

THE SAVAGES OF WIRRAMAI

by Sandy Fairthorne

CAST

RON Savage (“FATHER”) – 73

MARY Savage (“MOTHER”) – 68

DEVINA Savage– 38

ANGEL Savage – 35

CASSIE Savage – 28

MATTHEW Rawson – (Devina’s son) - 16

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“Behind every great fortune is a great crime.”

Honore de Balzac

ACT ONE

Scene One

A 60's style kitchen/living area, with kitchen bench, dining table opposite, and a couch. The paintings on the wall and the worn out décor suggest this was once, as far back as the 70's, an expensively decked out, highly functional living area. There is one door (to the bathroom) upstage coming off a small porch area where a rifle is propped, as if ready for use, with a bedroom door (downstage right) and door to a hallway on other side of the stage.

A radio plays country music (“Stand By Your Man”). ANGEL, 35, sings along as she vacuums. She wears a large floral smock, exaggerating a tendency to slight plumpness. She tosses an empty bottle of whisky in the bin, and squirts around cleaning agent.

The song comes to an end. She turns off the vacuum. From a bedroom can now be heard the sound of a man coughing and hoiking. She turns off the radio, goes to the bedroom door and peeks in.

ANGEL (*whispered*): Sorry.

She wanders back to the bench then stops. The faint sound of whirring can be heard in the distance. As if picking up a separate vibration, she looks out the window: her face shows a mix of panic and joy.

ANGEL: CASSIE!

She looks around and spots the rifle –

ANGEL: Shit!

She grabs it and climbs up onto the bench, hiding it in a top cupboard. She leans over and looks out the window again. A truck can be heard turning into the driveway. She clambers off the bench. A truck door slams. ANGEL looks out and waves.

ANGEL: Hii.

She leans forward, and stares, fascinated.

ANGEL: Who is that?

The truck can be heard revving, then driving away. ANGEL quickly resumes her cleaning.

CASSIE stands at the porch entrance and looks in. She is everything her sister isn't: a charismatic vision of dark red lipstick and underworld black. She lugs in a suitcase with broken wheels.

ANGEL: Wipe your feet!

CASSIE rolls her eyes, stamps her feet on the mat then walks in.

ANGEL: Hiii!/
CASSIE : FUCK.

ANGEL rushes to her to hug. CASSIE hugs her briefly then pushes past. She abandons the suitcase and collapses onto a couch. ANGEL drags the case away to a corner.

ANGEL: We've got to keep the floor clear for Dad. He tripped the other day (and –)

CASSIE (OVER): God it's hot in here.

ANGEL: I know. Heading for a storm. Gonna be a big one.

CASSIE turns on the ceiling fan. It begins to turn...very slowly. She gives up.

CASSIE: I forgot this is a fashion piece. Does the fridge work?

ANGEL: 'Course.

CASSIE walks to the fridge and pulls out a bottle of water.

CASSIE: Where are Hitler and Eva Braun?

ANGEL: In bed.

CASSIE: Still?

ANGEL: How'd you get here anyway?

CASSIE: Bus. Then hitched a lift with Jim /Saunders.

ANGEL: Saunders? / Oh God Cassie – No!

CASSIE: Sometimes a lift is just a lift, Angel.

ANGEL: I know that! I'm just saying -.

CASSIE: What's with the windmills?

ANGEL: *Windfarm.* The latest thing. Doesn't matter that the place looks like War of the Worlds.

CASSIE: Jim reckons they're the only things round here that compete in size with his dick.

ANGEL: Well you'd know.

CASSIE: God how I've missed sophisticated country wit.

ANGEL: Dad keeps threatening to turn them into a tourist attraction. I can just see me working at a little booth, getting \$5 a carload to drive in and watch the blades.

CASSIE: Like giant stick insects.

ANGEL: They pay well, so -.

CASSIE: How much do we get for them?

Pause. ANGEL shrugs.

ANGEL: God it's good to see you.

CASSIE (*looking through her handbag*): One night only. As soon as the march is over I'm out.

ANGEL: Thanks for making the effort. I know it's...

Pause. CASSIE sits and pulls out some tobacco and papers.

CASSIE: I saw Poppy at the shed. Dugs to her paws.

ANGEL: He can't get out there now with his leg so -

CASSIE (*rolling a cigarette*): Lucky kitties.

ANGEL: I was even thinking of getting a dog again.

CASSIE: Don't risk it.

ANGEL: DON'T SMOKE IN HERE! He'll have a fit!

CASSIE: He's got no sense of smell anymore. I've smoked skunk in the same room. Never said a thing.

ANGEL: He notices. He's just too -

A beat. CASSIE waits. ANGEL shakes her head and smiles.

CASSIE: You were gonna say scared of me weren't you?

ANGEL (*lying*): No.

CASSIE tilts her head back and takes in a large breath of smoke. She stares in to space for a moment, smiling.

CASSIE: Where are the others so I can scare them too?

ANGEL: Devina and Matthew got in late last night. They've gone in to do a shop.

CASSIE: Where's Henry?

ANGEL shakes her head. CASSIE smiles.

ANGEL: You look - different.

CASSIE: What sort of different? Good, bad or..wierd?

ANGEL studies CASSIE for a moment.

ANGEL: Um..

CASSIE: Take your time.

ANGEL: No.. Good different, yeah..

CASSIE: How'd you pay for it anyway?

ANGEL: Cleaning jobs and -

CASSIE: That's a lot of cleaning.

ANGEL: So was it good?

CASSIE: Good's not exactly the (word)

ANGEL (OVER): Did you make any friends?

CASSIE: Well yeah, but not – you know – forever friends.

ANGEL: Why not?

CASSIE: 'Cos we'd all end up having a huge party to celebrate and go out and score together what do you think? *(Pause)* They gave me stuff to help me through. And - we talked a lot.

ANGEL: If things get tough I can always drive you back –

CASSIE: I'm not going (back).

ANGEL (OVER): I mean to Melbourne.

CASSIE: Or I can hitch. *(teasing)* With Jim.

ANGEL: Jim shouldn't be driving Cassie.

CASSIE: Oh really?

ANGEL: He's just lost his license.

CASSIE: Is that right?

ANGEL: I'll drive you. Not (Jim)

CASSIE (OVER): Okay okay. Jesus!

CASSIE smokes. Outside it starts to rain heavily. The mood shifts slightly, as CASSIE considers the night ahead. ANGEL waves the smoke away from her face.

ANGEL: Bloody FLIES. Every time there's a storm–

CASSIE: Did you tell them? Where I've been?

ANGEL: Who Mum and Dad?

CASSIE: Were they pleased?

ANGEL: 'Course.

ANGEL walks off towards her parent's bedroom door again.

CASSIE: Where you going?

ANGEL: Just to see if they're awake?

CASSIE: I'M the one in recovery.

ANGEL: It's nearly lunch time and they don't even know you're here yet.

CASSIE: Don't talk I feel sick. *(pause)* Maybe I'm coming down with something.

ANGEL: It's just the heat. *(pause)* Or do you think -?

CASSIE: What?

ANGEL: Well -

CASSIE: What?

ANGEL: Do you think you might be putting them in danger?

CASSIE: Who in danger?

ANGEL: Mum and (Dad).

CASSIE (OVER): Don't be (stupid).

ANGEL (OVER): But if it's catching they might -

CASSIE: I'll WASH MY HANDS.

ANGEL: Oh. Okay, then.

CASSIE: GOD.

ANGEL: I'm sorry I just -

CASSIE: Shut up. I've got no energy to speak or listen to you. I am drained. Exhausted. Nauseous. Shakey. Look! My hands are -

ANGEL: Maybe you're -.

Pause.

CASSIE: Maybe I'm -?

ANGEL: Nothing.

CASSIE: You were going to say hungover.

ANGEL: 'Course (not!)

CASSIE (OVER): I don't drink anymore Angel.

ANGEL: I mean anxious maybe you're anxious about being (home again).

CASSIE (OVER): Not like some people round here.

CASSIE walks over to a drinks cabinet and starts looking through some bottles. ANGEL watches her discover a bottle of whisky, still in its box.

CASSIE (CONT'D): Jesus. Look at this.

ANGEL: Dad stocked up last week.

CASSIE examines the bottle, then in quiet disgust puts it back in the grog cupboard.

CASSIE: Nice. Thoughtful. Supportive.

ANGEL: I'll support you. I won't drink.

CASSIE: Come on (Angel)

ANGEL (OVER): I won't drink. I won't. I won't drink. It's no big deal. I -.

Long pause. They stare at each other.

ANGEL (CONT'D): Won't. Drink.

CASSIE shrugs and starts rummaging around in her handbag. She pulls out her mobile phone, starts to text then tries to send it. She waves the mobile round, as ANGEL stares into her parent's room, biting her fingernails.

CASSIE: Is there anywhere -?

ANGEL: Try -

ANGEL stands in the reception spot. CASSIE goes to it and holds up her mobile.

CASSIE: I'll have to use the landline.

ANGEL: Can't. Lines are down.

CASSIE: Jesus.

ANGEL: Who - is it?

CASSIE: My buddy. From rehab.

ANGEL: Who's your buddy?

CASSIE (*reading mobile*): He texts stuff like - (*in whispery New Age voice*) - "Hey there Cassie. Thinking of you, take it easy and remember to BREEATHE."

ANGEL: Who forgets to breathe?

CASSIE: I dunno. A corpse?

They laugh a little.

ANGEL: I'll be your buddy here okay? I'm your buddy here.

CASSIE checks her phone. Then tries to send it again. No success.

ANGEL (CONT'D): I should wake them up.

CASSIE: What's the hurry? He'll be awake soon enough. He'll wander out for a snack or to try to make it to the bathroom in time and here we'll be. And then it'll just be work. (*Pause*) You look after them too well if you ask me.

ANGEL: What?

CASSIE: All this tending to them it's (unnatural) -

ANGEL (OVER): How can you (say that)

CASSIE (OVER): You give him too much attention. He's self absorbed enough.

ANGEL: That's an awful thing to say. He can hardly walk!

CASSIE: Oh yeah. Sorry. Forgot.

ANGEL: That's terrible Cassie.

CASSIE: Just slipped out.

From their bedroom, the sounds again of FATHER hoiking. CASSIE grimaces.

ANGEL: I'm thinking of buying a baby monitor.

CASSIE: What, so you can watch them sleep?

ANGEL: That's what it's like. That's how bad it's got. You have no idea.

CASSIE (*pulling out some tablets*): Jesus.

ANGEL: If Mum gets angina, Dad falls over trying to get to the phone. If Dad falls over – which he did last week - Mum gets angina trying to get him up again. It's only a matter of time before Dad breaks his hip and Mum has to have a pacemaker put in. That's what Dr Healy reckons.

CASSIE (*swigging down tablets*): Dr Healy's a freak.

ANGEL: What are they?

CASSIE: Rehab supplied them to me. For - emergencies.

ANGEL: Oh. Okay then.

CASSIE: I don't need your permission Angel.

ANGEL: It's just – after (last time)

CASSIE (OVER): Have one.

ANGEL: What?

CASSIE: Have one.

Pause. CASSIE holds out a sheet of tablets. ANGEL looks at them for a moment.

ANGEL: I don't need –

CASSIE: It's only valium. (*ANGEL shakes her head*) Oh that's right –I forgot – She's sooo (good)

ANGEL (OVER): Don't (start)

CASSIE (OVER): Such a sweet little girl – so (caring and -)

ANGEL (OVER): Don't do (this)

CASSIE (OVER): Kind and generous and (thoughtful-)

ANGEL (OVER): Shut up!

CASSIE: Don't YELL AT ME.

ANGEL: I'm not yelling.

CASSIE: You bloody are! (*pause*) And stop watching me. Everything I do is always reported back to (someone else in the)

ANGEL (OVER): No it's not./

CASSIE (OVER): - family these days/.

ANGEL: I'm not interested in (watching you)-/

CASSIE (OVER): I cannot (fucking MOVE)/

ANGEL (OVER): I'm *not* watching you. I don't care what you do.

Pause.

CASSIE: GOOD.

ANGEL picks up a cloth and begins to wipe the bench. CASSIE scratches and tries to breathe deeply.

ANGEL: Just – don't mix them Cassie.

Pause.

CASSIE: What?

ANGEL: We don't - need another - like last (year) –

CASSIE (OVER): Last year I was in GRIEF for God's sake -

ANGEL (OVER, *backing off*): Ofcourse you (were –)

CASSIE (OVER): Last year was the worst year of my life!

ANGEL: I know - I just – we don't need another – like..

CASSIE: Jesus I'm just out of fucking (rehab -)

ANGEL (OVER): Sorry - I (know)

CASSIE (OVER): Give me a break!

ANGEL: Sorry. I'm just - .

CASSIE: Christ Angel -

ANGEL (OVER): Sorry -

CASSIE: Just GROW UP.

Long pause. CASSIE looks around restlessly.

CASSIE (CONT'D): I cannot believe how little this place has changed.

ANGEL: Spooky isn't it?

CASSIE: Mum still hasn't got a dishwasher.

ANGEL: Dad was always on about how much more family time we had washing the dishes, remember? Remember that time you stabbed me with the butter knife while I was drying up?

CASSIE: It was a pate knife -

ANGEL: Right in the belly button you got me.

CASSIE: It was tiny. It didn't even have a point.

ANGEL: It was so painful.

CASSIE: You always tell that story. I can't even remember it.

Pause. A rumble of thunder.

ANGEL: Oh God. What if the march is cancelled? What if Devina and Matthew get stuck in the storm?

CASSIE watches ANNIE wipe down the kitchen table.

CASSIE: How's your business anyway?

ANGEL: I thought of a name for it. The Immaculate Cleaning service.

CASSIE: Very chaste.

ANGEL: I got another client yesterday. So that's the hospital, Briar Rose B and B, the Grand and -

CASSIE: The Grand Hotel?

ANGEL: Yeah!

CASSIE: Hey can you drive me in?

ANGEL: What for?

CASSIE: To play pool. Hey let's take Dad's old rifle and pretend to hold up the drive through.

Pause. CASSIE looks at her sister with a 'dare you' expression.

ANGEL: Cassie No.

CASSIE: I was joking you dick. *They'd laugh.*

Pause. ANGEL fans herself. CASSIE is fidgety.

ANGEL: Anyway, Dad hid it.

CASSIE: What the gun?

ANGEL: Yesterday.

A beat. ANGLE keeps fanning. CASSIE rolls another cigarette.

CASSIE: I heard about your early menopause.

ANGEL: Who told you?

CASSIE: You could have twins Angel! If you had sex. All the eggs are giving up and popping off in twos. Like a last minute mass exodus. “No action here kids, let’s (go!)”

ANGEL (OVER): DON’T talk like that!

CASSIE: Actually best you don’t. *(softening)* Why’d you want to pass on our genes anyway?

ANGEL: Don’t you think I should wake them up and tell them you’re here?

CASSIE: Do you ever wish you’d had kids?

ANGEL: Maybe they’re hiding from you?

CASSIE: I don’t.

ANGEL: Mum always wanted us to.

CASSIE: Why?

ANGEL: Who’s going to help us? When we’re dying?

CASSIE: They’re not dying Angel. They’re not even close to dying.

ANGEL (OVER): Dad’s had three mini strokes this year –

CASSIE: Mini strokes (what next?)

ANGEL (OVER): - plus Mum’s heart’s always playing up.

CASSIE: What are mini strokes?

ANGEL: It’s true! He lost his eyesight for a day.

CASSIE: How come I wasn’t told?

ANGEL: It was only one eye.

CASSIE: Well I don’t want to die old.

ANGEL: Oh come on – it’d be fun. We could move in somewhere together and play ‘guess my number’.

CASSIE: You've already booked into the Wirramai Peace Haven, haven't you? (*ANGEL rolls her eyes*) Oh my God you have! HA! (*lighting her rollie*) It's obvious why Henry isn't coming. Last time...he leered at me all weekend.

ANGEL: Really?

CASSIE: Then just as they were leaving, he grabbed my tit.

ANGEL: Oh my God!

CASSIE: So I bit him.

ANGEL: Did Devina see?

CASSIE: She was packing the car.

ANGEL: Wow! Why doesn't anyone leer at me?

CASSIE: Drew blood.

ANGEL: You flirt that's why.

CASSIE: With Henry. As IF.

Pause.

CASSIE (CONT'D): So where's Annie then?

ANGEL: I dunno. Gone off us. She's very superior these days. The new generation of female is full of all the confidence Greer fought so hard for, with none of the gratitude. I read it in this book I'm reading.

CASSIE: Really?

ANGEL: *Yin and Jung*. Feminism from a Jungian perspective.

CASSIE: Helping?

ANGEL: It gives me strategies. For coping.

CASSIE (*eyes closed, zoning out*): Fabulous.

Pause.

ANGEL: She wants to be a doctor, did you know?

CASSIE: Who?

ANGEL: Your niece Annie? She wants to do medicine.

CASSIE: Really?

ANGEL: Imagine a female in *this* family doing medicine! Devina reckons she'll be able to help Henry on his way - when he's all - you know -

CASSIE spots her FATHER in the bedroom doorway, leaning heavily on his walking stick. ANGEL has yet to notice him. He is well groomed, wearing freshly pressed trousers and shirt.

CASSIE: When he's all what?

ANGEL: Infirm.

CASSIE: Infirm?

ANGEL: You know – Annie can euthanise him –

CASSIE: What, euthanise her own father?

ANGEL: Yeah...

CASSIE: What, you mean -?

ANGEL: Imagine it!

ANGEL does an imitation of a nurse watching on –

ANGEL (CONT'D): “No! Not your own father! Please, not here!” *(in voice of ‘evil daughter’)* “Yes, right here, right now I’m afraid! *(injecting morphine action)* Bye bye Dad! Byee!”

ANGEL exaggerates waving goodbye like a little girl. FATHER watches, his face reading mild disgust. ANGEL follows CASSIE’s look and stares at him guiltily.

ANGEL (CONT'D): Morning.

CASSIE *(coolly)*: Hi Dad.

He limps into the room.

ANGEL: Well give him a kiss!

CASSIE totters over to him, and without actually touching, gives him a theatrical luvee air kiss (“mwoh”).

FATHER: What’s that smell?

ANGEL: We were wondering where you were.

FATHER: Didn’t look very far did you?

ANGEL: I looked at the bed but –

CASSIE: You’re both so tiny we couldn’t see you there! Little tiny whiney little things you are! But look at you – popping up like a cork again!

FATHER: Still dressing like a teenager?

ANGEL: How are you this morning?

He tries to smile but only his mouth moves. He starts to limp slowly to the table to sit down.

FATHER: Same as usual. Half deaf, half blind, half (crippled.)

ANGEL (OVER): How'd you sleep?

FATHER: Nothing wrong with my sense of smell anyway.

ANGEL wipes down the table again. CASSIE looks in her bags for something.

FATHER (CONT'D): Where are-?

ANGEL: Devina and Matthew have gone in for a shop. They were going to ask you but you were (asleep.)

FATHER (OVER): Doing my ablutions. *(to CASSIE)* How'd you get here then?

CASSIE: I flew.

FATHER: That'd be bloody right.

ANGEL: Guess who she got a (lift with)

CASSIE (OVER): Shut up Angel.

FATHER: How long they been?

ANGEL: They'll be home any minute./

CASSIE: They're on their way Dad.

FATHER: Have you rung to see (where they are)?

CASSIE (OVER): They're on their way they're on their way they're on their way.

ANGEL: Matthew's coming back, (don't worry.)

CASSIE (OVER): You won't be overwhelmed with stupid females for long. Speaking of which...*(she goes to the bedroom door, holding a present, and looks inside.)* Mum?

CASSIE walks out of the room. ANGEL stands awkwardly in front of her father, smiling like a child. She passes him some mail. He looks at it. In the background can be heard the sound of CASSIE and MOTHER, talking excitedly.

CASSIE (CONT'D *offstage*): Look at you darling!

MOTHER (*offstage*): Lovely to have you here at last.. (ETC)

FATHER: Keep it down for God's sake!

ANGEL: They're just excited to (see each other)

FATHER (OVER): KEEP IT DOWN.

Silence. ANGEL bends down in front of her father.

ANGEL: You want some breakfast or..?

FATHER: Stand away from me please. You smell of onions.

ANGEL: I showered this morning-

FATHER: You've put on more weight.

ANGEL: What?

FATHER: You're looking bigger.

ANGEL: It's only been a day since we discussed (that Dad)

FATHER (OVER): What do you do with it all?

ANGEL: What?

FATHER: What do you eat to get so –

ANGEL: I eat what you eat.

FATHER: I hear the fridge door at night.

ANGEL: You're being - inappropriate Dad.

FATHER (*looking up*): Beg your pardon? Did you just say -

ANGEL: Inappropriate. Especially (when-)

FATHER (OVER): Don't (be funny.)

ANGEL (OVER): Excuse me –

FATHER: You heard.

ANGEL: Excuse me Dad. You (interrupted me.)

FATHER (OVER): I'll tell *you* what's inappropriate – it's having a forty year old –

ANGEL: Thirty (five–)

FATHER (OVER): - middle aged charwoman for a daughter, that's inappropriate.

ANGEL: That too is an inappropriate thing to say to me – especially given (that I – excuse me, excuse me -)

FATHER (OVER): Christ almighty unappreciative, *unappreciative* after all I've done for you –

ANGEL: I didn't say unappreciative I said inappropriate.

FATHER: Don't you bloody start.

Pause.

ANGEL: Start what?

FATHER: I know what you're doing.

ANGEL: I think mistaking 'inappropriate' for 'unappreciative' was an interesting Freudian slip on your part actually.

FATHER: Jesus wept.

ANGEL: I also take offense at being called a witchedy grub.

FATHER: What?

ANGEL: Last night you called me a witchedy grub in a dress. At dinner.

FATHER: Don't be stupid.

ANGEL: Don't you remember?

FATHER: 'Course I bloody remember.

ANGEL: I'd prefer it if you didn't talk to me (like that-)

FATHER (OVER): *You'd prefer* – has anyone bothered to ask what *I'd* prefer (for a change?)-

ANGEL (OVER): I - I hadn't finished speaking (Dad)-

FATHER (OVER): It's not all about *you* you know. Jesus.

ANGEL: I'm just saying – oh – God (this is so -)

FATHER (OVER): This is my home isn't it?

ANGEL: Yes Dad. It is.

FATHER: Well? "What would you prefer Daddy?" Hmm?

Pause.

ANGEL: I was just saying – this isn't – . (*she clears the air with her hands, takes a deep breath and smiles*) Good morning. Did you sleep well?

FATHER (*looking at the paper*): Stomach stapling.

ANGEL (*HORRIFIED*): What?

FATHER: Healy and I could get you into a good place before it's too late. (*ANGEL sighs. Pause. He looks up from his paper*) I don't mind if you don't stand there.

ANGEL goes to the kitchen bench and puts the kettle on.

ANGEL: We're all excited about the weekend Dad. We're all bringing something to the Anzac Day lunch. You know, a little joke, or song or story –

FATHER (*starting to read the mail*): Don't tell me. Make it a surprise.

She brings over some tablets, which she puts down in front of him on a small saucer with a glass of water. She then carries over the bunch of flowers, a card and pen.

FATHER: What are these then?

ANGEL: Your painkillers. And - for Mum.

He picks up the card and looks at ANGEL, who passes him a pen. He begins to write something to his wife. ANGEL tries to see.

FATHER: That kettle boiling yet?

ANGEL: Just about to. How'd Mum sleep?

FATHER (*taking his tablets*): Ask her yourself.

ANGEL: Sorry?

FATHER (*CALLING TO MOTHER*): Where are you Mum? (*in whiney child like voice*)
Muuuum?

ANGEL (*attempt to sound amused*): A heh.

ANGEL scuttles off in the direction of the bedroom, just as her MOTHER appears in a dressing gown, held by CASSIE on one arm. She is younger but frailer than her husband.

MOTHER: Were you calling me?

CASSIE: We're just coming out for some breakfast, aren't we Mum?

ANGEL: Don't hold her so hard under her arm -

CASSIE: Back off Angela!

ANGEL: It bruises her -

MOTHER: I'm alright. I was absolutely bedridden last week but -. (*ANGEL hugs her mother*) Not too tight darling. Morning dear. You'd laugh at Cassie's present Ron. Ron? (*she holds up a doll and shakes it at FATHER*) It's called a 'Stress Doll'.

CASSIE: I don't think Dad's going to appreciate it like (you)

MOTHER (OVER): Watch!

She strangles the doll, which instantly makes a noise as if it were gasping for breath.

MOTHER: Isn't it hysterical? (*FATHER doesn't react.*) Doesn't she look well? Ron? Doesn't Cassie look well? Darling? (*FATHER looks up and half nods in acknowledgement. CASSIE is secretly pleased by this. MOTHER notices the flowers*) Ooh. Who are these for?

FATHER: The card.

For a moment CASSIE and ANGEL watch, spellbound, as MOTHER reads the note and smiles at FATHER adoringly.

MOTHER: Thank you darling.

He kisses her hand.

FATHER: Forty years it'll be.

ANGEL: Actually thirty nine.

CASSIE: Why'd you marry the day before Anzac Day?

MOTHER: I don't know - easier to remember?

CASSIE: So did you march with him on your honeymoon?

MOTHER: Don't be silly. They weren't (allowed)

FATHER (OVER): I bloody marched. For Dad I marched.

MOTHER: You did darling.

FATHER: And you supported me always - thoughtful, kind, generous woman.

MOTHER (to CASSIE and ANGEL): Your father was a hero.

ANGEL: And you were the town beauty.

MOTHER: He was the only man who enlisted in Wirramai. No one else. All the boys waited in terror to see if their birthday was called –

ANGEL: Vincent Calleri sent his boys back to Italy –

MOTHER: - but not your father. He was there –

FATHER: With Dad I (was –)

MOTHER (OVER): - ready and willing -

FATHER: Like my father with his father –

MOTHER: So handsome in his uniform. All the girls melted when he walked past..

For a moment FATHER and MOTHER only have eyes for each other.

FATHER: "I'm going to have you," I said. "When I get back. I'm bloody going to have you."

MOTHER: And you did.

FATHER: I did.

MOTHER: You did.

FATHER wraps his arms around MOTHER. ANGEL sighs: for a moment all is well with the world. CASSIE walks over to the kitchen. FATHER returns to reading. MOTHER puts the flowers in a vase.

MOTHER: Where's Devina?

ANGEL: Shopping.

MOTHER: Still?

FATHER: Don't start your fussing -

CASSIE: She's just keen to have us all here aren't you Mum.

ANGEL picks up her mobile and walks to the corner of the room, dialling.

MOTHER: Maybe they're bogged.

ANGEL: I'll call them.

FATHER: Not in that hovercraft with wheels.

CASSIE (*sitting her mother down on a chair*): What would you like for breakfast?

MOTHER: Oh. Um.

FATHER: Like something NATO uses for warzones.

CASSIE: Toast and jam?

ANGEL (*waving phone in the air*): No toast. Hyatus hernia. You taken your meds?

MOTHER nods.

CASSIE: Bread and butter?

ANGEL: Wheat blows her up.

FATHER: Get me a cup of tea – water'd be boiled by now.

MOTHER: Get your father his tea.

CASSIE (*to ANGEL*): Make the tea for Dad.

ANGEL: I'm on the phone./

FATHER: Tea please now.

CASSIE (*to FATHER*): Just a sec – (*to ANGEL*) You're not on the phone –

ANGEL: I'm trying to get reception!

CASSIE (*to MOTHER*): Porridge Mum?

FATHER: Cup of tea.

MOTHER: Get his tea for God's sake. In the container there.

CASSIE (*making the tea*): I know that! Same place for twenty years.

FATHER: Brain cells aren't all shot then..?

CASSIE: What?

FATHER: Strong. I like it strong.

CASSIE: Like you like your women?

FATHER: What?

CASSIE: What do you want Mum?

MOTHER: I'm fine. Get your father's tea.

CASSIE: I am! Jesus!

ANGEL hangs up her mobile, stands on a chair and redials.

CASSIE (CONT'D): What's wrong with the landline?

FATHER: Too expensive./

ANGEL: Broken down.

MOTHER: That Jim Saunders drove into his father's pole –

CASSIE: He what?

ANGEL: He crashed. A few weeks back.

FATHER: Useless bloody degenerate prick of a thing.

ANGEL: It's been out ever since.

CASSIE chortles a little as she walks over to FATHER with the cup of tea.

CASSIE: It's so HOT in here.

FATHER: Stop your whining.

MOTHER: The teabag – take it out for (your father –)

CASSIE (OVER, *turning on the ceiling fan*): I'm not. I'm just stating the obvious. /

FATHER: Turn it off.

CASSIE: Why's no one replaced this relic of a thing?

MOTHER: Angel – (*pointing to FATHER's cup*)

ANGEL walks over and collects the teabag from her FATHER's cup – still holding the mobile phone to her ear.

FATHER (*referring to teabag*): Leave it! (*referring to fan*) Turn it off. It gives me kidney pain.

CASSIE: Oh well open the window then.

She goes to open a window.

FATHER: LEAVE IT/

MOTHER: Don't do that Cassie. (*to ANGEL*) Did you get through?

ANGEL: Out of range. Hold on.

ANGEL climbs up on a chair and waves the mobile around a bit. CASSIE fans herself and puffs angrily.

MOTHER (to CASSIE): He likes the warm./

FATHER: I like the warm.

CASSIE: Mum doesn't.

FATHER: She does/

MOTHER: I do.

CASSIE: She doesn't. You don't.

FATHER: I like the warm. /

ANGEL: Dad likes the warm.

CASSIE: It's like a jungle (in here).

FATHER (OVER): What would you know about jungles? Hmm?

Pause.

CASSIE: Nothing. I'd know nothing, okay? It's just so bloody - HOT.

ANGEL (into phone): Hello Devina?

FATHER slams the cup on the table. It smashes. CASSIE turns off the fan obediently. There is a beat, a hush. MOTHER gets up and begins to clean up the broken bits.

ANGEL: We're just wondering - could you call us to say when you'll -?

CASSIE (grabbing the mobile, climbing up on the chair): In case you haven't already guessed, we're having such a fun time celebrating what is fast becoming yet another superbly enjoyable wedding anniversary slash Anzac Day weekend. Can you call and tell us how long you'll be before someone takes to someone else with a machete? Tha-a-anks!

CASSIE hangs up the mobile and looks at her FATHER.

CASSIE (CONT'D): 'Nuther cuppa?

Scene Two

Some hours later. It's raining onto the porch tin roof. CASSIE and ANGEL are now drinking tea together. ANGEL holds out an empty sheet of tablets. CASSIE lights herself a cigarette and studies it.

ANGEL: Dr Healy prescribes them for me. They're sort of anti anxiety. I hate 'em – make me feel like a stone in the morning. Can't move. But Dad sort of – copes with them. He's such a - freak. It'd take a packet to knock him out.

ANGEL walks over and puts the sheet in the kitchen bin.

CASSIE: How many? (ANGEL shrugs) What, three, four -?

ANGEL: No, stupid! Just the one usually. With his bed time meds.

CASSIE: You gave him one last night, didn't you?

ANGEL: We'd never get to sleep in otherwise. He gets up so early.

CASSIE: Jesus Angel - I don't think - that's -.

ANGEL: Only now and then. For a bit of time out.

CASSIE: But -

ANGEL: Should be on them anyway. It doesn't hurt.

CASSIE: Yeah but -

ANGEL: You'd do it too if - you had to live here.

CASSIE: Still, drugging your own father is - just a tiny bit -

ANGEL: You don't have to live with him.

CASSIE: And you do? *(walking over to gaze out the window.)* Bloody weather. We'll be trapped inside all weekend. Suffocating. Hey...

The sound of a car purring up the driveway. Expensive car doors slam shut.

CASSIE (CONT'D): They're baaaack!

DEVINA *(offstage)*: Don't stand there staring!

ANGEL joins her at the window and waves.

CASSIE: Look at the outfit.

DEVINA *(offstage)*: Come and help!

CASSIE: Give me strength.

DEVINA *(offstage)*: It's POURING out here!

ANGEL *(to CASSIE)*: Come on!

ANGEL rushes out. CASSIE stands back for a moment and collects herself. FATHER walks out of his study from the hallway door.

FATHER: Get out there and help your sister for God's sake.

CASSIE makes to go, but slumps down again into the couch. FATHER actually seems excited, pleased even. He walks around a little, stopping at the bedroom door.

FATHER: Your girl's back Mary. Mary?

MOTHER *(offstage)*: In a minute Ron!

DEVINA enters with a dripping umbrella and muddy shoes. She is dressed most inappropriately for a weekend on the farm, covered in bling, pearls and Armadale finery. She walks over to FATHER and kisses him.

DEVINA: It's the handsome veteran ..Good morning!

FATHER: Morning.

ANGEL carries boxes of food to the kitchen bench.

DEVINA (*taking off muddy shoes*): Very impressed with those windmills Dad! We're now surrounded by giant Mercedes Benz symbols.

FATHER: Don't complain. They're your livelihood.

DEVINA: How are those tennis player's legs?

FATHER: How do you think?

DEVINA: Bit painful today?

FATHER: No prizes for stating the obvious.. Move your car would you? You're all over the kiy-kuya.

DEVINA walks over to help ANGEL unload the shopping.

DEVINA: Okay okay. (*passing ANGEL, she squeezes her hips*) God it's good to be here – ooh and feel those hips!

ANGEL: If one more person mentions my weight, I'm getting liposuctioned.

DEVINA: I know a good doctor for that. Seriously.

CASSIE: That'd be right.

DEVINA: Cassie! Where've you been?

ANGEL: You know where (she's been.)

DEVINA (OVER): You look fantastic.

CASSIE: Wish I felt it.

DEVINA walks over and hugs her hard.

DEVINA: Well done honey.

CASSIE (*embarrassed*): Thaaaanks.

DEVINA: Look at your hair! Gawd!

CASSIE: Isn't it great?

DEVINA: Is there a hive of wasps in there or did you just have a very wild night?

CASSIE: Sadly wasps.

FATHER: Move the car!

DEVINA: I will.

ANGEL: I will.

MATTHEW: I will.

A hush, as they all turn to watch a slightly awkward sixteen year old, MATTHEW, entering the room, carrying the last of the groceries.

FATHER: Here he is..!

CASSIE: MATTIE! It's the golden boy...

CASSIE rushes over to him. They hug. DEVINA and ANGEL start to unpack food.

MATTHEW: Hi Auntie Cassie./

CASSIE: Oooh all that testosterone! How are you gorgeous?

MATTHEW: Good thanks.

CASSIE: Bring any mates with you? To party with?

MATTHEW: Nah not this time.

CASSIE: Pity. That muso was (gorgeous)

DEVINA (OVER): Don't be so disgusting Cassie/

ANGEL: Let him breathe!/

CASSIE: So who's got the girls going crazy?

MATTHEW: Not really..

CASSIE: Betcha have. Betcha have. My God is that stubble? You're just a hunka hunka burnin' lerve.

DEVINA: Stop being sleazy. He's sixteen for God's sake.

CASSIE: I am an auntie pleased to see her nephew.

FATHER (to MATTHEW): You gonna greet your grandfather or just hang around with the girls?

CASSIE: Ooh quick! It's Big Daddy!

CASSIE saunters back to the couch, as MATTHEW walks over to his grandfather. FATHER nods, and extends a manly handshake. MATTHEW hesitates, then hugs his grandfather.

MATTHEW: Morning Grumps.

FATHER pulls back and holds out a flexed arm.

FATHER: Feel that son. All muscle that is.

CASSIE: God I hope we're talking about his *arm*.

DEVINA: Don't be disgusting.

MATTHEW feels his grandfather's arm as usual.

MATTHEW: Very impressive Pop.

FATHER: And the other, come on!

MATTHEW feels his grandfather's arm on the other side.

FATHER: DON'T SQUEEZE!

MATTHEW: Sorry! Sorry Grumps!/
FATHER (*rubbing his arm*): Jesus wept –

ANGEL (*passing FATHER a newspaper*): He took a fall. Last week. So –

MATTHEW: Bit bruised?

FATHER: Nah. Just –

DEVINA: God what a drive. Hit three roos on the way in.

MATTHEW: *We* didn't. *You* did.

ANGEL: THREE?

DEVINA: Yes Angel three. (*chopping through the air with her hands*) BANG BANG BANG! Didn't even see them!

ANGEL: Poor things.

DEVINA: Oh it was QUICK.

MATTHEW: How would you know? You didn't even stop.

FATHER: You never stop son.

DEVINA: Car smells like steak and kidney pie. Right through the grill all through the leather seats.

CASSIE: Oh well. Henry'll buy you a new one.

FATHER: Or I will. More to the point.

Pause. FATHER goes back to reading his paper, pleased with the ensuing silence.

ANGEL: No ipod during the march this year, and no texting during speeches. Did you remember to bring a tie?

MATTHEW: Yes Auntie Angel

DEVINA: For God's sake you're nagging him already.

FATHER: Bloody women son. They're everywhere.

CASSIE: Waiting on you hand and foot.

MATTHEW: I'd much rather be here than looking at seaweed with Dad.

CASSIE: What a compliment.

MATTHEW: Really.

CASSIE: I believe you.

DEVINA: I don't.

ANGEL stands behind MATTHEW and scruffs his hair affectionately with both hands, then slips her hands under his arms and hugs him from behind.

DEVINA (CONT'D): Don't do that, he hates it.

MATTHEW: No I don't.

DEVINA: You do! You tell me (you do)

MATTHEW (OVER): I don't -

ANGEL (*letting go, embarrassed*): It's okay..

MATTHEW: I don't Auntie Ange.

MATTHEW shoots a 'what you say that for' look at his mother. FATHER goes over to the grog cupboard and starts to look through some bottles. From the couch CASSIE watches.

ANGEL: Where's Henry anyway?

MATTHEW: Didn't want to /

DEVINA (*staring MATTHEW down*): Couldn't make it.

FATHER: We don't need him to celebrate the Anzacs. My grandson's just the right age to join me in a glass of Scottish brew.

CASSIE (*lying on couch, singing softly*): Here we goo (here we goo here we goo...here we goo here we goo here we goo.)

FATHER (OVER): Grab a couple of glasses son - get a load of this.

DEVINA (OVER): Cassie don't.

CASSIE stops singing. MATTHEW brings his grandfather two glasses.

DEVINA (CONT'D): He's sixteen Dad.

MATTHEW: I'll be fine.

DEVINA: Just the one.

FATHER: Leave him alone! First time your great grandfather drank whisky he was your age. Just before he signed up for El Alamein. Never checked your birth certificate in those days – just bloody glad to have you on board. Here – (*He takes off the lid and throws it away*) Won't be needing that again. Get this down yer cakehole son- (*holding out his glass victoriously*) WOOF WOOF WOOF!

MATTHEW: Sorry?

FATHER: That's what we said when we got our hands on sly grog. WOOF WOOF WOOF.

MATTHEW (*feebly*): Woof Woof..woof.

FATHER: WOOOF!

CASSIE: If I say "Woof" can I join the fun? (*she looks at ANGEL*) Joke Joyce. Jesus.

MATTHEW swigs down a large gulp of whisky and swallows with great difficulty.

FATHER: Come on son. Let's move that car and then give the garden a seeing to. Bring – (*holds up glass*) Nothing like a good micturate out in the open.

MATTHEW: Yep. Nothing like it.

FATHER: A crap's good too. Outside.

MATTHEW: Yep. No. Great.

FATHER exits into the garden. MATTHEW surreptitiously glances at his AUNTS as he follows with a 'Help me' expression.

DEVINA: Go and mark the lemon tree with your grandfather.

MATTHEW exits.

DEVINA (CONT'D): Are you okay with them - ?

CASSIE: I can handle it.

DEVINA: Oh God I - I am so - proud (of you-)

CASSIE (OVER): Yeah yeah yeah. So where's Henry?

DEVINA: Just - busy.

ANGEL: It's so strange you here without (him)

CASSIE (OVER): Yeah, it's – weird.

DEVINA: Stop acting like teenagers with a secret. He told me.

CASSIE: Told you what?!

ANGEL: Really?

DEVINA: He was mucking round Cassie. Not everyone finds you irresistible. I thought it was funny anyway. So did he. Except for the tooth marks. Had to go on anti biotics.

MOTHER enters, carrying a basket of dirty laundry. ANGEL rushes over and takes it from her.

DEVINA (*rushing to her mother*): Morning!

MOTHER (*coming out of the bedroom*): How was town? Did you get (some milk?)

DEVINA (OVER, *hugging her mother*): Feel how skinny she is! She's got the best figure of all of us!

MOTHER: It's the heart tablets.

DEVINA: Quick Angel! Get the prescription! (*to MOTHER*) Look what I got. (*pulls out a cardigan, holds it against her mother*). I thought this pink would – it *does* – it looks fantastic. I got some biscuits too – home made by that little woman next to the butcher's. And the most fabulous pie. Dad'll love it.

ANGEL: Pastry gives him indigestion.

DEVINA pulls out a shopping bag.

DEVINA: Oh well he can eat the filling. (TO MOTHER) You need some chocolate puddings Mum. Look!

ANGEL: Ooh.

DEVINA: Not you. You'll get diabetes.

ANGEL: Don't breathe you'll die of some mysterious allergy.

DEVINA: I've got a hyperactive pituitary gland.

ANGEL: I've got a sluggish thyroid.

MOTHER: Angel will you go and -

ANGEL: YES I WILL PUT THE WASHING ON OKAY?

ANGEL stomps out with the washing.

MOTHER: Early men-pause.

CASSIE: Men stop you mean.

MOTHER: I love this cardigan darling thank you.

DEVINA (*passing MOTHER a letter*): And take a look at this.

MOTHER: What is it?

DEVINA: Annie's latest results. Topped four subjects. Now set her sights on medicine which is SUCH A THRILL. She'll do the sabbatical you know first but -

FATHER enters again with MATTHEW.

MOTHER: Sabbata-what?

DEVINA: It's a year off. She's going to work her way round Europe. Everyone does it. Look Dad – Annie's report.

MOTHER passes FATHER the report, giving him a 'Here we go again' look. CASSIE closes her eyes and takes a large breath in... and out.

DEVINA (CONT'D): She's got the most divine boyfriend. You'll love him Dad. Doing law at Melbourne. Corporate thank you. Father owns a Scottish castle. Mother is *stunning* – Spanish heritage, related to Catherine of Aragon. And the cooking! Honestly they could run a restaurant.

FATHER: So where's Mathew's?

DEVINA: What?

MATTHEW (*preparing himself a snack*): I didn't do so well this term...

FATHER: You'll come good.

DEVINA: Annie has topped four subjects, Dad.

MOTHER (*to MATTHEW*): You don't need good marks to get by darling.

DEVINA: She's in the top two (percentile.)

FATHER (OVER): You just need balls!

FATHER picks up his paper and walks into the bathroom.

MOTHER: You're a good boy with a big heart that's what matters.

DEVINA: Raised by a mother with high standards.

MOTHER: Not too high I hope.

DEVINA: What's that supposed to mean?

MOTHER: Give him air darling. You push too hard.

DEVINA (OVER): Oh not this (again.)

MOTHER (OVER): He's a young man. He needs MEN around him. Not silly women.

MATTHEW and CASSIE laugh at this.

DEVINA: You've been saying that since he was in nappies. Jesus Mum. You're lucky we're not all feminist separatists.

MOTHER: What are they?

MATTHEW: You did grow up in the sixties didn't you?

MOTHER: I was courting your grandfather when all that was going on.

CASSIE: Mum never left Wirramai. She doesn't even know we got the vote.

MOTHER: Who'd want to?

ANGEL walks in again.

MATTHEW: At the risk of sounding like a eunuch, can I help with anything?

DEVINA: You can wash up later.

MOTHER: No you can't.

DEVINA: Yes he can.

MOTHER: He's a male. They don't know how to.

DEVINA: He'd like to./

MATTHEW: I'd like to.

DEVINA: See? Well trained.

DEVINA smiles smugly at her MOTHER as MATTHEW sits down next to CASSIE with a plate of nachos. CASSIE pulls out the 'stress doll and waves it at MATTHEW.

CASSIE: Hey look what I got your Gran.

She squeezes the doll. MATTHEW jumps then starts laughing with CASSIE. DEVINA looks on in disgust.

DEVINA: Thank God I didn't bring Annie.

MOTHER (*putting her hand to her chest*): Ooh.

ANGEL: What is it?

MOTHER: Nothing. Just a bit –

ANGEL (*grabbing her mother by the shoulders*): Angina? Is it angina?

MOTHER: Not sure.

ANGEL: Do you want your spray?

CASSIE: It's stress for God's sake. From you fussing all the time!

MATTHEW: Gran come and sit (down.)

ANGEL (OVER): NO! GET BACK! The big thing is NOT to panic. If she gets upset she fibrillates.

DEVINA: We're not panicking -/

MOTHER: I'm alright. Don't fuss./

CASSIE: *You're* panicking.

ANGEL: SHUT UP JUST SHUT UP ALL OF YOU.

Pause.

CASSIE: I'm sure that's not in ambulance training.

ANGEL (*slowly to MOTHER*): Do you want your spray?

MOTHER shrugs indifferently. ANGEL rushes to the kitchen and returns holding some Nitrolingual spray.

DEVINA: Yes quick Angel! The spray!

CASSIE: Before Mum has a heart attack and DIES!

DEVINA and CASSIE both laugh with relish. ANGEL sprays the medication under her MOTHER's tongue. MOTHER rubs her chest.

MOTHER: Stop teasing. We'd be lost without her.

MATTHEW: You okay?

MOTHER: I'm alright.

ANGEL: It'll calm down. *(checking her watch)* Five minutes. We've got – . Five minutes.

DEVINA *(sitting her mother on the couch and massaging her shoulders)*: Well it's stressful, isn't it? I mean, we *all* get worked up before coming here.

CASSIE: Nothing against you Mum.

DEVINA: We just find this whole Anzac wedding anniversary stuff a bit -

ANGEL: Try living here.

CASSIE: Try being the youngest.

MOTHER: Try being his *wife*. *(to DEVINA)* I don't like that hairstyle. It doesn't suit your face. Makes you look puffy.

DEVINA *(putting hand to hair)*: You've bounced back.

MOTHER: Well you should come here more often. I wouldn't find so many faults.

DEVINA: I do visit Mum. You know I do. You just don't remember.

MOTHER: I do. I do remember. Don't say I don't remember.

DEVINA hugs her mother. Thunder rumbles in the distance. MATTHEW and ANGEL go to the window.

DEVINA *(to MOTHER)*: I've told you whenever you're ready – there's the bungalow out the back waiting for you.

MOTHER: As if I'd leave him.

ANGEL: Storm approaching..

FATHER enters from bathroom and starts walking slowly towards the bedroom. Thunder rumbles, lightning cracks.

DEVINA: GOD!

MATTHEW *(to FATHER)*: There's talk in town about cancelling the march –

FATHER: We don't give in to pissy storms. We'll be there.

MOTHER: Well if the *vehicles* give in to pissy storms, the girls'll dress up in uniform for you darling.

CASSIE (*standing*): YES! Anzac Day in drag!

CASSIE blows a non existent trumpet, making MATTHEW, MOTHER and ANGEL giggle.

DEVINA: Stop it Cassie.

Playing up to her audience, CASSIE marches backwards, knocking into her father. He is only saved from falling by clutching hold of the table.

CASSIE: Sorry. Sorry Dad/

DEVINA: Watch out!/
FATHER: JESUS CHRIST WHY DO I DO THIS TO MYSELF?

CASSIE: Couldn't agree more. Why do you?

FATHER: You can go then.

CASSIE: Right. Be happy to.

CASSIE makes to leave.

MOTHER: Don't be silly (Cass.)

MATTHEW (*OVER, standing at window*): You're not going anywhere.

The lights flicker, and a rumble of thunder.

MATTHEW (*CONT'D*): Not in this.

CASSIE: There's no going back! 'WE'RE TRAPPED!' AAAAUGH!

She grabs the stress doll and strangles it.

FATHER: It's a friggin pantomime.

MATTHEW: You should see the cattle they're going nuts. Just pounding up and down the fence line.

Thunder claps again, the faint sound of horse's hooves, overpowered by hail pounding on the roof. CASSIE grabs hold of ANGEL and screams. FATHER glares at CASSIE, who's giggling like a child. ANGEL takes one look at her and starts giggling as well. MATTHEW joins in.

FATHER: Infantile bloody idiots.

MOTHER: Oooh. That's a real downpour..

DEVINA (*at bench, putting stuff away*): Like a bunch of seven year olds.

MATTHEW: Mum, chill!

FATHER: Bloody mad. The lot of you.

DEVINA: Calm down Dad.

MOTHER: What happens if we get flooded again?

FATHER: Christ.

MATTHEW: Again? When was the first time?

DEVINA: Years ago. Decades.

FATHER: An entire weekend of it.

CASSIE: Last time we flooded –

FATHER: Christ (almighty –)

CASSIE (OVER): I had to stay with Colin Risby.

Silence.

MATTHEW: Who?

MOTHER: What supplies do we need?

DEVINA: We've got stacks of food.

CASSIE: He worked for Dad.

ANGEL (TO MOTHER): We'll be fine.

CASSIE: Farm hand, sort of thing.

MOTHER: Do we have batteries –

CASSIE: Hand being the operative (word.)

MOTHER (OVER): What about the torches?

FATHER: Stop your panicking Mary for Christ's sake.

ANGEL: She's not panicking are you Mum?

CASSIE: Does anyone remember?

DEVINA: Shoosh Cassie.

CASSIE (OVER): All on my own (I was.)

MOTHER: What supplies have we got?

ANGEL: I think we should get a weather report before we panic.

FATHER: Nobody's panicking, Jesus.

ANGEL: We'd know if it was something to worry about, the roof'd be rattling.

CASSIE: OOooh the rattling roof...

DEVINA: It is. Outside it is.

CASSIE wanders over to the window.

CASSIE: The rrrroofs a-rrrrattling.. (*gazing out window*) Hey there's a crow. Out the back. ...Pecking out the eyes of something... Quick Dad get the gun. HA.

FATHER: Shut her up for Christ's sake.

CASSIE: Yes! Shut me up! Quick!

ANGEL: Where's your radio Mum?

CASSIE: How 'bout some of that whisky?

ANGEL: Cassie.

MOTHER: What radio?

CASSIE: That'll shut me up. A whisky or three.

A hush. EVERYONE looks at CASSIE, straight faced.

CASSIE (CONT'D): Oh. I've suddenly got all your attention.

She smiles victoriously.

ANGEL: Mum what happened to that radio I gave you last week?

MOTHER: Your father broke it with his walking stick.

FATHER (*looking out window, holding his glass*): Looks like it's heading east.

CASSIE: Is that the way your piss blew Dad? Out at the lemon tree? SSSSSsss.

FATHER: Don't be bloody stupid. (*to MOTHER*) What's wrong with her?

MOTHER: She's just tired Ron.

FATHER: What's she on?

DEVINA/ANGEL: Nothing Dad.

MOTHER: She's just happy to be here.

CASSIE smiles smugly at her father.

ANGEL (*looking out the window*): Here it comes now –

CASSIE: Look at that sky!

ANGEL: Look at the shape of that cloud...

CASSIE: ...like fingers, streaming out to grab you! Russian hands, and Roman fingers!

CASSIE grabs her mother's and sister's shoulders and runs her hands up and down their backs. ANGEL and MOTHER scream, then start laughing. CASSIE collapses onto the couch and starts to roll a cigarette. FATHER picks up a photo album and heads for the hallway.

FATHER: Jesus. What a family!

MOTHER: Where are you going?

FATHER: Escaping the hysterical clatter of mad women.

MOTHER starts to head for her room.

ANGEL (to mother): Where you going?

MOTHER: To put my feet up.

ANGEL: How's the angina?

MOTHER: Fix dinner will you?

MOTHER exits.

MATTHEW (aside): What's wrong with Cassie?

DEVINA: What?

MATTHEW: Why's she gone (all -?)

DEVINA (OVER): Just - leave it.

She shakes her head at MATTHEW. FATHER stands at the doorway, holding his photo album and a glass of whisky.

FATHER: Come on son. Grab your glass. Come and I'll show you a real war.

MATTHEW makes a point of topping up his glass in front of his mother, then exits to the study, leaving the THREE SISTERS staring into space.

The windfarm throbs like distant heartbeats.

Scene Three

Afternoon. The storm has subsided for now, leaving only constant rain. ANGEL and CASSIE are on the couch. CASSIE has a beauty mask on her face; DEVINA now applies the same to ANGEL's face. CASSIE has been trying on some of DEVINA's clothing, some of which still have their swing tickets attached. When the lights come up they are staring at each other, mid conversation.

CASSIE: What?

ANGEL: Nothing.

DEVINA: What?

ANGEL: Nothing.

DEVINA/CASSIE: What?

ANGEL: I can't believe you two.

DEVINA/CASSIE: Why?

ANGEL: I tried to talk to you but –

DEVINA: I can't remember (a word)

CASSIE (OVER): I can't remember (a thing)

ANGEL (OVER): You don't even remember us breaking up do you?

CASSIE: You never wanted to talk about it.

DEVINA: How long ago were you two? Fifteen years..?

ANGEL: What – you think – we go out for nearly two years and presto just– get over it?

CASSIE: It wasn't that long (Angel.)

DEVINA (OVER): It was about six months.

ANGEL: Eighteen months! It was eighteen months at least!

CASSIE: It's not as if you were married.

ANGEL: It was like a marriage though. In many ways it was like (one)

DEVINA (OVER): It wasn't like a proper relationship.

ANGEL: What, have you got the private rights to that?

DEVINA: It wasn't like you were in love –

ANGEL: How would you know?

Pause.

DEVINA: Why is this suddenly such a big thing?

ANGEL: It's not sudden. I've just been thinking that's all. If I'd married him when he'd proposed – I'd have kids by now and - .

Pause.

DEVINA: Oh baby..

ANGEL: I should never have broken up with him.

DEVINA: Yes you should – You should!

ANGEL: I dreamt I married him the other day. What a joke! I got to the church and Mum was in the vestry bit, reading the paper.

CASSIE: Mum never reads the paper.

ANGEL: And I looked down and I'm wearing my state school socks with wedding shoes. Grey socks with creamy satin shoes. Hilarious.

DEVINA: He would've made your life hell.

ANGEL: Who, Ralph?

DEVINA: Not Ralph. Dad. He'd've cut you off completely.

CASSIE: "Bloody little cufflink collecting Kraut!"

ANGEL: We'd have survived.

DEVINA: I don't know why you don't just call him.

ANGEL: BECAUSE he is HAPPILY MARRIED.

DEVINA: Not last time I heard.

Pause.

ANGEL: What?

DEVINA: He's been living in Hatfield's garage for the past six months.

ANGEL: How come no one told me?

DEVINA shrugs and goes over to the bench, where she starts preparing the dinner.

DEVINA: You got to gossip more Angel.

ANGEL: How could you NOT TELL ME?

DEVINA: I dunno. Most people move on after a decade or two.

ANGEL: He's really on his own? (*DEVINA nods*) You sure?

ANGEL beams.

CASSIE: Haven't seen that for a while.

DEVINA: Stop it you'll wreck your mask.

Silence. ANGEL stares into space beaming.

CASSIE: God, he had a big one.

ANGEL/DEVINA: Who?

CASSIE: Rolf's brother.

ANGEL: Carl?

CASSIE: He was huge. It was like a limb!

ANGEL: Oh no!

CASSIE: I had a thing with him one night.

DEVINA: When?

CASSIE: Don't panic, he wasn't married.

DEVINA: When?

CASSIE: It was about a week before. I walked in at the end of his bucks party at the Grand.

ANGEL: Oh no *enough!*

DEVINA: Really?

CASSIE: I felt sorry for his wife after that. It'd be like being skewered by a human pillar.

ANGEL: Really?!

DEVINA: Really?

CASSIE: I pretended to fall asleep.

ANGEL: On the pool table?

CASSIE nods.

DEVINA: Some women do that. Apparently.

ANGEL: Do what?

DEVINA: Pretend, you know – they're asleep.

CASSIE and ANGEL exchange knowing looks.

CASSIE: Okay. Think of a number.

DEVINA: Oh no...

CASSIE: Come on. A number. A number.

ANGEL and CASSIE close their eyes.

DEVINA: What should the oven be on?

ANGEL: Shoosh! *(to CASSIE)* Focus! Here it comessss...

CASSIE: Eight!

ANGEL: Yes! Your turn.

CASSIE closes her eyes and thinks of a number. ANGEL closes her eyes as well.

DEVINA: Angel can you please help?

ANGEL: Shut up shut up!

CASSIE: Sending it now..

DEVINA *(closing her eyes)*: Six? Eight!

CASSIE: Give up Devina. You're about as psychic as a piece of Tupperware.

ANGEL: THREE.

CASSIE: Yep. My turn. (*closing her eyes*) - Focus Angel. Focus.

ANGEL: Here it is... number...

They all close their eyes.

DEVINA: SEVEN!

ANGEL: Sending over the picture of it... come on Cassie.

DEVINA: Two!/
CASSIE: NINE.

ANGEL: On a roll. (*they do a little hand jig, something they used to do as children*) Yes - Yes - We're the best!

DEVINA: Don't mind me. So how's your art going?

CASSIE: I've got the next exhibition worked out. Giant testicles strapped to a crucifix – 'Sack-religious'. (*to ANGEL*) You should come to the opening. Really! You'd meet some very cool people. Wouldn't she Dev?

DEVINA: Oh yes. So cool most of them are mute.

CASSIE: Whereas *you'd* be a novelty. They'd be all "Who's the chick in the giant smock?"

DEVINA: Clearly I dress too well. (*holding up her mobile phone*) Where's best?

ANGEL: Corner there.

DEVINA: I mean private.

ANGEL: Oh. Stand on the dunny.

DEVINA: Really?

ANGEL nods. DEVINA walks into the bathroom and closes the door. ANGEL turns to CASSIE, and grins widely.

CASSIE: Who's single again...

ANGEL: Angela Heidinger. How does that sound?

ANGEL giggles hysterically.

CASSIE: This is your chance to escape this mouldy old zoo. Grab it. Grab it now!

ANGEL drifts off for a second, smiling at the thought. Then slowly a realization dawns on her.

ANGEL: How can I leave them?

Pause. CASSIE is too stunned at first to speak.

CASSIE: Okay. No. Stay right here. What a fabulous time you're having. Don't change a thing! Really! Don't commit to anyone but two self absorbed lunatics. Don't even call Ralph.

ANGEL: I could call him I'm just (saying -)

CASSIE (OVER): Don't waste his time.

Pause.

ANGEL: Well who else is going to keep an eye (on them?)

CASSIE (OVER): Yep yep yep.

ANGEL: Well you could thank me occasionally.

CASSIE: What for?

ANGEL: For caring.

CASSIE: We didn't ask you to be a martyr.

ANGEL: I have a duty.

CASSIE: This isn't about duty. This is about fear. Admit it. You're scared -

ANGEL: I'm not scared -

CASSIE: You're too scared to move -

ANGEL: *SOMEONE* has to care for them--

CASSIE: You are so seething with resentment you secretly sedate your own father!

ANGEL: Oh God I wish I hadn't told you that.

CASSIE: Deep down you despise them both admit it!

ANGEL: That's not true!

CASSIE: This is what you've all decided works for the rest of *their* lives, and to hell with what works for the rest of *yours*. Which is why you've already booked yourself into the Wirramai Peace Haven – haven't you? - where you're going to live out the rest of your life, farting and sewing quilts for other people's babies, watching morning (television -)

ANGEL (OVER): Stop it –

CASSIE: - and listening to some old crusty play "You Are My Sunshine" on the Hammond organ. All the while fantasizing about what could've been with Ralph Heidinger. This is your life!

Pause.

ANGEL: You're early aren't you?

CASSIE: For what?

ANGEL: Being a bitch.

CASSIE: I thought I started as soon as I walked in. *(beginning to walk about, agitated)*
God I'm SO BORED.

ANGEL: Already?

CASSIE: I took my early pills okay? Everything happens faster on early pills.

ANGEL: Bet they do.

CASSIE: What?

ANGEL: Nothing.

Pause.

CASSIE: I'm not on anything Angel.

ANGEL: Oh well that's that.

CASSIE: What?

ANGEL: First lie.

CASSIE: Sorry?

ANGEL: You've already taken five valium. I counted.

CASSIE: Stop watching me!

ANGEL: That's (something.)

CASSIE (OVER): That's to cope (with this dump!)

ANGEL (OVER): Just as long as you don't start drinking (like last year -)

CASSIE (OVER, *hands over ears*): I AM NOT DRINKING. (I AM NOT USING.)

ANGEL (OVER): I'm just saying -

Pause. CASSIE takes her hands away for a moment, hoping it's over.

ANGEL (CONT'D): I saw you earlier eyeing off the whisky. I saw (the way you -)

CASSIE (OVER, *blocking her ears*): La
LAAAAH.

ANGEL: I'm just (saying we don't want -)

CASSIE (OVER): LAAAAAAH.

Silence.

CASSIE (CONT'D): Anyway, you can talk. You and your eating - and drinking...and eating some more. Which you *are* doing ofcourse, unless you've swallowed a blimp.

CASSIE does an imitation of a fat person. ANGEL puts her sewing down and goes to exit.

CASSIE (CONT'D): Where are you going?

ANGEL: For a walk.

CASSIE: Good. Go! You need it! Go!

ANGEL gets to the door and looks out.

ANGEL: Bloody weather.

CASSIE totters over and hugs her.

CASSIE: Ohhh... Hey! Come on! I didn't mean it.

ANGEL: I just get so nervous when you say you're bored.

CASSIE: I know I know I'm sorry.

ANGEL: It's like I'm in crisis mode all the time.

CASSIE: Don't be. You're my hero. You are! Hey! Look at me – I'm squeaky friggin' clean and it's all thanks to you! Now! Let's go hold up the drive through!

ANGEL: I hope you're (joking)

CASSIE (OVER, *teasing*): Oh come on! I'll sing for you on the way in – (SINGING) "The hills are alive, with the sound of music.."

ANGEL relaxes a little.

ANGEL (SINGING): La la la la...

CASSIE: With things that are thought...for a thousand years.

Pause. ANGEL drifts off again sadly.

CASSIE (CONT'D): Hey! Listen – you deserve a life. You deserve love and passion and – You just have to trust okay? Say after me: All will be well.

ANGEL/CASSIE: All will be well.

CASSIE: And feel it – come on – deep breath –

They close their eyes and take a big breath..

CASSIE: All will be well all will be well -
CASSIE/ANGEL: All will be well.

CASSIE: With Ralph.

They open their eyes and giggle.

The sound of the windfarm whirrs to a throbbing distant roar. They gaze out the window again.

CASSIE: What is that –?

ANGEL: Just the blades.

CASSIE: Look. The cows can't find anywhere to shelter.

ANGEL: They'll be okay. They're tough.

A beat. The bathroom door flies open and DEVINA enters. She's been crying. She blows her nose with a roll of toilet paper.

CASSIE: What's up?

DEVINA: Nothing. Nothing! NOTHING OKAY?

She walks to the kitchen and pulls the oven door open. A cloud of smoke comes out.

DEVINA (CONT'D): DINNER'S READY! DINNER EVERYONE!

DEVINA starts to cry as she pulls out a charred smoking piece of meat and puts it on the bench.

DEVINA (CONT'D): DINNER!

She walks out of the room sobbing.

Lights fade.

End of Act One.

ACT TWO

Scene One

The dinner table is set with decanters, glasses, and good silver cutlery. Everyone in the room has dressed for the occasion.

FATHER stands at the bench, listening to an old jazz number (Bobby Darren's 'Mack the Knife'.) He starts to sing along to it. CASSIE, ANGEL and MOTHER laugh and sing along with him. He dances a bit with his stick, in front of them, as they all pass him nibbles, and watch the stove.

He dances over to a slightly bemused MATTHEW, and pats his grandson on the back to the rhythm. The song comes to an end.

FATHER sits. MATTHEW nods, and tries to think of something to talk about. FATHER pours himself and his grandson a large whisky and stares at his war album. MATTHEW takes a sip. The affect of the whisky is starting to make him feel maudlin but more confident.

Behind the kitchen bench, ANGEL and MOTHER are now in a subdued panic, the one that comes with serving dinner to the man of the house.

ANGEL: Are the plates hot enough?

CASSIE: Had them in for ten minutes.

FATHER: How's the footie going? Started kicking a few yet?

DEVINA walks out, having changed for dinner.

MATTHEW: Actually it's still soccer –

FATHER: Ahhh bloody (bullshit)

DEVINA (OVER): -which is another perfectly legitimate form of football requiring great skill –

She walks up to her father and he takes her hand briefly, before she pours herself a red wine and sits down.

FATHER: Fairy's game..

MATTHEW: I know I know.

FATHER: You're not a fairy are you?

DEVINA: Actually it's an extremely skillful game.

FATHER: Italian boys dancing class with only one ball.

DEVINA: He's just got best on field.

FATHER: Have you! Have you son? Bloody proud I am.

FATHER squeezes MATTHEW on the arm affectionately.

MATTHEW: Thanks Grumps.

FATHER: My grandson. Queen of the fairies.

CASSIE puts some nibbles on the table. The affect of the valium is slowing her down. She pats MATTIE on the head.

CASSIE (*quietly*): Don't listen to him honey.

FATHER: I'm just a bloody old fool.

CASSIE: He's just our little family homophobe. And you know what they say about them.

CASSIE walks back to the kitchen bench.

FATHER: Good on you son. Good on you! Bloody proud I am! (*sticking his chest out*)
You been breathing like I told you? Get a lungful. Come on!

MATTHEW obediently inhales a breath with his GRANDFATHER.

MATTHEW: Windfarm's – impressive Grumps.

ANGEL (*half under her breath*): Feel too close if you ask me

FATHER: Nobody did.

ANGEL: People have sold up to get away from them. Even dogs are affected.

FATHER: Bloody rubbish.

ANGEL: I know I've had more headaches lately. Haven't we Mum?

MOTHER: Don't put the plates out yet Cassie.

MATTHEW: Apparently one windmill takes ten years to recover all the energy it takes to actually produce it.

FATHER: Where did you read that, son?

ANGEL: It's all over the internet

FATHER: Quiet! Let the boy speak.

MATTHEW: Experts say by the time they've paid for themselves, they'll be redundant.

FATHER: Go on load a crap.

ANGEL: But this windfarm isn't about the environment, is it Dad.

MOTHER: Have another drink Angela.

CASSIE: She's not -/

ANGEL: I'm not – drinking.

MOTHER: How are those plates?

ANGEL: And when they're no longer a profit making venture there's not even a commitment to dispose of them. Is there Dad? So this whole farm will be covered in these monstrous great relics - rusting and falling to bits –

FATHER grabs his hand.

FATHER: Ooh - just felt a bite. On the hand that feeds you all.

MOTHER (*to ANGELA*): Leave it alone for God's sake

FATHER: Interesting how opinionated my daughter becomes when her sisters visit.

CASSIE: Should I serve up the gravy here or –?

MOTHER: NOT HERE – on the table!

CASSIE walks over to the table with a saucepan of gravy.

MOTHER (CONT'D): In a JUG Cassie!

CASSIE turns around and walks back to the bench.

MATTHEW: Wave power's the next big thing. That's what they're saying Grumps.

FATHER: Googling a lot are we?

MATTHEW: Actually it was Dad who -

DEVINA: Matthew. *(shakes her head)*

MATTHEW falls silent.

MOTHER *(quietly furious)*: The gravy is lumpy!

FATHER: I'm doing my bit son, don't you worry about that.

MATTHEW: Depends on how far ahead you look I guess.

FATHER: Some of us don't have that luxury. Live for the present.

DEVINA: And the future fixes itself. Doesn't it Dad.

CASSIE: What jug do you use?

MATTHEW: Can't do that anymore.

MOTHER: The one in the oven. But sift the gravy first.

MATTHEW: Everyone has to live for the future now. No choice.

MOTHER *(to CASSIE who holds out the jug)*: Hot! It's got to be hot. *(to ANGEL)* Sift the gravy for God's sake.

MATTHEW: I mean, that attitude's a bit hackneyed if you don't mind (my saying).

FATHER (OVER): You think too much. Think too much you're gone. You're gone.

MATTHEW: Yeah but like –

FATHER: In a war you don't think! You do! You get on with it! You got no bloody choice.

MATTHEW hesitates, then tries again.

MATTHEW: I just think - we've been left a legacy from you guys, which kind of sucks. You know, like climate change may not be a world war but -

DEVINA: Oh God.

DEVINA gets up and walks over to the kitchen to help serve.

FATHER: Every generation must earn its laurel wreath.

MATTHEW: Well you guys must have a lot of faith in the next generation cos you've left us a shitload of wreaths to (earn).

DEVINA (OVER): Matthew!

MATTHEW: I just hope the laurel wreaths don't end up being for the people who –

FATHER: Go on.

MATTHEW (*sensing an argument*): Nothing.

FATHER: Come on. For who?

MATTHEW: I dunno. For the people who least deserve it.

FATHER: Number one rule of life. The weakies are always first to go.

MATTHEW (*askance*): Really...

FATHER: You'll learn.

ANGEL: Not so much Devina!

FATHER: You'll do what we all did. You put your head down and get on with (the job.)

MOTHER (OVER, *to DEVINA*): Get that off the plate! Only a mouthful. Cassie – DON'T pour the gravy on his yet wait 'til it's on the table!

CASSIE: Okay okay..!

CASSIE walks out to put his dinner in front of FATHER, who pours himself another drink. MATTHEW has given up trying to talk to his grandfather. He takes a drink and stares at the photo albums.

ANGEL: CASSIE!/
/

MOTHER: CASSIE / BRING THE PLATE BACK! QUICK!

CASSIE: Why?

ANGEL: Serve his last – otherwise it gets cold –

CASSIE: Sorry.

MATTHEW: Good photos Pop.

FATHER: Great men.

MOTHER (*grabbing plate from CASSIE*): That is TOO MUCH!

MOTHER starts to scrape food onto other plates.

FATHER: All of them. Dedicated, strong, gutsy. A generation of fighters we were.

MOTHER: You can't give him big serves he won't eat it.

FATHER: You got it too son. You got guts. Don't you worry about that. (*holds up glass*)

WOOF WOOF /WOOF!

MATTHEW: WOOF!

MOTHER continues to put half of his dinner on other plates. DEVINA goes to pick up a HOT plate and drops it.

DEVINA: YOW!

FATHER: DON'T START YOUR YELLING.

DEVINA (*running cold water over her hand*): Sorry. Sorry. Just – sorry.

FINALLY, they bring the food forth, and put it on the table. When ANGEL puts the plate before him, FATHER looks at it dismissively. Tension as MARY and DEVINA sit and watch him inspect his meal. ANGEL and CASSIE go back to the kitchen. CASSIE pours herself an orange juice. ANGEL pulls out a puffer and shoots some ventolin into her mouth. CASSIE takes a long drink. ANGEL notices.

CASSIE: Orange juice. (*offering up the glass*) Smell it if you –

ANGEL: It's okay.

CASSIE: I mean it have a sip (if you -)

ANGEL (OVER): I believe you I believe you.

ANGEL and CASSIE both take a seat at the table.

FATHER: What's this?

DEVINA: Pepper steak.

MOTHER: Devina made it.

ANGEL: Your favourite.

FATHER: Gives me indigestion.

ANGEL: We did it without pepper. See?

DEVINA: Roast pumpkin and tomato pie then.

FATHER: Take the meat away will you?

DEVINA: Why can't you just eat around it?

MOTHER: Devina!

FATHER: TAKE THE MEAT AWAY PLEASE.

ANGEL obediently takes up her father's plate and serves up a different meal, minus the meat. DEVINA takes a long swig of red.

FATHER (CONT'D): How's Henry's book going?

DEVINA: Good. Fine. Okay. He's flat out, writing to another deadline. Something about seaweed.

MATTHEW: The history of kelp farming.

FATHER: Where from - home or -?

DEVINA: Brighton. I think.

FATHER: You *think*?

MATTHEW: Actually it's more Sandringham.

DEVINA: We don't know exactly. Somewhere near the beach.

Pause. ANGEL brings a fresh plate to the table, puts it in front of FATHER, and sits down.

FATHER: How do you surmise that then?

DEVINA: He comes home with sand between his toes.

MOTHER: Oh. Has he taken up surfing at lunch time?

DEVINA: No. He's definitely riding something – just not waves.

CASSIE smirks. MATTHEW looks at her, puzzled.

FATHER: What's that supposed to mean?

DEVINA: How's everyone else's meal?

Long pause. They all murmur 'good' etc and continue to eat for a moment.

MOTHER: What's he riding then?

DEVINA shrugs and shakes her head.

MOTHER (CONT'D): Why don't you just ask him?

DEVINA: I did. He said he was on an exercise campaign and his latest research is near the beach.

MOTHER: Well? That's good isn't it?

DEVINA: Yes Mum. Great. Especially when he's been using his twenty four year old editor's apartment as a changing room.

MOTHER: That's alright. What's wrong with that?

DEVINA: Nothing! Nothing at all! Much more sensible than going to a gym.

MOTHER: Well it's cheaper.

DEVINA: That's for sure. She's cheap.

Silence.

MOTHER: It'll pass. Ignore it. It'll pass.

DEVINA: I'm not ignoring anything.

MOTHER: You wait. He'll be back with his tail between his legs.

DEVINA: I don't care what's between his legs I'm not taking him back.

FATHER: That's not the Savage way. We Savages stick it out. From wars –

CASSIE: To whores.

CASSIE smirks. ANGEL joins in, nervously.

FATHER: Jesus can we not have a sensible conversation without your infantile bloody interjections?

ANGEL: Sorry Dad.

CASSIE: She's sorry Dad.

ANGEL: And she's sorry too.

CASSIE: Yes I am Dad. Sorry.

Pause.

DEVINA: Pumpkin's good isn't it?

Beat.

MOTHER: I've never heard anything so silly.

DEVINA: Can we change the subject?

CASSIE: Yes let's get back to the pumpkin.

DEVINA: Will everyone stop judging me? It's HENRY who's having the AFFAIR.

MOTHER: They ALL do. What a fuss.

Pause.

DEVINA: I've told him to move out.

MATTHEW: What?

MOTHER: Why'd you do that?

DEVINA: Because! He is having (an affair)

MOTHER (OVER): I've never heard of anything (so stupid.)

FATHER (OVER): He will abandon you.

DEVINA: How? I'm abandoning *him*.

MATTHEW: Mum what are (you -?)

FATHER (OVER): You will be left with those children on your own with nothing to live on.

DEVINA: I could find someone else.

MOTHER: Who'd want to take that on? No one.

DEVINA: They might.

MOTHER: Why would anyone want you?

DEVINA: I'm not a monster –

MOTHER: Why?

DEVINA: No idea. Thanks Mum.

MOTHER: Ridiculous!

DEVINA: Thanks for giving me such hope.

FATHER: No guts.

MOTHER: They all do it at that age.

FATHER: Gutless, the lot of you.

DEVINA stands up.

FATHER (CONT'D): Where are you going?

DEVINA: I thought I'd leave the table.

FATHER: Sit down please.

DEVINA: I'd like to leave the table –

FATHER: Now.

She sits again. MATTHEW reaches over and squeezes his mother's shoulder.

DEVINA: I'm sorry darling.

FATHER (SLOWLY): Now you listen to me.

DEVINA (*to MATTHEW*): I shouldn't have told you here -

ANGEL: What?!

CASSIE: No kidding! God Devina! /

ANGEL: So Matthew didn't know?

DEVINA: I've only just found out myself.

ANGEL: You could've at least waited ('til) -

DEVINA (OVER): Til what? When is the right time for telling him his father's an arsehole?

MOTHER: HERE!

FATHER slams his fist on the table.

MOTHER (CONT'D): Yes listen to your father!

FATHER (*LONG PAUSE, SLOWLY*): In the circumstances –

DEVINA: Me being a single mother you mean?

FATHER: - should they continue –

DEVINA: What circumstances?

FATHER: - LISTEN TO ME. Should this separation go ahead, I will be forced to make some amendments.

DEVINA: Amendments?

FATHER: For example –

DEVINA: What amendments –?

FATHER: I will no longer be prepared to pay the children's school fees.

DEVINA: What?

FATHER: I will not pay to educate children who are no longer coming from a secure domestic environment –

DEVINA: They're not in one *now*!

FATHER: - children whose mother is not prepared to stay in a marriage.

DEVINA: I would if he was worth it.

MOTHER: He's worth it. (They all are)

FATHER (OVER): Quiet please can I talk? I will not be prepared to support anyone at this table who can no longer call themselves a family. End of story.

Pause. Nobody moves.

DEVINA: But that's - blackmail -

FATHER: Don't you blackmail me! If you are so ill equipped emotionally to deal with what is at the end of the day a minor obstacle – (listen to me please.)

DEVINA (OVER): Minor obstacle that's a joke –

FATHER: If I can talk without being (interrupted -)

DEVINA (OVER): Hardly a minor obstacle having an affair is it?

FATHER: This minor obstacle –

DEVINA: We don't do what you all did – we don't gag ourselves and suppress all our feelings and allow it to poison everything –

CASSIE: Sometimes we do.

MOTHER: Shut up! Shut up and listen to your father!

CASSIE: Depends on what you're talking (about.)

FATHER: QUIET!/

ANGEL: Don't make it (worse-)

FATHER (OVER): This minor obstacle –

DEVINA: A minor obstacle is forgetting to put the (washing out -)

FATHER (OVER): -and if you are prepared to let this –

MOTHER: Bit of nothing! What is she? – (nothing!)

DEVINA (OVER): Some minor bloody (obstacle.)

FATHER (OVER): I'll tell you why it's a minor obstacle. You didn't fight in a war, you didn't know what it was like to smell the enemy, you haven't smelt the fear of death -

Pause.

DEVINA (GENTLY): Dad, this isn't about the war – this is –about (my marriage)

FATHER (OVER): You wouldn't know. Any of you. What it is to be under fire. You wouldn't know what it is to put everything on the line for your mates. None of you. Loyalty. You want loyalty? You think loyalty is belonging to a soccer club, or a tweeter group, or some kind of – of – drug running circle of artists who spend their time sniffing glue or cocaine or whatever it is you do in your spare time? You want to know what it is to be dependable? It's knowing the feller next to you's life is on the line if you don't hold your gun still enough. It's knowing you've got no one else in the world to rely on other than the three or four fellers beside you as the enemy blows their limbs off. You don't know what it's like – the relief - the *relief* – you feel when your best mate's head's blown off - because you are - still - alive. Or firing on young boys screaming in agony – *in agony* – hoping to end it all quick. You never stop hearing those screams. Pulling them out of the tunnels the next day – charred young bodies stinking like burnt meat - trying to give them some kind of - burial. You want loyalty? You want to know what that is? You people have no idea. (*hitting his chest*) This is where it counts. This is where you feel it.

Long pause. EVERYONE hangs their heads.

MOTHER (*quietly accusatory, to DEVINA*): That's why your father never coped with barbecues.

FATHER stares at MOTHER incredulously.

DEVINA: I'm sorry Dad - I don't know how Vietnam is in any way related to my philandering husband.

FATHER: Pass the gravy.

Pause.

DEVINA: What?

FATHER: Pass the gravy would you mother?

MOTHER passes the gravy to him. CASSIE rolls her eyes, scrapes back her chair and walks over to the bathroom door. She waves her mobile round for a moment and tries to text

something. After a moment she gives up. Unnoticed, she walks over to the grog cupboard and pulls out a bottle of vodka.

DEVINA: So Annie's got to change schools right before her VCE? Is that what you're saying? Go to a high school?

FATHER: She will have to cope with the changes you inflict upon her.

DEVINA: She wants to study medicine Dad. We can't afford the school fees let alone the fees for medicine.

FATHER: Pepper. Please.

MOTHER (*passing pepper*): She can - nurse!

MOTHER puts her hands over her mouth and giggles like a naughty girl. CASSIE closes her eyes and holds onto the bench, trying to focus on her breathing as DEVINA talks.

DEVINA: That'd be right. That'd be right. Keep the women down. Don't let any female in this family get above themselves. Keep us flattened. Keep us squashed. And what about Matthew? Would everything be different if he was called up for war Dad? You want that? You want him to know what it's like? To make a (man of him?)

FATHER (OVER): Enough of your crap. Go. Go on! Get out! Our dinner has been ruined by your selfish attitude. You can leave now! Go!

Finally, CASSIE quietly pours herself a large glass of vodka. She swigs down half of it, then tops it up with orange juice.

DEVINA: Gladly. (*she rises*)

MOTHER: Not the table! Stay here please and finish your meal!

FATHER: You can go home whenever it (suits)

DEVINA (OVER): I would leave now but the car -

FATHER: Paid for by me! I paid for that car!

DEVINA: Henry and I paid for it Dad

FATHER: I've guaranteed every loan for every brick of your house, and funded the private school your children (go to -)

DEVINA (OVER): Well THE CAR YOU PAID FOR appears to have got bogged. SO I AM TRAPPED. I'd much rather be back at home with Annie right now - telling her that not only is her father a philandering little shit, but her grandfather is an emotional blackmailer!

FATHER slams his fist on the table.

FATHER: When do you leave? When do you go back to the home I bought (you?)

MOTHER (OVER): Yes, when are you leaving?

DEVINA scrapes back her chair and stands.

DEVINA: Sorry. I just -. Sorry.

FATHER starts to eat as DEVINA walks out of the room. Long silence, save for the clink of cutlery as FATHER continues his meal.

FATHER: Tomato pie's bloody awful.

MOTHER: What's wrong with it?

FATHER: Overcooked.

MOTHER: You're not eating Matthew?

MATTHEW shakes his head. CASSIE reaches over and squeezes his hand.

MOTHER (CONT'D): Well have some salad – have some –

MATTHEW scrapes back his chair.

MATTHEW: Excuse me-

About to be sick, he rushes to the bathroom. ANGEL, MOTHER AND FATHER all now continue to eat for a moment. CASSIE walks over to the couch and slumps down with her drink.

MOTHER: I hope he's not – what's that cow word?

ANGEL: He's not bullemic Mum.

ANGEL continues to serve herself some salad.

FATHER: Well at least we have one daughter with an appetite.

ANGEL pulls back her chair and throws down her napkin. She goes to scrape her salad dramatically back into the salad bowl but MOTHER stops her.

MOTHER: Don't do that!

ANGEL walks over to the sink carrying plates.

FATHER: Bad tempered (little-)...

MOTHER (OVER): Where are you going? *(to FATHER)* What's got into them all?

ANGEL begins to clear the kitchen bench. CASSIE swigs down the last of her drink.

FATHER: They're *your* daughters. They're your side of the family..every one of them. Just like your mother. They're weak (natured..)

MOTHER (OVER): Talk to ME about families. Your family was always drunk (and arguing.)

FATHER (OVER): Ah but I'll tell you what we had that you lot didn't.

MOTHER: Don't tell me what you had I know what (you had-)

FATHER (OVER): A sense of humour.

Pause.

CASSIE (*eyes closed*): HA!

MOTHER: Rubbish. I never saw you laugh once.

CASSIE snorts again and lies down on the couch to sleep. FATHER points to both girls.

FATHER: I wanted sons and look what you gave me. Three useless mad women.

ANGEL (*doing dishes*): We are not useless Dad.

FATHER: You are very helpful.

ANGEL: I could do anything.

FATHER: You run a wonderful cleaning service.

ANGEL: I topped history twice. And look at Cassie she was doing law - she could've graduated with honours –

MOTHER: Except that she got in with the wrong crowd.

ANGEL: We all could've done anything. *All* of us. If we'd -.

FATHER (SLOWLY): Darling you all need help. You are all unstable. You cannot help yourselves. It's a genetic weakness.

MOTHER: Don't look at me. I didn't pass it on.

ANGEL drops a saucepan. It crashes to the floor. Her FATHER, determined this proves his point exactly, is mildly amused.

FATHER: HO!/
ANGEL: Sorry/

FATHER: Jesus wept. /
MOTHER: What now?

ANGEL: Sorry./
FATHER: And another one down!

ANGEL: Nothing's broken. It's okay.

MATTHEW walks out of the bathroom. He heads for the hallway and stops, looking down at CASSIE.

FATHER: This cleaning business insured is it?

MATTHEW: Is Cassie okay?

ANGEL: She's okay./
MOTHER: She's fine.

MATTHEW: You okay Auntie Cass?

CASSIE: Fine honey.

MOTHER: She's fine/

ANGEL: Go to bed.

MOTHER: There are blankets in the –

MATTHEW: I know where they are Gran.

MOTHER: Night darling.

FATHER: Night Mattie boy.

MOTHER: Lovely to have you here darling.

He hesitates at the door.

MATTHEW: Night.

MATTHEW turns and walks out.

Scene Two

Outside a storm rages. Lights up on CASSIE who is trying to call someone. She holds up her mobile phone in the usual spot. She's agitated, drunk, hyper. ANGEL walks in, dressed in a neck to ankle flannel nightie. She carries a sleeping bag and walks over to the couch.

CASSIE: What're you doing?

ANGEL: Devina snores. *(starts to make up a bed on the couch.)* RSL's just called. They've cancelled the march. Dad'll be so upset.

CASSIE wanders over to the window and looks out.

CASSIE: Let's get out've here.

ANGEL: The roads are blocked.

CASSIE: Jim's wake.

ANGEL: So?

CASSIE: I can – *(waves her mobile)* - make calls -

ANGEL: Who to?

CASSIE: My buddy.

CASSIE picks up her handbag and puts on some red lipstick.

ANGEL: You've been doing so well.

CASSIE: Yeah yeah. I am. I am doing well.

ANGEL: Why don't you stay here and play Scrabble or -

CASSIE: I don't want to play Scabble okay? Jessuss. Scabble.

ANGEL: I'll be your buddy tonight okay? Tell *me* how you're feeling. Talk (to me)

CASSIE (OVER): I need to talk to my buddy. My proper -.

ANGEL: Why don't you just cut the crap and finish the drinks cabinet?

CASSIE stares at her.

CASSIE: Fuck you.

ANGEL storms over to the drinks cabinet and opens it for CASSIE.

ANGEL: Party away here. Look! Go for it. Go for broke. Just - please don't go out. Please.. I'll drive you anywhere in the morning. I'll take you wherever you want -

CASSIE: Fuck (that)

ANGEL (OVER): - I'll drive you back to Melbourne I promise. As soon as the roads are cleared. Just please (stay.)

CASSIE (OVER): S'okay honey. I won't be long.

CASSIE makes to go.

ANGEL: How can you do this?

CASSIE reaches the door.

CASSIE: See ya.

ANGEL: Wait! (*pulling a torch down from a shelf*) Watch for the fences.

CASSIE: Thanks baby -

ANGEL: And – (*holding out a torch*) – Here.

CASSIE: I'm fine.

ANGEL: What about gumboots?

CASSIE: See ya.

CASSIE exits. ANGEL'S left on her own. She watches her sister through the window for a moment. DEVINA enters, pulling on her dressing gown.

DEVINA: Where's she gone?

ANGEL: To score from Jim Saunders. Where else?

DEVINA: Oh God. So selfish of her to do this here.

ANGEL: It's not selfish! She hates it here.

DEVINA: Oh PLEASE – you’re always finding excuses for her. She’s not a baby anymore. She’s got to do rehab.

ANGEL: She’s just back from -

DEVINA: I mean - proper serious rehab. Where they don’t just levitate and take valium. There’s a good one in the Dandenongs apparently. Run by scientologists.

ANGEL: She’ll be brainwashed.

DEVINA: So what? She’ll be clean. It’s all natural too. The woman in the chemist was telling me. They put them in saunas and make them sweat it out.

ANGEL: She hates saunas. And religion.

DEVINA (*going to back door*): Who cares as long as it works?

ANGEL: It’d kill her Devina.

DEVINA: She’s doing that anyway. (*putting head outside*) CASSIE! COME BACK!

ANGEL: Shh! Don’t yell!

DEVINA: Let’s get this all out in the open. While we’re here to defend each other. They do it in America all the time. Intervention. I’ve seen it on Fox. The whole family bands together and tells them they’ve had enough.

ANGEL: What about Matthew?

DEVINA: He’s just been vomiting in a bucket. This’ll show him where it leads. (*out door again*) CASSIE! It’s called ‘tough love’. Some families pay for them to be dropped into the desert by parachute with food packs and leave them there to detox on their own. Unsupervised.

ANGEL: How cruel.

DEVINA: It works. Usually. Unless they forget to pull the parachute open. And it’s a great holiday for their families.

ANGEL: Where’s your compassion?

DEVINA: Where’s hers?

A beat. DEVINA leans out the door again.

DEVINA (CONT’D): CASSIE COME BACK HERE NOW!

ANGEL: We’ve got to support her (in this -)/

DEVINA (OVER): Tough love is being supportive –

ANGEL: I mean we’ve got to at least acknowledge/

DEVINA (OVER): Oh no, don’t go there, not tonight./

ANGEL: We’ve got to – talk about (it and -)

DEVINA (OVER): For God’s sake even if it did happen, and let’s face it we’ll never know for sure –

ANGEL: OFCOURSE it happened!

DEVINA: Then why doesn't she just report the prick?

ANGEL: You know why. She'd have to get Mum into the witness box.

DEVINA: Mum'd be alright.

ANGEL: She thinks Mum'd blame herself. That she couldn't take the guilt.

DEVINA: You could give evidence. She told you –

ANGEL: Yeah but not when it was happening. The only person she told at the time was Mum.

DEVINA: Who then told Dad.

Pause.

ANGEL: Who did nothing about it. Nothing. It was like he never believed her.

Pause.

DEVINA: It was over thirty years ago for God's sake! Jesus Angel. How long can she keep using that as an excuse? Intervention is the only way (to go)

ANGEL (OVER): Not in front of Mum (and-).

DEVINA (OVER): Stop protecting everyone. Where is she? CASSIE! CASSIE!

ANGEL: Stop yelling! You'll wake them up.

DEVINA: COME BACK HERE NOW!

ANGEL: I know what you're doing.

DEVINA: What am I doing?

ANGEL: Trying to get the focus off your marital problems.

DEVINA (*leaning outside again*): FORGET IT. WE GIVE UP. STUPID - GIRL. Go - Kill - yourself -

ANGEL (*pulling DEVINA inside*): Get away from (there)

DEVINA (OVER): SEE IF WE CARE.

DEVINA slams the door and heads out of the room.

ANGEL: Where you going?

DEVINA: Bed.

ANGEL: But we need to talk about -

DEVINA: We just did.

ANGEL: Help me here. Please.

DEVINA: I've got enough going on.

She stops at the door.

DEVINA (CONT'D): Bloody Dad -

ANGEL: Dad makes our lives easier -

DEVINA: Why are you so bent on protecting them? What have they done for us? Except drill into us how hopeless we all are? Look at us. We're pathetic. We fell for it.

ANGEL: If it wasn't for Dad we'd all be -

DEVINA (OVER): If it wasn't for Dad Cassie might be clean. He's been funding her habit for years.

ANGEL: If it means saving her from a life of prostitution then it's a good thing.

DEVINA: She's already a prostitute Angel. *(pause)* We all our.

Pause.

ANGEL *(shocked)*: Don't - say that.

DEVINA exits. ANGEL is stunned. She mutters 'that's a dreadful thing to say' 'Prostitutes' as she walks to the fridge and pulls out a chocolate pudding and a bottle of wine. She walks over to the table and pours herself a large glass. She takes a swig, then picks up a huge piece of pudding. She is about to start eating the cake when she stops. Staring into space, she picks up her mobile phone. She waves it round in the corner of the room, gets up on a chair for better reception, dials and waits.

ANGEL: Hello - Ralph? .. It's - Yes! Yes it's me! How'd you know that?..Really? ..How are - I'm fine. ..I just thought - it's been a while and - I thought, you know I'd give an old - you - a call. - So how are you? ...Really?.. Really? I had no idea! ..Me? I - I - I'm still - I'm still - *(giggling girlishly)* - free and easy...

SCENE THREE

ANGEL sleeps. There is a banging of the door as CASSIE enters, clutching her bag. Her clothing is torn from getting caught on fences. She's soaked through.

ANGEL: Oh God - what are you doing? Oh God the mud!

ANGEL rushes to the bathroom and comes back with towels.

CASSIE: HA! Fuck em all I reckon - fuck em ALL! *(pause)* Where is everybody?

ANGEL: In bed. Hours ago.

CASSIE staggers round the room as ANGEL cleans up.

CASSIE: YOO HOO? Oi! Anyone wake?

ANGEL: Shut up Cassie -!

CASSIE staggers towards the radio and turns it up loud. "In the Mood" is playing.

CASSIE: Heyy moy lovver- let's dance! Wo!

ANGEL: Turn it off! Everyone's asleep.

ANGEL tries to turn it off but CASSIE swirls her round and won't let her get to it. ANGEL laughs a little as she keeps trying.

ANGEL (CONT'D): Stop it Cassie. Everyone's asleep. Stop it!

Suddenly they stop. FATHER stands in the doorway. ANGEL turns off the music quickly. CASSIE tries to stop herself swaying.

ANGEL (CONT'D): Sorry Dad. We were just –

FATHER: Look at you.

ANGEL: Sorry Dad.

FATHER: Where've you been?

CASSIE: What's shaking diddio.? (Daddio Diddio..)

FATHER (OVER): Where have you been.

CASSIE: - to my pretty maid?

ANGEL: Just over -.

FATHER: Where?

ANGEL: The neighbours -/

CASSIE: Jim's place.

FATHER: Jesus.

ANGEL: She was only - /

FATHER: Ashamed. I am ashamed.

CASSIE: Shaaaamed.

ANGEL: Cassie.

FATHER: I'm disgusted.

CASSIE: Really? 'Gusted no less.

FATHER: Look at you.

CASSIE: Look at YOU.

ANGEL: She just/

CASSIE: Why you shaaamed Dad?

FATHER: Your mother'd be beside herself.

CASSIE: Beside myself in -Wirramai? Wirramai? Oh that's right Wirramai.

FATHER: Get to bed.

CASSIE: Ashamed. He is ass -shamed.

ANGEL: She's (sorry -)

CASSIE (OVER): Shaaaaamed

FATHER: Get to bed NOW!

CASSIE: We're all in some kind of war – with our shaaame

FATHER turns to walk back to their bedroom. CASSIE grabs him by the arm and stops him in his tracks.

CASSIE (CONT'D): Oi!

FATHER: Let go of me.

CASSIE: We've all been there./

FATHER: LET GO OF ME/

ANGEL: Let him go -/

FATHER: Let me go I said.

CASSIE: I had a war too you know - a different kind of war, but it was a war. It *was*. And I was only five. Five Dad when I joined up.

Long pause. She lets go of his arm. FATHER stares at her in disgust.

CASSIE (CONT'D): You're a bastard.

FATHER: And you're drunk.

CASSIE: Ah, but tomorrow I will be sober.

FATHER: That'll be the day.

FATHER turns to walk back into the bedroom. CASSIE grabs him by the shoulder and turns him round.

CASSIE: HEY!

FATHER: Let go of me (alley cat -)

CASSIE: I'm not finished (with you).

MOTHER appears at the bedroom door.

ANGEL (OVER): Cassie don't –

CASSIE: You allowed it - you (allowed it –)/

FATHER (OVER): Look at you now, look at this, this waste of energy before me –look at what I've got for a daughter –. I'm ashamed and disgusted -/

CASSIE : - I was in a war but you didn't care you didn't CARE-

ANGEL: Cassie stop it!

CASSIE: I hate you.

FATHER: GET TO BED NOW.

MOTHER: What's happening?

A BEAT. CASSIE sees her MOTHER.

ANGEL: Nothing Mum. Just Cassie –

CASSIE: I'm okay Mum.

MOTHER: A lot of yelling going on.

ANGEL: It's okay. It's finished.

CASSIE: It's okay Mum. Okay?

FATHER: Go to bed Mary. It's nothing.

MOTHER walks back in and closes the door. FATHER now looks back at CASSIE, who holds her arms out to her FATHER as if to embrace by way of making peace.

FATHER (CONT'D): You appall me.

ANGEL: Come on Cassie.

CASSIE: It appalled ME Dad every day (every day).

ANGEL (OVER): Sorry Dad she's (just -)

FATHER (OVER): Get to bed. Now.

ANGEL pulls CASSIE off her FATHER.

ANGEL: Come away.

FATHER (to ANGEL): You too. You great – fat animal.

ANGEL stares at her FATHER as he walks back into the bedroom. CASSIE makes to kick the door, but misses. She walks over to the couch and collapses.

CASSIE: We're witchy proof in Witchyproof. Why oh why in Woy Woy. Weerite in Weerite. Where am I in Wirramai? Fuck you Dad.

ANGEL: Ssssh Cassie! Calm down!

CASSIE: Fuck 'em all.

ANGEL: Hey, you want to know a secret?

ANGEL starts to dry CASSIE's hair with the clean towel.

ANGEL (CONT'D): Guess who I called tonight?

CASSIE: Go fuck yourself Diddio. Big Daddio.

ANGEL: Sssh Cassie. Guess what? I called Ralph!

CASSIE: Big Dad.

ANGEL: Cassie I called Ralph!

CASSIE (*not listening*): Really..?

ANGEL: He sounded really happy to hear from me and asked me if I was going out with anyone. And - he sounded sort of keen... Cassie? Can you believe it?

ANGEL pulls out some blankets and tries to put them around CASSIE.

CASSIE: Fuck the fucking...

ANGEL: Shhh. Calm down. And you know what I'm thinking? Here put this -.

CASSIE (*grabbing ANGEL'S hands*): I need to talk Angel.

ANGEL: Stay warm. (*pulling blankets back over her*) Here. I've finally decided Cassie! I've decided (to -)

CASSIE: Dad still does business with him. Did you know?

Pause. ANGEL freezes for a long moment.

ANGEL: What?

CASSIE: He still does deals with him.

ANGEL: With who?

CASSIE: Colin RISBY.

ANGEL: Sssshhh!

CASSIE: They all do business together. Jim told me! He reckons that the windfarm company's his. They all do business together. Dad makes money from Colin Risby's windfarms. Can you believe it? (*pause, shivering*) Did you know?

ANGEL: I had an idea, but...

CASSIE: You DID! YOU KNEW!

ANGEL: Shhh. Sshhh. Keep it down.

ANGEL tries to put a blanket over CASSIE but she flicks it off.

CASSIE: Did you know?

ANGEL: Did I know what?

CASSIE: Colin Risby runs the whole windfarm set up.

ANGEL: Yeah.

CASSIE: Do you ever see him in town or..?

ANGEL: Dad talks to him. Sometimes. (*drying off CASSIE'S hair with a towel.*) He's old now Cassie.

CASSIE: Do you – talk to (him?)

ANGEL (OVER): He's never done anything (since-)

CASSIE: Really? I was the chosen one? How do you know that?

ANGEL tries to put a blanket over CASSIE'S shoulders.

ANGEL: You'll get pneumonia –.

CASSIE: HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT?

ANGEL: Ssshhh. We'd have heard (about it)

CASSIE (OVER): Not hearing about it doesn't mean it's not (happening.)

ANGEL (OVER): You know what kids are like today. (They'd tell –)

CASSIE (OVER): How would you know? Seriously? How?

ANGEL: He runs a charity for cancer sufferers now.

CASSIE: That'd be right.

ANGEL: Since Francine died –

CASSIE: When she die?

ANGEL: Ovarian cancer – last year.

CASSIE: Why didn't you tell me?

ANGEL: I don't know I -

CASSIE: I loved Francine.

ANGEL: Ever since she died he's been (really into) –

CASSIE (OVER): She was like a second mother to me. Into what?

ANGEL: Charity work and stuff.

CASSIE: That's what they do. That's what they DO.

ANGEL: I know.

CASSIE: They're all model citizens. That's their – disguise. (*taking ANGEL'S hand*) I told them -

ANGEL: I know –

CASSIE: I *said* it was happening but no one BELIEVED me.

ANGEL: I know. I know.

CASSIE: NO ONE BELIEVED me.

ANGEL: I believed you.

CASSIE: So why didn't you -

ANGEL: I didn't know what to do did I? He'd been off the farm for years by the time you told me. If I'd known when he was *working* here I'd have -

CASSIE pulls her hand away from ANGEL'S.

CASSIE: Yeah. 'Course.

ANGEL: I mean it was -

CASSIE: Don't worry about it.

Pause.

CASSIE (CONT'D): You probably still speak to him. Do you?

ANGEL: I never speak to him.

CASSIE: Did you go to Francine's funeral?

ANGEL looks away and shakes her head.

CASSIE: Yes you did. You DID.

ANGEL: She was a good person. You liked her too remember?

CASSIE: Did Colin do the big teary speech?

ANGEL nods.

CASSIE (CONT'D): Did he thank her for staying in the lounge room while he made me feel him up outside the toilet?

ANGEL: Can't recall that, no.

CASSIE: Didn't think so.

Pause.

ANGEL: Why did you keep going back?

CASSIE: What, you think I wanted it?

ANGEL: No (no no..)

CASSIE (OVER): I was three, four years old (for God's sake!)

ANGEL (OVER): I know, I know.

CASSIE: Francine loved me - like I was her baby. I was her little princess. I couldn't tell her what he was doing. Francine loved me. Like a mother.

ANGEL: You were so little. So -..

CASSIE tries to laugh, but it goes sour. ANGEL is starting to get angry.

ANGEL (CONT'D): Let's report the prick. Come on. Let's get him. It's not too late Cassie. You can press charges decades later. YOU CAN! Let's do it. Let's DO IT! Come on!

CASSIE jumps up on the bench and pulls open the cupboard.

ANGEL (CONT'D): What are you doing?

CASSIE: Wouldn't you know it -

ANGEL: What are you doing Cassie?

CASSIE (*jumping off the bench holding the rifle*): Hasn't changed it in forty years.

She points the gun at ANGEL recklessly.

ANGEL: What are you doing?

CASSIE: Showing you my plan.

ANGEL: Cassie. Give me the gun.

CASSIE: We go round to the little fucker's house right?

ANGEL: What are you talking about?

CASSIE: Shut up for a second. Sit there – (*ANGEL sits*) – I point the gun, see?

ANGEL: Cassie. It's (loaded!)

CASSIE (OVER): It's okay it's okay. You be him.

ANGEL: Put it down.

CASSIE: But I'm showing you what we're gonna do.

ANGEL: Okay. Okay.

CASSIE (*pointing gun while backing up to grog cupboard*): Now see here Colin Bizza Wizza Risby. I've got a little offer you can't refuse. I won't press charges, I won't take you to court, I won't put you in the local paper announcing you're a sad little peddo.. (*pause*) But I WILL SHOOT you –

ANGEL: You're (scaring me)

CASSIE (OVER): Shut up – I WILL shoot you UNLESS you take these –

She pulls away bottles, and tosses a small bottle of pills and several packets of medication out onto the floor. ANGEL stares at them.

ANGEL: What are they?

CASSIE: Just a stash. In case I ever ran out.

ANGEL: What are they?

CASSIE: Painkillers. Morphine, Oxycontin...and... Same sort of stuff Francine would have had for her cancer. I can get prescriptions of it whenever I like.

ANGEL: What for?

CASSIE (*shaking the gun at ANGEL*): The pain the PAIN THE PAIN.

ANGEL: Put the gun down Cassie.

CASSIE: Anyway. You get the picture. (*lowering gun*) What do you think?

ANGEL: It's -.

CASSIE: Wild eh? It'd work too. Imagine how stuffed he'd be if I just put it out there?

ANGEL: So what if he has a gun too? He's got guns – he's got a shed of them-.

CASSIE: We get him unawares. When he's coming out of the dunny or something.

ANGEL: You mean, where he used to make you-

CASSIE: Right on the spot! I'll make him look in the mirror while he swallows the pills...

Silence.

ANGEL: It'd take a long time, waiting for the pills to work.

CASSIE: Oh well shoot him in the head while we're waiting - fuck I don't know – but we could do it! We could make it look like suicide and kill the weasel.

ANGEL: It would be a very peaceful way to go.

CASSIE: Except for us pointing a gun at his head, very.

ANGEL: We wouldn't need to shoot him.

CASSIE: But best be sure.

ANGEL: And then what?

CASSIE: I dunno. Leave him to be found, holding the gun with a note we make him write: "I Colin Risby cannot bear to live with my dirty little secrets any longer".

ANGEL is a bit shocked at her own reaction.

ANGEL: I like it.

CASSIE puts down the gun and, muttering and laughing to herself, picks up her handbag and heads for the bathroom door. ANGEL leaps up and blocks her way.

ANGEL (CONT'D): Where you going?

CASSIE: Where does it look like? Let me through.

ANGEL: Oh no. Come on! Let's talk some more –

CASSIE: I need to go -

ANGEL: Don't Cassie -

CASSIE: Move away.

ANGEL: Come on!

CASSIE: I want to go to the (toilet –)

ANGEL (OVER): Not with the bag –

CASSIE: Let me (through –)

ANGEL (OVER, *trying to take the bag*): Leave this – . You don't need this Cassie.

CASSIE glares at ANGEL, like a cornered animal.

CASSIE: Fuck off fuck off fuck off.

ANGEL: You're still clean Cassie -. You haven't used -

CASSIE: Even if I had, I'm cleaner than you'll ever be.

ANGEL: If we're going to take this further with (Colin) –

CASSIE (OVER): Everything here is so toxic. Everyone's poisoned. Everything – Every fucking thing – Even you!

CASSIE pushes past ANGEL and walks into the bathroom. The door slams shut.

ANGEL: Please! Don't! I hate this I hate it. You're killing yourself! I hate watching it. (*slumps to the floor.*) I just want to help. We can do this. We can we can we can. We can find something for us all – out the other side of town – you and me and - and Ralph. He's got a little farm now Cassie. With a little cottage on it and - . You and I could move in with him and get you back on your feet. You can paint and - and - I can – cook for us all and – make smoothies and -. Cassie? And we can do the family mediation with me and Devina and I'll take you to group and - and no one has to know.. I just want you to be well and clean and - happy. I know why you do it Cassie. We all do. No one blames you okay? Okay? Just - let's get proper help this time and - and you can tell me everything and I can tell you to breathe and we won't – put you in saunas or - . What do you think? .. Honeybee?

The door opens slowly. CASSIE has had her hit and is relaxed at last.

CASSIE: Hey sis, hey...did I hurt you?

ANGEL stands and shakes her head. CASSIE sways blissfully.

CASSIE (CONT'D): Let's dance.

CASSIE takes her hands to dance, but ANGEL tries to wrench away from her.

ANGEL: I'm really tired...

CASSIE: Come on, fly with me...Hey....Dance big sister. Dance..

ANGEL: Stop it. Just – Stop it!

ANGEL pulls free from her, as CASSIE is weakening from the hit. CASSIE wanders over and collapses onto the couch. ANGEL follows. CASSIE leans against her.

CASSIE: What number am I thinking of?

ANGEL: Come on...just - sleep now...

CASSIE: What number am I ...?

ANGEL: I'm so sorry I made you come home this weekend. I should never – I'm so -.. - so sorry..

CASSIE slowly runs her hands over her own face, as if feeling it for the first time.

CASSIE: Don't be. And don't feel angry with - Colin. It's not so bad. I mean, at least I knew he loved me. He used to say to Dad.. "Look at her Ron. Isn't she beautiful?" Just like that. "Isn't she beautiful?" He loved me more than my own father. I don't care about it now. Heh. It's not so bad. It's not so bad.. Ge'some sleep now. Sleep now. (*singing*) "The hills are alive..."

ANGEL (*stroking her hair*): "With the sound of music.."

CASSIE falls asleep as DEVINA enters and puts the kettle on.

DEVINA: Jesus it's three am. Doesn't anyone sleep? Christ. Less than a day together and we're all exhausted. What a family.

ANGEL: Oh God what have I done?

DEVINA: What about me? I'm the only one around here who's normal, and look what they've done to me?

ANGEL: You're not normal Devina.

DEVINA: Beg your pardon.

ANGEL: No one in this family is normal.

DEVINA: I may not be "normal" –

ANGEL: You're not –

DEVINA: I'm closer to it than everyone else. Look at you!

ANGEL: Don't look at me. Don't.

Pause. DEVINA softens.

DEVINA: You look exhausted.

She walks over to ANGEL, and kisses the top of her head. She walks towards the kitchen.

DEVINA (CONT'D): Cup of tea?

DEVINA puts the kettle on.

ANGEL: What a wreck we all are. What a vast, shaking wreck of a family.

DEVINA: Nothing's changed. For you two anyway. Cassie's still self medicating. You're still living at home. *I'm the one who's suddenly -.*

Thunder claps. The lights flicker then die, leaving them all in darkness. From the porch, the shadow of tree branches move in the wind. The porch roof bangs. DEVINA shrieks.

ANGEL: Oh God.

DEVINA: What's happening?

ANGEL: A blackout, what do you think?

DEVINA: Is there a torch or something?

ANGEL: Hold on.

ANGEL walks over to the kitchen bench in the darkness..

DEVINA: I'm scared...Angel?

ANGEL: It's fine. There's a torch. Here. Bloody hell...

A torch lights up the kitchen a little, then ANGEL manages to light a candle. She returns holding both the candle and the torch.

They sit together for a moment in silence. DEVINA looks at CASSIE.

DEVINA: She looks so peaceful...

ANGEL: She just shot up in the bathroom.

DEVINA holds a torch towards her face.

DEVINA: Absolute oblivion.

ANGEL: She just found out about Dad doing business with Colin Risby.

DEVINA: Oh God what did she expect? How can anyone *not* do business with him round here?

ANGEL stares ahead.

DEVINA (CONT'D): Was she devastated...?

ANGEL nods. DEVINA strokes CASSIE'S hair. Silence.

DEVINA (CONT'D): She looks blue in this light. Look.

ANGEL: It's the torch –

DEVINA: She's blue. Angel she's (going blue.)

ANGEL (OVER): It's okay.

DEVINA: She looks -...

ANGEL: She's okay.

DEVINA: What's she done?

ANGEL: She knows what she's doing.

DEVINA: CPR do you know CPR?

ANGEL: She's got huge tolerance to it, remember?

DEVINA: She's hardly breathing Angel she's not (breathing!)

ANGEL (OVER): Stop panicking you'll wake (everyone up –)

DEVINA (OVER): Christ. MATTHEW! MATTHEW! Quickly! Cassie. Wake up.
CASSIE! I CAN'T FEEL ANY BREATH.

ANGEL: Oh God, (what?)

DEVINA (OVER): CASSIE! CASSIE! CASSIE!

She shakes CASSIE as MATTHEW enters. ANGEL gets up and starts to hunt round in the dark.

MATTHEW: What's -?

DEVINA: We need CPR.

ANGEL: Where's the phone –/

DEVINA: Oh God. Oh God.

ANGEL: The PHONE.

DEVINA: What for?

MATTHEW begins to check her airways.

ANGEL: To get an AMBULANCE.

DEVINA: It'll take too long – Ring for advice – Ring for advice/

MATTHEW: /Here shine the torch–

DEVINA shines the torch clumsily on CASSIE'S face, as MATTHEW presses on her chest and performs mouth to mouth.

ANGEL: Breathe Cassie – BREATHE BREATHE BREATHE
BREATHE BREATHE

In the dim, the bedroom door opens. FATHER stands and looks out at the scene before him.

DEVINA: THE LINE'S DEAD WHERE'S A MOBILE?

FATHER: What's (happening?)

ANGEL (OVER): BREATHE CASSIE.

FATHER: Jesus. Mother! MOTHER!

DEVINA: Where's a mobile? Angel -

ANGEL grabs the torch from DEVINA and finds the phone on the kitchen bench.

ANGEL: Got it got it./

MATTHEW: I can't see a thing!

DEVINA grabs the phone as ANGEL shines the torch back on MATTHEW who continues mouth to mouth. MOTHER appears next to FATHER. They lean in to watch from a distance.

DEVINA: I CAN'T GET THROUGH.

ANGEL: Keep going Mattie.

FATHER: God help us! What's (she done?)

MOTHER: What's (wrong with her?)

MATTHEW: She's not -

ANGEL: Cassie! NO! Don't go – do not do this Cassie! Keep going!

MATTHEW: There's no – she's not breathing. (*repeats mouth to mouth*) There's no breathing – she's- (she's -)

ANGEL (OVER): Keep going Matt. Keep going!

DEVINA gives up and stands beside MATTHEW.

FATHER: Call an ambulance! CALL AN AMBULANCE.

ANGEL: WE CAN'T DAD THE LINES ARE DOWN.

MATTHEW slows down, exhausted.

MATTHEW: She's -.

FATHER: Keep working on her. Keep -

He nearly stops, then starts again. ANGEL holds onto CASSIE'S hand and weeps.

ANGEL: NOOOOOO! My baby sister. My baby sister. CASSIE!

MATTHEW gives up. He holds her in an embrace. DEVINA rushes to hold her MOTHER.

MOTHER: Cassie! CASSIE! MY LITTLE GIRL! Not my little girl!

FATHER stares at the scene before him, and, leaning on his stick, falls down on his knees.

Lights fade.

End of Act Two

ACT THREE

Scene One

LIGHTS UP on ANGEL, surrounded by darkness. She stares into nothingness. DEVINA sits beside her, staring at the floor. They are dressed for the funeral.

ANGEL: I was lying on a dirt road somewhere, in the middle of nowhere, like in a western or .. and I was going to get up, when I noticed some kind of insect crawling over my face. And then all this dust just whipped up round me, in a sort of willy willy, and I could feel it settling right in round my eyes, and I didn't bother trying to get any of it off me. It was in my hair and up my nose. And I didn't care. I just lay there. Then I suddenly realised, "I'm dead. I'm in the middle of a dirt road, in the middle of nowhere, and I'm dead." And I sort of got up, but not with my body. I walked away, but I left my body behind. I didn't see it behind me but I knew it was there. It was okay, even sort of – peaceful. (*surfacing again, she looks at DEVINA*)

DEVINA: What was?

ANGEL: My dream.

DEVINA: You okay?

ANGEL nods.

ANGEL: I still keep – I still –

DEVINA: I know.

ANGEL: I just – want a sign, you know? That she's okay.

DEVINA: She's okay now. She's at peace.

ANGEL: Where's Henry?

DEVINA: He and Annie are meeting us at the church. Annie's made up a music list. All Bob Dylan ofcourse, which is..

Pause.

ANGEL: Why a church?

DEVINA: If it makes Mum happy –

ANGEL: But –

DEVINA: I know.

Pause.

ANGEL: All I keep thinking is give me a sign – give me a sign –

Suddenly the lights are snapped on by FATHER, who stands in the bedroom doorway, dressed in a dark suit and tie. He wears his Vietnam war medals. MOTHER can now be seen, also dressed formally. She stands at the kitchen bench, staring into space, holding a tea towel. The room is covered in bunches of flowers. On the floor are drooping lilies in a large bucket. To the right of the door is a large suitcase.

FATHER: What time is it mother?

MOTHER: What?

FATHER: What time is it?

MOTHER: Oh. We'd better start getting your father to the car, Angela?

ANGEL (*not moving*): Yep..

A beat. MATTHEW enters, carrying a bag of groceries and a bottle in a brown paper bag.

MATTHEW: Where do you want me to –

MOTHER: Just on the bench for now.

FATHER: Thank you old boy.

MATTHEW wanders over to ANGEL and DEVINA, awkwardly.

MATTHEW: Morning.

A small smile from ANGEL.

MATTHEW (CONT'D): Is there anything else I (can -?)

MOTHER (OVER): No darling. We'll leave shortly.

MATTHEW: I could drive you in. I've got the 'L' plates up and -

No one moves.

DEVINA: That'd be good honey.

MATTHEW walks up to ANGEL and puts a hand on her shoulder.

MATTHEW: You alright?

FATHER: She's alright. We're alright.

A moment. MOTHER looks at FATHER.

MOTHER: What are you wearing those for?

FATHER: What?

MOTHER: Your medals. It's a funeral not –.

FATHER: I want to wear them. I missed the march. I'm wearing them.

MOTHER: Ridiculous.

FATHER looks at her in surprise.

MOTHER (CONT'D): I said you'll look silly at her funeral wearing medals. Stupid.

Long pause.

MOTHER (CONT'D): I'll go in with the girls.

FATHER: Whatever you like.

MATTHEW (*to FATHER*): I can take you in.

FATHER: Right you are son.

MATTHEW: Anyone else -?

DEVINA: I'll bring Mum and -.

MATTHEW (*to ANGEL*): There are a few locals who want to meet us in there so -

ANGEL: Good. That's – good.

Pause.

FATHER: Private.

MATTHEW: Sorry?

FATHER: Private funeral. Family only.

MATTHEW: Oh. I – I think there's a few more who'd like to come -

ANGEL: It can't be private Dad. I've already spoken to people who (want to-)

FATHER (OVER): Private.

ANGEL: But there are people who've driven from Melbourne (to) –

FATHER (OVER): Private I said. Private.

MOTHER: There were so many Ron - who wanted to come.

FATHER: I told you to put a notice in the paper.

ANGEL: We did./

MOTHER: But we just (thought)

DEVINA (OVER): Ralph – remember Ralph? –

MATTHEW: - and Mrs Bath and her son would like to -

MOTHER: Oh that's nice isn't it? Mrs Bath was her teacher.

ANGEL: Art.

DEVINA: Her art teacher.

MOTHER: They were great pals, remember? And I like Ralph. How is he?

ANGEL: He's well. He sends - love.

MOTHER: Oh that's -. I like Ralph.

A long pause. MATTHEW watches, uncomfortable.

MATTHEW: Do you want me to – help you to the car or-?

FATHER: You go ahead son.

DEVINA: He needs a passenger.

FATHER: We'll see you in there.

DEVINA: You need a -

MATTHEW: What do you want me to say?

FATHER: Who to?

MATTHEW: To the people who turn up.

ANGEL: Tell them to-/
FATHER: Tell 'em to/ go home. It's family only.

MATTHEW: What about the wake?

DEVINA: Yes, the wake! Ofcourse –

ANGEL: We'll meet them at the pub –

DEVINA: Good idea - tell them all (to -)

FATHER (OVER): Bugger 'em. We don't need 'em all – gawking at us – Stuff the wake.

A long pause.

FATHER (CONT'D): I'm not going.

MOTHER: What do you mean?

FATHER (OVER): I'm not going. Go without me.

MOTHER: But – you're her -.

FATHER: I said I wanted the funeral Friday.

DEVINA: Why Friday?

FATHER: Friday suited me. Not today.

MOTHER: It's your daughter's funeral Ron. You have (to go -)

FATHER (OVER): Call him then. You want me to go, call him –

DEVINA: Call who?

FATHER: - the friggin funeral director - say it suits to have the funeral Friday.

FATHER walks over to the table and sits down.

DEVINA: Dad it's all been organized –

FATHER: We want the date changed.

He glances over the paper before him.

MOTHER: But the minister's already there waiting –

FATHER: Fuck the friggin minister. Private. Put it in the paper. Private. Family only. Delay the bloody thing.

MOTHER: But –

DEVINA: Dad we can't –

FATHER: THEN I'M NOT GOING.

ANGEL: Fine. Have your little tantrum. We don't need you anyway.

FATHER: What did you say?

ANGEL: I said tough. We're not going to fit this to suit you. This isn't about you it's about Cassie -

FATHER: Don't you raise your voice at me -

ANGEL: I wasn't. I was just saying there are people who want to be there. For us and –

FATHER: For us my arse.

ANGEL: And for Cassie – to celebrate her life (and -)

FATHER (OVER): We all know what happened. They all just want to talk about it.

ANGEL: Yeah they do. They want to talk about it. They want to remember her fondly, for the warm and loving and slightly crazy woman she was. They're not malicious, they're genuinely sorry -

FATHER: For what? My daughter was a junkie. My daughter died from an overdose.

DEVINA: That's not the case Dad.

FATHER: Bloody bullshit –

MATTHEW: It wasn't an overdose. The autopsy said -. It was her heart Grumps. She died of heart failure.

FATHER: EVERYONE DIES OF HEART FAILURE IT WAS AN OVERDOSE YOU IDIOT.

ANGEL: What does it matter anyway, what she died of?

MOTHER: It was the heart. That's what the autopsy (said)

ANGEL (OVER): She's dead. What does it matter now?

FATHER: It was the drugs. We know it. So do they. I'm not going.

He looks down at the newspaper stubbornly.

ANGEL: Fuck you you asshole.

MOTHER: Angel!

FATHER: Don't you take this out on ME

ANGEL: You narcissistic bastard.

DEVINA: Calm down.

FATHER: GET OUT.

ANGEL: I will. I'm going. Don't worry. I'm leaving all this behind me.

FATHER: NOW. GO NOW.

ANGEL: I'm going alright.

FATHER: GOOD. Now! GET OUT NOW!

MOTHER: What's happening?

ANGEL: I'm out of here. I'm going.

MOTHER: What have I done?

DEVINA: Nothing –

ANGEL: Mum you've done nothing. It's not (you Mum)

MOTHER (OVER): Don't do this now. What are you trying to do to us?

ANGEL: I'm not trying to do anything to (you.)

DEVINA: You're upsetting (Mum)

FATHER (OVER): She's trying to kill us that's what this is about.

DEVINA: Oh Dad please stop (being so –)

ANGEL (OVER): You've already killed us Dad. You've already done that.

MOTHER: What a thing (to say)

FATHER (OVER): She's trying to blame us (for –)

ANGEL (OVER): I DON'T HAVE TO TRY DAD. We all know what killed Cassie. And it's not something a fucking autopsy can explain. You and your indifference to your own daughter. Your own little girl. That's what killed her.

MOTHER: What are you talking (about?)

DEVINA (OVER): Angel stop it.

ANGEL: Cassie was being abused and you chose to ignore it.

MATTHEW: What?

An airborne silence..in which MATTHEW'S surprise is suspended. MOTHER grasps her chest a little. DEVINA links arms with her protectively.

MOTHER: What are you saying this (for?)

ANGEL (OVER): A little girl Dad. She was just a (little girl)

DEVINA (OVER): Don't do this now for God's sake–

DEVINA and MOTHER start to walk to her room as they all talk simultaneously.

MOTHER: Why would she upset us? Why would she do this to us now? What's she trying to do? /

DEVINA: It's okay Mum – just come away. (That's it. Come away.)

DEVINA signals for MATTHEW to go, but he shakes his head, stepping away from his GRANDFATHER and ANGEL, wanting to watch on unseen. DEVINA leads her MOTHER out of the room, but comes back and stands in the shadows, watching from the bedroom door.

ANGEL (OVER): Why? Why Dad? Why were you so gutless? Because deep down you couldn't give a damn. She was only a girl after all. And when you thought about it, maybe it was handy to have something over the old prick. Was that it? Being such a powerful man that must've really pissed you off.

FATHER: Don't you take this out on (me)

ANGEL (OVER): Maybe it was convenient – did you owe him money? Did Colin Risby have something over you too? What - did you – square the books? What was the deal Dad?

FATHER: Jesus..

DEVINA (*at the bedroom door*): Leave him alone! (Stop it!)

ANGEL (OVER): Why did you allow a man to abuse your daughter for YEARS – why did you let a man strip her of her childhood – why did you let it go? You know why. Because she loved you. And you knew you could get away with it. She loved us all. So much that she didn't want to cause us all that pain. That pain and guilt. Isn't that funny? Isn't that the tragedy?

FATHER: Pain and guilt - I'll tell you about pain (and guilt.)

ANGEL (OVER): This is all our doing. Every one of us. And the tragedy is Cassie cared more, loved harder, than all of us put together. Do you remember how that Last Post made her cry? Every year. You'd stand there, back straight, hand on heart, chest covered in

medals. But it was Cassie who always cried. Out of all of us. Cassie who wept the hardest. She knew what it was to be put out to dry. What hell was. And who did she hurt in the end? Not us. She was angry, yes, but never took it out on us. Whenever she got strong enough to talk about it, God knows we drowned it out, every bloody time. And in her efforts to keep down the voices that tore into her head, she took to anything – anything to block it all out. *YOU* killed her Dad. Not the drugs -

MATTHEW: Grumps didn't kill Cassie –

FATHER: Don't you DARE take this out (on me!)

ANGEL (OVER): -when she finally discovered what we all *KNEW* she'd find out one day. That you were still doing deals with the man who abused her. All these years later. Still shaking his dirty slimy hand. You could've shot him, God knows, it could've been an accident the number of times you two went out shooting together full of grog. But you didn't. You kept the status quo. All in the name of what? WHAT?

FATHER: And who was it all for, tell me that?

ANGEL: For you Dad. It was always for you.

FATHER: Who pulled this family out of poverty and paid for your education, tell me that?

ANGEL: We didn't ask (you to)

FATHER (OVER): And I've kept paying.

ANGEL: We were your (children.)

FATHER (OVER): Let me speak now – I've kept paying. And I'M PAYING NOW. With every atom of my being.

ANGEL: I despise you.

DEVINA: You don't – . She doesn't (Dad)

ANGEL (OVER): But I pity you more.

FATHER: So you *should* pity me.

ANGEL: You should've dealt with Colin Risby long ago. But deep down you're gutless. My father's a gutless bully boy coward.

Unable to listen to anymore, DEVINA goes back into her parents' bedroom.

FATHER: And who the hell are you to judge? You never had a family to support. You weren't torn apart by – . What bloody war have you fought?

ANGEL: Oh God – listen to yourself Dad, (just listen -)

FATHER (OVER): No you listen! You wouldn't know, none of you would. Call me gutless?

ANGEL: Yes Dad. Gutless. (Gutless.)

FATHER (OVER): Eighteen years it was before I could march

ANGEL: Oh no oh no. Always your war. Always your bloody war. Why didn't you do anything Dad? WHY?

FATHER: Because the damage was DONE. By the time I found out it was DONE. What good would it've done any of us to drag it through some bloody court? And what about the people of this town, who relied on him for their livelihood? What good would it have done them?

ANGEL: You wouldn't do it because was too lucrative the way things were. Admit it. He was too good for your bank (balance).

FATHER (OVER): I did! I DID NEED HIM. I needed him badly. We all did. You want me to be ashamed of that too? You want me to apologise for trying to keep this family fed and educated? For holding on to this piece of land by my fingernails? Because I couldn't have done it any other way. How's that for the truth? Third generation fighter I was and I was the one – who -. I COULD NOT HAVE DONE IT ANY OTHER WAY.

MATTHEW (to ANGEL): That's enough -

ANGEL: I despise you.

MATTHEW: She doesn't Grumps – you (don't)

ANGEL (OVER): - for exchanging the one thing we all wanted so much from you – the *one thing* – for power.

FATHER (OVER): Don't you dare blame me for (this).

ANGEL (OVER): You took away all our self worth – – and then you hobbled us with your fucking money.

FATHER: You lazy wanton little -.

ANGEL (OVER): Dogs on chains we were. Tied to your fucking kennel.

FATHER: How dare you! I fought a *war* for this country. And my father. And his father before him. We didn't need – drugs. We came home and got on with the business of living. We didn't - hide.

ANGEL: You sad, mistaken, twisted little man. Don't come to the funeral. Cassie wouldn't want you there anyway.

FATHER (*breaking*): I did love her. You know I did. I remember the first words she said as a baby –

ANGEL: 'Daddy'.

FATHER: That's what she said. 'Daddy'. I did love her. I love you all –

ANGEL is unmoved. MATTHEW walks up and puts his hand on his grandfather's shoulder. FATHER shrugs him off.

FATHER (CONT'D): Go on bugger off with you. Go on with you!

MATTHEW starts to sob as he moves away from his GRANDFATHER. MOTHER appears in the doorway.

ANGEL: I'm out Mum. After the funeral. I'm leaving with Devina. It's up to you. If you want to - .

ANGEL goes to the door and waits calmly. DEVINA walks out from the bedroom carrying her mother's suitcase.

DEVINA (to MOTHER): Just for a little while. Do you good.

MOTHER looks guiltily at FATHER, but remains standing at a distance from him.

MOTHER (to DEVINA): I don't know what to do – I –

FATHER holds out his arms. She stays put.

FATHER: Mary..

MOTHER: I want to be with the girls for a while. I'll - (*looking away guiltily*) I won't be long.

MATTHEW: Come to the funeral. Please Grumps.

DEVINA (TO FATHER): Is there anything you want us to say – on your behalf?

FATHER: What?

MATTHEW: At the funeral.

FATHER: Leave me.

MOTHER goes to leave and stops. She turns to him –

MOTHER: Darling I –

FATHER: Leave me. Go then. Piss off. GO!

The three WOMEN begin to walk to the door. MATTHEW hovers. FATHER flails his stick at him.

FATHER (CONT'D): All of you. Get the hell out. GO ON! STUFF OFF THE LOTTA YA!

They all exit. He walks around the room a little, in shock. The car can be heard starting up. He stops and stares out the window as they drive off into the distance. He points accusingly into the air.

FATHER: STUFF OFF THE LOTTA YA. STUFF BLOODY OFF THEN.

FATHER pulls the bottle of whisky off the bench. He pulls out a chair and stands at the table, pouring himself a glass. He takes a large swig of it and takes a deep breath, then stands up straight, chest out, as if he's a soldier again. A moment passes; he gasps and laughs a little oddly, still in shock, then throws back another drink.

FATHER: You - ...Taken 'em all with you. Just took 'em all with you. Knew you - bloody would. Knew you bloody would.

The throbbing sound of the windfarm gets louder.

FATHER: HA!

He slumps down in the chair. A silent scream stamps itself on his face. Finally, he begins to break.

Fade to black.

The End.