

SUE SMITH is a multi-award-winning screenwriter, playwright and script editor. In 2018 Sue was the recipient of the Australian Writers' Guild Lifetime Achievement Award.

Sue's screen credits include being co-writer of the feature film *Saving Mr Banks*, produced by Disney Pictures in 2013 and starring Tom Hanks and Emma Thompson, ABC telemovie *MABO* (screened SFF in 2012 and winning an AWGIE and Queensland Literary Award), ABC miniseries *Bastard Boys* (won AFI Award for Best Screenplay in Television), feature film *Peaches* (nominated AWGIE Award) and SBS miniseries *RAN*, which Sue co-wrote with John Alsup and Alice Addison, receiving another AFI Award for Best Screenplay in Television.



Other credits include telemovies *Temptation* and *The Road From Coorain*, and, in partnership with John Alsup, the ABC series *Bordertown*, miniseries *The Leaving of Liverpool* and *Brides of Christ*, both of which won AWGIE and AFI awards. Sue wrote an episode of the series *Significant Others* for Fremantle/ABC and is co-writing a feature film for producer Tristram Miall.

Sue's first stage play *Thrall*, was produced by Tamarama Rock Surfers in 2006. Sue's professional theatre debut, *Strange Attractor*, premiered at the Griffin Theatre in 2009. Sue also wrote the libretto for *Rembrandt's Wife*, which premiered at the Victorian Opera, and won the 2010 AWGIE award for Music Theatre. Her adaptation of Tolstoy's *The Kreutzer Sonata* premiered at the State Theatre Company of South Australia to rave reviews. *Kryptonite* was produced by State Theatre Company of South Australia and the Sydney Theatre Company in 2014 to rave reviews and was nominated for Best Play at the 2014 Sydney Theatre Awards. Her play, *Machu Picchu*, starred Lisa McCune in the 2016 program for the STC and STCSA, and in 2019 her play *Hydra* – based on the lives of George Johnston and Charmian Clift - was produced by QT and STCSA. Sue was the 2018 Sydney Theatre Company Patrick White Playwrights Fellow. Sue's adaptation of Charlotte Wood's novel *The Weekend* premiered at Belvoir Street Theatre in 2023.

Sue Smith is represented by Anthony Blair. Please direct your enquiries via email or contact Cameron's Management on (02) 9319 7199.



CHARLOTTE WOOD is the author of seven novels and three books of non-fiction. Her new book *Stone Yard Devotional* was described by the UK *Guardian* as ‘a quiet novel of immense power’ and has been praised by authors Anne Enright, Tim Winton, Karen Joy Fowler, Hannah Kent and Paula Hawkins among others.

Her previous books include *The Luminous Solution*, a book of essays on the creative process; the international bestseller, *The Weekend*; and *The Natural Way of Things* which won a number of prizes including The Stella Prize and the Prime Minister’s Literary Award. Her features and essays have appeared in *The New York Times*, *The Guardian*, *Literary Hub*, *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Saturday Paper* among other publications.

In 2023 Belvoir Theatre Company staged an adaptation of her novel *The Weekend*, and her novel *The Natural Way of Things* featured in ABC Television’s 2021 series *The Books That Made Us*.

She has produced a podcast of interviews with artists, *The Writer’s Room with Charlotte Wood*, and in 2024 launched a monthly newsletter on the creative process titled *Subtraction*.

THE WEEKEND

Based on the novel by

CHARLOTTE WOOD

Adapted by

SUE SMITH



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Contents

<i>The Spaces Between: mortality and friendship in The Weekend</i>	vii
THE WEEKEND	1

The Weekend was first produced by Belvoir St Theatre, Gadigal country, Sydney, on 5 August 2023, with the following cast:

JUDE	Toni Scanlan
WENDY	Melita Jurisic
ADELE	Belinda Giblin
JOE GILLESPIE <i>and others</i>	Roman Delo
PUPPETEER	Keila Terencio

Director, Sarah Goodes
Designer, Stephen Curtis
Costume Designer, Ella Butler
Lighting Designer, Damien Cooper
Composer, Steve Francis
Sound Designer, Madeleine Picard
Puppetry and Movement Director, Alice Osborne
Puppet Maker—Body and Skin Covering, Indigo Rose-Redding
Puppet Maker—Head, Philip Millar
Video Design, Susie Henderson
Choreographer, Charmene Yap
Dramaturg, Ruth Little
Assistant Director, Abbie-Lee Lewis
Special Effects Makeup Artist, Amelia Fell
Stage Manager, Luke McGettigan
Assistant Stage Manager, Mia Kanzaki



Belinda Giblin in Belvoir's The Weekend, 2023 (Photo: Brett Boardman)



Toni Scanlan, Belinda Giblin, Melita Jurisic and Keila Terencio in Belvoir's The Weekend, 2023 (Photo: Brett Boardman)

CHARACTERS

WENDY

JUDE

ADELE

JOE GILLESPIE

PRIEST

NURSE

FINN, a dog.

COCO, a dog.

NOTE

The actor playing JOE GILLESPIE should double as PRIEST and NURSE.

FINN and COCO are intended as puppets.

SETTING

The action shifts fluidly from the main performance space to other spaces, including a beach, a church, a restaurant and a hospital.

The main performance space is the deck of a sixties or seventies fibro beach house on the NSW Central Coast. The house, well loved, has seen better days ...



Keila Terencio in Belvoir's The Weekend, 2023 (Photo: Brett Boardman)

ONE

JUDE enters the space. Puts down her neat, stylish overnight bag. Withdraws a cosmetic bag and sprays her face with cooling mist.

Next, she exits into the house and re-emerges wheeling a beautiful white lounge chair onto the deck, and manoeuvres it into pride of place.

Next she begins to push a series of untidy plastic bags and boxes out to the deck.

The light comes up. And so do the sounds. Summer on the eastern Australian coast. Cicadas. Kookaburras. The wash of the nearby ocean. The distant hum of a lawn mower.

WENDY is in a car on the side of the freeway. The staging suggests that she is trapped: on her driver's side, semi trailers zip past. On her left, the car is pulled off the road against the edge of a sandstone cliff. It is 35 degrees.

She is on the phone.

WENDY: No, I look ... I ... Yes I AM a member ... I told the girl ... oh, it's lapsed.

She rummages madly through a huge untidy tote bag.

Look if I rejoin on the spot can someone ... I'm on the freeway, and it's ... Well, the radio said it was thirty-five degrees. Before it conked out, that is, it was thirty-five. Could very well be more now ... Yes, I know ... holiday traffic ... Christmas ... but it's ... No I CAN'T push the car to a more convenient spot. I'M IN THE MIDDLE OF THE FREEWAY ... Oh ... yes ... It's a Corolla ummmm 1989 ... yes, that's what I said. 1989 ... HOW LONG? ... I'm on my own, you know. So it's really quite urgent. There could be ... well ... health implications. An elderly woman with a heat problem. On her own ...

Her smelly, demented dog Finn appears from the floor of the passenger seat, struggles to climb up on her lap, and begins to turn in circles.

Oh, Finny no. It's too hot ... No, no, I'm still here. No-one ... up to ... Three hours ... Well, I haven't got much choice, have I?

She ends the call.

Oh, Finny you're very smelly, darling.

Finn whines, and she relents, stroking him tenderly. Her phone rings. She looks at it.

Oh fuck ...

And answers.

Hey, Jude ...

Lights up on JUDE on the other side of the stage, now wearing workshirt and trousers, rubber gloves, and an apron.

JUDE: Where ARE you?

WENDY grabs Finn's snout and holds it shut.

WENDY: Sssh ...

JUDE: Wendy?

WENDY: I'm fifteen minutes away. Twenty tops. Just got a bit of a glitch with the car.

JUDE: Oh for ... how much of a glitch?

WENDY: The NRMA's on the way. They might take awhile ... Back in the day, I was a whizz with a spanner. Any old back-of-beyond track. Out I'd hop. A judicious whack or two and off I'd go. But the mobile phone seems to have landed women straight back in the 'helpless damsel' narrative. Quite a comment on the state of contemporary feminism / really ...

She's trying to maintain her grip on Finn's muzzle, as the dog writhes and wriggles.

JUDE: I offered you a lift, Wendy. For God's sake, that junk heap's older than you are—and in even worse shape. I can't even begin to think about its emissions ...

WENDY: Well if it's any consolation, it's not emitting anything right now.

A small whump of a whimper from Finn.

JUDE: Wha—who's there?

WENDY: Nothing. No-one.

A long silence during which WENDY grips on to Finn's muzzle for dear life.

JUDE: Wendy. You haven't brought Finn have you?

Silence.

Wendy?

More silence. WENDY, knowing the game is up, lets go her grip and Finn lets out a plaintive wail.

I asked you not to do that.

WENDY: Told me, more like.

JUDE: We're supposed to be cleaning up the place for sale, not wrecking it. This is not a holiday.

WENDY: I will keep him under control, Jude. But he'll want to honour Sylvie. He'll want to say goodbye.

JUDE: Wendy, he's a dog. You have the most astonishing capacity for anthropomorphism. Well, he'll have to stay outside.

She ends the call. WENDY puts on a snarky face and mimics Jude's 'Well he'll have to stay outside'.

WENDY: If she said anything different I'd die of shock.

Then she tries to adjust herself under the weight of the dog.

I'll do you a deal, Finbo. Let's both watch our emissions, hmmm?

Lights down on WENDY.

JUDE slumps onto the beautiful white chair—the only truly lovely thing in the rather decrepit coastal weekender. She has taken off her gloves and is sending a text message.

JUDE: Wendy's brought the wretched dog after I specifically asked her not to. The place is a bombsite. The only decent thing here, after all these years, is the chair I gave her.

Lights down on JUDE. And up on WENDY. Finn is still on her lap, whining with distress.

WENDY: Oh, Finny, sweetheart. Don't don't don't.

Finn urinates in WENDY's lap.

You did.

She closes her eyes and tries to breathe calmly.

JUDE: Wendy'll still think it's charming. Her own place is a troll's den. You know, I counted sixty-seven dead apple cores in her car once, each encrusted with dog hair. I know what YOU'LL say: you should try to be kinder. In two more days you can say it. To my face.

TWO

JUDE *drags a green garbage bag full of clattering jars and general kitchen rubbish across the deck.*

The metallic grinding and thumping of a machine that has seen better days. Over this, the terrified whimpering of a dog.

WENDY: [*off*] It's all right, darling. It's all right, sweetheart. We're nearly there.

WENDY and Finn enter, WENDY carrying a motley assortment of untidily packed bags.

That inclinor hasn't got any younger.

JUDE stands like a Roman centurion at the door between the deck and the living room.

JUDE: He can't come inside. And don't let him near the chair.

WENDY: And hello to you too.

Here you go, Finny. Go on. Come on. Come and sit in the shade. Feel.

There's a lovely breeze.

She tugs Finn gently to a spot on the deck. Finn whines.

Sit. Sit, Finny. Go on.

WENDY pats the deck.

Sit. There's a good boy.

Nothing.

Finnie. SIT.

She presses down on his rump.

SIT. Sit sit sit sit sit. He was taught. He was well trained. Sit, darling. Sit ...

JUDE sees WENDY's wet skirt.