

EXTRACT

THE PYJAMA GIRL

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THE PYJAMA GIRL
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NOTE ON THE SCRIPT

This is an unedited manuscript as provided to us by the playwright. We distribute it in good faith; however it may contain layout inconsistencies or typographic errors.

CHARACTERS

MC – charming

Nancy – ingénue

A vaudeville troupe, indicated by letters – A, B, C etc.

Lines indicated with letters can be freely allocated at the director's discretion. The troupe should include a magician, a strong man, a fading star, a singer, and (if possible) a musician or two, who may accompany parts of the show live. The troupe members play the following roles (with doubling):

George Wallace – Australian vaudeville star

Philomena Morgan – pretty girl of easy virtue

Dr Benbow – American (played by the magician)

Lucy Collins – a colourful drunk

Mackay – Police Commissioner. Scottish (played by the strong man)

Jeanette Routledge – Philomena's mother, lacks credibility

Alma Brooks – sassy film maker

Rupert Kathner – shrewd film maker

Linda Agostini – English, sweet but hot tempered (played by singer)

Antonio Agostini – Linda's husband. Italian.

Grace Hopkins, 1940s, a policewoman

Coroner

This play can be performed by 7 actors (3M; 4 F) with doubling, although allows for up to 20.

SETTING

A vaudeville troupe reminiscent of 1930s/40s regional Australia (with some anachronisms).

The set contains a defined performance space (i.e raised stage) as well as visible backstage areas where we can see the off-stage interactions of the troupe.

Note: When a line of dialogue is interrupted or incomplete it is marked with a slash /

SCENE 1: A SUITCASE

Nancy alone with a suitcase.

NANCY

I saw a beautiful lady once. A vaudeville star. Her lips were red, her cheeks were rouged, her hair elaborate.

She was so elegant and glamorous. After the show I saw her smoking a cigarette and talking to a gentleman friend.

He said something close to her ear and she laughed. His eyes burned. He picked her up, fierce, passionate, and carried her away while she tried to fight him off, still laughing.

I wanted to be like her. To have my name on everyone's lips.

That's where my story started. I left my drab country town, seeking bright lights and adoration.

Here I am with nothing but my suitcase and possibility.

Who knows what lies ahead for a girl like me?

Nancy exits.

SCENE 2: SETTING UP RUMOURS

The troupe enters.

A

I remember where I was when I first heard about it.

B

Oh I remember/

C

And everybody was talking about it/

D

It was a real scandal.

E

I remember it like I remember what I was doing when Princess Dianna was killed.

F

When I heard about Azaria Chamberlain.

A

Something like that, it just stays with you.

B

It was national news/

C

International/

E

And I used to travel that road twice a day and I'd always reach that spot and think of her.

F

In a way, it put Albury on the map.

E

Who could fathom something like that happening in a sleepy country town?

G

Actually the town was on the rise. With wool and whatnot, it was poised to become a city.

D

The population had grown to about 10,000 people.

A

Oh and by 1934, Albury had electricity.

B

Oh yes.

A

But Wodonga didn't.

B

And the War Memorial. Here's this flood-lit shrine/

A

But Wodonga didn't have electricity.

G

Actually, Wodonga—Belvoir it was called then—had electricity first.

A

But I'm sure not many homes were connected.

C

Of a night you'd look out and see nothing but stars.

B

And the memorial.

E

There wasn't a whole lot going on in those days.

F

My dad used to say the ABC news would usually be something about a bull chasing someone round a paddock.

G

There were two papers: the Albury Banner and the Border Morning Mail.

E

Something like a murder was big news.

B

Oh and of course we had the bush telegraph. Word spread like wildfire.

A

Anyway, the story goes, Tom Griffiths was walking his bull along the Howlong Road/

B

He was the son of a notable farming family.

A

Tom stopped to light a cigarette/

C

Then the bull just stopped like something was wrong/

D

And it snorted/

E

Quivered with fear/

G

Actually, if you read Tom's statement, he doesn't make any mention of the cigarette or the bull.

D

Nonsense. I saw it on the telly.

E

I read it in the paper.

F

The bull knew.

G

The bull probably didn't know.

F

And then Tom saw this bundle, poking out of the culvert.

G

A culvert's a drain that runs under a roadway.

B

This culvert's not there anymore.

D

No, they realigned the road.

E

The bricks from the culvert were just dumped in the paddock.

D

Probably someone's taken those bricks to use for a retaining wall or something.

C

Makes me shudder to think. Cross myself every time I go down that road.

A

Anyway, Tom saw a body, half burnt and half concealed, half in and half out of the culvert.

B

Sort of tucked in there with her knees up to her chest.

C

A chaff bag on her head.

A

And so he tied up the bull and ran straight to the police.

B

Oh, I heard he flagged someone down on a bicycle.

C

And he rang the police—because the Griffiths' were one of the first families to have a telephone.

E

People said maybe he did it/

F

But why would he tell the police?

E

Or people said it was his family.

C

Because there'd been a big party there, in the nights before the murder.

D

The parties that went on out there at Delaware, well...
Steeple chasing their horses. In the nude.

E

Without any clothes!

A

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