

SHATTERED REFLECTION

By

Darren R Brealey

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About The Author

Playwright Darren Brealey is the Author of several plays, short film scripts, monologues and short stories. His first published book, *Performing The Goat, A Collection Of One-Act Plays* was originally published in June 2006. ISBN 1 84401 503 3

Brealey has completed his next full-length work ready for the stage entitled, *Shattered Reflection*. A story of a strong-headed and educated woman with a Masters Degree in Arts Science and Degrees in Business Management. Her role as the Divisional Manager of the Asia Pacific region for an international manufacturing company for truck engines and farming equipment dissatisfies her career goals. She finds the people she works with boorish and common. Without a tendency to commit to relationships and feel for true love, her only outlet for sex is rent boys on a Friday night. She suffers from mental illness and personality disorder and this is exacerbated by her addiction to a cocktail of illicit drugs and alcohol.

Brealey first came to public attention in 1996 when his play, *The Meeting Place* was produced during the Melbourne Fringe Festival. In 1998, Brealey's next full-length work, *Three Shorts* was produced at Melbourne's Workhouse Theatre. *Performing The Goat* followed in 1999 containing three one-act plays, as part of the Melbourne Fringe Festival. In the 2005 Melbourne Fringe Festival he produced *Comfort Zone* and recently had *Penniless Penny*, a one-act play produced by Walking Into Bars as part of the 2008 Melbourne International Comedy Festival. In 2008 Brealey's one-act plays, *Disturbing Mavis* and *The Mechanics* were produced in Singapore as part of the Short and Sweet Singapore 2008 Festival, *Disturbing Mavis* won the People's Choice Award.

Brealey learnt drama from the age of six with Arena Theatre and first appeared on stage at the Palais Theatre in St. Kilda, when he was ten, in the *1980 Gang Show*. In addition to his training in theatre, he studied writing at the Australian Film, Television and Radio School. (AFTRS). In August 2004, Brealey attended the Robert McKee, 'Story Seminar', claimed to be the world's ultimate writing course taught by Hollywood's master of the craft.

The Meeting Place was a critical and public success: "The Meeting Place was a simple even old fashioned story of family and loss. I rarely cry in the theatre - at least for emotional reasons - but there I was enjoying some new talent. And I was bawling, with the joy of it and of the magic of a good yarn well put, the tears running down my cheeks like a bloody baby." (*Ralph McLean - 3RRR*). Brealey won a Special Recommendation Award for *The Meeting Place* in the Melbourne Fringe Performance Art Awards.

Three Shorts comprised of three self-contained plays: 'Disturbing Mavis', 'The Stair' and 'Champagne Ladies'. Once again, critical and public reaction to the work was favourable, with 'Champagne Ladies' singled out for particular praise: "With *Three Shorts*, Darren Brealey has written an eclectic mixture of observations that manage, somehow, to connect ... with the satirical 'Champagne Ladies' definitely my favourite" (*Stage Whispers*).

Performing The Goat was a strong production and gained a positive audience reaction and critical comment confirmed Brealey's ability to create realistic, original characterisations and dialogue: "Darren Brealey delivers four humorous and often terrifyingly accurate portrayals ... four short plays that capture colloquial Aussie stereotypes and presents them with hilarious accuracy" (*Buzz Cuts*).

Comfort Zone, co-written with friend Stuart Pursell was proven by its audience appreciation, the production received critical acclaim: "Comfort Zone has delivered a rare piece of new theatre that is hilariously self referential and thematically bold" (*BNews*).

Synopsis

Christine comes home already full of alcohol on Friday night, desperate for a hit or two of her drug of choice to celebrate her fortieth birthday. Amy is at home preparing for a night out on the town with her boyfriend, Tyrone. Amy enjoys living in Christine's penthouse apartment for the opulence and the postcode.

Refusing sexual favours and joining in Christine's self-imposed birthday party weekend celebration by Amy and her boyfriend, Christine settles in for the night by ordering a home delivered five-star meal and home delivery of wine. Bored, she unsuccessfully telephones her fair-weather friends; none of them answer. She eventually ditches the food idea and calls Toy Boys Escort Agency for a few hours with a Prostitute (Oscar).

Shane arrives with Christine's delivery of a dozen bottles of red wine. Confusing him for Oscar, she attempts to seduce him with her sexual favours and wads of cash, but quickly tires of him when he refuses to play along. Eventually, he is allowed to leave the apartment.

After ingesting her drug of choice, Christine's persona dramatically changes, becoming vindictive and nasty. Throughout her drug binge she discloses moments of physical abuse by her father, emotional abuse by her mother and the witnessed accounts of her brother's sexual encounters, on their family run cattle farm at Milking Yard Creek in the Northern Territory.

Oscar arrives to make a quick buck and service his client well, only to find out Christine has another agenda; keeping him for the night by enticing him with wads of cash. Oscar encourages Christine to enjoy the job he was sent to do; when Oscar touches Christine, she violently lashes out at him. He realises his client is weird, yet loaded with cash and with some intelligent manoeuvres he hopes to fill his pockets.

Oscar learns of Christine's family history and her rise out of adversity through a University Scholarship. He discloses his talents as a sketch artist and to keep her amused, Oscar draws a portrait of Christine.

When Christine tells Oscar she loves him, he stupidly tells her it is all part of the service; Christine is mortified. Christine encourages Oscar to disclose his personal life. Once she realises Oscar has a partner, she degrades him about his little woman, until she finds out the little woman is, Benjamin.

Amy returns home early to find Benjamin tied to the bar, only wearing his underwear. Christine and Oscar are elsewhere in the apartment. Benjamin pleads to be released from his shackles, but Christine intervenes. Ben learns of Christine's hallucinations and stories of a make believe cattle farm, an adored helicopter pilot and incest, from Amy; apparently it's all in Christine's head.

In Christine's drug induced state of confusion, she blames Amy for her unhappiness, her lack of friends and other minor incidents. She battles Amy for ownership of Benjamin and Oscar. The fighter in Christine proves fatal for Amy, stabbing her with a knife from the bar.

Oscar and Benjamin make their escape, with Amy bleeding on the floor and Christine pleading for Oscar to return, so they can fall in love.

Characters

Christine

Christine has a Masters Degree in Arts Science and Degrees in Business Management. Her role as the Divisional Manager of the Asia Pacific region for an international manufacturing company for truck engines and farming equipment dissatisfies her career goals. She finds the people she works with boorish and common.

Without a tendency to commit to relationships and feel for true love, her only outlet for sex is rent boys on a Friday night. She suffers from a mental illness and personality disorder and this is exacerbated by her addiction to a cocktail of illicit drugs and alcohol.

Amy

Amy is a Marketing Strategist for a marketing company and attended University with Christine, about fifteen years ago. This is how they met and at the time, Amy took Christine under her wing; Amy quickly learnt why Christine had no friends, but took this on board.

Her long time relationship with her boyfriend, Tyrone has been her strength in life; committed and loving, they are almost the perfect couple. Amy protects Tyrone from Christine sexual desires. Amy remains Christine's only friend.

Oscar

Oscar has been a male prostitute for two years, helping him to pay for his Arts Degree at University. He studies drawing as his Major and this is his passion. Oscar's bisexual orientation has made it easy for him to relate to both men and women. He met his long term relationship boyfriend, Ben three years ago and they have been committed ever since.

Ben

Ben finds working as a Clerk in the corporate world the perfect job for him, without having to work too hard or commit too heavily in office politics or organisational values and expectations. He does his job and goes home.

He is madly in love with Oscar and understands the work he does to bring home a decent income. Oscar is generous with the money he makes with Ben, buying him many material items at his whim.

Shane

Shane is the Delivery boy for the local Bottle Shop / Alcohol Retail Outlet. Fresh out of Secondary School and working his first job, this role fits his personality very well. Apart from delivery of wine and spirits to nearby homes and offices, he also stocks shelves and assists the Managers at the Bottle Shop.

Shane and his girlfriend from Secondary School have kept their relationship strong and she waits for Shane to propose to her, one day.

Setting

Period

This play is set in modern day Australia.

Location

The location of this play is situated in a large metropolitan city. In a high class inner suburb with its leafy-tree lined streets is an apartment building.

In the apartment building on the top floor is a professionally decorated lounge room, with its plush surroundings and expensive furniture.

Relationships

Christine and Amy met at University and became best of friends. Amy soon learned why Christine couldn't retain any friends, but she took Christine under her wing. Through adversity, they are now successful business women.

Oscar and Ben are true lovers and committed to one another. Ben is understanding in Oscar's side profession and enjoys the income.

Christine and Oscar become connected through Christine's request for a rent boy.

Shane is the Delivery boy for the local Bottle Shop / Alcohol Retail Outlet. His connection with Christine and Amy is purely of a customer / provider relationship.

A Note To The Director:

In this script the word *buzz* refers to illicit drugs.

On Stage

The set consists of a lounge room with fireplace and mantle, couches, side tables, coffee table and bar.

A round mirror sits on the mantle, behind a potted palm. On the walls, framed paintings are hung; one of a landscape. On each of the side tables sit a side lamp and an ashtray.

Other furnishings adorn the lounge room to show an air of opulence and plush surroundings, as if professionally designed and decorated.

Underneath the bar top a wooden box holding skeletal remains of Christine's dead pet rabbit; Mr Twinkles, her drugs and accessories.

An exit to the kitchen sits *USR*. An exit to the hallway towards the front door and other rooms sits *USL*. An exit to the bedrooms and bathrooms sits *SL*.

The outside view from the lounge room overlooks an inner suburb of a large metropolitan city, with its leafy-tree lined streets.

Shattered Reflection

AMY enters USR wearing a Bluetooth device on her ear, talking, her hurried conversation matches her actions of dressing and grooming. She finishes off a glass of champagne.

AMY: What happened? Did he agree to the changes? He said what? Commission increase, bullshit! I couldn't care less what that tight two-bit cowboy thinks is best for his business, he engaged *us* to market his product. When you start letting them do *our* job there's no point *us* being there. I want the Gantt chart updated and the demographic segmentation criterion report on my desk, Monday morning. He's a cigar sucking CEO; what would he know about the twelve to twenty-four year old market? He wouldn't know the difference between a Nintendo Wii and pissing in a pot. No. Send me the latest Stakeholder Report, the Scope, stock figures and latest sales reports. Damn it Melanie, I don't care if it's Friday night and your boyfriend has gone without you. You're the one who wanted to play this game, it was your idea to come on board at this level, you want that pay rise and that promotion, you know what you have to do. I'm only doing this for your benefit; it's your future we're working on here. Call me on the mobile when you're done. You bet your sweet arse I'm going out with Tyrone tonight. Behave; it's been weeks since I've seen him and weeks since... yes, all night if I can push him. Call me on the mobile later tonight when you've emailed those reports. Call me if it all goes pear-shaped. Enjoy your weekend. Ciao.

She disconnects the call.

AMY: God damn child wants it both ways; not in this funny farm. Handbag. (*Checking her watch.*) Shit.

Amy finds her handbag and removes a hairbrush, moves to the mantle and pushes the pot plant to one side to reveal a round mirror. She starts brushing her hair.

AMY: C'mon Tyrone, you better get here before she gets home.

The front door is heard opening and closing, Christine is home.

CHRISTINE (off): Hello darling, it's me. Christine. Listen. I need a man.

AMY: C'mon Tyrone, get your hairy arse here.

CHRISTINE (off): I want a black man. You know, tall, dark chocolate sweet and... I want him. I'll wait.

CHRISTINE enters USL talking on her Blackberry.

CHRISTINE: What do you mean you're all out of black? What else you got on the menu? No. No. No. Damn. He has to have something going for him apart from the cash register between his legs. Yes, send him.

Christine disconnects the call.

CHRISTINE: Happy Birthday, to me. Happy Birthday, to me.

Christine moves the pot plant to cover the mirror.

AMY: Happy fortieth birthday, Christine.

CHRISTINE: Bitch. You had to say it, didn't you? It's Friday night and it's my fortieth.

AMY: You look like you've had a good afternoon.

CHRISTINE: Of course. The boys took me out for a drink at lunch to toast in the new set of wrinkles. Bradley, the one-shot hormone; thought he was going to get his hand up my skirt. Last invitation from him for dinner was on his houseboat! All the blokes of the Big Swinging Dicks club have jets, or fast cars. Moron here goes on this bloody house boat. The sad part is, once you're there you can't get off.

AMY: That's unlike you.

CHRISTINE: Darling Bradley and his little mousey-wife tried a weekend of partying with those suburban sexual predators. A houseboat; what was I thinking? It was an absolute bloody disaster. She's got no arse on her to talk about and he looks like he's about to give birth any minute. The irony of it all. I called ahead for a case of wine, has it arrived?

AMY: No.

CHRISTINE: Help me kick off my fortieth birthday celebration weekend.

Christine pours two glasses of champagne at the bar and hands one to Amy.

AMY: No more champagne for me. I'm heading out.

Christine forces the champagne glass into Amy's hand.

CHRISTINE: You're not staying for my birthday party weekend celebration?

AMY: I would really love to stay, but I just need one night out with Tyrone.

CHRISTINE: Oh. I see. It's been a while, then.

AMY: We've both been busy.

CHRISTINE: I want a black man for my Birthday. They cost a little extra...

AMY: No, you are not sleeping with Tyrone.

CHRISTINE: How do you keep such a strength of hormones entertained for so long? Why don't you bring him back after dinner? We'll have a night in – like old times.

AMY: Why don't you get yourself a real boyfriend?

CHRISTINE: None of them want to stick around.

AMY: Only your rent boys.

CHRISTINE: What's his name from last Friday was gorgeous.

Christine tidies up the lounge room.

AMY: Will you be doing the buzz thing tonight?

CHRISTINE: The buzz thing? You make it sound so unfashionable!

Pause.

AMY: Your mother rang.

CHRISTINE: Oh?

AMY: She left her number, again?

CHRISTINE: Right.

AMY: Will you call her back this time? She wanted to discuss Joel's...

CHRISTINE: Joel, What about him? It wasn't me. It was Francis. He started ...

AMY: Christine!

Pause.

CHRISTINE: Tomorrow morning I'll take you on a shopping spree, just you and me. I'll get you that Ottoman you've always wanted for your bedroom and some new curtains for the bathroom. At lunch we can go to Mario's and indulge in a fine dining seafood lunch and because it's my fortieth birthday celebration weekend, we'll go to Margot's in the afternoon and I'll buy you something haute couture. That way you'll have something fabulous to wear out tomorrow night.

AMY: I have plenty of fabulous things to wear tomorrow night. I'd love to join you in your party tonight, but seriously, Tyrone is on his way over and we're going out.

Amy finishes her champagne.

AMY: He'll be here any moment. I've got to finish getting ready.

AMY exits SL. Christine begins to drink the remaining champagne as quickly as she can.

CHRISTINE: God. Another end of the week and nothing new to get excited about. What's the point? Come on Amy, stay and play. Please?

AMY (off): Have you seen my necklace?

Christine removes a necklace from her pocket and places it on the mantle. AMY enters SL.

AMY: Have you seen my necklace?

CHRISTINE: There's one on the mantle, next to the pot plant. Saw it there this morning.

AMY: Thanks. Help me put it on.

Christine assists Amy put on her necklace.

CHRISTINE: Maybe you can stay for one drink?

AMY: I had no idea you'd be doing anything tonight. You should've planned ahead.

CHRISTINE: Fine. Go out with your black boyfriend. Have sex. Enjoy yourself. Leave me to my rent boy. What am I to do without a black man? I'm forty, God damn it.

AMY: It's just a number.

CHRISTINE: Forty. Forty. Forty.

AMY: Ok. Settle down. I'll come home early and you can introduce me to your friends and we'll sit on the roof and smoke a joint and laugh about the good old days.

CHRISTINE: Really? You will? That's superb. I'd be lost without you.

Christine embraces Amy.

AMY: We have been through some tough times together.

CHRISTINE: I know, it's the true meaning of friendship.

AMY exits USR.

CHRISTINE: I'm old enough to have some fun by myself. If you can't enjoy your own company, whose can you enjoy? Where's that little black book.

Christine locates her little black book and flicks through the pages.

CHRISTINE: Let's eat in tonight. Perfect. Have you had dinner? I haven't eaten since...

Christine picks up the cordless phone and dials.

CHRISTINE: Hello darling. It's me, Christine. Yes. I can't stay away from your sauce. No. For starters the Prawn Rolls. And for dinner the Lobster Mornay with chat potatoes. Dessert? You are naughty, oh, alright, a slice of Chocolate Cheesecake. Yes, my account. Yes. Yes. Sounds fine. Ciao.

Christine disconnects the call.

AMY (off): You dialling in?

CHRISTINE: Yes. I've ordered for two.

AMY (off): Tyrone and I are going to that Jamacain restaurant.

Christine dials on the cordless phone.

CHRISTINE: Hello darling. It's me, Christine. Just checking up on the wine delivery. Wonderful. Is Andre delivering tonight? Where is he? Body Building Championships. Of course; shame. Ciao.

Christine disconnects the call and drops the cordless phone. She stares into the mirror, playing with her hair, adjusting it.

CHRISTINE: Body Building Championships? He's avoiding me because of my hair.

Christine picks up the cordless phone and dials.

CHRISTINE: Voicemail. Giorgio, it's me. I'm not happy about this hair cut. You need to fix it, makes me look absolutely atrocious. You call yourself a Hairdresser, more like a Mortician. Call me.

Christine disconnects the call. Christine finishes off the bottle of champagne. AMY enters USR. Christine refills Amy's glass and forces it into Amy's hand.

CHRISTINE: Cheers.

Christine and Amy clink glasses.

AMY: Cheers.

They drink.

CHRISTINE: There's no need to look so nervous. *Tyrone* will be here soon.

AMY: Sorry. Just wish you'd stop talking about...

Amy looks nervously at her watch.

AMY: Earrings. Damn.

Amy finds her earrings on the mantle. She pushes the pot plant to one side and puts on her earrings in front of the mirror.

AMY: Why is this the only mirror in the penthouse?

CHRISTINE: You don't want to over do it. Less is more. It took forever to find the right interior decorator, with good taste. Then it took forever to have his taste come to the surface. Talk about control freaks. Everything is them, them, them. The 'Cliché Crew'. The statue of David is so passé, don't you think? Forget anything black – too eighties. Next thing you know, we'll be back to handbag dancing in Nightclubs, and panel vans – with pink fluffy dice.

Christine moves the pot plant to cover the mirror. Amy looks nervously at her watch.

CHRISTINE: This weekend will excel all previous parties.

AMY: Like our housewarming party?

CHRISTINE: That party lasted for days. Jenny and Jan did that strip tease in the window.

AMY: The party lasted one long night. It ended abruptly when you vomited in the bath, filled with ice and everyone's drinks. Then you proceeded to flick your vomit filled hair in everyone's face.

CHRISTINE: My parties are never a dull.

AMY: Passed out on the floor with vomit in your hair.

CHRISTINE: That was embarrassing.

AMY: When I dragged you into the bathroom?

CHRISTINE: You did see me naked!

AMY: Plus that unforgettable attack of the squirts that left a trail in the carpet, like a marker-pen.

CHRISTINE: Hey, remember when we're at University? We went to that party in that two-story, cramped student share house? Those drinking games – sitting on someone's shoulders whilst sculling beer out of a yardarm glass. Smoking joints, sitting on the next door neighbours' roof, and that horny naked woman reading poetry; she wore that ridiculous hat. I saved you, you know.

AMY: What do you mean, you saved me?

CHRISTINE: You were about to have sex with that Engineering student. What a number one nerd, he was.

AMY: You walked in on us, embarrassing the poor boy, telling him you'd seen bigger things crawl out of cheese.

CHRISTINE: And that time we had that threesome with that Art student?

AMY: What? Who?

CHRISTINE: He invited us to his studio for a sitting, ending up in an interlude. You were nervous, but we got you in the mood.

AMY: That was one embarrassing moment, fifteen-twenty years ago. It's never happened since.

CHRISTINE: When did you turn into the prude?

AMY: That was a once-off drunken romp. I don't know why you continue to bring up that incident.

CHRISTINE: Incident? Bring Tyrone upstairs, we can share him in a fortieth birthday incident?

AMY: No Christine.

CHRISTINE: At least seventy people are coming tonight. They'll all bring friends and their friends; it will be another wowser.

AMY: Just don't make a fool of yourself.

CHRISTINE: We'll play grown-ups, don't worry mother.

AMY exits SL.

CHRISTINE: Tonight Bunny will perform her Drag Show. The bar will be a buzz, speaking of which, I better get my buzz box organised. And I've invited that really cute guy from the third floor, the one who's just moved in. I met him by accidently dropping some of my knickers onto his balcony when he was sunbathing. O-oh, I haven't got round to Ed and Megan. They'll kill me if I don't invite them.

Christine picks up the cordless phone and dials.

CHRISTINE: Hello. Oh, voicemail. Darling, it's me, drop everything you're doing. You're coming to my fortieth birthday weekend celebration at my place. Call me. Kisses.

Christine disconnects the call and dials again.

CHRISTINE: And mustn't forget Neil and Nick. What's up with bloody voicemail? Darling, it's me. I have three words for you, party, party, party, all weekend. See you at my place, now. Kisses.

Christine disconnects the call and dials again.

CHRISTINE: Fucking voicemail.

She moves to the bar and removes her buzz and accessories from the box and sets them out on top of the bar. She pours herself another drink. She lights up a cigarette and walks about the room with drink in hand, touching things until she reaches a framed landscape painting on the wall. She stares into the painting.

CHRISTINE: Have you worked out where I've disappeared to? I'm not living in sin, debauchery maybe. You'd hate it if I found someone you couldn't control.

She moves away from the painting. AMY enters SL.

AMY: See you later. Can't wait to go shopping tomorrow for those new bathroom curtains.

Christine picks up the cordless phone and dials.

CHRISTINE: Have fun with, what's his name.

Amy notices the buzz on the bar.

AMY: I hate Friday nights.

During Christine's next speech, the buzzer phone on the wall rings, AMY picks it up, listens, and then exits USL to meet Tyrone downstairs.

CHRISTINE: Darling, it's me. Cancel my order. You're taking too long. Who cares what you do with the Lobster. Charge me double, it's my birthday and no one cares, that's what. No, I don't want the Prawn Rolls. I don't care.

Christine disconnects the call. She moves to the bar and prepares her buzz.

CHRISTINE: Amy can have her black man. Think she's something of a hot shot Market Strategist, with her fancy title, her black man and my fancy address. You like my postcode don't you? I don't blame you for liking my postcode. I like it too.

Carefully she snorts her buzz. She replaces the accessories to the bar and reacts to its immediate effects.

CHRISTINE: That's got to be better than sex. They're not coming. They hate me. Happy Birthday to me, Happy Birthday to me. Happy Birthday dear, Christine. Hey, that's me. Whack-o the chook, I'm alive and I'm forty. I need a wine. Something red and ruby. Wonder where that has got to?

She finds her Blackberry device.

CHRISTINE: There you are my little gem. My key to the world; how much I love you, my Blackberry. Let's pump up the volume on this party. This will get the little buggers buzzing.

Christine types out a quick email on her Blackberry device.

CHRISTINE: *(lyrically)* P.A.R.T.Y. And send.

*Christine lights up another cigarette and walks about the room with a fresh drink in hand. She stares into the painting, touching the frame. The door-buzzer rings twice before Christine acknowledges someone is there. **CHRISTINE** exits USL.*

CHRISTINE *(off):* Come in.

CHRISTINE *enters USL. She talks to the framed landscape painting.*

CHRISTINE: He's very cute.

SHANE *enters USL, he stands by the entrance.*

SHANE: Where'd you like it?

CHRISTINE: You don't beat about the bush, or maybe you do.

Pause.

CHRISTINE: That was a little joke. Boy, it's just business with you.

Christine pours Shane a drink and forces it in his hand.

CHRISTINE: Don't just stand there... you're a strong brute, aren't you!

SHANE: Yeah. I work out.

CHRISTINE: Have you been at this long? Maybe you need a real woman to show you the ropes.

SHANE: Nah. I'm right, thanks Lady.

CHRISTINE: Lady?

Christine bursts out with laughter. Shane moves away.

CHRISTINE: Oh sweetheart, you're the sensitive type. I shouldn't have laughed at you. You're a little different to the normal; definitely cute, big hands. You know what they say about big hands?

SHANE: No.

Christine grabs Shane on the crotch. He jumps back.

CHRISTINE: It's definitely true. You must be popular with the girls.

SHANE: I've only come to...

CHRISTINE: Would you like a buzz, honey?

SHANE: A what?

CHRISTINE: Buzz. From my buzz box.

Christine takes Shane by the hand, they move to the bar.

CHRISTINE: If you don't want to inject, you can always snort.

SHANE: No. Sorry.

CHRISTINE: You remind me of my Helicopter pilot. You have any flying experience?

SHANE: No.

CHRISTINE: You could've taken me away for the weekend. But not to the Territory. No where near Milking Yard Creek.

Christine prepares some buzz from her buzz box for her and Shane to share.

SHANE: Never heard of it.

CHRISTINE: My eldest brother was shy, like you. He drove me to the bus stop in the middle of the night, in the middle of no where. I didn't let mum and dad know I was leaving, I couldn't live there any longer. They were driving me crazy. Do your parents drive you crazy?

SHANE: Sometimes.

CHRISTINE: Only the moon shone. The bus stop was a big tree, on the side of the road. The only tree as far as the eye could see. It was big, tall and protective. Standing there in the middle of the night, I felt insignificant. It's the tall and strong that make you feel so secure, but when you get older, they pale into insignificance. Not much rain out there. I was scared to death.

Shane snorts a small portion of the buzz, and reacts. Christine snorts up the remainder of the buzz.

CHRISTINE: I was scared to death, only the crickets and bugs kept me company. Did you bring it in?

SHANE: What? It's in the hallway.

CHRISTINE: (*pointing*) Be a darling and take it into the kitchen.

SHANE exits and reenters carrying in the case of wine, placing it in the kitchen, USR.

CHRISTINE: That's been put on my account, but this is for your trouble.

Christine takes out a wad of cash and hands a hundred-dollar bill to Shane. He places it in his pocket.

CHRISTINE: If there's one thing I've learnt in life, it's always be nice to the boy who delivers the wine.

SHANE: Thanks.

CHRISTINE: He's serving a purpose.

Pause. Christine pours two glasses of wine.

CHRISTINE: You're not as playful as Andre. Maybe someone else can show you the ropes. Go sleep with a man.

SHANE: No thanks.

CHRISTINE: It'll make you relax a little. Broaden your horizons; get to know your own kind first before playing the wider field.

SHANE: No.

Christine forces a glass of wine in Shane's hand.

CHRISTINE: Cheers.

Shane falters, then raises his glass up to Christine's.

SHANE: Sorry.

CHRISTINE: Stop saying sorry, kid. I might feel sorry for you. Ever broken a photocopier, before?

SHANE: No.

CHRISTINE: New Years' Eve, three years ago. I was completely naked on top of the colour Canon, literally. Kevin was banging me stupid. You'd like him, he's a big boy. His wife walks in just as he's about to shoot his load and the glass cracks on the copier, the lid falls off and the photocopies of my privates jam in the drum. You going to stay the night?

SHANE: I should get back to work.

CHRISTINE: More of my fabulous friends are coming to rave all weekend.

*Christine turns her back to Shane. During her next speech, **SHANE** silently makes a hurried exit USL without Christine noticing; as if he never existed. She finds her Blackberry.*

CHRISTINE: Isn't that just typical, you go out of your way to invite all these people and no one returns your calls or emails. You could send me a bloody email, sweetheart, I can receive bloody messages on my bloody Crackberry, thingy.

Christine sits in her chair. She sips at her wine. Pause.

CHRISTINE: Happy Birthday, Bobby. Remember that Mother, you used to call me Bobby.

*The door-buzzer rings twice before Christine acknowledges someone is there, then without hesitation **CHRISTINE** exits USL.*

CHRISTINE (off): Come in.

***CHRISTINE** enters USL. She talks to the framed landscape painting.*

CHRISTINE: He's better than last Friday night. He's gorgeous. This one I'll definitely keep. In here honey, just follow the sound of my dulcet tone.

***OSCAR** enters USL. He places his knapsack by the entrance. Christine overreacts with graciousness.*

CHRISTINE: Hello. No. Don't speak.

Christine circles Oscar, inspecting him.

CHRISTINE: I'd call the Agency, but I don't want to ruin this moment.

Christine circles Oscar.

CHRISTINE: Good choice. Hmmm, who needs black when I can have you?

Oscar sits in a chair.

CHRISTINE: No, no. Stay standing. Hmmm. Very nice.

Oscar stands. Christine hands Oscar a drink. She sits in her chair.

CHRISTINE: Make yourself comfortable.

Oscar sits. Christine plays with her hair. Pause.

OSCAR: Nice fucking place you got here.

SILENCE.

CHRISTINE: You're not supposed to speak like that. You're not what we expected.

OSCAR: I can tell a woman's sensuality by her surroundings.

CHRISTINE: And?

OSCAR: Warm, sensuous, deep – very deep.

CHRISTINE: Really?

OSCAR: Did I mention intelligent – very intelligent.

CHRISTINE: Are you usually this naïve in judgement of strangers?

OSCAR: I feel I know you already?

CHRISTINE: You know me, already?

OSCAR: Surely connoisseurs enjoy diversity.

CHRISTINE: We'll get down to that later. I want you to take off your shirt, turn me on.

OSCAR: A simple kiss, a touch, a look – would that be enough to turn you on?

CHRISTINE: For a boorish, contemptuous child perhaps.

OSCAR: I thought women enjoyed bouts of foreplay?

CHRISTINE: You call that foreplay?

OSCAR: Under that tough exterior, there's a beautiful woman – needing to get out.

CHRISTINE: Do you have a busy night ahead?

OSCAR: Yeah.

CHRISTINE: You're staying the night.

OSCAR: You better call the agency.

CHRISTINE: Why should I?

OSCAR: Everything has a price.

CHRISTINE: Conditions. Limitations. Parameters. You call yourself a man?

OSCAR: You get what you pay for!

Christine moves to Oscar and pulls him close by the collar of his shirt.

CHRISTINE: I'm sick of being told what I can and can't have. I've been ordering from Escort Agencies before you were learning to tie up your shoelaces. You're here in my house – my rules.

OSCAR: Dominating – I like that.

Pause.

CHRISTINE: I'm not Christine? Call me Bobby.

OSCAR: Bobby?

CHRISTINE: Tell me how exciting you are. Surely, there is more to this manly young thing than meets the eye.

OSCAR: I work out at the gym. I enjoy a good movie.

CHRISTINE: You'd hardly enjoy a bad movie.

OSCAR: I study.

CHRISTINE: Now we're getting somewhere. Economics, Law, Medicine perhaps?

OSCAR: Art.

CHRISTINE: How quaint.

OSCAR: I draw.

Pause.

CHRISTINE: By the time I was twenty-eight, I was the Divisional Manager of the Asia Pacific region for an international manufacturing company for truck engines and farming equipment. I managed to climb out of adversity through a Scholarship to University. I now have a Masters Degree in Arts Science and Degrees in Business Management. You should extend your horizons. It's all due to my wonderful Helicopter Pilot; he was my protector, lover and my saviour. When I fell down he'd pick me up, dust me off and send me on my way.

OSCAR: Who was he?

CHRISTINE: My secret beau, though nothing came of it; I was eleven and he was twenty-nine. He was my only friend out on the cattle station; in the middle of bloody no where, Milking Yard Creek.

Christine sits in a chair. Pause.

OSCAR: Tell me more about your Helicopter Pilot. Is he on staff?

CHRISTINE: No silly. He was at our cattle station. When you're rounding up thousands of head of cattle, not only did we use horses, we also used a helicopter.

OSCAR: That's a big change, from farm girl to University student.

CHRISTINE: We attended Ham Radio School. Our teacher was in the Alice and we sat in our lounge room; Francis, Joel, baby Jake and me.

Christine gracefully swans about the room with a drink in her hand.

CHRISTINE: You really must get out there Oscar and improve yourself. Do courses, attend University, and get a better education. You're smart, cute and can talk to people, you need to find your niche and become a man of respect. You can't depend on me all your life and drawing isn't going to help you survive. Just make sure you don't end up in a work situation like me, with those pedigree freaks.

OSCAR: A woman of power and influence; I thought that about you the minute I set eyes on you.

CHRISTINE: Tell me more about your art.

OSCAR: I've had an exhibition at the Sunlavita Gallery.

CHRISTINE: You're an established artist?

OSCAR: Yes.

CHRISTINE: Sell anything?

OSCAR: One portrait to a collector of new works from up north.

CHRISTINE: Not Milking Yard Creek?

OSCAR: No.

CHRISTINE: After University, I suppose you're going to live in some second-rate, rat infested flat on the other side of town. You'll busk for the tourists in town and scrape and beg to make ends meet. Your girlfriend won't be happy; no self-respecting woman could live like that. Do you have a girlfriend? What's her name?

OSCAR: I don't have a girl friend.

CHRISTINE: Why not?

OSCAR: My boyfriend doesn't do women.

Pause.

CHRISTINE: You're bisexual, how exciting! What's his name?

OSCAR: Ben.

CHRISTINE: Ben Dover?

OSCAR: Benjamin.

CHRISTINE: Your boyfriend let's you, do this?

OSCAR: I love my boyfriend. He understands my need to be with a woman. Pays the rent and he knows I'm not on my knees with some other guy.

CHRISTINE: How old is he?

OSCAR: He's in his mid-twenties. Is it important?

CHRISTINE: Is he available?

OSCAR: For what?

CHRISTINE: Tell him you need close supervision. You two could get it together and I could join in.

OSCAR: Join us? He doesn't do women.

CHRISTINE: He's gay?

OSCAR: Gayner than a Christmas tree.

Christine hands Oscar the cordless phone.

CHRISTINE: Ring him. Tell him to get here. I'll make it worth his while.

OSCAR: That's up to you; double the hourly rate.

CHRISTINE: Double? For some gay guy who won't perform for me. Make it a quarter.

OSCAR: Half – if you join in.

CHRISTINE: Half it is. Call him.

OSCAR: He's gone out.

CHRISTINE: Is he black, no I guess that would be too much to hope for? Is he musical?

OSCAR: After eight beers and a packet of onion rings.

CHRISTINE: Don't be obtuse. Can he play a musical instrument?

OSCAR: No.

Oscar stands and moves to the telephone. He dials.

CHRISTINE: I need more people at my party.

Oscar dials on the telephone.

OSCAR: Sweetie, it's me. Yeah, doing her now. Hey do you want to come over? I know you don't, with me. She's got money. Yeah, for you too. Go on, it will be fun. I've never invited you before. No. Don't be shy. Earn a couple of grand. We can be together. Good. See you soon. Yeah, she'll be watching. No, I promise, that's what I get paid for. Sweet.

Oscar disconnects the call and returns to his seat.

CHRISTINE: You drink slowly.