HONEY SPOT

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Prologue

Music plays. People appear one by one, going about their daily business.

Mother, an Aboriginal woman in her mid thirties, walks past carrying a shopping bag. The Forest Ranger watches her go, then finds a limb of a tree lying on the ground. He picks it up and examines it, noticing that it has been cut cleanly through with an axe.

William, a young Aboriginal man, comes along. He is holding an axe. He hides behind the log when he sees the Ranger, then runs off as the Ranger returns to his house.
Tim, an Aboriginal boy of thirteen, runs along bouncing a basketball. He wears school uniform. He stops when he sees Peggy, a twelve-year-old white girl, also in school uniform, practising ballet steps as she walks along. The two look at each other for a moment, then Peggy runs off.

William comes back, and he and Tim throw the basketball between them a couple of times, then leave. Mother returns, her shopping bag now full. She stops to rest for a moment, then moves quickly on when she sees the Ranger watching her.

The mood is one of suspicion between white and black people.
ONE

It is a hot afternoon in a state forest. Tim arrives, eating a piece of honeycomb which he is holding on a scrap of bark. A small tomahawk is stuck in the band of his school shorts. He sits on the log.

Peggy arrives, returning home after a ballet class, practising a step as she walks. She is carrying a school bag. When Tim sees her he hides behind the log, but she has heard a noise and comes back to see who is there. Tim tries to bury himself in the ground but she has seen him.

PEGGY
Hello?

TIM
Go away!

PEGGY
What for?

TIM
Go away!

PEGGY
Are you all right?

TIM
Yeah.

PEGGY
What’s wrong with you?

TIM.
Nothing. Mind your own business.

PEGGY
Are you hiding from someone?

[Tim springs to his feet, threatening her with his tomahawk].

TIM
Clear out, will ya.
[Peggy sees that he has honey all over the front of his shirt.]

PEGGY
Yuk! You've been lying in something.

TIM
Stop being a sticky beak, will ya?

PEGGY
It's honey.

TIM
No, it's not.

PEGGY
I know what you've been doing.

TIM
What?

PEGGY
And I know who you are. You're new at our school, aren't you?

[Tim nods his head.]

Are you in Mr Barker's class?

TIM
Mrs Porter's.

PEGGY
Mrs Porter's? That's only Year Six! How old are you?

TIM
Thirteen.

PEGGY
You can't be.

TIM
I am.

PEGGY
You can't be thirteen in year six. I'm only twelve and I'm in Year Seven.

[Tim shrugs his shoulders.]
TIM  
I missed some school when we lived up at Moore River.

PEGGY  
Where’d you get the honey?

TIM  
I’m not telling you.

PEGGY  
Why not?

TIM  
’Cause this is a State Forest and your dad’s the Forest Ranger!

PEGGY  
Did you get the honey out of trees?

[No answer.]  
Did you cut them down?

[No answer.]  
’Cause if you did you’ll be in trouble. If you cut down trees in a State Forest the police can get you and . . .

TIM  
I don’t cut down trees. I just cut holes in ’em. If you cut down a honey tree, there’d be no more honey. Look — there’s a honey tree.

[He points upwards.]  
You climb up and make the opening to the hive bigger . . .

[He sees that Peggy has become aware that there are bees flying around her.]  
What’s the matter?

PEGGY  
Look out, there’s bees!

[She tries to swipe them with her school bag. One lands on her arm and stings.]  
Ooh, ah, it bit me!
TIM
Don’t squeeze it. You’ll squeeze all the venom in!

PEGGY
It hurts!

TIM
Let’s have a look.
[He extracts the sting with the blade of the tomahawk.]
There — it’s out.

PEGGY
Rotten bees.

TIM
I told you to clear out.

PEGGY
If you hadn’t taken their honey they wouldn’t have bitten me.

TIM
They don’t bite, they sting.
[Another bee circles them.]

PEGGY
Look out, there’s one in your hair!
[Tim gently picks it out and shows her.]

TIM
They don’t sting me.

PEGGY
Step on it!

TIM
No, they’re my brothers.

[He cradles the bee in his cupped hands, then releases it into the air.]

PEGGY
Who?
TIM
The bees. They’re my totem.

PEGGY
Your totem?

TIM
When I was born, a bee came and dropped some honey in my hair. Now I am brother to the plura.

PEGGY
What’s the plura?

TIM
The bees. That’s our law, Nyoongah way.

PEGGY
Gee, you sure got a lot of brothers.

TIM
Yeah, Nyoongahs got big families, eh?

PEGGY
Thanks for getting the sting out.

TIM
Is it swelling up?

PEGGY
A bit, and I’ve got ballet again tomorrow.

TIM
Here, take some honey.

PEGGY
No, no, I don’t want any.

TIM
Go on, try it. It’s just like a Crunchy Bar, only better.

[Peggy tries some honey.]

Like it?

PEGGY
Mmmm.
TIM
Then take it. I can get more, easy.

PEGGY
Thanks.

[She takes the honey and moves off.]

TIM
Hey, your name’s Peggy Summers, isn’t it?

PEGGY
Yeah, what’s yours?

TIM
Tim.

PEGGY
Tim what?

TIM
Tim Winalli.

[The conversation is becoming a bit embarrassed, but both want it to continue.]

PEGGY
Hey, will I see you tomorrow?

TIM
Maybe at the bus stop.

PEGGY
Do you live around here?

TIM
We just moved into that Forestry cottage down Acacia Rd.

PEGGY
Does your dad work for the Forestry too?

TIM
Nuh. Ain’t got no dad. Forestry just said we could live there. See ya!

[He runs off. Peggy calls after him.]
PEGGY
At the bus stop tomorrow, OK?
[But he is gone. A bee flies around her, she waves it away gently.]
Bye, plura.