

FURIOUS
MATTRESS

MELISSA REEVES



CURRENCY PRESS
SYDNEY

CHARACTERS

ANNA

PIERCE

ELSE

MAX

POLICEMAN

RAT

The actor who plays ANNA also plays RAT.

The actor who plays MAX also plays POLICEMAN.

ACT ONE

SCENE ONE

ANNA is standing in the kitchen, on an extremely hot afternoon, looking down at the table. On the table is a misshapen loaf of bread in a plastic bag. PIERCE emerges from a bedroom door, and shuts it carefully behind him.

ANNA: How is she?

PIERCE: Peaceful.

They smile tentatively at each other.

ANNA: The bread's damp.

PIERCE: Damp?

ANNA: More than damp really...

She holds up the bread. A sizable amount of water has collected in the bag and the bread has shrunk to half its size.

PIERCE: How did it get like that?

ANNA: I don't know.

PIERCE: Did Else wet it?

ANNA: No. No. I don't think so. [*Pause.*] It's the heat I think.

PIERCE looks at it closer.

PIERCE: It's horrible...

ANNA moves quickly to a doorway and throws the bread out of the house.

ANNA: Have you got any biscuits?

PIERCE: Biscuits?

ANNA: We could have biscuits instead.

PIERCE nods.

Where do you keep them?

PIERCE: I don't know. Else does all the shopping.

ANNA *looks and finds biscuits. They both take biscuits from the packet and eat them slowly, savouring them, like they taste fantastic.*

What are these biscuits?

ANNA: 'Nice' biscuits... look, it's written on them.

PIERCE *reads his biscuit.*

It's a place in France. 'Nice'...

They resume nibbling. There is a still, excited quality in the room.

PIERCE: I haven't been to France.

ANNA: I haven't either.

They nibble some more.

I'm starving.

PIERCE: So am I.

They smile foolishly at each other.

Have another.

ANNA: No. No.

PIERCE: Are you still hungry?

ANNA *shakes her head.*

We could order pizza.

ANNA: I'm fine now.

PIERCE: They will drive out here but they charge an extra five bucks.

ANNA *puts on her reading glasses.*

ANNA: Let's read.

There is a high level of tension and expectation in the room.

'There was a disciple named Tabitha who filled her days with acts of kindness and charity. One day she fell ill, and died. The disciples sent for Peter. Peter sent everyone out of the room, and he turned to Tabitha, lying on the bed, and he said, "Get up, Tabitha". And Tabitha opened her eyes, saw Peter, and sat up—'

The phone rings. They both start. PIERCE answers it.

PIERCE: Hello...

ANNA *watches him on the phone.*

Yes it is... No, I don't mind.

Pause. PIERCE *pays no attention to ANNA, just responds to the unseen questioner.*

Video World. [*Pause.*] No, I don't much, my wife usually does. [*Pause.*] Oh, an hour a week, I suppose.

ANNA leaves the room.

Well, put it this way, she picks more than I pick, but then she watches more than I watch. [*Pause.*] She likes romantic comedies but I prefer action films. No. No. No. None of them. No, we wouldn't choose ones like that. [*Pause.*] No, you can't, I'm sorry, she's in bed. No, she's not sick, she's...

A kettle whistles. It sounds like an alarm.

... not sick. She's... resting.

He hangs up the phone. ANNA brings in a tray with two mugs of tea. It's getting dark. PIERCE turns on a fluorescent light. It hums. It's very hot.

Time has passed. They're both getting tired. They sip their tea. PIERCE opens his Bible and reads.

'For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. Let your loins be girded about and your lights burning.' [*He pauses.*] That's us.

ANNA smiles. PIERCE goes on reading.

'And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding, that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open to him immediately' ... It's like he sat down a couple of hours ago, and wrote us down a list of instructions.

ANNA: The whole Bible's like that.

PIERCE lifts his head suddenly.

What?

PIERCE: I thought I heard something...

They both listen. Everything is quiet.

ANNA: You should get a new Bible, Pierce. All that cometh and goeth, it's a bit old-fashioned.

PIERCE *nods. He feels his pulse.*

What's wrong?

PIERCE: My pulse. It's going very fast.

ANNA: It's alright, Pierce.

They both look at the door.

PIERCE: My heart's pounding... it almost hurts.

ANNA: Maybe have a lie in the bath.

PIERCE: Let me feel your pulse.

ANNA: No.

PIERCE: Just in case.

ANNA: In case what?

PIERCE: It might be dangerously fast.

ANNA: How can you tell?

PIERCE: We can compare.

ANNA holds out her arm. PIERCE feels her pulse. He feels his pulse.

You're very fast. You're faster than me.

They look at each other.

You wouldn't think it to look at you.

ANNA: The body is so deceptive.

PIERCE: There are flies in her room.

ANNA: Are there?

PIERCE: It must mean something.

They are silent for a moment.

ANNA: You think they're spirits of some kind?

PIERCE: After what we've seen, I could believe anything.

ANNA: They wouldn't be good spirits. God wouldn't put any of himself
in a fly.

PIERCE: Wouldn't he? To watch over her?

ANNA: I don't think so.

PIERCE: Maybe we should catch one.

ANNA: Why?

PIERCE: See if it has a face.

Pause.

ANNA: They're just flies.