

# BIELBAH – DOUBLE HELIX

**A music - drama by Mark Dunbar**

Composed March 2009 – January 2010

**Scored for string orchestra, piano & percussion**

(snare drum, claves, marimba, xylophone, vibraphone, bass drum, woodblocks  
slap sticks, timpani, agogo bell)

**9 singer/actors**

**SATB chorus**

## **A NOTE ON THE CHARACTERS**

***Bielbah – Double Helix*** is a work of fiction. While all of the characters are imagined, some are loosely based on historical persons. According to Reid, there was a warrior called Bielbah who, in 1857 organised and led the attack on the Fraser homestead. Similarly Baulie worked as a ‘house-boy’ for the Fraser family. Wessie indeed survived the attack, in which his mother and sisters were raped and killed. He then reputedly rode for three days to Ipswich to inform his brother William. William returned and was a ringleader in the reprisals that largely destroyed the Jiman people along with many other innocent indigenous Australians. Ipetta, as a name, is taken from the Myall Creek massacre. She was one of the aborigines brutally killed in that event. Anderson, according to Milliss, may well have been her lover, as he tried to protect her. Many of the events and details in the story (e.g. the strychnine pudding, the firing of salt, the killing of dogs etc) come from the research. The following books were pivotal in this regard:

Reid, Gordon – *A Nest of Hornets*

Milliss, Roger – *Waterloo Creek*

Wright, Judith – *The Cry for the Dead*

Pybus, Cassandra – *Community of Thieves*

## CHARACTERS

### **BIELBAH 21<sup>st</sup> Century – TENOR**

A black activist in his mid - twenties. Tall, charismatic, messianic in his self belief. A student of his people's history, he has taken on the name and persona of the 19<sup>th</sup> Jiman warrior Bielbah, as his model and hero. He is in love with Ipeta.

### **BIELBAH 19<sup>th</sup> Century – TENOR**

A Jiman warrior in his mid – twenties. Tall and charismatic with prophetic views about the consequences of appeasing the white invaders of his people's lands, he advocates proactive violent resistance before it is too late. The same actor plays both Bielbahs.

### **IPETA – SOPRANO**

A young indigenous woman in her early twenties. Strikingly beautiful. An up-and-coming bureaucrat within the Federal Government's Department of Indigenous Affairs & Quarantine. She is having a clandestine affair with Anderson, her boss. She is an admirer and follower of Bielbah.

### **ANDERSON KILMEISTER – BARITONE**

A high ranking white bureaucrat within the Department of Indigenous Affairs & Quarantine. He is in his late thirties, confident with a genuine belief in the correctness of the government's policies concerning indigenous people.

### **BAULIE - TENOR**

A non – Jiman indigenous adolescent about 17 years old. He works for the Fraser's as their house-boy. He has a fun-loving nature and plays the clown. Good friends with Wessie.

**WESSIE (SYLVESTER) FRASER – HIGH TENOR (TREBLE)**

The 14 year old son of Martha and John Fraser. Younger brother to Elizabeth and William, the latter he especially admires. Precocious, especially in his bush-craft skills, he is particularly keen to learn from Baulie with whom he plays and exchanges children's games.

**MARTHA FRASER (nee Pithers) – MEZZO SOPRANO**

A white woman 43 years old. Mother of eight, including William, Elizabeth and Wessie. She has been recently widowed.

**ELIZABETH FRASER - SOPRANO**

Nineteen year old daughter of Martha. She dreams of princesses and gallant courtship but is stuck in the reality of dust and despair.

**WILLIAM FRASER - BARITONE**

Twenty five year old son of Martha. The head of the family since the death of their father, John Fraser of dysentery a year ago.

**PEAWADDY – BASS**

A Wakka Wakka tribal elder. He is the upholder of the law and fears the consequences of Bielbah's impetuosity.

**WARRIORS** from the Jiman, Wakka Wakka, Goreng Goreng, Mandandanji, and Kungabula peoples.

**POLICE****BIELBAH'S FOLLOWERS (21<sup>st</sup> century)**

# LIBRETTO

Text in ***bold & italics*** indicate sung lyrics

**SCENE 1**  
**INTERIOR OFFICE, CANBERRA**  
**FRIDAY DECEMBER 15, 2015. 3am**

BIELBAH, IPETA AND THEIR FOLLOWERS MOVE AROUND THE SPACE CONSPIRATORIALLY AND PULSATING TO THE MUSICAL RHYTHM. THE LIGHTS ARE LOW. IT IS UNCLEAR WHAT THEY ARE UP TO, BUT IT IS CLANDESTINE, HIGH-TENSION AND PROBABLY NO GOOD. THEY COALESCE AS A GROUP AROUND A SMALL OFFICE TABLE.

BIELBAH: Listen...did you hear anything?

SUDDEN BRIGHT LIGHTS, NOISE AND MAYHEM. POLICE ENTER THE ROOM YELLING AND BRUTAL. A FIGHT SCENE PLAYS OUT, HIGHLY CHOREOGRAPHED, STYLISED AND DANCE-LIKE. POLICE PERIODICALLY YELL:

COP CHORUS: ***Nigger***

1<sup>ST</sup> COP: ***On the floor***

COP CHORUS: ***Pull the trigger nigger, nigger, nigger... pull the trigger***  
***Nigger, nigger... pull the trigger***  
***Nigger... pull the trigger***

AMIDST THE CONFUSION AND PANIC IPETA STANDS STOCK STILL, WATCHING WITH HORROR. A COP, AGGRESSIVE AND ARMED POINTEDLY SEES HER, SMILES AND IGNORES HER, MOVING ON TO ATTACK ANOTHER. BIELBAH TRIES TO ESCAPE CALLING TO IPETA:

BIELBAH:            ***Ipeta...it's too late...Ipeta do it now...dial the number.***

BIELBAH IS HIT WITH A BATON, STAGGERS, FIGHTS OFF HIS ATTACKER AND YELLS AGAIN:

BIELBAH:            ***Hit the fucking number Ipeta!***

BIELBAH RUNS TOWARD THE DOOR TO ESCAPE. A SHOT IS HEARD, BIELBAH FALLS.

POLICEMAN:        ***Settled the bastard.***

IPETA RUNS TO BIELBAH, SCREAMING.

IPETA:              ***Bielbah... Bielbah!***

LIGHTS GO TO BLACK, AND THEN A SLOW FADE UP AS THE PLAYERS TAKE THEIR POSITIONS AND ROLES FOR THE 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY STORY. THIS STORY SHOULD BE PLAYED WITH A HEIGHTENED REALITY THROUGHOUT, ALMOST DREAMLIKE. IT COULD IN FACT BE BIELBAH'S PAST FLASHING BEFORE HIS EYES BEFORE DEATH.

**SCENE 2****EXTERIOR, HORNET BANK STATION, 1857**

A GROUP OF ABORIGINES GATHER AROUND A MAKESHIFT CAMP. SOME ARE OBVIOUSLY WOUNDED. OTHERS APPEAR TO BE SICK AND IN MUCH DISCOMFORT AND PAIN. THERE IS A FIRE BURNING, WOMEN ARE TENDING IT AND PLACING DAMPER AND A FEW ROOT VEGETABLES IN THE COALS TO COOK. A GROUP OF MEN, LED BY PEAWADDY BRING IN A DEAD SHEEP. THEY PREPARE IT FOR THE COOKING FIRE. THE CAMP IS ODDLY ABSENT OF DOGS. DURING THE ABOVE THE CLAN CHORUS IS SUNG.

CLAN CHORUS: *What, what woe crowns us?  
 Not before sung  
 Oh what woe  
 Apparitions come  
 Crows of blood and mayhem  
 Thunderous tumult  
 Deafening swift  
 Undanced beasts howl through us  
 Spitting death-seed  
 From hot stick- arms  
 What calamity fells us?  
 Not told on stone  
 And then dawn quiet and gone  
 Every dog lies cold  
 No lolling tongue  
 Every dog lies still  
 Crimson and clotted  
 Oh what woe befalls us?  
 Not danced nor sung*

**SCENE 3****INTERIOR OFFICE, CANBERRA****FRIDAY DECEMBER 15, 2015. 2:30am**

LOW LIGHTS, SHADOWY. TORCHES FLASH, CARVING SHAFTS OF LIGHT THROUGH THE GLOOM. MUSIC BUILDS IN INTENSITY. SIGNS OF SECURITY PARAPHERNALIA, KEY CODES BEING ENTERED, SWIPE CARDS BEING SWIPED. BIELBAH, IPETA AND THEIR SIX FOLLOWERS ARE ENTERING A SMALL ROOM THAT AJOINS THE MAIN CHAMBER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES. IPETA IS SUPPLYING THE CODES THAT HAVE GAINED THEM ACCESS INTO THIS INNER SANCTUM.

THE GROUP IS ENTERING PARLIAMENT HOUSE IN THE EARLY HOURS OF THE MORNING BEFORE THE KING WILL OFFICIALLY OPEN PARLIAMENT. THEY CARRY BAGS WITH ELECTRONIC DETONATION AND TRIGGER DEVICES. THEY ARE SETTING UP THE TRIGGER DEVICE TO ENABLE THEM TO DETONATE AN EXPLOSION BY MOBILE PHONE REMOTE CONTROL. CERTAIN PHRASES ARE PERIODICALLY SUNG AS PART OF THE MUSICAL STRUCTURE TO INDICATE THEIR PROGRESS AND INTENT:

BIELBAH:            ***Ipeta, clearance code***

IPETA:                ***This way Bielbah... follow me***  
                           ***Keep close, Bielbah***

FOLLOWERS,        ***This is the Regal Room where His Royal Highness will***  
 IPETA, BIELBAH: ***be settled before the opening. This is the place we***  
                           ***agreed, closest to the door. Ipeta, set the trigger device***

**SCENE 4****EXTERIOR, HORNET BANK STATION 1857**

THE CLAN IS EATING, ALL EXCEPT BIELBAH. A WOMAN OFFERS BIELBAH DAMPER.

WOMAN:           ***Hast thou no appetite?  
Great warrior  
Even thine spirit needs sup***

BIELBAH GENTLY PUSHES HER AWAY

BIELBAH:       ***What rampant pestilence names thee food?  
Given thee in pinched malice  
To smite thee slowly  
White haired beast, white grain, white stinging shot  
The soil that rears us all is black  
Contagion is white hot***

PEAWADDY STANDS TO ADDRESS THE CLAN.

PEAWADDY:      ***An old man dost seek leave to speak  
Canst thou grant his wish?***

CLAN CHORUS:   ***Yea, old one yea, please may we hear thee speak  
Though we be ill and weak  
Thy words cool his coals  
Look ye to it  
Peawaddy speak  
Wise old man speak***



***Peawaddy speak***

PEAWADDY: ***Countless suns dost caress our skin  
 Coloring us  
 Numberless fires hath split the sky  
 In warning  
 Bones dry white  
 Knoweth thou to turn away from grinning skulls  
 As the pale ancestor groans  
 Brittle thine bone, brittle thine bone***

CLAN CHORUS: ***Our sickness wise one  
 From whence is the trigger?  
 First the dogs all dead  
 Now we seemest all to be frail  
 What sayest thou?***

PEAWADDY: ***If only one among us...***

CLAN CHORUS: ***(Or in truth more)***

PEAWADDY: ***Doth sicken them who came before***

CLAN CHORUS: ***Ancestors pure***

PEAWADDY: ***Then in sickness, sickness is meted out  
 And all canst drink from sorrow's fount  
 A sore lies on the limb  
 Thou seest but a secret sign  
 Yet under the skin lies grave contagion  
 That, if not sucked out, will destroy thee in time  
 Will destroy thee in time***

CLAN CHORUS: ***Of whom wouldst thou speak, feared one  
 Who amongst us***

***So offensive to thine laws and thee?***

**BIELBAH:** ***He speaks of me!***

**PEAWADDY:** ***I name no names***

**BIELBAH:** ***(I'm not to blame)***

**PEAWADDY:** ***Old fingers art blunt***

**BIELBAH:** ***(They point all the same)***

**PEAWADDY &** ***Honour alone points to what hath been done***

**BIELBAH:** ***Honour alone points to what hath been done***

**BIELBAH:** ***Thou sayest well and true old man  
And in the best of times I hath erred  
Deserving censure and wrath***

**CLAN CHORUS:** ***Why dost thou sayest thus?  
Art thou mad O Bielbah?  
Thine honour is like a scar  
Won through pain, pridefully worn***

**BIELBAH:** ***If the Beforers were ever among us  
Now banished they be!***

**CLAN CHORUS:** ***Stop thy mouth, this is blasphemy!***

**BIELBAH:** ***Truly, I say unto thee  
If the Beforers were once among us  
They be now banished  
Fled from a force  
Whose deathly spell***

*Like a pallor hangs  
Abandoning us to our fretful fate*

CLAN CHORUS: *Art thine words not soiled brave Bielbah,  
Art thine words not a punishable crime?*

BIELBAH: *Wait and listen before thou judgest me, my people.*

PEAWADDY: *Yea... let him speak it out.*

BIELBAH: *From fire, sturdier seeds are hewn*

CLAN CHORUS: *He speaks true*

BIELBAH: *From violent skies, sweet shoots sprig upward  
By our own hands must we heal this sore  
Accomplish what*

CLAN CHORUS: *What to do?*

BIELBAH: *We hath done before  
Insipidness and doubt art our fatal flaw  
So I sayest plain/canst thou listen to me?*

CLAN CHORUS: *(Rise up)*

BIELBAH: *Rise up  
Hast thou eyes to seest?  
All is around us  
The choice is stark  
Resist or die out!*

**SCENE 5****INTERIOR ROOM, CANBERRA****THURSDAY DECEMBER 14, 2015. 7pm**

ANDERSON AND IPETA ARE PLACED IN SEPARATE AREAS OF THE SPACE BOTH ARE ON THE TELEPHONE.

ANDERSON: Hello, Anderson Kilmeister speaking.

IPETA SPEAKS, HEAVILY DISGUIISING HER VOICE. THE PHONE IS COVERED WITH CLOTH.

IPETA: Stay away from tomorrow's ceremony or you may not live to regret it.

ANDERSON: Come again? Who is this please?

IPETA: Stay away. You have been warned...please...

IPETA HANGS UP. LIGHTS OUT ON HER.

ANDERSON: Who the hell is this...is this a joke?

ANDERSON LOOKS AT THE PHONE AND REALISES THE PHONE IS DEAD. HE PUTS THE PHONE IN HIS POCKET. THERE IS A MOMENT FOR THOUGHT, AND THEN HE RETRIEVES HIS PHONE AND DIALS.

ANDERSON: Yes, put me through to Mr. Hooverman, Federal Police...it's Anderson Kilmeister, First Under Secretary, Department of

Indigenous Affairs and Quarantine, (LONG PAUSE) then  
fucking find him!

## SCENE 6

### EXTERIOR, HORNET BANK STATION 1857

PEAWADDY LEADS THE CLAN IN A RITUAL DANCE TO SEEK TO APPEASE  
THE OFFENDED SPIRITS. THE DANCE IS FULL OF SOLEMN DIGNITY.  
BIELBAH WATCHES ON BUT DOES NOT PARTICIPATE. HE STANDS ALONE  
WITH HIS THOUGHTS UNDER A SINGLE TIGHT SPOT LIGHT.

CLAN CHORUS: *Fine Beforers*  
*Fine Beforers* etc (long chant)

*Bright Beforers*  
*Remove thine blight*  
*And restore us*  
*Humbly we honour and beseech thee* (entire verse x 3)  
*Humbly we honour and...*

SUDDENLY THERE IS GUNFIRE FROM THE HOMESTEAD. LAUGHTER IS  
HEARD OFF STAGE. WILLIAM AND WESSIE ENTER IN A SINGLE TIGHT  
SPOTLIGHT LAUGHING AND FIRING.

WILLIAM: *Wessie!*  
*Great sport*  
WESSIE: *Great sport*  
BOTH: *Look at them scatter*  
WILLIAM: *Great sport, Wessie look at them scatter*  
BOTH: *The salt has 'em on the hop*

WILLIAM:           **Wessie**

BOTH:               **The salt has got them, the salt has got them**  
**The salt has got them on the hop**

WILLIAM:           **Wessie**

BOTH:               **Look at them scatter**

WILLIAM:           **Great sport, Wessie**

BOTH:               **Look at them scatter**

WILLIAM:           **Hit the tall one**

WESSIE:            **Okay**

WILLIAM:           **Wessie**  
**He's so stupid he doesn't even run**

BOTH:               **Doesn't even run**  
**Trigger, scatter**

WHILE THE CLAN SCATTER, BIELBAH STANDS STOCK STILL AND TAKES THE HITS IMPERVIOUS AND IMPERIOUS.

WILLIAM (yells):   **Settled the bastards!**

MARTHA (off stage):   William, Wessie do you think we are made of salt?  
Give your trigger-fingers a rest.  
Stop wasting our salt tormenting the nigger.

WESSIE (off stage):    Sorry mumma, it's just a bit 'o fun.

THE CLAN SLOWLY RE-GATHERS AND HESITATINGLY RECOMMENCES THEIR RITUAL THAT WILL GO ON THROUGHOUT THE NIGHT.

CLAN CHORUS: ***Bright before us  
Remove thine blight  
And restore us  
Humbly we honour and beseech thee***

CLAN CHORUS: ***Great Beforers, great Beforers  
Fine Beforers, fine Beforers  
Bright Beforers, bright Beforers*** etc (long chant)

## **SCENE 7**

**INTERIOR PARLIAMENT HOUSE, CANBERRA.**

**THURSDAY DECEMBER 14, 2015. 3pm**

THE CLAN CHANT AND DANCE SEGUES INTO BIELBAH AND HIS FOLLOWERS REHEARSING THEIR DANCE. THERE IS AN ON-STAGE BAND COMPRISING ONE CLAP STICK PLAYER AND TWO DIDGE PLAYERS. ONE DIDGE IS REAL, THE OTHER IS LARGER AND A FAKE. IT LOOKS SUSPICIOUS. BIELBAH HEADS UP THE MOB OF DANCERS. THEY ARE DRESSED IN LAP-LAPS AND PAINTED UP GAUDILY. THEY LOOK AWKWARD AND UNCOMFORTABLE, ALMOST COMICAL. THEY SING NONSENSE WORDS, A PARODY OF AN ABORIGINAL LANGUAGE. IPETA AND ANDERSON ARE WATCHING THEIR PROGRESS.

DANCE CHORUS: ***Ummanidjirumma  
Wangawangabuma  
Stila eh Stila eh brrrrrr.....  
Ummanidjirumma  
Wangawangabuma  
Stila eh! Stila eh!  
Uh, uh, uh, uh, uh, uh, eh!***

BIELBAH TAKES A SOLO IN THE DANCE IMITATING A KANGAROO. HE TRIPS AND QUICKLY CONVERTS IT INTO A LARGE JUMP. IPETA HAS HER HEAD IN HER HANDS CRINGING AT HIS INEPTITUDE. BIELBAH, ALL BRAVADO CONTINUES AND WINKS AT IPETA. ANDERSON LOOKS ON DEEPLY IMPRESSED, NOT NOTICING BIELBAH'S OBVIOUS FAKERY.

IPETA, INCREASINGLY NERVOUS THAT ANDERSON WILL SEE THAT THEY ARE NOT REALLY DANCERS, BEGINS TO DISTRACT HIM FLIRTATIVELY. SHE LEANS INTO HIS EAR AND WHISPERS, WHILE TRAILING HER FINGERS PROVOCATIVELY DOWN HIS TORSO. HE TAKES HER HAND AND LEADS HER INTO ANOTHER ROOM. BEFORE SHE ENTERS THE ROOM, IPETA QUICKLY TURNS TO BIELBAH AND HOLDS UP HER TEN FINGERS SIGNALING THEY HAVE TEN MINUTES. SHE EXITS.

THE DANCERS SUDDENLY STOP AS DOES THE SINGING. ONE DIDGE CONTINUES TO PLAY, PROVIDING A SEMBLANCE OF COVER FOR THEIR ACTUAL PURPOSE. BIELBAH AND HIS FOLLOWERS HURRIEDLY REMOVE MATERIAL FROM THE OTHER LARGE, FAKE DIDGE AND BEGIN TO ASSEMBLE AND PLANT THE BOMB.

## **SCENE 8**

### **INTERIOR, HORNET BANK HOMESTEAD 1857**

MARTHA IS MIXING INGREDIENTS FOR A CHRISTMAS PUDDING. BAULIE IS TRYING TO MAKE HIMSELF LOOK BUSY CURSORILY DUSTING. WILLIAM IS LOUNGING IN A CHAIR.

MARTHA:                    *In Cornwall it rarely rains*  
                                   *Christmas is mild but the wind doth blow*



***The green grasses bow  
In Cornwall I was born  
Beloved home***

***Poor saplings in a storm  
The gales blow fierce and hard  
From the churning sea  
Cornwall***

***And maidens hide in their homes  
Singing carols on the yuletide  
On the yuletide singing carols on the yuletide  
Singing carols on the yuletide***

***A Christmas pudding our cockles do warm  
And bring you luck if you uncover  
The secret farthing baked inside  
Glint promise for a new dawn***

WILLIAM/MARTHA: ***A Christmas pudding our cockles do warm  
And brings you luck if you uncover  
The secret farthing baked inside  
Glint promise for a new dawn***

MARTHA: Baulie. Come here my dusky darlin'...  
Look William...I think he understands me.

WILLIAM: Like a dog understands, Mother.  
Tone of voice, not actual words.  
Grunts will do for these black apes.

MARTHA: I think you underestimate them...  
More akin to us than you think.

WILLIAM: You don't know them like I do mother.  
Haven't seen 'em like I have.  
This one's acting tame for now...  
but out there, fornication and treachery.  
Nigger is an offense against nature!

MARTHA: William! Please, it's Christmas...  
think of your father, God rest his soul, it's been a year...  
Baulie look... I'm baking you a special pudding,  
a Christmas pudding for you...and your own.

WILLIAM: Wouldn't know puddin' from pig shit!

MARTHA: Need more flour, it's far too moist.

MARTHA EXITS TO FETCH MORE FLOUR. WILLIAM JUMPS UP PURPOSEFULLY, AS IF WAITING FOR AN OPPORTUNITY AND TAKES A HANDKERCHIEF FROM A POCKET. HE CAREFULLY UNTIES THE KNOT IN THE HANDKERCHIEF AND GINGERLY TIPS ITS CONTENTS INTO THE CAKE, STIRRING IT IN. HE ADDS STRYCHNINE TO THE MIX. BAULIE IS WATCHING ON. MARTHA IS SINGING FROM THE NEXT ROOM.

MARTHA (off-stage): ***A Christmas pudding our cockles warm  
And brings you luck if you uncover  
The secret farthing baked inside  
Glint promise for a new dawn***

MARTHA RE-ENTERS AND ADDS FLOUR TO MIX, STIRING IT IN

MARTHA: That's peculiar...it doesn't seem quite as moist now.

WILLIAM/MARTHA: ***A Christmas pudding our cockles do warm  
And brings you luck if you uncover  
The secret farthing baked inside  
Glint promise for a new dawn***

## SCENE 9

INTERIOR BEDROOM, CANBERRA 2015

MONDAY DECEMBER 11, 2015. 10am

IPETA AND ANDERSON ARE IN BED TOGETHER POST COITAL AND PLAYFUL. THE LINES ARE INTERLACED WITH KISSES, CARESSES AND GENERAL FLIRTATIOUSNESS.

IPETA: ***Who's a clever little gin then?***

ANDERSON: ***You are my sucky sweet***

IPETA: ***I must tell a dark secret...***

ANDERSON: ***Shit, you promised you'd be discreet!  
Yes you promised***

IPETA: ***Did I promise?***

BOTH: ***You'd/l'd be discreet***

ANDERSON: ***I could lose my job, the Minister's a prude***

IPETA: ***Or get a raise, head hunted, promoted at his behest***

ANDERSON: ***Now you've got me curious***

IPETA: ***So listen... be impressed!***

IPETA: ***After searching high and low***

ANDERSON: ***I'm listening I'm all ears***

IPETA: ***Scouring nooks only us darkies know***

ANDERSON: ***Yes, yes...***

IPETA: ***I found a group prepared...***

ANDERSON: ***To dance for the King's show!***

IPETA: ***To dance for the King's bloody show!***

BOTH: ***To dance, to dance, to dance for the King's bloody show!***

ANDERSON CLAPS HIS HANDS CHILDISHLY AND KISSES IPETA  
EXCITEDLY.

IPETA: ***Who's a clever little gin then?***

ANDERSON: ***You are my savory sweet***

IPETA: ***I deserve a big reward***

ANDERSON: ***Yes you do... I'm at your feet!  
Yes you do, yes you do***

BOTH: ***yes you/I do, I'm/you're at your/my feet!***

IPETA: ***It wasn't an easy task you know***

ANDERSON: ***I don't get their hostile stance***

IPETA: ***Your government is on the nose***

IPETA: ***Around that pong no-one wants to dance!***

ANDERSON: ***Who did you find then?***

ANDERSON: ***Do they look the part?***

IPETA: ***Relax they're tribal, authentic, so black***

IPETA: ***Wild men, even I can't tell them apart  
Wild men, but with tame throbbing hearts***

ANDERSON: (spoken) That's settled then, sounds gorgeous!

ANDERSON: ***Ipeta... you're amazing***

IPETA: ***Thank you but there's stuff you must provide***

ANDERSON: ***For you my love, simply name it***

ANDERSON: ***Your panache has saved my hide!  
Your panache, yes your panache...***

IPETA: ***My panache, panache***  
BOTH: ***has saved my/your hide!***

IPETA: ***These wild blacks will need time to practice***

ANDERSON: ***I'm listening I'm all ears***

IPETA: ***To acclimatise to your marble floors***  
***They're used to red dust and trees***

ANDERSON: Shit is that all, the House of reps is free the arvo before the gig. I'll book it for three then.

ANDERSON: ***At the run through I have to be there***

IPETA: ***Yeah I know damn security***

IPETA: ***But maybe at the performance***

IPETA: ***You might stay away sweet pea?***

ANDERSON: ***That's crazy, absurd, insane, impossible...***

ANDERSON: ***This is my bloody do***

IPETA: ***I'd be so nervous with you there, and besides***

IPETA: ***I'd do the bloody same for you!***

ANDERSON: ***I get it, you're afraid you'll be spotted***

IPETA: *I'm listening I'm all ears*

ANDERSON: *Seen by your black mates cavorting with the devil*

ANDERSON: *But they already know you work for me*

IPETA: *And truly think I'm unstable!*

IPETA: *Please Andy, don't forget I found your token dancers*

ANDERSON: *You moved a mountain that I know*

IPETA: *So I'm asking in return*

ANDERSON: *That I don't come to my own bloody show...no go!*

IPETA: *Please, Andy pretty please*

ANDERSON: *Ipeta you're such a strange fish*

BOTH: *I love you, do anything, you know that*

IPETA: *Well then indulge this strange fish wish*

**SCENE 10****INTERIOR, HORNET BANK HOMESTEAD 1857**

MARTHA AND ELIZABETH ARE COOKING. WESSIE AND BAULIE ARE PLAYING MARBLES ON THE FLOOR. IN THE DISTANCE BIELBAH'S CLAN IS CHANTING.

MARTHA: *When I dream*

ELIZABETH: *I dream in pretty lace*

MARTHA: *When I dream*

CLAN CHORUS: *Bright Beforers*

(Off-stage) *Remove thine blight*

MARTHA: *When I dream*

ELIZABETH: *I dream in pretty lace*

CLAN CHORUS: *And restore us*

*Humbly we honour and beseech thee*

ELIZABETH: *When I dream*

*I dream in pretty lace*

*When I dream*

*Gentlemen gather near*

*To glimpse my alabaster face*

*When I dream, when I dream, when I dream*

*I raise a timid veil*

*I let it slip across my face*

*A maiden's virtue is her honour*

*A maiden's word is her solemn vow*



MARTHA: Elizabeth, stop day-dreaming and stoke the fire!  
I've mouths to feed...move it please.

ELIZABETH: ***This inferno shreds my dress***  
***The sun never dies***  
***I can't sleep, a ribbon all untied***  
***My ribbon all untied***

ELIZABETH TOSSES A RAISIN TO BAULIE ON THE FLOOR. HE PICKS IT UP  
AND EATS IT.

MARTHA: Lizzie, how many times have I told you, he is not a  
dog...don't throw food to him like that...he must learn to eat  
civilly.

CLAN CHORUS: ***Great Beforers***  
(Off-stage) ***Fine Beforers***  
***Bright Beforers*** (chant: many times)

THE SOUND OF GUNSHOT IN THE DISTANCE SILENCES THE CHANT

ELIZABETH: ***Mumma ooh...can't you hear them howl***  
***They moan like curs***  
***They're filthy, naked everyone, all***  
***Billy says they're not real human beings at all***  
***But devils in disguise, frightful eyes***  
***Horrid eyes, hungry eyes, horrid eyes***  
***He says they just won't work***  
***A human being should plow the earth***

***Cannibals, or something even worse  
They suck the marrow from raw bones barely cold,  
Billy says, Billy says***

DURING THE FOLLOWING TEXT THE CLAN GATHERS IN THE SHADOWS

MARTHA: Bah... your brother's vivid all right; he'd do better to think about buying good breeding stock in Ipswich, instead he's out rousing blacks with ex-convicts who don't know any better. Who knows what mischief he's making rushing those young, naked gins...as if firing salt at their men-folk isn't torment enough...settlers, we are trying to settle...

ELIZ/MARTHA: ***Billie quieted all their dogs***

CLAN CHORUS: ***Every dog is still now***

ELIZ/MARTHA: ***Prancing round the nigger gait***

CLAN CHORUS: ***No wagging tails before the hunt now***

ELIZ/MARTHA: ***Tongues lolling, licking sores***

CLAN CHORUS: ***Licking children laughing eyes***

ELIZ/MARTHA: ***He and Wessie gave them bait  
When I dream, when I dream***

CLAN CHORUS: ***We used to dream, we can't dream***

ELIZ/MARTHA: ***Mumma ooh...can't you hear them howl***  
***They moan like curs***  
***They're terrifying me/you***

MARTHA: Then he goes and poisons their dogs, they sang that dirge for weeks after that, noisier than the mutts...for the life of me I can't see what pleasure it brings him... and it's hardly responsible, since your father passed on, William is the head now, and dog baiting is not a priority when we have a run to fill with sheep. Where is he anyway? He should be getting the dray ready for Ipswich, weather provided, and God willing, he is to be leaving in two days for the sales...

AT THIS LAST PIECE OF INFORMATION BAULIE STOPS PLAYING THE GAME WITH WESSIE AND TURNS HIS HEAD TOWARD MARTHA.

MARTHA: See that Lizzie, I am sure he understands us.

ELIZABETH: ***When I dream***  
***I dream in pretty lace***  
***When I dream***  
***Gentlemen gather near***  
***To glimpse my alabaster face***  
***When I dream, when I dream, when I dream***  
***I raise a timid veil***  
***I let it slip across my face***  
***A maiden's virtue is her honour***  
***A maiden's word is her solemn vow***  
***When I dream, when I dream, when I dream***  
***When I dream, when I dream, when I dream***

**SCENE 11****INTERIOR LOUNGE, CANBERRA 2015****SUNDAY DECEMBER 10, 2015. 4pm**

BIELBAH AND HIS FOLLOWERS ARE REHEARSING THEIR DANCE FOR THE OPENING CEREMONY. THEY ARE IN COSTUME, PAINTED UP AND AWKWARD.

DANCE CHORUS: *Ummanidjirumma*  
*Wangawangabuma*  
*Stila eh Stila eh brrrrrr.....*  
*Ummanidjirumma*  
*Wangawangabuma*  
*Stila eh! Stila eh!*  
*Uh, uh, uh, uh, uh, uh, eh!*

SOMETHING GOES WRONG AND TWO DANCERS COLLIDE. THE TROUPE COLLAPSES INTO FITS OF LAUGHTER MID-PERFORMANCE

IPETA (laughing): Call yaself black fellas...I seen betta shake-a-leg when me dog takes a piss... (Laughs) nah only gammin.

BIELBAH (in fits): Speakin a takin the piss...

FOLLOWER: Ya need a geel eh? That why ya hurryin' all the moves brus?

BIELBAH: Anymore piss-takin' and I'll die of exhaustion.

FOLLOWER: Me too bro, lets have a rest...time for a durri?

IPETA (serious): Bullshit a break, we only just started...this gotta be convincing, (PUTTING ON HER PUBLIC SERVICE VOICE) my reputation is at stake...

BIELBAH: Ah...white lover-boy won't care, long as we look black, (WITH MALICE) wouldn't know puddin' from pig shit!

IPETA: (DEFENSIVELY) Lay off him, he's OK...anyhow youse all be laughin' from the other side of ya mouths when yas gotta dance in fronta all those white VIPs...and da bloody Kinga England.

BIELBAH: Ooh, we're so scared!

ALL EXCEPT IPETA DIE LAUGHING

IPETA: OK, enough fuckin' foolin' around now...let's go from the top...

THE REHEARSAL RESUMES, THIS TIME WITH MORE APLOMB

DANCE CHORUS: ***Ummanidjirumma***  
***Wangawangabuma***  
***Stila eh Stila eh brrrrrr.....***  
***Ummanidjirumma***  
***Wangawangabuma***  
***Stila eh! Stila eh!***  
***Uh, uh, uh, uh, uh, uh, eh!***

**SCENE 12****EXTERIOR, HORNET BANK STATION 1857**

THE CLAN'S RITUAL DANCE CONTINUES. BAULIE IS NOW WITH THEM.

CLAN CHORUS: ***Great Beforers, ah, ah...***  
***Fine Beforers***  
***Bright Beforers*** (chant: many times)

PEAWADDY/BIELBAH: ***Great Beforers,***  
***Fine Beforers...*** (Chant: many times)

CLAN CHORUS: ***Great Beforers***  
***Remove thine blight***  
***And restore us***  
***Humbly we honour and beseech thee***  
***Humbly we honour and beseech thee***  
***Humbly we honour and beseech thee***

WESSIE APPROACHES THE CAMP. HE CARRIES A LARGE FLOUR SACK. THE DANCE STOPS SUDDENLY. THE INCANTATION HAS BEEN TAINTED BY WESSIE'S PRESENCE.

WESSIE (SLOWLY): Pud – ding...

BIELBAH: ***Peawaddy, I shall slayest him?***

PEAWADDY: ***Nay Bielbah settle, nay***

BIELBAH: ***He hast defiled the dancing ground***

PEAWADDY:        ***He's but a child of innocence unworthy of your wrath  
Red embers glowing  
Red embers glowing hot***

BIELBAH:         ***He defiles sacred land  
Beforers teach vengeance, now he must die***

PEAWADDY:       ***I, not thou hold the law***

BIELBAH:         ***One land, one law, all equal in it***

PEAWADDY:       ***Let us move from this sacred dance, let us hear what  
word he bringeth***

BIELBAH:         ***Red embers burn  
Old man too gentle***

CHORUS:          ***Red embers burn, red embers burn etc***

BIELBAH:         ***Red embers burn  
We will pay***

PEAWADDY:       ***Let us hear what the boy has to say***

WESSIE PUTS DOWN HIS SACK, UNKNOTS THE TOP AND REACHES INTO IT. BIELBAH VISIBLY BRISTLES. WESSIE TAKES A LARGE CHRISTMAS PUDDING OUT OF THE SACK AND OFFERS IT TO BAULIE.

WESSIE:           Pud – ding...for Chris' – mas

WESSIE: *Baulie, mumma says you understand  
At Christmas we eat special pudding  
Baulie, it has a lucky silver charm  
Mumma baked this for you and your family*

PEAWADDY: *He seemeth friendly bearing a gift*

BIELBAH: *I've heard that voice before*

PEAWADDY: *Calm thyself Bielbah  
We cannot learn of this mystery  
If we do see the embers of anger*

BIELBAH: *Peawaddy knowest well that voice?  
It sounds with the rain of fire  
That burns holes in flesh  
Brings death  
No good can come of this  
Treacherous words, magic gifts  
No good can come of this  
Treacherous words, magic gifts*

BAULIE RUSHES TO WESSIE AND SUDDENLY HITS THE PUDDING FROM WESSIE'S GRASP. IT FALLS TO THE GROUND

BIELBAH/PEAWADDY: *Red embers burn*

CHORUS: *Red throats on fire  
Our lips burn and blister  
Red embers burn  
Red throats on fire  
Our lips burn and blister*



PEAWADDY:     ***Red embers burn... etc***  
 BIELBAH:       ***Red embers burn***  
 CHORUS:        ***Red throats on fire***  
                   ***Our lips burn and blister***  
                   ***Red embers burn***  
                   ***Red throats on fire***  
                   ***Our lips burn and blister***  
 BIELBAH:       ***Old man too gentle***  
                   ***Red embers burn***  
                   ***We will pay***

THE CHORUS LEAVE DURING THEIR LAST CHORUS

PEAWADDY:     ***Red embers burn... etc***  
 BIELBAH:       ***Red embers burn***  
                   ***Old man too gentle***  
                   ***Red embers burn***  
                   ***Old man too gentle***

**SCENE 13****INTERIOR LOUNGE, CANBERRA 2015****SUNDAY DECEMBER 10, 2015. 11am**

IPETA:                    *You were brilliant*  
                               *Never heard you speak so well*  
                               *Simply stunning*  
                               *Do you think this could really change things?*  
                               *Do you think this could really change things?*  
                               *Do you think this could?*

BIELBAH:                *Forever*  
                               *If we don't we're really done for*  
                               *So this guy, your boss Anderson Kilmeister?*

BOTH:                    *What a name!*

IPETA:                    *He's desperate coz not one black*  
                               *Will do his welcome dance for the opening ceremony*

BIELBAH:                *Yeah right, same old...*

IPETA:                    *He's not too bad you know*  
                               *As far as bosses go*  
                               *He begged me to find someone, anyone*

BOTH:                    *As long as they look black!*

BIELBAH:                *Yeah typical*

IPETA:                    *Yeah typical*

BIELBAH: *Yeah typical*

BOTH: *Yeah typical*

IPETA: *Said I'd do what I can*

*You should have seen his face*

*So grateful*

*Should have seen his big puppy-dog eyes*

IPETA: (spoken) He gave me this...my boss gave me a present...ridiculous!

IPETA SHOWS BIELBAH THE CHRISTMAS PUDDING ANDERSON HAS GIVEN HER. THERE IS A FROZEN MOMENT AS BIELBAH RE-LIVES THE DNA CONNECTION TO THE STRYCHNINE-LACED PUDDINGS OF HIS FOREBEARS. HE SUDDENLY GRABS THE PUDDING FROM IPETA AND THROWS IT VIOLENTLY AGAINST A WALL.

**SCENE 14****INTERIOR LOUNGE, CANBERRA 2015****SATURDAY DECEMBER 9, 2015. 9pm****EXTERIOR, HORNET BANK STATION 1857**

THE TWO STORIES MEET, BOTH BIELBAHS ARE WITH THEIR FOLLOWERS AND OUTLINE THEIR PLAN. THERE SHOULD BE AN AMBIGUITY BETWEEN WHICH BIELBAH IS SPEAKING.

MALE CHORUS: *Poison and slaughter  
Brain splatter on the run  
Hunter now the cowering roo  
Blood and shit and torn sinew*

FULL CHORUS: *Slaughter and poison  
Skin torn and shot, shot through  
Woman, child too cut to run  
Death and stench and feeble sun  
Lying helpless gulping air  
Warrior now vacant stare*

FEMALE CHORUS: *Oh what corruption  
What evil terror  
Rained this disaster  
One full moon night?  
The gash gapes open  
The wound won't mend  
We crouch together  
Await the end*

MALE CHORUS: *Poison and slaughter  
Brain splatter on the run  
Hunter now the cowering roo  
Blood and shit and torn sinew*

FULL CHORUS: *Slaughter and poison  
Skin torn and shot, shot through  
Woman, child too cut to run  
Death and stench and feeble sun  
Lying helpless gulping air  
Warrior now vacant stare*

*Run for my life to save our skin  
So many dead all kith and kin  
Then when hushed we keep on falling  
From plague and the cough and boils of pox  
Bodies lie still upon the rocks  
Entrail feast for swarming flies*

MALE CHORUS: *Poison and slaughter  
Brain splatter on the run  
Hunter now the cowering roo  
Blood and shit and torn sinew*

FULL CHORUS: *Slaughter and poison  
Skin torn and shot, shot through  
Woman, child too cut to run  
Death and stench and feeble sun  
Lying helpless gulping air  
Warrior now vacant stare*

A WOMAN EMERGES FROM THE CHORUS.

WOMAN:            *Then one day this world was born*  
                          *Snorting beasts surround us all*  
                          *Warriors were dead or chased away*  
                          *Just us women with the little ones cowering*  
                          *They raped us one by one*  
                          *Tied together with one long rope*  
                          *Neck to neck and raped again*  
                          *Then as the sun rose hot and high*  
                          *They prised our babies from our bleeding thighs*  
                          *We dug small snug holes*  
                          *We were thirsty but had no water*  
                          *Our breasts were dry*  
                          *But their cries brought milk like tears*  
                          *Milk like tears*  
                          *They put our babies in those holes*  
                          *Babes fell silent then*  
                          *Then they put our babies in those holes*  
                          *Tiny faces like wet stones*  
                          *Tiny faces like wet stones*  
                          *Then with clubs they climbed their snorting beasts*  
                          *All yips and yells*  
                          *They rode among those buried babes*  
                          *And with the clubs*  
                          *They sent those tiny faces*  
                          *From earth to sky*

FEMALE CHORUS: *(From snake to magpie)*

WOMAN:            *Then they left us to our silence*  
                          *Silence*

FULL CHORUS: ***Take revenge, the cause is just*** (many times: chant)

BIELBAH: ***I stand here before you  
Unblinking and strange  
A moment comes but once, creeps up  
Callous and alive  
I speak here before you  
These words my last, are spent  
Knowing no words can realise  
What's heaven sent***

***Believing we can take back  
What we, brothers and sisters have lost  
I stand here before you  
Unblinking at the cost***

FULL CHORUS: ***Take revenge, the cause is just*** (chant under Bielbah)

BIELBAH: ***I weep here before you  
These tears are unwed  
Unlike the salt-blood tears  
Our mothers have bled  
I die here before you  
Knowing every smile we shared  
Now courses through my brain  
Beautiful and prepared***

***Believing we can take back  
What we, brothers and sisters have lost  
I stand here before you***

***Unblinking at the cost***

***With the coming moon we deliver  
The first telling blow and the last  
As water cuts through rock  
With this act we explode  
Past, present and future***

FULL CHORUS: ***Take revenge, the cause is just*** (chant under Bielbah)

BIELBAH: ***I weep here before you  
These tears have no cost  
Unlike the salt-blood tears  
Our mothers have bled  
I die here before you  
Knowing every smile we shared  
Now courses through my brain  
Beautiful and prepared***

***I weep here before you  
These tears have no cost  
Unlike the salt-blood tears  
Our mothers have bled  
I die here before you  
Knowing every smile we shared  
Now courses through my brain  
Beautiful and prepared***

CHORUS TENORS & BIELBAH: ***I weep here before you  
These tears have no cost  
Unlike the salt-blood tears***



*Our mothers have bled  
I die here before you  
Knowing every smile we shared  
Now courses through my brain  
Beautiful and prepared*

BIELBAH: *Courses through my brain  
Beautiful and prepared*

CHORUS BASSES: *Take revenge, the cause is just*

## **SCENE 15**

**INTERIOR LOUNGE, CANBERRA 2015**

**SATURDAY DECEMBER 9, 2015. 11am**

IPETA: I can get you in the day before at three.

BIELBAH: Brilliant, you're a genius!

IPETA: No, you are brilliant...are you sure everyone is with you?  
One mistake and it's over...and I mean over.

BIELBAH: Leave that to me Pet...we meet tonight. I reckon they're up  
for it but...how we get in then?

IPETA: You're the dance group he so desperately needs, youse  
have to pretend youse can dance...

BIELBAH: Ha, ha, Ipetta, great...easy.

IPETA: Not freestyle clubbing, or hip hop...old style, corroboree, lap laps...

BIELBAH: Shit, I never done that stuff, don't think the others have either.

IPETA: Don't worry, you're lucky...I have...I'll teach ya.

BIELBAH: You? Sweet. Won't we need to sing in language?

IPETA: Ha, don't worry, we'll make some words up...no-one will ever know...or care!

BIELBAH PICKS UP IPETA AND KISSES HER ON THE LIPS IN EXCITEMENT. BOTH ARE A LITTLE TAKEN ABACK, A BEAT THEN THEY CONTINUE.

IPETA: This is the plan...Anderson has to be there for security. You guys are rehearsing in the House of Reps. He has a short attention span and will get bored...

BIELBAH: Ya reckon, with our groovy moves?

IPETA: Trust me he will. I'll suggest we leave you guys to it for a while and sneak off to have a bit of nookie (*Alt: Murri word for sex?*) in a side room.

BIELBAH: Bit extreme?

IPETA: One for the cause, foolproof...should give you ten minutes max to place the device.

BIELBAH (LAUGHS): That quick eh?

IPETA: Trust me, I know my man!

BIELBAH: Lap laps? How we get the explosives in?

IPETA: Use ya head...in the didges.

BIELBAH: Brilliant Pet.

IPETA: 3am...morning before the show we break in and set the mobile phone triggers...I have the security passes, so it should be plain sailing...you sure ya want to go through with this?

**SCENE 16****EXTERIOR, HORNETS BANK STATION 1857**

BAULIE SITS ALONE WITH HIS OWN THOUGHTS. HE IS MAKING A SPIN-BALL TO PLAY WITH, OUT OF A SMALL GOURD AND A PIECE OF TWINE. UNKNOWN TO BAULIE, WESSIE IS WATCHING HIM MAKE THE TOY WITH FASCINATION.

WESSIE:           *Baulie's such a silly name  
Playing such a silly game  
Baulie's such a funny, silly name*

*Wessie's such a silly name  
Watching such a silly game  
Would he let me play I wonder*

*Mumma says he's just like me  
Can make a fire but not a pot of tea  
He can run so fast he's very hard and tricky to see*

*Billy says he smells a lot  
And does bad things when he's with his lot  
What Billy says is sometimes tommyrot*

BAULIE/WESSIE: *Just like me I wonder  
Just like me I dream  
Could he really be  
Just like me?  
Just like me?*

*Just like me I wonder*  
*Just like me I dream*  
*Could he really be?*  
*Just like me?*  
*Just like me?*  
*Just like me?*

WESSIE: Can I have a turn?

BAULIE SMILES AND OFFERS THE TOY TO WESSIE. WESSIE TRIES BUT AT FIRST IS NOT VERY SUCCESSFUL. BAULIE TAKES IT, DEMONSTRATES AND GIVES IT BACK TO WESSIE.

WESSIE: Wow, that's great. You're an expert Baulie!

WESSIE MAKES ANOTHER ATTEMPT AND IS MORE SUCCESSFUL. BAULIE LAUGHS AND CLAPS AT HIS IMPROVEMENT.

BAULIE: Wessie what am I? I go along the river, I go across the river, I go underneath the river and again along the river but I have never left either side of the river?

WESSIE (NOT PAYING MUCH ATTENTION): Dunno what?

BAULIE: The creeping water weed!

BAULIE LAUGHS HILARIOUSLY, WESSIE IS BEMUSED.

WESSIE: Is that a riddle?

BAULIE: Yes, riddle. Another?

WESSIE: Why not.

BAULIE: Who always says: 'you cannot leave me behind; you cannot walk or run away without me?'

WESSIE: Ah...a whining little sister?

BAULIE: (LAUGHS) Wrong again... a person's feet!

THE BOYS LAUGH TOGETHER.

WESSIE: Hey you wanna play ringer?

BAULIE: Yeah.

WESSIE DRAWS A BIG CIRCLE AND PLACES 13 CERAMIC MARBLES IN A CROSS FORMATION INSIDE THE CIRCLE.

WESSIE: Here's your shooter. You lag first.

THE BOYS CONTINUE TO PLAY THE GAME UNTIL MARTHA CALLS.

MARTHA: Wessie! Bath-time.

WESSIE: Damn! I gotta go.

BAULIE: We play tomorrow?

WESSIE:                    Maybe...it's a full moon and William and the boys are going to Ipswich to buy sheep... while they're away I'm the boss. Mumma says as the eldest man staying I will have to look after the women, so I might be too busy.

**SCENE 17**

**INTERIOR BEDROOM, CANBERRA 2015**

**FRIDAY DECEMBER 8, 2015. 11pm**

IPETA AND ANDERSON ARE IN BED.

ANDERSON:            *It's not about taming  
Or maiming your culture*

IPETA:                    *Then why are these people  
Being told where they must live?*

ANDERSON:            *It's simple math, Pet, it's economics  
The nation can't afford...*

IPETA:                    *To support black communities, yeah  
Heard it a thousand times before!*

ANDERSON:            *It's a harsh, sad reality  
These people live unviably  
We want to give opportunity  
Not sentence them to obscurity*

IPETA:                    *So you round them all up  
Put them in a bloody prison*

***Just for being black  
Same old government mission***

ANDERSON: ***You're exaggerating Pet  
You're far too close  
In the end we will improve lives  
Surely that matters uppermost?***

IPETA: ***Uppermost is that this government  
Like all the rest still can't listen***

ANDERSON: ***What were we to do?  
Kids had dengue like a plague***

IPETA: ***First communities were quarantined like lepers***

ANDERSON: ***Oh Ipeta***

IPETA: ***Shuttered down  
That hardly helped their 'viability'  
Or made for a thriving town!***

ANDERSON: (SPOKEN) You can't seriously be saying  
We should have just turned away?

IPETA: ***I know, I know, I know  
It's an extreme event but so often  
The response feels cold out there  
Like... different nail...same coffin  
Different nail...same coffin***



ANDERSON: *Oh Ipeta...*

BOTH: *Let's agree to disagree  
For now, for evermore  
Love can heal even bruises  
Could love settle the score?  
Let's agree to disagree  
For now, for evermore  
Love can heal even bruises  
Could love settle the score?  
Could love settle the score?*

ANDERSON: Hey Pet...I got you a chrissie present?

HE GIVES HER A TINSEL-CLAD PARCEL. SHE EXCITEDLY RIPS OFF THE WRAPPING.

IPETA: You shouldn't have...what is it?  
(SQUEALS WITH EXCITIMENT) It's one of ya mum's famous Christmas puddings!

ANDERSON: *Let's call it a peace offering  
And I have a favour to request  
I'm desperate for a dance group  
Is there one you can suggest?*

IPETA: *You're pushing shit uphill mate  
I'm not sure a pudding cuts that far!  
My street cred's all in tatters coz  
Your mob's so unpopular*

***But coz you're cute I'll try  
I'll see what I can find  
Can't make any promises  
Our dance groups are not inclined***

***To be performing monkeys  
For a King and his charade***

ANDERSON: ***Thanks Ipeta...***

IPETA: ***With all the shit gone down  
You can't buy a damn parade***

ANDERSON: ***There must be some group out there  
Hold a bloody referendum  
Coz what's an opening look like  
With no traditional Abo welcome?***

***I don't care if they're expensive  
They can charge like a bull at a gate  
I don't care if they can't dance  
Long as they're black and look great!***

IPETA: ***Mate, you're in a bind for sure  
The pressure must be exquisite!  
All that TV hype and bullshit  
They've surely dropped you in it!***

*Give me a day or two to check  
I'll go underground and get back  
There's maybe a group out there  
Who'd sell their mother for a Zak*

BOTH: *Let's agree to disagree  
For now, for evermore  
Love can heal even bruises  
Could love settle the score?*

*Let's agree to disagree  
For now, for evermore  
Love can heal even bruises  
Could love settle the score?  
Could love settle the score?*

## **SCENE 18**

### **EXTERIOR, HORNETS BANK STATION 1857**

THE CLAN IS ASSEMBLED LED BY BIELBAH. BAULIE APPROACHES AND SITS AMONG THEM.

BIELBAH: *Hail young warrior! Hast thou intelligence?*

BAULIE: *Aye, intelligence unto thee of the greatest import!  
Thou seest in the darkened sky  
The disc shining bright  
The firmament shimmers  
Wouldst thou hunt by such a light?*

CLAN CHORUS: *Wouldst thou hunt by such a light?*

BIELBAH: *Asketh thou not, knowest it well...we will hunt*

BAULIE: *Then prepare thine spears well  
Look ye to it  
By the very same light  
The white crow-men, bark beasts and firesticks too  
Go far away through the night  
Abandoning their kith and kin*

CLAN CHORUS: *Abandoning their kith and kin*

BAULIE: *To their unprotected fate*

BIELBAH: *As they hath taken our women*

CLAN CHORUS: *So theirs will be taken*

BIELBAH: *As they hath molested our children*

CLAN CHORUS: *So theirs must be forsaken*

BIELBAH: *This night all will be settled*

CLAN CHORUS: *This night all will be settled  
This night all will be settled*

CLAN CHORUS: *Yea unto them, it is the law*

BIELBAH: *Thou hast done well Baulie  
We are prepared  
Tonight will be the night  
To be rid of this blight*

CLAN CHORUS: *To be rid of this blight*

BIELBAH: *For thou, hast I another task  
That only thee canst fulfill  
Their dogs knoweth thee well  
With thine waddie are stilled  
Then canst we make attack  
And pierce their camp by pale light  
Quieted dogs make not a sound  
Can give no clue that we surround*

CLAN CHORUS: *Yea we are with thee  
As art the Beforers  
Every drop of blood  
Every drop of blood, blood  
Dost make to restore us  
Dost make to restore us*

BAULIE: *And I too, am with thee  
And I maketh a special plea  
One among them, verily is  
Deserving of your mercy  
Deserving of your mercy*

BIELBAH: *Of whom dost thou speak brave Baulie?*

BAULIE: *Of the young boy child named Wessie  
From whom I took this intelligence*

BIELBAH: *Then we will try, good friend  
To show him benevolence*

CLAN CHORUS: *To show him benevolence  
To show him benevolence*

## SCENE 19

INTERIOR LOUNGE, CANBERRA 2015

TUESDAY DECEMBER 5, 2015. 11pm

BIELBAH IS ALONE. HALF WAY THROUGH HIS SONG IPETA ENTERS AND LISTENS, UNSEEN BY BIELBAH.

BIELBAH: *How short is victory's memory?  
The damage is a long lost dream  
How used to misfortune  
We become with time*

*Will they brand me un-Australian?  
For standing up for what is right  
Terrorist and wrecker  
Daring to fight*

*Once proud with vibrant song  
Now just a handful humming on  
With every thread of melody  
The memory makes me strong*

***They will brand me un-Australian  
For standing tall and upright  
Terrorist and wrecker  
Daring to take up the fight***

***Well, I'd rather be a crime than a problem  
Rather be a spark than a tear  
I'd rather die than be less than human  
I'd rather kill than fade into yesteryear***

***Well, I'd rather be a crime than a problem  
Rather be a spark than a tear  
I'd rather die than be less than human  
I'd rather kill than fade into yesteryear***

***So its time to break the pattern cast  
Times made with malice and greed  
To regain our pride through fire  
Re-forge steel with blood***

***One act can forever shatter now  
Our blighted past into shards  
The tree of life can seed and grow  
From the embers of a fire***

***Well, I'd rather be a crime than a problem  
Rather be a spark than a tear  
I'd rather die than be less than human  
I'd rather kill than fade into yesteryear***

***Well, I'd rather be a crime than a problem  
Rather be a spark than a tear  
I'd rather die than be less than human  
I'd rather kill than fade into yesteryear***

IPETA: Dangerous thoughts?

BIELBAH: Time for thinking is done and dusted, Pet.

IPETA: Direct action eh?

BIELBAH: Yeah, somethin' to change the game forever.

IPETA: Specifics?

BIELBAH: Yep, but need help.

IPETA: Might be able to. What exactly?

BIELBAH: Access.

IPETA: Where and when?

BIELBAH: Parliament. Kings opening address.



**SCENE 20****EXTERIOR, HORNETS BANK STATION 1857**

MARTHA, ELIZABETH, WESSIE AND THE CHILDREN ARE HUDDLED AROUND A TABLE. THE LIGHTS ARE LOW. SUDDEN BRIGHT LIGHTS, NOISE, MAYHEM. BELBAH AND HIS FOLLOWERS ENTER THE ROOM YELLING AND BRUTAL. A FIGHT SCENE PLAYS OUT, HIGHLY CHOREOGRAPHED, STYLISED AND DANCE-LIKE. WESSIE IS CLUBBED AND FALLS BEHIND A SOFA.

CLAN CHORUS: ***Take them***

BIELBAH: ***Take the poisoners***

CLAN CHORUS: ***Take them, take them, take them***

BIELBAH: ***Take the murderers***

CLAN CHORUS: ***Take them, take them***

BIELBAH: ***Take the law breakers outside to the fire circle***

AMIDST THE CONFUSION AND PANIC MARTHA STANDS STOCK STILL, WATCHING WITH HORROR. SHE SEES BAULIE AND PLEADS:

MARTHA: ***Baulie, you know us Baulie***  
***Take anything Baulie***  
***Baulie, you know us Baulie***  
***But do not kill us Baulie***

***Please Baulie, please, please Baulie  
We're begging you please Baulie  
Baulie, you know us Baulie  
Please do not kill us Baulie***

BAULIE HESITATES UNTIL BIELBAH PUSHES HIM OUT OF THE WAY AND HERDS MARTHA AND HER CHILDREN OUTSIDE. THEY ARE RAPED AND MURDERED. BIELBAH WIPES HIS BLOOD STAINED HANDS ON THE POSTS OF THE HOMESTEAD. THE CLAN LEAVES. WESSIE REGAINS CONSCIOUSNESS AND SEES THE BODIES STREWN AROUND. HE RUNS TO THEM, SCREAMING.

WESSIE:           Mumma!

LIGHTS TO BLACK

*Finis*