONG PAUSE. **RINO** CHECKS TO SEE IF **FLETCHER** IS WATCHING. HE PICKS UP HIS COMIC, OPENS IT AND BEGINS ACTING OUT A LIGHT SABRE DUEL. HE STARTS HUMMING THE "STAR WARS" THEME.

FLETCHER: Where ?

RINO: What ?

FLETCHER: Which way ?

RINO: Way ?

FLETCHER: Can he see me ?

RINO: Who ?

FLETCHER: Woods !

RINO: Woods ? Fletcher, what are you talking about ?

FLETCHER: (APPEARING) You gave the signal.

RINO: Oh, yeah. Sorry. Just got a little carried away.

FLETCHER GRABS THE COMIC AND HIDES AGAIN. **RINO** STANDS WAITING. THE **MAN** ENTERS LEFT.

MAN: Hello.

RINO: Hello.

MAN: I've seen you around here before.

RINO: Have you ?

MAN: Yes I have. "Solo they're getting closer !" "Tell me something I don't know kid." "Eeeeeaaahhh !"

RINO: When did you see me do that ?

MAN: Tonight. Last night. Lots of nights. You're very good with those voices. How many times have you seen the movie ?

RINO: Seventeen. And I didn't pay once. I'm The Coathanger Kid.

MAN: I don't need a coathanger to see Star Wars for free.

RINO: Do you work at Hoyts do you ?

MAN: No. I've got it on video.

RINO: You've got Star Wars on video !

MAN: Yes. And The Empire Strikes Back, and Return of the Jedi. I bought it when I was in New York.

RINO: You've been to New York ?

MAN: And Paris, and London.

RINO: I've got this comic. It comes from Trafalgar Square. That's in London, isn't it ?

MAN: Yes, it is. Have you ever seen the action figures from Star Wars ?

RINO: Yeah, but only in the shops.

MAN: I've got the entire set at home.

RINO: The entire set !

MAN: Yes. Would you like to come and see them ? You can have a few if you like.

RINO: You mean come to your place ?

MAN: My car's just around the corner.

RINO: What kind is it ?

MAN: A Lamborghini Contage.

RINO: It isn't red is it ?

MAN: Yes. That's right.

RINO: So that's your's is it ? I see that around here all the time. Do you know that's the only car I can't ... Don't worry.

THE MAN TOUCHES RINO'S ARM.

MAN: Would you like to come for a ride ? We can go to my house. It's right on the water.

RINO: Really ?

MAN: Why don't you stay overnight ? You can have a whole room to yourself. Tonight we can watch Star Wars on video and play with the action figures, and then tomorrow morning we'll have McDonalds for breakfast and swim in the pool.

RINO: You've got a pool ! Wow ! Can Fletcher come too ?

WOODS ENTERS FROM THE PUB.

MAN: Who's Fletcher ?

WOODS: (APPROACHING) Is everything alright sir ?

MAN: Yes Officer. I hate having my nephew out so late. He gets very tired. I had to drag him off the Big Dipper at Luna Park. (TO RINO) We better get you home.

WOODS: (TO MAN) What's his name ?

MAN: Anthony.

WOODS: (TO RINO) Who is he Rino ?

MAN: I don't know, but I'm going to his house to watch Star Wars and then in the morning we're going to have McDonalds for breakfast.

WOODS: (TO RINO) Just wait over there will you ?
(TO MAN) Come with me for a moment would you sir ?

WOODS GRABS THE MAN AND USHERS HIM DOWNSTAGE LEFT.

MAN: Would you please let go of my arm ?

WOODS: There are certain people I really like to arrest, and your friend is one of them. What kind of sick pervert are you? That little boy's only thirteen years old and you're trying to do him up the arse!

MAN: Now you listen here -

WOODS: You've got a problem mate. Why don't you just pull yourself off over baby photos?

THE MAN PULLS HIS ARM FREE.

MAN: What are you talking about? Look at him. He obviously hasn't eaten for days. God knows when he last bathed. I'm just trying to help the lad. Put a roof over his head. It's the least I can do. Perhaps we should discuss this with your Sergeant.

WOODS SHOVES THE MAN AGAINST THE BINS.

WOODS: My Sergeant would spit in your face! Why don't you stick it up someone your own age for once? If I ever see you around here again I'll have you in, and everybody, absolutely fucking everybody will thank me for doing it. Now take a walk.

MAN: Well, you're obviously not going to listen to reason.

WOODS: Take a walk!

THE MAN STARTS TO EXIT.

RINO: Can't I come to your place anymore?

MAN: I'm sorry Rino, the Officer won't let you. He suffers from a rather over active imagination.

THE MAN EXITS.

RINO: (TO **WOODS**) Thanks!

WOODS: What were you doing? You know what he was after.

RINO: He just wanted to be my friend.

WOODS: No he didn't.

RINO: Bullshit!

WOODS: Rino, that guy was a pederast. Do you know what that means ?

RINO: No.

RINO TURNS AWAY. PAUSE. **WOODS** REALISES.

WOODS: Of course you know what that means. You and Fletcher were planning to rip him off, weren't you ? Where is he ?

RINO: Nowhere.

WOODS: I've made some inquiries about your mate Fletcher. He's got a record. You must be a little goldmine for that scum. You've got to stop hanging around with him.

RINO: Fletcher's okay.

PAUSE.

WOODS: Look, I'm sorry for flying off the handle. I'm not mad at you. Come on then.

RINO: Where are we going ?

WOODS: I've been in touch with your Social Worker friend. He told me where I should take you.

RINO: No way ! No way ! I'm not going home and you can't make me. When I was up for Neglect the judge said I never had to go home again. I'll ring him up -

WOODS: I'm not going to take you home. There's a refuge down the road called Defence. I've made a few inquiries. You can stay there.

RINO: Oh Defence. Defence is okay. It's got a good pool table. Fletcher says it's a bad skinhead hang, but you can get good dinners, except when it's salmon rissoles.

WOODS: On your feet then. I'll walk you down.

RINO: Can't.

WOODS: What do you mean "can't" ?

RINO: Got to wait for Fletcher.

WOODS: Fletcher ?

RINO: I promised I'd meet him here.

WOODS: Forget about Fletcher.

RINO: I'm sorry Constable Woods, but I've got to wait for him.

WOODS: Yeah.

PAUSE.

RINO: How old are you ?

WOODS: Twenty one.

RINO: Why'd you come up here ?

WOODS: They sent me.

RINO: Do you like being a cop ?

WOODS: Can't do anything else. (PAUSE) Is old Mr. Paramjitti still teaching ?

RINO: Mr. Paramjitti ! He was my Maths' teacher. Did you go to Matraville Boys too did you ?

WOODS: Sure did. You mustn't've lasted long.

RINO: Three weeks of Year 7. Then Dad got killed and everything changed.

WOODS: What happened ? (**RINO DOES NOT RESPOND**) Paramjitti got married when he was twelve you know ? In India. It was all arranged before he was born. That didn't seem to bother him though. He was as happy as Larry when I left. Still happy is he ?

RINO: He should be. He sure smiles an awful lot.

WOODS: That's his false teeth. They don't fit properly. (PAUSE) Weird isn't it ? Same school. Same Maths' teacher.

RINO: Yeah.

WOODS: Paramjitti thought it was great me being a cop. He wanted me to work at Matraville. You know ? Clean up the neighbourhood. After tonight, I might just go back there.

RINO: Don't.

WOODS: So where are you going to stay tonight ?

RINO: In a squat, down on Bourke Street. With Fletcher and George. She's the girl. There's others too, but I don't know their names.

WOODS: Be off the streets by one.

RINO: Okay. Bye.

WOODS STARTS TO EXIT BUT STOPS.

WOODS: You did take that Laser didn't you ?

RINO: Yeah. Me and Fletcher. We only wanted a go. It's in the parking lot behind the Chevron.

WOODS: Thanks mate. Fletcher'll keep.

WOODS EXITS. FLETCHER APPEARS.

FLETCHER: Christ you're an idiot ! (IMITATING RINO) "I've got to wait for Fletcher. " I can look after myself Rino and don't you ever fucking forget it ! I don't need you ! Or anybody else !

RINO: Well I had to tell him something.

FLETCHER: You didn't have to tell him we took the laser. You think Woods cares don't you ? Well he doesn't. He's gonna run off when it all gets too much. Just like that wanker McDonald did.

RINO: No he won't.

FLETCHER: And why were you talking to that Gay Boy for so fuckin' long ?

RINO: He's not a Gay Boy. He's okay. He wants to look after us Fletcher.

FLETCHER: I'm going to the country tomorrow.

RINO: I'm not.

FLETCHER: Just get it right next time.

RINO: I'm allowed to have friends too ! What am I meant to do every time you go off with George ?

FLETCHER: I never said you couldn't hang around with us.

RINO: I hate being around when you're with her. It's like I'm first reserve, waving from the side line.

FLETCHER: She's your friend too.

RINO: Not if you can help it. You snap my head off every time I try and talk to her.

FLETCHER: I don't see her much. That chick Suzie's always with her.

RINO: You don't see me much either.

FLETCHER: Whaddya want me to do ? Marry you ?

RINO: No. But you could at least say thank you for helping you out. (PAUSE) Well ?

FLETCHER: Thank you.

RINO: What was that Fletcher ? I couldn't hear you.

FLETCHER: Thank you Rino for helping me out. Happy now ?

RINO SMILES. FLETCHER STARTS TO HIDE AGAIN.

RINO: Fletcher, why don't we forget about rolling Gay Boys eh ? We could ask that guy at Defence for some money. He gave John-John fifty bucks when he wanted to get out.

FLETCHER: I'm not asking nobody for money.

RINO: Why not ?

FLETCHER: I don't trust him. He'll try and put me in lock-up.

RINO: No he won't.

FLETCHER: Yes he will. Just like that bitch my Foster mother did, and I never done nothing. I don't trust him. I don't trust any of them ! Now just shut up and do it right this time. George'll be waiting for me.

RINO: Okay. (**FLETCHER STARTS TO HIDE**) Fletcher, why didn't you tell me about your Foster mother before ?

FLETCHER: Because I didn't that's why.

RINO: Fletcher, it helps to talk about these things.

FLETCHER: Fuck off ! Rino the Social Worker. Yeah yeah.

RINO: Ssssh ! Somebody's coming.

FLETCHER CONCEALS HIMSELF. RINO LOOKS RIGHT.

RINO: Fletcher. It's that man again. The one with Star Wars on video.

FLETCHER: Okay. I'm ready.

RINO: But he's my friend.

THE MAN ENTERS.

RINO: You came back.

MAN: Yes, but we'll have to be quick. You're still coming to my house aren't you ?

RINO: Are you a Gay Boy or not ?

MAN: No, I'm a friend. I had a boy your age once. He and his mother were killed by a drunk driver about a year ago.

RINO: My Dad's dead too.

FLETCHER CREEPS UP ON THE MAN.

MAN: Let's go.

RINO: Okay. (**SEEING FLETCHER**) Fletcher !

RINO HAS TURNED TO SEE FLETCHER HOLDING HIS KNIFE AGAINST THE MAN'S BACK.

FLETCHER: On ya knees !

THE MAN DROPS TO HIS KNEES.

RINO: No Fletcher. You've gotta find a Gay Boy. He's my friend.

FLETCHER: He is a Gay Boy. He's just having you on. He hasn't got Star Wars on video and you won't be going swimming in the morning. You'll be too sore to get off the bed.

RINO: No !

FLETCHER: Tell him poof. You're just after a fuck. Aren't you ?!

MAN: No.

FLETCHER: Aren't you ? Quick fag, the knife's starting to slip.

MAN: I'm not. Please. Believe me !

FLETCHER MOVES THE KNIFE CLOSER.

MAN: Oh God.

RINO: Don't kill him.

FLETCHER: Why not ?

RINO: He's my friend.

FLETCHER: He's not your friend !

RINO: Okay, he's not my friend. But don't kill him.

FLETCHER RUBS THE KNIFE ON THE MAN'S THROAT.

MAN: Rino. Please.

RINO: Everyone'll be after him if you kill him. Nobody'll care if we just roll him. (PAUSE. TO MAN) Get out your wallet. (THE MAN HESITATES) Get out your wallet !

THE MAN TAKES OUT HIS WALLET AND GIVES IT TO RINO.

RINO: Look ! Eighty bucks. That's what you want isn't it ? Think of George.

FLETCHER LOOKS AT THE MONEY.

FLETCHER: Eighty bucks for a night on the town. I don't think so
(TO MAN) Turn out your pockets.

THE MAN DOES SO. THEY ARE EMPTY, EXCEPT FOR HIS CAR KEYS.

FLETCHER: Fuck !

RINO: What's the matter ? You've got enough for the tickets, easy.

FLETCHER: I want to get something for George.

RINO: Fletcher ! Woods might come back.

FLETCHER: Fuck Woods ! (TO MAN) Right, drop your pants.

THE MAN LOOKS AT RINO.

RINO: Do it !

THE MAN TAKES OFF HIS PANTS. FLETCHER TOSSES THEM TO RINO. RINO SEARCHES THEM. A WAD OF MONEY FALLS TO THE GROUND. RINO PICKS IT UP.

RINO: Look at all the money.

FLETCHER GRABS THE MONEY.

FLETCHER: This is for you George ! Bellingham here we come. (TO RINO) Take the eighty bucks to her. Tell her to buy herself something nice. I'll be there as soon as I get the tickets.

RINO HESITATES.

RINO: (TO MAN) I'm sorry.

FLETCHER: Run !

RINO EXITS.

FLETCHER: Thank you darling. Nice doing business with you. Here, catch.

FLETCHER TOSSES THE WALLET NEAR THE MAN. AS THE MAN SCRAMBLES FOR HIS WALLET, FLETCHER GRABS HIS CAR KEYS.

FLETCHER: Lamborghini eh ?

FLETCHER THROWS THEM OVER THE FENCE AND EXITS. PAUSE.
ENTER **ASTRADYNE**, FROM THE PUB.

ASTRADYNE: Nice legs. You gotta smoke.

THE **MAN** HANDS **ASTRADYNE** A PACKET OF CIGARILLOS FROM
HIS TOP POCKET. SHE TAKES THEM AND PUTS THEM IN HER
POCKET.

ASTRADYNE: Ta. (EXITING) Check ya.

MAN: Excuse me. (**ASTRADYNE** TURNS) You couldn't lend me
a couple of dollars for a taxi could you ?

ASTRADYNE: Sorry. Don't do rescue scenes.

ASTRADYNE EXITS. **MAN** ALONE. BLACKOUT.

Scene 2

The squat.

IN THE BLACKOUT A DOOR AND FRAME ARE PLACED DOWN CENTRE. THE RIGHT SIDE OF THE DOOR IS LIT BY A NEON SIGN FLASHING THROUGH A WINDOW, THE LEFT BY A NAKED LIGHT BULB.

AS THE LIGHTS COME UP **GEORGE** IS SITTING AT A SMALL TABLE DOWN RIGHT, RUMMAGING THROUGH HER BAG. SHE PULLS OUT A CANDLE AND STICKS IT ONTO THE TABLE. NEXT SHE PULLS A KIT OUT AND TOSSES IT ONTO THE TABLE. SHE DISCOVERS THE TOBACCO IN THE BAG. SHE LOOKS AT IT AND SMILES BEFORE PLACING IT ON THE FLOOR BESIDE HER. FINALLY SHE TAKES A TINY WRAPPER OF SMACK OUT OF HER COAT POCKET AND PLACES IT ON THE TABLE VERY CAREFULLY. SHE SPOTS A BOTTLE OF AMYL NITRATE IN THE BOTTOM OF HER BAG. SHE TAKES A SNORT. SHE TAKES ANOTHER.

GEORGE: (SINGING) "Just a snort full of Amyl helps the heroin go down, the heroin go down, the heroin go down. Just a snort full of Amyl helps the heroin go down, in the most delightful way."

RINO ENTERS.

RINO: What are you doing ?

GEORGE: G'day Rino.

RINO: (NOTICING STUFF ON THE TABLE) When did you start doing smack ?

GEORGE: Today.

RINO: I didn't know Astradyne was stocking the big stuff.

GEORGE: She isn't. I bought it off that ugly Italian guy in the pub.

RINO: He didn't call himself the Piper did he ? Constable Woods told me to look out for him.

GEORGE: Suzie told me to look out for him too. She said he's selling the best gear in town, and that if I was gonna buy anything I should buy it from him. So I did. And he thought I was cute, so he gave me some of his private stash. This shit's got to be good.

RINO: But Constable Woods said his private stash was too strong. You'd better be careful.

GEORGE: I've watched Suzie do it heaps of times. It'll be okay. It's only smack.

RINO: But people die !

GEORGE: People die driving cars Rino, but I don't tell you not to drive.

RINO: That's different.

GEORGE: No it isn't. You've got your hobbies and I've got mine.

RINO: But why are you doing smack ? I thought you liked trips best.

GEORGE: I do. But everybody says there's nothing like smack. The ultimate buzz.

RINO: What's Fletcher gonna say ?

GEORGE: He'd better not say anything. I'm doing this for him.

RINO: Pardon me ?

GEORGE: Well, I've been thinking about the country and being with Fletcher, and the more I think about it the more I like the idea. I might want to live at Uncle Bob's forever. But I won't be able to if I leave things undone. I admit I've done most things -

RINO: Even cracking it.

GEORGE: Yeah, but I still haven't done the last big thing. I haven't done smack. And if I don't, it'll fuck up everything. Every morning sitting at breakfast, bacon and eggs with Bob and the boys, I'd be asking myself "What's so good about smack ? What makes everybody do it ?" And that's what'd bring me back. Maybe in a week, maybe in a month, maybe in six years - but it'd bring me back. I have to experience it for myself. If I take this stuff tonight, I'll have done it all. I can go to the country tomorrow without any questions nagging me. I can start again. And maybe me and Fletcher can be happy. You want us to be happy don't you ?

RINO: But what if something goes wrong ?

GEORGE: Rino, I control drugs. Drugs don't control me. Fletcher got the tickets yet ?

RINO: He's getting them right now. We rolled this man. He wasn't really a Gay Boy. We should have done somebody else. (TAKING MONEY OUT OF

RINO: (CONT) HIS POCKET) But we got all this money. (HE HANDS IT TO **GEORGE**) Fletcher says to buy yourself something nice.

GEORGE: Eighty bucks ! Shit. Hey, I'll buy some fashion magazines to read on the train. When I get to Uncle Bob's, I'll cut out all the pictures of cute models and stick them up on the wall. And then if I get lonely I can look up at them, and imagine I'm back in the pub, dancing to the Howard Eliminators and doing a few lines.

RINO: You'll come back and visit ?

GEORGE: Of course. Maybe you can come and visit us. I'm sure Uncle Bob can find you a room.

RINO: I'd like that.

THEY EMBRACE. SILENCE.

GEORGE: It's after midnight. We won't go to sleep. We'll sit up all night, talking and making plans. The three of us. We'll have something to drink - champagne ! And maybe some green. There'll be goodbyes. And tears. Then at four o'clock, me and Fletcher will walk down to the station singing songs and laughing. We'll take our seats, watch the sun come up, and wait to go.

RINO: (HUGGING **GEORGE**) I'll see you off.

GEORGE: Hey. Maybe you can come too.

RINO: Could I ?

GEORGE: Can't see why not. Uncle Bob wouldn't mind. We'll tell Fletcher when he comes. We've got enough here for ten tickets.

RINO: But I'm too young to work on a farm.

GEORGE: There's other things to do besides farming you know ? Laundry, dirty dishes. You'll be kept busy.

RINO: I'll work hard.

GEORGE: Well, it looks as if we're all going to Bellinghen.

RINO: Oh no ! Is there a Hoyts in Bellinghen ?

GEORGE: No Hoyts. No trips. (INDICATING HEROIN) I'd better get this over with.

RINO: Don't George.

GEORGE: Rino, I just told you. I've got to do it.

RINO: But Fletcher'll be here soon.

GEORGE: Then I guess I better hurry up.

RINO: I don't wanna watch.

GEORGE: Then don't.

GEORGE BEGINS PREPARING THE HIT. RINO WATCHES.

RINO: Can I ask you a question ?

GEORGE: Fire away.

RINO: Why do you take drugs ?

GEORGE: Why ? I don't know. Same reason everybody else does I guess. The spin. The buzz. The high.

RINO: What do you mean ?

GEORGE: Well, it's kind of like having a holiday. To get away from the monster in the mirror. The better the stuff, the longer the holiday.

RINO: Are trips a long holiday ?

GEORGE: The longest and the best. They even help you to understand yourself better. Say you've got a really big problem. You take a trip, and soon enough you know exactly how to solve it.

RINO: So people who take trips don't have any problems ?

GEORGE: No. When the trip wears off you realise just how dumb your solution was. But trips don't just make you see things differently. They make different things to see. Sand goblins, giant green spiders, talking ducks.

RINO: Talking ducks ?

GEORGE: Yeah ! Rino, do you wanna find out what trips are really like ?

RINO: Have you got one ?

GEORGE: No, but you've got a good imagination haven't you ?

RINO: Yeah. I do.

GEORGE: Then you can imagine the whole thing. You'd be surprised how powerful the human mind is. I remember when I was still at school, my Drama teacher used to take us on these imaginary journeys all the time. We'd fly around the world on little white clouds, and sit on top of the Eiffel Tower drinking cappuccinos.

RINO: Wow ! What was it like ?

GEORGE: Excellent. Listen, I'm sure you'd be able to do it. You like Star Wars don't you ? That's all that is you know ? Powerful imagination. Trust me.

DURING THE FOLLOWING SEQUENCE, **GEORGE** FINISHES PREPARING THE HEROIN.

GEORGE: Lie down, hands by your side. And take a big deep breath. (**RINO DOES SO**) Good. Now close your eyes. Feeling relaxed ?

RINO: Yes. (**HE YAWNS**) Sorry George.

GEORGE: No, that's good. That's just your body switching off. Right, now imagine you're standing in a big white room, and in front of you is a small black table. You walk up to the table, and there's the trip. Can you see it ?

RINO: What does it look like ?

GEORGE: A tiny square of foil with a star on it. Can you see it ?

RINO: Yes.

GEORGE: Press your little finger onto the star and then put the trip in your mouth.

RINO: Oops ! I dropped it.

GEORGE: Then pick it up.

RINO: Okay. Got it. What do I now ?

GEORGE: You put it in your mouth. And then you chew it up, really slowly.

RINO: I'm chewing George.

- GEORGE: Then after you've given it a good chew, you swallow it. (**RINO SWALLOWS**) Good. Now straight away your nose and mouth start to tingle. Can you feel it ?
- RINO: Yeah ! It's like pins and needles.
- GEORGE: Now, you lie down on the cold white floor in the big white room. Slowly your whole body turns to lead and the whole floor turns to clay. Warm and mushy. Can you feel it ?
- RINO: Doesn't feel too nice George.
- GEORGE: Now, ever so softly, you start to sink down into the clay. Down and down, until it's dark all around you. You look up into the black, and suddenly out of thin air come hundreds and thousands of jigsaw pieces. They swirl over your head like a cyclone. Can you see them ?
- RINO: There's millions of them.
- GEORGE: They spin round and round, faster and faster, like tiny little spaceships. All of a sudden - they stop ! And just float, hanging in the air above your head. You watch real hard as they begin fitting themselves together, piece by piece, one attaching itself to the other, perfectly. Eventually they make up a huge round picture.
- RINO: What is it ?
- GEORGE: A picture of yourself as you wish you were.
- RINO: Wow ! I'm Luke Skywalker !
- GEORGE: Now, slowly, so slowly you can't even see it, the picture begins to change. Dissolving into another picture. Another version of you.
- RINO: What is it ?
- GEORGE: You as you really are.
- RINO: I don't look like that !
- GEORGE: Now, both pictures appear at once, and begin to merge. Rolling inwards, until there is only one picture left. This is the best picture.
- RINO: But what is it ?
- GEORGE: The perfect Rino.

RINO: I look fantastic !

GEORGE: Then you're ready to go. It's surprisingly easy to stand now. Your body feels as delicate as butterfly wings wrapped in tissue paper. You stroll along, six feet above the ground, on a trampoline of air. Soon you reach the end of the darkness. The sun bursts onto you and you're standing in the middle of a gigantic park. You look all around. It's the best park you've ever seen. Pine trees that fill your head with health, thousands of birds, and a huge blue pond.

RINO: There's even weird orange flowers George.

GEORGE: Your senses are in love, and nothing will ever be this good again. You run over and lick the rain off a big pine cone.

RINO: Mmmm. Yum !

RINO BEGINS TO HUM THE "STAR WARS" THEME.

GEORGE: You say hello to a duck, and the duck says hello back. Your voice sounds as soft as a kitten running across fluffy carpet. The whole world is a huge bubble and it's sitting in the palm of your hand. But be careful ! Breathe too hard and you'll break it. Your eyes can see everything, in front and behind. You smile so much it hurts.

RINO: This is fantastic ! I'm showing my comic to the duck now. "You look like Luke Skywalker" says the duck. "I am Luke Skywalker" says I.

GEORGE: Now, incredibly gently, the whole park starts to turn blue. The sun, the pine trees, the pond - everything, a beautiful soft blue. You wave goodbye to the duck.

RINO: Goodbye duck.

GEORGE: And soon all you can see is blue. Slowly your feet leave the ground, and you're floating. Gently the blue fades to green, the green fades to orange, and the orange fades to white. Now everything is white. White, silence, and you - floating. Everything is perfect. Perfection and peace. (**RINO SIGHS**) You open your eyes, (**RINO DOES SO**) and you're home. You have successfully completed your first trip.

RINO: That was excellent ! I'm going to get some trips off Astradyne first thing tomorrow.

GEORGE: First thing tomorrow you'll be asleep on a train.

RINO: I won't be asleep. (NOTICING NEEDLE IS READY) Do you have to ?

GEORGE: Handle it Rino. (**RINO COVERS HIS EYES**) Don't go on. I'll do it in the bathroom. (MOVING TO BATHROOM) And make sure I don't say anything stupid to Fletcher okay ? I don't want to fuck up tomorrow.

RINO: Oh, so shooting up with smack isn't fucking up tomorrow ?

GEORGE: Rino, I need to do this.

GEORGE CLOSSES THE BATHROOM DOOR.

RINO: Tell me what it's like George. So I know if anything's wrong.

GEORGE: Okay okay.

GEORGE PULLS THE RUBBER TUBING TIGHT AND INJECTS HERSELF. SILENCE.

RINO: George ? What's happening ? Say something. (PAUSE) George !

GEORGE: Quiet Rino. It's alright. (PAUSE) Silence. (PAUSE) I'm coming out.

GEORGE STARTS TO OPEN THE DOOR. SHE HAS TROUBLE WITH THE HANDLE. SHE LEANS HER HEAD AGAINST THE DOOR.

GEORGE: Soon.

GEORGE RESTS. PAUSE.

RINO: George ? George ! (PAUSE) Are you coming out ?
George ! Well if you're not coming out, I'm coming in.

RINO PULLS OPEN THE DOOR. GEORGE FALLS THROUGH IT ONTO THE FLOOR.

RINO: Fuck.

FLETCHER: (OFF, SINGING) "Little Boy Blue come blow your horn, the sheep's in the meadow, the cow's in the corn.

FLETCHER ENTERS, CARRYING TICKETS AND ORANGE FLOWERS.

FLETCHER: (SINGING) "Where is the boy ..."

RINO: Fletcher ...

FLETCHER SEES GEORGE. HE STOPS SINGING. HE RACES FORWARD AND CUP'S GEORGE'S HEAD IN HIS HANDS.

FLETCHER: George ? George ! (SCREAMING) George !!! (BEAT) You stupid fuckin' gutless bitch. We did it. We got the tickets. (THROWING THEM AT HER) And you didn't even have enough guts to keep living. Look. I brought you flowers. But of course, I forgot. You don't like flowers. You like money. (TAKING OUT MONEY) Well here you go then. Well come on, take it. No good to me anymore. Go on. Take it ! Come on, you always said you liked the taste of money. Take it. (PUTS MONEY IN HER MOUTH) That's it. Have a nice long suck ! Tastes good doesn't it ? Doesn't it ?! George. (HE SLUMPS TO THE GROUND, CRYING. PAUSE.) Well, aren't you a lucky girl then eh ? The Grand Lotto winner for the first and only time. And the first prize - a one way ticket straight out of life. But where's your ticket ? You can't have your prize if you haven't got your ticket. Come on ! Where's the fuckin' ticket ?

RINO: (HOLDING UP SYRINGE) Fletcher.

FLETCHER: Well aren't I a fuckin' idiot then eh ? Little Rino's had it all the time. (TAKING SYRINGE) Thank you Rino.

FLETCHER GRABS THE RUBBER TUBING AND STARTS TYING IT AROUND HIS ARM.

FLETCHER: I'm coming George. I'm coming baby.

RINO: Don't Fletcher. I can still come to the country with you. (HOLDING UP TOBACCO) Look, we've still got the tobacco.

FLETCHER: I ... don't ... want ... to ... go ... with ... you. I want to go with George !

FLETCHER IS ABOUT TO INJECT HIMSELF BUT RINO GRABS THE SYRINGE AND PUSHES THE PLUNGER DOWN. THE CONTENTS SQUIRT OUT ONTO THE FLOOR. FLETCHER SCREAMS AND HURLS RINO AGAINST THE WALL. HE STANDS OVER RINO, HAND RAISED.

FLETCHER: Don't hit me Fletcher. It wasn't my fault. It was the Piper. I told her the stuff was too good.

FLETCHER LOWERS HIS HAND. HE RUNS OFF, SCREAMING AT THE TOP OF HIS VOICE. RINO PICKS UP THE FLOWERS, THE TICKETS AND THE TOBACCO.

RINO: Fletcher. Wait !

RINO RUNS AFTER FLETCHER. THE LIGHT REMAINS ON GEORGE'S BODY FOR SOME TIME.

BLACKOUT.

Scene 3

The back of the Pub.

ASTRADYNE STANDS ON THE DOORSTEP. WOODS STANDS ON THE GROUND BESIDE HER, HOLDING PEN AND NOTEBOOK. IN THE BACKGROUND WE HEAR DANCE MUSIC.

ASTRADYNE: Just as it sounds. Astra, A-S-T-R-A. Dyne, D-Y-N-E. Astradyne. Got it ?

WOODS: Thanks. Last name ?

ASTRADYNE: I don't have a last name.

WOODS: Come off it. Everybody has a last name.

ASTRADYNE: It's Smith.

WOODS: Astradyne Smith ? I don't think so.

ASTRADYNE: What's wrong with that ? It's my father's name. I'm very proud of it.

WOODS: Whatever you say. Alright then Astradyne Smith, why did you run before ?

ASTRADYNE: Run ? Me, run ? Never. I walk - quickly.

WOODS: Well then, why did you walk quickly in the other direction as soon as you saw me ?

ASTRADYNE: I just remembered I'd left my hanky in the pub. My dear old mother gave it to me you see.

WOODS: Your hanky. Turn out your pockets.

ASTRADYNE: No.

WOODS: I said turn out your pockets.

ASTRADYNE: And I said no. I'm not a minor Constable. If you want me to turn out my pockets, you'll have to charge me first. And what are you gonna charge me with ? Think carefully Constable. Possession of hanky ? Don't want to make a mistake. False arrest doesn't go down too well on a young Constable's record now does it ?

PAUSE.

WOODS: Alright. Give it to me again.

ASTRADYNE: I knew you'd see it my way. From the start ?

WOODS: Yes thanks.

ASTRADYNE: Well I was born in -

WOODS: No. Just from the start of the incident.

ASTRADYNE: Well, the Eliminators were about half-way through their set when this Joy Boy -

WOODS: Joy Boy ?

ASTRADYNE: J-O-Y B-O-Y. Cross between a Skin and a Punk, yells out for them to play a bit of Clash. Now Jag, J-A-G, the lead singer, he hates The Clash, so he yells back to the Joy Boy: "Get fucked cunt !" Shall I spell that ?

WOODS: I've got a fair idea.

ASTRADYNE: Now, the Joy Boy , he doesn't take too kindly to being told to "fuck off" or being called a "cunt", so he picks up this empty stubbie and hurls it at Jag. Now Jag sees it coming and ducks really quick, but Stark, the bass player, S-T-A-R-K, who was standing directly behind Jag, well he doesn't. And it was a pretty good hurl see ? And it scones Stark right on the chin and he goes down. The rest of the band stopped playing of course.

WOODS: I thought as much.

ASTRADYNE: Now, Jag's not very impressed about his bass player being sconed, so he takes a flying leap at the Joy Boy. Now Jag's a big lad and he could have stuck it to the Joy Boy good and proper , but due to an unfortunate coincidence, at that very moment ten more Joy Boys walked through the front door. Now birds of a feather stick together, so quicker than you could do a few lines - it was on for

ASTRADYNE: (CONT) young and old. The Reagan Eliminators versus the Joy Boys. Resulting in much damage to bar and amenities, gross disturbance of the peace, and grievous bodily harm to all and sundry. Hope I'm not boring you.

FROM OFF STAGE COMES THE CRASH OF METAL GARBAGE BIN LIDS.

FLETCHER: (OFF STAGE) Oh Piper ! Come out, come out wherever you are !
(ANOTHER CRASH OF LIDS)

ASTRADYNE: (TO **WOODS**) Check ya. (SHE EXITS INTO THE PUB)

FLETCHER: (OFF STAGE) Come on Piper ! Little Boy Blue wants to blow his horn !

FLETCHER ENTERS, CRASHING TOGETHER TWO GARBAGE BIN LIDS.

FLETCHER: Oh look ! It's Mr. Pig. Did you have a nice day at the market Mr. Pig ?

WOODS: Okay Fletcher. That's enough.

FLETCHER: Is it ? Is it ? Enough for who ? Enough for you ? Enough for me ? Enough for George ? It's not enough for George. I wasn't enough for George. George can never have enough.

RINO ENTERS, STILL WITH FLOWERS, TICKETS AND TOBACCO.

RINO: Stop it Fletcher !

FLETCHER: Fuck you !

RINO: But I've got the tickets.

FLETCHER HURLS DOWN THE GARBAGE BIN LIDS.

FLETCHER: I don't want the tickets !

FLETCHER PULLS OUT HIS FLICK KNIFE.

WOODS: Alright Fletcher. Put the knife down. Real slow.

FLETCHER: What are you gonna do if I don't Mr. Pig ?

RINO: (TO **WOODS**) You don't understand. George is gone.

WOODS: Come on Fletcher. Drop the knife.

FLETCHER: Gone ? Did she go to the Gardens ?

WOODS: Give me the knife.

FLETCHER: My flowers ! Where are my flowers ?

RINO: I've got them. Look !

WOODS: Give me the knife.

FLETCHER LOWERS THE KNIFE.

WOODS: That's it. Nice and easy.

SUDDENLY FLETCHER SLASHES WOODS HAND. WOODS TAKES OUT HIS BATON AND STRIKES FLETCHER. RINO DARTS IN AND TAKES WOOD'S GUN OUT OF HIS HOLSTER.

RINO: Freeze ! Drop it. (**WOODS DROPS HIS BATON**)

FLETCHER: On ya Rino.

RINO: You too Fletcher.

FLETCHER: Give me the gun Rino.

WOODS: (**TO RINO**) Don't !

FLETCHER: (**TO RINO**) Give it to me ! We're going to the country aren't we ?

WOODS: Rino, give him the gun and you're in lock-up for life.

FLETCHER: Don't listen to him. They'll never catch us.

WOODS: Rino. He's going to shoot me.

FLETCHER: No I won't.

RINO HANDS FLETCHER THE GUN.

FLETCHER: Ta.

WOODS: Jesus !

RINO: Let's go Fletcher.

FLETCHER: (POINTING GUN AT **WOODS**) Sorry. I lied.

WOODS: Talk to him Rino !

FLETCHER: Now I've got the gun.

RINO: But why ? It wasn't his fault.

FLETCHER: Can't find the Piper, so he'll have to do.

FLETCHER COCKS THE GUN. RINO STANDS BETWEEN FLETCHER AND WOODS. FLETCHER POINTS THE GUN AT RINO.

RINO: Don't shoot him Fletcher. He's only a pig.

FLETCHER: A pig. My old man had pigs. I don't want to shoot them. I only want to shoot dumb people. Dumb people who sing songs about going to the country.

FLETCHER STARTS TO TURN THE GUN IN ON HIMSELF.

RINO: No, Fletcher !

FLETCHER PUTS THE GUN UNDER HIS CHIN. AS RINO PLEADS, WOODS SLOWLY INCHES HIS WAY, CLOSER TOWARDS FLETCHER.

RINO: Let's go to the country. Just you and me. Right now. I don't care if there's no Hoyts in Bellingham. I don't care about Star Wars anymore. I just want another chance. Away from here. I just want us to be together. Please Fletcher. Dad's dead. George is dead. Bruce is gone. We've done everything wrong. Let's do something right. Just once.

WOODS JUMPS FLETCHER. THEY WRESTLE AND THE GUN GOES OFF SHOOTING FLETCHER IN THE CHEST. FLETCHER FALLS ON TOP OF WOODS. WOODS PULLS HIMSELF OUT FROM UNDERNEATH FLETCHER. WOODS LOWERS HIS HEAD.

LIGHTS FADE.

Scene 4

The back of the Pub. Sunrise.

ALL IS QUIET NOW EXCEPT FOR OCCASIONAL CALLS FROM INSIDE THE PUB AS THE REAGAN ELIMINATORS LUG OUT. THE ORANGE FLOWERS LIE DOWNSTAGE, WITH SOME SCATTERED IN **FLETCHER'S** BLOOD. THE LANE IS DESERTED.

ENTER **ASTRADYNE** THROUGH THE STAFF DOOR WITH AN UNLIT CIGARILLO IN HER MOUTH AND NEW SHOES ON HER FEET. SHE WANDERS ACROSS STAGE CHECKING HER POCKETS FOR A MATCH. SHE PICKS UP A FLOWER AND SMELLS IT. SHE PUTS IT IN HER LAPEL. SHE NOTICES SHE HAS SOME BLOOD ON HER SHOE. SHE TRIES TO RUB IT OFF. THE BLOOD REMAINS. SHE KNEELS AND SPITS ON HER HANKY. SHE RUBS HER SHOE HARD. THE BLOOD REMAINS.

ASTRADYNE: Shit.

THE **YOUTH** ENTERS. HE STOPS SHORT WHEN HE SEES **ASTRADYNE**. **ASTRADYNE** STANDS. SILENCE.

ASTRADYNE: Sun's coming up.

YOUTH: Yeah I know ! I stayed up all night. This where it all happened ?

ASTRADYNE: Nowhere else.

YOUTH: Two dead and a cop seriously injured. Heaps of blood eh ?

ASTRADYNE: Got some on my new boots. Thought I'd be able to rub it off, (SHE KNEELS AGAIN AND RUBS) but I'm not having much luck.

YOUTH: Do you want me to have a go ?

ASTRADYNE: No thanks. I'll live.

YOUTH: I heard about it on the radio. Thought I'd come and check it out. A cop got shot eh ?

ASTRADYNE: No, just cut. He'll probably be transferred though, and it was only his second night. Doesn't go down too well when a kid shoots himself with your gun.

YOUTH: No, I guess it doesn't. Hey, you haven't seen this cute punk chick have you ? Dressed in all this purple stripey stuff.

ASTRADYNE: George.

YOUTH: Yeah, that's her. Do you know where she is ? My mates want to check her out. They reckon she couldn't be as good as what I said.

ASTRADYNE: First of the two.

YOUTH: You're kidding ? George ? (**ASTRADYNE NODS**) Fuck. (PAUSE) Shit ! What'll I tell my mates ? They'll think I made the whole thing up.

ASTRADYNE: (INDICATING BLOOD WITH HER FOOT) Show 'em that.

RINO ENTERS CARRYING GEORGE'S BAG AND THE TOBACCO. HE WALKS TO THE BLOOD AND STOPS. HE STARES DOWN AT THE STAIN.

ASTRADYNE: Must be hard Rino. (**RINO DOES NOT RESPOND**) Listen mate, I know what you must be going through, and I'd like to do something nice for you. (TAKING OUT ENVELOPE) This is unusually generous of me, but if you deliver this to Bondi I'll give you fifty bucks, and you can keep a couple for yourself. Nothing eases the pain like Ecstasy.

RINO: No thanks Astradyne. I've already got a delivery to make.

ASTRADYNE: Suit yourself.

RINO BEGINS TO EXIT.

ASTRADYNE: What's your hurry ?

RINO: I've got a train to catch. Check ya.

HE IS ABOUT TO LEAVE BUT STOPS. HE OPENS GEORGE'S BAG AND TAKES OUT HIS COMIC. HE PUTS IT IN A BIN. THE MAN ENTERS. RINO TURNS AND SEES HIM.

MAN: I've been looking everywhere for you Rino. You can still come home if you like. Where are you going ?

RINO: Away.

MAN: Can I give you a lift ? I found my keys.

RINO: No thanks. I can go by myself.

THE **MAN SMILES. RINO LOOKS AT HIM AND EXITS. THE MAN WATCHES RINO GO. ASTRADYNE LOOKS AT THE MAN. THE MAN PICKS UP THE COMIC AND EXITS, QUICKLY.**

ASTRADYNE: Fag.

YOUTH: What's up Ringo's bum ?

ASTRADYNE: Rino. You know how two got killed ?

YOUTH: Yeah.

ASTRADYNE: The other one was his best friend.

YOUTH: Really ? Shit eh. (PAUSE) Listen Astradyne, my mates are going to be pretty disappointed when they find out George is ... You couldn't accommodate them could you ?

ASTRADYNE: Sorry. Don't do rescue scenes. But, I do have something else that you might be interested in. Are you game ?

YOUTH: You selling dope are you ?

ASTRADYNE: Better than dope.

YOUTH: What is it ?

ASTRADYNE: (PRODUCING ENVELOPE) Ecstasy. It'll blow your tits off.

YOUTH: Ecstasy. I've heard about that. Wait till they see this ! How much ?

ASTRADYNE: How much you got ?

YOUTH: (TAKING MONEY OUT OF HIS SHOE) Enough.

ASTRADYNE: How many of you are ready for it ?

YOUTH: We're all ready ! I'll need enough to get four of us totally whacked.

ASTRADYNE: You'll get whacked alright. Totally. It'll cost you a hundred and twenty.

YOUTH: (COUNTING MONEY) I've only got a hundred.

ASTRADYNE: I shouldn't do this, but I like the way you smile.
(SHE GRABS THE MONEY AND COUNTS IT. SHE HANDS
OVER FOUR TABS.) Now don't go telling the boss.

YOUTH: I won't ! I really appreciate this Astradyne. Now let me get this straight, so
they'll think I've done it before. You just swallow them right ?

ASTRADYNE: (NODDING) With plenty of water.

YOUTH: You're a lifesaver.

ASTRADYNE: All part of the service. Come back and see me when you've finished
that lot.

YOUTH: I will. (STARTING TO EXIT) Bye.

ASTRADYNE: Bye.

ASTRADYNE SMILES BROADLY. THE YOUTH STOPS AND TURNS.

YOUTH: Hey Astradyne, what's it like ?

ASTRADYNE: What you lose on the swings, you gain on the roundabouts.

YOUTH: And then ?

ASTRADYNE: You're on your own.

**THE YOUTH EXITS. ASTRADYNE WATCHES HIM GO. SHE CHECKS
AROUND THEN SHE OPENS HER HAND TO REVEAL THE MONEY. SHE
SMILES AND HIDES IT IN AN INSIDE POCKET. SHE LIGHTS HER
CIGARILLO, TURNS AND EXITS.**

SUNSHINE.

BLACKOUT.

END PLAY.