

48 Shades of Brown
by Philip Dean
adapted from the novel by Nick Earls

Draft 3.1
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Characters

Dan	Aged sixteen.
Jacq	Dan's Aunt, aged twenty-three.
Naomi	Aged eighteen.
Chris	Dan's mate, aged sixteen.
Imogen	Aged sixteen.
Clare	An actor in her teens.
Girl	Aged about sixteen.
Inga	A Danish girl about sixteen.
Jason	Aged twenty-one.
Phil	Aged about thirty.

The parts of Clare, Girl and Inga should be played by the actor playing Imogen.
The parts of Jason and Phil should be played by the actor playing Chris.

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Act One

We can see a bedroom and the back veranda of a share house in Toowong. The room has a bed, a chair and desk, and a waste paper bin. There are chairs on the veranda and perhaps a table and steps down to the back yard. There is a telephone near the entrance to the rest of the house.

*At the moment though, we are in the car park at Brisbane airport. **Dan** is sixteen. **Jacq** is a twenty-three year old uni student. She has short hair and is fashionable with perhaps a techno flavour.*

Jacq So how was Geneva? Dan?

Dan Sorry.

Jacq Oh, right.

Dan Just give me a minute.

(Pause.)

Jacq Can I ... Is there anything I can do?

Dan No.

(Pause.)

Jacq Anything your mother would do?

Dan She'd probably leave me alone.

Jacq Sorry.

(Dan breathes carefully, recovers slightly.)

Dan You're not patting me. That's good.

Jacq Patting?

Dan I'm sure you've patted a vomiting person before.

Jacq I think I'd be more conscious of holding their hair out of the way.

Dan Holding their hair?

Jacq Yeah, you know, long hair.

Dan Right.

Jacq Feeling better?

Dan I think I'm all right.

(Dan is about to pick up the luggage.)

Jacq There's no hurry.

Dan Thanks.

Jacq I was thinking of the car.

Dan Right.

Jacq So, how was Geneva?

Dan Cold and gray, mostly. I don't know if there is a time of year when Geneva buzzes, but I hope it's not January.

Jacq Your parents are in for an excellent year, then.

Dan Yeah. And lots of snow. That's why I'm late.

Jacq I told school. It's not a problem. There was a guy in your classes ... Chris?

Dan Chris Burns.

Jacq He was going to, you know, do whatever. Get books, or whatever.

Dan Good. Thanks.

(Pause.)

I'm fine now.

Jacq I'll go and get the car. Save you walking.

(Jacq leaves.)

Dan That'd be quite personal, wouldn't it, Dan? Holding a girl's hair out of her vomit trajectory. She'd have to be quite interested before she'd let you do that.

(He picks up his bag.)

Okay. Do not throw up in the car, Dan. That is not how you want to begin this year.

(Meanwhile Naomi has come onto the house veranda and is making a mess of the Sunday paper. She is blond, pretty and eighteen. Dan stares at her for a moment before picking up his suitcase and moving towards her. Jacq enters.)

Jacq Any calls?

Naomi No. Did the plane arrive?

Jacq Eventually. I should have been at band practice half an hour ago.

Naomi Hi Dan.

Jacq This is Naomi. She always gets the paper last. It's a rule.
(Naomi looks innocent.)

Dan Hi.

Naomi So how was Geneva?

Jacq Not the vomit question.

Dan I did not vomit.

Jacq I was ready to pat him, you know.

Naomi Will we have to pat him a lot this year?

Jacq Only when he's sick. He likes to be patted when he is sick.

Naomi Sure. It's comforting.
(Dan is growing increasingly annoyed.)

Dan Could we stop this?

Jacq Madge isn't here and someone's got to look after you.

Dan Jacq.

Jacq I'm sure you can look after yourself.

Dan Thank you.

Jacq And it's going to be a great year.

Naomi Absolutely.

Jacq I'm late. Now you kids be nice to each other.
(Jacq leaves. Pause.)

Naomi Band practice.

Dan Are they any good?

Naomi I don't know.
(Naomi shuffles the pages of the paper and folds them into a wad. She seems pleased. She stands and stretches. She wears a white cheese cloth dress that is somewhat see-through. Dan is mesmerized.)

Naomi Your father works for a bank?