

After early experience with J.C. Williamson's, Sydney University Dramatic Society (SUDS), Nimrod Theatre and Melbourne Theatre Company, Nick Enright trained for the theatre at New York University School of the Arts, where he studied playwriting with Israel Horovitz.

His plays include *On the Wallaby*, *Daylight Saving*, *St James Infirmary*, *Mongrels*, *A Property of the Clan*, *The Quartet From Rigoletto*, *Blackrock*, *Good Works*, *Playgrounds*, *Spurboard*, *Chasing the Dragon* and *A Poor Student*. With Justin Monjo, he adapted Tim Winton's *Cloudstreet* for the stage.

For film Nick wrote *Lorenzo's Oil* with George Miller (for which they were nominated for Academy and WGA Awards for Best Original Screenplay), and *Blackrock*; and for television *Coral Island* and the miniseries *Come In Spinner*. Many of his plays have been broadcast and he has also written original work for radio.

With composer Terence Clarke, he wrote the musicals *The Venetian Twins* and *Summer Rain*. Other musical collaborations include *Miracle City* with Max Lambert, *Mary Bryant* and *The Good Fight* with David King and the book for the Australian production of *The Boy From Oz*.

*Good Works* and *Cloudstreet* won Melbourne Green Room Awards for Best Play. *Daylight Saving*, *A Property of the Clan*, *Blackrock* (screenplay) and *Cloudstreet* have all won Writers' Guild Gold AWGIE Awards. Nick was honoured to receive the 1998 Sidney Myer Performing Arts Award.

Nick had long been involved as a teacher and writer with young actors, especially at the National Institute of Dramatic Art (NIDA) and the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA), as well as community-based companies such as Freewheels. He was recently instrumental in setting up, with Jessica and Julian Louis, State of Play, an actors' ensemble in Sydney which develops and presents new works.

Nick Enright died in Sydney in March 2003.

*For all my teachers  
and especially George Miller*

# A PROPERTY OF THE CLAN

★ ★ Nick Enright ★ ★



CURRENCY PRESS • SYDNEY

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*A Property of the Clan* was commissioned by Freewheels Theatre-in-Education Company in Newcastle and first performed on August 14, 1992 with the following cast:

RACHEL/DIANE

Simone de Mestre

JARED

Mark Newland

RICKO/GLEN

Peter Ross

JADE/MARIAN

Vanessa Bates

Directed by Brian Joyce

Designed by Vicki Newman

Many people in the Newcastle community helped in the research for this play. I offer my thanks to them, and particularly to Carol Myers and her family.

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## **CHARACTERS**

RACHEL ACKLAND

MARIAN, her mother

JARED ELPHICK

DIANE, his mother

JADE, his sister

BRETT RICKETSON (RICKO)

GLEN

TEACHER

VOICES [recorded]

The play can be performed by four or more actors. The following doubles are possible:

RACHEL/DIANE

JARED

RICKO/GLEN

JADE/MARIAN/TEACHER

## **SETTING**

The play takes place in a large Australian industrial city in the present day, between October of one year and the winter of the next year.

GLEN *reads an assignment in a Year 11 classroom.*

GLEN: ‘...Young girls could be taken away from their homes, and put into orphanages, even though they weren’t orphans. They’d be given a low-grade version of a white girl’s education. Then they’d be sent out to work on stations, or in white people’s houses in country towns. The excuse for this was that their own families couldn’t bring them up properly to make a place in white Australia. So young Aboriginal women were made into servants. They were separated from their own culture and its traditions. And they were conditioned to think they were the lowest of the low... black, female and unskilled in a white man’s world.’

I’ve got some slides. I photographed some stuff from a few books.

TEACHER: Good, Glen. Go ahead.

STUDENT: Spock.

GLEN: I’ll just set up the projector.

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JARED *stands in the middle of the schoolyard, calling for the ball.*

JARED: Here, here! Scott! Scottie, here!

RICKO’S VOICE: Hey, Elphick! Hey, Jared!

JARED *looks beyond the fence and sees BRETT RICKETSON passing in a van.*

JARED: Shit. Ricko. Hey, it’s Ricketson. Ricko! Hey, Ricko!

JARED/RICKO: How... does... it feeeeeeel!

JARED: You’re back, mate.

RICKO: No, I’m still up in Surfers, you dropkick.

JARED: Didn’t you like it up there?

RICKO: It was choice, mate. The waves, the women, everything. Goin’ off.

JARED: Why’d you come back, then?

RICKO: Cause I thought youse all had to be ready for a boot up the arse.

JARED: Yeah?

RICKO: Yeah. Saturday night, mate. I’m throwing myself a welcome home.

JARED: Shit, why?

RICKO: I'm back home.

JARED: That's nothing to have a party about.

RICKO: Saturday night at the Rock. Spread the word.

JARED: Spread the word? Everyone in the yard's heard about it.

*The school bell rings.*

RICKO: Into class, girls and boys.

JARED: How'd that heap get you to Queensland? Looks like it couldn't get you across town. Sell it for scrap, Ricko.

*He leaves as JADE walks towards the fence.*

JADE: Hey Ricko! It's me. Jade. You back, Ricko? Back to stay? See you round.

◇ ◇ ◇

RACHEL and JARED are at the ferry wharf, city side, with their school bags.

RACHEL: There's no point arguing. They don't want me to go.

JARED: Why'd you tell them?

RACHEL: I just did. And they said no.

JARED: Because it's with me?

RACHEL: No, Jared. They said you could come along with us.

JARED: Come where?

RACHEL: Camping. We're going up to the Inlet.

JARED: Since when?

RACHEL: Since months ago. I forgot. We said we'd spend the weekend together before my brother goes overseas.

JARED: You said you'd go?

RACHEL: Yes.

JARED: Shit, Rachel. Why?

RACHEL: Because I like Philip. And he'll be away for years.

JARED: You like me. Don't you?

RACHEL: No, I hate the sight of you, you dag. Come with us.

JARED: With your Mum and Dad and them?

RACHEL: Well, with me. We don't have to be with them every minute.

JARED: Ricko's my best mate. It's going to be mega. Everyone's going.

*JADE arrives with her schoolbag.*



JADE: Where? Where, Jared?

JARED: None of your business.

RACHEL: Brett Ricketson's party.

JADE: Oh, that. I know about that. Saturday night at the Surf Club. You going, Rachel? I'm going.

JARED: No way.

JADE: You said everyone. Didn't he say everyone?

JARED: Not little kids.

JADE: Get stuffed. I'll be there....

JARED: Get on the ferry, Jade.

JADE: I'm going if Tracy's going. And Tracy's going.

JARED: What if Tracy wasn't invited?

JADE: She's been invited.

JARED: Bullshit.

JADE: She has. Scottie's asked her.

JARED: Scott Abbott's a bloody little root-rat.

JADE: He told her he likes her! And she really likes him.

JARED: And she's a moll. A fucken—

*She swings at him with her schoolbag.*

JADE: Don't swear at me. I'll tell Mum.

JARED: Yeah? Well, first you tell her you want to go the Surf Club Saturday night, and see what she says. Zit-face.

*She swings at him again. He mock-threatens her and she goes.*

Mum'll spew.

RACHEL: You shouldn't call her that.

JARED: Zit-face? She says worse to me.

RACHEL: I mean Tracy. You called Tracy a moll.

JARED: It's true.

RACHEL: It's really off.

JARED: You don't even know her.

RACHEL: Do you?

JARED: I get the ferry with her every day.

RACHEL: It's leaving. You'd better hop on.

JARED: I'll get the next one. I'll walk you to the bus-stop. Look, Saturday night—

RACHEL: Jared. We'll have heaps of time over Christmas.

JARED: Saturday's going to be hell. Ricko's a top bloke.

RACHEL: You think I'd like him?

JARED: Everyone likes Ricko. Mad bastard.

RACHEL: There'll be other parties. Go on, run.

JARED: Hey, you got to help me. My report. I've got to do it Friday.

RACHEL: Ring me tonight.

JARED: Thanks.

RACHEL: I'll be home from netball about eight.

JARED: Go go go.

RACHEL: Yeah. Gotta go.

JARED: So what about Saturday?

RACHEL: I'm going... [with my family.]

JARED: You're going to get eaten by mossies up the Inlet. Wow.

RACHEL: You gonna get legless at Black Rock Surf Club. Wow-wow.

JARED: If you change your mind...

RACHEL: If you change yours. Quick, it's going.

*They part. She sees a girl running for the ferry.*

God, Tracy, don't try and jump!

JADE: Jump, Tracy!

*Tracy evidently makes it.*

Yea, Trace.



*JARED makes his report in the classroom.*

JARED: '...The Germans believed they were a threat to the master-race. The master-race had to be racially pure to achieve its aim of dominating Europe and the world. Traditionally Jews were money-lenders and bankers because they were shut out of all professions. This control of finance was something the Nazis set out to break. They made a "systematic campaign of hatred against Jews". They made them the national enemy. Jews were beaten in the streets. Their shops were attacked. Many were robbed of their homes and money. They were often stopped from leaving Germany. They were branded in many ways, sometimes by being made to wear a yellow

Star of David. Which looks like this. [*He shows a drawing.*] In many cities they were driven into ghettos where their movements could be policed. And by the outbreak of war they were already being sent off to camps called concentration camps, which were really death camps. By 1945, when the Germans were finally defeated, about six million Jews had been murdered in the many death camps set up throughout Nazi-occupied countries.'

TEACHER: Very good, Jared. We're discovering that prejudice and discrimination are based on assumptions. The value systems of power. People ought to be A, B, and C. These people are X, Y and Z. So we lock them up, or deny them basic rights, or even kill them. Because of what they are, rather than because of what they do. It's your race, your looks, your gender, your beliefs that make you vulnerable. Who else did the Nazis send to the camps? Did you find that out in your research? [JARED *shakes his head.*] Well... gypsies. Homosexuals. Communists. And Jews. Very different groups. What could they have in common?



*At the Elphick house.*

JADE: Because Tracy's going!

DIANE: That's not a reason. You see her every day.

JADE: She wants me to go with her.

DIANE: Jade. Love, how old is Tracy? Fifteen?

JADE: Fourteen.

DIANE: Well, she's mature for her age.

JADE: So am I.

DIANE: Your age and her age are a bit different.

JARED: One year.

DIANE: You're just thirteen. She's...

JADE: I needn't even have told you. I could have said I was going over to her place to watch TV.

DIANE: Jade, I would have called Tracy's Mum to check.

JADE: So you don't trust me!

DIANE: I do, but I'm not a complete idiot. Every kid in Black Rock point is heading for that party.

JADE: Yeah. Yeah! So why not me? There's other kids my age going. I bet their Mums let them.

DIANE: I bet their Mums don't know it's unsupervised. And with enough grog flowing to—

JADE: You don't know that.

DIANE: I know Brett Ricketson.

JADE: Trace said she'd stick with me.

DIANE: You told me, she's going with Scott Abbott.

JADE: He'll be with his mates half the time, with Davo and Wayne Hanley and them.

DIANE: And the other half? He'll be with her. And they won't want you around.

JADE: She's my friend. She's going to do my hair. And lend me a dress.

DIANE: Why would she have to dress you!

JADE: Because you never buy me anything I'd be seen dead in.

*Silence.*

DIANE: I've got to get the tea.

JADE: I won't drink, I promise.

DIANE: The subject is closed.

JADE: Or get into drugs. Or muck around with the boys.

DIANE: So what will you do, Jade? What will you do? Stand on your own and watch? Tell me. Why do you want to be there?

JADE: To be there!

*JARED comes in wearing a wet-suit.*

Tell her she's got to let me go.

JARED: You're not invited. When's tea? I'm out of here.

DIANE: I'm out of here. What's that? Beverly Hills 90210?

JARED: Real smart, Mum. Tell me when it's ready, okay?

DIANE: Oh, ring the servant's bell. I'll bring it into the bathroom on a tray.

JARED: Yeah. That'd be good.

*He goes.*

DIANE: That boy. Is he taking Rebecca?

JADE: No. And it's Rachel. Get it right.

DIANE: If he'd let me meet her, I might. Is she nice?

JADE: I suppose so. Her father drives a BMW.