

Draft 3

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***Beyond Our Shores***

by

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## Characters

**Shirley Richards** – Mother  
**Stanley Richards** – Shirley’s Father  
**Wayne Richards** – Shirley’s Son  
**Nicola Richards** – Shirley’s Daughter  
**Qasim Khayyar** – Father  
**Nujood Khayyar** – Mother  
**Shadar Khayyar** – Qasim and Nujood’s Son  
**Douglas Thomson** – Real Estate Agent  
**Don Allen** – Motel Proprietor  
**Betty Allen** – Motel Proprietor  
**Peter Smith** – Policeman  
**Marie Berghoffer** – Check out chick  
**2 women** in fruit and veggie store

## Scenes

**Scene One:** Tuesday afternoon – Richard’s living room

**Scene Two:** Tuesday afternoon – motel room

**Scene Three:** Tuesday afternoon – motel office

**Scene Four:** Wednesday morning – Richard’s living room

**Scene Five:** Wednesday morning – Doug’s real estate agency

**Scene Six:** Wednesday morning – shed at the back of the Richard’s house

**Scene Seven:** Wednesday morning – motel room

**Scene Eight:** Wednesday around lunch time – local grocery shop

**Scene Nine:** Wednesday, early afternoon – motel room

**Scene Ten:** Wednesday afternoon – local park

**Scene Eleven:** Wednesday evening – motel room

**Scene Twelve:** Thursday morning – Richard’s living room

**Scene Thirteen:** Thursday morning – Doug’s real estate agency

**Scene Fourteen:** Thursday mid morning – the motel room

**Scene Fifteen:** Thursday afternoon – Richard’s living room

**Scene Sixteen:** Thursday afternoon – motel office

**Scene Seventeen:** Thursday afternoon – motel room

**Scene Eighteen:** Friday morning – Doug’s real estate agency

**Scene Nineteen:** Friday morning – motel room

**Scene Twenty:** Friday lunchtime – Richard’s kitchen

**Scene Twenty-one:** Friday lunchtime – school playground

**Scene Twenty-two:** Friday lunchtime – Doug’s real estate agency

**Scene Twenty-three:** Friday afternoon – motel room

**Scene Twenty-four:** Friday afternoon – Doug’s real estate agency

**Scene Twenty-five:** Friday afternoon – outside the main entrance to the motel

**Scene Twenty-six:** Saturday morning – motel front office

**Scene Twenty-seven:** Saturday morning – motel room

**Scene Twenty-eight:** Saturday morning – Richard’s kitchen

**Scene Twenty-nine:** Saturday late morning – Doug’s real estate agency

**Scene Thirty:** Saturday afternoon – Richard’s kitchen

**Scene Thirty-one:** Saturday afternoon – Richards’ granny flat

**Scene Thirty-two:** Saturday later afternoon – motel room

**Scene Thirty-three:** Saturday late afternoon – Richards’ living room

**Scene Thirty-four:** Wednesday morning – Richards’ living room

The play is set in a small country town on the Western Darling Downs of Queensland, around 2019.

All the communities and all the cultural references in the play can be changed to suit a setting that is relevant to any company producing this play.

## Scene One

The Richard's household in a small town on the Western Darling Downs – Nicola is about to return home after many years away in Toowoomba – Shirley is vacuuming – Stanley is sitting down doing a Sudoku puzzle in the newspaper and Wayne is sitting down as well having a drink of water.

**Wayne:** Geez Mum do you have to keep on going with that?

**Shirley:** Well it wouldn't hurt if you did something

**Wayne:** Do something? – I just mowed the bloody lawn – what more do you want?

**Shirley:** You could do the bathroom like I asked

**Wayne:** Fat chance.....(*looking at the vacuum cleaner*) that bloody stinks – can you change the filter on it or something?

**Shirley:** I'm almost finished – lift your legs

He stands up to get out of the way

**Shirley:** You don't have to stand up

**Wayne:** Don't worry.....geez all the bloody fuss over Nicola – you wouldn't be making this kind of fuss if it was me

Turns the vacuum off – looks around

**Shirley:** There, that'll do – now don't you mess anything up – she'll be here in any minute (*she puts the vacuum cleaner away*) Dad do you want anything?

**Stan:** (*Not even looking up*) No I'm right

**Shirley:** (*to Wayne*) Make sure you put that glass back on the rack

**Wayne:** I will, I will geez....

He wanders off to the kitchen, Shirley straightens a few things – we hear a car horn toot out the front – Wayne wanders back in

**Wayne:** Don't tell me she got Rob to give her a lift? – she could have walked from the bus station

**Shirley:** (*Pointing the finger*) stop being critical of her – if she wants to give him some work she can

**Stan:** No bloody work for taxis here

**Shirley:** And watch what you say when she gets in – no smart comments

The front door rattles and Nicola comes in – struggling with a fairly heavy port

**Shirley:** Hello dear

**Nicola:** Hi Mum

They hug – she crosses over to Stanley

**Nicola:** Grand Dad

**Stan:** Hello

**Wayne:** Hey

**Nicola:** Hi Wayne

**Shirley:** Welcome home dear – it's so good to have you back

**Nicola:** Thanks Mum.....thanks for having me

**Shirley:** Oh this is your home dear.....you don't have to thank me

**Nicola:** Well, it's been a long time

**Shirley:** There's always a place for you here.....I love it when everyone's home (*Wayne rolls his eyes and looks away*) your room is just as you left it – you can move right back in

**Nicola:** Thanks.....it's kind of weird being back here

**Shirley:** Nonsense.....home is always here for you – Wayne don't just stand there – put her port in her room

**Nicola:** No it's alright

**Wayne:** Yeah it's alright – she can do it

**Shirley:** Go on (*Wayne reluctantly does so*) Can I get you a drink sweetheart? Dinner's already on

**Nicola:** Oh just whatever – don't go to any fuss

**Shirley:** I'll get you a soft drink – you just wait here

Shirley exits – Nicola looks around

**Nicola:** So how are you Grand Dad?

**Stan:** Can't complain.....still on the right side of the grass

**Nicola:** (*She nods slowly, smiling*) Well that's good.....what are you doing?

**Stan:** One of those Sudoku puzzles.....(*puts the paper down*) bloody impossible....it's a new form of torture invented by the Japs

**Nicola:**.....still you got the other one

**Stan:** That was easier.....I try and do the harder one every day now – I get them about every second or third day – it stops the brain from seizing up

Shirley comes back and gives her a glass

**Shirley:** There you go dear

**Nicola:** Thanks Mum

**Shirley:** Dad can I get you another cup of tea?

**Stan:** No I'm right

**Shirley:** And how was the bus trip dear?

**Nicola:** Slow and boring – you forget how far out we are

Wayne re-enters

**Wayne:** Geez it's like a bloody time warp in there – I don't think I've looked since you left - how long ago did you leave?

**Nicola:** .....four years

**Wayne:** Struth

**Nicola:** Yeah but I was here two years ago – you saw me then

**Wayne:** And how's your Arts Degree?

**Nicola:** .....deferred

**Wayne:** What does that mean?

**Nicola:** I'm going to finish it later

**Wayne:** (*laughs*).....Oh well – what bloody use are they anyway? Hey what does an Arts graduate say to you? – Do you want fries with that? (*laughs*)

**Shirley:** Alright Wayne – that's enough

**Nicola:** I see you haven't changed

**Wayne:** Why change perfection?

**Shirley:** Turn it up.....he never grew up and left home.....never even grew up

**Wayne:** Well at least I had a job

**Nicola:** Had? – What happened?

**Wayne:** There's a new dealership opened up in Dalby – ever since that opened not enough people have been taking their cars into Davo.....he's slowly going under.....there's not enough work for me so I've been laid off

**Nicola:** That's bad luck.....now you can see what I've had to put up with.....there's no work in Toowoomba

**Wayne:** Seriously? – I doubt that's the problem

**Shirley:** Look don't start that up!

**Nicola:** It's alright Mum – he's just being Wayne – I can handle it. You're the one who needs to do an Arts Degree – it's all about personal development

**Wayne:** *(Laughs sarcastically)* Yeah right

## Scene Two

Qasim, Nujood and their ten year old son, Shadar are being shown into a motel room by Betty. Betty opens the door and turns on the light

**Betty:** So here we are.....(*They walk in*).....this is our biggest room – double bed and single bed, bathroom through there.....(*Qasim and Nujood are struggling with two large suitcases*) you should just leave that there.....the luggage rack is here

Betty looks at them as they look around – Qasim is happy, Nujood is sullen, and Shadar is looking down – barely showing any interest

**Betty:** Well there you go – breakfast is at 7.....just leave your order on the slip and put it outside your door tonight or in the morning – we collect them at 6:30. We only provide breakfast – there's a number of eateries in town.....there's no cooking in the rooms.....there's drinks and a few things in the mini bar.....they're not complimentary – they'll be added on to the bill at the end, and the maid will restock it each day.....well that's about it – are there any questions?

**Qasim:** No.....it's good – very adequate thank you

**Betty:** Oh just watch the water in the shower we're still on water restrictions here – there's a two minute egg timer in the bathroom to help with that

Qasim nods

**Betty:** .....Well righto then – if you need anything just ask at the front reception

**Qasim:** Thank you, okay

**Betty:** And don't forget your breakfast orders

They watch her go, there is a bit of a silence for a while

**Nujood:** It is just another room

**Qasim:** But the difference is we are here because we choose to be here – not because they want to put us here.....this is our own choice

**Nujood:** But how long can we afford this for?

**Qasim:** Long enough to get a house.....we won't be here long (*he looks to her – she looks morose*) I don't want us to stay in Sydney and grow up in Sydney – I don't want Shadar to be just another refugee boy in amongst all the others.....I want to get away from it all – I want a new start.....I want our life.....too many camps and refugees – I want our life in our country.....our new country – and to make it here our own way – this is a good town – I will find agricultural work here, and we will live and grow here – if we stayed in Lakemba we would be just another face in the crowd – just like in the detention centre – I want away from all of that

**Nujood:** But you didn't give it a chance

**Qasim:** No, and we agreed we never would

**Nujood:** Three days

**Qasim:** That was not to move there – that was to get ready to come here

**Nujood:** But I liked it there (*he glares at her*).....I'm sorry I'm glad we are here.....I just don't know anyone here.....I knew people there

**Qasim:** (*With sympathy*) We will get to know them here, it will be alright (*he crosses to Shadar who is sitting by himself in a chair*) and Shadar did you see that football field as we came in – plenty of room to kick a ball....as far as you can see – all the way to the horizon....I bet you can kick a ball that far

He gives no response, Nujood is watching and sighs, Qasim waits for a response, then gets up, and goes and sits next to Nujood on the bed

**Qasim:** This is why I come here.....for him – four years of detention make him like this.....this is what he has grown into – we have to make him grow into more – back into himself....this is not right.....there's fresh air and blue skies here – just like home.....not like in the city of Sydney.....where it is all noise and people staring at you like you don't belong.....he will get to know people here and rediscover his spirit

They stare at him glumly

### Scene Three

Betty and Don in the front office of the motel, Don is going over accounts

**Betty:** I showed them to their room.....bloody Muslims

**Don:** I saw she's got that head thing on

**Betty:** What are they doing out here?

**Don:** Don't know, there's nothing out here for them.....thank goodness she's not one that wears that full body thing....they look like they're about to rob a bank or something

**Betty:** How long are they staying here for?

**Don:** They've booked for three days – but they asked if a week was available

**Betty:** A week! – that's a long time.....I wonder where they're going – why would they want a week?

**Don:** Don't know.....still their money's just as good as anyone's

**Betty:** I spose so....as long as they don't cause any trouble

**Don:** Did they talk to you?

**Betty:** He did, but she didn't.....and the boy doesn't say anything.....it's a bit rude if you ask me – they should at least give you the time of day

### Scene Four

Doug, the local real estate agent, is having morning tea with Shirley, Stan sits in the background reading the paper. Shirley pours his tea and passes it to him

**Doug:** Thanks Shirl

**Shirley:** .....Dad, you sure you won't have one

**Stan:** No I'm right.....too early.....what are you doing having smoko now anyway Doug

**Doug:** I've got Felicity filling in for me – she can only stay till 10:30

**Stan:** Oh right

**Doug:** Yeah she's off to Brisbane for the weekend – leaving with some friends in an hour or so

**Shirley:** What's going on down there?

**Doug:** Oh some dance party or concert or something.....I dunno – bloody kids these days – we used to go B and S's or into Dalby for parties – everyone used to know everyone – it was great

**Shirley:** Now they've got to go into those big festivals and dance parties where no-one knows anyone

**Doug:** Yeah and get off their face on drugs.....we used to get sloshed – at least you'd wake up the next day sober

**Stan:** You never used to do that did you dear?

**Doug:** Oh I could tell you some stories Stan.....

**Shirley:** (*Offering the plate*) Here put a scone on it instead

**Doug:** (*he smiles*) thanks.....no it's all different now.....she's talking of moving to Brisbane actually – I tell you every time I train up a junior they end up moving

**Shirley:** It's just a stage – they all want to move to the bright lights – do you know Nicola's moved back?

**Doug:** I had – I've heard that.....how is she? Is she here now?

**Shirley:** No she's out

Wayne wanders in scrolling through his mobile phone and sits down

**Doug:** Giddy Wayne

**Wayne:** Doug

**Doug:** You just get up?

**Wayne:** No I've been up for hours

**Shirley:** You mean been on your X-Box for hours (*Doug looks to Shirley and smiles*) go brush your hair would you

**Wayne:** When I'm ready.....haven't even had breakfast yet

**Shirley:** Well get a move on

**Wayne:** Gee look at what she's laid on for you Doug – anyone'd think she's trying to impress ya

**Shirley:** (*shakes her head*) How's your tea Doug. Would you like some more?

**Doug:** (*Smiling*) Yeah, thanks

Wayne looks at the table then grabs a scone

**Wayne:** Don't mind if I do (*he sits back down*)

**Doug:** Do you want to take a look at that bike of mine Wayne

**Wayne:** What's wrong with it?

**Doug:** Won't start

**Wayne:** Sure

**Doug:** I'll bring it round after work this arvo

**Wayne:** Whenever

**Doug:** .....thanks.....great scones Shirl.....you're a great cook

**Wayne:** That's not all she's good at

Pause, she turns to him

**Shirley:** Do you wanna bugger off

**Wayne:** (*He gets up*) Sure (*he grabs another scone and goes*)

**Shirley:** He's always been a smart arse, that one

**Doug:** So what's Nicola doing?

**Shirley:** (*Bit of a sigh*) Oh I don't know....I'm just happy to have her home.....her job didn't work out for her in Toowoomba....and her uni didn't....I don't think she knows to be honest

**Doug:** Well we might end up with a job going in the agency if she's interested and if she's going to stay

**Shirley:** Well I'll mention it to her.....but I doubt she'll be interested – she's turned into a greeny or something – she's anti everything

**Doug:** Struth all I'm doin' is sellin houses and rentin em out....but still I spose people can find something wrong with that

**Shirley:** I know, I don't know what's got into her – she's anti everything – everything's capitalist and is destroying everything and she doesn't want to be a part of it....I had a big chat with her last night....wish I never did – everything is someone else's fault – they never look at themselves

**Doug:** Well you know what they say – if you're not a socialist before you're 20 you haven't got a heart, if you're still a socialist after you're 20 you haven't got a brain.....how old is she?

**Shirley:** Too old

## Scene Five

Doug is back at his real estate agency, Felicity has gone by now, he is sorting through some advertising cards to go in the window – Qasim, Nujood and Shadar come in – Doug looks at them and is taken aback and hesitant

**Doug:** .....can I help you?

**Qasim:** Yes, we are looking for a house to rent

**Doug:** .....alright.....in town here?

**Qasim:** Yes

**Doug:** .....well there's not many.....(*Qasim is looking at the cards*) these are for sale.....we've only got three available for rent at the moment (*he grabs a folder and passes it over to Qasim*) .....have a look in here

Qasim looks through the folder without showing it to Nujood

**Qasim:** Can we have this one please (*he passes it back*)

**Doug:** .....that's just two streets across – down here

**Qasim:** Good – it is close to everything in the town – when can we move in?

**Doug:** Well it's not as easy as that, you've got to apply for it and the owner has to approve you

**Qasim:** How do we do that?

**Doug:** I've got a form.....and you want to live here – have you got a job?

**Qasim:** No, I want to work in agriculture.....I will look for a job once I have my family settled in

**Doug:** Where are you from?

**Qasim:** Afghanistan

**Doug:** And you don't have a job – what are you doing out here?

**Qasim:** We want to live in Australia and I want to get an agricultural job

**Doug:** Have you done that kind of work before?

**Qasim:** Yes at home

**Doug:** Well they're different kinds of farms out here – they're very big concerns.....look here's the form.....fill it in – see how you go – but I think not having a job might be a sticking point

He passes it over

**Qasim:** Thank you

Qasim sits down to fill it in, Nujood watches Doug then Qasim, Shadar does nothing – Doug watches them all with uncertainty

**Doug:** .....have you got ID?

**Qasim:** We have our Australian Citizenship Certificates

**Doug:** You're Australian Citizens?

**Qasim:** Yes – we have been settled here by the Government

**Doug:** Alright.....well I'm going to need more than that

**Qasim:** What do you mean?

**Doug:** We use a 100 point system....do you have bank accounts, Medicare

**Qasim:** Yes I can provide all of that

**Doug:** Alright.....I still think not having a job is going to be a problem – but fill it in anyway

**Qasim:** It will not be a problem.....I will get a job – I want to work

Everyone waits as he fills it in – Douglas and Nujood's eyes catch – he gives her a quick smile. Qasim finishes and passes the form

**Doug:** Alright, thanks

**Qasim:** We are staying at the motel – I have put our room number.....How long till we know when we can have it?

**Doug:** That's if the owners approve it.....I'd say by tomorrow morning, provided I can get in touch with them today

**Qasim:** Okay, we'll come back tomorrow morning

**Doug:** Okay thank you

**Qasim:** Thank you for your time

**Doug:** That's alright

Qasim reaches out his hand to shake – they do so – the family leave, Doug watches them go unsuredly

## Scene Six

The shed at the back of the Richard's house, light streams in from the ceiling amongst Wayne's motorbike and all his mechanics gear

Wayne enters a bit wistfully – just looking at all the bits and pieces – in particular his old motorbike – an XR250 – he holds the handlebars and pretends to steer it a bit – Nicola enters shortly and startles him – he quickly stops what he is doing

**Nicola:** There you are.....Mum says lunch is ready.....what are you doin?

**Wayne:** Nothin – just lookin

**Nicola:** Geez you've got enough motorbike junk – this place has only got worse

**Wayne:** Occupational hazard of my job.....ex job

**Nicola:** So what are you going to do – look for more work?

**Wayne:** Got no choice – not going to sit round in this town forever.....I'm thinking of going out and working in the mines – could easily get work as a diesel fitter and mechanic – rather drive one of those big trucks though

**Nicola:** Yeah.....so what are you gonna do with all this crap?

**Wayne:** It can stay here – Mum wont' mind.....man's gotta have a hobby....remember when Mum and Dad gave us the XR250s?

**Nicola:** Yeah

**Wayne:** Best thing that ever happened, and then they got divorced not long after.....where's yours? Still in Toowoomba?

**Nicola:** .....I sold it

**Wayne:** Ohr what did you do that for?

**Nicola:** What do you think? – I needed the money

**Wayne:** Some things you shouldn't sell.....not bikes and not presents.....and not these.....geez they used to be fun – remember tearin round the streets here, and packin a picnic lunch and goin bush.....how much you get for it?

**Nicola:** Don't know

He just looks at her for a bit

**Wayne:** What do you mean you don't know?

**Nicola:** I don't

**Wayne:** I don't know why you even moved....everything was fine

**Nicola:** What? In this dump? I just wanted to get out.....you said yourself you want to go

**Wayne:** Yeah but that's to go to something – to get a job in the mines – what were you going to?

**Nicola:** Well I wanted to go and educate myself

**Wayne:** And what did you learn - nothin

**Nicola:** I learnt you're a dick.....didn't have to go away to learn that though

**Wayne:** I know what you did there – Mum tried to keep it from me – but I'm not stupid and I hear things.....

**Nicola:** What are you talking about? I didn't do anything

**Wayne:** She said you were into drugs

**Nicola:** No....geez I lose my job and I'm on the dole.....and people start jumpin to all sorts of conclusions.....I just never got off the dole.....to be honest never wanted to

**Wayne:** She says you looked like a drug addict cause she went and saw you

**Nicola:** Doesn't mean I was

## Scene Seven

Qasim, Nujood and Shadar are returning to their motel room

**Qasim:** You are worrying unnecessarily.....tomorrow it will be all sorted out and we will move in

**Nujood:** What if it's not approved

**Qasim:** It will be....why wouldn't it be?

**Nujood:** What if someone else has also applied.....or if they don't want us there

**Qasim:** *(Turns to her)* Nujood you have to stop thinking like this.....we have a right to be here – we are here because Australia wants us here....we are welcome here

**Nujood:** I do not feel welcome here

**Qasim:** You just have to give it a while to get to know the people here....and for them to know us.....now stop talking about this – Australia is a good country – we came here because they will let us be ourselves here – they accept all sorts of people in Australia – now stop worrying about it – the detention is over *(to Shadar who is curled up on a couch chair)* Shadar you don't want to put dirt on there with your feet *(Qasim turns to Nujood, with a concerned look on his face about Shadar's general state)*

**Nujood:** He doesn't like it either

**Qasim:** Look we work so hard to get here! Years! And for what? – this? – No! Now stop it the both of you....just as things are starting to turn good – you two must turn good too.....we are here now – we are free....this is what we worked so hard for....do you remember....everything we have been through....it is over now! This is the start of our lives now – don't you see it!

Shadar slowly looks up at him and makes eye contact- Qasim sighs and smiles to him, then turns to Nujood

**Nujood:** We have to buy some food - I'll do it - I'll take Shadar with me.....it might be good for him

**Qasim:** Okay

**Nujood:** What do you want me to get?

**Qasim:** Just meat and vegetables....*(Looking around the room)* there's no.....we can use the camping stove....make sure the meat is Halal....if you can't find any don't get any

**Nujood:** What if we can't ever find any here?

**Qasim:** Don't worry I will do the slaughtering when we get a house.....if you can't find any Halal we'll just have to eat vegetables until then

**Nujood:** Alright

Nujood pauses and thinks

**Nujood:** Why don't I make \*\*\* that would be nice wouldn't it.....it will make us all think of home

**Qasim:** Yes – but it will bring home to us – to our new home

**Nujood:** I just need \*\*\* and \*\*\* and \*\*\* - I have some \*\*\*\* and I'll have to see if they have \*\*\* and if they don't I will use \*\*\* it will not matter.....and I can cook it on that stove.....it won't be as good but it will be alright

**Qasim:** It will be beautiful.....and so good for Shadar

They both look at Shadar, sitting forlornly

**Nujood:** He is never to forget who is, or where he came from.....he must always remember who he is

**Qasim:** He will....I want him to do that as well

Nujood nods silently, Qasim watches her and then hands her some money

**Qasim:** Here buy whatever you need – let's make it a great meal.....the start of our new life

Nujood looks at Qasim and nods then turns to Shadar

**Nujood:** Shadar (*he looks up to her right away*) come on – we will go out (*he crosses to her and they exit*) you can help me buy the food – I am going to make \*\*\*\* tonight....you like that – I have made it before – a long time ago – do you remember?

Shadar looks at her, but doesn't react.....Qasim watches them go and breathes out a loud sigh

**Qasim:** (*softly*) It will be alright.....it will be alright

## Scene Eight

Nujood and Shadar are at a fruit and veggie shop – Nujood has a basket under her arm full of vegetables – she is standing in front of a stack of potatoes, checking them, Shadar is just looking at the ground

There are two women in the background shopping independently, they are both looking at Nujood and Shadar strangely and then recognise each other – they walk over to meet and chat about what they see – making no attempt to be discreet or to hide their interest and slightly disparaging looks

Nujood sees them and feels uncomfortable, she turns her head slightly but can't look them in the eye – she makes her selection and then grabs Shadar by the hand and crosses to the counter

Marie, a young girl of about 20, looks at them equally strangely

**Nujood:** I will buy these please

Marie starts to process them

**Nujood:** Do you have any Halal meat?

**Marie:** Sorry?

**Nujood:** Do you have any Halal meat?

**Marie:** All of our meat is in the deli counter – did you have a look there?

**Nujood:** *(looking awkwardly over her shoulder)* Yes

**Marie:** Well if it's not there we don't have it.....that'll be \$19.40 then if you're not going to get anything else

**Nujood:** *(Nujood hands over a twenty dollar note) there you are (Marie gives her the change and then the vegies in a cardboard box)*

Nujood and Shadar exit

**Marie:** Thank you

The two women cross up to Marie to chat to her

## Scene Nine

In the motel room Qasim is setting the table – and experimenting with what few settings he has to work with – he turns when he hears the door open. Nujood is struggling with the box of vegetables, Shadar goes and sits in a lounge chair

**Qasim:** Ah let me help you

Qasim takes the box and looks in it on his way to putting it on the table

**Qasim:** So there was no Halal meat

**Nujood:** No, and I think she doesn't even know what it means – how stupid can people be?

**Qasim:** It is not stupid Nujood, they just do not know. We can show them – maybe one day when we have our house we can invite people around – have a Aussie barbecue! And we can have \*\* and \*\* and \*\* - and they will like it – you will see – and they will get to know us

Nujood looks to him disbelievingly and starts taking some of the vegetables out

**Nujood:** I will be able to make \*\* - I also bought \*\* so we can have some \*\* too

**Qasim:** That is good – well done (*he turns to look at Shadar*) how did he go – did he say anything?

**Nujood:** No....there were some other people in there – some young girls – they were staring at him and talking – that is what people are like here!

**Qasim:** No it's not (*he sighs and crosses to Shadar*) Shadar....Shadar....why don't we go to the park and kick the football.....would you like that? Your mother can make the meal now – she has everything she needs - we can go to the park and play some football – we haven't done that for weeks now – do you want to come? (*Shadar slowly starts to nod his head*) Alright – let us go then

Qasim looks at Nujood, who has a big smile on her face

**Nujood:** Take as long as you like – but this will take just over an hour

**Qasim:** We will be back by then.....come on Shadar let's go – can you get the ball

Shadar gets up out of his seat and walks over to get the ball

## Scene Ten

Park near the roadside – Qasim and Shadar walk along – Qasim is holding the ball

**Qasim:** Okay this will do....if you go down there – do you see that goal post – do you know what that is? That is a rugby post, that is what they play here – but we play this – football - this is much better.....they call it soccer here, did you know that? Okay you go down there – now look out for that bird! (*Shadar stops*) that black and white one – that is a magpie – that is the one that attacked me in Sydney.....why didn't they tell me they would do that? Anyway it has flown away – you go down there near the goal posts – we will just kick it to each other.....go on it is alright.....you go down there

The sound of a loud car going past

**Qasim:** But don't let it go near the road.....okay are you ready?

Qasim and Shadar are on opposite sides of the stage – Shadar just stands still

**Qasim:** Okay I will kick it to you now and you kick it back

Qasim kicks it very gently – it rolls near Shadar who just stands there and doesn't do anything

**Qasim:** Come on now you can kick it to me

Qasim stands patiently – another loud sound of a car going past – then he runs to get the ball and goes back to his where he was

**Qasim:** Okay Shadar I will kick it right to you now

Qasim kicks the ball and it rolls right in front of Shadar – Qasim waits

**Qasim:** Come on Shadar you can kick it to me.....I know you like this

Qasim waits – then eventually sighs and runs forward to the ball – he is just about to get it and then Shadar kicks it back past him

**Qasim:** Hey now I have to run back to get it!

Shadar giggles and Qasim runs back to the ball – another car sound is heard – Qasim gets the ball and stops

**Qasim:** Okay I will kick it to you from here and you will kick it back to me so I don't have to run for it

Qasim kicks the ball and Shadar suddenly comes out of his shell – with a big smile on his face he runs to the ball and kicks it back to his Dad

**Qasim:** Very good!

Qasim kicks it back – another car is heard

They kick it back and forth a few times and then another car is heard with cheering coming from it, Qasim stops and looks towards the car and then to Shadar

**Qasim:** See they are cheering you – they know how good you are – you are very good at this

Qasim kicks it to Shadar who runs to it with a big smile. They kick the ball back and forth about four times, with Shadar's happiness growing each time – then another car sound with shouting is heard

**Shouting:** Fuck off ya Muslim wog!

Qasim and Shadar stop right away – Qasim looks at the car, trying to comprehend it – Shadar just stands still and starts withdrawing into himself – Qasim is lost for words and turns to Shadar

**Qasim:** Come on Shadar (*he kicks the ball to him – there is no response*) do you want to kick the ball back to me?

Shadar just stands still, Qasim sighs and walks over to him

**Qasim:** Shadar?

It is clear Shadar is not going to respond, Qasim puts his arm around him, then kneels in front of him

**Qasim:** Shadar I don't know why people say those things.....but we can't let it stop us having fun.....do you want to keep kicking the ball?

There is no response – Qasim stands up and sighs and looks around

**Qasim:** Alright....we'll go back to the motel room – your mother is making \*\* that will be really special – you will love it – I know you have had it before....it will be a really special meal – it will make you happy Shadar

## Scene Eleven

At the motel room, early evening – Qasim, Nujood and Shadar are sitting at the table eating  
\*\*

[\*\* need culturally specific information to expand this scene\*\*]

**Qasim:** This is beautiful Nujood – I think this is the best \*\* you have ever made

**Nujood:** Thankyou – I had to use \*\* instead of \*\* but it still tastes almost the same

**Qasim:** And it smells beautiful – I could smell it from before I got to the door.....

**Nujood:** But that was the good things about Lakemba – you cannot deny it – we could get all the spices and ingredients at the markets and at the shops

**Qasim:** Well I think you don't need them – this is so beautiful – this is just like how my mother used to make it

Nujood smiles

**Qasim:** What about you Shadar what do you think?

They both stop and look at Shadar – he doesn't say anything but then starts to nod his head agreeingly – Qasim and Nujood look at each other with a big smile

**Qasim:** You know Shadar back where we are from this is a very famous meal – there is a story that goes with it.

[\*\*Qasim proceeds to tell the story – again more culturally specific information required\*\*]

Qasim finishes telling the story and then there is a knock on the door – he thinks nothing of it and crosses to open the door – Betty comes in

**Betty:** Now I have to ask you what is that smell ? I've been getting complaints from some other guests – and what is that? Have you been cooking in here? I thought I told you specifically no cooking in the rooms?

**Qasim:** I am sorry, we made \*\* would you like some? It's very nice – it's a traditional meal from Afghanistan

**Betty:** Look I don't care where it's from – there's no cooking in the rooms! It's a fire hazard – and let alone with that god awful smell – you're going to drive the other guests out of here

**Qasim:** I am sorry it won't happen again

**Betty:** Too right it won't happen again, I have a good mind to throw you out now (*she sighs*) but I won't – but if it happens again I will

**Qasim:** It won't happen again.....I'm sorry – we just thought if we made something from home it might cheer our son up

**Betty:** Well it looks like he could do with cheering up – what's wrong with him? Isn't he happy to be here?

Qasim is lost for words and looks to Shadar and Nujood

**Betty:** Anyway don't worry this is your only warning okay – next time and you're out (*she walks towards the door*) and try and do something about that smell

Betty goes, Qasim turns to Nujood

## Scene Twelve

The following morning – Shirley is sorting through a basket of washing – Wayne wanders in with a package

**Shirley:** What have you got there?

**Wayne:** My latest eBay bargain....I hope....I'm pretty sure *(he continues looking at the packet then notices what Shirley is doing)* You doing her washing? – geez Mum let her do it herself

**Shirley:** I don't notice you doing yours

**Wayne:** I do sometimes

**Shirley:** Did you get the milk?

**Wayne:** Yes, it's in the fridge

**Shirley:** Any other mail?

**Wayne:** No *(He has the packet open and pulls out a CD)* Alright!

Wayne wanders over to the CD player, puts it in and blasts out some heavy metal music – Wayne is smiling, banging his head a little – Shirley just drops her arms down and glares at him

**Shirley:** Turn it off!

**Wayne:** Don't worry I will I will geez

He turns it off

**Nicola:** It's way too early for that

Nicola walks in, in her pyjamas, still waking up

**Nicola:** Do you have to?

**Wayne:** Nup – but I'm going to

He gives it another blast

**Shirley:** Wayne!

He turns it off, laughing

**Wayne:** Don't worry I'll stick it on my phone geez

**Nicola:** God that was crap – at least play something good

**Wayne:** Ohr yeah and what have you got then? (*Nicola just nods her head*) Hey you'll never guess what I just saw down town?

**Nicola:** What?

**Wayne:** Three Muslims – right here.....I always knew it would happen.....they'd get out here eventually

**Nicola:** Yeah they were on the bus with me when I arrived – so what?

**Wayne:** Well why didn't you tell us?

**Nicola:** Well why should I? – there's nothing special about that

**Wayne:** Well what are they doin' out here?

**Nicola:** I dunno I didn't talk to them – they can be out here if they want

**Wayne:** What do they want here?

**Nicola:** I dunno – probably the same things you do – a life, job, family

**Wayne:** Yeah but out here?

**Nicola:** Well why not?

**Wayne:** There's nothing for them.....then they're going to bring their backwards bloody culture and expect us to change everything for them

Pause

**Nicola:** You're such an idiot

**Wayne:** Yeah and what makes you so high and mighty?

**Nicola:** It's called an education

**Wayne:** Ha! You didn't even finish it

**Nicola:** Still smarter than you

**Shirley:** Stop it you two

**Nicola:** Anyway they're welcome – we owe it to them

**Wayne:** Owe it to them?! – what?!

**Nicola:** If we didn't invade their country, they probably wouldn't be here in the first place

**Wayne:** Ohr geez you're full of it

**Shirley:** Stop it the two of you! (*stands up*) I've had enough. Now either you both get along or I'm kicking the two of you out

**Wayne:** Don't worry, I'm goin – go and listen to this in my room

**Nicola:** Thank goodness

Wayne gets up and leaves and glares at Nicola as he passes her – there is a long silence

**Shirley:** Are you alright Dad?

**Stan:** Yes, I'm fine.....listenin to them two go at it

**Shirley:** Sorry Dad.....Nicola don't argue when your grandfather is around – it's not good for his heart

**Stan:** No no I'm fine....it's entertaining....what time is it dear?

**Shirley:** It's getting on to ten

**Stan:** (*Stan nods*) Why don't we put the TV on – might be time for the morning news

**Shirley:** Okay Dad

Nicola watches them both, and then walks into the kitchen

### Scene Thirteen

Doug is sitting at his desk typing on his laptop – Qasim, Nujood and Shadar come in

**Qasim:** Good morning....do you remember....yesterday we put in the application for the house

**Doug:** Yes

**Qasim:** ....how did it go? Did we get the application?

Doug sighs

**Doug:** I'm afraid it's been knocked back – you didn't get it

**Qasim:** Why?

**Doug:** Don't know....I think it was the employment history....lack of work

**Qasim:** But I want to get work

**Doug:** I think they've had a bad experience with unemployed people before

**Qasim:** .....but I want to get work

**Doug:** .....Well I don't know – it's up to them – it's a free country if they don't want to rent it out they don't have to – it's their house

**Qasim:** .....can't we explain?

**Doug:** No – they just look at it as facts and figures and unemployed people can sometimes have trouble paying rent – it's not worth the bother for them

**Qasim:** But we're not like that

**Doug:** Well sorry

**Qasim:** .....show me the other two.....you have two more houses

**Doug:** *(A bit reluctantly)* Alright

Doug reaches over and gets the folder and passes it to Qasim – Qasim looks through it

**Qasim:** .....this we can't afford....and this way too much....let me meet with the owners of this one and explain.....I can offer them what we can afford

**Doug:** I can't do that

**Qasim:** Let me discuss the price with them

**Doug:** That's not how we do it here....you might haggle over things back where you're from but here the owner sets the price – well the market sets the price really.....all three of these houses will go at that price

**Qasim:** But let me explain to them who we are, and what we can pay.....we will pay the money – we are reliable

**Doug:** No you can't meet them – that's the whole idea in having an agent....often the owners like to keep their privacy

Long pause. Qasim doesn't know what to do

**Qasim:** Well look, if we get this second one we have hardly any money for food.....and this one we can't afford at all.....alright I will apply for this one and when I get a job it will be better, we will grow our food till then

**Doug:** Look.....you're probably going to find they won't accept your application either

**Qasim:** Well I have to try don't I....now please give me the form

Doug reluctantly hands him the form

## Scene Fourteen

Mid morning. The motel room – Betty knocks on the door. Qasim is reading a newspaper, Nujood is sorting through things in a suitcase and Shadar is watching TV, stony faced. Qasim and Nujood look at each other and then Nujood crosses to open the door.

**Betty:** Ah.....excuse me I was just wondering if I could have a quick word (*she steps past Nujood, Qasim crosses towards her*)

**Qasim:** Yes

**Betty:** Look, I was just wondering how long you think you might be staying here for? We never rent out rooms for more than three or four days at the most....we like to keep them clean and fresh for when other visitors come through the town (*long pause*)....it's not a permanent....we're not set up for people to live here permanently or semi permanently

**Qasim:** I understand what you are saying

**Betty:** Good because I want to make sure.....

**Qasim:** We are talking with the real estate agent now and applying for houses. As soon as we find out we will let you know

**Betty:** So it will be soon will it?

**Qasim:** I think so, yes, as soon as I know I will let you know

**Betty:** Good because we just like to keep everything....we can't have people here for a long period of time (*looking around*) and if you must cook your food there's a free electric barbecue down at the park – it's only five minutes walk from here

Qasim pauses, a bit taken a back

**Qasim:** Yes I know, I have seen it

**Betty:** That's good – so you'll be able to use that from now on?

**Qasim:** .....yes

**Betty:** Alright..... there's also the Charcoal Chicken and pizzeria in town if you want to eat out.....so just as long as we understand each other....no more cooking in the room – is that clear

**Qasim:** Yes

**Betty:** And let us know as soon as you get word about your house applications and when you can move out

**Qasim:** .....yes, alright

**Betty:** Rightio then I will leave you to it – have a good day

Qasim sighs as she leaves

## Scene Fifteen

The living room – Nicola is sitting down watching something on her mobile phone – Shirley is in the kitchen cleaning up after lunch – Wayne walks in

**Wayne:** Mum you seen my socket set?

**Shirley:** *(Pause)* I lent it to Doug dear *(she comes in from the kitchen)*

**Wayne:** What?

**Shirley:** I lent it to Doug he needed it

**Wayne:** What did you do that for it's my bloody set

**Shirley:** Well I didn't think you'd mind – sorry dear

**Wayne:** I don't care if you're trying to impress him just don't do it with my gear

**Shirley:** Sorry.....he was fixing something for his mother in Dalby

**Wayne:** I don't care *(sits down dejectedly)* well it was his bloody bike I needed it for....can't do it now....shit.....he'll just have to wait *(turns to Nicola)* what are you doing?

**Nicola:** What does it look like?

**Wayne:** Netflix? How can you afford that? *(Shirley goes back to the kitchen)*

**Nicola:** Shuddup

**Wayne:** Ohr that's right – you're living at home – you don't pay rent – that's what all your dole money is going to

**Nicola:** You don't pay rent either

**Wayne:** I don't get the dole

**Nicola:** Why are you such an asshole?

**Wayne:** Just lucky I guess *(he smiles – looks around – then looks back to her)*....what are you watching?

**Nicola:** None of your business

**Wayne:** Ohr for fucks sake.....all my fuckin tax money gone into your dole....and your useless uni degree – how far did you get in that?

**Nicola:** *(Quietly- trying to watch her show)* Fuck off

**Wayne:** Come on how far?

She puts her phone down and turns to him, sighing and pausing before she speaks

**Nicola:** First year

**Wayne:** *(Laughs)* What! Four years in Toowoomba and you can't even get past first year in a course – what were you doing all that time?

**Nicola:** Just trying to live.....with my friends.....geez there's more to life than mechanics and farming and working in a mine you know

**Shirley:** *(Shirley enters)* Wayne leave her alone

**Wayne:** Gimme a break – she's old enough to stick up for herself – stop making excuses for her *(Wayne gets up and starts to walk off, then stops and turns back to Shirley)* – and don't ever lend out my gear again

Doug walks in

**Wayne:** Speak of the devil – you got my socket set?

**Doug:** I have – I just put it back in your workshop

**Wayne:** Good – now I can work on your bike *(to Shirley)* don't lend out my stuff again – ask

Wayne, exits, Shirley nods her head a bit aggrieved

**Shirley:** He is so rude

**Doug:** Don't worry about it

**Shirley:** I'm glad you brought them back so quickly – otherwise I'd have to put up with him for the rest of the day carrying on about it

**Doug:** Well that's good – I actually came over to see Nicola as well

**Shirley:** Oh.....Nicola did you hear that – Doug wants to see you

**Nicola:** *(Still on her screen)* Hello Doug – been a while

**Shirley:** Nicola come over here

Nicola pauses her show and walks over

**Doug:** Hello Nicola good to see you again

**Nicola:** Yeah you too

**Doug:** Look I was wondering if you'd be interested in a job – Fliss is definitely moving on and I need an offsider – just office duties that kind of thing.....what do you think?

**Shirley:** That'd be wonderful Doug when can she start?

**Nicola:** Mum!

**Doug:** Yeah give her a chance Shirl – do you want a week to think about it? I’m going to need someone soon – but I thought I’d ask you before I advertised

**Shirley:** Well it’s the perfect opportunity for you Nicola

**Doug:** Full time....you’d have to clean yourself up though – you couldn’t go in looking like that – you’d scare the customers away.....what do you think?

**Shirley:** Come on Nicola

**Nicola:** I’ll think about it

**Doug:** Could you let us know as soon as possible – I really do need someone soon.....it’s good pay too – I always look after my employees

**Nicola:** Well I think about it

Nicola wanders back to the couch

## Scene Sixteen

The office of the motel – Betty and Don are talking to Peter the local police officer

**Betty:** Thank you for coming here Peter....can I get you a cup of tea?

**Peter:** Only if you're having one

**Betty:** Sure, Don will be in in a tick too *(Betty crosses to the kettle and flicks the switch)*

**Peter:** Has there been some trouble here?

**Betty:** No, we just want a bit of advice

**Peter:** Oh yes

**Don:** *(walking in)* Giddy Pete

**Peter:** Don

**Don:** Thanks for coming over – take a seat

Both Peter and Don sit

**Peter:** So what do you need advice about?

**Don:** That Muslim family we've got staying here

**Peter:** Oh yes, I've seen them down town.....are they causing any trouble?

**Betty:** No, no I don't think so....they were cooking in their room but I think that's going to stop now - but I don't think they're planning on moving out

**Don:** This is a motel not housing commission units

**Peter:** Yeah

**Betty:** And they can't stay here forever *(she starts pouring the tea)*

**Peter:** No.....so how have they been since they've been here?

**Don:** Very quiet

**Peter:** Have they caused any trouble?

**Betty:** No apart from the horrid smell when they're cooking that weird food – the amount of comments that generated...*(passes Peter his tea)* it's just that if they want to stay and we want to move them out – we just want to know where we stand from a legal point of view – you can't do anything now without being accused of being a racist

**Peter:** Well the bottom line is it's your property and you can do what you like

**Betty:** Thankyou – it's just that with all this political correctness people are getting sued if they even look sideways at a Muslim now

**Peter:** But you're not kicking them out on racial grounds or religious grounds

**Betty:** That's right....it's just that we're not a long term accommodation option

**Peter:** Are they paying their bills? Has he got a job?

**Don:** He's paid for two nights already and two more nights....he's not employed – I think they get the dole

**Peter:** *(laughing)* Oh they'd be looked after alright

**Betty:** It's not fair is it while ordinary Australians are struggling these refugees get everything

**Peter:** No....just keep an eye on them and if you do ask them to leave if you want me to come round when you do it that's fine

**Betty:** Good

**Don:** Thanks Peter

**Betty:** It's crazy the way everything is working – political correctness will be the death of the country

**Peter:** All I can say is I'm glad she's not one of those ones that wears the full body covering because if I had to stop her in the street to identify her for something I would take it off her

**Betty:** And so you should too

**Peter:** It's got nothing to do with religion or racism it's just being practical

**Don:** That's right

**Betty:** The problem with those Muslims is they don't blend in – they come over here because of what we've got and then they try and turn the place into how it was back home

**Don:** Yeah, so why come over here in the first place

**Peter:** Yeah.....how many of them are here in the family, is it just the three?

**Don:** Yeah the mother, father and son

**Betty:** And he's a rude little blighter, never looks you in the eye or says anything

**Peter:** Is he going to school?

**Betty:** That's a good question? Don do you know?

**Don:** Don't know, don't think so

**Peter:** Hmmmm.....well that's a problem, I'm going to have to talk to them about that, he has to be enrolled

**Betty:** They're in room 5 if you want to see them

**Peter:** Yeah, I'll just have a gentle word

## Scene Seventeen

The motel room – Qasim is asleep in an armchair, Nujood is still at the suitcase and Shadar is playing with some toys quietly – there is a knock at the door – this wakes Qasim up – he looks at Nujood and then crosses to the door and opens it – Peter steps in

**Peter:** Gidday, I was just wondering if I could have a word – I'm Constable Peter Davis, one of the local policemen

**Qasim:** *(still waking up)* Yes sir

**Peter:** Look it's come to my attention that your son might not be enrolled in school, is that true?

**Qasim:** Ah....we are going to be enrolling him when we get our house

**Peter:** How old is he?

**Qasim:** Nine

**Peter:** Well he needs to be enrolled now.....it's a state offence for any child of school age not to be enrolled in school

**Qasim:** Oh.....okay

**Peter:** Now look, it's no big deal – there's a local primary school nearby, I can take you down and introduce you to the headmistress if you like – not much point now but tomorrow morning

**Qasim:** Oh.....alright.....okay.....I am sorry about this.....I thought it best to wait until we had a permanent home

**Peter:** No he's got to get in there right away – the school day's almost over now I'll give them a call and let them know we'll be in tomorrow morning - I'll come by here at 8:30 in the morning *(looking to Shadar)* have him ready for a day at school – pack him a little lunch and get him a little school port – you can get the uniforms from the school and they'll have most of the text books....you'll need to buy a few exercise books

**Qasim:** .....okay....we will organise it

**Peter:** Alright, so I'll see you all at 8:30 tomorrow morning

**Qasim:** Yes, okay, thank you

**Peter:** *(Nods)* Alright, bye

**Nujood:** What did he want?

Qasim crosses to Nujood

**Qasim:** Shadar must go to school.....tomorrow

**Nujood:** No.....no.....no it is too soon – I don't want him to, he doesn't even have a home yet

**Qasim:** You heard what the police officer said – he must go – it is the law

**Nujood:** What happens if we don't send him? Will they take him away from us?

**Qasim:** I don't know....but Nujood this is a good thing, I want him to go....I want him to meet other boys and play and learn....and make friends.....look at him

Pause as they look – he is playing introvertedly

**Nujood:** I just want him to stay here with me where he is safe

**Qasim:** But how long is that going to keep him safe for? He needs to know the other children around him and make friends

## Scene Eighteen

The following morning in the real estate agent's office – Doug is working quietly and Peter comes in – Doug looks up then back down

**Doug:** It wasn't me, I didn't do it, I wasn't there

**Peter:** Giddy Doug

**Doug:** Pete.....how are things

**Peter:** Alright, listen I just want to ask you something, that Muslim family that are staying at the motel

**Doug:** Yep

**Peter:** How are they going for accommodation? I heard they've been looking for somewhere to rent

**Doug:** They've come in here a couple of times – they've got one application in at the moment which I can tell you they're not going to get

**Peter:** Why's that?

**Doug:** They can't afford it....he was knocked back for one already – no-one wants an unemployed person in their house – let alone a Muslim one

Peter sighs

**Doug:** What's the problem?

**Peter:** Betty's starting to flip out down at the motel, she doesn't want them in there any more – I've just come from there, I took the family down to the school so their little boy could get enrolled – he wasn't even going to school – and Betty just wants them out

**Doug:** Why doesn't she want them in there – they're paying aren't they?

**Peter:** Yeah but she says they're cooking in their room which is a fire hazard....and she's worried they're setting up shop permanently.....she's just found out they're not eating meat because they can't get Halal meat here and she's petrified they're going to get a sheep or pig or something and slaughter it on the motel grounds – do you remember there was that case in Sydney where a Muslim bloke slaughtered a goat in his backyard and the neighbour's kids heard all the noise and wailing from the goat – she's worried that's going to happen

**Doug:** Ah it's all bloody ridiculous all that religious stuff – who cares how it's killed – it's all superstition

**Peter:** Yeah but I got Betty down there having kittens over it

**Doug:** How's old Don?

**Peter:** He's quiet – which is a bad sign – he's likely to just snap and turf them out on the spot – he gets very protective of Betty

**Doug:** Yeah.....

**Peter:** So is there nothing here they can afford?

**Doug:** The only one they could's the one they got knocked back on

**Peter:** Who's house is that?

**Doug:** Jess Moynihan's.....you know down the end of Roma Street

**Peter:** Where's she now?

**Doug:** Sunshine Coast – I've talked to her, she won't budge – the problem is she doesn't need the money, she's happy just to let the house sit there – and I can't make her take people if she doesn't want to – she's knocked back others before too – I think she wants a family in there....an employed family

**Peter:** Yeah, well something's got to give, before Betty does

**Doug:** Yeah but what are they out here for anyway? – they should stay in the cities where there's more of their kind – they'd be happier

**Peter:** You can't think of anyone who can offer them anything?

**Doug:** Not off the top of my head.....I'm speaking to Des this arvo about the other house that they've got the application in on – but he'll knock em back – they can't afford it – the father's on the dole and Des is no fool – God knows what they could do to the place if they're allowed in and then we have to move them out a few weeks later because they can't afford it.....we have enough bloody trouble with the Abo's with that

**Peter:** Yeah.....is there any other option.....is anyone away temporarily or anything?

**Doug:** Not that I know of.....

**Peter:** Anyone with a granny flat?

**Doug:** *(Pause, thinks)* There is actually.....Shirley and Stan

**Peter:** I thought Stan lived in it

**Doug:** No, he moved into the house about a year ago – Shirley wanted him closer after his accident

**Peter:** So is it empty?

**Doug:** There's a bit of stuff in there, it could probably be moved

**Peter:** I'll have a word to them anyway and see

**Doug:** Alright....don't know how you'll go though.....Nicola's back you know

**Peter:** Is that right? And how's she doing?

**Doug:** Don't know – I've offered her a job here though which would be good – I could certainly do with the help, and it'd be good for her – I think she's a bit lost to be honest

**Peter:** Yeah like all the kids now though – they don't know what's what – they've got too many choices

**Doug:** Wayne's doing alright though....I've got him working on my bike at the moment – he's going to head out to the mines I think since his job's finished up

**Peter:** Good on him.....anyway, I better go, thanks for your time, I'll have a word to Shirley and see how I go – try and calm Betty and Don down too

**Doug:** Good luck with that

**Peter:** Yeah

## Scene Nineteen

The motel room – Peter is in there to talk to Qasim and Nujood

**Peter:** Look, I've just come by to let you know that I've just had a word to Doug Thomas, the real estate agent, and he's given us a few ideas on how we might be able to help you

**Qasim:** Yes

**Peter:** There's a family that's got a small flat.....a granny flat – outside their house – you might be able to stay there

**Qasim:** Okay.....

**Peter:** And if you can't I'm going to ask around and see if we can find somewhere.....there's got to be something even if it's not in the real estate agents

**Qasim:** Yes, thank you, thank you very much

**Peter:** But listen, in the meantime can you just.....lay low – don't do anything to upset the owners here.....they're both elderly

**Qasim:** We are not doing anything wrong

**Peter:** Well, she says you're cooking in here, are you cooking in here?

**Qasim:** *(Pause)* We did once but we haven't since then

**Peter:** *(Pause)* Well it's a fire hazard – the rooms aren't set up for cooking.....some time ago there was a big fire in a place like this in a town called Childers – a lot of people died – we don't want that to happen again.....there are other people staying in this motel you know

**Qasim:** Yes

**Peter:** You can just go down to the park down the road – there's a barbecue there

**Qasim:** .....Yes we know

**Peter:** Alright well just lie low because if she wants to throw you out she can

**Qasim:** We are doing our best – we are trying to get somewhere to stay – and I am trying to find a job – I have started looking

**Peter:** That's good – look in the paper there are plenty of jobs advertised there – or go online....do you know how to do that?

**Qasim:** Yes

**Peter:** Alright, well give that a go.....I'm off to speak to that family about the granny flat – I'll let you know how I go

**Qasim:** Alright, thank you

Peter nods and goes, Qasim closes the door slowly and walks over to Nujood

**Qasim:** Are you alright?

She is silent for a long time

**Qasim:** Are you alright?

**Nujood:** I want Shadar here.....all the time, all his life he has always been next to me.....I want him here – he has never been away from me – ever

**Qasim:** *(Sighs)* He is at school.....he needs to be there.....he needs to learn.....it is good for him

Qasim hugs Nujood, she sniffs and holds back the tears

## Scene Twenty

Shirley and Stan are sitting at the kitchen table having lunch, Wayne is leaning against a bench eating a sandwich, a knock at the back door is heard

**Peter:** Hello Shirley, it's Peter

**Shirley:** Oh, come in

Peter walks in

**Wayne:** Geez just in time.....what, you could smell it could you?

**Peter:** Watch it son.....hello Shirley, hello Stan.....where's Nicola – I heard she was back

**Wayne:** She's out

**Peter:** Oh well...look I was coming to see you Shirley – I don't know if you've heard but there's a bit of a situation down at the motel – that Muslim family are there and Betty's sick of them, she wants them to go.....now I've spoken to Doug and the only places that are available they can't afford, and then we realised about your granny flat and

**Wayne:** (*Cuts in*) What here? You want them to move in here? Fuck off

**Shirley:** Wayne! Watch yourself

**Wayne:** Well they're not comin here

**Peter:** (*Looks at Wayne for a bit then turns to Shirley*) Look I know it's a big thing to ask and not many people would want to, but I just thought I'd suggest it that's all.....it's just an idea

**Shirley:**.....no

**Peter:** Look I know it's a hard thing....

**Shirley:** No – I don't want them here – I don't know them – I don't know anything about them – I don't want them here

**Peter:** That's fair enough Shirley – I was just trying to help Betty out

**Shirley:** Well what are they coming out here for anyway? There's nothing out here for them – and if they can't find somewhere to live well I'm really sorry for Betty but they're not coming here – if she doesn't want them why should I have to take them....no

**Peter:** That's alright Shirley not a problem, look...okay – I'll leave you to it – enjoy the rest of your lunch, thanks for your time, see you

**Shirley:** Alright, bye

**Wayne:** Fuckin hell what does he think we are – a charity? A fuckin refugee centre?

## Scene Twenty-One

Shadar sits down stage centre in a single spotlight from up behind him. His knees are drawn to his chest and he is looking down at the ground immediately in front of him.

We hear the sounds of a school yard and children playing, eventually some boys and girls voices are drawn up out of it and start taunting him. At first it is soft and quiet – inquisitive – but then loud and raucous and reaches a crescendo. There can be additional taunts improvised as well

### **Voices:**

Who's he?

He wasn't here yesterday

Look at the skin and the hair

He's different

He's different

He doesn't say anything

Where did he come from?

Hello, who are you? I said who are you?

What's your name?

Where are you from

*(He doesn't answer)*

Look at him – hello – hello

What's wrong with him?

He's a deadshit

He's some Muslim weirdo

Look at him

Just poke him – see what he does

Hello!

What's wrong?

*(laughter)* he's fucked, look at him

Hey fuckin mongo what's wrong with you ?

Talk to me, talk to me

He's an Arab, look at him

He's probably a fuckin terrorist

Shove him

*(Big laughter)*

He doesn't fuckin do anything – what's wrong with him?

Get your phone out, film this

Here

*(Big laughter)*

*(More big laughter)* This is fuckin awesome

*(More big laughter)*

Kick him fuckin kick him *(More big laughter)* Fuckin awesome

*(All together)* Deadshit, Deadshit, Deadshit

## Scene Twenty-two

Doug is at his desk in his office, Wayne walks in

**Wayne:** Your bike's done

**Doug:** (*Looking up*) Oh thanks – how'd it go?

**Wayne:** You need a new bike mate – you're just throwing good money after bad now

**Doug:** So what'd you do to it?

**Wayne:** New starter, gasket – the cylinders need boring out – it's not worth the fuckin effort

**Doug:** ..what's the cost?

**Wayne:** I dunno – the starter's an old one I had lying around....probably 450 all up

**Doug:** ....alright – can I do an electronic transfer

**Wayne:** Sure – if you're good for it

**Doug:** (*laughing*) Of course I'm fuckin good for it.....geez you lot are cheeky

**Wayne:** Here are the keys (*throws them to him*) it's still at our place – get it whenever you want – and thanks for suggestin the Muslims move in with us

**Doug:** What I didn't suggest that

**Wayne:** You told Peter

**Doug:** Yeah well I did mention you had that granny flat

**Wayne:** Well he was around this morning trying to convince us to let them move in – it's not gonna happen – why don't you let 'em move in to your place?

**Doug:** I don't have a granny flat

**Wayne:** Well let 'em move in to your house

**Doug:** (*Looking back down at his work with a grin*) Go on off you go – I'll be around late this arvo to get the bike – the money'll be in your account in the morning

**Wayne:** Yeah

Wayne leaves

### Scene Twenty-three

The motel room. Qasim and Nujood are preparing some food to take to the park and cook, Shadar is sitting bunched up next to the television but not watching it – there is a knock on the door – Qasim answers it, Betty stands there

**Betty:** Hello

**Qasim:** Hello.....we are just preparing some food to take to the park and cook

**Betty:** That's good.....good, now listen, I just got a phone call from Doug Thomas, the real estate agent, he said there's a few things he'd like to talk to you about before he closes today, which is very soon, do you think you might like to go down and see him? It's only a short walk

**Qasim:** Yes.....yes okay

**Betty:** Right then I'll leave you to it *(She exits, he shuts the door)*

Qasim crosses to Nujood

**Qasim:** Maybe this is good news.....why would he want to see us now – this must be important.....come on lets go

**Nujood:** But I'm preparing the food

**Qasim:** It can wait, come on let's go.....come on Shadar

Shadar just sits, then Qasim crosses to him

**Qasim:** Come on Shadar *(he grabs his arm – Shadar shrugs him off)*

**Nujood:** He is tired from school

**Qasim:** .....All right he can wait here – you and I will go.....alright Shadar? .....do you want to come or not *(he shakes his head slightly)* Alright you can wait here, we won't be long

**Nujood:** I will stay with him

**Qasim:** No you will come with me, it is important – we must both be there

**Nujood:** .....alright

**Qasim:** We will be back soon Shadar

They cross – lights out before they exit

## Scene Twenty-four

The real estate agents – Qasim and Nujood enter – Doug looks up and crosses to them

**Doug:** Ah, thanks for coming

**Qasim:** You wanted to see us

**Doug:** Yes.....look I've got a bit of news for you.....good and bad

**Qasim:** Yes

**Doug:** Look, the owner of the second house has got back to me and there's no way he's going to consider it, sorry.....it's not just the rent but there's a sizeable bond that has to be put up as well and I can tell you from past experience there's just no point in putting someone into a house that stretches them financially, it doesn't end well.....I'm thinking of yourselves as much as the owner. And then there's the matter of that flat.....the granny flat – I believe the policeman told you about that? – now unfortunately that's just not available....I'm sorry but it's just not an option either....but....there is some good news though (*he looks up at them with a smile*) – I've got a mate who's a real estate agent in Dalby and I gave him a call – he can get you a couple of houses now that you can afford

**Qasim:** .....in Dalby?

**Doug:** Yes, there's two that he thinks will be fine

**Qasim:** .....but that is another town.....I don't want to live in Dalby.....I want to live here.....I want to be part of this town

**Doug:** Well look the houses are there.....you'd be foolish not to take one of them

**Qasim:** But I want to live in this town

**Doug:** But look if there's nowhere here for you, there's nowhere here for you

**Qasim:** I don't want to have to move

**Doug:** Well where are we going to put you? You can't stay at the motel – it's not for long term accommodation

**Qasim:** But we are paying

**Doug:** It's not about the money.....it's just not for long term.....the only other option is....the police have told me to have a chat to a woman at the council who works on diversity and inclusion and all of that kind of stuff – she's seeing if she can do anything at her end as well – I haven't heard back from her yet....but if I was you I'd think about those houses in Dalby....there's more work there too – I think there's some Muslim people who live in that town too - it's probably better for you all round

**Qasim:** But I don't want to live there – I want to live here....be part of this...community

**Doug:** Well I just don't think that's going to happen alright.....(*sighs*) ...think about those houses in Dalby – it's your best option

There is a long pause

**Qasim:** Alright.....we have to prepare our dinner

**Doug:** Alright.....let me know by tomorrow if you can

He nods and they leave dejectedly

### Scene Twenty-five

Outside the main entrance to the motel – there is flashing red and blue lights from a police car – Betty is talking to Peter and then walks away when she sees Qasim and Nujood approach. Peter holds his arms out to stop Qasim and Nujood going any further – there is muffled talking, we can't hear what they are saying, but soon Nujood screams, stumbles around and collapses, sobbing inconsolably – Qasim bends over and holds her – eventually they both struggle up together and walk into the motel with Peter

## Scene Twenty-six

The front office at the motel – Peter is talking to Betty

**Betty:** Well how long will it be?

**Peter:** I don't know.....I think there might be some accommodation for them in Dalby – but under the circumstances.....just let it take its time Betty

**Betty:** That's easy for you to say – I have to clean that room and then I have to deal with the fact no one wants to stay in a room where someone has died

**Peter:** Betty if I can just ask for some consideration

**Betty:** Sure they can have all the time they want...they've done nothing but push me the whole time they've been here....I should never have accepted that booking – I had a bad feeling right from the start

**Peter:** Betty they have lost their son

**Betty:** And what if I lose my business – this is all I've got – this is my superannuation – my retirement – when I sell who's going to want to buy it – three people checked out early this morning – do you think the media are going to keep the name of the motel out of it

**Peter:** Betty it's not even going to be in the media

**Betty:** I wouldn't bet on it

**Peter:** If you could just please give them a break – I promise you we will get somewhere for them

**Betty:** Fine fine they can have a week then they've got to be out

**Peter:** Betty they've got to burry their child..... there has to be a coroner's report.....we're trying to get support for them – but please just give them however long it takes

**Betty:** Okay they can take however long they like I don't care I just don't care anymore – do whatever you want – give them whatever they want – it doesn't matter – I don't matter and what I want doesn't matter so why should I care – tell them they can have whatever they want they can stay however long they like

## Scene Twenty-seven

The motel room – the food is left unprepared as it was last night – Qasim and Nujood are in the same clothes – and sitting apart variously sobbing and struggling with the tears

**Qasim:** I will never forgive myself.....never

Nujood wails softly and it fades into whimpers.....after a short while a knock on the door is heard – they sit there, scarcely noticing it – Peter opens the door.....eventually Qasim looks over

**Peter:** Hi Qasim, Nujood.....how are you this morning?

They both just look at him – Peter walks in and sits at a chair

**Peter:** ....I've been talking to Betty the owner here and she said you're both welcome to stay as long as you like.....so.....you don't have to worry about that. (*He takes a big breath, unsure how to handle the situation*) we've been in touch with the coroner's office....but we can deal with all that later.....I am just so sorry for your loss.....I wish there is something I could do.....I really do

Qasim nods his head slowly, and then speaks very softly

**Qasim:** It is not your fault, don't worry

Peter sighs and looks out, a mixture of strain and pity

## Scene Twenty-eight

Shirley's kitchen – she and Stan are at the breakfast table – after a while there is a little knock at the door and Doug walks in

**Doug:** Morning Shirl – Stan

**Shirley:** Morning Doug

**Stan:** Morning

**Shirley:** Want a cuppa? Sit down

**Doug:** Oh I'll just be quick – I'm on my way to the office – is Nicola up?

**Shirley:** Huh! Are you kidding....no she's still in bed

**Doug:** I just want to see if I can get a word from her on that job – I'm going to have to advertise soon I think

**Shirley:** I'll get her to make up her mind today – hopefully she'll say yes

**Doug:** Yeah.....did you hear what happened down at the motel?

**Shirley:** No what?

**Doug:** That Muslim family – the little kid? – killed himself last night

**Shirley:** Oh no

**Doug:** Stabbed himself.....he did it while the parents were seeing me at the office.....I've got to go give a statement to the police later today

**Shirley:** Oh Doug you must be feeling terrible

**Doug:** Well what can you do? The parents left him alone.....no one knew this was going to happen.....I'd sent them a message just to give them an update on the accommodation situation and this goes and happens

**Shirley:** Doug you can't blame yourself

**Doug:** No, well no-one knew it was going to happen

**Shirley:** They shouldn't have left him by himself – from what I heard he had problems – wouldn't talk to anyone just off in his own world

**Doug:** Yeah I know.....it's just terrible

**Shirley:** In situations like this you can't blame yourself Doug – we had nothing to do with it – the child obviously had problems and something like this was probably always going to happen no matter what you do

**Doug:** Well we did our best – I was trying to find them accommodation – they actually had three places they could have taken in Dalby, but they knocked them back

**Shirley:** Well there you go – they don't even accept help when it's given to them.....what can you do – and with a child like that what do you think is going to happen in the end.....no it's terrible but it's not our fault – we did all we could for them

**Doug:** Yeah.....anyway I better get going....get down to the office – can you tell Nicola to get in touch – it'd be great if I could get an answer today – I think I told her a week, but I really need someone sooner than that

**Shirley:** Yes of course, I'll tell her.....I'll see you

**Doug:** Bye.....see you Stan

Stan nods, as Doug exits - Shirley and Stan continue eating in silence for a while

**Shirley:** Do you want some more toast there Dad

**Stan:** No.....it's a terrible business isn't it – that family and their kid

**Shirley:** It is....but it had nothing to do with us Dad so don't worry about it

Wayne walks in

**Wayne:** Did you bloody hear – I just saw Doug – did you hear about that kid?

**Shirley:** Yes

**Wayne:** Bloody hell – just as well they weren't here – could you imagine if he did it here....geez

Shirley looks around uncomfortably, Wayne sits down

**Wayne:** You just can't bloody pick it – mind you, you could with him – you know Robbo's kid Jack – he was in the same class with him at school – said he didn't say a thing all day just sat in a corner or didn't mix with the other kids – so what are you supposed to do.....how are you supposed to mix in with someone like that.....they shouldn't even let them out in the community when they're like that – he needed help he was never going to get it here – why they are even fuckin comin here for?

**Shirley:** Wayne don't swear – I'm sick of it

Nicola walks in, in her pyjamas having just woken up

**Nicola:** Did I hear Doug's voice here before

**Shirley:** Yes – he wants you to see him – can you tell him about that job – are you going to take it or not?

**Nicola:** *(Sighs)* I don't think so

**Wayne:** See typical you – why not? You get given a bloody job on a plate and you're not going to take it – why not? You too good for it are you – you might have to work in it

**Nicola:** No...because I shouldn't have to change myself for the job

**Wayne:** What?

**Nicola:** He told me I'd have to cover my tattoos and take my rings out

**Wayne:** So?

**Nicola:** Why should I have to change just so I can get a job – why can't it just be about my skills

**Wayne:** Cause you don't have any

**Nicola:** Shuddup

**Shirley:** Dear you should take it

**Nicola:** No.....not if I have to stop being myself

There is a pause for a moment

**Wayne:** Did you hear about that Muslim kid?

**Nicola:** No

**Wayne:** The little kid? He killed himself last night

**Nicola:** Oh no

**Wayne:** Yeah – but what are you going to do – there was always something wrong with him

**Nicola:** Oh my god....

Nicola leaves

## Scene Twenty-nine

Doug is in his office – a little flustered trying to find various items of paperwork, Nicola walks in, hands in pockets, a little reserved

**Doug:** Ah Nicola – good to see you – your Mum told you, did she?

**Nicola:** Yeah

**Doug:** Take a seat

They both sit on either side of his desk

**Doug:** So have you had a think about it – do you want the job? I could really use someone here

**Nicola:** *(Pause)*...no...no thanks very much though – it's not for me

**Doug:** Oh...alright...okay.....well thanks for letting me know.....I can advertise now.....I just thought it might be perfect for you

**Nicola:** No....

**Doug:** So what is it?.....just out of interest – the pay's good – did we talk about that?

**Nicola:** No it's not that...it's just when you told me I'd have to cover up things.....and I dunno – it's just the whole mentality of this town – I just can't buy into it.....I left for a reason.... and I've come back – and.....I just can't do it – I had a realisation a while ago – if I can't be myself while I'm doing something then I can't do it – it's not right.....I've got to be true to myself

Pause

**Doug:** All I want is a receptionist and book keeper.....you can't be yourself while you're doing those things?

**Nicola:** Not if I have to cover up my tattoos or take rings out or change my hair....or something.....it's just – I'm not like this.....I just can't become like this town is and conform and....

**Doug:** It's alright – don't worry – suit yourself – it's just a good job's going begging that's all – but I'll find someone – I'll advertise – hopefully the turn around time will be quick

**Nicola:** Yeah – I'm sorry and I appreciate you asking

**Doug:** Not a problem.....been a hell of a morning hasn't it

**Nicola:** What do you mean?....ohr the boy who died

**Doug:** It's terrible isn't it – you know his parents were here when it happened – I'd been trying to get the accommodation for them and nothing was working out – too bad your Mum knocked back letting them use the granny flat

**Nicola:** What?

**Doug:** I asked your Mum if they could use the granny flat but she wouldn't let them

**Nicola:** You are shitting me

### Scene Thirty

The Richard's kitchen

**Nicola:** What do you mean you wouldn't let them have it?

**Shirley:** Well why should I – I don't even know who they are?

**Nicola:** Well why don't you find out – let them move in – god just do something nice and then get to know them

**Shirley:** I'm not letting strangers move in here

**Nicola:** They were a family – they had a child – had a child! They were refugees – they had nothing

**Shirley:** Rubbish – they would have had so much government payments behind them – more than you and I get!

**Nicola:** Good – I hope they get a shit load more – have you ever stopped to think what they've been through.....what they're going through now

**Shirley:** Look you can't put that on me – I had nothing to do with it

**Nicola:** That's right – you had nothing to do with it.....you didn't do anything for them – no one here did - that's what's wrong with this whole fucking town – that's why I hate it so much – no one wants to do anything that's a little bit different – Doug doesn't even want to employ me because I've got a nose ring and tats – can you imagine what that family went through....everyone takes one look at them and looks the other way – no we had nothing to do with it! Of course you had nothing to fucking do with it – because you didn't want to – no one did.....I can't stand this place

**Shirley:** Nicky I know you're worked up

Stan wanders in and leans against a door frame, listening

**Nicola:** Don't say that! Don't say that.....you had that granny flat – no one was using it.....you could have let them – Doug asked you

**Shirley:** That's easy for you to say – you don't let strangers on to your property

**Nicola:** Well get to know them! Give them a chance! Geez no one's even using that place – you can lock the door here, no one's asking you for them to stay in the house here with you – it's just if someone reached out to them and gave them some kind of help.....why is that so hard?

**Shirley:** Well what have you done for them?

**Nicola:** I don't know....that's a bloody good question and I'm really sorry to say nothing.....I could have got to know them, spent some time with them, and I'm really sorry I didn't.....but at least I know it

Nicola is almost in tears and walks out past Stan – Stan just stares at Shirley

**Shirley:** .....don't look at me like that Dad

**Stan:** But she's right

Stan walks in and sits at the kitchen table

**Stan:** In Vietnam you know I soon found it was the people that had the least to give, that gave you the most...the villagers who had lost everything...family killed – villages destroyed.....especially the kids.....and yet somehow they gave us everything – the simple joy in being alive while we were busy taking it away .....she's right Shirley....she's right

Shirley sighs and thinks

### Scene Thirty-one

Granny flat, dark – Shirley and Stan walk in and turn on a light – there are storage boxes and bric-a-brac spread around – they stare at it for a little while

**Shirley:** There's a lot here....I suppose we can put a lot of it in the shed....Wayne's going to love that

**Stan:** I don't even need most of this stuff – I never unpacked most of it when I was even in here.....and then when your mother died I didn't want to.....and I still don't want to....it's all just stuff – what good is stuff? You can throw it away for all I care

**Shirley:** Well we'll just have to move it out first – and then maybe sort it or something – some of it can go to the opshop too if you really don't want it

**Stan:** Yeah do whatever you like with it – I don't need it – better that the space is used now

**Shirley:** I'll get Wayne into help me move it

**Stan:** Move what?

**Shirley:** Ah

**Wayne:** What are you two doing in here?

**Shirley:** We're going to clean this out – let that family move in here

**Wayne:** What? The Muslims? Now? What are you going to do that for?

**Shirley:** Because it's the right thing to do Wayne

**Wayne:** Pig's arse

Stan turns to him and starts pointing

**Stan:** Now you listen to me son! We're going to clean this place and they're going to move in if they want to – is that clear? And you're going to move everyone of these boxes out and stack 'em in the shed is that clear? Is that clear son?

**Wayne:** Alright.....but you're makin' a mistake

**Shirley:** Well maybe we are – but it's a mistake I want to make

**Wayne:** Geez Mum

**Stan:** There's only one thing worse than making a mistake Wayne – and that's doing nothing....or worse still thinking you know everything and don't have to do anything. Maybe they won't want to move in – but at least then we would have asked, and done what we should have in the first place

**Shirley:** Go and get Nicola and tell her Wayne

**Wayne:** ...oh shit

He walks off

### Scene Thirty-two

The motel room – Qasim has just prepared a meal of \*\* and passes a bowl to Nujood – she just stares at it morosely and doesn't move

**Qasim:** Come on eat up – you have to

**Nujood:** I don't want to.....I have no need to anymore

**Qasim:** .....yes you do

Qasim, sits down, upset, and slowly starts to eat – after a while a knock on the door is heard. Qasim looks at Nujood, who doesn't react at all, and then crosses over to the door, and opens it – Peter walks in, and half closes the door behind him

**Qasim:** Hello Qasim – how are you? Hello Nujood.....look I've just come around because....there's two people I'd like you to meet, they're friends of mine, you don't know them.....would that be alright

Qasim just and doesn't react – he glances to Nujood who is staring forward at the table, completely disengaged, he then turns back to Peter and shrugs

**Qasim:** .....I'll just get them alright

Peter goes back out the door and then shortly returns with Shirley and Nicola – they walk in very timidly

**Qasim:** Qasim this is Shirley Richards and her daughter Nicola, and they have something they wanted to say to you, and to offer

**Shirley:** ...hello.....how do you do.....I just wanted to say.....I'm so sorry for what has happened....I can't begin to imagine.....um the reason why I'm here is.....I don't know if you knew but.....I was the person with the granny flat.....that Doug asked if you can move in....and.....I'm sorry I never offered it before – but I want you to know it's there now if you want – it's all cleaned and if you want it, it's there

Qasim doesn't know what to say, and then turns to Nujood – she gets up and walks over slowly

**Nujood:** You are offering us your little flat for us to live in

**Shirley:** Yes

**Nujood:** Now – you are offering it now – now that our son is dead you want to do something

**Shirley:** Ah....

**Nujood:** Why now? Why now! Why right now – why does it take for Shadar to die before you want to do anything? Did you even know that was his name? Did you know how old he was? Did you

know what his favourite things were? How he cried every night! Why are you asking me now? Of course I don't want it! You are just asking so you can feel good – so you can rid yourself of guilt. Well I don't want your help – I don't want your pity – it is I who pity you – because you're too scared to help people who are different to you – look at me! Am I really that different to you? Go! Get out of here, I don't want to see you – you weren't there when I really needed you so I don't want your help now.....just go

Shirley and Nicola look around, and then slowly leave, followed by Peter. Qasim consoles Nujood.

### Scene Thirty-three

Richards living room, Wayne and Stan are sitting there – Shirley and Nicola come in, there is an uneasy silence

**Stan:** How did it go?

Shirley is sniffing, almost crying

**Shirley:** They didn't want it.....they don't want any help now

**Stan:** Well at least you asked dear

**Nicola:** But she was right, she was one hundred percent right.....where were we when they needed us.....where was anyone?

**Shirley:** She was really angry – she told us off

**Stan:** Oh....well you did your best, that's all you can do

**Shirley:** But we did mean it....it was rude of her

**Nicola:** God Mum! Just don't.....I can't stand this place!.....she just lost her child – however she reacts is fine....she could have sprayed us with a firehose I wouldn't have cared....just... I don't know

**Shirley:** Well Nicola what do you want me to do?

**Nicola:** Not be like this in the first place.....and not judge her

**Shirley:** Well it's hard not to when you're trying to help someone

**Nicola:** Well who are you trying to help – it's like she said – who are you offering this for?

**Shirley:** For them....to help

**Nicola:** I just can't take this anymore....this town....this place....the way everyone is

**Wayne:** What does that mean?

**Nicola:** Sandra's asked me if I'll move in with her in Melbourne and I'm going to

**Shirley:** Melbourne! That's so far away – what are you going to do down there

**Nicola:** I don't know.....just be myself – I can't be myself here – I can't

Nicola leaves, upset, Shirley turns to Stan

**Shirley:** I don't know what to Dad, I don't – she's always been a wild one.....and the scene with those people was horrible – we meant it when we offered that flat – but the mother just tore strips off us

Nicola comes back in

**Nicola:** Well that's what she wanted to do – she had every right to – however she reacts is the right way – she just lost her child! You know we shouldn't have offered them that flat we should have just gone there and said how can we help, what we can we do for you...we're very sorry for your loss, what can we do for you – and let them decide what happens, let them be in charge.....exactly what we should have done when they first moved in here – and then maybe none of this would have happened – and you know what – I'm going to apologise to them before I leave, I'm going to leave in the next few days – but I'm not leaving like this, I'm going to make sure they know someone is truly sorry

### Scene Thirty-four

A few days later, Shirley is standing in the hallway, solemn – waiting for Nicola, eventually she comes out carrying her large port

**Shirley:** Are you sure you want to do this?

**Nicola:** Yes

**Shirley:** I worry about you Nicola

**Nicola:** Mum I'll be fine.....I've got a place to stay and Sandra said she's pretty sure she can get me a job at the pub she works at – everything will be fine – and if not...god I can always come back here

**Shirley:** You're always welcome here sweetheart (*Shirley hugs her*) – have you ordered a taxi? – I don't mind taking you

**Nicola:** Taxi's coming – it's fine Mum

**Shirley:** What time does the bus leave?

**Nicola:** Half an hour – plenty of time.....then the flight leaves Brisbane at 3 and I'm in Melbourne by 5

**Shirley:** Alright – text me when you're there

**Nicola:** I will

Stan wanders in

**Stan:** Good bye Nicky

**Nicola:** See you Grandad – thanks for having me, putting up with me

**Stan:** That's alright (*they hug*)

**Shirley:** I don't know where Wayne is?

**Nicola:** He's going to see me at the bus stop

**Shirley:** Oh....and so the taxi's on its way?

**Nicola:** Yes Mum.....and thanks for everything

**Shirley:** That's alright.....you just look after yourself there

**Nicola:** I will

There is a knock on the door

**Shirley:** I guess that's your ride

Shirley goes to open the door – there is some strange talking – Nicola looks over – and then Shirley walks in with Qasim and Nujood

**Shirley:** Um this is....Qasim....and...?

**Qasim:** Nujood

**Nujood:** Hello

**Shirley:** Um this is my daughter Nicola who you've met, and my father Stan

**Nicola:** Hello

**Stan:** How do you do?

**Qasim, Nujood:** Hello, hello

**Qasim:** Thankyou for allowing us in to your house.....we just wanted to talk to you....about your flat

**Shirley:** Oh

**Nujood:** And I want to say.....sorry.....sorry I got angry the other day

**Shirley:** No, no, not at all – you had every right to be.....and I think what you were saying is right.....I am just sorry that we weren't there to help you before.....I truly am.....but if there is anything we can do now – please let us

**Qasim:** We would just like to look at the flat and maybe talk about it

**Shirley:** Yes, yes of course.....you'll have to excuse us – my daughter Nicola is leaving today – she is moving

**Qasim:** Yes I know – to Melbourne – you must be very proud of her

Shirley is confused and doesn't know what to do or say

**Nicola:** Mum I'm going to go – I can hear the taxi

**Shirley:** Okay

**Nicola:** ....I'll text you

Nicola hugs Shirley, then Stan, she walks past Qasim and nods – then she and Nujood look at each other with a smile and they hug and she leaves

Shirley watches all this, still a taking it all in , then turns to Qasim

**Shirley:** Well why don't you come this way – the flat's through here

They walk off together – lights out