

Final post performance draft

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TALE OF TWO MEN

by

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CHARACTERS:

Elizabeth
Jo-Anne
Arnold
Jack

SYNOPSIS

The play is set in Sydney in the early 1980's.

I/1 Elizabeth's flat late one Sunday night, then the following Monday morning and later that day.

I/2: Arnold's flat a few days later.

I/3: The beach the following Saturday.

II/1 Elizabeth's flat Saturday night a short while after I/3.

II/2: Elizabeth's flat the morning after.

III/I: Elizabeth's flat one afternoon a week later.

III/2: Elizabeth's flat late the following Sunday night.

III/3: Elizabeth's flat the following morning.

III/4: The beach late that afternoon.

ACT ONE - SCENE ONE

ELIZABETH'S LIVING ROOM, SHE IS LYING ON HER BACK TALKING ON THE PHONE TO HER FRIEND, JO-ANNE

Elizabeth: I know, and then when he went back to her a few days afterwards I couldn't believe it, it was so rude of him, I don't know how poor Jenny could have taken it,, and now they're back together again, which is just stupid if you ask me, Mark doesn't deserve someone as good as Jenny, why she'd want to go with someone like him is honestly beyond me, he's so disgusting isn't he, (PAUSE) I know, he's such a pig he tries to show how big and tough he is but if you ask me he's just a big slovenly disgusting fat repulsive pig (SLIGHT PAUSE) well you're right he's not that fat, yeah he is pretty well built, he's quite a hunk actually isn't he, from that point of view of course; maybe that's why Jenny likes him (LAUGHING) yes it couldn't be for his intelligence that's for sure, oh yeah hey you know how the two other flats here on my floor have been empty for about a month (SLIGHT PAUSE) well the landlord told me they've both been sold, or rented I mean, and the new people will move in sometime this week, (PAUSE) no, I don't know who's moving in, but I can't wait though, I've been scared stiff of burglars and rapists (PAUSE) what's that? - huh I doubt it!, I don't think anyone like that would want to move in here, and you know my luck Jo-Jo, I'm the girl who didn't even get her first boyfriend till she was twenty-one, (PAUSE, LAUGH) oh, it has not been non-stop every since; (HER LAUGHS DIE OUT) wish it was though, how are you and Michael going? (LONGER PAUSE), yes I know what you mean, it's hard to find a real man, I mean no matter who you get they're never perfect and it's always the ones who you think are the best that end up having the biggest problems, it's a shame you can't get someone with everything, just for once, (PAUSE) yes well I s'pose that's life, everyone has their faults, but only if there was someone perfect - but even if there was I'd never meet him (PAUSE) what d'you mean?, yeah but the brains and brawn never seem to go together on anyone do they, not that I mind though, brawn will do me just fine right now (LAUGHS A BIT, LOUD KNOCKING IS HEARD ON THE FRONT DOOR, ELIZABETH SITS UP STARTLED) oh no someone just knocked on my door (SLIGHT PAUSE) but I'm not expecting anyone, I wonder who it 'is?; I s'pose I better go and answer it, I'll call you later Jo-Jo, okay (SLIGHT PAUSE) bye bye

MORE KNOCKING IS HEARD, ELIZABETH APPROACHES THE DOOR

Elizabeth: Okay, okay

SHE UNLOCKS THE DOOR AND OPENS IT, SLIGHTLY APPREHENSIVELY

Jack: Look, sorry to bother ya, Jack Flynn's the name, I'm the bloke that's movin' in next

door

SHE OPENS THE DOOR A BIT WIDER, AND IS SLIGHTLY TAKEN ABACK.

Elizabeth: Hello, pleased to meet you, I'm Elizabeth Fletcher what can I do for you?

Jack: I was wondering if I might be able to use yer phone if I could please

Elizabeth: Sure, come in, it's just over here (MOTIONS TO THE PHONE)

Jack: This is very good of you I appreciate it a lot (WALKS TO THE PHONE). Yer see there's been some sort of a mix up, I'm moving in next door here but I wasn't meant to get here until tomorrow, I just got down from Moree today

Elizabeth: Oh, you're from the country

Jack: Yeah, jus' finished working as a classer in a shed out there day before yesterday, I'm taking a job for the Wool Board in town now, they organised the flat for me but I can't take hold of it till tomorra

Elizabeth: So what are you going to do?

Jack: Well, I've got a number of a mate here, I'll jus' give 'im a ring if that's alright

Elizabeth: Yeah sure

RINGS UP, PAUSES FOR A WHILE, THEN HANGS UP

Jack: No, there's no answer

Elizabeth: Well um, ah you're quite welcome to stay the night here if you like

Jack: Oh no I couldn't I've been enough trouble to you already, I'm sorry to just come in on ya like this I would have used a public phone but I couldn't find any around; I only came by cause I thought maybe they mighta left the flat unlocked, and when I saw yer light on I thought you might be able to help

Elizabeth: Ohll, you are quite welcome to stay if you like

Jack: Well thankyou very much, that's very good of you, but I couldn't - I've been enough trouble to you already, it's very kind of you though, thankyou

Elizabeth: Could I get you a drink then?

Jack: Ah (LOOKS DOWN FOR A WHILE, SCRATCHING THE BACK OF HIS HEAD, PAUSE, LOOKS UP), yes, that'd be great thanks very much

Elizabeth: What would you like?

Jack: Whatever you've got, I don't mind

Elizabeth: Coffee?

Jack: That'd be great thanks

Elizabeth: How do you take it

Jack: Straight

Elizabeth: Righto, take a seat, I won't be a tick

Jack: Thankyou

JACK SITS DOWN AND ELIZABETH EXITS TO THE KITCHEN AND RETURNS SHORTLY AFTER WITH TWO MUGS OF COFFEE AND A TRAY OF BISCUITS, SHE HANDS HIM HIS MUG, THEN SITS DOWN AND OFFERS HIM SOME BISCUITS

Elizabeth: Bicky?

Jack: Thankyou (TAKES ONE) I must say I wasn't expecting any of this, this is very good of you

Elizabeth: Ohr that's alright, it's a pleasure

Jack: Well thankyou very much

SHE IS SLIGHTLY EMBARRASSED BY HIS CONSTANT THANKING

Elizabeth: That's okay. Did you have a good trip down?

Jack: Yeah - bout eight hours it was, stopped off at Dubbo for a feed, it was a pretty good trip, didn't hit anything or have any troubles with the vehicle so it was alright

Elizabeth: You must be pretty tired

Jack: (YAWNS) Ohr not too bad, I didn't leave till after lunch though, I wanted to get away early this mornin' but I kept on getting held up, yer see that way I would have got here earlier this arvo and could have seen about getting a key fer the flat

Elizabeth: Ohr well it wouldn't have mattered - today being Sunday they'd be shut anyway

Jack: Yeah but I was hopin' my employers might have organised something with 'em with the key

Elizabeth: You don't have to go to work tomorrow do you?

Jack: No, they don't need me till Thursday they're givin' me a little time to get organised

Elizabeth: Ohll well that's good

Jack: How about you, where do you work?

Elizabeth: Well I don't actually, well I used to, but not anymore

Jack: What happened - get sacked?

Elizabeth: No I quit actually

Jack: Really - what for?

Elizabeth: Well, I was this man's secretary, and well, let's just say we had a disagreement over what range of activities my job entailed

Jack: (NOT KNOWING WHAT SHE MEANT) Ohr, he must been a pretty rough boss

Elizabeth: He was a real bastard, a big fat cold slimey man who liked to try and be in control of everything

Jack: Yeah I can remember when I was jackaroo in' we used to get a few pretty rough bosses, they'd work ya sun-up ter sundown, ya wouldn' wanna stuff anythin' up or they'd fuckin tear inter ya - ohr shit I'm sorry, I didn't mean to swear in front of you

Elizabeth: (SMILING, AMUSED) That's alright - it doesn't matter

Jack: Sorry, look I'd best be gettin' on m'way I think, thank you very much for the coffee and the biscuits and lettin' me use yer phone (HE STANDS UP, THEN SHE DOES)

Elizabeth: Where are you going to sleep for the night?

Jack: In my vehicle, or I might role my swag out somewhere or something

Elizabeth: Ohr you couldn't do that, that'd be too dangerous around here - look I have a spare room with a bed in it, why don't you use that for the night?

Jack: No I couldn't

Elizabeth: Look I insist - you haven't got anything else for the night

Jack: No look I don't want to put you out

Elizabeth: It's no bother, honestly

Jack: I've been enough trouble to you already

Elizabeth: No you haven't, look the room's there if you want it

Jack: Well it's very good of you to offer

Elizabeth: Yes and it'd be rude of you to turn it down

Jack: Well (PAUSE) okay then, thankyou very much

Elizabeth: Good, well if you want to go and get your clothes or whatever you want from your car I'll just make the bed for you

Jack: Oh no don't do that, I'll just put my swag on the floor

Elizabeth: Are you sure?

Jack: Yes, thankyou very much though

Elizabeth: Okay

Jack: I'll just go and get my gear then

ELIZABETH SITS DOWN AND FINISHES HER COFFEE, AND STARTS SMILING IN AMAZEMENT, JACK RETURNS SHORTLY WITH HIS SWAG AND AN OLD BAG

Elizabeth: Right, well the room's just down the hall here (THEY WALK OFF, VOICES HEARD OFFSTAGE) right next to my room, and the bathroom and toilet are here

Jack: Right, thanks very much

Elizabeth: That's okay, it's a pleasure

Jack: I'll see you in the morning then

Elizabeth: Okay goodnight

Jack: 'Night

ELIZABETH ENTERS BACK ON STAGE AND TAKES THE COFFEE MUGS AND BISCUIT TRAY BACK OUT TO THE KITCHEN. LIGHTS FADE OUT TO BLACK THEN SLOWLY UP INTO AN EARLY MORNING STATE.

8:30 THE NEXT MORNING, ELIZABETH IS HAVING BREAKFAST AND READING THE PAPER SHE HAS SET TWO PLACES AND IS STILL IN HER NIGHTIE, JACK ENTERS FROM THE HALLWAY, DRESSED AND WITH HIS SWAG

Jack: Mornin', sorry I'm up so late

Elizabeth: Don't worry, I only just got up myself

Jack: I better be on my way now, an' see if I can sort out about the flat, so thankyou very much fer everything, fer the room and the coffee and lettin' me use yer phone, it was very good of you

Elizabeth: Aren't you going to stay and have some breakfast?

Jack: Thanks very much but I better get going

Elizabeth: No, the Agents won't even be open yet, come on, I've set a place for you

Jack: Well

Elizabeth: Come on, you might as well

Jack: Okay then

HE PUTS HIS SWAG DOWN AND SITS DOWN AT HIS PLACE

Elizabeth: (POINTING TO THINGS ON THE TABLE) There's cereals, milk, orange juice, whatever you want - just go for it

Jack: Thankyou (HE STARTS SERVING HIMSELF) I must say I never expected country hospitality in the city, this is very good of you

Elizabeth: Ohr it's a pleasure, don't mention it

Jack: Much in the news today?

Elizabeth: No, not really, never is

Jack: You got the sports section there?

Elizabeth: Ah, yeah, here you are (PASSES IT TO HIM)

HE READS IT AND KEEPS EATING HIS WEET-BIX, THEN AFTER A WHILE

Jack: Ah look at this would ya, we're killin' those Poms

Elizabeth: In the cricket?

Jack: Yeah, 8 declared for 512 in our first innings

Elizabeth: I saw a bit of that on telly yesterday morning, Wayne Phillips hit two sixes and a four all in a row, off Botham

Jack: Yeah, 152 off only 98 deliveries, not bad going, I wish I could play like that

Elizabeth: Do you play cricket?

Jack: Not anymore, I used to, at school and a bit just after I left - footy's my big game

Elizabeth: Really - what sort

Jack: Union

Elizabeth: Oh I'm an Aussie Rules fan, but I don't mind Rugby League

Jack: Ah - they got nothin' on Union

Elizabeth: What were you like at Rugby Union - better than cricket?

Jack: Yeah heaps

Elizabeth: How much?

Jack: (PAUSE) I played second row for our school's fifteen; even made the New South Wales country side

Elizabeth: Do you still play?

Jack: No, I gave it away at the end of the season before last - too many injuries. Do you play anything?

Elizabeth: I used to play hockey and netball at school and I also swam a bit, I don't really play them now - but I've been thinking of taking up surfing

Jack: Surfing! - why?

Elizabeth: Oh I dunno, I think it'd be good fun, and all the guys that do it are so cute -

that's probably the main reason actually, but I think it'd be fun, I spend a lot of time at the beach so why not?

Jack: I've never even tried surfing, in fact it's been years since I've been to the beach

Elizabeth: That's where I'm going today we'll have to go sometime together now that we're neighbours

Jack: Yeah, one day, that'd be good. I guess this is what comes from living your whole life in the country, but still I wouldn't swap it for anything

Elizabeth: Really?

Jack: Yeah

Elizabeth: I don't think I could stand living in the country for more than a week at a time, I wouldn't have the beach, or the city life or anything

Jack: But you get other things

Elizabeth: I'd still prefer the city though

Jack: Well I'm just a country boy and I'll stick with it - when you're on a good thing

Elizabeth: Yeah, where else have you lived apart from Moree?

Jack: Well our family's place is just near Moree, I was brought up there, I've worked mainly in central and Northern New South Wales, an' had a spell jackerooing in South West Queensland out Thargo way, haven't got up into the Territory yet I'd really like to work for a while in the Gulf Country

Elizabeth: What about school? - were you on the School of the Air when you were younger?

Jack: No, we lived close enough into Moree for me to go to school there, forty minutes each way, by bus, I did my primary there at Moree Public and then did my high school at TAS

Elizabeth: What's TAS?

Jack: The Armidale School, it's a boarding school at Armidale

Elizabeth: Oh right, don't think I've heard of it before. So tell me Jack' if you're from the country, and you want to live your life there, why are you here in Sydney?

Jack: Yeah, it seems a bit odd doesn't it, but I won't be here for too long

Elizabeth: Oh, how long?

Jack: Only about six months, it's not a permanent job

Elizabeth: What exactly are you doing again?

Jack: Just some classing for the Wool Board - I don't know exactly what the set up is, I got the job through the father of a mate of mine, it was just some odd job that popped up

Elizabeth: So are you a qualified wool classer?

Jack: No, I guess I just picked it up over a matter of years, it couldn't be that much of an important job or else they would have got someone more qualified

Elizabeth: But why'd you decide to take this job, instead of going up into the Northern Territory or something?

Jack: Well it's only a short term job and I can get some good money, and thought I might try a change of pace and check out the city for a while. I mean I love the country but I'm not going to be totally ignorant of things outside it, though I'll always be a country man

Elizabeth: What about going to the Territory though?

Jack: Well I'd like to get a bit more experience with cattle first, I'm looking at working there next year, maybe for a few years

Elizabeth: Yeah I can't wait to go there too, I'd love to see Ayers Rock and Alice Springs and Darwin

Jack: They'd be about the last places I'd see, be too busy working for sightseeing

Elizabeth: Yeah of course, guess you'd be spending all your time working out whoop-whoop or somewhere

Jack: Yeah, most of the time

Elizabeth: (PAUSE) You don't get bored or anything with that do you?

Jack: No, the land's its own reward. Give me a few million acres and I'm happy

Elizabeth: A few million!

Jack: Yep that's how big they are up there, you can't afford to stuff around, if you've got

a job to do you do it and that's all there is to it.

Elizabeth: You'd have to be good

Jack: Yep, sure do, but I'm going up there to learn as well as just do my job

Elizabeth: Yeah, there'd be so much to learn wouldn't there. You know I've always wanted to travel and talking to you now makes me really want to go and see the outback

Jack: Has it?! I spose I've seen a bit of the country but not much else

Elizabeth: Huh! I've hardly seen anything, I've lived in Sydney all my life, except for 2 years in Melbourne when I was younger - but I don't remember that, ohr we had one holiday when I was twelve we stayed at the Gold Coast, but it was only for a week, it was good though, probably the best holiday I've had for ages, that's how depressing it is. I've been thinking of going overseas, back packing, with a friend of mine

Jack: That'd be good fun, who are you going with

Elizabeth: Jo-Anne Blakemore, she's been my best friend for years

Jack: Just the two of you?

Elizabeth: Yeah

Jack: But won't that be a bit dangerous?

Elizabeth: Why?

Jack: Well just two girls by yourselves overseas

Elizabeth: What's wrong with that?

Jack: It's dangerous, something could happen to you

Elizabeth: Do you think so?

Jack: Well it could, but of course it's entirely up to you if you go, it's none of my business

Elizabeth: Ohr yeah, that's alright

Jack: (GLANCES AT HIS WATCH) Look Elizabeth I think I better get going, thanks very much

Elizabeth: Ohr, won't you stay and have some more, I thought country people were big eaters

Jack: No, I'm full, I had a big dinner, thanks very much. (STANDS UP) Can I give you a hand cleaning up?

Elizabeth: No don't worry, I'll leave it to dinner, I always do

Jack: You sure?

Elizabeth: Yeah don't worry. (STANDS UP) Jo-Jo, that is Jo-Anne, should be around here soon if you'd like to meet her

Jack: Ohr well I'll probably catch up with her some other time

Elizabeth: I should be back this afternoon if you want a hand moving your stuff in

Jack: Thanks very much, but I think I'll manage alright though

HE WALKS TOWARDS THE DOOR, SHE WALKS WITH HIM TO SEE HIM OUT

Jack: Thanks very much for everything Elizabeth, you've been too good to me, it really is very good of you and I appreciate it greatly

Elizabeth: That's okay it's a pleasure

Jack: And look, I'm sorry about coming out this morning with you not being properly dressed yet

Elizabeth: (LAUGHING) Ohll look don't worry, I usually get round in nothing anyway - you were lucky I had something on

Jack: Ohr well, I thought I better apologise anyway

Elizabeth: Don't worry, it's no big deal

Jack: Yeah, okay then, I'll see you later, thanks very much for everything again

Elizabeth: That's okay, righto, see ya

HE EXITS, ELIZABETH GOES AND SITS BACK AT THE BREAKFAST TABLE, LOOKING UP INTO SPACE, DAYDREAMING FOR A WHILE, WITH A GRIN ON HER FACE. AFTER A SHORT WHILE A KNOCK ON THE DOOR IS HEARD, SHE THINKS IT IS JACK WHO MAY HAVE FORGOTTEN SOMETHING, SHE WALKS AROUND AND OPENS THE DOOR, JO-ANNE

WALKS IN

Jo-Anne: Elizabeth who was that who just walked out of here? - he was gorgeous

Elizabeth: Who?

Jo-Anne: The one who was blushing

Elizabeth: Blushing?!

Jo-Anne: Yes, and he had a big grin on his face too

Elizabeth: Did he?!

Jo-Anne: Yes, now who is he?

Elizabeth: Oh, he's just a friend I suppose

Jo-Anne: Just a friend!? - you don't spend much time on the rebound do you?

Elizabeth: Ohr, I dunno

Jo-Anne: I'm just wasting my time taking you to the beach aren't I?

Elizabeth: Ohr I wouldn't say that

Jo-Anne: Well tell me who he is Elizabeth

Elizabeth: Oh just someone I met yesterday, he spent the night here

Jo-Anne: He spent the night here!

Elizabeth: (LAUGHING) No, not like that

Jo-Anne: Well who is he?!

Elizabeth: He's my new neighbour actually

Jo-Anne: Really!

Elizabeth: Yeah, he got here late last night and needed somewhere to stay

Jo-Anne: So you offered to help him out - typical

Elizabeth: It's not like that at all

Jo-Anne: Oh?

Elizabeth: No, I almost had to break his arm to get him to stay here - he was going to camp out on the lawn or something

Jo-Anne: You did the right thing, I would have done the same had I been in a similar position of course

Elizabeth: Yes I'm sure. (BEAMING) Anyway, his name's Jack Flynn, and he's my new neighbour!

Jo-Anne: Well lucky for you

Elizabeth: He's from the country, up at Moree

Jo-Anne: Yes, I thought he might've been judging by the way he was dressed - what's he like?

Elizabeth: Typical country I think very set in his ways, he didn't want to impose on me at all and he kept on thanking me and apologising for everything

Jo-Anne: Seems alright, he's not your dumb rural type is he?

Elizabeth: I dunno - I don't really know him yet, he seemed okay though

Jo-Anne: Yes but you know these country types

Elizabeth: Whadoo ya mean?

Jo-Anne: All they ever talk about is the rain

Elizabeth: I don't think he's like that. Anyway let's go to the beach (STANDS UP AND EXITS TO HER ROOM TO GET CHANGED)

Jo-Anne: Just like that?

Elizabeth: (OFFSTAGE) Yep, there's no use in talking about it, he's just some bloke I met

Jo-Anne: That's right

Elizabeth: (RE-ENTERS, DRESSED FOR THE BEACH) So let's forget about it and go and check out all those gorgeous hunks hey!

Jo-Anne: That's the idea

THEY WALK TO THE DOOR THEN STOP, ELIZABETH LOOKS AROUND

Elizabeth: Ah, I'll leave it

Jo-Anne: Do it when we get home

Elizabeth: Yeah it's right

THEY EXIT LIGHTS FADE OUT, THEN, AFTER A SHORT WHILE, BACK IN, TO INDICATE A PASS OF SOME HOURS. ELIZABETH AND JO-ANNE ENTER, A BIT TIRED AND EXHAUSTED FROM TOO MUCH SUN. ELIZABETH HAS JUST HER ONE-PIECE ON. WHEREAS JO- ANNE HAS HER BIKINIS AND A LIGHT BEACH ROBE ON AS WELL. ELIZABETH LIES DOWN ON THE COUCH AS SOON AS SHE ENTERS.

Jo-Anne: Do you want a drink?

Elizabeth: Yeah, orange-juice thanks

JO-ANNE CROSSES TO THE KITCHEN AND RETURNS SHORTLY WITH TWO GLASSES OF ORANGE JUICE, SHE HANDS ONE TO ELIZABETH

Elizabeth: Tah

JO-ANNE SITS DOWN IN A LOUNGE CHAIR, THERE IS A RELAXED SILENCE FOR A SHORT TIME

Elizabeth: I think I'll remember the suncream next time

Jo-Anne: Might be an idea

Elizabeth: You're lucky, you don't get burnt

Jo-Anne: Sometimes I do

Elizabeth: No you don't, you were born with a permanent tan

Jo-Anne: That's what my Mum always said

Elizabeth: I s'pose she had one too

Jo-Anne: Yeah she did

Elizabeth: (STARTING TO DOZE) Lucky devil, I only get red

JO-ANNE PICKS UP A MAGAZINE AND STARTS LOOKING THROUGH IT,

BUT SOON FALLS ASLEEP HERSELF. AFTER A SHORT WHILE LIGHT KNOCKING ON THE DOOR IS HEARD, IT CONTINUES INTERMITTENTLY UNTIL IT EVENTUALLY WAKES JO-ANNE UP

Jo-Anne: (STANDING UP, AND WALKING TO THE DOOR) Who is it?

Arnold: (OFFSTAGE, BEHIND THE DOOR) It's your new neighbour!

Jo-Anne: Just a minute

JO-ANNE IS SLIGHTLY TAKEN ABACK BY THE SELF EXCITED TONE OF HIS REPLY, AND WALKS OVER TO ELIZABETH AND WAKES HER UP

Jo-Anne: Elizabeth, Elizabeth, someone's at the door

Elizabeth: Well don't wake me up - go and answer it (ROLLS OVER TO SLEEP AGAIN)

Jo-Anne: I think it's him - Jack

Elizabeth: Jack Flynn?

Jo-Anne: Well he said he was your new neighbour

Elizabeth: Oh

ELIZABETH GETS UP AND WALKS OVER TO THE DOOR

Jo-Anne: Do you want to put a towel round you or something?

Elizabeth: Um (THINKS ABOUT IT FOR HALF A TICK) No

SHE OPENS THE DOOR, ARNOLD WALKS IN, SEES HER, STOPS DEAD IN HIS TRACKS, THEN SHORTLY REGAINS HIS COMPOSURE, SMILES, AND OFFERS HIS HAND

Arnold: Good afternoon ladies, my name's Arnold Harburg

Elizabeth: (SHAKES HIS HAND) Ah, Hi, I'm Elizabeth Fletcher and this is Jo-Anne

Arnold: Jo-Anne?

Elizabeth: Jo-Anne Blakemore, sorry

ARNOLD WALKS OVER AND SHAKES HANDS WITH JO-ANNE

Arnold: Pleased to make your acquaintance Jo-Anne

Jo-Anne: (SMILING:) Yes

Arnold: So (CLAPS HIS HANDS TOGETHER AND RUBS THEM) I guess we're neighbours now

Jo-Anne: She is, I'm not

Arnold: Ohll, ohll, you don't live here

Jo-Anne: (TRYING TO SMILE HER WAY OUT OF IT ALL) No I'm just a friend

Arnold: Oh I see

HE WALKS OVER TO ELIZABETH WHO IS STILL BY THE OPEN DOOR

Arnold: Well as you may have noticed I've just moved in next door, and I was thinking maybe you and Jo-Anne might like to come over for a drink this evening

ELIZABETH GLANCES AT JO-ANNE

Elizabeth: Ah, well thank you very much, but maybe some other time Arnold

Arnold: Ohll, okay then, some other time. I just thought it would be nice if we could get to know each other sometime

Elizabeth: Yes, it would be, but you'll have to excuse me now, I've only just woken up, and I thought you were going to be someone else so I'm not really.....

Arnold: (LOOKS AT HER, AND GIVES A HALF SMART GRIN, CUTTING IN:)
Yes, yes, I understand

Elizabeth: (STARTING TO TAKE OFFENCE TO HIM) Well, nice to have met you

Arnold: Yes, I'll see you later then sometime I guess

Elizabeth: Yes, bye

SHE SHUTS THE DOOR BEHIND HIM

Elizabeth: Ohr dear, things are happening too fast for me

Jo-Anne: He was nicely dressed wasn't he

Elizabeth: Ohr yeah, pretty forthright too, I hate forthright people, now if you don't mind

you're on my chair

Jo-Anne: Sorry! (STANDS UP)

Elizabeth: Oh look, I'm sorry I didn't mean to be crabby, I just want to get to sleep

Jo-Anne: Don't worry, I understand, I better get going now anyway

Elizabeth: Oh look don't go, I didn't mean to be

Jo-Anne: (CUTTING IN) No, it's right, I've got to go, it is getting late

Elizabeth: Yeah, well right then

JO-ANNE GATHERS HER BELONGINGS

Jo-Anne: Okay, I'll see you later darling (WALKS TO THE DOOR, STOPS
HALFWAY OUT) tell us how you get on with them (WINKS AT HER)

Elizabeth: (HALF JOKING, AND WITH A SLIGHT LACK OF CONFIDENCE) Yeah,
sure

Jo-Anne: Okay, bye-bye

Elizabeth: Bye

ELIZABETH SHUTS THE DOOR, GOES BACK TO THE COUCH, FALLS ON
IT, ROLLS OVER AND DOZES OFF TO SLEEP - CURTAIN

ACT ONE - SCENE TWO

A FEW DAYS LATER, ARNOLD'S LIVING ROOM. HE IS RACING AROUND ORGANISING THINGS AT HIS SMALL BAR AND SINGING A POPULAR SONG QUIETLY, BUT BRISKLY, TO HIMSELF. AFTER MUCH MOVEMENT HE IS FINALLY HAPPY WITH THE ORGANISATION OF THE BAR, AND STEPS BACK AND GIVES IT HIS SEAL OF APPROVAL. HE THEN CASTS A CRITICAL EYE OVER HIS LIVING ROOM, AND HIS STYLISH CASUAL DRESS WHERE HE ADJUSTS HIS COLLAR. A KNOCK ON THE DOOR IS HEARD, HE RACES OVER TO THE DOOR, BUT SLOWS DOWN TO CONTROL HIMSELF, HE OPENS THE DOOR

Elizabeth: Giddy Arnold

Arnold: Elizabeth, come in, glad you could make it

Elizabeth: Yeah I'm sorry I couldn't come earlier, but this is about the first opportunity I had, wow! this is beautiful

Arnold: Thankyou, I'm glad you like it

Elizabeth: Yeah I do, this is great

Arnold: (WALKS OVER TO THE BAR) Would you like a drink?

Elizabeth: Wow! a bar!

Arnold: Yes - now can I get you a drink?

Elizabeth: Um, yes, thanks

Arnold: What would you like?

Elizabeth: Ohr sorry, um what have you got?

Arnold: Pretty close to everything

Elizabeth: Well I'm easy, I'll just have whatever's going, whatever you want

Arnold: I was going to have a Hairy-nosed Spider, do you like them?

Elizabeth: Ah I don't think I've every had

Arnold: (CUTS IN) Ah you'll love it (GOES BEHIND THE BAR AND STARTS

PREPARING THE DRINK) this is my favourite, you need six different ingredients, but the trick is to

Elizabeth: (CUTTING IN, AS SHE WALKS OVER TO A PAINTING) Hey what's this painting?

Arnold: Sorry, ohr that's called The Swing, why? do you like it?

Elizabeth: Ohr yeah it's alright I s'pose

Arnold: I quite like it, Jean Honore Fragonard is the artist, a little known Frenchman who lived in the 18th century. I find the painting quite erotic in its own sort of way, do you agree?

Elizabeth: Ah, I wouldn't say that, no, it just caught my eye that's all

Arnold: Yes, well a lot of his work's like that, very sensuous

Elizabeth: Oh

Arnold: He's not my favourite artist though, I only have that print up there because it was given to me a long time ago by an old old friend

Elizabeth: Why this painting in particular?

Arnold: The woman who gave it to me was an art student friend of mine, about seven years ago. Have you ever heard of Andrea Lawrence?

Elizabeth: No

Arnold: Well she's now trying to make it in the big wide world of painting, she's having moderate success in Melbourne, she recently had eight paintings included in an exhibition at the Victorian Gallery but anyway years ago she and I were very much in love and then one day she just up and left me, said she had to go and see the world, and as a parting gift she gave me that print of The Swing. She said it reminded her of us together.

Elizabeth: (LOOKS AT THE PAINTING) Why, were you always looking up her dress?

Arnold: (LAUGHING) No, well she said it had more to do with the colour, and depth of fun, its timeless classical qualities

Elizabeth: So much for that then

Arnold: What do you mean?

Elizabeth: It wasn't very timeless was it

Arnold: No, she said she'd come back once she's seen the world, but you know what it's like - when your heart says you've gotta do something you've gotta do it, no matter what

Elizabeth: That's never really happened to me

Arnold: No, Elizabeth some people just get this strong undeniable urge from within, and they have to do what it says - I'm like that, anyway, here are the drinks

HE PLACES THEM ON THE BAR, ELIZABETH WALKS OVER AND TRIES
HERS

Elizabeth: Mmmmmm this is beautiful

Arnold: Wait for it

Elizabeth: Ohhhhhhhhh

Arnold: It's got a bit of a kick to it hasn't it?

Elizabeth: What is that?

Arnold: That's the Cliquay, it's a South American spirit - you don't feel it until after you've swallowed

Elizabeth: And then it burns your throat off, right?

Arnold: Don't worry the first one's always the worst, try it again, it won't be nearly as bad

SHE DOES, PAUSES, NOT MUCH HAPPENS

Elizabeth: Yeah, hardly felt anything then

THEY BOTH SIT ON THE BAR STOOLS, AND SIP THEIR DRINKS QUIETLY
FOR A WHILE, THEN

Elizabeth: Tell me Arnold, were you angry that she left you?

Arnold: Well it was all so long ago, but no, I think she did the right thing, through the benefit of hindsight I don't think we would have lasted anyway

Elizabeth: What about commitment to each other?

Arnold: At that age?! No, I don't think I was committed to anything back then - the only thing she was ever committed to was her art, and that's about all she ever will be committed to too - a true artist!

Elizabeth: Is that what it takes to be a "true artist"?

Arnold: Well that's what she always said, and I s'pose she'd know

Elizabeth: It sounds pretty stupid to me, if someone ever did that to me I'd sock him one

Arnold: Oh, I'll have to remember that (ELIZABETH,GIVES A SLIGHTLY PUZZLED STARE) Yeah but she had her reasons, and above all she was being true to herself which I admire

Elizabeth: Yeah I s'pose, but that doesn't change the principle much, anyway I really like the way you've done up your flat

Arnold: Ohlll thankyou, it's um, it's nice I think, I like it

Elizabeth: Yeah I think it's great, I'm just trying to work out, that is, yeah, this is the same design as mine

Arnold: Yes I'd say all the apartments in the building would be of the same general layout

Elizabeth: You've done it up better than mine, that's for sure

Arnold: Do you think so?

Elizabeth: Ohr well I dunno, I was just saying

Arnold: Yeah, no your place is nice though, I quite like it

Elizabeth: Thanks, it was a real mess though when you came round earlier, the other day I mean

Arnold: Ohll I hardly noticed

Elizabeth: Well that's good - it's usually that much of a mess

Arnold: Ohr well didn't notice. so tell me Elizabeth, what do you do for a living?

Elizabeth: Sandologist

Arnold: What?

Elizabeth: Beach bum

Arnold: (LAUGHS) Oh I see

Elizabeth: Or at least that's what I seem to be of late, no I used to have a job as a secretary but I quit it a while ago

Arnold: Why's that?, if you don't mind me asking

Elizabeth: Oh I just got sick of it, and a lot of the things there you know

Arnold: So you've been out of work ever since?

Elizabeth: Basically, yes. What about you? What do you do?

Arnold: Ah, well that's a long story, I started off when I left school as an arts student, that's visual arts, but I left that for various reasons after a year, and bummed around for another year experiencing life

Elizabeth: Did you have a job?

Arnold: No, but I did do occasional freelance art work, sign painting and design and so on, and anyway somewhere along the line I picked up the computer bug and am now just finishing off a Bachelor of Applied Science Degree majoring in computer Science

Elizabeth: Wow! - that's interesting having done arts and science, cause usually they don't really go together

Arnold: No that's right, but that's usually the ignorance of the people involved I've found, they're both totally different and totally engrossing fields, and the key is to accept them both in their own right, not in terms of the other

Elizabeth: Right

Arnold: Do you have any interests at all in either the arts or the sciences?

Elizabeth: No, I was never really big on either

Arnold: That's a pity because there's so much to learn, if you're interested I'll show you what I'm working on now

Elizabeth: Yeah, I'd love to have a look

THEY CROSS TO A DOWN STAGE CORNER WHERE THERE IS A LOT OF
COMPUTER EQUIPMENT SET UP ON A SMALL TABLE

Arnold: Right well what I'm doing here is basically trying to make a chess playing programme, but instead of just sitting down and writing out a programme straight out what I'm doing is writing a programme to watch two other computers play continuous games of chess and so while the master programme watches them play it records everything that it watches, right?

Elizabeth: Ah, yeah

Arnold: So then when the master programme plays a match against some opponent instead of thinking it all out for itself it refers to what it has recorded from watching other games and from that it works out its best course of action from all of the options possible, by seeing what course of action had the best results in the games it has already seen

Elizabeth: Right, I see

Arnold: So in effect it's learning and could be described as a form of artificial intelligence. And the more games it watches the stronger its own game becomes, until, I hope, its invincible

Elizabeth: That's amazing! You know I really reckon one day these things are going to rule the world

Arnold: No, I don't think they will, the chessboard maybe, but not the world, as long as we keep them in control they'll be all right

Elizabeth: Oh I dunno

Arnold: Anyway this is what I've done of the master programme (TURNS THE MAIN COMPUTER ON, PUTS A DISK IN THE DRIVE, AND TAPS IN A FEW COMMANDS ON THE KEYBOARD IN ORDER TO LOAD IN THE PROGRAMME) you see the big problem with this is getting it to interpret the data it gets from watching the matches being played, especially in allowing for different strategies and tactics, because for instance on the surface a move might appear very weak but in terms of a particular game strategy it could be a winning move, right well that's got it (HE GETS THE COMPUTER TO LIST THE PROGRAMME - IT'S VERY LONG AND TAKES QUITE A WHILE TO FULLY LIST) most of this is involved in watching the games and storing the data, I've only just started it on analysing the moves and making up its mind

Elizabeth: So if you were to get it to go now, it wouldn't work?

Arnold: No, it would watch the matches all right but won't record them properly yet, there's some minor bug, I've been trying to sort through this (INDICATES TO A VERY THICK MANUAL) to find out where the problem is, I've managed to isolate

it down to about three different possible sources, but haven't got the solution yet. You see what basically is happening is, once I've finished it all, is the programme will watch these two computers in here (TAKES THE TOP OFF A LARGE PROJECT BOX REVEALING A FEW VERY DENSELY PACKED CIRCUIT BOARDS)

Elizabeth: There are two computers in there?

Arnold: Yeah well basically all they are are two suped-up expansion boards which have been altered so they can only play chess and

Elizabeth: (CUTS IN) But how do they play?

Arnold: They've both got separate E-PROMS with a different chess programme in each of them, and both the boards are then controlled by a separate mother board which is basically just a 16 bit CPU with a short 4K E-PROM which keeps the two games constantly playing and sends all the moves along this cable to the master programme in the IBM here

Elizabeth: Ohll, right

Arnold: And then, when it works properly, the computer format's all of the data from the moves into a code I've developed and then writes it into this hard disk, and then when I've worked out the final game playing programme, it accesses the information and then from there decides on its move and makes it, as simple as that

Elizabeth: That's great, that really is

Arnold: I'd be a good year or so off finishing it I think

Elizabeth: Really?

Arnold: Yes, and I'm thinking of making a lot of changes to it as well

Elizabeth: Like what?

Arnold: Well basically (SHE NOW WISHES SHE HADN'T ASKED) I'm thinking of setting up a series of dumb-systems where the games are just played and the information is stored on a series of hard disks so that quite a few different games can be played and stored simultaneously, which I can't do now, and then have a separate unit which then can access that combined information pool and keep playing its own game, whilst the dumb units are continually adding to the information pool. There is one way I could be playing an external game whilst simultaneously storing the information but that would be a waste of CPU time really as I'd have to establish a time sharing system whereby the CPU switches back and forth from job to job and does a little bit on each every few milliseconds, so its not really simultaneous anyway is it

Elizabeth: No I guess it isn't then

Arnold: Anyway, I'm sure I'm boring you to tears with this

Elizabeth: Oh no, I'm glad you showed it to me

Arnold: Oh well that's good, (TURNING THE COMPUTER OFF AND TAKING THE DISK OUT) yes well this has been my pride and joy for about the last six months or so. There's about \$20,000 worth of equipment here

Elizabeth: Really!

Arnold: Yeah, about half of it's mine, and the rest I've borrowed, mainly from the Uni, they want it back pretty soon too which'll cause problems because I don't want to give it back. Only the computer and the game playing system box are mine, the extra drives and the Winchester and the monitor and most of the rest are the Uni's. I reckon if I get this up on its feet with all of the expansions and additions I want, the printer and so on, I'd need about another \$50,000 worth of equipment, but hopefully it'd then be the most powerful chess playing computer system in the world!

Elizabeth: Wow!

Arnold: But that's all a big if, if I can get the equipment and if it works!

Elizabeth: What will you do with it if it all does work?

Arnold: I dunno, play chess with it I s'pose, no, there are various competitions in the world for chess computers - I'd enter it in them

Elizabeth: I see

Arnold: Can I get you another drink?

Elizabeth: Ah yes, if you like

Arnold: Same again?

Elizabeth: Well if you have to go to all that trouble again

Arnold: No, I made up enough for another one each the first time

Elizabeth: Oh, okay then thanks

ARNOLD POURS THE DRINKS BEHIND THE BAR, SHE WALKS TOWARDS THE BAR

Arnold: Sit down, there are some munchies on the table there

SHE LOOKS AT HIM SLIGHTLY ANNOYED ABOUT BEING GIVEN SO MANY DIRECTIONS, AND THEN SITS IN A LUXURIOUS BROWN LEATHER COUCH

Arnold: (ARRIVING WITH THE DRINKS) Here we are my sweet

Elizabeth: (SLIGHTLY OFF-PUT) Thank you (SIPS IT) Mmmm, not as bad the second time is it

HE SITS NEXT TO HER

Arnold: No, they're funny like that

Elizabeth: So when you finish your degree Arnold, you'll what, get a job as a computer programmer somewhere will you?

Arnold: Ah, no, I don't think so

Elizabeth: Why not? - that doesn't seem to make sense

Arnold: Yes I know, especially in light of everything I was talking to you about before, but no, um what I really want to do is be a novelist

Elizabeth: Really?

Arnold: Yes, why, does that shock you or something?

Elizabeth: Ohll no, no, it's just that what about all of the computers and programming and everything?

Arnold: Yes I know, well I've been thinking of quitting my course for some time now, but I've only got four units left to do so think I'll finish them and get the degree done, which is something I s'pose

Elizabeth: And then what'll you do - write books?

Arnold: Well I'm doing these last four units part time, so I think I'll take a lot of things this year as they come, but I want to do a fair bit of writing as well so that should hopefully give me a taste of what it would be like if I was writing as my main concern

Elizabeth: But why do you want to write when you could have a good career as a computer programmer?

Arnold: I don't know, it's just one of those things about being true to yourself I think, I feel inside me that there are so many things I want to say about the world and that's more important to me than just having a good job and all of the material possessions that go with it. I'll really just be giving it a trial run over the year anyway, I think what's really important is that you do be true to yourself at all times, no matter what, so if I decide that writing isn't right for me then I'll change and do whatever I feel is right

Elizabeth: But you won't get anywhere that way

Arnold: Why not? - that to me would be the ultimate in success

Elizabeth: But if you do that you'll always be chopping and changing and never get very far in anything

Arnold: And in twenty years time I'll be a boring unhappy middle aged old man who hates himself and his life because he's still doing what he thought he liked doing 20 years ago

Elizabeth: No, you would have achieved so much, imagine how much farther you would have got with your chess computer or with your writing with 20 years solid work in it? - heaps

Arnold: Maybe - but I probably would have lost interest in it by then

Elizabeth: But you've got to stick with it to achieve something

Arnold: Achieve something for who though? It wouldn't be for me

Elizabeth: But that's not why you should, be doing it, not for yourself but for what it is you're doing - and if you do it for that you'll get everything out of it

Arnold: But look I don't want to change the world or anything with what I do in art or science or whatever, I only do it for me, because at the time I like doing it, it feels right for me

Elizabeth: Yes but can't you see then you'll just end up meandering around doing whatever you feel like and never getting anywhere. You've got to look at it sensibly

Arnold: I am because I'll be happy no matter what I'm doing because I'm being true to myself, in putting myself first

Elizabeth: But you won't have achieved anything

Arnold: On the contrary, I would have achieved the ultimate in success

Elizabeth: Only to yourself, not to anyone else

Arnold: That's right, and that's all that matters

Elizabeth: Why don't you want to help anyone?

Arnold: Why should I? - What would they have ever done for me?

Elizabeth: That's not the point

Arnold: Well that's the way it is in this world

Elizabeth: No it's not

Arnold: Well I'm afraid you're going to find out something remarkably different one day

Elizabeth: (CUTS IN) You know probably the main reason I left my job was because no one there really cared about what they were doing, they were just doing it for themselves and for the money, and I couldn't stand working in a place like that

Arnold: So what do you really want to do then?

Elizabeth: I want to get married and have kids

Arnold: That's all?

Elizabeth: (SLIGHTLY INDIGNANT FROM HIS QUESTION) Yes, that's all

Arnold: Lots of people do that

Elizabeth: I know, I think that would be really achieving something worthwhile
Have you ever met a woman who devoted herself entirely to her family? My mother was like that - there's nothing more noble a woman can do. When I find the right man that's what I'm going to do - no matter what

Arnold: Does that mean you'd never break up with him?

Elizabeth: No, I don't believe in divorce, I think it's irresponsible, but of course you've got to marry the right person in the first place!

Arnold: And how about having children now, you wouldn't?

Elizabeth: Oh no, I think that's unfair to the kids straight out, because they need a mother and a father

Arnold: Well I can see your reasons for what you're saying but I wouldn't necessarily

agree to it of course

Elizabeth: No. We can always agree to disagree, can't we?

Arnold: Yes

SLIGHT PAUSE

Elizabeth: Look I'm sorry about giving you such a bad earbashing, I don't usually do this to people I've just met, I'm sorry

Arnold: Oh no not at all, I appreciate a woman who speaks her mind

Elizabeth: Well I don't usually, I'm sorry

Arnold: No that's good, you obviously have quite strong beliefs and you stand by them, I admire that

Elizabeth: Yeah, but I don't usually tell anyone (LIGHTLY TO HERSELF, CONSIDERINGLY:) Hmmmmm

THERE IS A SHORT QUIET PAUSE, THEN THEY BOTH GO TO SPEAK TOGETHER IN A SUDDEN BURST

Arnold: Sorry, you go first

Elizabeth: Ah well I was just going to say you know how you want to be a writer, have you ever written much before, or will

Arnold: (CUTS IN) Well you could probably say I've been a closet writer all my life, mainly little things here and there you know, I've started about five novels in the last twelve months, but didn't get very far with any of them, they sort of ran out of puff or self destructed under the weight of the work involved. I think the best thing I've written was this long short story come novelle called "The Terrapins"

Elizabeth: "Terrapins"?' What's a terrapin?

Arnold: It's a brand of turtle, so to speak

Elizabeth: Oh

Arnold: A very stylish and distinctive looking, brand of turtle

Elizabeth: Right

Arnold: Anyway the story was basically a satire on two blokes I know who were very

trendy and fashionable, they had all the right gear and talked about the right things and mixed with the right people, so on the outside they looked great, but on the inside they were as thick as two bricks, and the story was a satire on a day in the life of these two idiots, do you know the type I mean?

Elizabeth: Oh yes, very much

Arnold: I called it the Terrapins because they looked most impressive on the outside but whenever things got tough for them they used to crawl into their shells and just let their outside facade see them through

Elizabeth: Sounds pretty good, is it funny?

Arnold: Yes, it'd probably be funnier if you know the two though

Elizabeth: They sound like real pains

Arnold: Oh they were, utter drop-kicks, you know I don't mind if someone dresses well because they like the look of the clothes but if they do it mindlessly, just to be in, I can't stand that

Elizabeth: No

Arnold: I wrote it back when I was doing visual arts, I was so impressed I wanted to drop that course and take up literature, yes but as it turned out I left all together

Elizabeth: Did you ever get it published?

Arnold: Oh no, I've only ever shown it to a few people too, it was sort of my big secret joke on these two back then, which was pretty childish, but I and a few friends got a few laughs out of it so it was okay, you know you're one of the few people I've every told about it

Elizabeth: Wow hey

Arnold: Yes, so that was a lot of fun, my biggest writing achievement thus far and it's destined for literary oblivion, devoid of all recognition (LAUGHS) No, but I enjoy writing a lot, do you ever write?

Elizabeth: Ohll no, I've never had the urge, and I'm probley not smart enough anyway

Arnold: Oh don't say that, you don't need to be smart to write - look at me!

HE LAUGHS, SHE DOES SLIGHTLY, SOMEWHAT APOLOGETICALLY

Arnold: Does any sort of creative writing interest you?

Elizabeth: Oh I like poetry, I liked it a lot at school, I still read it a bit I s'pose - it'd be my favourite sort of writing

Arnold: Why's that?

Elizabeth: Oh, I dunno, It's just so simple and nice I think (LAUGHS SOFTLY)

Arnold: Fair enough, some of it's pretty ugly you know

Elizabeth: I don't usually read that sort

Arnold: Oh, do you ever write any?

Elizabeth: No, no

Arnold: Why not?

Elizabeth: Don't want to

Arnold: Yes well that's a fair enough reason I suppose, not ever?, any?

Elizabeth: No

Arnold: Not even in the closet?

Elizabeth: No! honestly I don't

Arnold: No, I don't write much either you know

Elizabeth: Really?

Arnold: Well if I get a little thought that might be good for a poem I try and save it up to put in somewhere in a novel, but I've never been able to get a whole novel out of a poetical thought, I think novels come from far greater and stronger ideas and totally different thought processes

Elizabeth: Oh

Arnold: Yes, well at least that's the way I see it. You know there's so much in this world isn't there?, everything is a world in its own right. That's why I don't think I'll ever settle on any one thing to do, but as you said earlier it's better to end up specialising in something

Elizabeth: Mmmmmm

Arnold: But I think I'm going to end up specialising in a few very select fields, and try and achieve a lot in them, for what it's worth

Elizabeth: You know you remind me a lot of a person I used to know

Arnold: Oh, why's that?

Elizabeth: He was a lot like you, in what he wanted to do, about being true to himself and so on, but he was different in that he also felt it was his responsibility and duty as well to do these things

Arnold: What did he want to do?

Elizabeth: He wanted to have a sports career until he was about 30 or so and then enter politics and become Prime Minister by the time he was 50, as well as get married and raise a family. He knew all of this when he was 18, at the end of school

Arnold: So what's he doing now, how far has he got?

Elizabeth: He died a month after he finished school, in a car crash - got hit by a drunk driver

Arnold: Oh, I'm sorry (PAUSE) Do you think he would have done all of that?

Elizabeth: Oh yes, there's no doubt in my mind, he was very gifted and very determined, there was nothing that could have stopped him, nothing he wouldn't have been able to overcome

Arnold: (POLITELY AS HE SENSES HE IS TREADING ON TENDER GROUND)
Were you very close?

Elizabeth: Oh well yes and no, it was all so long ago now, we were close in a funny way, we weren't going out together or anything - it was never like that, but we seemed to understand each other though, and could communicate on a really deep or, I dunno, understanding or sympathetic note, do you know what I mean?

Arnold: Yes, yes I do

Elizabeth: I couldn't believe it when he died, that to me was just absolute waste, because he had himself totally together and was really going places, and then that happened, I mean out of the thousands of people around it had to happen to him - life can be pretty tough

Arnold: Yes (PAUSE) and you really think he would have succeeded in it all?

Elizabeth: Oh yes, it's amazing for someone that young to be that well developed, but

he was. He was already well on his way in his cricket career, when he was only 17 he was selected in the Australian schoolboys team

Arnold: (CONSIDERING FOR A LONG WHILE) Hmmmmm (THEN SUDDENLY, AS IT WASN'T WHAT HE WAS CONSIDERING:) Do you think he would have made a good Prime Minister?

Elizabeth: Yeah, he'd have been the only one I voted for and really meant it

Arnold: What was his name?

Elizabeth: Duncan James, it was four years ago that he died

Arnold: Mmmm, the things that could have been

Elizabeth: He always told me that as far as the real world's concerned the only thing that matters is result

Arnold: I'm sorry Elizabeth

Elizabeth: Yeah, so am I, but that doesn't change anything does it, though I'm sure that wherever he is now he'd still be eternally grateful for his life

LONG PAUSE

Arnold: Can I get you another drink?

Elizabeth: Um, could I just have a drink of water please?

Arnold: Yes, sure

HE GETS UP, GOES TO THE BAR, GETS THE DRINK AND RETURNS

Arnold: There you are

Elizabeth: Thanks, you're not having anything?

Arnold: No, two of those Spiders is usually enough for me, usually I said

THEY LAUGH A LITTLE, SHE LESS THAN HIM

Arnold: Tell me Elizabeth, are you doing anything this weekend?

Elizabeth: Ah, no, no I don't think so

Arnold: Would you like to go and see a film or something?

Elizabeth: Ah, yeah, okay, if you like. is there any movie in particular or anything?

Arnold: Have you seen Bladerunner?

Elizabeth: No, what's that?

Arnold: It came out just a while ago, it's one of the best films I've ever seen, it's science fiction, it's set in the future, it stars Harrison Ford

Elizabeth: Ohr yeah, I think I know the one now

Arnold: Yeah, there's a special screening of it this Saturday night at the Valhalla

Elizabeth: Well that'd be really good then, thankyou

Arnold: Good, well I'll organise the tickets and everything, and get back to you about it later

Elizabeth: Yeah (PAUSE), I think I better get going Arnold, thanks very much for the drinks, and the conversation and everything. I really enjoyed it

Arnold: Already?

Elizabeth: Yeah, you know how it is, things to do

Arnold: Yeah I understand, well thanks for coming

Elizabeth: Ohr, it was a pleasure

THEY STAND AND WALK TO THE DOOR, HE OPENS THE DOOR FOR HER

Arnold: I'll see you when, then?

Elizabeth: Ohr, well we're neighbours, I'm sure we'll see each other round

Arnold: Yeah, okay then

Elizabeth: Thanks very much again

Arnold: That's okay, bye-bye

Elizabeth: See you later

SHE EXITS, HE CLOSSES THE DOOR, IS QUIET FOR QUITE A WHILE, THINKING HE HAS BLOWN IT, THIS THEN CHANGES TO GREAT

CONFIDENCE AND HAPPINESS

Arnold: Ah, Mmmmmmm, yes! yes! yes! yes! yes! yes!

CURTAIN

ACT ONE - SCENE THREE

THE BEACH, THE SATURDAY FOLLOWING SCENE TWO - ELIZABETH AND JO-ANNE ARE LYING DOWN ON THEIR TOWELS, WITH THEIR BAGS ETC. NEAR THEM, A TRANSISTOR RADIO IS PLAYING SOFTLY

Elizabeth: Yeah and then, I don't know how it happened, we started talking about Duncan

Jo-Anne: Duncan?

Elizabeth: You know, Duncan James, we went to school with him remember?

Jo-Anne: Yeah, I know. How on earth did you get on to him?

Elizabeth: Ohll I dunno, this is gonna sound really weird, but it was because Arnold reminded me of him

JO-ANNE HALF SITS UP AND LOOKS AT ELIZABETH

Jo-Anne: What?! Where on Earth do you see the similarity?

Elizabeth: Well Arnold has a lot of things going on inside him at the moment, and he's gotta be true to them, it was the same with Duncan

Jo-Anne: And?

Elizabeth: And that's it (LOOKS AT JO-ANNE FOR A TICK, SLIGHTLY PUZZLED THEN LIES BACK DOWN, PAUSE)

Jo-Anne: Got the hots for him have you? (ELIZABETH HITS HER) Ow!

Elizabeth: I have not, and don't ever say I have

Jo-Anne: Got the hots for Jack too, haven't you?

Elizabeth: Don't be silly, I haven't got the hots for anyone, not Jack and especially not Arnold

Jo-Anne: But you did for Duncan, didn't you?

Elizabeth: Ohll will you shut up! I never had the hots for him, I just liked him that's all. Now read your book or something. (PAUSE) Arnold was funny - I liked him, but I didn't. You remember that day he came into the flat and introduced himself?

Jo-Anne: Yeah

Elizabeth: And how forthright we thought he was?

Jo-Anne: Yeah

Elizabeth: Well, he was like that, very up front which was annoying, but he was nice, he seems pretty brainy, full of good ideas and everything, but I don't know how far he's gonna go with them though - I think that's why I brought up Duncan, because he was full of good ideas too, but could back them up and take them all the way through, which I don't know about Arnold

Jo-Anne: Ohr, you never know, he might get himself together and really go places

Elizabeth: Oh yeah, like I'm not trying to take anything away from him, or knock him or anything, but I think he was a bit lacking as far as that was concerned

Jo-Anne: Yeah, you're probley right (LIES BACK DOWN) but then again who are we to talk, spending all day on the beach

Elizabeth: (LIES DOWN) Yeah, it's enough to make you sick isn't it

PAUSE, AS THEY LIE BACK ENJOYING SOAKING UP THE SUN AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Elizabeth: He asked me out to the pictures you know

Jo-Anne: Really

Elizabeth: Yeah

Jo-Anne: Did you say yes?

Elizabeth: Yeah

Jo-Anne: (LAUGHING) Ohr, there's no hope for you, there really isn't

Elizabeth: Why?

Jo-Anne: Well you spend half your time telling me about a bloke you don't know if you like or not, but definitely aren't interested in, and then you decide to go out with him

Elizabeth: I never said I definitely wasn't interested in him

Jo-Anne: You said you weren't keen on him in that sort of a way

Elizabeth: Yeah, yeah I know, well I'm just making sure aren't I?

Jo-Anne: (LAUGHS) Ah dear, you're amazing

Elizabeth: Look, it's only one picture

Jo-Anne: You never know what it could lead to

Elizabeth: Huh, it'll only lead to what I want it to

Jo-Anne: And what about what he wants?

Elizabeth: Well, that's something I'll have to deal with, but for goodness sake I don't think there are any strings attached

Jo-Anne: Just you watch out, you never know what he's got in mind

Elizabeth: Huh, I don't think I ever do, not with any men

Jo-Anne: Just be warned

Elizabeth: Yeah yeah

Jo-Anne: What film is it anyway?

Elizabeth: Bladerunner

Jo-Anne: Ohr yeah

Elizabeth: Have you seen it?

Jo-Anne: Yes, it's quite good

Elizabeth: What's it about? It's science fiction isn't it?

Jo-Anne: No

Elizabeth: What?

Jo-Anne: Did he tell you its a sci fi movie?

Elizabeth: Yeah, why, isn't it?

Jo-Anne: No, it's a porno

THEY LOOK AT EACH OTHER, PAUSE, GRIN, LAUGH

Elizabeth: (PUSHING JO-ANNE) Ohll get out, I don't know why I even like you

Jo-Anne: No, it's a good film, you'll like it

PAUSE

Elizabeth: Are you sure?

Jo-Anne: Yes

Elizabeth: Really

Jo-Anne: (INSISTENTLY) Yes, you will honestly

Elizabeth: Good, I hope so (PAUSE) I liked Star Wars

Jo-Anne: It's not anything like Star Wars

Elizabeth: Oh (PAUSE) tell me Jo-Jo, what do you think of Arnold?

Jo-Anne: If I were you I'd forget him and go for Jack

Elizabeth: Do you think so?

Jo-Anne: Yeah

Elizabeth: Iederknow, I want to know when I'm going to meet the perfect man with it all

Jo-Anne: Huh, do you think one exists?

Elizabeth: Yeah, I think so, I think it all depends on the individual though and what they do with themselves, I don't think one is ever born that way

Jo-Anne: But you know if you met a man like that he'd probley be the most stuck-up conceited arrogant person you'd ever seen

Elizabeth: Yeah

Jo-Anne: Either that or held be gay

Elizabeth: (LAUGHS A BIT) Yeah, but if he was stuck-up or gay he wouldn't be perfect would he?

Jo-Anne: What you mean is perfect for you, don't you?

Elizabeth: Ohr yeah, but there must be some sort of natural sense of perfection, not just what I want, ohr I dunno, I don't know what I want, I think I just want someone who's absolutely unreal

Jo-Anne: (SITS UP) Well look, take Jack for instance (INDICATES FORWARD GENERALLY)

Elizabeth: (SITS UP) Where is he?

Jo-Anne: (LOOKING OUT) Ah over there in the surf (POINTING) near that flag

Elizabeth: Ohr yeah

Jo-Anne: I mean look at the body

Elizabeth: I know! I love his swimmers

Jo-Anne: (LAUGHS) Yeah

Elizabeth: I didn't think anyone wore togs like that anymore

Jo-Anne: Yeah, but I mean look

Elizabeth: Yes, makes you drool doesn't it

Jo-Anne: Sure does

ELIZABETH LOOKS AT JO-ANNE

Jo-Anne: Ohr no, don't get me wrong, I'm not interested in him, but I mean that just speaks for itself though

Elizabeth: (LOOKING BACK OUT To JACK) Yeah, he used to play a lot of football you know

Jo-Anne: Well there you go, lots of muscles, if you went out with him you know you'd be safe from anyone else

Elizabeth: Yeah, sure would, (SIGHS) but there's more to it than that though

Jo-Anne: No there's not! - look take my word for it, Jack's the better of the two

Elizabeth: I think you've got a biased opinion

Jo-Anne: I haven't, I know both of them just as well - which is hardly at all, so I'm

looking at this totally objectively

Elizabeth: Ohr yeah

Jo-Anne: No I am, look if you get going with Jack you're set for life, aren't you?

Elizabeth: That's taking things an awfully long way

Jo-Anne: But you are, aren't you? but if you get going with Arnold where will you be in twenty years time?

Elizabeth: Who knows - (HER EYES LIGHT UP) but it'd be different wouldn't it?

Jo-Anne: (SARCASTICALLY) Sure would be

Elizabeth: Look at it this way then, all I want to do is get happily married and raise a good family, right, that's all I want

Jo-Anne: Yeah

Elizabeth: I don't want a separate career or anything, that if you like would be my career, but I want to marry someone who I not only love and get on really well with personally, but someone who has got a very definite career and who is going places, someone who it's exciting to be with because they've always got something new happening and is always doing things, that's what I want, but I mean looking at it this way, if I was to marry Jack, or someone like him, I have a feeling it would very soon level out, it would be very stable, but it wouldn't be very exciting; but then look at Arnold, now I'm not saying I want to, but if I were to marry him, it would probably be very exciting with his careers and so on, but I don't think with him it would be very stable or reliable

Jo-Anne: What if he changed and really put the drive and dedication in behind his work, and his ideas with computers and writing and so on came through - would that make him what you want?

Elizabeth: Well it would depend then on how we get on on just a personal level, but there's a lot of ifs with Arnold in what you just said

Jo-Anne: Yes I know, but I don't know, he might come good

Elizabeth: Yes but "might" isn't good enough is it

Jo-Anne: You don't ask for much, do you?

Elizabeth: No, I don't think I do. Arnold would have to change a lot before I even thought about it, he'd have to get himself together for a start, and be less slimey as

well - but you know, and it's the same for Jack too, I really hardly know them and have got to give them a fair go

Jo-Anne: Yeah that's right

Elizabeth: It's stupid to start jumping to any great conclusions now

Jo-Anne: Mmmmm yeah (GAZING OUT TO JACK) and another thing with Arnold, he's got a terrible body

Elizabeth: (HITTING JO-ANNE) Will you stop it

Jo-Anne: He's looking this way, do you think he sees us?

Elizabeth: I don't know

JO-ANNE GOES TO WAVE, ELIZABETH GRABS HER ARM BEFORE SHE CAN

Elizabeth: Don't wave, I don't want him to come back yet

Jo-Anne: Why not? - frightened of him?

Elizabeth: No, he's having a fine enough time out there by himself, he's perfectly alright

Jo-Anne: Well he's turned away, I guess he didn't see us

Elizabeth: Good thing too, we'd probley look pretty stupid

Jo-Anne: I just thought he might want a bit of company

Elizabeth: Well why don't you go out there to him

Jo-Anne: (LIES BACK DOWN) Ohr no, not me, not now anyway - like you said he's perfectly alright out there by himself, he doesn't need us

Elizabeth: (LIES BACK DOWN) I think at times you're a bigger coward than I am

Jo-Anne: (SMILING) That's right

THEY SUNBATHE QUIETLY FOR A WHILE THEN JACK ENTERS WET FROM THE SURF AND WEARING JUST SPEEDO SWIMMING TOGS, ELIZABETH SITS UP

Elizabeth: Well what did you think?

Jack: Oh it was great

Elizabeth: How long is it since you've last been to the beach?

Jack: About ten years I think

Elizabeth: That's amazing, I can hardly get by ten days without coming, did you hear that Jo - it's been a whole decade since Jack last went to the beach

Jo-Anne: Yeah, I heard

Jack: So what have you two been doing, just lying here getting a tan?

HE SITS DOWN ON HIS TOWEL, NEXT TO ELIZABETH

Elizabeth: Yeah that's it, just lying here, talking, nothing exciting really

Jack: Yeah

HE LIES OUT ON HIS TOWEL, ELIZABETH LIES BACK DOWN, PAUSE FOR A WHILE

Elizabeth: Do you want some sunscreen Jack? I've got some here

Jack: Oh no, I think I'll be right, thanks very much though

Elizabeth: Are you sure? You might get burnt

Jack: No I'll be right, I reckon I'm so used to it I don't get burnt anymore

Elizabeth: Well if you change your mind it's just here

Jack: Okay thanks

PAUSE FOR A WHILE, THEN JACK SITS UP

Jack: You know what I wouldn't mind is an ice-cream, would you like one?

ELIZABETH SITS UP

Elizabeth: Yeah that'd be nice, thanks

Jack: Jo-Anne?

Jo-Anne: Well since you're offering

Jack: Okay then (HE REACHES INTO HIS BAG FOR HIS WALLET BUT IS TEMPORARILY DISTRACTED AND WATCHES SOMEONE WALK BY) You know I can't get over how many topless bathers there are here

Elizabeth: Don't worry you'll get used to it after a while

Jo-Anne: Yeah, seen one pair you've seen 'em all; Elizabeth and I usually go topless

ELIZABETH LOOKS AT JO-ANNE, SHOCKED AND INDIGNANT, HITS HER

Elizabeth: Jo-Anne! (TURNS To JACK) We don't, don't listen to her

Jack: Well of course I have nothing against it anyway

Jo-Anne: Yes I bet you don't

Jack: Well I'll just be on my way now and get those ice-creams

Elizabeth: Okay, see ya

JACK EXITS, JO-ANNE SITS UP AND STARTS TO UNDO HER BIKINI TOP

Jo-Anne: Quick lets give him a shock when he comes back

Elizabeth: Ohll will you stop it

Jo-Anne: Come on, I bet he won't know what to do

Elizabeth: No. (SEES SOMEONE) Ohr no! (QUICKLY LIES DOWN AND ROLLS OVER ONTO HER FRONT)

Jo-Anne: What?

Elizabeth: Quick get down, (JO-ANNE LIES DOWN ON HER FRONT LIKEWISE) that's Arnold over there

Jo-Anne: Where?

Elizabeth: Over there, in the pink okanui's

Jo-Anne: (SITS UP) Over where?

Elizabeth: (PULLS HER DOWN) Get down will you. Look he's seen us now

Jo-Anne: Ohll come on, he'll be alright

ARNOLD ARRIVES SHORTLY

Arnold: Well hello ladies, fancy meeting you here

Elizabeth: (LEANS UP AND LOOKS AT HIM) Ohr giddy Arnold what a surprise

JO-ANNE MOVES AWAY SLIGHTLY, TRYING TO SUPPRESS HER
LAUGHTER

Arnold: Hello Jo-Anne

Jo-Anne: (LAUGHING) Giddy Arnold

Elizabeth: (HITS HER) Don't worry about her

ARNOLD SITS DOWN NEXT TO ELIZABETH, ON JACK'S TOWEL

Arnold: So how long have you been here for?

Elizabeth: Oh I dunno, not long half an hour or so. What about you

Arnold: Since early this morning - I came to watch the sunrise

Elizabeth: Really?

Arnold: Yeah I really enjoy sunrises, it was just out there (POINTING) it was beautiful,
all the headland had this magnificent ochre brown glow

Elizabeth: Mmmm that sounds really nice

Arnold: Yes it was, we'll have to come down sometime together and watch one

Elizabeth: (NOT COMMITTING HERSELF) Yeah

Arnold: So how long are you staying here for? - all day?

Elizabeth: No, probably just until lunchtime or so

Arnold: Oh, I was going to say if you wanted to go now I could give you a lift back, I'm
on my way

Elizabeth: Ohr well thanks, but we'll be right, we came down with Jack, have you met
him yet?

Arnold: No. Who is he?

Elizabeth: He's our neighbour, Jack Flynn, he lives in flat three

Arnold: Oh no, no, I haven't met him yet, I think I've seen him round a few times, he's a big fella isn't he, with dark hair?

Elizabeth: Yes

Arnold: Yeah, I know the one, but I haven't met him yet

Elizabeth: You're sitting on his towel

Arnold: Oh, maybe I should get off it

Elizabeth: Oh no, I don't think he'd mind too much

Arnold: Is he having a swim now or something?

Elizabeth: No he was before, he's just gone to get some ice creams, he should be back soon - look here he comes now, I'll introduce you

JACK RE-ENTERS, ARNOLD STANDS UP TO MEET HIM, ELIZABETH SITS UP

Elizabeth: Jack you haven't met Arnold before, he's our neighbour

ARNOLD OFFERS HIS HAND TO SHAKE, JACK INDICATES HE HAS A HANDFUL OF ICE CREAMS, HANDS THEM OUT FIRST

Jack: Sorry, hold on, here you are Elizabeth (HANDS HER HER'S)

Elizabeth: Thanks Jack

Jack: Jo-Anne

JO-ANNE SITS UP AND TAKES HERS

Jo-Anne: Thank you

Jack: Jack Flynn, giddy

THEY SHAKE HANDS

Arnold: Yes, Arnold Harburg

Jack: Sorry about the ice creams, had I known you were here I would have got you one

Arnold: Ohr no that's okay, I'm trying to give them up anyway, (ARNOLD HITS JACK ON THE SHOULDER WITH THE JOKE, JACK STARES AT HIM, OFFENDED TO HAVE BEEN HIT, ARNOLD'S LAUGHTER DIES QUICKLY) so you live in flat three

Jack: Yes, only just moved in, you must be in flat one then

Arnold: Yeah, I've only just moved in too, I got there just after you I think

Jack: Yeah

Arnold: Well, I better get going, nice to meet you Jack

Jack: Yeah I'll see you later

Arnold: Goodbye Elizabeth, Jo-Anne

BOTH TOGETHER

Elizabeth: See you Arnold

Jo-Anne: Bye

Arnold: Don't forget about the movies, I'll see you at about seven, right?

Elizabeth: Yep, see you then

Arnold: Okay, bye

HE EXITS, JACK SITS DOWN

Jack: Are you going out with him?

Elizabeth: Ohr just this once, he asked me to the movies, so I thought why not?

JACK GRUNTS - CURTAIN

ACT TWO - SCENE ONE

ELIZABETH'S FLAT, ON A SATURDAY EVENING, A SHORT WHILE AFTER THE PREVIOUS SCENE, ELIZABETH AND JO-ANNE ARE SETTING UP FOR A DINNER PARTY, THEY ARE AT FIRST STRAIGHTENING AND TIDYING THE LIVING ROOM

Elizabeth: Can you pass me that pillow Jo

SHE DOES, ELIZABETH PLACES IT ON THE LOUNGE

Elizabeth: Thanks

Jo-Anne: What about these magazines?

Elizabeth: Just put them under there (POINTING TO UNDER A COFFEE TABLE) I really think I should have vacuumed

Jo-Anne: No it's alright

Elizabeth: Ohll I dunno (WALKS OFF TO THE KITCHEN) I'll just check the meal

JO-ANNE SITS DOWN ON THE COUCH

Jo-Anne: So tell me what do you think Arnold will be like tonight?

Elizabeth: (FROM IN THE KITCHEN) He'll be quite well behaved if he knows what's good for him

Jo-Anne: No more subtle as a sledgehammer passes?

Elizabeth: Not on your life (IN THE KITCHEN DOORWAY) I think he's got the message all right, can you give me a hand with the dip and things?

Jo-Anne: Sure

THEY BOTH EXIT TO THE KITCHEN AND QUICKLY RETURN WITH SOME TRAYS WHICH THEY PLACE ON THE CORFEE TABLE

Jo-Anne: He's mad about you you know

Elizabeth: Do you think they're right there?

Jo-Anne: Yes, you know that don't you, he's still hung up on you

Elizabeth: Look I like Arnold, I honestly do, I have nothing against him, I just don't think he's my type that's all

Jo-Anne: Do you think he knows that?

Elizabeth: Ohll, I don't know, I think he does, I think I made it clear to him, but honestly it's no big deal, that time we went to the pictures was a one-off, I haven't gone out with him since, and probably never will again, but look I still don't know him well enough to be able to say anything really serious or meaningful about him, give it time, I'll know him a lot better in a while I'm sure

Jo-Anne: If I was you I'd give him the absolute cold-shoulder right now, just tell him straight to his face to go away and that you never want to see him again, as simple as that

Elizabeth: (WALKING OUT TO THE KITCHEN) Huh, I can hardly do that (THROUGH THE SERVERY WINDOW) I don't hate him

Jo-Anne: Well if you like him you have a funny way of showing it

Elizabeth: No, it's just that there are some things in him that I wonder about (BURSTS BACK INTO THE LIVING ROOM) Okay look take this for an example, sit down on the couch with me, (THEY DO) you're me and I'm him, now remember how I told you what a slime ball he was when we went to that movie

Jo-Anne: Yeah

Elizabeth: Well this is what he's like, okay we're sitting together watching the movie and he does this (ELIZABETH SIDES RIGHT UP TO JO-ANNE, THEN PLACES ONE ARM AROUND JO-ANNE'S SHOULDERS, THEN CROSSES HER LEGS TOWARDS JO-ANNE, AND THEN PLACES HER OTHER HAND ON JO-ANNE'S LEG, ELIZABETH PAUSES THEN TURNS AND LOOKS AT JO-ANNE FOR A SHORT WHILE, AND THEN SUDDENLY SPRINGS UP AND STANDS NEXT TO JO-ANNE) Can you believe that?! And I had to sit like that through the whole movie, I swear he did not move from that position once in the whole night (WALKS AWAY TO THE KITCHEN) and I'd only just met him for goodness sake

Jo-Anne: Why didn't you elbow him one, or ask him to move or something?

Elizabeth: (FROM THE KITCHEN) Oh I dunno, I didn't want to be rude to him I

Jo-Anne: Huh, it wouldn't have stopped me

Elizabeth: (STANDING IN THE KITCHEN DOORWAY) It's pretty inconsiderate of him isn't it

Jo-Anne: My word it is

Elizabeth: That's one thing I hate, inconsideration like that (RETURNS TO THE KITCHEN)

Jo-Anne: I can't understand that you know, he must be pretty mixed up if he feels he has to do that to a girl, especially one he's just met

Elizabeth: (RE-ENTERS FROM THE KITCHEN) Yeah, pretty weird all right

Jo-Anne: And you think he'll be all right tonight?

Elizabeth: Yeah, I don't think he'll do anything stupid in front of everyone, and if he's got any sensitivity or understanding he'll know that I've been keeping a bit of distance from him so he won't try anything stupid

Jo-Anne: I don't know if he would have worked that out

Elizabeth: He's pretty smart, he should be able to

Jo-Anne: Maybe he's only smart in some things - that's how it looks to me

Elizabeth: Well

Jo-Anne: And besides if he tries anything you can always run to Jack

Elizabeth: Jack!?

Jo-Anne: Yeah Jack, he likes you too you know

Elizabeth: Ohr! What makes you say that?

Jo-Anne: Oh, just the way he looks at you

Elizabeth: The way he looks at me! I've never noticed

Jo-Anne: Well have a look one day - he does

ELIZABETH IS SMILING TO HERSELF

Jo-Anne: You're quite lucky you know

Elizabeth: Why's that?

Jo-Anne: They both like you

Elizabeth: (SMILING) Don't go on

Jo-Anne: No they do, and you're just going to sit in the middle and pick and choose and let them fight over you, aren't you?

Elizabeth: (FINALLY RELEASING A MOUNTING SMILE) Yep (EXITS QUICKLY AND HAPPILY TO THE KITCHEN)

Jo-Anne: I wish I had two men fighting over me, even if one of them was like Arnold

Elizabeth: (FROM THE KITCHEN) Well I reckon it's about time it was my turn

Jo-Anne: Well everything comes to she who waits

ELIZABETH RE-ENTERS FROM THE KITCHEN, GOES DOWN TO THE COUCH

Elizabeth: And you think I've been waiting on purpose do you?

Jo-Anne: Patience is a virtue

Elizabeth: Well my virtuosity is very frustrated - look of course I haven't been waiting on purpose! Whatdarya think I am?

Jo-Anne: Oh I don't know, you're inviting two men who have both got the hots for you around to dinner, that's really tempting fate if you ask me

Elizabeth: That's why you're here - to keep things nice and steady

Jo-Anne: (LAUGHS) You're got to be joking

Elizabeth: Look if you do anything I will kill you

Jo-Anne: I won't

Elizabeth: (POINTING BUT IN GOOD HUMOUR) And don't you go making too many moves on Jack

Jo-Anne: What makes you think I'd do that?

Elizabeth: Just don't

Jo-Anne: Okay I won't, not too many

Elizabeth: Or Arnold for that matter

Jo-Anne: No chance of it

Elizabeth: Good, now, what have I forgotten?

Jo-Anne: I dunno - it looks pretty, good to me. Is the table set properly?

ELIZABETH GOES OVER TO CHECK

Elizabeth: Yeah, Ohll hurry up - I get sick of waiting

Jo-Anne: Relax, they'll get here

Elizabeth: I know, I hope everything goes all right tonight

Jo-Anne: Look stop worrying it will

ELIZABETH MOVES BACK TO THE COUCH

Elizabeth: I hope Jack and Arnold get on all right - I'd hate to see a fight

Jo-Anne: They're not exactly best mates are they?

Elizabeth: No, ohr they'll probably argue over a few things but nothing worse than that

Jo-Anne: You hope

Elizabeth: No, they won't

Jo-Anne: It would be funny though wouldn't it?

Elizabeth: No it wouldn't, and stop saying stupid things and go and do something constructive

Jo-Anne: Like what?

Elizabeth: Oh I don't know, come on I must have forgotten something

Jo-Anne: Go and check yourself in the mirror, that'll calm you down

Elizabeth: Huh, I think that'd make me worry more

ELIZABETH EXITS UP THE HALLWAY

Jo-Anne: Are we still beautiful?

Elizabeth: Well we're still me put it that way

Jo-Anne: (UNDER HER BREATH) How disappointing

Elizabeth: What was that!?

Jo-Anne: Nothing, just a joke

Elizabeth: Yeah, pretty funny (SHE RE-ENTERS THE LIVING ROOM)

Jo-Anne: That's what I thought

Elizabeth: Why don't you go and have a, look at yourself?, ohr no on second thoughts don't, I don't want my mirror to crack

Jo-Anne: That's even funnier

Elizabeth: I'm glad you thought so cause I certainly didn't, (LOOKING AT THE FRONT DOOR) ohll come on

ELIZABETH WALKS OFF INTO THE KITCHEN

Elizabeth: (FROM IN THE KITCHEN) Jo can you come and have a look at this

Jo-Anne: Sure

JO-ANNE EXITS TO THE KITCHEN

Elizabeth: Does this look right to you?

Jo-Anne: Yeah, just keep an eye on the veges

Elizabeth: Yeah

A KNOCK IS HEARD ON THE FRONT DOOR, ELIZABETH SQUEALS

Elizabeth: They're early - what am I going to do

THEY WALK OUT INTO THE LIVING ROOM, ELIZABETH GOES TO THE DOOR

Jo-Anne: Don't worry, we're under control

ELIZABETH OPENS THE DOOR

Elizabeth: Hello, Arnold, come in

Arnold: Thankyou Elizabeth, hello Jo-Anne

Jo-Anne: Hello Arnold

Arnold: (To ELIZABETH) I'm sorry if I'm early, I wasn't sure exactly what time

Elizabeth: Ohr no, that's perfectly aright

Arnold: Jack's not here yet?

Elizabeth: No, I expect he'll be here shortly though

Arnold: Mmmm

Elizabeth: So, won't you come in, can I get you a drink?

Arnold: Yes thanks, what have you got?

Elizabeth: Ahr, well no Hairy-legged Spiders, just the run of the mill basics I'm afraid

Arnold: Right, well ah

Jo-Anne: Beer?

Arnold: Ah, no thank you, I don't drink beer, would a scotch and dry be too much to ask for?

Elizabeth: No (SLIGHTLY ANNOYED AT THE CONDESCENDING APPROACH TO THE DRINKS SHE MAY HAVE) not at all

ELIZABETH EXITS TO THE KITCHEN, JO-ANNE AND ARNOLD ARE LEFT, THEY LOOK AT EACH OTHER, STUCK FOR WORDS, ARNOLD TRIES THE BREATHING IN AND ABSORBING THE ATMOSPHERE TRICK, HE IS ABOUT TO SAY "Well this certainly is a nice place" WHEN JO-ANNE OFFERS:

Jo-Anne: Would you like some savouries?

Arnold: (AS IF DISTRACTED FROM SOMETHING IMPORTANT) Ah, oh yes, yes thank you ARNOLD GOES TO THE COFFEE TABLE, TAKES SOME BISCUITS, ELIZABETH YELLS FROM THE KITCHEN

Elizabeth: Jo do you want a drink?

Jo-Anne: Yes, just the usual thanks (PAUSE, TO ARNOLD) Well sit down

THEY BOTH DO, ARNOLD ON THE COUCH, JO ON THE STAGE RIGHT
ARMCHAIR

Jo-Anne: So tell me Arnold, what have you been up to lately?

Arnold: Well I've started up part time again at the Uni, but what's really been concerning me a lot of late is I've basically been

ELIZABETH ARRIVES WITH A TRAY OF THREE DRINKS, CUTS IN

Elizabeth: Here we are (PUTS THE TRAY ON THE TABLE, PASSES THE DRINKS)
Arnold

Arnold: Thank you

Elizabeth: Jo

Jo-Anne: Thanks

ELIZABETH THEN TAKES HER OWN AND SITS IN THE STAGE LEFT
LOUNGE CHAIR

Arnold: I was just saying to Jo-Anne, Elizabeth, that apart from having gone back to the Uni I'm getting quite busy now

Elizabeth: (CUTS IN) Really, on what?

Arnold: I've just started a novel

Elizabeth: Ohr good

Arnold: Yes and this one I'm going to finish

Elizabeth: What's it about?

Arnold: I don't know yet

Jo-Anne: Arnold how can you be writing a novel and not know what it's about?

Arnold: Well it's going to be an espionage thriller, but just to what proportions I'm not sure, because first and foremost it's going to be a work of literature

Elizabeth: Sounds interesting Arnold

Arnold: Yeah, you see I know its basic sort of structure and genre if you like, but on a deeper level I'm still formulating and developing a lot of the essential ideas and

content of what it's really about, and that's where its greatest worth will be, rather than the superficial surface level of the thriller story

Elizabeth: Right, what's it going to be called?

Arnold: I'm not sure, I'm sick of all those Frederick Forsythe novels that are all titled in the same way, you know "The Devils Alternative", "The Odessa File", "The Fourth Protocol", it's silly (MOCKING) the something something! - as long as it sounds intriguing and engrossing it must be a good novel - huh how stupid!, so I suppose I'm reacting against that a bit, I thought maybe I might call it "The Numbat Factor" or "The Chicken's Lament", just in spite of them; actually I did think "The Domino Effect" sounded pretty good - but that's going for the obvious and would give too much of the story away I guess

Elizabeth: Yes, so you haven't got any real idea of the title yet?

Arnold: No, but that's okay it'll come to me as I get further through the book, I don't know, maybe something like (PAUSES) no, I don't know

Jo-Anne: When do you think you'll have it finished by Arnold?

Arnold: I don't know, end of the year I hope, it all depends on how I go once I really get stuck into it, if the idea takes off, then I probably won't be able to stop writing till I finish it, you know my enthusiasm will just take me right through, but then if it becomes a real drag I probably won't ever finish it, though I should force myself to write through it of course

Elizabeth: Yes, does that happen much?, where you sort of lose your enthusiasm and the idea just dies on you

Arnold: Oh yes, it happens all the time to me, it's terrible too, because when you have a great idea you think that's enough but it's not, I think the best ideas carry themselves through, and you don't need to do much extra work yourself

Elizabeth: So you don't mind about all the ideas you've lost because

Arnold: (CUTS, IN) Oh well I wouldn't say that, it's, no you're right, but I don't know, it's very hard because there's a lot more work involved than you think

Elizabeth: Yes but what good's an idea if I no-one's going to be able to receive it?

Arnold: Yeah well that's right, whoever said ten percent inspiration ninety percent perspiration wasn't far wrong

Elizabeth: No

THERE IS A SHORT PAUSE, NO ONE SAYS ANYTHING, THEN

Jo-Anne: (ENJOYING THE AWKWARDNESS OF WHAT SHE IS SAYING) Well let's not let this die on us, have another savoury Arnold

Arnold: Thankyou

Jo-Anne: Elizabeth

Elizabeth: (EYEING JO-ANNE) No thankyou Jo

JO-ANNE SMILES

Arnold: So what have you two been doing with yourselves of late?

Elizabeth: Ohr, not much

Arnold: Thought about a job or anything?

Elizabeth: Yes, I have been actually

Jo-Anne: Really?

Elizabeth: Yeah

Jo-Anne: Not back at Watson's?

Elizabeth: No, have no fear, I wouldn't go back there

Jo-Anne: Where at then?

Elizabeth: Oh I don't know, anywhere I guess

Jo-Anne: You know when you quit you said you'd never do it again

Elizabeth: I know, I remember, but I also wasn't as bored and had a lot more money then

Jo-Anne: I see

Arnold: You don't think you'll have the same problems again if you get another job?

Elizabeth: I hope not, no I think it was just the particular people I was working with

Arnold: Yes, I don't see that need necessarily be a problem endemic to the secretarial sector of the workforce as a whole

Elizabeth: (NOT REALLY KNOWING WHAT HE MEANT, BUT SERIOUSLY AGREEING:) No, that's right

Jo-Anne: (JOKINGLY) Yeah, yeah

Arnold: And what about you Jo-Anne?

Jo-Anne: (CAUGHT OFF GUARD) Oh, um, what you mean a job?

Arnold: Yes, are you still with

Jo-Anne: (CUTS IN, IN MOCKERY HER EYES LIGHT UP) Yep! Woollies, part time

Arnold: Well that's better than nothing

Jo-Anne: (NOT SURE HOW TO TAKE HIS LAST COMMENT) Yeah (JOKINGLY) or at least that's what I tell the taxman anyway

Arnold: (NOT UNDERSTANDING THIS AT ALL) Yeah, clever girl!

NOT IMPRESSED BY THE LAST EXCHANGE JO-ANNE'S AND ARNOLD'S EYES START TO WANDER, DOWN THEN TO ELIZABETH, PAUSE THEN

Elizabeth: I just better go and check on the dinner, excuse me

EXITS TO THE KITCHEN, JO-ANNE AND ARNOLD REMAIN SEATED, SPEECHLESS FOR A SHORT WHILE THEN

Arnold: Would it be alright if I used the toilet, it's just through here isn't it?
(INDICATES THE HALLWAY)

Jo-Anne: Yeah sure, that's right, just through there

JO-ANNE HOPS OUT OF THE COUCH AND GOES UP TO THE KITCHEN, STANDING IN THE DOORWAY

Jo-Anne: Can you believe that, "a problem endemic to the secretarial sector of the workforce"

ELIZABETH JOINS HER IN THE DOORWAY

Elizabeth: Will you stop it, it's true though

Jo-Anne: And you sitting there like you understood it all

Elizabeth: Well I did, sort of, that's not as bad as saying we better not let this die on us,

where is he anyway?

Jo-Anne: Toilet, look don't leave us alone together - I don't know what to say

Elizabeth: I'm sure either of you could think of something

Jo-Anne: Huh, don't bet on it - that was a rather timely trip to the toilet don't you think

Elizabeth: He's just making room for dinner

Jo-Anne: Yeah sure

Elizabeth: I like the sound of his novel don't you?

Jo-Anne: I'd have to read it first

Elizabeth: Yeah that's true

A KNOCK ON THE DOOR IS HEARD

Elizabeth: Ohll that'll be Jack, ohr no

Jo-Anne: What?

Elizabeth: Is everything all right?

Jo-Anne: Yes

Elizabeth: Well I just want to be sure

ELIZABETH WALKS OVER TO THE FRONT DOOR, OPENS IT

Elizabeth: Giddy Jack, come in

Jack: Thanks Elizabeth, hi Jo-Anne

Jo-Anne: Giddy Jack

Elizabeth: How are you tonight?

Jack: Very well thanks

Elizabeth: Good, well come in, can I get you a drink?

Jack: Yes thanks

Elizabeth: Beer?

Jack: Yeah that'd be good

ELIZABETH EXITS TO THE KITCHEN

Jack: How are ya Jo-Anne?

Jo-Anne: Ohr good

Jack: Up to much lately?

Jo-Anne: No, just same old routine, you know

Jack: Yeah (ELIZABETH ENTERS AND GIVES HIM HIS BEER) thanks

Elizabeth: There are some bickies and dip down here if you want some

Jack: Ohr right

THEY GO DOWN TO THE COFFEE TABLE AND SIT DOWN. JO-ANNE AND ELIZABETH IN THEIR SAME SEATS AGAIN, JACK ON THE COUCH

Jo-Anne: How's your work been Jack?

Jack: Good, I haven't been doing much sorting lately, just manhandling some surplus bales they found in the back corner of the warehouse, of course all of it should be sorted in the bale but because they're not quite sure where this came from or what condition it's in we'll just be checking through it over the next week or so

Elizabeth: Right

ARNOLD RE-ENTERS

Arnold: Hello Jack

Jack: (STANDS UP) Giddy Arnold, howareya?

Arnold: Good, good, yourself?

Jack: Ohr can't complain

Arnold: Yeah (JACK SITS DOWN)

ARNOLD SITS DOWN NEXT TO JACK ON THE COUCH

Elizabeth: Do you want another drink Arnold?

Arnold: Ah, oh no I think I'll be right for a while thanks

Elizabeth: Are you sure? I'm going to have one

Jo-Anne: So am I (PASSES HER GLASS TO ELIZABETH, ELIZABETH SMILES SHAKING HER HEAD AT JO-ANNE)

Arnold: Oh well, okay then, can't say no

ELIZABETH EXITS WITH THE TRAY AND GLASSES

Jack: So what's new Arnold?

Arnold: Oh, not much I've just gone back to the University

Jack: Right, keeping you busy?

Arnold: Well I'm only there part time now, I've only got four units left to do and I'll have my degree, thank goodness

Jack: Are you doing all four of those units now?

Arnold: No, I can only do three this semester, the other one's only offered in the second semester so I won't get to do it until then, but that's okay because it spaces out my workload a bit which is good as the three units I am doing are quite advanced and demand a lot of time

Jack: How come you've got a whole year and only four units to do?, I thought you would have a whole final year of work to do

Arnold: No well it's a three year course but this is my fourth year, I sort of dropped out a bit half way through but managed to get back into it well enough to be able to complete it this year

Jack: Do many people complete it in the three years?

Arnold: Yes some do, only the really dedicated ones though, I'm afraid that hasn't always been my strongest point, but still I'm going to finish and I'll have my piece of paper at the end of it

Jack: And what then? - you'll get a job in the computer field

Arnold: Well that all depends

ELIZABETH RE-ENTERS WITH THE TRAY OF DRINKS, STARTS HANDING THEM OUT

Elizabeth: Sorry I took so long. Dinner's on it's way and should be ready soon

Jo-Anne: Do you want a hand in there Elizabeth?

Elizabeth: No, not yet, - everything's coming along perfectly would you believe

Jo-Anne: Surprise, surprise

Elizabeth: Yeah

ELIZABETH SITS DOWN

Jack: So what do you think you'll do when you graduate Arnold?

Arnold: Have a big party I think, no I don't know Jack, there are a lot of things that are just dawning on my horizon at the moment, but they're all going to depend on me, especially with what I do now, I've got a lot of areas that I'm interested in and am developing things in, but nothing to too substantial a degree yet, things are really only just starting

Jack: Like what

PAUSE

Arnold: (BECOMING SHY AND QUITE) Oh well you know, lots of things, nothing very concrete yet, I'm still working on them

Elizabeth: Like your novel

Arnold: Yeah

Jack: You're writing a book are you?

Arnold: Yes

Jack: What's it about?

Arnold: Oh it's just a thriller, sort of, I hope to have it finished by the end of the year

Jack: Well good luck with it

Arnold: Yeah, thanks (PAUSE) What's for dinner Elizabeth?

Elizabeth: (JOYFULLY AND WITH MOCK INDIGNATION) That's a surprise Arnold, you'll have to wait

Arnold: Ohll

Jo-Anne: Why? Aren't you sure if you should stay or not?

Arnold: (LAUGHING) Ohll no, nothing to do with that, it's just that I've got two very nice bottles of red that a friend gave me the other day and I was wondering if now might be the right occasion

Elizabeth: Ah well in that case I will tell you. We're having roast

Arnold: Well there you go, why don't I just pop over and get them?

Elizabeth: I have got a cask, but if you want

Arnold: (CUTS IN) Ah, no no no Elizabeth, this wine is special, it's something else believe me

Elizabeth: Okay then if you want

Arnold: Righto, won't be a tick

ARNOLD GETS UP AND EXITS

Jack: Ah, he's amazing isn't he

Jo-Anne: Sure is

Jack: Don't get me wrong, I don't mind him or anything, it's just that he never ceases to amaze me

Elizabeth: No, me neither, but I like him, he's got a lot going for himself - he's pretty intelligent and talented

Jack: Well you know I don't like to talk about people behind their backs or anything, but he always struck me as one of those arty-intellectual types off in his own little world, and always will be

Elizabeth: Yeah but he's happy, and he is working at things and doing things, he's not wasting his life away

Jack: Yeah but he could be doing more, he could be doing better things, though it's not really my position to say of course

Elizabeth: Oh, I dunno, I think if he really wants to, or when he really wants to, he'll come up with the results

Jo-Anne: Maybe, but no I agree with Jack, I think he could be doing far more worthwhile things

Jack: Look I'm not trying to force an opinion on him or anything, if he's happy fine, but that's just my personal opinion that's all

ARNOLD RE-ENTERS

Elizabeth: Did you get them?

Arnold: Yes, I was worried I might have drunk them (SHOWS IT TO HER) Penfolds Koonunga Hill Claret

Elizabeth: Is that good?

Arnold: Ohr yes. I'll just go and leave it in the kitchen shall I?

Elizabeth: Sure (PASSES IT BACK TO HIM, HE EXITS TO THE KITCHEN THEN RETURNS SHORTLY)

Arnold: (FINDS IT HARD TO BROACH THE CONVERSATION) So what were you all talking about when I was gone?

Jo-Anne: (SHRUGS) Ohll

Elizabeth: How's your chess programme coming along?

Arnold: Ohr fine, fine, what makes you ask?

Elizabeth: Ohr just wondering

Arnold: Ohr right, (ARNOLD SITS BACK IN COUCH) yes well it's coming along well, needs a lot more work on it and a lot more equipment as well

Jack: How long do you think it will take to finish Arnold?

Arnold: Over two years at least, it's full of bugs at the moment

Elizabeth: (CUTS IN) What do you mean bugs?

Arnold: That just means there are errors in the programme, the term actually came from back in the days when computers were all valves and they were reprogrammed by changing the wiring about, and anyway these people had a programme that should

have been working but it wasn't so they checked all the wiring and found a dead moth in amongst it all that was causing the errors

Elizabeth: Is that true?

Arnold: Yeah, so they tell me, and that's where the term bug came from

Jack: Well I'll be blown

Arnold: Yeah, interesting isn't it

Elizabeth: Jo, do you want to give me a hand, the dinner should be ready by now

Jo-Anne: Yeah sure

Elizabeth: Excuse us please

Arnold: Mmmm, go right ahead

JO-ANNE AND ELIZABETH EXIT TO THE KITCHEN

Jack: Much money in computers Arnold?

Arnold: Yeah if you want it

Jack: Well I reckon there are so many things that can happen to you in this world you never can have too much money, just as a safeguard

Arnold: Yeah, I s'pose, I've never really looked at it that way

Jack: Ohr mate you oughta try going' through three years of drought or something', it's a tough old world out there, that's the way it is and you've just gotta accept it, but you're right with the computers - you could probley make a living out of them

Arnold: Yes' though I don't think I want to spend my whole life with them anyway.
(PAUSE) It's funny you know, everyone talks about the state of the economy but the computer and technology industry is probably the fastest growth industry there is

Jack: Yeah, it's a bit different in my business, primary produce is in a very bad slump

Arnold: Can you see that turning around?

Jack: Ooohl I don't know Arnold, not for quite a while, the condition of the country's got to pick up, it's very poor, a lot of areas have been in drought for the last few years, and then once the seasons' get better the economy's still got to recover, our world trade prices are just disgusting at the moment, so no, I can't see it getting better for a

long time yet

Arnold: Yeah

Jack: Which is a terrible shame because so many peoples' lives are tied up with it

Arnold: Yeah, you wouldn't ever consider leaving the land and working in some other field would you

Jack: No, no, not in your life. It's not as simple as that, the land isn't a job it's a life, and once it's in your blood that's it

Arnold: But still some people

Jack: (CUTS IN) Sure there are people who have left it, there are many who have been forced off it, but I'd never leave, I couldn't, I love it too much,

Arnold: Yeah, that's really interesting you know

JACK SHRUGS

Arnold: So where do you want to end up, what's your goal?

Jack: (BECOMING A BIT SHY) I don't know, I often think I'd love to manage a cattle station in the Territory, but I don't think I will really, I'd like to take over the family's property when my parents move on, or you know it gets too much for them

Arnold: How long has your family been there for?

Jack: Nearly a hundred years, it was my great grandfather who started it originally

Arnold: Wow, that stretches back along way

Jack: Yeah

Arnold: So you feel it's your destiny to take over your family's farm

Jack: Well I wouldn't put it that way, but yeah if you like, it is like that

Arnold: How are you finding it here in the city? Do you miss the country?

Jack: Yeah, but I'm enjoying it, I'll be pleased to go though, I'm really only here to do my job and once it's done I want to get back to where my real work is and what really interests me

Arnold: Do you feel a bit like a fish out of water?

Jack: Oh yes and no, I'm getting used to the city life, but I'm really more interested in the land so once I've done my job here I'll be pleased to go and get back to what I want, but I'm happy enough to be here and to get the job done though. I can just see it when I go home all my mates'll tell me the city's made me soft, but I don't think it'll take too much work to get back into it

Arnold: What have your impressions been of the city?

Jack: (PAUSES, CONSIDERING, THEN:) Very big, very noisy, and often quite depressing. I mean there are a lot of good things here but it's not really my kettle of fish. One thing I hate is all the millions of people, you just feel like another meaningless face and all the drunks and derros, so many pathetic people with wasted lives, and there's no open spaces or fresh air

Arnold: Yeah I think you tend to get used to it though

Jack: Yeah that's right, but only a bit, I don't notice it as much as I used to, see I've never been brought up with this but I s'pose you've been used to it all your life

Arnold: Yeah the shock for me is the other way round, going to the country always gets me

Jack: What do you think when you go through the country?

Arnold: I don't know, it all looks the same

Jack: (VITALLY:) But it's not Arnold, it's not, once you even get to know just a little bit about it you can understand everything that's going on and see what the people are doing with the land

Arnold: I know, I'm looking at it from a biased or ignorant point of view

Jack: Yeah but don't, there's so much there

Arnold: Yeah

Jack: You don't want to cut yourself off just because you've never really been there

Arnold: No, that's right, but you know I can't do everything in my life and I've never felt a great compulsion to go and live in the country

Jack: Ah but you have to know it, it's the most fulfilling life there is

Arnold: I've heard so many people from the country say that, but it always struck me that you're missing out on so many important things

Jack: But you don't need those things, you get everything that you do need on the land

Arnold: Like what?

Jack: Simple hard-working outdoor life, what more could a man ask for!

Arnold: Well

Jack: No, just the basics and they keep you happy

Arnold: Well I don't think they'd keep me happy

Jack: (WITH SOME MALICE) Yeah but you're a special case aren't you

Arnold: Oh now come on you can't argue along those lines, your argument's got to fit every case or it just doesn't hold true

JACK IS NOT INTERESTED

Jack: You're wrong Arnold

ELIZABETH AND JO-ANNE ENTER FROM THE KITCHEN, PLACE THE ROAST AND A FEW VEGETABLE DISHES ON THE TABLE

Elizabeth: Righto here it is

ARNOLD AND JACK GET UP FROM THE COUCH AND WALK TO THE TABLE

Jack: Looks beaut Elizabeth

Elizabeth: Thankyou

Arnold: Yeah sure does

Jo-Anne: Right Arnold you're sitting here (POINTS TO CHAIR OPPOSITE ELIZABETH'S WHO IS SITTING CLOSEST TO THE KITCHEN DOOR), Jack you're here (POINTS TO ELIZABETH'S LEFT), and I'm here (ELIZABETH'S RIGHT)

THEY MOVE AROUND, TAKE THEIR PLACES AND SIT DOWN

Elizabeth: Mind your plates, they're hot

ARNOLD TOUCHES HIS PLATE

Arnold: Ooohl yes they are too (SUCKS HIS FINGER)

Elizabeth: Jack we thought you might like to do the honours (PASSES THE CARVING KNIFE AND FORK)

Jack: Righto

Elizabeth: Oohll hold on, drinks - who wants what?

Arnold: Well I'll just get that red from the kitchen - would everyone like to try it?

Elizabeth: Yes thanks Arnold

Jo-Anne: Yeah that'd be good

Arnold: Jack?

Jack: Ohr yeah, thanks very much Arnold

ARNOLD STANDS UP, EXITS TO THE KITCHEN

Elizabeth: You'll find a corkscrew in the top drawer

Arnold: Right

ARNOLD RETURNS SHORTLY WITH THE BOTTLE AND THE CORKSCREW, HE STANDS BETWEEN ELIZABETH AND JO-ANNE AND OPENS THE BOTTLE

Arnold: Ah that's got it, of course I should have opened this earlier to give it time to breathe but not to matter, Elizabeth you're the lady of the house

Jo-Anne: You want to be careful how you say that Arnold

Arnold: (HALF LAUGHS) Yes, Elizabeth would you like to try it?

Elizabeth: Yes thank you

HE POURS A SMALL AMOUNT IN HER GLASS, ELIZABETH JOKINGLY GOES THROUGH THE MOTIONS OF SWIRLING IT, SNIFFING IT, LETTING IT PLAY ON HER PALATE AND SWALLOWING IT

Elizabeth: Yes, beautiful thank you (LAUGHS IT OFF)

Arnold: (HALF JOKING) Slightly rambunctious on the palate, wouldn't you agree madam?

Elizabeth: (GOING ALONG WITH IT) Well yes this is what I thought

Arnold: And a somewhat monotonic bouquet?

Elizabeth: Yes, yes

Jo-Anne: Just fill them up Arnold

Arnold: (STILL ON THE JOKE) But of course (FILL UPS ELIZABETHS THEN JO-ANNE'S GLASS, TO JO-ANNE:) and would madam like to keep the bottle afterwards?

Jo-Anne: (STRAIGHT, SLIGHTLY DRAWN OUT) No thank you

ARNOLD THEN FILLS JACK'S

Jack: Thank you

AND THEN FILLS HIS OWN AND SITS DOWN, HAVING RETURNED TO HIS NORMAL SELF. JACK STOPS CARVING FOR A MOMENT AND TRIES THE WINE

Arnold: Do you like it Jack?

Jack: Mmm, it's good

Arnold: (SOMEWHAT DISAPPOINTED BY THE BANALITY OF THE ANSWER, LOOKING JACK OVER FOR A TICK) Yeah

Elizabeth: How's the carving coming Jack?

Jack: Almost there, would you like, to pass me your plate

Elizabeth: Sure, (FEELS HER PLATE) they've cooled down a bit

JACK TAKES HER PLATE AND STARTS PUTTING MEAT ON IT

Jack: Enough?

Elizabeth: Yeah that's fine thanks

JACK PASSES THE PLATE BACK

Elizabeth: Thanks

Jack: Jo-Anne?

SHE PASSES HER PLATE

Jo-Anne: About as much as Elizabeth thanks Jack

Jack: Right (SERVES IT UP) here you go (PASSES IT BACK)

Jo-Anne: Thanks

Jack: Arnold?

Arnold: Yeah same again thanks (PASSES HIS PLATE, JACK SERVES IT ON TO THE PLATE AND RETURNS IT) thanks (THEN SERVES HIS OWN)

Elizabeth: (AFTER SEEING JACK HAS SERVED HIS OWN) Well now don't let's wait, dig into whatever veges you want

THERE IS A SHORT SILENCE OF TALKING AS THEY SERVE THEIR VEGES

Elizabeth: (AFTER POURING SOME FOR HERSELF FROM A SMALL JUG) There's gravy here if anyone would like it

Jo-Anne: Mmm thanks (ELIZABETH PASSES IT TO HER WHO USES IT THEN GIVES IT TO JACK).

JO-ANNE AND ARNOLD START THEIR MEALS, JACK WAITS TO SEE ELIZABETH START AND THEN STARTS HIS, THERE IS ANOTHER SHORT SILENCE OF TALKING

Jack: Mmm this is great thanks Elizabeth

Arnold: Yes very good

Elizabeth: Thank you (LOOKS AT JO-ANNE, SLIGHTLY EXPECTANTLY)

Jo-Anne: (WITH A SMILE) Yeah I s'pose it's not too bad

Elizabeth: (EXPECTING THIS FROM JO-ANNE BUT NONE THE LESS ENJOYING IT) Thank you Jo

Jack: Did I ever tell you roast dinner's my favourite?

Elizabeth: Yes you did actually

Arnold: Oh yeah

Elizabeth: No, don't get me wrong! that's not why I made it, it's my favourite too

Jack: Yeah I don't think there are too many Australians who couldn't say roast is their favourite dinner

Elizabeth: No, I'm sorry Arnold did you want the gravy?

Arnold: (FINISHES A MOUTHFUL THEN:) Oh no thank you, I prefer to savour the taste of the meat itself, which I must compliment you on

Elizabeth: Thankyou, doesn't it get dry in your mouth though?

Arnold: Well hey I have got his red (INDICATES TO HIS GLASS)

Elizabeth: (SIPS SOME OF HER WINE) Yes they do go together well, don't they

Arnold: Yes well this beverage is very popular in certain circles as a preferred after-dinner wine,, I think actually it's complimented by the meal, it doesn't stand up as well in its own right

Jo-Anne: Well it must be a good meal then

Jack: Too right (AS HE DEVOURS HIS)

Elizabeth: You can have some more if you want Jack

Jack: Ohll, ohll excuse me, I might later when we're all finished

Elizabeth: No you're right, have as much as you like

PAUSE FOR A WHILE

Elizabeth: Did anyone see the news earlier?

Jack: We're winning the cricket I know that much

Elizabeth: Yeah, that was a good innings by Border

Arnold: What did he get?

Jack: 180 I think

Arnold: 180! Wow! So how many are we?

Elizabeth: Ohr what was it? 5 for 400 think

Jack: Mmm, they reckon he'll declare overnight so the Poms'll go in tomorrow about 200 down on the first innings with three days to go - we should win it

Elizabeth: Yeah, ohr who was it? Ritchie, yeah Greg Ritchie got out for 9

Arnold: Yeah I saw that, about lunchtime today, serves him right though, he didn't have to try and hit it out of the ground, he could have just tried for a single

Jack: Yeah, you know that reminded me of a match at school once, I can't remember who we were playing, but anyway they batted first, and a mate of mine, Alan Jackson, and myself were the opening bowlers we managed to skittle them for 50 runs on a bad wicket, and then when we came into bat the same thing happened - we lost 8 wickets for 49 runs, and of course being the opening bowlers Jacko and I were last bats, so as soon as the 8th wicket fell I came in, then first ball the next over the other bloke got run out coming back for the second run so Jacko came in with one run required but with about 3 overs to go, and so typical Jackson, he was a classic, he really was, he tried to hit it out of the ground, just the same, first ball, he swung and clean missed the ball but accidentally let go of his bat which went straight into the bloke at silly mid on and broke his nose, Jacko called me through for the single and the keeper then tried to run me out but missed the stumps and hit this bloke with the broken nose again instead, so he got carted off to hospital, and we won the match anyway.

Elizabeth: Was he all right, the bloke that got hit?

Jack: Ohr yeah he was right, had a bit of a sore head and a bandaged nose for a while but he was right

Elizabeth: Well that's okay, you know that's one of the things I like the most about cricket - there are hardly any injuries or violence

Jack: Yeah that's right, but it's still just as competitive without being a real contact sport

Jo-Anne: What about when they bowl bouncers, they can be pretty violent

Jack: Ohr yeah

Jo-Anne: I can remember seeing someone getting a broken jaw once

Jack: Yeah but the batsmen are prepared for that - it's part of the game

Elizabeth: And they can wear helmets now anyway

Jo-Anne: Yeah the helmets are a good idea

Jack: But I tell you Jo-Anne most times you bowl a bouncer it's just to intimidate the batsman, it gives you a psychological advantage, makes them easier to get out. I never bowled a bouncer with the intention of hitting a batsman, it was either to intimidate him or because I was angry at him or something, but I never intentionally bowled to hit the batsman

Arnold: Did you ever hit anyone?

Jack: (SLIGHT PAUSE) Yeah, quite a few times, but only ever decently once

Elizabeth: What happened to him?

Jack: Got very badly bruised in the ribs, thought they were broken but they weren't. Actually that was a pretty good game - we were playing on a very hard fast pitch and it was easy to get a good short ball rising

Arnold: How did you feel when you hit him?

Jack: Ohll come on look I wasn't trying to kill him

Arnold: I was just wondering that's all

Jack: Well, after I let go of the ball I felt good because I knew it would be a good delivery

Arnold: But what about when it actually hit him, what did you feel?

Jack: For one instant I was worried that I would have hurt him seriously - it hit him just under the heart, but then when I saw he was all right I felt good, very good

Arnold: Even though you knew you had hurt him?

Jack: Yeah, that's right. That's how it goes. (PAUSE) I mean I knew I hadn't damaged him badly - not anything he wouldn't get over easily. Why, do you think there's something wrong with that?

Arnold: Ohr no, I'm not saying anything's wrong with it, or right with it for that matter, these things just interest me that's all

JACK NODS, SLIGHT PAUSE FOR A WHILE

Arnold: There's one thing you didn't tell me though Jack?

Jack: What's that?

Arnold: What it actually felt like on the instant when you hit him, on that actual point of time

Jack: Ohll I dunno - this happened when I was at school

Arnold: Come on, you must remember

Jack: (PAUSE) Nothing. Nothing really on the actual instant, just a pause and then a worry if he would be all right

Arnold: Nothing at all?

Jack: No nothing Arnold. (PAUSE) It did feel good

Arnold: Yes, I knew you would say that

Jack: No, don't get me wrong, that was only a small thing I was more concerned right afterwards to see if held be all right

Arnold: Yeah I know

Jack: You know what else happened in that match Arnold?

Arnold: What?

Jack: The umpires asked us to stop bowling short so without a question we complied, and that fella I hit in the ribs, he put his head down and played one of the best knocks I've seen, saved his team by scoring a hundred

Arnold: And are you trying to say that's because you lost the psychological advantage of being able to bowl short at them?

Jack: No, not at all, I was just trying to say

Arnold: (CUTS IN) Yeah, look I know Jack I was just having a go at ya, look I'm sorry I'm not trying to say cricket's a blood thirsty game or all bowlers' want to kill batsmen, look cricket's one of my favourite sports, I know it's not like that, I was just wondering about, well you know

Jack: (SLIGHTLY DRILY, DETACHED) Yeah, yeah I know

Arnold: Well, more wine Elizabeth?

Elizabeth: Ahr, yeah, thanks (FILLS HER GLASS)

Arnold: Jo-Anne?

Jo-Anne: Thankyou Arnold (TOPS UP HER GLASS)

Arnold: Jack

Jack: Well since everyone else is, thanks (TOPS UP JACK'S GLASS THEN HIS OWN)

Elizabeth: Now that we've got that little argument cleared up maybe I shouldn't ask this
Arnold

Arnold: No no, go ahead, I think it's healthy to have differences of opinions and good
discussions

Elizabeth: Um, well just out of interest what's your favourite sport?

Arnold: Soccer

Elizabeth: Really?

Arnold: Yeah, I think it's because of my background, and I also used to play it a lot at
school, I admire the skill in it, its the only true football, it requires much more skill
than the other football codes (ELIZABETH GLANCES AT JACK THEN BACK TO
ARNOLD)

Elizabeth: (QUICKLY) Right, well that is of course debatable - like everything though
(TURNS TO JACK) Jack do you want some more meat or potatoes or something?

Jack: (CAUGHT OFF GUARD GRUNTS) Huh? No I'll be right Elizabeth, thanks very
much

Elizabeth: Are you sure?

Jack: Yes thanks, I'm sure

Elizabeth: Anyone else? Arnold?

Arnold: Thankyou but no, it's very nice but I have sufficient

Elizabeth: Jo-Anne?

Jo-Anne: No I'm right, I'm on a diet remember

Elizabeth: Oh yes that's right

Jo-Anne: And what about you, what happened to yours?

Elizabeth: Ohll you know, I got sick of it, it'd have to be the shortest one month diet on record, it lasted about half an hour I think

Arnold: Really?

Elizabeth: Ohr I wasn't that serious about it you know, I just got bored so I thought I'd do it, or something stupid like that anyway, I can do things I really want to do, but I wasn't that interested in this so that's what happened

Arnold: Yes it's hard to keep disciplined to something

Elizabeth: Hmm depressing isn't it

Arnold: More wine?

Elizabeth: Mmm thanks (FILLS UP HER GLASS THEN HIS OWN)

Arnold: You know the more I think about it the more it seems like an all or nothing world to me (PAUSE), oh I'm sorry Jack, Jo-Anne, would you like some more wine?

Jo-Anne: No thanks Arnold

Jack: No thanks; you know Arnold talking about discipline one thing I learnt from my upbringing and from working on the land, is that no matter how hard it is, if you've gotta do it you do it, no matter what, but the more you get used to it the easier it becomes and the better you get at it, I can remember when I was jackerooing in western Queensland we worked fourteen hours a day, seven days a week for a couple of months in a row, but we worked ourselves up to the standard, we didn't just hit it cold, and we got so used to that level of work that after a while it felt normal and it didn't strain us, it was just a matter of working up to that level and maintaining it. See I think the thing is whether we like to admit it or not most of us lead fairly easy lives and get so used to that we don't know what we are capable of if we only pushed ourselves

Arnold: That's right, I mean I know myself I'm not working anywhere near what I need to to achieve half of the things I want to do

Jack: Yeah well don't worry you're not on your own, I tell you I've picked up so many bad habits since I've come here, I lead the laziest life

Elizabeth: Ohll no you don't Jack, I've seen you, you're twice as active as myself and Arnold put together

Jack: No I'm not

Elizabeth: Well what do you do then that's so bad?

Jack: Ohr watch television till late each night

Jo-Anne: (HALF JAUGHING) Ohr come on Jack that's nothing!

Elizabeth: You wanna see a television addict you look at Jo-Anne

Jo-Anne: I'm not that bad!

Elizabeth: Hoh! Rubbish, you put her in front of a movie and she will not move, until the station closes that night

Arnold: Just as well they're all not 24 hour stations eh!

Elizabeth: Yeah, or a music show - that one that goes all night

Jo-Anne: Look I don't watch it all, I'm not that bad honestly Jack

Jack: Ohr well you know, I'm not getting involved

Jo-Anne: No believe me I'm not

Elizabeth: She is

Jo-Anne: Well at least I can keep to a diet (ELIZABETH LOOKS AT HER QUESTIONINGLY, PAUSE) Well, if I want to

Elizabeth: Yeah, just like me

Jo-Anne: That's right, so, Elizabeth, do you want some more roast

Elizabeth: Ohr no I couldn't

Jo-Anne: You'll have more wine though won't you

Elizabeth: Give me a chance, I haven't even finished this glass yet

Jo-Anne: And how many's that?

Elizabeth: Oh I don't know, I wasn't counting

Jo-Anne: You lost count?

Elizabeth: No I didn't Jo-Anne

Arnold: Yes come now Jo, she's only enjoying a splendid red, would you like some more?

Jo-Anne: Ahr, no I'm right thanks Arnold

Arnold: Well all the more for us then, Jack?

Jack: No thanks Arnold

Arnold: Okay (POURS HIMSELF SOME MORE)

Elizabeth: Well then if everyone's finished I'll get the dessert then shall I?

Arnold: Mmm what a good idea, can I give you a hand

Elizabeth: Ohr no we'll be right thanks Arnold

ELIZABETH AND JO-ANNE RISE, COLLECT THE PLATES AND EXIT TO THE KITCHEN, AFTER A SHORT WHILE JO-ANNE COMES BACK AND STARTS COLLECTING THE OTHER PLATES FROM THE TABLE AND TAKES THEM TO THE KITCHEN, ELIZABETH LEANS THROUGH THE SERVERY WINDOW

Elizabeth: Well whatdya want?, you can have apricot pie, with or without ice cream

Jack: Could I have it with ice cream please

Elizabeth: Right

Arnold: No ice cream for me thanks

ELIZABETH RETURNS TO WORK IN THE KITCHEN, JO-ANNE IS STILL BRINGING PLATES BACK TO THE KITCHEN

Arnold: Apricot pie, sounds good

Jack: Yeah

Arnold: Mmmm

PAUSE, NOT KNOWING WHAT TO SAY, AFTER A SHORT WHILE ELIZABETH AND JO-ANNE RETURN WITH THE BOWLS

Elizabeth: Here we are THEY HAND THEM ROUND

Arnold: Mmm looks good

Jack: Thank you

ELIZABETH AND JO-ANNE SIT DOWN, THEY BEGIN

Arnold: You're not having any Jo-Anne?

Jo-Anne: No, trying to watch my figure believe it or not

Elizabeth: Mmm I'd believe that

Jo-Anne: And I thought I'd demonstrate my superior willpower to Elizabeth's

Elizabeth: Ohr what?

Jo-Anne: Ohr nothing, just nothing

Elizabeth: You better watch yourself

Jo-Anne: Or what?

Elizabeth: I dunno, I'll force feed you the rest of the apricot pie I guess

Jo-Anne: That's if you haven't eaten it first

Elizabeth: Huh, fat chance of that

Jo-Anne: Yeah fat chance all right

Elizabeth: Jo-Anne!

AN ENJOYFUL PAUSE BETWEEN THE TWO

Arnold: I was just thinking Elizabeth I have a nice dessert wine. Well maybe it's just a very spatlese riesling, but it'd probably go quite nicely with this

Elizabeth: Ohr that'd be nice, only we'll be finished in a tick, maybe we could have it afterwards

Arnold: Um, no, you really have to have a dessert wine with your dessert, ohr well doesn't matter, it was only an idea

Jack: Do you have a wine for everything?

Arnold: Almost

Jo-Anne: How about a smoko wine?

Arnold: No, there's not really any such thing

Jo-Anne: I thought you might have invented one that's all

Elizabeth: (VERY LIGHTLY, DOING HER BEST TO DIFFUSE CONFRONTATIONS) Right, okay, thankyou Jo, do you want any more dessert Jack?

Jack: No thanks Elizabeth, that was beaut

Elizabeth: Arnold?

Arnold: Ah, no I'll be right, as soon as I finish

Elizabeth: Jo-Anne do you want to come and help me get the coffee, do you two want coffee?

Arnold: Yes that'd be nice

Jack: Yes thanks

ELIZABETH AND JO-ANNE EXIT TO THE KITCHEN, PAUSE FOR A SHORT WHILE

Jack: I take it you're a bit of an expert on wines Arnold

Arnold: Yes, product of a bad upbringing I s'pose

THEY LAUGHT A BIT

Jack: How much do you know? Would you say you're a real expert or something?

Arnold: Ohr no, I'm only an amateur, it's just an interest that's all, I guess I know a bit about wine, but only as a hobby, I don't want to get involved in the liquor trade for a living, how about you, you don't mind the odd drink I take it

Jack: Ohr no, not after a hard days work or something I guess

Arnold: Whatdarya put away the most, beer?

Jack: Yeah, after working in Queensland I got hooked on XXXX, and then after I came back down here none of the beers seemed strong enough, they all taste so weak and soft now, but I'm getting used to them again

Arnold: What, XXXX is really bitter is it?

Jack: Yeah, ohr it's not that bad don't get me wrong, just a really strong flavour though

Arnold: Yeah, I've never tried it, I'm not a great beer fan but I don't mind some

Jack: Ohr you should try it, you can get it in Sydney now you know

Arnold: Yeah I've seen it

JO-ANNE RE-APPEARS IN THE KITCHEN DOORWAY

Jo-Anne: How do you want your coffee?

Arnold: Ahr white with two sugar thanks

Jack: Black thanks Jo-Anne

JO-ANNE EXITS BACK TO KITCHEN THEN QUICKLY RETURNS

Jo-Anne: Do you want some port as well

Arnold: Yes why not

Jack: Yeah that'd be good

Jo-Anne: Right (SHE RETURNS TO KITCHEN)

Arnold: Do you like port?

Jack: Yeah, don't mind a bit of the old port (PAUSE) we go back a long way

Arnold: Ohr yeah

Jack: (PLAYING IT DOWN NOW) No, not that much

Arnold: Do you like much wine?

Jack: No, not a wine man Arnold, ohr you know I'll have it with dinner or whatever but I'm not mad about it, I usually find it's too sweet for me

Arnold: What about reds?

Jack: Yeah, don't mind some red, used to drink it a bit when I was young, got stuck into the odd flagon now and again I guess

Arnold: Yeah, I quite like some reds, I prefer whites though, most of my collection'd be whites

Jack: What have you got, a cellar or something in there?

Arnold: Ohr no, just a collection, they're in the spare room

Jack: How big's the collection?

Arnold: I don't know, I was trying to work that out the other day, I used to keep an inventory of it on my computer but I've let that slip since I've moved and I haven't updated it yet, I don't know how many honestly, ohr I reckon about a hundred and twenty, but I don't know

Jack: Fair dinkum a hundred and twenty?

Arnold: Yeah

Jack: Wow, you could have some fun there

Arnold: Yeah, could be the go for a party eh!

Jack: I reckon, a hundred and twenty

Arnold: Still you know, that's not much when you think any expert'd have a few thousand at least

ELIZABETH AND JO-ANNE RE-ENTER, ELIZABETH WITH THE PORT AND GLASSES, AND JO-ANNE WITH THE COFFEE MUGS ON A TRAY, THEY PLACE THEM ON THE TABLE AND START HANDING THEM OUT

Jo-Anne: Here you are

THEY SIT DOWN

Elizabeth: So everyone wants some port?

THEY ALL AGREE, SO SHE FILLS THE FOUR GLASSES AND PASSES THEM AROUND

Jack: Mmm this is good port Elizabeth

Elizabeth: Thanks, it's fairly cheap stuff actually

Jack: It wouldn't be as cheap as the port I'm used to

Jo-Anne: And what's that Jack?

Jack: Ohr you know, two dollar ninety-nine McWilliams Special

Jo-Anne: Yes know it well

Arnold: We were just talking earlier about drinks, tell us have either of you two tried
XXXX?

Elizabeth: No, I'd like to though, see if it's everything those Queenslanders crack it up to
be

Jo-Anne: It is, I can assure you

Jack: Yeah, that's right

Elizabeth: How do you know Jo?

Jo-Anne: Ohll just from when I stayed with my cousins

Elizabeth: That's right, where do they live?

Jo-Anne: Bundaberg

Elizabeth: That's right, how are they getting on? (TO JACK) They're cane farmers

Jo-Anne: Oh all right

Jack: I thought the bottom was falling out of the sugar industry

Jo-Anne: Yeah it was, last time I saw them was about a year ago, they were pretty
worried then, but I think it's better now

Elizabeth: Do you want some more port Arnold?

Arnold: Yes that'd be nice thanks

Elizabeth: Jo?

Jo-Anne: Give me a minute!

Elizabeth: What about you Jack?

Jack: Ohr no, I'll be right thanks

Elizabeth: You sure?

Jack: Yeah

Elizabeth: Oh well, we'll just get drunk while you sit there

Jo-Anne: You're not drunk are you?

Elizabeth: Oh no, it's just going to my head that's all

Jo-Anne: She does this all the time

Elizabeth: Hey

Jo-Anne: You should see her when she's drunk

Elizabeth: Jo

Jo-Anne: No, she's the real life-of-the-party

Elizabeth: Righto, and whatdarya think you are

Jo-Anne: Oh no, nothing, nothing

Elizabeth: You wanna see someone funny when they're drunk, just look at Jo

Jo-Anne: You don't believe this of course

Elizabeth: I can remember at this party.....

Jo-Anne: (CUTS IN) Now don't you dare

Arnold: No go on, this sounds good

Elizabeth: It was New Year's Eve I think, year before last

Jo-Anne: Elizabeth!

Elizabeth: Oh well come on fair's fair

Jo-Anne: Whatdarya mean?! I didn't say anything about you

Elizabeth: But you were going to

Jo-Anne: No I wasn't

Elizabeth: You were too

Jo-Anne: I wasn't

Elizabeth: Anyway she met this bloke

Jo-Anne: (CUTS IN) I wouldn't start if I was you Elizabeth, I've got more on you

Elizabeth: Like what?

Jo-Anne: Brad

Elizabeth: Oh no you don't

Jo-Anne: You see when I get drunk you can't stop me, but when she gets drunk you can't start her, (CLICKS HER FINGERS) out like a light

Elizabeth: That isn't true

Jo-Anne: That's what Brad told me, first hand account

Elizabeth: Yeah well what would he know

Jo-Anne: I don't know, what would he know?

Elizabeth: Look don't you start inferring anything, look Jack, Arnold, I hated this dag Brad so when he tried to crack onto me I pretended feeling sick and started going to sleep

Jo-Anne: She wasn't pretending it's true, grog just knocks her out

Elizabeth: Look I was pretending

Jo-Anne: Then why didn't you wake up for another fourteen hours?

Elizabeth: I dunno, I just wanted to make sure he was gone

THEY ALL LAUGH

Jo-Anne: Yeah yeah, you should have just told him in the first place to buzz off, why didn't you?

Elizabeth: Discretion is the better part of valour Jo-Anne, something you would know nothing about

Jack: It sounds like you two have got quite a history

Elizabeth, Jo-Anne: (TOGETHER) She has, I haven't (THEY LAUGH)

Elizabeth: (TO JA) There, have another drink

Jo-Anne: Ohll no you don't, you're not getting me drunk have it yourself

Elizabeth: Okay then I will (POURS HER OWN), this'll be a change won't it

Jo-Anne: (LAUGHING, THEN:) Who are you trying to kid?

Elizabeth: You just keep out of it. Arnold, another?

Arnold: Um, well okay, yeah

POURS HIS THEN

Elizabeth: Well Arnold I propose a toast to our tee totalling friends, to the one who knows when to stop (LOOKS AT JACK, THEN LOOKING AT JO-ANNE) , and to the other who never had any idea what the word ever meant in the first place

THEY CLINK GLASSES

Elizabeth, Arnold: Cheers

Elizabeth: Mmm well there you go

Arnold: Have you got some music why don't you put some music on?

Elizabeth: Yeah good idea, whatdarya want on?

Arnold: I dunno, whatdarya got?

Elizabeth: I dunno, whatdarya like?

Arnold: I dunno, whatever ya got

Elizabeth: Okay then

Arnold: Ohr no, I know, how about some good Australian rock

Elizabeth: Yeah

Jo-Anne: Ohr dear here we go, you hit the jackpot there Arnold

Arnold: Ohr beaut, whatdarya got?

Elizabeth: Australian Crawl, Goanna, Sunnyboys, INXS, Hoodoo Gurus, Mental as Anything, Models, The Church, um

Arnold: Ohll any of them'll do, they all sound pretty good to me

Elizabeth: What about you Jack, anything you like

Jack: Ohr I don't really follow, ohr Dire Straits, I like Dire Straits

Elizabeth: Yeah I've got one of their albums, and what do you want Jo, the Angels?

Jo-Anne: Yeah

Elizabeth: You've still got my album of theirs

Jo-Anne: Ohr that's right

Elizabeth: Well I'll just go and put something on then

WALKS OVER TO THE RECORD PLAYER

Elizabeth: Look why don't you all hop up from the table, sit on the lounge or something

THEY LEAVE THE TABLE, JO-ANNE AND JACK SIT DOWN ON THE LOUNGE, ARNOLD GOES OVER TO ELIZABETH AT THE RECORD PLAYER

Elizabeth: Here we go

Arnold: What did you put on?

Elizabeth: You'll see

THE SONG COMES ON FAIRLY LOUDLY, ELIZABETH STARTS DANCING

Elizabeth: (TO ARNOLD) Come on

ARNOLD JOINS IN, THEY CONTINUE FOR A SHORT WHILE THEN COAX THE OTHERS

Elizabeth: Come on

JO-ANNE GETS UP, JACK IS RELUCTANT

Jo-Anne: Come on Jack (HE LOOKS AWAY THEN BACK) come on

Jack: Ohr well (HE GETS UP)

THEY ALL DANCE FOR A WHILE

Arnold: (TO ELIZABETH) Hey I've got a tape next door of this great new band, why don't I go and get it

Elizabeth: Yeah sure

ARNOLD DANCES HIS WAY OUT THE FRONT DOOR

Jo-Anne: I can just imagine what this is going to be like

Jack: It'll be different you can say that for sure

Elizabeth: Yeah

THEY KEEP DANCING, ARNOLD DANCES HIS WAY BACK IN AFTER A SHORT WHILE, GIVES THE TAPE TO ELIZABETH.

Elizabeth: (READING THE LABEL) The what? oh right sure, I'll put it on then

SHE STOPS THE RECORD AND PUTS THE TAPE IN

Arnold: This is great you'll love it

SILENT PAUSE

Jack: Yeah it's terrific isn't it

Arnold: There's a bit of leader tape at the start

SUDDENLY THE VERY LOUD AND VIOLENT MUSIC BURSTS OUT
ARNOLD STARTS DANCING WILDLY. ELIZABETH, JO-ANNE AND JACK
JUST STAND THERE, STUNNED, LOOKING AT EACH OTHER THEN THE
RECORD PLAYER THEN ARNOLD

Elizabeth: It's beautiful Arnold, what is it?

Arnold: Oh it's just this band I

Elizabeth: I'm getting a pretty bad headache why don't I put on something we can understand?

Arnold: Yeah sure, (ELIZABETH STOPS THE TAPE), don't worry that's okay

ELIZABETH PUTS THE OTHER MUSIC BACK ON, THEY DANCE A BIT FOR

A WHILE, THEN ELIZABETH HALF FAINTS, ARNOLD CATCHES HER

Elizabeth: I don't feel too well

JACK TURNS THE MUSIC DOWN

Jo-Anne: Sit down for a while Elizabeth

Elizabeth: Yeah (FEIGNS) no, I think I'll go and lie down

Arnold: I'll give you a hand

Elizabeth: ohr thanks Arnold

THEY WALK OFF TOGETHER DOWN THE HALL

Jack: Will she be all right?

Jo-Anne: Yeah, she's like this, she'll go to sleep in a while and wake up tomorrow with a bit of a hangover and then be right

Jack: Yeah. She drank a bit didn't she

Jo-Anne: Yes silly girl, ohr well just having fun I guess

Jack: Yeah, Arnold drank a bit too didn't he

Jo-Anne: Yeah, mind you he'll be out any minute now saying she's fallen asleep

Jack: Mmm, oh well, might as well wait

THEY BOTH SIT ON THE COUCH

Jack: Tell us Jo-Anne, how long have you known Elizabeth for?

Jo-Anne: Oh I don't know, we've been best friends for years, since Primary School

Jack: Yeah, that's good. I've got a few mates I've probably known all my life too, or it seems like that at least. Where would you be without your mates eh?

Jo-Anne: Yeah, though I think with Elizabeth I'd sometimes be a lot better off! I'm only kidding - don't ever get the wrong impression that we hate each other or something because we fight - we only do it cause we're good friends

Jack: Ohr yeah, yeah I realise that

Jo-Anne: I guess it must look pretty silly at times but it's just fun

Jack: Yeah, if I told you some of the stupid things I've done with my mates

Jo-Anne: Like what?

Jack: Ohll I dunno, just stupid things

Jo-Anne: No, go on, like what?

Jack: Ohll (PAUSES, THINKS, LAUGHS) No you don't want to know

Jo-Anne: Yes I do, what?

Jack: Ohll, I don't suppose it matters now, I can remember one time at school about a month before our HSC exams, that fella I was telling you about in the cricket match, Alan Jackson, he and I were badly drunk one night, on port, and anyway we decided it'd be a good idea to go and move the House Master's car and place it between two trees so he couldn't drive it out, it was only a little car a VW or something, so we rounded up some of the other blokes, about five of us, and picked it up and put it between two gum trees just out the other side of the house

Jo-Anne: And what happened?

Jack: Well we thought we were going to get busted then and there, but the House Master never turned up, Old Russo it was, until 6:30 the next morning he woke me up and told me there'd be a house parade as soon as we got back from breakfast, you see I was the House Captain and Jackson was the Vice-captain, so we thought bloody hell that's it - we're sure to be expelled about one month before we finish sixth form, our fathers would have killed us, and so anyway I called a roll call before we went to breakfast and told everyone about the parade, it was full uniform and all, and so come the parade Russo inspected everyone's front with Al just behind me on my left, and then Russo came and stood about a foot right in front of me looked me fair and square in the eye and said 'Someone moved my car last night, I don't know who did it, but I have a damn good ideal, and he's looking me fair and square in the eye and all I can hear is bloody Al Jackson behind me giggling, and Russo goes 'I tell you what I'm not going to do anything this time, I think these fools have learnt, but by crickey I hope they don't want to be car thieves when they leave - because apart from watching it from my bedroom window I even heard them planning the whole bloody operation from the start', and just then Al couldn't hold it back any longer and burst out laughing and Russo goes 'Jackson! you're the worst! I think you can start by organising another group to move it back and then wash it yourself!, and Russo stormed off

Jo-Anne: And that's all that happened to you?

Jack: Ohr yeah we got off easily, Russo was a pretty good bloke, but mind you if we ever did anything like that again he would have got us then, so we behaved ourselves. It was all Jackson's fault though, he was wicked, real wicked, he just couldn't help himself

Jo-Anne: What's he doing now?

Jack: Working out near Dubbo, and making a real menace of himself by all accounts. I'll never forget at this B and S at Moree there was this bloke we all hated, so Jackson got a wine glass and pissed in it and gave to him

Jo-Anne: Did he drink it?

Jack: (LAUGHING) Yeah, ohr he spat it all back out again though, funny thing was he spat it back out all over Al (LAUGHS) so they went for it fists and all bashing the crap out of each other, they were going for it hammer and tongs before we broke it up and stopped them from killing each other

Jo-Anne: My goodness

Jack: Ohr you know didn't do 'em any harm, bumps and bruises that's all, but they'll end up best mates, I can just see it. It was great. They hated each other and knew it, they didn't make any bones about it, and so they just got stuck into it. Actually that's one thing I've noticed since I've come here no one does anything like that here. They don't seem to put as much guts into what you believe, they just stuff around willy-nilly and don't do anything, you know even if it's something they believe in, they just don't seem to get stuck into it with the same sort of energy and drive as the people I'm used to they'd just attack something so ferociously and get the job done, they didn't care they'd just give it their all

Jo-Anne: Yeah, that's right, there's a lot of apathy around isn't there

Jack: Hohr you're tellin' me there is

PAUSE

Jo-Anne: They've been in there for a while

Jack: Yeah they have, maybe you should go and see if she's all right

Jo-Anne: Yeah (WALKS TOWARDS THE DOOR, THINKS, TURNS BACK), no on second thoughts maybe I better leave them

Jack: No but she might.....(STOPS HIMSELF, CONFUSED, THINKING)

Jo-Anne: Maybe they want to be left alone

Jack: But surely Elizabeth.....(LOOKS TO THE HALL, PAUSES, THEN TURNS BACK).....Ohr dear

Jo-Anne: What's the matter?

Jack: I didn't think Elizabeth would have been like that

Jo-Anne: Ohr well who knows that they're doing, let's not jump to any conclusions

Jack: No

PAUSE FOR A WHILE. JACK LOOKS TO THE HALL, THINKS, THEN TURNS BACK, LOOKING DISAPPOINTED. JO-ANNE WATCHES HIM, THEN

Jo-Anne: What's the matter, don't you believe in sex before marriage?

Jack: (SOMEWHAT SHOCKED AT HER QUESTION) Ohr yeah I do, I do, I just didn't think Elizabeth would have

Jo-Anne: Well it just goes to show underneath it all we're all humans aren't we

Jack: (DEJECTEDLY) Yeah. I don't believe in making it cheap or anything, it'd have to be with someone you cared for and knew pretty well

Jo-Anne: (WITH A GRIN, AND ULTERIOR MOTIVES AS SHE MOVES TOWARDS HIM) How well?

Jack: (TAKEN ABACK) Ohll, I don't know, I s'pose it depends on the individuals

Jo-Anne: As well as Elizabeth and Arnold know each other?

Jack: Maybe

Jo-Anne: As well as you and I know each other?

Jack: Um (HE STANDS UP) I think it's time I was going Jo-Anne

Jo-Anne: No, tell me, what do you think?

Jack: I think it's time I was going

Jo-Anne: No, do we know each other well enough?

Jack: Ah (LOOKS AROUND WORRIED THEN BACK TO HER) no. Look I really better go, Elizabeth wouldn't want me here now

Jo-Anne: Don't be silly she wouldn't mind at all

Jack: No I better

Jo-Anne: There's a spare room here

Jack: Good that'll give you somewhere to stay tonight won't it. Look I'm sorry Jo-Anne,
I've got to go okay

Jo-Anne: Yeah

Jack: Thanks very much for the great meal and everything

Jo-Anne: Mmm that's okay

Jack: Well I'll see you later then

Jo-Anne: Yeah

Jack: Say thankyou to Elizabeth for me, when you see her.

Jo-Anne: Yeah I will

Jack: Bye

Jo-Anne: See ya

HE EXITS. SHE LOOKS AWAY NOT TOO IMPRESSED AT HER MISSED
CHANCE, BREATHES OUT LOUDLY THEN LIES DOWN ON THE LOUNGE -
CURTAIN

ACT TWO - SCENE TWO

THE NEXT MORNING, 10AM, JO-ANNE IS STILL ASLEEP ON THE COUCH, LOUD KNOCKING IS HEARD AT THE FRONT DOOR, IT CONTINUES INTERMITTENTLY UNTIL JO-ANNE WAKES UP, SHE STUMBLES TO THE DOOR AND OPENS IT

Jo-Anne: Ohll Jack

Jack: Oh I'm sorry I woke you up

Jo-Anne: Doesn't matter, what time is it?

Jack: About ten

Jo-Anne: A.M. OR P.M.?

Jack: A.M.!?

Jo-Anne: Ohr right, now I'm with you, come in

Jack: Look I'm sorry to do this I thought everyone would have been awake

Jo-Anne: Huh fat chance

Jack: Yeah I guess I should have thought, look I think I might have left my jumper here

Jo-Anne: Well you're welcome to have a look, I haven't seen it

Jack: (LOOKING AROUND) You don't remember what I did with it do you?

Jo-Anne: Well you didn't rip it off with an uncontrollable urge that's for sure

Jack: (HE LOOKS AT HER, UNSURE OF WHAT SHE MEANS) No (CONTINUES LOOKING)

Jo-Anne: Do you want to have a look down the hall or something?

Jack: No, I didn't go down there, I can't see someone would have taken it down there

Jo-Anne: Well, I don't know. Are you sure you had it with you?

Jack: Oh I don't know, I've put it down somewhere and I can't find it, damn it, it didn't have to be here I just thought this was a possibility that's all

Jo-Anne:, Well if it turns up I'll tell you

Jack: (WORKING HIS WAY TO THE DOOR, STILL LOOKING A BIT) Yeah thanks

Jo-Anne: That's all right

Jack: Sorry to get you up

Jo-Anne: That's okay, can't sleep forever (SHUTS THE DOOR BEHIND HIM, TO HERSELF:) unfortunately

SHE GOES AND SITS BACK DOWN ON THE COUCH, SHE IS VERY STILL AND QUIET FOR A WHILE THEN ELIZABETH COMES OUT JUST WEARING A NIGHTIE, SHE IS QUITE THE WORSE FOR WEAR AND SITS ON ONE OF THE LOUNGE CHAIRS NEXT TO THE COUCH

Jo-Anne: Well well well, and how are we this morning?

Elizabeth: Very sick

Jo-Anne: (HALF LAUGHING) Serves you right

Elizabeth: Ohr shuddup. And what are you still doing here anyway?

Jo-Anne: About the same as you

Elizabeth: I heard some voices so I thought I'd get up, was that Jack just leaving?

Jo-Anne: Yeah

ELIZABETH PAUSES THEN TURNS TO HER QUESTIONINGLY

Jo-Anne: No, don't get any ideas, he came round this morning looking for his jumper

Elizabeth: Oh, why what did you do with it last night?

Jo-Anne: Nothing, I don't even think he wore one over here

Elizabeth: So you missed out

Jo-Anne: Sure did

Elizabeth: That's bad luck

Jo-Anne: Yeah. And what about you?

Elizabeth: (DISDAINFULLY) Ohll, don't mention it

Jo-Anne: Why, what happened?

Elizabeth: Ohll he was all over me like a rash

Jo-Anne: Really?

Elizabeth: Ohr I guess he wasn't that bad, I don't know if he took advantage of me or if I couldn't help myself because I was so drunk. All we did was kiss

Jo-Anne: That's all?

Elizabeth: Well we did it a lot. I didn't really feel like anything more

Jo-Anne: What about him?

Elizabeth: He wasn't really up to it either, ohr he was at the start, he was quite keen, but then when I (STARTS LAUGHING)

Jo-Anne: What?

Elizabeth: (STILL LAUGHING) Ohr I told him I felt really sick, and he just kept on kissing me, and I just couldn't help it (BURSTS OUT LAUGHING)

Jo-Anne: What?!

Elizabeth: I spewed into his mouth

THEY BURST OUT LAUGHING

Jo-Anne: Ohr you are disgusting, that is the most sickening thing I have every heard

Elizabeth: I didn't mean it

Jo-Anne: And what did he do?

Elizabeth: Ohr I don't know I can't really remember, I think it put him off though

Jo-Anne: I'm sure it did, I can't believe that, you're lucky he didn't drown

Elizabeth: Ohr well come on, what was I supposed to do?, it just came out all of a sudden

Jo-Anne: You're one of a kind, you really are

Elizabeth: Ohr look come on I didn't mean it, I said I was sorry to him

Jo-Anne: What about him, was he sick at all last night?

Elizabeth: Nuh, the lucky beggar, I hope he gets a darn good hangover this morning

Jo-Anne: He's probley used to it with all of his wine

Elizabeth: Yeah he's probley a real wine-o in disguise. You should have heard the things he said to me last night

Jo-Anne: Like what?

Elizabeth: Oh I don't know, just these really terrible things. There's no way I would have done any of that if I was sober, I don't know what came over me

Jo-Anne: Face it, you're a hopeless drunk

Elizabeth: I know, this is why I try not to get drunk very often, I dunno, it's not that I lose self-control, it's just that I do these really silly things, I just get weak

Jo-Anne: Yeah

Elizabeth: You know I like Arnold, just as a person, he's got some good things in him, but I don't like him that much, ohr I feel so bad, I should never have let him come near me last night, I s'pose it's my fault though he just kept on filling up my glass and I just kept on drinking it all, my fault

Jo-Anne: Not totally it isn't, he was the one who was filling up your glass

Elizabeth: Ohr yeah but if I didn't drink it all there's no way it would have happened - I don't want that with him. Oh boy, I tell you my self respect has taken a nose-dive, I must have no willpower at all, especially after all those things I said before he even arrived last night

Jo-Anne: Oh well, live and learn

Elizabeth: Yeah I reckon

Jo-Anne: I don't think you'll be hearing much out of him for a while anyway

Elizabeth: Yeah I hope not, you know what he said to me last night, he said "ever since I first saw you I knew there was something between us", and then he goes, wait for this, he goes, "but now, the only thing between us are these clothes", as he starts unbuttoning his shirt

Jo-Anne: No wonder you were sick

Elizabeth: Hmm, and he said these other things, they're pretty personal so don't tell anyone, like how lonely he felt sometimes

Jo-Anne: Yeah

Elizabeth: It's pretty sad really, and I feel for him, but I'm just not the one for him, I hope he knows that now

Jo-Anne: Do you think he does?

Elizabeth: I don't know, he should, I said I hope he finds someone one day to make him happy

Jo-Anne: And then you started kissing him?

Elizabeth: Ohr yeah, well, I know it sounds silly, but I was drunk, and he knows that, he should know I didn't really mean it (PAUSE) do you think he does?

Jo-Anne: (PAUSE, THINKING) I don't know, he's pretty smart, if he doesn't know it he should work it out

Elizabeth: Yeah, I hope so. He's just in there sleeping

Jo-Anne: Why don't you go in there and tell him, say hey Arnold I hate ya now piss off!

Elizabeth: Ohr yeah, ha ha ha

Jo-Anne: Oh well, Jack wasn't too impressed with you you know

Elizabeth: Ohr really?

Jo-Anne: Didn't think you were the type, he had nothing against it or anything, but he looked pretty disappointed, I think he expected more from you

Elizabeth: Well he's not the only one

Jo-Anne: Ohr now come on don't feel so bad

Elizabeth: Yeah. I want to go back to sleep but I couldn't bare crawling back into bed with him there

Jo-Anne: (STANDS UP) Well here you are, use this, I'm not gonna go back to sleep again

Elizabeth: You sure?

Jo-Anne: Yeah

Elizabeth: Thanks

Jo-Anne: I think I'll just get a drink or something

Elizabeth: Sure

JO-ANNE EXITS TO THE KITCHEN ELIZABETH LIES ON THE COUCH AND VERY QUICKLY GOES TO SLEEP, AFTER A SHORT WHILE ARNOLD STUMBLES OUT FROM THE HALLWAY, HE LOOKS AN ABSOLUTE MESS, HE HAS HIS TROUSERS AND SHIRT ON, HIS SHIRT HAS A VERY BAD RIP DOWN ITS BACK, HE NOTICES ELIZABETH ON THE COUCH AND WALKS DOWN TOWARDS HER, LOOKING DOWN AT HER FROM OVER THE BACK OF THE LOUNGE. JO-ANNE ENTERS FROM THE KITCHEN WITH A GLASS OF ORANGE JUICE.

Jo-Anne: Hello

ARNOLD TURNS AROUND TO FACE HER, AND GRUNTS

Arnold: Uhr, morning

Jo-Anne: How do you feel this morning?

Arnold: (TASTING HIS MOUTH) I dunno, must have been sick, I've got this funny taste in my mouth

Jo-Anne: Have you? What happened to your shirt?

Arnold: She did (INDICATING TO ELIZABETH)

Jo-Anne: What?

Arnold: I couldn't stop her, she's an absolute animal, she ripped it off me

Jo-Anne: Really?!

Arnold: Yeah

Jo-Anne: Do you want an orange juice or something Arnold?

Arnold: Yeah thanks

JO-ANNE EXITS TO THE KITCHEN, AND QUICKLY RETURNS WITH ANOTHER GLASS OF ORANGE JUICE, SHE CROSSES DOWN AND GIVES IT TO HIM

Jo-Anne: So she ripped it off you hey?

Arnold: Yeah. That's funny I thought she was in the bed before?

Jo-Anne: She must have come out here sometime in the night

Arnold: Yeah

Jo-Anne: I've never known Elizabeth to be particularly violent, so how come she ripped your shirt?

Arnold: Oh I dunno, I can't remember how it happened, all I can remember is her leaning over me and next thing I know rip! My hundred and twenty dollar shirt is now worth a dollar twenty, boy I've got a terrible taste in my mouth, can I have another orange juice please

Jo-Anne: Sure, the carton's on the bench in the kitchen, have as much as you want

Arnold: Thanks (HE EXITS TO THE KITCHEN AND RETURNS SHORTLY WITH JUST THE CARTON)

Jo-Anne: Actually Arnold, Elizabeth only came out here just a minute ago, she talked for a bit and then went straight back to sleep

Arnold: She talked for a bit?

Jo-Anne: Yeah, you're a real devil from what I hear

Arnold: Oh it's not true, besides I can't remember any of it anyway

Jo-Anne: Oh now come on don't deny it

Arnold: No I don't, honestly, I can't remember

Jo-Anne: Really?

Arnold: Yeah I don't know what happened it felt good though, I remember that much

Jo-Anne: Yeah I bet you do

Arnold: (PAUSES, LOOKS AROUND, THEN) I think I better get going now, I'll just

go and get the rest of my stuff (HE EXITS TO THE HALLWAY AND THEN RETURNS SHORTLY WITH HIS SHOES AND SOCKS ETC.) Thanks very much for a lovely meal and a great night

Jo-Anne: Don't thank me, thank her

Arnold: (LOOKING AT ELIZABETH) Well I'll see her later. Thanks very much again
Jo-Anne

Jo-Anne: That's all right

Arnold: Bye

Jo-Anne: Bye

HE EXITS, JO-ANNE CROSSES BACK TO THE LOUNGE CHAIR, SITS, LOOKS AT ELIZABETH, SMILES, THEN LIES BACK TO GO TO SLEEP -
CURTAIN

ACT THREE - SCENE ONE

ELIZABETH'S FLAT, A WEEK LATER, ONE AFTERNOON, ELIZABETH AND JO-ANNE ARE SITTING DOWN, ELIZABETH IS FLIPPING THROUGH A SCUBA DIVING MAGAZINE

Elizabeth: Get a load of this would ya, this fella's hand feeding a groper and there are two sharks circling him

Jo-Anne: (NOT TOO INTERESTED) Really

Elizabeth: Yeah, they're blue pointers

Jo-Anne: Well I tell you there's no way you'd get me down there

Elizabeth: Ohr come on Jo-Jo, there aren't sharks everywhere, and look he survived

Jo-Anne: How do you know?

Elizabeth: It says so, they just swam off after a while, and didn't bother them, and isn't it mainly swimmers that get attacked, not divers

Jo-Anne: I don't know, but I s'pose so

Elizabeth: Come on Jo-Jo, if we learnt how to dive instead of going to Surfers we could go up to the Reef, I mean look at this (HOLDS UP A PICTURE) its beautiful, look at all the colours, and the coral, and the fish.....

Jo-Anne:and the sharks.....

Elizabeth:and the sharks, no, look the sharks aren't everywhere, thousands of people go diving each year without getting attacked

Jo-Anne: Well I'm not going to make a meal for any shark, thanks very much I

Elizabeth: The chances of that happening are absolutely infinitesimal

Jo-Anne: Especially if you don't go in

Elizabeth: You have more chance of being eaten when you go swimming at the beach

Jo-Anne: No you haven't, they've got shark nets, and look-outs and lifesavers

Elizabeth: Ohr yeah, and what's a lifesaver going to do to a shark, say hello would you

mind leaving our beach please

Jo-Anne: No, don't be silly

Elizabeth: You've been watching too many Jaws movies that's your problem

SILENCE FOR A WHILE, ELIZABETH CONTINUES FLICKING THROUGH HER MAGAZINE, THEN

Elizabeth: And besides, think of all of those gorgeous diving instructors

Jo-Anne: What, you don't think you've got your hands full enough already?

Elizabeth: Not with diving instructors I haven't

PAUSE

Jo-Anne: You're going to end up in big trouble soon

Elizabeth: Why do you say that?

Jo-Anne: Don't you think you better sort things out with Arnold and Jack before you start worrying about diving instructors

Elizabeth: Nope, there's always room for more

Jo-Anne: Oh boy

Elizabeth: No I'm only joking, I'm not interested in diving instructors, that's not why I want to go diving

Jo-Anne: Oh yeah, but what about Jack and Arnold?

Elizabeth: Oh I don't know, I'm hoping that'll sort itself out - I haven't seen much of Arnold since that party, I find it hard to look at him

Jo-Anne: What about Jack

Elizabeth: What about him?, he's not a problem

Jo-Anne: He really likes you, you know

Elizabeth: Look you keep saying that, I don't think it's true

Jo-Anne: He does

Elizabeth: How do you know?

Jo-Anne: I asked him

Elizabeth: What!?

Jo-Anne: I asked him

Elizabeth: Oh my goodness you actually asked him, how embarrassing - what did he say?

Jo-Anne: He didn't really say anything, he just blushed and said he liked a lot of people, which is all the answer you need

Elizabeth: Well thank you very much for that little piece of information

Jo-Anne: Well can't you tell yourself, just look at the way he looks at you

Elizabeth: If someone ever looks at me I'm usually too embarrassed or self conscious to pay any attention to them

Jo-Anne: Ohll no you're not

Elizabeth: I mean I love it of course, but I always feel so bad at the time

Jo-Anne: Well one day get a grip of yourself and just feel the way he's looking at you

Elizabeth: Yeah, I will, I'll do that one day. I thought you said he wasn't very impressed with me after that party

Jo-Anne: Maybe for a start he wasn't, but that's changed, believe me that's changed, he's a lot more interested now

Elizabeth: Really? Oh men are stupid aren't they

Jo-Anne: Yep can't help themselves, ey

Elizabeth: Not that that worries me though, ohll no, that reminds me, Arnold invited me out the day before yesterday

Jo-Anne: You didn't say yes did you?

Elizabeth: I can't remember

Jo-Anne: What?

Elizabeth: I can't remember. He wants to go to the pictures this Saturday, I was in a rush I can't remember what I said, I was trying to get down to the shop in time and he just came up to me as I was leaving, I don't know, I either said yes I'd think about it or yes I'll go or something, oh dear I hope I didn't say that

Jo-Anne: You better clear this whole thing up fast before it gets out of hand

Elizabeth: Before it gets out of hand!?

Jo-Anne: I think it's about time you and Arnold had a little talk

PAUSE

Elizabeth: I know, I don't want to, but it's the best thing isn't it

Jo-Anne: Yes, why don't you go and see him now

Elizabeth: No, I couldn't not now; I'm pretty sure he's out anyway

Jo-Anne: Well you've got to see him

Elizabeth: I know, I'll do it tomorrow, for sure

Jo-Anne: Good, then the whole thing'll be cleared up

Elizabeth: Yeah, poor Arnold, boy I feel sorry for him

Jo-Anne: Look it's not your fault

Elizabeth: I know, but I still feel sorry for him, oh well that's part of life eh, he'll be all right. I just don't want to hurt his feelings that's all, I guess its unavoidable though and I'd be hurting them more if I didn't tell him once and for all

Jo-Anne: Yes, just break the ice nice and slowly though

Elizabeth: Mmm, oh well that's how it goes. (STANDS UP) I wouldn't mind seeing this film though, oh well catch it later I guess

Jo-Anne: What is it?

Elizabeth: The new James Bond film, what's it called?, oh I can't remember but it's that one anyway, (WALKING TO KITCHEN) Arnold's quite a fan of them he told me (FROM IN THE KITCHEN) do you want a coffee or tea or something?

Jo-Anne: Ohr yeah coffee thanks

Elizabeth: Whatdarya want for dinner?

Jo-Anne: Ohll anything'll do

Elizabeth: Good cause that's all I've got, hmm, there's not really that much here to eat

Jo-Anne: That's okay I'm not really hungry

A KNOCK ON THE DOOR IS HEARD

Elizabeth: I wonder who this could be?

Jo-Anne: It'll be Arnold for you, just wait

ELIZABETH OPENS THE DOOR AND JACK WALKS JUST INSIDE

Jack: Hello Elizabeth

Elizabeth: (A BIT SURPRISED) Ohr hello Jack

Jack: Oh hi Jo-Anne, how are you?

Jo-Anne: Good thanks

Jack: Look I came to see you about something Elizabeth ahr but it might be better if I came back later

Elizabeth: Ohr no, what is it?

Jack: Well (PAUSE), ahr I've got tomorrow off work and with the weekend as well I thought I might go up home for the three days and come back on the Sunday arvo, and, I was wondering if you'd like to come up too, have a look around the place, see what it's like in the country, you know

Elizabeth: (THRILLED) Ohr, I'd love to Jack, that'd be great thanks very much, if of course your parents wouldn't mind me coming, and if I wouldn't get in the way or anything

Jack: No of course not (SHARED PAUSE) , well I was looking at getting away first thing tomorrow, would about seven o'clock be all right

Elizabeth: What, leave here at seven

Jack: Yeah

Elizabeth: Ohr I think I could handle that, what will I need to take?

Jack: Ohr you know just old stuff that you can wear around, and a change of clean clothes for dinner, in fact we're going to have a big dinner on Saturday night - the whole family'll be there

Elizabeth: Oh well I better bring something nice for that

Jack: Yeah but you know, nothing too extravagant

Elizabeth: Don't worry I don't own anything that's extravagant

Jack: No worries then (GLANCES AT JO-ANNE) well better leave you to it then, I'll see you tomorrow at seven

Elizabeth: Yeah

Jack: Okay then, see ya Jo-Anne

Jo-Anne: Bye

Jack: (TURNS TO EXIT, THEN TURNS BACK ROUND TO ELIZABETH) Ohr listen do you want me to give you a call tomorrow morning?

Elizabeth: Ohr no I'll be right, I'll get up at six it's right

Jack: Okay see ya then

Elizabeth: Bye

HE EXITS

Elizabeth: I don't believe it, I really don't

Jo-Anne: What do you mean?

Elizabeth: Everything just seems to happen all of a sudden

Jo-Anne: Yeah lucky you

Elizabeth: I mean I wasn't even trying - not that I'm complaining though

Jo-Anne: No of course not

Elizabeth: It's funny isn't it, there's just no sense in it

Jo-Anne: So you see what I mean about Jack?

Elizabeth: What?

Jo-Anne: Come on, if you can't see it now he's inviting you up to his place for a big dinner to meet his family

Elizabeth: Ohll it's not like that

Jo-Anne: Yes it is, this sort of thing is important to someone like Jack, to meet his family, get accepted by them, your future parents-in-law

Elizabeth: Ohll will you stop it

Jo-Anne: No it's true, this is your first step into the big time, don't blow it

Elizabeth: Ohll stop it, it's not like that at all, it's just that Jack thought I might like to have a look at the country and now is a convenient time, it just so happens that the rest of his family are going to be there too, pure coincidence

Jo-Anne: Ohr yeah

Elizabeth: It is

Jo-Anne: I don't believe it

Elizabeth: Well you better or you're gonna cop it (THROWS A PILLOW AT HER)

Jo-Anne: Huh

Elizabeth: (SLIGHT PAISE, THEN) You know you sound jealous to me

Jo-Anne: Huh! Me? Jealous?

Elizabeth: You are

Jo-Anne: I am not

Elizabeth: Yes you are Jo-Anne and don't you tell me you're not

Jo-Anne: Me!?! Jealous?, you've got to be kidding (PAUSE AS ELIZABETH LOOKS AT HER EXPECTANTLY) well, okay, maybe just a little bit

Elizabeth: Hahr ahar har har, you are you are you are

Jo-Anne: Okay okay

Elizabeth: Ahr you're jealous of me, I don't believe it for once in my life you're jealous of me

Jo-Anne: Okay okay, and it's not the first time anyway

Elizabeth: Ohll really?!

Jo-Anne: Yeah

Elizabeth: Ahr dear, you're jealous of me (WITH MOCK HONESTY:) look I'm sorry Jo-Anne I wasn't trying or anything, please believe me I'm sorry, I didn't mean to end up with the big gorgeous millionaire grazier, I honestly didn't, it just happened

Jo-Anne: (JOKINGLY) Okay knock it off, I don't care anyway

Elizabeth: Ahr dear (PAUSE, SMILING) come on, let's go get tea

THEY EXIT TO THE KITCHEN - CURTAIN

ACT THREE - SCENE TWO

ELIZABETH'S FLAT LATE THE FOLLOWING SUNDAY NIGHT, ELIZABETH AND JACK ENTER

Elizabeth: Ah well at long last, back again (SMILING) I was beginning to wonder if we'd ever make it back

Jack: Ohr no safe as houses

JACK PUTS DOWN HER BAG

Elizabeth: Can I get you a drink or something?

Jack: Yeah, I'll just go and offload this in m'flat first

Elizabeth: Coffee?

Jack: Yeah that'd be beaut (JACK EXITS WITH HIS LUGGAGE, ELIZABETH GOES INTO THE KITCHEN, JACK RE-APPEARS AFTER A SHORT WHILE AND SHUTS THE DOOR BEHIND HIM) So what did you reckon Elizabeth, did you enjoy yourself?

ELIZABETH WALKS INTO THE LIVING ROOM

Elizabeth: Yeah I had a great time, and thanks so much for inviting me, I really did enjoy it

Jack: Ohr good

Elizabeth: Your parents were so good to me, I s'pose I better write and thank them

Jack: Ohr you don't have to, but they would appreciate it

Elizabeth: No I will, it's best to do the right thing

Jack: Yeah

Elizabeth: I had a ball of a time I really did. (PAUSE) I still don't know about the roo shooting though

Jack: You're the one who wanted to go

Elizabeth: Ohr yeah but that's only cause I've never been before, I'd never even shot a

gun before, what sort of a gun was it again?

Jack: You mean rifle

Elizabeth: Yeah, rifle

Jack: A thirty-thirty

Elizabeth: Yeah I don't think my shoulder'll ever be the same again, are they big?

Jack: Big enough. It's funny you know, we didn't see as many roo's as I thought we would have, but I think with the spot of rain we just had they all woulda moved into the western paddock - maybe we should have gone out there

Elizabeth: Yeah was there much rain?

Jack: About twelve points I think

Elizabeth: Ohr, is that much?

Jack: (DETACHED) No, but still the country's in better nick than I thought it would be, that cotton's coming on well, this'll be only our third cotton crop and probley the best so far

Elizabeth: Whatdarya have the most? - wheat

Jack: Yeah, but you've gotta try and diversify and not put too many eggs in the one basket if you know what I mean

Elizabeth: Yeah

Jack: The only problem with wheat is every bloody living thing around loves it - locusts, mice, roo's - you name it anything with two legs and a mouth'll eat it

Elizabeth: Yeah, do the roo's eat much

Jack: Ohr they do their fair share of damage put it that way

Elizabeth: Yeah, hmmm (PAUSE) I'll just go and check the coffee

ELIZABETH EXITS TO THE KITCHEN

Jack: Don't let it get you down though

Elizabeth: (SMILING) Ohr no, wouldn't do that

Jack: Good; but you had the time of your life out shooting didn't you

Elizabeth: Ohr yeah

Jack: Not a bad shot either

Elizabeth: Really?

Jack: For a beginner

Elizabeth: Huh thanks

ELIZABETH RE-ENTERS WITH THE COFFEE

Elizabeth: Here you go

Jack: Thanks (SIPS IT) Mmm So what did ya think of the family?, you don't want to worry too much about my brother - he's a bit of a mad idiot

Elizabeth: Yeah I gathered that, anyone who'd drive that ute like he did would have to be a bit mad

Jack: Yeah, he's rolled it three times you know

Elizabeth: Really!

Jack: Yeah

Elizabeth: Has he ever hurt himself in it?

Jack: No, ohr he cut his forehead once, but nothing serious - not wearing a seat belt

Elizabeth: The fool, I don't know how your mother can put up with it

Jack: She's used to it all by now, I was probley just the same when I was that age; no, Danny'll be all right, he just needs to grow up a bit more, he's only sixteen

Elizabeth: Yeah. How much older than you is your sister?

Jack: About three years

Elizabeth: You're a pretty spread out family

Jack: Yeah, you'd have to ask Mum and Dad about that one

Elizabeth: (SMILING) Yeah (PAUSE) Your sister's doing pretty well for herself

Jack: Yeah she is, you didn't meet Grahame but he owns a lot of land at Scone, they're doing quite well. They're going to have another baby you know

Elizabeth: Yeah she told me that

Jack: She's about two months pregnant I think

Elizabeth: Yeah she said she wanted another boy, I think I would've wanted a daughter

Jack: Yeah?

Elizabeth: Well she's already got one son so why not have a daughter this time

Jack: Yeah, well I'd say they're going to have a few more anyway, so she's bound to have a daughter sometime

Elizabeth: Yeah, she didn't seem too impressed with me when I told her I didn't have a job

Jack: Ohr you don't want to worry about that she bungs on a bit of an act at times

Elizabeth: Yeah

Jack: Actually Grahame would have been there but he had to go away, he plays a lot of polo and there was something on, I don't really know what it was

Elizabeth: Do you play?

Jack: Ohll I have, put it that way, no I'm not much good, it doesn't interest me that much, though I could see it probley might later on but not now

Elizabeth: Yeah

Jack: Dad used to play a lot, that's where I got it from. He retired a few years ago - said he'd had enough, getting too old for it he reckoned

Elizabeth: He still looks pretty fit now

Jack: He used to play for the Moree team

Elizabeth: He musta been good

Jack: Ohr yeah in his day, he's getting on a bit now though. No polo's a good game but you really need the time and the money and the facilities for it which I just haven't got at the moment, if I was back at my parents place I'd probley get into it though

Elizabeth: Yeah, you know your father was just how I thought he would be

Jack: Really, whatdarya mean?

Elizabeth: Oh I don't know, he's just how I thought he would be, your Mum was different though - I thought she was going to be more like your sister is

Jack: Bit of a relief she's not, eh

Elizabeth: Ohr no, Margaret's all right, we talked for a bit

Jack: Yeah

Elizabeth: Boy your Mum can cook all right, that was a beautiful meal

Jack: Yeah, it was almost as good as the roast we had here

Elizabeth: Oh that?, don't mention that

Jack: Ohll?

Elizabeth: (EMBARRASSED) I think I'd rather forget it

Jack: Ohr no, it was nice

Elizabeth: No the rest of it I mean

Jack: Uhr

Elizabeth: (PAUSE) Ohr no, that reminds me

Jack: What?

Elizabeth: Ohr no, I knew there was something (LONG PAUSE) I was going to see Arnold yesterday and explain things to him, he asked me out to the movies and I was going to go just so I could talk it all over with him. I'll tell you Jack - there's nothing between Arnold and myself, nothing. What happened at that party was just a stupid thing, I mean nothing really happened then between us you know

Jack: Uhr

Elizabeth: It's just I don't know how to tell him, I mean I don't want to hurt his feelings, and the longer I leave it the worse it gets, he must feel so bad now - sorry to be telling you this

Jack: Ohr no

Elizabeth: I think I should've explained it to you anyway - so you don't get the wrong impression about Arnold and myself

Jack: Ohr no, haven't got that

Elizabeth: Well that's good. I don't know I have this problem explaining myself, things never seem to work out right without someone getting upset. Sorry to be telling you all of this, I shouldn't be

Jack: No you're right

Elizabeth: That's what I like about you Jack, you're so open and straight forward and honest

Jack: (SLIGHTLY EMBARRASSED) Ohll

Elizabeth: No you are, and I really appreciate that in a man, if there's something to do you'll do it and that's it

Jack: (SHRUGGING IT OFF) Uhr

Elizabeth: But you need to be like that

Jack: (VACANTLY) Yeah

LONG PAUSE

Elizabeth: Would you like another coffee Jack?

Jack: Ohr, I dunno, it's getting pretty late

Elizabeth: Yeah (GLANCES AT JACK) must be bedtime soon

Jack: Yeah

THEY SIT THERE FOR A WHILE, QUIET

Jack: (LOOKS AT ELIZABETH) Oh well better make a move I suppose (HE STANDS UP WALKS OVER TO THE SERVERY WINDOW, PLACES HIS COFFEE MUG ON IT AND THEN STANDS THERE, LOOKS AT HIS WATCH) five to twelve, 'bout time I was making tracks, let you get to sleep

Elizabeth: (SOMEWHAT BLANKLY) Yeah

Jack: (STARTS WALKING OVER TO THE DOOR) I'm glad you enjoyed yourself out there

Elizabeth: Jack (HE STOPS) thanks

Jack: That's all right

SHE WALKS OVER TO HIM BY THE DOOR

Jack: I guess I'll see you round eh

Elizabeth: Yeah

SHE MOVES CLOSER TO HIM THEY COULD ALMOST KISS BUT DON'T, THEY PAUSE FOR A SHORT TIME, THEN

Jack: Goodnight Elizabeth

Elizabeth: Yeah, goodnight

HE EXITS, SHE CLOSSES THE DOOR BEHIND HIM AND LEANS ON IT, BREATHING OUT AND LOOKING DOWN FULL OF FEELING - CURTAIN

ACT THREE - SCENE THREE

ABOUT 10AM THE FOLLOWING MORNING, ELIZABETH IS IN HER NIGHTIE AND DRESSING GOWN EATING BREAKFAST, SEEMINGLY IN A TRANCE, AFTER A SHORT WHILE A KNOCK IS HEARD ON THE DOOR, ELIZABETH TAKES A BIT OF A TIME TO REACT THEN GOES OVER AND OPENS THE DOOR

Elizabeth: Arnold

PAUSE

Arnold: I'll come back later if you want, if you want to get dressed properly

Elizabeth: No, come in

HE STEPS IN, SHE CLOSSES THE DOOR BEHIND HIM, PAUSE

Elizabeth: I'm sorry about Saturday night Arnold, I just clean forgot. I'm sorry

Arnold: I rang Jo-Anne to try and find out where you were

Elizabeth: Oh

Arnold: She told me you'd gone up to Jack's place with him

Elizabeth: Yeah

Arnold: So it's him now, is it?

Elizabeth: No, it's not like that, don't say it that way. I like him, I like you too, look I didn't mean to do this to you Arnold. I'm sorry about the other night it was an honest mistake, when I said yes to Jack I clean forgot about our arrangement, honestly, I wasn't trying to deceive you or anything Arnold

Arnold: Really?

Elizabeth: Yes. Sit down

THEY DO

Elizabeth: Look I was going to tell you something on Saturday night

Arnold: What?

Elizabeth: (BREATHES IN THEN SIGHS) I like you a lot Arnold, I think you're a very nice bloke, but, ohll, Arnold can't you see, don't you know what I'm going to say?

Arnold: No, I want to hear you say it

PAUSE

Elizabeth: We're just not suited to each other, don't you agree?

LONG PAUSE, ARNOLD SIGHS

Arnold: No, I wouldn't of said that (PAUSE) I thought we were getting on well. I wouldn't have said that at all. What is it then, what's the matter, why not?

Elizabeth: Nothing's the matter, it's just one of those things

Arnold: One of those things ey

Elizabeth: Yes. Look I'm sorry Arnold, I didn't want to hurt your feelings, but you've got to know (PAUSE) it's how I feel

Arnold: Yeah. I thought we were getting on well, but if that's how you feel then I can hardly want it if you don't can I?

Elizabeth: Well it is how I feel Arnold, I'm sorry, I never set out to intentionally hurt you or upset you

Arnold: No I know (PAUSE) don't worry I hold nothing against you. It's just the way it goes that's all

PAUSE

Elizabeth: You know I probley feel just as bad as you

Arnold: Well don't. Huh come on smile, great start to the morning ey!?

Elizabeth: (HALF LAUGHING) Hmm, yeah

LONG PAUSE, THE JOVIALITY DIES

Arnold: Tell me one thing Elizabeth

Elizabeth: What?

Arnold: Why?

Elizabeth: Ohll come on Arnold

Arnold: No, I want you to tell me why

Elizabeth: Don't dwell on it Arnold, please (LOOKS AT HIM, HE IS WAITING FOR THE ANSWER) Ohll I don't know, I could give you some reasons, some things, but most of all it's just what I feel

Arnold: What you feel?

Elizabeth: Yes. It's just not right, that's what I feel. And I feel very sorry as well

PAUSE

Arnold: What about Jack?

Elizabeth: What about him?

Arnold: What's the story with you two?

Elizabeth: Not much

Arnold: Come on Elizabeth I know he likes you a lot, and you obviously like him

Elizabeth: I like him yeah, but I still hardly know him

Arnold: Are you going out with him?

Elizabeth: No

Arnold: Are you going to?

Elizabeth: I don't know, maybe

PAUSE

Arnold: It was him then, wasn't it?

Elizabeth: No, Arnold I didn't say everything I just said to you so I could be with Jack; why can't you just accept it?

PAUSE

Arnold: I always thought you were honest Elizabeth

HE STANDS UP AND CROSSES TO THE DOOR

Elizabeth: Arnold. I'd be lying if I said he wasn't part of it, but honestly he wasn't the main reason for it; we just wouldn't work together that's all (ARNOLD TURNS BACK), I'm sorry Arnold, I really am

Arnold: Yeah (LOOKING HER IN THE EYE) Thanks. (HE TURNS AWAY AND CROSSES TO THE DOOR, OPENS IT, STOPS, LOOKS OUT, THEN TURNS BACK, LOOKS DOWN THEN UP AGAIN TO ELIZABETH)

Arnold: Elizabeth

Elizabeth: Yes

Arnold: Can I ask one thing of you?

Elizabeth: What?

PAUSE

Arnold: A kiss

Elizabeth: What?!

Arnold: Just a kiss, for goodbye

Elizabeth: No Arnold, it'll only make it worse

Arnold: No it won't

Elizabeth: Arnold?

Arnold: Please

LONG PAUSE AS ELIZABETH CONSIDERS

Elizabeth: Okay then

ARNOLD WALKS UP TO HER, PAUSE, THEN THEY EMBRACE. IT STARTS OFF AS A SWEET TENDER KISS, BUT ARNOLD CAN'T CONTROL HIMSELF, ELIZABETH STARTS STRUGGLING AND SQUEALING BUT CAN'T FREE HERSELF, JUST THEN JACK ARRIVES AT THE FRONT DOOR, SEES WHAT'S HAPPENING, ASSESSES THE SITUATION AND QUICKLY RUSHES IN GRABS ARNOLD AND PUNCHES HIM IN THE JAW, HE THEN GRABS ELIZABETH AND HOLDS HER CLOSE

Jack: Are you all right?

Elizabeth: Yes (PUSHES HERSELF AWAY FROM JACK)

Jack: And whadarya think you're doing?! (GRABS ARNOLD BY THE SHIRT)

Elizabeth: (SHOUTING) Leave him alone Jack (BREAKS ARNOLD FREE)

Arnold: I was just kissing her

Jack: Kissing her! I tell you what mate you do that again and I'll flatten you

Elizabeth: Knock it off Jack! Are you all right Arnold?

Arnold: Yeah

Elizabeth: It's not broken is it?

Arnold: No

Elizabeth: I can't believe you just hit him Jack, don't you have any consideration?

Jack: Hit him, by gees next time I'll do more than that

Elizabeth: (SHOUTING) Stop it Jack! And you Arnold, I'm disgusted, go on get out the both of you

Jack: What?

Elizabeth: You heard me, go on get out, now!

Jack: But I just saved you, I saw what he was doing

Elizabeth: You have no idea whatsoever what he was doing, now go on - out!

JACK AND ARNOLD LOOK AT EACH OTHER

Elizabeth: You can both come back when you've grown up, when you've got more understanding for someone (TO JACK), and when you've got more bloody guts (TO ARNOLD), now go!

PAUSE, ARNOLD WALKS OUT THE DOOR, JACK LOOKS AT ELIZABETH ANGRILY

Elizabeth: I'll talk to you when you start acting with your brain first and not your muscle

JACK STANDS THERE, EYES HER OFF THEN STORMS OUT ELIZABETH
CLOSES THE DOOR BEHIND HIM, THEN GOES OVER TO THE PHONE AND
RINGS UP JO-ANNE

Elizabeth: Jo-Jo, me here (PAUSE) yes I know, I just saw him (PAUSE) no, no look just
come around (PAUSE) ohll, Jack was here too and they had a fight, I've had it with
both of them, Jack can't control his temper and you can't trust Arnold - there's no such
thing as the perfect man (PAUSE) no look just come around okay, I'm gonna have a
shower now, no I'll tell you when you get here, okay, bye

SHE HANGS UP AND EXITS DOWN THE HALL FOR HER SHOWER

ACT THREE - SCENE FOUR

LATE THAT AFTERNOON, ARNOLD AND JACK ARE SITTING ON THE BEACH, DRINKING OUT OF BEER CANS, THEY ARE LOOKING DOWN, STARING AT THEIR CANS, ALMOST WITH A SLIGHT GRIN ON THEIR FACES

Jack: Ya wouldn' bloody believe it would ya

Arnold: Nuh

THEY LOOK BACK DOWN AT THEIR CANS, FEELING ANGRY AND FRUSTRATED BUT ALSO THE HUMOUR OF THEIR PREDICAMENT, PAUSE FOR A WHILE THEN JACK LOOKS UP AT A GIRL IN A BIKINI WALKING BY ON THE BEACH

Jack: Look at that one would ya

ARNOLD LOOKS UP, SIGHS

Arnold: Yeah

THEY BOTH LOOK BACK DOWN

Jack: Look I'm sorry about punchin' ya mate

Arnold: Ahr don't worry, forget it, I needed it

LONG PAUSE

Arnold: They make ya sick, women, don't they?

Jack: Yeah

LONG PAUSE, JACK HALF LAUGHS, LOOKS UP AT ARNOLD WITH A SMIRK, THEY BOTH HALF SMILE AND SHAKE THEIR HEADS DISBELIEVINGLY, FEELING THEIR PREDICAMENT, THEN LOOK BACK DOWN AT THEIR CANS. LONG PAUSE THEN

Arnold: At least it's made us both agree on something

PAUSE

Jack: (ENLIGHTENDLY) Yeah

Arnold: (LOOKING UP, INTO THE AUDIENCE) I mean look at them all, down there

and out in the water - all those bloody women

Jack: (LOOKING UP) Yeah

PAUSE

Arnold: There's only one thing ya can say about women - you go mad with 'em

Jack: and ya go mad without 'em

THEY LOOK AT EACH OTHER, SMILE, AND TAKE A DRINK OUT OF THEIR
CANS - CURTAIN