

EXTRACT

PROPHET

Jodi Gallagher

australian *plays*.org

PROPHET
© Jodi Gallagher 2014

AUSTRALIAN SCRIPT CENTRE

This playscript is published and distributed by the Australian Script Centre, trading as AustralianPlays.org. The Australian Script Centre, a national not-for-profit organisation, has been selectively collecting outstanding Australian playscripts since 1979 and is home to a comprehensive and extraordinary catalogue of production-ready plays.

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

This work is protected by Australian and international copyright law. You have a legal obligation to obtain permission before making copies of this script or performing the play. Contact details for further information are provided below.

MAKING COPIES

Your script purchase entitles you to print the script once only. Beyond this single use, you may not copy or print more than 10% of this script without permission, even if you are covered by a Copyright Agency Limited (CAL) statutory licence. Additional copies may be made with the purchase of a [Copy Licence](#) from AustralianPlays.org.

COPYRIGHT ADVICE

For detailed information on copyright issues, please contact the [Australian Copyright Council](#).

PRODUCTION RIGHTS

Before producing or performing any play you must obtain the permission of the relevant rightsholder. Fees will vary according to the nature and scale of the proposed production. They are set at the discretion of the relevant rightsholder (usually the playwright or their agent). As a general guide, AustralianPlays.org recommends 10% of gross box office receipts or \$100 per performance, whichever is greater, as the minimum fee for amateur production. Your [production enquiry](#) for this play may be submitted through the AustralianPlays.org website.

PERMISSIONS FOR SOUND RECORDINGS & MUSIC

Some playscripts will require specific published sheet music or sound recordings for which performing rights may need to be separately licensed. Producers are advised to contact the [Australasian Performing Rights Association](#) (APRA) for more information on music licensing requirements.

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.

you want to track each trickle
back to its source
and then scream up the faucet
til your face is hoarse
cuz you're surrounded by a world's worth
of things you can't excuse

but you've got the hard cough of a chain smoker
and you're at the arctic circle playing strip poker
and it's getting colder and colder
every time you lose

so go ahead
make your next bold move

Ani DiFranco

Characters are:

David – Nathan’s father. 50s

Cassie – 40s

Nathan – early 30s

Elena – Nathan’s wife. early 30s

Simon – 30s

Frida – Simon’s mother – ageless

Kala – a politician. 50s

There should be a continuous soundscape throughout – occasionally getting loud enough to be intrusive and make the actors raise their voices. It should be urban noise – traffic, with the occasional very heavy vehicle, snatches of radio, scraps of other conversations perhaps drawn from sections of the script. Especially important – there should be sirens and gunshots.

The repetition of Simon’s speech on pg 4 and pg 62 is deliberate.

An oblique indicates crossover dialogue.

Scene 1

SIMON: In the city the lights bleach the stars and bring the sky down on our heads. I sit at the crossroads and wait. Some nights she comes, some nights she doesn't. When the streets filled with water they reflected the city lights. No stars. There's no one watching the show. There's only us left. When I see his face I think he's beautiful. Relentless. Too bright. The sky in the heat of summer. Polished metal, the blue flare from the barrel of a gun. A brightness that gives no quarter and offers no relief. And she stands behind him, always behind him, silent, veiled. She only speaks to me. She tells me stories, she waits for me to come home. I hold my breath, waiting to come home.

Scene 2

Nathan is talking to Cassie.

CASSIE: And?

NATHAN: I'm trying to tell the truth, not just what happened. Sky opened, the deluge came and the water found its level, and its level was always where the people lived. Earth opened, and the cities tipped into the cracks and holes that appeared, and the people cried. They turned to the people who had power, power that the people had given to them full of trust, or indifference, or sheer expedience. The people with power turned their faces away. They were too busy looking at the adjustments, at the fluctuations, at the rise and fall on the graph that told them how their power was increasing. The people lived in the streets, and held their families together and the end of the world came riding out of the east. Came thundering out of the west. Swarmed from the north, brought the winds with them from the south. Came riding with swords, came riding with guns, came riding with plans and blueprints and rezoning permits and bombs and schemes, with economics, statistics, legislation and razor wire.

They sent people to the stadium, under the dome in the sweltering heat and they stayed there until the water ran out and the shit piled up in the corners and the cameras rolled all the time, never ceasing, an endless whirring of wings, the angel of history beating her wings. And it seemed to be all for entertainment.

CASSIE: Get to the part with him in it.

NATHAN: He's all of it. It's all about him.

CASSIE: Tell me about him.

NATHAN: You've seen him.

CASSIE: We've both seen him. Many times. But you know him. Tell me.

NATHAN: I wanted...I don't really know what I wanted. I don't know if I really know him. I wanted to know him.

CASSIE: You're doing that adolescent fanboy thing again/

NATHAN: /I know. But there's a part of that feeling that never changes, or it hasn't for me. I wanted to know every thought that passed through his mind, I wanted to know what it was like to be him, doing the everyday things that people do. I've been in love before. I loved my wife. But that changes, the need to know and understand and feel like you are inside the other person's skin, disappears. It becomes everyday. What I felt about him wasn't romance, I don't think it was desire. I don't know.

CASSIE: You want to possess/

NATHAN: /not so crude/

CASSIE: /to control/

NATHAN: /no. *BEAT* No.

BEAT

NATHAN: To be him.

Scene 3

KALA: People talk about prophecy. They talk about the end of the world, saying the same things for thousands of years now. It's a rare year when someone isn't waiting for an apocalypse. They watch the stars and throw the bones and chart the changes in the weather. They count the floods and the fires, the blizzards and the hurricanes, and search for someone to blame. The human race has considered itself all-powerful for some time now – we can do anything, go anywhere, control everything. Short memories and big egos. Do you really believe we have the power to change the weather? Can we also move mountains and drink the seas dry? I believe in God. I believe he has a plan. I don't presume to know the details. I saw the waters rising, like everyone else. I saw certainty disappear, the queues in the streets, the men of faith ranting, the women crying. I saw all the same things everyone else saw. They saw the end of the world. I saw a golden opportunity.

Scene 4

Simon and Nathan. Simon sitting staring at nothing, Nathan hesitates a little before approaching him. He sits beside Simon in silence for a couple of beats.

NATHAN: How long have you been here?

SIMON: A long time. Forever.

NATHAN: It must feel like that.

SIMON: Nine months.

NATHAN: Long enough.

SIMON: Yes.

NATHAN: Where are you from?

SIMON: Same place as you. I heard you talking to the others.

NATHAN: Hometown brothers/

SIMON: /we're all brothers.

NATHAN: Of course. So how did we end up here, bro?

SIMON: I followed the signs.

BEAT

SIMON: We have to come. We have no choice. You know that.

NATHAN: Rhetorical question/

SIMON: /the first sign was her going away. I walked the whole town searching for her but she was gone. She wasn't at the station – she used to like watching

the people come and go – so I walked all the way down Burgundy to the House of the Nightingales, past the Vic and up to the university but there was no sign of her/

NATHAN: /who are you talking/

SIMON: /then I asked about her near the temple, and at the pier, and then near St Paul's and all the way out to the hills. She hadn't been in to the mission. No one had seen her.

BEAT

SIMON: So I came here.

BEAT

SIMON: She likes places that are empty.

BEAT

NATHAN: She's gonna love it here.

BEAT

NATHAN: She's your girlfriend?

SIMON: She gave birth to me.

NATHAN: Your mother.

SIMON: And your mother. She's everyone's mother.

NATHAN: You've been here nine months?

SIMON: Yes.

NATHAN: You've seen a lot of action.

SIMON: We all have. So have you. I've been watching you.

NATHAN: I've noticed you, too. You like to keep to yourself.

SIMON: It's best. I learned that a long time ago. People only confuse things.

NATHAN: You must find these close quarters difficult.

SIMON: Yes. I prefer out here. It's/

NATHAN: /empty.

SIMON: You understand.

NATHAN: Not yet.

SIMON: You're easy to talk to.

NATHAN: It's part of what I do.

SIMON: Scribbling all the time.

NATHAN: Old fashioned.

SIMON: Yes.

NATHAN: I have a tablet and a voice recorder, but it feels awkward out here/

SIMON: Who's waiting for you?

NATHAN: At home? My wife.

SIMON: Children?

NATHAN: No... We meant to. *BEAT* But somehow it got lost in the shuffle. *BEAT* Elena... my wife... wanted to. *BEAT* Never too late nowadays, though, it seems.

SIMON: You feel guilty.

NATHAN: I think I do.

SIMON: You find it difficult.

NATHAN: Yes.

SIMON: You shouldn't worry. We'll all be home soon.

Scene 5

CASSIE: You have to understand. You have to listen. It's a catastrophe. Not one of the things that used to be a catastrophe. Not like the things that happened before, in the lives we lived before. Not like the meetings at work where you sit there passing the time trying to remember the precise distinction between a psychopath and a sociopath and sort the people in the room into their proper categories and then later, in the bar, someone who wasn't in



australian *plays*.org