

Eyes to the  
Floor

Remembering the Hay  
Girls Home

Alana Valentine



*Kayla Barrett as Marjorie in the 2008 Outback Theatre production.  
(Photo: James Edwards)*

## Writer's Note

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It was when I began researching the stories of women who were incarcerated in the Girls Training School, Parramatta, formerly known as the Parramatta Girls Home, that I first began to hear stories of Hay. Women in their fifties, sixties, seventies and even eighties would sit across from me, having revealed the most gruesome and horrifying recollections of their time at Parramatta, and then they would say the word. Hay. After what I had heard it did not seem possible that there could be a place of which they had been more afraid, of which they spoke of in even more hushed and fearful tones. Some who had been there, others who had been threatened with the place and seen the effect on other inmates who returned to Parramatta. And where the stories about Parramatta had flowed out of them—jagged, brutal, struggling into the light often after many, many years of silence—the stories about Hay were harder to speak aloud. Often it was just a look of utter pain and despair, a quiet shaking of the head as if the horror of the recollection was just too incomprehensible, too appalling to form into syllables. But then these astonishingly courageous women, these women whom I have come to respect with such deep and abiding awe, these strong and beautiful survivors, gave voice to their memories and trusted me with their feelings and their stories. And a picture began to emerge of an injustice so grotesque that I could only sit open-mouthed and weeping that such treatment had been metered out to Australian children until as recently as 1974.

As with my stage play *Parramatta Girls*, the characters here are composites from all the stories I have been told by actual survivors of these two institutions, as well as from material on the public record in newspapers, the Senate report 'Forgotten Australians' and from interviews with counsellors and psychologists who treat the legacy of such incarcerations. All of the characters are fictional and do not represent any particular individual, but all of the stories are true and were drawn from one or another of the above sources. I would especially like to thank the former employees of the Hay Girls Institution who told me

their own stories with candour and sincerity. I wanted to include their perspective because of the central thesis of this play, which is that a brutal state institution like this leaves a painful legacy, most especially on the former inmates themselves, but also on their families, the guards who were employed to work there, the town of Hay, and, in ways too numerous to calibrate, on the complexion of Australia's past and its future. I have profound admiration for the town of Hay for confronting and supporting this examination of old wounds and painful histories. I commemorate the women who died carrying the burden of a childhood broken by violence and abuse in institutions such as Hay. I dedicate this play to those working with Australian children today, under what must always be enormously difficult circumstances, to provide some better way forward for neglected and troubled young women and girls.

Alana Valentine  
April 2008

*Eyes to the Floor* first previewed at the Hay Goal Museum on 26 April 2008 and was first produced by Outback Theatre for Young People in association with Griffith Regional Theatre at the Griffith Regional Theatre, Griffith on 2 May 2008, with the following cast:

MARJORIE	Kayla Barrett
FIONA	Danielle Curtis
GWEN	Ebony Lees
EMMA	Teleaha Marlin
JANE	Abby Martin
DANIELLA	Alannah Robertson
FUREDI/LENNY/HAWKINS	Jack Murray
GUARD KAY	Ashleigh Haynes-Holyoake
MR NAYLOR	Craig Higgs

Director, Amy Hardingham

Choreographer, Lee Pemberton

Set/Costume Designer, Nicola Barber

Sound Designer, Scott Howie

Lighting Designer, John Matkovic

Production/Stage Manager, Sophie Berry

OTYP Company Manager, Carlie Mason

Photography/Video, James Edwards

Costume Realisation, Elizabeth Howe, Kayla Barrett, Linda Wright

## **CHARACTERS**

DANIELLA GREAVES 15, Hay inmate

JANE ROGERS 16, Hay inmate

EMMA ABBOT 14, Hay inmate

GWEN GILL 16, Hay inmate

FIONA HODGES 17, Hay inmate

MARJORIE LINNETT 17, Hay inmate

GUARD FUREDI, guard at Hay

FH HAWKINS, Minister for Child and Social Welfare

LENNY

MRS KAY, A recently arrived guard at Hay

MR NAYLOR, Superintendent at Hay

FATHER

The actor who plays FUREDI also plays HAWKINS and LENNY.

The actor who plays NAYLOR also plays FATHER.

The play is set in the remembered past.

## SCENE ONE

FIONA stands alone on stage. She holds a long lead with a single light bulb on it. She holds the bulb up to her face and then swings the bulb back and forth across her face. Finally she spins the globe in circles around her head.

FIONA: Committal to an Institution. Fiona June Hodges. Born 22.2.1944.  
Charge: Neglected and Exposed to Moral Danger.

*JANE enters the stage. She too has a long lead with a single bulb and performs the same actions as FIONA.*

JANE: Committal to an Institution: Jane Dawn Rogers. Born 19.6.1945.  
Charge: Neglect and Exposed to Moral Danger.

*EMMA enters the stage. She too has a long lead with a single bulb and performs the same actions as JANE.*

EMMA: Committal to an Institution: Emma Abbot. Born 21.8.1947.  
Charge: Uncontrollable. Escape from Cootamundra Girls Home.

*GWEN enters the stage. She too has a long lead with a single bulb and performs the same actions as EMMA.*

GWEN: Committal to an Institution: Gwen Gill. Born 9.3.1945. Charge:  
Uncontrollable. Escape from Cootamundra Girls Home.

*MARJORIE enters the stage. She too has a long lead with a single bulb and performs the same actions as GWEN.*

MARJORIE: Committal to an Institution: Marjorie Linnett. Born 6.11.1944. Charge: Uncontrollable and Exposed to Moral Danger.

*DANIELLA enters the stage. She too has a long lead with a single bulb and performs the same actions as MARJORIE.*

DANIELLA: Committal to an Institution: Daniella Andrea Greaves. Born 14.5.1946. Charge: Uncontrollable and exposed to Moral Danger.

FIONA: General Comment: Last Saturday afternoon it became apparent that Hodges had assumed leadership of the girls and the recreation period was very disturbed by her. Girls who previously were conforming satisfactorily became troublesome.

JANE: Home situation: The home is a fibro-lined tin shack in a poor

state of repair. Home contains two tiny rooms. One is a kitchen where the father sleeps, in the other room, Jane, Louise and baby shared one bed, three younger boys share second bed and two eldest boys share third bed.

EMMA: Home situation: Emma had been removed from home when father charged with shooting uncle in the thigh.

GWEN: Home situation: Became a ward of the state at six months old. Was living with a foster family, the Anthonys who commented that her behaviour whilst in the home could not be faulted, but her behaviour outside was most undesirable and they had not been able to control her.

MARJORIE: Home Situation: Father still caring for large family of brothers and sisters after mother died of cancer one year ago. Father seems to have taken to drinking after this event, eventually being jailed for fighting.

DANIELLA: Home Situation: Daniella lives in desperate poverty in Surry Hills, Sydney.

FIONA: Although the crisis has passed the influence of Hodges is such that it will be several weeks before the effect of her time in the main institution is erased.

JANE: There is a bare minimum of furniture. Mrs Rogers has applied for a Housing commission home and lives in hopes of getting it.

EMMA: Emma was being housed at Cootamundra Girls home then, with two other girls jumped a goods train and was carried as far as Narrandera before being apprehended by the local police constable.

GWEN: Gwen was being housed at Cootamundra Girls home then, with two other girls jumped a goods train and was carried as far as Narrandera before being apprehended by the local police constable.

MARJORIE: Three youngest sisters placed in an orphanage by sister-in-law and Marjorie was employed in a factory at thirteen when subsequently charged with neglect and exposed to moral danger by sister-in-law.

DANIELLA: She has been treated for repeated sexual assaults at a young age, one of which resulted in a pregnancy and the birth of a child who has been adopted out.

FIONA: Recommendation:

*All begin their lines in unison.*

FIONA: That Fiona June Hodges be transferred from the Training

School Parramatta to the Institution for Girls, Hay. Transfer Order herewith for Minister's signature.

JANE: Jane has been repeatedly reprimanded for language infringements at Parramatta and transferred to Hay on 26.10.61. Transfer order herewith for Minister's signature.

EMMA: Transferred to Parramatta and thence to Hay for repeated charge of refusing duties. Transfer order herewith for Minister's signature.

GWEN: Transferred to Parramatta and thence to Hay for repeated charge of refusing duties. Transfer order herewith for Minister's signature.

MARJORIE: Committed to Parramatta by Sydney Children's Court and transferred to 'The Institution for Girls, Hay' for repeated self-mutilation. Transfer order herewith for Minister's signature.

DANIELLA: Committed to Parramatta by Sydney Children's Court and transferred to Hay after repeated twenty-four hour detentions for violent, uncontrollable behaviour at Parramatta. Transfer order herewith for Minister's signature.

*All the GIRLS being to say 'Choo Choo, Bum Bum' in unison, as a chanting rhythm. It becomes quicker and more insistent until it cross fades with the sound of a train.*

*The GIRLS run past FIONA with their lights, as if lights passing outside the window and the chanting continues. The other GIRLS force FIONA to drink largactyl. She staggers around, disorientated.*

FIONA: I am scared to death  
 And wish that I could sleep.  
 The rocking of the train lulls me  
 Dulls me.  
 Between stations there is time  
 Expressed in forward motion  
 And there is  
 Gentle  
 Fragmental  
 Sleep  
 My limbs are heavy with it  
 My eyes droop  
 How delicious is the oblivion of dreams  
 Those palaces of imagination

How I long to slip into the silk of rest  
Of sleep  
Of glorious rest  
But now I feel the train lurch  
A sign flashes by  
Narrandera  
And I am being  
bundled into a truck  
It is close, it is airless  
Again we lurch  
And I feel the speed increase  
I cannot rest  
I cannot sleep  
The speed increases  
They do as they please  
They do as they like  
And still the pace  
Escalates  
Even more  
Even more  
I am lost.

*FIONA finally falls to the ground and all the other characters leave the stage.*



## SCENE TWO

SUPERINTENDENT NAYLOR, *in a suit and tie, stands beside the fallen FIONA. He kicks her, casually, and she groggily wakes up. She looks up at him.*

NAYLOR: Rule Number One. Don't look at me. Don't ever look at me.  
I repeat. Don't ever look me in the eye.

*FIONA gets up onto her feet, she is unsteady but looks at the ground.*

NAYLOR: Do you understand?

FIONA: Yes.

NAYLOR: Right. That is called a bounce.

FIONA: A what?

NAYLOR: A bounce. You'll have no sweets with your dinner this evening.

FIONA: For what?

NAYLOR: For looking me in the eye.

FIONA: [*looking up*] I didn't.

NAYLOR *meets her eye.*

NAYLOR: That's half your dinner this evening gone.

FIONA *looks at the ground.*

Am I making myself understood?

FIONA: Yes.

NAYLOR: Yes, who?

FIONA: Yes, Superintendent.

NAYLOR: There was a girl brought in yesterday, name of Jane Rogers.

FIONA: Sir.

NAYLOR: She lost both her dinner and her sweets last evening.

*Pause. FIONA continues to look at the ground.*

She was given bread and water and put in isolation for twenty-four hours.

FIONA *looks up. NAYLOR meets her gaze.*

Once more and you will be put in isolation yourself.

*The tough nut almost cracks. Her chin wobbles but she doesn't cry.*

FIONA: I'm sorry, sir.

NAYLOR: Yes, I'm sorry too.

FIONA *stands, eyes still to the ground.*



### SCENE THREE

GUARD FUREDI *blows a whistle.*

FUREDI: All rise.

*The GIRLS rise from their beds. Their clothing is passed to them through a flap which is then relocked. In perfect unison, the*

*GIRLS get out of bed, take off their nightdresses, fold them, tie them with tape and place them with their reading matter on the bed. They get dressed and then stand at the head of the bed.*

*All the cell doors are opened and FUREDI inspects the beds for tidiness. The GIRLS, without exception, have their eyes to the floor.*

Kneel.

*The GIRLS, simultaneously, kneel.*

GIRLS: Our Father,  
 Who Art in Heaven,  
 Hallowed be thy name,  
 Thy kingdom come,  
 Thy will be done on earth  
 As it is in heaven.  
 Give us this day our daily bread  
 And forgive us our trespasses,  
 As we forgive those who trespass against us  
 Lead us not into temptation  
 But deliver us from evil  
 For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory,  
 For ever and ever,  
 Amen.

FUREDI: Stand.

*The GIRLS, in unison, stand at attention, facing the bed.*

Gear up.

*The GIRLS pick up their nightwear, night can and reading material.*

Move.

*The GIRLS move to the cabin doorways.*

Daniella Greaves.

DANIELLA: Yes, Mr Furedi.

*DANIELLA goes to her locker, place her night attire on the shelf and picks up her comb and toothbrush. She then moves back to the cell door.*

Reporting back to you Mr Furedi.

FUREDI: Marjorie Linnett.

MARJORIE: Yes, Mr Furedi.

*MARJORIE goes to her locker, places her night attire on the shelf and picks up her comb and toothbrush. She then moves back to the cell door.*

FUREDİ: Fiona Hodges.

FIONA: [*quietly*] Yes, Mr Furedi.

FUREDİ: What?

FIONA: Well, you know who I am, don't you?

FUREDİ: That's twenty minutes of practices, Hodges. [*Pause.*] What did you say?

FIONA: Yes, Mr Furedi.

*FIONA goes to her locker, places her night attire on the shelf, picks up her comb and toothbrush. She then moves back to the cell door.*

FUREDİ: Jane Rogers.

JANE: Yes, Mr Furedi.

*JANE goes to her locker, places her night attire on the shelf, picks up her comb and toothbrush. She then moves back to the cell door.*

FUREDİ: Daniella Greaves.

DANIELLA: Yes, Mr Furedi.

*DANIELLA moves to another part of the stage to shower. Before she does so she reports to the GUARD there.*

Reporting to you, Mrs Kay.

MRS KAY: Carry on.

*DANIELLA then empties her night can, uses the toilet, washes and cleans her teeth. When she is finished she returns to MRS KAY.*

DANIELLA: Reporting to you, Mrs Kay.

MRS KAY: Carry on.

*DANIELLA then collects her cabin cleaning gear, moves to her locker, replaces the comb and toothbrush and then goes back to her cell door.*

DANIELLA: Reporting back to you, Mr Furedi.

*As all the GIRLS go through this routine they will finish one*

*by one and end by standing at their cell doors. Once all are assembled* NAYLOR, *who has entered to observe, directs them.*

NAYLOR: Move.

*The GIRLS all, simultaneously, take three steps into their cells. The doors are then closed and locked by the officers, but the flap on the cell is left open.*

*The two OFFICERS come and serve breakfast through the flap.*



#### SCENE FOUR

EMMA *and* GWEN *are together.*

EMMA: They normally transport you separately.

GWEN: Yeah, so.

EMMA: So, there must be a reason they put us together.

GWEN: Not that reason.

EMMA: How do you know?

GWEN: Because. [*Beat.*] Why would they know that?

EMMA: It'd be in their files. From when you was taken away.

GWEN: Nah.

EMMA: Yeah, they got it all written down. On bits of paper in them files. They've got our whole lives in them files.

GWEN: Then why don't they tell us?

EMMA: Because. They don't want us to know. But I'm smarter than them. I've worked it out.

*Pause.*

GWEN: So would they have written down all the stuff about Cootamundra?

EMMA: Yeah. For sure.

GWEN: How we met up there and then tried to escape?

EMMA: Yeah.

GWEN: How you fell off the train and sprained your ankle?

EMMA: That rattler was too high for me.

GWEN: So I shouldn't have brung ya.

EMMA: Well why did ya?

GWEN: You said you wanted to come.

EMMA: I did. Because of who you are.

*Pause.*

GWEN: How do you know?

EMMA: 'Cause ya look like me.

GWEN: That's no proof.

EMMA: You got the same eyes.

GWEN: That's no proof.

EMMA: I just know.

GWEN: Ya can't just know.

EMMA: I do. That's why I helped ya in Parramatta.

GWEN: You shouldn'ta done that.

EMMA: You gotta take care of me. We gotta take care of each other.

GWEN: Yeah.

EMMA: You do.

GWEN: Says who?

EMMA: Says me.

GWEN: So. Why should I listen to you?

*Pause.*

EMMA: Because I'm your sister.

GWEN: Are not.

EMMA: I am.

*Pause.*

GWEN: So. Even if you are. And that's only a maybe.

EMMA: So.

GWEN: So. So what?

EMMA: So, sisters look after each other and nothing can separate them.

GWEN: Yeah it can.

*GWEN grabs EMMA and hauls her up by the collar.*

Don't you ever say anything to anyone about your theory.

EMMA: I won't.

GWEN: Anyone who gets me into trouble, I'll pay them back.



## SCENE FIVE

NAYLOR *and* FUREDİ *are onstage when* MRS KAY *enters, holding a broken piece of the concrete path.*

MRS KAY: I wouldn't have believed it.

NAYLOR: What's that?

MRS KAY: But now I've seen it for myself.

NAYLOR: Sorry?

MRS KAY: I've seen what these little terrors can do.

NAYLOR: Is that part of the path?

MRS KAY: So how did they get away from you?

NAYLOR: To do what?

MRS KAY: To break up the path. I mean, was there a riot? What did they use?

NAYLOR: Pick axes.

MRS KAY: But where were they hiding them? I watch them at night. I watch them. I've never seen pick axes.

NAYLOR: We gave them the pick axes.

*Pause.*

MRS KAY: What?

NAYLOR: We gave them the pick axes to break up the path.

MRS KAY: But they've just laid the path.

NAYLOR: And now they can lay it again. [*He take the lump of concrete from MRS KAY and throws it in the air and catches it a few times.*]

Mrs Kay. [*Beat.*] It's a discipline exercise.

*Pause.*

MRS KAY: It's a stupid exercise.

NAYLOR: As you said yourself ... they're terrors.

MRS KAY: Many of them can't read or write.

NAYLOR: Exactly.

MRS KAY: So let me teach them.

NAYLOR: We all think that, at first.

MRS KAY: Think what? That they could benefit from learning to read?

NAYLOR: But then you see what they are.

MRS KAY: Uneducated, disadvantaged, neglected children.

NAYLOR: Morally misguided, sexual extroverts, violent, unstable terrors.

MRS KAY: Then give them rehabilitation.

NAYLOR: They don't deserve to be given anything else. Parramatta tried to give them guidance and what did they do? These girls climbed on the roof and hurled roof tiles at their protectors. These girls swallowed pins and needles and brasso to get away from the people who were trying to help them. These girls, these ten girls are the worst, most violent, unstable girls in New South Wales and you want to mollycoddle them?

MRS KAY: I was only suggesting some arithmetic.

NAYLOR: They are taught to wash floors, they are taught to wash clothes, they are taught to assist in the kitchen. When you see them they're locked behind bars, sleeping but we live with the fact that they can turn any moment into little wildcats who could scratch your eyes out if you let them get close to you.

MRS KAY: You don't think they're going to do that.

NAYLOR: I do think they're going to do that if we give them the chance. If we underestimate them. The system has tried to help them. We didn't ask their parents to abandon them, we didn't ask them to run away from home, we didn't ask them to give themselves to their boyfriends or assist in armed robberies or destroy and burn government property at Parramatta. Why do they deserve to be treated well?

MRS KAY: It might reform them.

NAYLOR: I don't believe that. I don't believe that they are capable of change. They are vicious little bitches who won't do as they're told. Take off your rose-coloured glasses.

*He throws the lump of rock in the air again but this time he misses catching it and it smashes on the ground. MRS KAY begins to exit but stops as NAYLOR speaks.*

Religious instruction. Not religious discussion. Not religious conversion. You may instruct them, Mrs Kay. [*Beat.*] That is what you may do for us and for the community who will be forced to live with them.

*MRS KAY leaves, then NAYLOR exits, passing an entering FIONA as she goes.*

FUREDI: Commence practice.

*FIONA stands.*

Eyes to the floor.

FIONA *marches back and forth across the stage, back and forth back and forth.*

Cease practice.

FIONA *stands at attention.*

Commence practice.

FIONA: Yes, Mr Furedi.

Yes, Mr Furedi.

Yes, Mr Furedi.

FUREDİ: Cease practice.

Yes, Mr Furedi. Like you mean it.

Commence practice.

FIONA: Yes, Mr Furedi.

Yes, Mr Furedi.

Yes, Mr Furedi.

Yes, Mr Furedi.

FUREDİ: Cease practice.

FIONA *stands at attention.*

Commence practice.

FIONA *picks up a pile of clothes and folds them. She shakes them out and folds them again. She shakes them out and folds them again. She shakes them out and folds them again.*

Cease practice.

FUREDİ *goes over and folds the cloth, very carefully.*

Commence practice.

FIONA *folds the clothes again. Over and over.*

Cease practice.

FIONA *stands at attention.*

FIONA: Reporting to you, Mr Furedi

FUREDİ *is holding an orange. He drops it and stands on it.*

FUREDİ: Permission to eat your fruit.

FIONA *picks up and eats the fruit.*



## SCENE SIX

*The GIRLS move into the dining room in single file, at intervals of two metres apart. They proceed to their nominated place at the table and mark time.*

FUREDÌ: Halt.

*The GIRLS stop marking time.*

Sit.

*The GIRLS sit. Two girls, JANE and MARJORIE, carry meals from the servery and place them in front of the GIRLS who are seated.*

Grace.

DANIELLA: For what we are about to receive may the Lord make us truly thankful.

*DANIELLA sits down. The GIRLS sit, waiting. NAYLOR enters with MRS KAY. The GIRLS do not look up at her.*

NAYLOR: Carry on.

*The meal proceeds in silence. As each GIRL finishes she puts her knife and fork on the top of the plate.*

FUREDÌ: Grace.

*DANIELLA stands.*

DANIELLA: Thank you for the world so sweet

Thank you for the food we eat.

Thank you for the birds that sing.

Thank you God for everything.

*DANIELLA sits down.*

*JANE and MARJORIE, now clear the plates and put them in a servery. The GIRLS stand and line up, as in muster.*

NAYLOR: First, I remind you that girls are to sleep facing the door at all times. I have been receiving reports that too many girls, too often are rolling over in their sleep. These girls will be woken, made to stand for an hour until they learn to sleep facing the door. Do you understand?

GIRLS: Yes, Superintendent.

NAYLOR: What?

GIRLS: [*more loudly*] Yes, Superintendent.

NAYLOR: Second. You have a new instructor. This is Mrs Kay who you know as your night guard.

*Beat. None of the GIRLS look up.*

Good. She will be here on Fridays for half an hour to give you some religious instruction. [*Pause.*] Right. File out.

*The GIRLS file off stage.*

MRS KAY: They didn't look at me.

NAYLOR: We might finally be getting somewhere.

MRS KAY: How do you mean?

NAYLOR: We still do get the odd one who continues to rebel, but I pride myself that there has been a margin of improvement.

MRS KAY: They're not allowed to look up?

NAYLOR *looks at her and exits.*



## SCENE SEVEN

*The GIRLS enter, marching. They stand at attention in front of their cells. They take three paces into their cells.*

MRS KAY: Lights out.

*After a moment, from one of the cells, there is the sound of a girl crying. After a few moments another girl begins to softly join her. Then after another time there is a third girl crying.*

*MRS KAY listens. She stands to say something and then decides against it. Instead she begins to sing.*

[*Singing*] In Dublin's fair city  
 Where the girls are so pretty  
 I first laid my eyes on sweet Molly Malone.  
 As she wheeled her wheelbarrow  
 Through the streets broad and narrow.  
 Crying cockles and mussels alive, alive, oh.  
 Alive alive oh, alive alive oh,  
 crying cockles and mussels alive, alive oh.

She was a fishmonger  
And sure t'was no wonder  
For so was her father and mother before  
And they all wheeled their wheelbarrows  
Through the streets broad and narrow  
Crying cockles and mussels alive, alive, oh.  
Alive alive oh, alive alive oh,  
Crying cockles and mussels  
Alive, alive oh.  
She died of a fever  
And no-one could save her  
And that was the end of sweet Molly Malone  
Now her ghost wheels that barrow  
Through the streets broad and narrow  
Crying cockles and mussels, alive, alive oh.  
Alive alive oh, alive alive oh,  
Crying cockles and mussels  
Alive, alive oh.

*There is silence after she finishes singing. The crying has stopped and the GIRLS have got out of bed and come to the bars of their cells.*

EMMA: What was that?

MRS KAY: Well, it's a song.

MARJORIE: What's it called?

MRS KAY: It's called Molly Malone.

DANIELLA: My moth is called Molly.

MRS KAY: Do you know that song?

DANIELLA: No. I just called it that.

MRS KAY: That's nice.

DANIELLA: It's dead. Like Molly Malone. And when it died it must have known it was about to die because its wings are kind of folded back, all neatly and its legs are all folded forward all neatly. It must have known it was going to die, don't you think, like Molly knew when she got her fever.

MRS KAY: Get back into bed now girls.

MARJORIE: How do you know that song?

MRS KAY: Everyone knows that song. It's a folk song.

EMMA: From where?

MRS KAY: From Ireland.

MARJORIE: Is that where you're from?

MRS KAY: Yes. Now go back to bed girls or there'll be no more songs.

*The GIRLS go back to bed. There is a silence.*

DANIELLA: Alive, alive oh.

MARJORIE: Alive, alive oh.

GIRLS: Crying cockles and mussels alive, alive oh.

*FIONA walks forward, she is shivering. The other GIRLS circle her; they hold a thin blanket wrapped around their shoulders and then, in unison, begin to flap the sides of the blanket as if they are a flock of birds. They begin to caw and twitter like birds as they fly around then off and away, crumpled in a heap to sleep.*

FIONA: I am freezing to death

And wish that I could sleep.

The shivering of my shoulders shakes me,  
breaks me.

Between sunup and sundown there is work

Repetitive, exhausting work

And there is

blank

rank

Silence.

My brain is whirring with it

My throat is dry

How monotonous is the loneliness of lips

The whispered intimacies of personal talk

How I long to chat and laugh

To talk

To form and roll words along my tongue

But there is only the cold

With claws that bite at my palms and feet.

Only the cold speaks

a varied language

of ruthless chill

of probing pain

I cannot rest  
 I cannot sleep  
 The shaking increases  
 I mutter to myself  
 I start at a and say  
 all the words  
 all the verbs  
 My teeth are chattering with adjectives,  
 unused.



### SCENE EIGHT

MARJORIE *walks onto the stage. She has a ping pong ball and bat and she hits the ball onto the side of the stage. The ball may be attached by string to the bat.*

MARJORIE: With all this looking at the floor, I had a dream.

*EMMA enters. She also has a ping pong ball and bat and hits it onto the floor of the stage.*

EMMA: With all this looking at the floor, I had a dream about ping pong.

*GWEN enters. She also has a ping pong ball and hits it onto the floor of the stage.*

GWEN: With all this looking at the floor I had a dream about ping pong balls.

*FIONA enters. She also has a ping pong ball and hits it onto the floor of the stage.*

FIONA: With all this looking at the floor I had a dream about ping pong balls and how they bounce.

*DANIELLA enters. She also has a ping pong ball and hits it on the floor.*

DANIELLA: With all this looking at the floor I had a dream about ping pong balls and how they bounce out of my head.

MARJORIE: I dreamt they were like my eyes.

EMMA: With all this staring at the floor.

GWEN: Seeing shoes, seeing dirt, seeing concrete.

FIONA: I dreamt that all of the officers surrounded me.

DANIELLA: And then they held me down and started gouging at my eyes.

*The GIRLS all hold MARJORIE down and there is a struggle. One of the ping pong balls flies across the stage and rolls. There is more of a struggle and another of the balls flies out and rolls.*

*MARJORIE emerges, she has her eyes closed. Black may have been put on the eye area, making it look like her eyes have popped out. Fake blood is optional.*

MARJORIE: And in the dream I was laughing.

GWEN: Laughing.

EMMA: Because at first it was funny.

FIONA: With all this looking at the floor.

DANIELLA: I lost my eyesight.

*MARJORIE drops to the floor; blindly searching for the balls, crawling on her hands and knees and then, successively, so do all the others.*

MARJORIE: With all this looking at the floor I had a dream.

GWEN: With all this looking at the floor I had a dream that I searched and searched.

EMMA: With all this looking at the floor I had a dream that I searched and searched but I couldn't find my eyes.

FIONA: With all this looking at the floor I had a dream that I searched and searched but I couldn't find my eyes and I imagined them covered in all the filth of the floor.

DANIELLA: With all this looking at the floor I had a dream that I searched and searched but I couldn't find my eyes and I imagined them covered in the filth of the floor ...

GIRLS: ... and I wasn't laughing anymore.



## SCENE NINE

*NAYLOR comes in carrying a hay bale. He walks to the centre of the stage where he puts down the bale then climbs on top of it. All the GIRLS sit in a semicircle underneath it. He pulls a pair of garden shears from his pocket and begins to cut the hay, so that bits and pieces of it*

*fall down over the GIRLS sitting underneath.*

NAYLOR: We don't cut their hair because we are barbaric. We don't like having to cut off their hair. I'd go so far as to say that we don't even like having them here. But we didn't ask them to be here. They are uncontrollable, rebellious girls. I know there may be reasons why they are like that. I know that many of them have had very hard childhoods. But that does not discount that fact that now, now, our society is having to deal with them and they are, dreadful. Really dreadful girls. Perhaps any ladylike behaviour has been beaten out of them or bullied out of them. But however it has been removed it is doubtless gone from them. You can't reason with them. And in your heart of hearts you know that I am right. There are girls like this. There are girls who, perhaps for no fault of their own, or perhaps simply because they choose not to learn from their mistakes, are wild, hostile, barbaric little wild animals. And they must be corrected. They must be corrected. And that is why we cut off their hair. And it's not barbaric. It's not cruel and indifferent. Hair will grow back. But they need to learn to submit. Goodness I submit. There's a lot of things I have to do that I don't like doing. There's a lot of things in life that you just have to force yourself to submit to. But these girls won't accept that. They smash things, they bite each other, they hurt themselves. I'm not making this up. Maybe you think that they aren't so bad. Well I do this day in and day out and I'm here to tell you that these are wild little bitches who need to have everything taken from them before they are prepared to listen. Well fine. If you're not going to listen we are going to take you down. We are going to take everything away from you until you do listen.

*He holds the scissors up into the air.*

Next.



## SCENE TEN

NAYLOR *and* JANE.

NAYLOR: Jane?

JANE: Yes, sir.

NAYLOR: That is your name.

JANE: Yes, sir.

NAYLOR: Yes. However we have another Jane arriving.

JANE: Yes, sir.

NAYLOR: So that will be a problem for us.

JANE: A problem, sir?

NAYLOR: Two girls with the same name.

JANE: Sir.

NAYLOR: We can't have that.

JANE: Am I being sent back to Parramatta?

NAYLOR: No.

JANE: Will you call us by our surnames, sir?

NAYLOR: We could do that.

JANE: Yes, sir.

NAYLOR: But I don't think that will work for us.

JANE: Sir?

NAYLOR: There is only one solution.

JANE: Yes, sir.

NAYLOR: You see what we have to do don't you, Jane?

JANE: I'm not ... I don't ...

NAYLOR: Brain engaged, girl.

JANE: You'll call us by our numbers, sir?

NAYLOR: No. Call you by your numbers? What do you think we are?

JANE: Then ...

NAYLOR: Think child. Honestly, the stupidity of you girls is exhausting.

Sometimes I think that you don't have brains at all, only useless  
grey mush.

JANE: Not our surname ...

NAYLOR: Yes.

JANE: Not our number ...

NAYLOR: Yes.

JANE: Not sent away ...

NAYLOR: And ...

JANE: Not able to have two of us.

NAYLOR: Logic child? Use a bit of logic can you?

JANE: You wouldn't?

NAYLOR: Wouldn't what?

JANE: No, please, sir please don't.

NAYLOR: Please don't what?

JANE: Please don't ... kill me.

*Pause. He slaps her. He kicks her. He punches her.*

NAYLOR: You are a stupid, worthless, worthless piece of rubbish.

JANE: I'm sorry sir.

NAYLOR: I'd like to kill you, because of your utter idiocy. Kill you! Get back to your dorm, right this minute.

JANE *begins to leave.*

Wait.

JANE *stops.*

NAYLOR: You will be called Joanne.

JANE: Sir?

NAYLOR: We will call the new girl Jane and you will be Joanne. You will answer to Joanne when an officer addresses you as such.

JANE: Joanne?

NAYLOR: Yes, Joanne.

JANE: But ...

NAYLOR: But what, Joanne?

JANE: My name is Jane.

NAYLOR: Your name is Joanne.

JANE: But why?

NAYLOR: Because I say it is.

*Pause.*

NAYLOR: Did you think that your name was something that belonged to you? Did you think that your name was the only thing that no-one could take away from you? Did you?

JANE *nods.*

[*Amused*] I killed Jane off.

JANE: But I am Jane.

NAYLOR: If we had any sense I would rename all of you. Give you all a fresh start. But as it transpires only you will be lucky enough to have that done for you.

JANE: I am Jane.

NAYLOR: You are nothing. [*Beat.*] Now get out.



## SCENE ELEVEN

DANIELLA *is lying in bed, speaking aloud. Two other actors appear, upstage, and act out the scene she is describing, as the spider and the fly. They may have cups from the dining room scene or other props on their eyes.*

DANIELLA: Bzzzz.

Bzzzzz.

Bzzzz.

It's on the roof of my cell.

A fly has been caught by a spider. The web has probably only snared its leg or its wing, only one small part of it. But that's enough. The spider is alerted to its catch by the desperate tugging on the threads of its trap and also by a low, mournful buzzing.

Bzzzzz.

Bzzzzz.

Bzzzzz.

The spider crawls towards its catch. I can't quite see but it looks like it goes in and bites it on the head, or something like that. The fly is still buzzing but the action of the wings is getting lower. The buzzing is no longer a desperate struggling zzzzz but a continuous moaning bzzzzzt, bzzzzt. The spider becomes a dancer, it is wrapping up the fly in long threads of web. Around and around and around it dances, and then it falls back, like a maniac weaver, and tugs the threads tight across the body of the fly. The buzzing continues and continues.

Bzzzzt.

Bzzzzzt.

Bzzzzt.

I can see other flies on the walls. They are still. They are silent. The spider dances again like some insane grandmother with lethal crochet hooks, conducting the air with sticky fibres. Bzzzzt.

Bzzzzt.

Bzzzzt.

Long after it knows its fate. Long after it is wrapped and tied. Long after the spider advances toward it to suck it dry.

When I look up in the morning there will be a small little husk. Or

it will have fallen to the floor where I will find it. I will get into trouble if I leave the cobwebs hanging in my cell until they can be seen. But I don't care. I am in league with the spider. I am in league. I love to watch him feeding.



## SCENE TWELVE

*The GIRLS march on stage. They sit around in a circle. They all hold bras. The first GIRL cuts off the hooks and eyes on the bra. She then passes the scissors to the next GIRL who also proceeds to unpick the hooks and eyes. When the GIRL has taken them off she hands them to FUREDİ who is waiting for them. At one point FUREDİ goes over to get some buttons which he gives to the first GIRL. The GIRL then begins to sew the buttons on. FUREDİ proceeds down the row to each GIRL getting hooks and eyes and giving out buttons. Suddenly he notices that something is wrong.*

FUREDİ: Where is the other piece?

MARJORIE *looks at the ground.*

Marjorie Linnett. Where is the hook from this bra?

MARJORIE *looks at the ground.*

No girl will leave here until you hand over the hook from this bra.

MARJORIE *still says nothing.*

Get up.

MARJORIE *stands.*

Give me the hook, immediately.

MARJORIE *looks at the ground. FUREDİ hits her on the legs at the end of every sentence.*

Why do you think we have to get you to do this? Because we know what you'll do with little pieces of wire. What did you do in Parramatta? Do you think I don't know that you swallowed them? Do you think I don't know that you cut yourself with them? Why do you think that we make you sew on these buttons?

MARJORIE *falls to her knees.*

Now where is that hook?

MARJORIE *sticks out her tongue and the hook is on it.* FUREDI *puts out his hand.* MARJORIE *spits the hook slowly into FUREDI's hand.* FUREDI *slaps MARJORIE with his right hand and knocks her to the ground.*

Carry on.



### SCENE THIRTEEN

*Through their cell flap, JANE and DANIELLA are comparing their legs and arms. They speak in barely a whisper.*

JANE: See my arms are just that little bit longer than yours.

DANIELLA: Yeah, but you're older than me.

JANE: No, it's more than that. Show us your legs.

*They compare the length of their legs.*

See that's another sign.

DANIELLA: No it's not.

JANE: Yeah, it is. Now stick out your tongue. [*She sticks her own tongue out.*] How far can you stick your tongue out?

*They both stick their tongues out.*

Yeah, see that's another sign.

DANIELLA: Of what?

JANE: Of that you're more tainted than me.

DANIELLA: How come?

JANE: No, it's nothing you did. It's just the way you are.

DANIELLA: I'm not.

JANE: Yeah, you are. For sure, you're more tainted than me.

DANIELLA: What's that?

JANE: Tainted stock. I heard one of them, MacPherson, explaining it.

DANIELLA: And can you change it?

JANE: No, you just are it. You just have it in your blood that makes you bad.

DANIELLA: Yeah?

JANE: Yeah. You're just tainted and you need to be kept away from the untainted.

DANIELLA: How come?

JANE: I dunno. So that you don't, you know, taint them up or something.

DANIELLA: Right.

JANE: Can you get your hand around your head?

*They both put their arms around the back of their heads.*

JANE: Yeah, see, that's another sign of you're more tainted than me.

DANIELLA: I don't want to be more tainted.

JANE: I know but you can't get out of it. You're just bad.

DANIELLA: I'm not bad.

JANE: Yeah, you are. You're just bad and the only thing you understand is isolation and punishment. And no matter what you do that's just how you'll always be. How far is it from your chin to your ear?

*They measure with their hands.*

DANIELLA: Hey, Fiona.

FIONA: Shut up, Daniella.

*DANIELLA mumbles something with her mouth closed.*

What are you doing?

DANIELLA: I'm shutting up, but I've got to tell you.

FIONA: You're such a retard.

DANIELLA: I know. But so are you.

FIONA: I'm what?

JANE: You're tainted.

FIONA: Says who?

JANE: You can measure it.

DANIELLA: Yeah, you can measure your leg. Like this.

FIONA: Shut up, retard.

JANE: That's the taint coming out.

FIONA: Yeah. Just you remember that.

*The GIRLS open their eyes and mouths wide as if in shock and then take a breath and pretend to be swimming underwater, holding their breaths. They do breast stroke toward the audience and then other styles of swimming, as FIONA speaks.*

It is boiling hot  
And we cannot sleep  
Inside our tiny cells  
is airless

prayerless  
 Mrs Kay takes her children to the local pool  
 Said she felt mean  
 But here too there is  
 dripping  
 slipping  
 water.  
 My arms are thick with it  
 My neck runs rivers  
 My hair is damp  
 How delicious would be an immersion in water  
 the silk of sliding strokes  
 How I long to dive and paddle  
 in the satin of shimmering water  
 Of fluidity, of liquid  
 Of melt  
 But we may not go to the pool  
 We may not leave our cells  
 I stand on my bed to get closer to the night  
 The crickets scratching dryness  
 I cannot rest  
 I cannot sleep  
 The sweat glands churn like oceans  
 Making patches on the mattress  
 Making patterns on my nightwear  
 I dip my finger in the ink of my own excretions  
 And draw pictures of children swimming  
 Onto the dusty walls.



#### SCENE FOURTEEN

*MARJORIE is in solitary confinement. FUREDI enters and puts down a tray with bread and water. The other actors enter and they behave like clocks, their hands all ticking forward and all ticking together. They seem to tick slowly and then stop altogether, which makes MARJORIE get up and try to get them started again, but instead they start ticking*

*backwards. One of the 'clocks' turns into MARJORIE'S FATHER (double for NAYLOR). He holds a mini-skirt.*

FATHER: You're not wearing this to the wedding.

MARJORIE: Too much?

FATHER: Don't get smart with me.

MARJORIE: Or what?

FATHER: Or you'll find out.

MARJORIE: You've already stopped me from going out on Friday night, going out on a Saturday night with every other kid from school.

FATHER: I don't want you going to those places.

MARJORIE: You mean places where I might have fun, Dad?

FATHER: You could have fun at the wedding if you put your mind to it.

MARJORIE: The whole room will be chocka with wrinklies.

FATHER: Don't speak about my friends like that.

MARJORIE: Or what?

*The clocks turn again.*

*One of the 'clocks' turns into MARJORIE'S FRIEND. She starts to dance with her.*

FRIEND: Come do the cha-cha-cha at Ourimbah!

MARJORIE: He said I can't go.

FRIEND: We'll drink Coo-la-ba and laugh ha ha ha at the pop festival at Ourimbah.

MARJORIE: He'll kill me if I don't go to this stupid wedding.

FRIEND: There'll be boys cha cha, who'll slip off your bra, and you'll go ooh-la-la at Ourimbah.

MARJORIE: It's not fair that I can't go.

FRIEND: So just come with us.

MARJORIE: He never let's me do anything. He's virtually locked me up and thrown away the key since mum died.

FRIEND: So come.

MARJORIE: Run away?

FRIEND: Come on. It's going to be the biggest pop music festival of the year. You've got to be there.

MARJORIE: I'll do it.

FRIEND: Come on. What can he do to you?

*The FRIEND steps back and becomes a 'clock' again. All of the*

*clocks seem to 'melt' and dance and groove to the pop music sounds. Then suddenly they become clocks again, ticking fast and sort of breathing heavily. MARJORIE is with LENNY.*

LENNY: Which of your senses is the most heightened?

MARJORIE: Um, I dunno. Sound?

LENNY: Yeah. The sound of another human being right in close to you. The sound of you whispering, the smallest crackle of your breath, the tiniest tap of your teeth.

MARJORIE: That sounds nice.

LENNY: The sound of the music and the crowds and the mud and the music.

MARJORIE: The sound of the night and the outdoors and the dark.

LENNY: My hearing has become incredibly sensitised. I feel like I can hear for miles.

MARJORIE: Kilometres even.

LENNY: Yes.

MARJORIE: 'Cause a major part of attraction is people's voice rather than their looks.

LENNY: You don't like how I look?

MARJORIE: I haven't seen all of you yet.

LENNY: Just say the words.

MARJORIE: Kiss me?

*She leans to kiss him but as she does the clocks sound like a clock alarm.*

*Two of the clocks become police officers and grab MARJORIE.*

OFFICER 1: Come with us.

MARJORIE: What are you doing?

OFFICER 2: Don't make this harder than it has to be.

MARJORIE: Make what harder?

OFFICER 1: Your father reported you missing.

MARJORIE: So just let me go home.

OFFICER 2: You're not going home.

MARJORIE: What?

OFFICER 1: You're being charged.

MARJORIE: I haven't done anything wrong.

OFFICER 2: No, you're not going to be punished.

MARJORIE: I want to go home.

OFFICER 1: You've been exposed to moral danger.

MARJORIE: I ... can I see my father?

OFFICER 2: You'll see him in court.

MARJORIE: In court?

OFFICER 1: It's for your protection. For your own protection.

MARJORIE: What is?

*The 'clocks' return to their original position and tick slowly.*

MARJORIE *sits, staring at them.*



### SCENE FIFTEEN

EMMA and GWEN are in a solitary confinement cell. They are marked with bruises all over their bodies and have obviously been viciously bashed. EMMA looks up at the ceiling.

EMMA: Look at that.

GWEN: What?

EMMA: I can see the stars.

*GWEN looks at her.*

GWEN: Don't go weird on me, squirt.

EMMA: I'm not. Look again.

GWEN: What's up there is the roof, runt. The concrete roof.

EMMA: Yes, but outside the roof is the stars. Is really the stars.

GWEN: Yeah, right.

EMMA: If there was no roof we would be able to see the stars.

GWEN: Pity about the roof then.

*Pause.*

EMMA: The roof is boring. I'd rather look at the stars.

*She lays down on the floor of the cell and looks up.*

Come on.

*GWEN doesn't move.*

Come on, Sis.

GWEN: Don't call me that.

EMMA: Come on then.

GWEN *lays down. They both look up at the ceiling.*

GWEN: You could see more in Cootamundra.

EMMA: You could see even more at Carowa.

GWEN: Yeah.

EMMA: I bet if we ever got back to Carowa, you'd remember it.

GWEN: Just look at the stars will ya.

EMMA: You would. You'd remember the stars and you'd remember Dad. And you'd remember me, Sis.

GWEN: I told you not to call me that.

EMMA: But you are. I know you are.

GWEN: You don't know I am.

EMMA: But you look just like me.

GWEN: You reckon.

EMMA: I can tell that you are.

GWEN: Yeah.

*Pause.*

What was home like?

EMMA: My home? Carowa?

GWEN: Yeah?

EMMA: Pretty dry. There was one big tree, that you was born under.

GWEN: What is it like?

EMMA: Big. Lots of shade. That's where your mother had ya.

GWEN: Why under the tree?

EMMA: Dunno. That's just what they used to tell me. That my sister was born under the the big tree with lots of shade. And that's why they called her Penny. Because the shade under that tree was like a big brown penny all around your mother the whole time she was giving birth.

GWEN: But my name isn't Penny.

EMMA: They does that all the time. If they took ya away they mixed up your names so you couldn't find your way back. But I'm smarter than they are. Because Gwennie is like Pennie. They changed your name but only a little. They didn't want me to know you because it was my father with your mother and not my mother. But your mother told me about you.

GWEN *sits up and looks at her, long and hard.*

EMMA: One day the memories will come back. They will. And I'll be here to help them come. I'll be right next to you. I will.

*EMMA lays back down and looks at the roof.*



### SCENE SIXTEEN

*The GIRLS line up for Religious Instruction Class. They stand in a line with their eyes to the floor. MRS KAY enters.*

MRS KAY: Good morning, girls.

GIRLS: Good morning, Mrs Kay.

*They continue to stand.*

MRS KAY: Oh. Oh. Permission to be seated.

*The GIRLS all sit.*

Good, now first. During religious instruction class you will not be required to keep your eyes on the ground.

*The GIRLS continue to look at the ground.*

I repeat, you will not be required to keep your eyes to the ground.

*The GIRLS continue to look at the ground.*

Girls, eyes to the front.

*The GIRLS continue to look at the ground.*

JANE: That's been used as a trick on us before.

MRS KAY: I beg your pardon?

JANE: That's been used as a trick on us before. Where we've been told we can look up and then corrected when we do.

MRS KAY: [*sighing*] This is not a trick. Girls, I would like you to look up at me when I read the lesson and then for the duration of the class.

*The GIRLS still do not look up.*

Today's reading is from Colossians Chapter 2 verses 18 to 25. Wives, be committed to your husbands, as is fitting in Christ. Husbands love your wives and never treat them harshly. Children, heed your parents in everything, for this is your acceptable duty

in Christ. Parents, do not provoke your children, or they may lose heart. You who are enslaved, heed your earthly masters in everything, not only while being watched and in order to please them, but wholeheartedly, revering the Lord. Whatever your task, put yourselves into it, as done for the Lord and not for human beings, since you know that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward; you serve the Lord Christ. For the wrongdoer will be paid back for whatever wrong has been done, and there is no partiality.

*The GIRLS are still not looking up.*

Does anyone have any questions? Or comments?

*The GIRLS still do not look up.*

Will you look at me, please. Girls.

*Pause. The GIRLS continue to look at the floor. But then, FIONA puts up her hand.*

FIONA: What does it mean, never treat them harshly?

MRS KAY: I won't answer unless you look at me, Fiona.

*FIONA very slowly, very hesitantly, looks up at MRS KAY.*

MRS KAY: Thank you. [*Beat.*] Now you may repeat your question.

FIONA: Husbands, love your wives and never treat them badly. What does that mean?

MRS KAY: What do you think it means?

FIONA: I don't know. That's why I asked.

MRS KAY: Anyone else?

*Pause.*

GWEN: It means they should stop before they beat their brains out.

MRS KAY: It does mean that. It means, of course, that they should not be beaten.

JANE: What never?

MRS KAY: No. Never.

DANIELLA: Not even if they deserve it.

MRS KAY: No-one ever deserves to be treated in a violent manner.

JANE: What is a violent manner?

MARJORIE: It's when you grab someone around the neck and you slam them into a door frame over and over and over again until they're like bleeding from the head and from the nose and from the mouth.

That means you shouldn't do that.

*Pause.*

MRS KAY: Marjorie is quite right.

EMMA: Are we enslaved?

MRS KAY: I beg your pardon?

EMMA: Like it says, you who are enslaved. I'm just trying to work out if we are enslaved.

GWEN: Shut up, Emma.

EMMA: I was only asking.

MRS KAY: No you are not enslaved.

EMMA: I wasn't saying we were. I was just asking if we were.

GWEN: Shut up, Emma.

MRS KAY: She is entitled to ask.

GWEN: And you're entitled to mention it to the Superintendent.

MRS KAY: I promise not to do that.

GWEN: What?

MRS KAY: If you have questions about the scriptures I will not be mentioning them to the Superintendent.

*Pause.*

Any other questions?

FIONA: When it says the wrongdoer will be paid back for whatever wrong has been done ... ?

MRS KAY: Paid back by God.

FIONA: When?

MRS KAY: Well, when we face our maker.

JANE: Is that like the judge we faced in the Children's Court?

MRS KAY: A little like that.

JANE: So we can get blamed for other wrongdoers' actions?

MRS KAY: No, you will only have to face God and reveal your own wrongdoings.

DANIELLA: But in the children's court we can be charged with being neglected and we can be charged with being exposed to moral danger.

MRS KAY: Yes. Those are particular circumstances.

*Pause.*

FIONA: What about if someone else did wrong to you first?

MRS KAY: Then they will have to face God and explain it.

FIONA: Will they really?

MRS KAY: Yes. What kind of wrongdoing are you thinking of?

GWEN: Don't answer her.

MRS KAY: I beg your pardon, Gwen?

GWEN: She imagines things, Miss, that's all. She imagines things and I wouldn't want her to worry you with the kinds of things she imagines. We're used to them now but since you don't know her you might take her seriously and that would just worry you. You know.

MRS KAY: I think I can make up my own mind about whether or not she is imagining things, don't you Gwen.

GWEN: She's really clever. She tells a story and you know, sometimes I even believe her.

MRS KAY: Stories about what?

GWEN *glares at* FIONA.

Fiona?

FIONA: I don't have any stories today, Miss. I just liked the idea of God sitting up like in the judges box and judging everyone.

MRS KAY: Yes. In the end we will all be called to account.

FIONA: Only sometimes judges get it wrong.

GWEN *glares at* FIONA *again*.

I mean, not any judges we know. But you hear about them. Judges on other planets you know. Judges on Mars and Venus and all the way out on Pluto.

GWEN *puts a hand around her ear like* FIONA *is cuckoo*. MRS KAY *looks at them but they all have their eyes back to the ground*.



## SCENE SEVENTEEN

SUPERINTENDENT NAYLOR *enters*.

NAYLOR: Extract from the Riverine Grazier, 3 May 1962.

*As NAYLOR reads, the GIRLS begin to do their work on stage. They scrub the floors in a pair, they garden with a spade in a pair and with a trowel in a pair.*

The headline reads, Hay Girls Home a credit to Welfare Department. HAWKINS: The Institution for Girls conducted by the Department of Child Welfare and Social Welfare is a small institution but has already demonstrated a significant role in the total programme of child welfare.

NAYLOR: Said the Minister in charge of that Department, the Hon F. H. Hawkins when in Hay in February.

*The GIRLS continue to work.*

HAWKINS: The press will understand that this is a closed institution but in the autumn, when the flower gardens are in full bloom, the Grazier will be permitted to see the transformation which is taking place.

NAYLOR: The pictures on this page are the result.

*The GIRLS get up from their work and begin to behave like flowers, their hands out as if in bloom, their faces smiling. A small red paper flower may emerge from their hands. But they hold the smile too long and the smile appears fixed and horrible.*

Each girl picks two bunches of flowers each week from their own gardens for her own room.

*The GIRLS, still behaving like flowers, begin to wither and die. They hang limply and fall to the ground where they begin to scrub and dig again.*

As one enters through the large blue door, the immediate view is of spacious green lawns, bisected with spotlessly clean cement paths, with garden plots surrounding all the buildings.

*The GIRLS again get up from their work and 'bloom' like flowers, the fixed smiles on their faces. But the poses they take are less easy, instead their limbs are twisted and their stances are awkward.*

Their duties include bed making, sweeping and the arrangement of flowers.

*The GIRLS fade again, wilting and dying as they go to the ground to do their work.*

Very old residents of Hay will remember this property when it was occupied with male civil prisoners and used to take many prizes at the flower shows of the day.

*The GIRLS 'bloom' as flowers again, but their limbs are as tangled as they can possibly make them, their heads on a strange angle, even though they are smiling and their stances almost impossible to hold for very long without collapsing, which they do at the limits of their endurance.*

Those with shorter memories have only a picture of a derelict building and untidy grounds that no-one would touch for any sort of purpose.

*The GIRLS stand at attention, their eyes to the floor.*

Now the place has been restored in an almost unbelievable way and shows just what can be done when interested people set out to restore order and grow gardens.

*The GIRLS bob down and roll themselves into as small a ball as possible. MRS KAY speaks to the audience.*

MRS KAY: Maybe you've seen the picture, in the Riverine Grazier, showing the basic cells. They mostly slept well, after their hard work on the concrete paths. They had a couple of rough grey blankets each. It was enough but you wouldn't say they were really cosy, because the cells were freezing, the whole block was freezing. And their beds had to be made exactly so, like in the army. They had to be out from the wall at a slight angle, so that you could see the girls asleep at night. They were allowed two items on their bed tables. Those flowers in the photo were only put in their for effect. They weren't allowed flowers.

*MRS KAY exits. FUREDI remains on stage.*



## SCENE EIGHTEEN

*The GIRLS stand across the front of the stage. They all have glasses of water and DANIELLA, at the end, has a jug. The girl closest to DANIELLA pours her glass of water into DANIELLA's jug. DANIELLA puts her hand up, as is required of her.*

DANIELLA: Permission to go to the toilet, sir. [*Beat.*] Try to think about something else. A tree. A tall tree. White trunk. Green leaves. A gum

tree. Wind in the leaves. Pale green leaves with white undersides. Bending, swaying. A clear blue sky.

*The girl next to the the girl alongside DANIELLA pours her glass of water carefully into the glass of the girl alongside DANIELLA who then pours that into the jug of water DANIELLA is holding.*

[*With more urgency*] Permission to go to the toilet, please, sir. A great dry plain. Yellow grass. Fields of long white yellow grass. Bone dry. The ground cracking it is so dry. Spinifex rolling. Dried out clumps of spinifex grass tumbling and rolling across the dry, windy landscape. Cartwheeling and tumbling completely free. Blown by the wind. The wind in the tree.

*The girl third in line pours the water into the glass of the next girl, who pours it into the glass of the girl next to DANIELLA, who pours it in to the jug which is now close to the top.*

Miss, permission please please, I have to go to the toilet. I have to go. I'm begging you to go. [*Beat.*] The caves up behind the house. The red of the rock, the pale dry whiteness of the sand in the red rock cave. The view out to the great dry plain. The spinifex skipping and twirling. The gum tree swaying and bending. The sun glinting on the breeze on the leaves. A glorious day. A glorious sunny day, safe and happy and smiling and O God, O God please let me go to the toilet. Please I have to go to the toilet. Please give me permission. Please.

*The fourth girl in line pours the glass of water and it passes down the line until it gets to DANIELLA's jug where it starts to overflow. The girl continues pouring till the water runs down DANIELLA's arm and keeps pouring down the side of her body, along her trousers and to the ground in a small puddle.*

[*Crying*] The pretty little stream at the base of the cliff. The pretty little stream running past the white trunk green leaf gum tree swaying in the wind. The delicate stream running past the yellow grass and the rolling spinifex. The gentle pretty stream flowing past the red rock cave, the shining sunny day. The pretty, flowing stream, sparkling in the daylight.

DANIELLA *exits.*



## SCENE NINETEEN

*The GIRLS all stand in line with pieces of painted 'wall' in front of them (the 'wall' may be solid paint at the first piece and then brick by the end of the row). FIONA has a scrubbing brush and a bucket of water and she scrubs on the 'wall'.*

FIONA: When you first start you can't believe that it isn't just paint all the way down. That there isn't really any brick under all those layers. But there is and you just have to scrub and scrub and scrub until you get to it.

*She scrubs at each successive piece of 'wall' and when she can scrub no more the performer lowers it to the ground so that only her arms are visible over the top of the 'wall', holding a scrubbing brush.*

FIONA *continues to scrub.*



## SCENE TWENTY

MARJORIE *and* MR NAYLOR *are in* NAYLOR's *office. MARJORIE is standing at attention, eyes to the floor; NAYLOR sits in a chair at his desk.*

NAYLOR: You know why you're here, Linnett.

MARJORIE: No, Mr Naylor.

NAYLOR: Yes, you do. Why are you here?

MARJORIE: I don't know, Mr Naylor.

NAYLOR: Don't contradict me.

*Pause.*

Why are you here?

MARJORIE *says nothing.*

Let me give you a hint. It has something to do with your face.

MARJORIE *still says nothing.*

Tell me what people say about your face.

MARJORIE *says nothing.*

I said, tell me.

MARJORIE: My mother used to say that it resembles nothing so much as a slapped arse.

NAYLOR: That is what your mother said to you is it?

MARJORIE: Yes, Mr Naylor.

NAYLOR: She set you a poor example.

*Pause.*

Has anyone in here spoken to you about your face?

MARJORIE *says nothing.*

Answer me.

MARJORIE: The guards have said about my eyebrows but I've told them that they just grow like that.

NAYLOR *gets up and walks around the office.*

NAYLOR: They just grow like that?

MARJORIE: Yes, Mr Naylor.

NAYLOR: You don't pluck them at night?

MARJORIE: No, Mr Naylor.

*Pause.*

NAYLOR: You think that your eyebrows give you a certain distinction.

MARJORIE: No, Mr Naylor.

NAYLOR: Of course you do, you think that they give you personality.

MARJORIE: I'm sure I don't, Mr Naylor.

NAYLOR: Your contradictions don't irritate me, Linnett. They make me pity you.

*Pause.*

Why? Because they reveal how very very stupid you really are.

MARJORIE *shifts where she is standing.*

You pluck your eyebrows, Linnett. You do it at night in your cell, with your fingernails because you think it gives you control. I would go so far as to say that you think that your eyebrows give you individuality because, due to the mismanagement of your mother and the delinquency of your own nature, you think that individuality is something to have. Don't you, Linnett?

MARJORIE: No, Mr Naylor.

NAYLOR: Yes, you do. But you're lucky because I'm going to teach you

something that will help you. You won't thank me for it. I'm not looking for thanks. What I'm going to teach you, Linnett, is that you are nothing. That the very best of us, the very best of us are nothing. We have no individuality, we have no personality. We are servants. We are nothing.

MARJORIE: Yes, Mr Naylor.

NAYLOR: Do you think that life in this institution is hard, Linnett?

MARJORIE: No, Mr Naylor.

*NAYLOR goes over to her and, as casually as if he is hitting a fly, slaps her hard across the head.*

Do you think that life in this institution is hard, Linnett?

MARJORIE: Yes, Mr Naylor.

NAYLOR: Yes, it is hard. Why?

MARJORIE: I don't know, Mr Naylor.

*NAYLOR hits her again.*

NAYLOR: What are you, Linnett?

MARJORIE: I'm nothing, Mr Naylor.

NAYLOR: You're nothing, but, and remember this Linnett, I'm also nothing. Being nothing is not about what you're worth, Linnett. It is true that you are worth nothing because your family are poor, if you don't kill yourself with drugs and alcohol you will certainly have children at an early age. You are worth nothing. And yet we are taking the trouble to correct you. If you go missing from this institution we will not send anyone out to find you, however. Why? Because you are worth nothing. You could starve out there, die out there and we would do little more than go through the motions of finding you. Why? Because you are worth nothing. The only time you will begin to be worth something is when you become nothing. When you learn to deny yourself and discipline yourself and push through. You are nothing because you are worth nothing. I am nothing because I choose to be nothing other than discipline and service and self-control. And by embracing nothingness I have become something, something and someone. Do you want to be that, Linnett?

MARJORIE: Do I want to be you, Mr Naylor?

NAYLOR: Yes, Linnett, do you want to serve your community in a way that they will be grateful for and reward you for?

MARJORIE: Yes, Mr Naylor.

NAYLOR *goes over to her and knocks her to the ground. He slaps and kicks her.*

NAYLOR: Then stop plucking your eyebrows, Linnett.

MARJORIE: Yes, Mr Naylor.

NAYLOR *grabs her up and looks her in the face.*

NAYLOR: If you don't, I will commit you to psychiatric treatment and from a place such as that you will never, never get out. Do you understand me?

MARJORIE *nods.*

MARJORIE: Yes, Mr Naylor.

NAYLOR: What will you do, Linnett?

MARJORIE: I will stop plucking my eyebrows and become nothing, Mr Naylor.

*He releases her.*

NAYLOR: See that you do.



### SCENE TWENTY-ONE

*The GIRLS, as a group, march into the cabin block where they stand in front of their cells and mark time.*

FUREDİ: Halt.

*The GIRLS stop marching.*

Left and right, turn.

*The GIRLS turn one way or the other to face their cells.*

Two paces forward. March.

*The GIRLS take two paces into their cells.*

Cans down.

*The GIRLS put down their night pans.*

Two paces backwards, march.

*The GIRLS march backwards.*

To your lockers, march.

*The GIRLS all troupe out one by one to go to their lockers and collect their change of clothing, tooth brush and comb.*

*FUREDİ exits. Out of their lockers the GIRLS take cell bars, like batons, and begin dancing around them, cuddling them, running them over their bodies.*

FIONA: I am scared to death  
 And wish I could relax  
 I want to hurt someone  
 Like I have been held down  
 and ground down  
 and pierced.  
 I am corroded with fear  
 My veins ring with it  
 I flash on my past  
 The boys who ripped me  
 Stripped me  
 But that is no excuse  
 Fiona  
 You have betrayed yourself  
 Fiona  
 Take it back  
 Take back the mistake  
 Take back the error  
 Hide the thing or you will never leave  
 Hide the thing or you will not survive  
 Hide it  
 Hide yourself  
 Retreat and hide inside  
 Forever  
 Inside  
 And never show yourself again.



*SCENE TWENTY-TWO*

*GWEN and EMMA are whispering.*

GWEN: There was a big old tree. And there was an old fella. White beard, dark hat. Black maybe brown. He had a gold cap on his front tooth. And he was saying to me thina. I remember he said thina, thina. Thina. Thina. Kiruu thina. Kiruu thina.

EMMA: And what was he doing?

GWEN: I don't know.

EMMA: Think.

*Pause.*

GWEN: I think ... I'm not sure ... but I think he was touching my feet.

*Pause. EMMA is overcome. Looking up at the ceiling to stop herself crying.*

EMMA: Warm toes.

GWEN: What?

EMMA: Kiruu thina. Warm toes. It would have been paapaa saying you had nice warm feet. Kiruu thina. Warm feet or warm toes in Ngiyampaa.

*GWEN looks at EMMA.*

GWEN: What does that mean?

EMMA: That means you're a Barkindji woman. And you really are my sister.

*GWEN and EMMA turn over their stainless steel buckets and begin drumming and the other GIRLS also take their buckets and drum on them.*



### SCENE TWENTY-THREE

MARJORIE and DANIELLA are breaking up the concrete path, outside their cells.

DANIELLA: Marjorie.

MARJORIE: What?

DANIELLA: How did you go with Naylor?

MARJORIE: Told me to stop plucking my eyebrows.

DANIELLA: Or what?

MARJORIE: Or I'd go to the psych home.

*Pause.*

DANIELLA: So you're going to, aren't ya?

MARJORIE: Maybe.

DANIELLA: You've got to.

MARJORIE: Yeah, I know. I can't help myself sometimes that's all.

DANIELLA: I know.

MARJORIE: No, ya don't.

DANIELLA: Yeah, I do. You get lonely. So you pluck your eyebrows.

*Pause.*

I don't know what I'd do without Molly.

MARJORIE: Who?

DANIELLA: Little Molly Malone.

MARJORIE: You mean the song?

DANIELLA: No. I've got this moth.

MARJORIE: Can I see?

*DANIELLA takes out Molly Malone the moth and shows her.*

It's dead.

DANIELLA: Yeah.

MARJORIE: So what use is it?

DANIELLA: She keeps me company.

MARJORIE: How can she if she's dead?

DANIELLA: Well at least she was alive once, not like your stupid eyebrows.

*Pause.*

MARJORIE: You're lucky to have her.

DANIELLA: I know.

MARJORIE: Yeah.

*Pause.*

DANIELLA: You're not going to pluck them are ya?

MARJORIE: I'm gonna try not to.

DANIELLA: You can't just try, you have to not.

*Pause.*

MARJORIE: Can I have a loan of Molly?

DANIELLA: What?

MARJORIE: A loan, for overnight. I'd give her back.

DANIELLA: A loan?

MARJORIE: Yeah. To keep me company. So I don't pluck my eyebrows.

DANIELLA: But what will I do?

MARJORIE: It's only for one night.

*Pause.*

Do you want to see me go to the psych hospital?

DANIELLA: No. Of course not.

MARJORIE: Then lend me Molly.

DANIELLA: I don't know.

MARJORIE: Come on.

DANIELLA: Why should I?

MARJORIE: Please.

*DANIELLA looks at a the small moth. She strokes it. It is absolutely excruciating for her to give it away.*

DANIELLA: How would you like a little holiday, Molly? You could come straight back. Straight back tomorrow. And it will have been as if you've never even been away. So I'll let you go on this holiday but you must promise to fly straight back.

*MARJORIE puts her hand out to take the moth.*

*DANIELLA looks at the moth again and then puts her hand out to transfer it.*

You will give her back?

MARJORIE: Of course I will.

DANIELLA: Promise.

MARJORIE: Swear on the bible.

DANIELLA: Swear on the bible and something else. Something important to you.

*Pause.*

MARJORIE: Don't have anything else.

DANIELLA: What about your mother's life or something?

*Pause.*

MARJORIE: Nah.

DANIELLA: Then swear on your own life.

MARJORIE: I swear. Now come on.

DANIELLA *puts out her hand, she puts the moth in MARJORIE's hand. Suddenly MARJORIE cries out, jerks her hand up and the moth goes flying across the yard onto the path beyond.*

It fluttered.

DANIELLA: She did not. Now look what you've done.

MARJORIE: I swear to you that it fluttered.

DANIELLA: You did that on purpose.

MARJORIE: I didn't.

DANIELLA: You did. She's right out there. Someone is going to stand on her.

MARJORIE: Keep your voice down, you'll have the guard on top of us.

DANIELLA: You swore. You swore on your own life.

MARJORIE: Yeah. So. So what? It's only a stupid moth.

DANIELLA: You're the stupid one.

MARJORIE: Shut up.

DANIELLA: I hate you. I hate you. I hope you do go to the psych ward.

MRS KAY *walks down the corridor.*

MRS KAY: What do you girls think you're doing?

MARJORIE: Nothing, Mrs Kay.

DANIELLA: Sorry, Mrs Kay.

MRS KAY: Now go back to work.

*She turns and stands on the moth. She feels it under her foot and then stamps on it and scrapes it off, kicking it over towards DANIELLA.*

DANIELLA *retrieves the little moth and cries over it.*

DANIELLA: I'm sorry. I'm so sorry Molly. I should never have let you go. I'm so sorry.

*She continues to cry as MARJORIE sits down beside her. We see her reach her hand up to her eyebrows and begin to pluck them.*



## SCENE TWENTY-FOUR

GUARD FUREDI *blows a whistle.*

FUREDI: All rise.

*The girls who are all on stage together, in the separate cells, rise from their beds. Their clothing is passed to them through a flap which is then relocked. In perfect unison, the girls get out of bed, take off their nightdresses, fold them, tie them with tape and place them with their reading matter on the bed. They get dressed and then stand at the head of the bed. All the cell doors are opened and FUREDI inspects the beds for tidiness. The GIRLS, without exception, have their eyes to the floor.*

Kneel.

*The GIRLS, simultaneously, kneel.*

GIRLS: Our Father,

Who Art in Heaven,

Hallowed be thy name,

Thy kingdom come,

Thy will be done on earth

as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread

And forgive us our trespasses,

As we forgive those who trespass against us

Lead us not into temptation

But deliver us from evil

For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory,

For ever and ever,

Amen.

FUREDI: Stand.

*The GIRLS, in unison, stand at attention, facing the bed.*

Gear up.

*The GIRLS pick up their nightwear, night can and reading material.*

Move.

*The GIRLS move to the cabin doorways.*

Daniella Greaves.

DANIELLA: Yes, Mr Furedi.

*DANIELLA goes to her locker, place her night attire on the shelf and picks up her comb and toothbrush. She then moves back to the cell door.*

Reporting back to you Mr Furedi.

FUREDİ: Marjorie Linnett.

MARJORIE: Yes, Mr Furedi.

FUREDİ *checks* MARJORIE's eyebrows.

FUREDİ: Come with me.

MARJORIE: No. No, please.

FUREDİ *drags* MARJORIE, *kicking and screaming, off. The other GIRLS watch.*

MRS KAY, *distressed, takes up the routine.*

MRS KAY: Jane Rogers.

JANE: Yes, Mrs Kay

JANE *goes to her locker, places her night attire on the shelf, picks up her comb and toothbrush. She then moves back to the cell door.*

MRS KAY: Daniella Greaves.

DANIELLA: Yes, Mrs Kay.

DANIELLA *moves to another part of the stage to shower. She empties her night can, uses the toilet, washes and cleans her teeth. When she is finished she returns to* MRS KAY.

Reporting to you, Mrs Kay.

MRS KAY: Carry on.

DANIELLA *collects her cabin cleaning gear, moves to her locker, replaces the comb and toothbrush and then goes back to her cell door.*

*As all the GIRLS go through this routine they will finish one by one and end by standing at their cell doors. MARJORIE's cell door stands ominously ajar.*

*The GIRLS simultaneously take three steps into their cells. The doors are then closed and locked by the officers, but the flap on the cell is left open.*

MRS KAY *comes back and serves breakfast through the flap.*



*SCENE TWENTY-FIVE*

*The GIRLS are again in scripture class with MRS KAY.*

MRS KAY: [*reading*] Love is patient, Love is kind,  
It does not envy, it does not boast,  
It is not proud, It is not rude,  
It is not self-seeking,  
It is not easily angered,  
It keeps no record of wrongs.  
Love does not delight in evil,  
but rejoices with the truth.  
Love always protects, always trusts,  
always hopes, always perseveres.  
Love bears all things, believes all things,  
hopes all things, endures all things.  
And now faith hope and love abide, these three; and the greatest of  
these is love.

*Pause.*

JANE: Why does God make people go mad?

MRS KAY: The question of suffering is a complex and difficult area  
when it comes to God.

JANE: No, straight up. Just why.

MRS KAY: Why is complicated. God doesn't make people go mad.

JANE: I thought God controlled everything.

MRS KAY: God does.

JANE: Then he makes people go mad.

MRS KAY: No.

JANE: Then he doesn't control everything.

MRS KAY: Things happen in the world so that God's love may become  
apparent. To every bad event there is usually a corollary ...

DANIELLA: A what?

MRS KAY: Another thing that is good.

DANIELLA: Where's the good in people going mad?

MRS KAY: Well. I don't know. I don't claim to understand God but  
perhaps another way to think of it is that it allows other people to  
show compassion toward the person with the mental illness.

EMMA: Show what?

MRS KAY: Kindness.

JANE: Yeah, right. So God makes people mad so that other people can be nice.

EMMA: Tough luck for the mad person though.

MRS KAY: Girls, I encourage you to question the scriptures. But I counsel you against thinking that just because you can't understand everything it makes it untrue.

DANIELLA: Then how should we know.

MRS KAY: Some things we have to accept on faith.

*Pause. The GIRLS all look at her, unconvinced. Suddenly JANE stands up. She overturns her chair.*

JANE: It's not fair.

MRS KAY: Jane. Pick up your chair and sit down.

*JANE looks at her. She goes to the chair and picks it up and hurls it across the space.*

*MRS KAY does not move from where she is sitting. They stare at each other.*

Pick up your chair and sit down.

JANE: Come on. Call the Superintendent on me.

MRS KAY: No.

JANE: Come on. Put me in there too. Put me in there where they're going to put Marjorie. Put me in the mad house as well.

*JANE screams in a rage and then begins to cry. MRS KAY goes over to her and gives her a hug. JANE quickly composes herself and pushes her away, viciously wiping away her tears.*

Aren't you gonna call the superintendent?

MRS KAY: No. Now pick up your chair and sit down.

*JANE looks at her. Then she retrieves the chair and sits down.*

Marjorie is being sent to the psychiatric home?

DANIELLA: The loony bin.

MRS KAY: Well clearly those who know about these things think she could benefit from the treatment that is offered there.

*Pause.*

You girls have got to learn to stop being driven by your fears. You know nothing about what happens in the psychiatric home, do you?

EMMA: Only know that we never see those girls ever again.

MRS KAY: Well perhaps that's because they complete their treatment and are released.

*Pause.*

It is ignorance that feeds your fears.

JANE: No. It's how they took her away.

EMMA: Yeah.

MRS KAY: They had to use force and that scared you?

DANIELLA: They shoved the stuff down her throat.

MRS KAY: What stuff?

EMMA: We dunno. But it made her go all limp.

*Pause.*

MRS KAY: What did you see?

DANIELLA: Just what I said. They shoved the stuff down her throat.

*Pause.*

MRS KAY: Show me.

EMMA: Show you what?

MRS KAY: Show me what you saw.

*EMMA and DANIELLA go over to JANE. JANE is held down by EMMA and DANIELLA tries to shove the contents of an imaginary bottle down JANE's throat.*

*JANE struggles but EMMA and DANIELLA use force. After several moments they release JANE. She is woozy and groggy, clearly drugged. JANE staggers around the space disorientated until finally she collapses. Then she gets up and they all return to their seats.*

Why would they let you see that?

DANIELLA: Dunno.

EMMA: They just did.

*Pause.*

MRS KAY: No. Even if they did do that, they wouldn't have let you see it.

JANE: But they did.

*Pause.*

MRS KAY: Why are you girls making it worse for yourselves?

EMMA: What?

MRS KAY: I'm on your side. I've been on your side from the beginning.

Is that why you think you can take advantage of me?

GWEN: She doesn't believe us.

MRS KAY: No. I don't believe you and I'm not going to fall for your tricks.

JANE: But it happened.

DANIELLA: Just like we showed.

EMMA: Marjorie is in the madhouse right now.

FIONA: And you helped put her there.

*Pause.*

MRS KAY: Eyes to the floor.

JANE: What?

MRS KAY: [*raising her voice*] I said eyes to the floor.

*The GIRLS look down to the floor.*

*MRS KAY sits looking at them. Upset and conflicted by what has transpired but still determined to retain control. She doesn't know what to do next. Then she opens the bible and finds a passage to read.*

[*Reading*] Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Humble yourselves before God who will exalt you.



### SCENE TWENTY-SIX

*JANE is in the centre of the room while the other GIRLS are in a bunch at the side. As JANE walks the others move but when she turns around they are still. Essentially she is playing a game of shadows with them. She looks at them.*

JANE: When you are in your cell at night. All by yourself. Sometimes your mind plays tricks. [*She turns around and continues to walk, not looking at the 'days.'*] Who's there?

DAY 1: You know.

JANE: Who's there? Hello?

DAY 2: You know who brays.

DAY 3: We're your wasted days.

DAY 4: You know who fights.

DAY 5: We're your wasted nights.

*She turns and looks but again they are frozen. She looks at them.*

JANE: When you are in your cell at night. All by yourself. Sometimes your mind plays games.

*She turns and walks again, not looking at the 'days'.*

What do you want?

DAY 1: You know.

JANE: What do you want? Hello?

DAY 2: You keep getting put away.

DAY 3: We're the ones who pay.

DAY 4: You keep getting shut in.

DAY 5: We're the ones who don't win.

JANE: What do you want me to do?

DAY 1: Learn to sneak.

DAY 2: Learn to hide.

DAY 3: Be nice to their face.

DAY 4: But keep your feelings inside.

DAY 5: Fly under the radar.

DAY 1: And don't get sprung.

DAY 2: Pretend to be good.

DAY 3: So that we can have fun.

*She turns and looks at the frozen 'days'.*

JANE: When you are in your cell at night. All by yourself. Sometimes your figure out how the world works.

*She turns and walks around her cell.*

DAY 1: You're a rebel.

DAY 2: You're in trouble.

DAY 3: No-one tells you what to do.

DAY 4: But the more you buck the system.

DAY 5: The more they punish you.

DAY 1: We want you to stay a rebel.

DAY 2: We want you to keep your guts.

DAY 3: But you have to pull your punches.

DAY 4: And you have to choose your puts.

*She turns and looks at them.*

JANE: When you are in your cell at night. All by yourself. Sometimes you learn how to fake it. How to fake being nice. How to fake being sweet. How to fake being obedient. So that you can get out of here, and out of their clutches and away from the people who want to tell you what to do and how to do it. And you learn, and you learn the hard way, that a girl has to appear to be one thing and hide deep down inside what she really is and what she can let herself become once she gets out of here.

*The days all hug around her. JANE hugs her arms around herself and paces her cell.*



### SCENE TWENTY-SEVEN

EMMA is carrying a tray to GWEN, who is in solitary confinement. She puts it down and stares at her.

GWEN: What do you call this?

*EMMA looks at her. GWEN takes something out of her hair.*

EMMA: A nit.

GWEN: Yeah. But what do you call it?

EMMA: Thinil.

GWEN: And a louse?

EMMA: Kapul.

GWEN: And a maggot?

EMMA: Nhukuy.

*GWEN nods. EMMA sits down.*

GWEN: What's the word for sister?

*EMMA shakes her head.*

Don't you know it?

EMMA: Kapu.

GWEN: What's that?

EMMA: That's the word for any small creature you haven't got a name for.

*Pause.*

GWEN: Like an insect.

EMMA: Yeah, like anything that gives you the creeps.

*Pause. They laugh.*

Kaathii.

GWEN: Is that how you say us?

EMMA: Kaathii. That's how you say sister.

*EMMA exits.*

GWEN: Kaathii.



### SCENE TWENTY-EIGHT

NAYLOR *enters*, GWEN *looks to the floor*.

NAYLOR: You're being transferred, Gill, back to Parramatta. We're done with you here. You will be given time to pack up your things and then you will be transported back to Sydney.

*There is silence. GWEN gradually raises her eyes to NAYLOR.*

GWEN: I don't want to go back to Sydney.

NAYLOR: Eyes to the floor.

*But GWEN does not put her eyes to the floor.*

NAYLOR: I said, eyes to the floor.

*Still, GWEN looks at him.*

*NAYLOR comes close to her, threateningly close. She meets his eye.*

GWEN: [*a small voice*] You don't own me.

*NAYLOR raises his hand to strike her, but hesitates.*

[*Hesitantly but with increasing confidence*] 'Cause how would you explain the bruises? 'Cause there's a medical check when you enter Parramatta and the doctor would have to note them down wouldn't he? Then they'd be on the record wouldn't they?

*NAYLOR stares at her. He folds his arms.*

NAYLOR: So, you've got something left, have you Gill?

GWEN: Have I?

*He walks around her.*

NAYLOR: There's a way that the world works. Everywhere you go. There's a way that the world works. And those who agree to its conditions, those who subscribe to its rules, they succeed. They can even rail against it or poke fun at it or seem to be rebelling, but they only go far enough not to get into real trouble. And we tolerate them, because they know the limits. Then there are people like you Gill, who see the way that the world works and say, 'I'm not gonna do that, I'm smarter than that, I'm better than that, I'm going to do whatever I want.' And you're the ones who end up in here. And you suffer and you hurt and you're more and more controlled but for some reason, for some reason, you continue to rebel.

GWEN: For some reason?

NAYLOR: Yes, for some reason that is beyond our comprehension. For some reason you can't just see the way the world works and behave.

*Pause.*

GWEN: Because I'm bad?

NAYLOR: I'm afraid so.

GWEN: I can't see how the world works and so I rebel?

NAYLOR: That's what I believe.

GWEN: And what else have you left me?

NAYLOR: I'm sorry?

GWEN: I said, what else have you left for me except that?

NAYLOR: [*amused*] What have I left you? Because it's always about me, isn't it, Gill? The problem is always with me, isn't it?

GWEN: Yeah.

NAYLOR: You could have your freedom, you could have your own life back.

GWEN: If I do as I'm told?

NAYLOR: Yes.

GWEN: Really?

NAYLOR: Really.

*Pause.*

GWEN: Could I go back to Carowa?

NAYLOR: Possibly.

GWEN: That's where I was born.

NAYLOR: If you learn to do as you're told.

GWEN *stares at him for a long moment.*

Eyes to the floor.

GWEN *looks at him, silently. Her eyes begin to fill with tears.*

Eyes to the floor.

GWEN *very slowly, with great difficulty, lowers her eyes to the floor:*

Thank you, Gill. Keep that up and you're be back to Cowra in no time.

GWEN: Carowa.

NAYLOR: Carowa, sir.

GWEN: Carowa, sir.

GWEN *is crying, sobbing almost uncontrollably.*

NAYLOR: It will be hard at first Gwen, it will be very hard. But you've taken the first step to being part of something much bigger than you. To being part of your society. And you'll find, if you persist, that society will accept you if you accept it. We are not hard on everyone, only the one's who won't fit. Only the ones who won't fit. [*Beat.*] Now stop that blubbering and run along.

GWEN *exits, still crying, past the other GIRLS.*



### SCENE TWENTY-NINE

*The GIRLS all line up on stage, in formation for muster. They directly address the audience.*

NAYLOR: When you leave here, girls, you will be charged with becoming good citizens of this great nation. You will be given a small stipend and you will be encouraged to take your place as the mothers and wives of Australia. I encourage you to do so. You will be interested to know that your transformation here has been a matter for the State Parliament of NSW and I quote. The girls who

have been transferred to Hay have all benefited quite markedly from the experience and upon their return to Parramatta have displayed attitudes and a general demeanour of a satisfactory standard.

HAWKINS: My under-secretary and the officer in charge of the establishment division recently visited Hay and spoke with those difficult girls who hitherto would have been sent to Long Bay.

FIONA: They sent me to Long Bay. And all I can tell you is that it was a lot nicer than Hay. This place. This place was ... [*She breaks down crying.*] I can't tell you how bad it was. But it was brutal. And I carried it with me ... all my life. All through my life I carried it. I'm still carrying it.

HAWKINS: Following their most recent visit I received an excellent report from these officers. They asked the girls whether they had any message for their mates at Parramatta.

MARJORIE: I was returned to Parramatta and committed to the psychiatric wing of the Parramatta psych home. They didn't hold me there for long. When I got out I went up the Cross and lived on the streets for a while. Worked for a while. Had a couple of kids. But they're with their father now. I've seen them a bit since they got older. Been in and out of psychiatric care most of my life. Don't know what else to say. I'm nothing special. Turns out, I'm just a silly old bugger. But I still don't think I deserved none of this.

HAWKINS: Many of the girls had nothing to say, but one of them said, 'Yes, tell them that this place stinks and whatever they do, don't come down here'. Hay was established to create just that sort of feeling.

JANE: Institutionalisation has a multigenerational effect. My mother was institutionalised with the Sisters of Mercy. My father was in one of them institutions where they worked on a farm, and he was horrendously abused. My daughter is the first in three generations to stay with her mum. It has been a constant struggle for me and she will have effects and she does have effects. My children all have drug problems from time to time with one son being in constant incarceration.

MRS KAY: The staff were just people like me. We had no special training. Though I was a trained nurse so I supposed I was one up. The men who worked there were just ordinary fellows from around Hay. The women were the same, they were just housewives, who

could spare the time from their commitments so they could take the job. We were not given any real instructions, except, 'Make them behave, don't let them talk.'

DANIELLA: The health care needs of those of us who remain as survivors of this infamous institution are overwhelming. The majority of our people suffer from varying degrees of mental illness. Post traumatic stress disorder is one thing we all seem to have in common. Depression and anxiety related illnesses such as panic attacks and sleep disorders are common, as are some phobic disorders.

MRS KAY: I was transferred to Condoblin and never went back to Hay. It was really just an accident of geography that I was ever in Hay at all. I guess that's a bit the same for the people who lived in Hay when I did. It wasn't up to them that these girls were here. This place, it was something that was done to Hay, and to me as well. That's what I want to be able to admit to myself. So I can look into the face of the horror and say, this was something that was done to me as well.

NAYLOR: I just want to say that hindsight is always 20/20 vision. At the time we did what we could to discipline them. We thought discipline was the only thing we could give them.

GWEN: You stole our childhood, you stole our lives.

NAYLOR: Emma Abbot, step out.

*EMMA steps out.*

The rest of you. Shoulders back. Eyes to the Floor. And quick march.

*The GIRLS process off. NAYLOR follows them. EMMA walks forward, addressing the audience.*

EMMA: I never saw my sister again. By the time I got out she'd just disappeared. I went looking in all the correctional facilities because one out of six of us are likely to end up in those places. I went looking at the mental hospitals because you know one in three of us are likely to attempt suicide. I don't know if that's why I couldn't find her. I still hope that one day I might know. But right now, today, she is still missing. People think that what happened here, it's in the past. Um. I just want to say, it's just not.

*EMMA exits the stage.*

*Lights fade.*

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