

# **The Dead Sun**

a short play

by

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**Cast**

**KE-LO**

**TUNG**

**TWAN**

**Setting**

Kitchen.

**Time**

Dusk.

## 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 lilies. 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.**