

EXTRACT

THE COLOUR OF FIRE

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THE COLOUR OF FIRE
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The Colour of Fire

CHARACTERS:

EVA	thirties, an artist
ALEX	thirties, Eva's boyfriend
JACK	fifties, a volunteer fire fighter
HEATHER	fifties, a wildlife rescuer

SETTING:

The play is set 10 years after the Victorian 2009 bushfires.

Most of the action takes place in EVA's studio in her home. Her studio features a large artist easel, a table bearing paints and brushes, a few canvases (blank and complete paintings) a sofa, chairs and other occasional furniture.

PRODUCTION NOTES:

The visual artist's process is an important component of the play, alongside the motif of colour in symbolising EVA's inner world. Technical notes are featured in various scenes, with images being projected on a scrim. However, the production does not need to be limited by these suggestions.

SCENE 1

EVA's home.

A few canvases line the walls and are propped up against furniture. The canvases are abstract paintings, painted only in the colours of orange, red, yellow, black and grey.

EVA stands at an easel, in front of a large canvas. A table is slightly downstage to the easel, laden with paints, brushes and various painting equipment.

She paints onto the canvas, slowly at first, then moves into a more erratic rhythm. The painting is being projected onto a scrim.

She shifts between colours of black, orange, yellow and red.

Lighting reflects the changes of colour and mood.

EVA uses her whole body as she paints, as if personifying the fire itself.

Her face shows anguish in the last colour, red, a burning.

Sounds of bushfire.

ALEX enters.

Sound and music fades.

Lights turn to white wash. As if the fire has been put out.

ALEX: I was calling out to you. Eva?

ALEX sees the painting.

Wow, that looks great. I'm going to work now. You okay?

She doesn't respond.

You're doing it again.

EVA: Sorry, I was just...

ALEX: In another world?

EVA: What were you saying?

ALEX: I'm heading off to work.

Pause

You okay?

EVA: Yeah. I'm fine.

ALEX: Maybe you should, you know, think about painting something other than fires for a change.

EVA: (*sarcastically*) Maybe I should change my whole exhibition too? It's only a month away, Alex. I don't even know how I'm going to get it all done in time.

ALEX: It looks like you're almost done.

She looks at the other paintings around the room. She screws up her face.

ALEX: Oh come on...aren't there any that you like?

EVA: Not really.

ALEX: Surely there's one.

EVA: Maybe that one. Maybe.

ALEX: The orange one?

EVA: That's Burnt Sienna. Not Orange.

ALEX: Sor-ry.

Pause

Evie, they're commissioning you to do the paintings. They're paying you.

EVA: It's just pity.

ALEX: Don't be silly, they like what you do. So which painting do you really like?

EVA: The one on the chair.

ALEX: It's a big grey rectangle.

EVA: It's Arsenic actually.

ALEX: Arsenic, grey, whatever. You don't think it's too...?

EVA holds up a glass of wine

EVA: Want some?

ALEX: This early? No, thanks, I've got work. (*ALEX goes to the Arsenic painting*) I thought you wanted an exhibition about hope. It's a little dreary, don't you think?

EVA: Hope can look grey.

ALEX: Arsenic actually.

EVA: I don't know. I don't even know what I'm doing anymore.

He sighs.

EVA: What?

ALEX: Nothing.

EVA: You're angry with me.

ALEX: I've got to go to work.

EVA: What's wrong?

ALEX: I'm just going to be late.

EVA: Tell me.

ALEX: Don't you think this has gone on long enough?

EVA: What?

ALEX: This. Your insecurity. Your moods.

EVA: That's not very nice.

ALEX: But it's true.

EVA: I've got a lot going on right now.

ALEX: You've always got a lot on.

ALEX goes to leave.

EVA: I've got the exhibition coming up. And the portraits tomorrow. (*Pause*) I don't know why I said yes to it. I haven't done a portrait in years. Do you know how hard that'll be for me?

He is almost out the door.

I'm trying to tell you how I feel and...

ALEX: Now you know how I feel.

EVA: I hate this.

ALEX: Me too.

EVA: What can I do?

ALEX: Try to think of me sometimes. Not just your own stuff.

EVA: Maybe you should do more with your life then.

They hold each other's gaze.

ALEX: You're bloody hard to live with, Eva.

EVA: Thanks.

ALEX exits.

She goes to the table and finds a scalpel blade. She hacks at the canvas she has just painted.

EVA: *(yelling at the door)* Happy now?

SCENE 2

A country hall.

It is the 10 year anniversary of the 'Victorian Bushfire Survivors Memorial.'

JACK is addressing a crowd.

JACK: You never think it's gonna be you.

We'd heard all the warnings – get 'fire ready.' But nothin quite prepares you, does it? Mother Nature was too powerful. But we tried, by god we tried.

EVA enters and stands at the back of the crowd, listening.

Lots of people wanted answers. They asked, 'where were you?' 'Why didn't you save my home?' But we couldn't be everywhere at once. Some places were too dangerous.

Many of you lost something or someone in those fires. Some of you have lived through other fires – Ash Wednesday, even Black Friday. That's why we're here



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