

## The man in the back bedroom

### Characters:

Main: sisters CAROL and LILY both in their 60s;

Minor: MATTHEW and AMY a couple both in their 20s or early 30s

### Setting:

The lounge room in an old workman's terrace Running time: 18 minutes  
Scene 1 Lounge room at night, the light from a TV is flickering. Two sisters, both in their 60s sit in opposite armchairs or at opposite ends of a couch. One, LILY, is knitting/crocheting furiously, the other, CAROL, is staring vacantly at the TV, drinking a glass of red wine. LILY is a neat, uptight woman, dressed in sensible beige and navy clothes, she sits hunched over the work. CAROL is her opposite, her clothing crumpled and colourful, she wears copious beaded jewellery and lounges back in her seat, barefoot.

LILY: He was very persuasive.

CAROL: To the tune of \$680,000. I'd say that's one charming bloody prince.

*Pause. Outside the room there's a low murmuring of inaudible voices.*

CAROL: Did you hear that?

*They stop and listen for a moment. All is quiet.*

CAROL: That was him, you know.

LILY: Him? Who?

CAROL: The man. The man in the back bedroom.

LILY: The man... For god's sake, Carol, it was probably someone outside on the street.

CAROL: Nope, I tapped on the window at someone just the other day. They didn't hear me...

LILY: Well, lucky them...

CAROL: So why would I hear them? Anyway, couldn't you tell? There was an... otherworldliness about it. Couldn't you hear that?

LILY: All I can hear is the nonsense coming out of your gob. Dad always said you were off with the fairies.

CAROL: He said no such thing.

LILY: Yes he did. Said you had your head in the clouds. I told him you had your head somewhere else altogether less savoury...

CAROL: That sounds like you.

LILY: Dad said that's why you became an actor - so you could live in your fantasy world all the time.

CAROL: Oh well, hark, is that the sound of sour grapes I hear?

LILY: Grapes don't make a sound...

**Scene 2**

*The lights black out, and a spotlight shines on the living room door which opens suddenly. A young MATTHEW stands in the doorway, looking into the room. He's dressed in the type of old clothes you'd wear to do grubby work around the house. He has a big paint brush in one hand and a streak of paint on his face. He's joined a moment later by a young AMY, similarly dressed, a scarf protecting her hair.*

AMY: What are you looking at?

MATTHEW: Did you hear that?

AMY: Hear what?

MATTHEW: Talking. I heard people talking.

AMY: *(smiles)* Oh, not your old ladies again?

MATTHEW: They're not my old ladies...

AMY: Weeeelll, they kind of are...

MATTHEW: I don't think you're taking this seriously.

AMY: *(Making a straight face)* Very sorry, carry on.

MATTHEW: *(Pause)* I spoke to Jordan the other day. The guy from next door?

AMY: Oh yes?

MATTHEW: He was telling me about them - the sisters.

AMY: Right, go on.

MATTHEW: He didn't know them that well, but he said they were always bickering. He could hear them sometimes through the wall. And in the courtyard.

AMY: Wow, sisters who bicker - uncanny!

MATTHEW: Well, look how it ended.

AMY: *(Serious)* Yes, awful.