



# STORIES IN THE DARK

BY DEBRA OSWALD

**TEACHER'S NOTES**

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Debra Oswald is a writer for stage, film and television, and of children's fiction.

Her stage plays have been produced around Australia. *Gary's House*; *Sweet Road* and *The Peach Season* were all shortlisted for the NSW Premier's Award. Her play *Dags* has had many Australian productions, and has been published and performed in Britain and the United States. *Gary's House* has been on the senior high school syllabus, and has been performed in translation in both Denmark and Japan. *The Peach Season* won the 2005 Seaborn Playwright's Prize. *Mr Bailey's Minder* broke the Griffin Theatre's box office record in 2004, toured nationally in 2006, and was produced in Philadelphia in 2008.

Debra has written two plays for ATYP (Australian Theatre for Young People). *Skate* was performed in Sydney, went on a NSW country tour and was performed at the Belfast Theatre Festival. *Stories in the Dark* premiered at Riverside Theatre, Parramatta in 2007 and in the following year went on to win the AWGIE Award for Theatre for Young People and the NSW Premier's Literary Award for Best Play. *House on Fire* premiered at ATYP in 2010.

She is the author of three 'Aussie Bite' books for kids, including *Nathan and the Ice Rockets*, and six novels for teenage readers: *Blue Noise*, *Me and Barry Terrific*; *The Return of the Baked Bean*; *The Fifth Quest*; *The Redback Leftovers* and *Getting Air*. Debra's first novel for adults, *Useful*, will be published in 2015.

Among Debra's television credits are *Bananas in Pyjamas*; *Sweet and Sour*; *Palace of Dreams*; *The Secret Life of Us* and award-winning episodes of *Police Rescue*. She is also the writer and creator of *Offspring*. Her script for the *Offspring* telemovie won the 2011 NSW Premier's Award.

## ABOUT THE TEXT

Tomas is 12, terrified and alone. Separated from his family by the ravages of war he takes shelter in a derelict house. Anna is 16, street smart and doesn't need a tearful 12-year-old in her life. At night, when the house is dark, Anna tells Tomas folk stories, distracting them both from the realities of their war torn homeland. *Stories in the Dark* explores the power of storytelling, mingling the magic and earthy wisdom of folk tales with the hard-edged story of violence, conflict and the struggle to survive.

# LINKS TO THE AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM

## The Arts

### YEARS 5 AND 6

Develop skills and techniques of voice and movement to create character, mood and atmosphere and focus dramatic action (ACADRM036)

Rehearse and perform devised and scripted drama that develops narrative, drives dramatic tension, and uses dramatic symbol, performance styles and design elements to share community and cultural stories and engage an audience (ACADRM037)

Explain how the elements of drama and production elements communicate meaning by comparing drama from different social, cultural and historical contexts, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander drama (ACADRR038)

### YEARS 9 AND 10

Practice and refine the expressive capacity of voice and movement to communicate ideas and dramatic action in a range of forms, styles and performance spaces, including exploration of those developed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dramatists (ACADRM0409)

Perform devised and scripted drama making deliberate artistic choices and shaping design elements to unify dramatic meaning for an audience (ACADRM051)

Evaluate how the elements of drama, forms and performance styles in devised and scripted drama convey meaning and aesthetic effect (ACADRR052)



This is an extract from the Australian Curriculum.

# General Capabilities

## YEARS 5 AND 6

- Interpret and analyse information and ideas, comparing texts on similar topics or themes using comprehension strategies
- Pose questions to clarify and interpret information and probe for causes and consequences
- Analyse, condense and combine relevant information from multiple sources
- Combine ideas in a variety of ways and from a range of sources to create new possibilities
- Reflect on assumptions made, consider reasonable criticism and adjust their thinking if necessary
- Evaluate the effectiveness of ideas, products, performances, methods and courses of action against given criteria
- Explain how the appropriateness of emotional responses influences behaviour
- Explain the influence of emotions on behaviour, learning and relationships

## YEARS 9 AND 10

- Use language that indirectly expresses opinions and constructs representations of people and events, and consider expressed and implied judgements
- Pose questions to critically analyse complex issues and abstract ideas
- Clarify complex information and ideas drawn from a range of sources
- Create and connect complex ideas using imagery, analogies and symbolism
- Give reasons to support their thinking, and address opposing viewpoints and possible weaknesses in their own positions
- Evaluate the effectiveness of ideas, products and performances and implement courses of action to achieve desired outcomes against criteria they have identified
- Reflect critically on their emotional response to challenging situations in a wide range of learning, social and work-related contexts
- Consider, control and justify their emotional responses, in expressing their opinions, beliefs, values, questions and choices
- Articulate their personal value system and analyse the effects of actions that repress social power and limit the expression of diverse views



This is an extract from the Australian Curriculum.

# WORKSHOP ACTIVITIES: YEARS 5 AND 6

## WORKSHOP ACTIVITY 1

### Getting started

At 56 pages, *Stories in the Dark* is a play that can be read from start to finish over only a few lessons. With the use of magic realism, opportunities for physical theatre and soundscape as well as realism, the play offers students a great opportunity to engage in a number of dramatic forms and performance styles.

To begin working with the script, start with a moved reading. Use the following techniques so each student has an opportunity to read from the script, engage with a number of characters and experiment with the elements of drama.

- **Tapping In and Out**  
Tap students in and out of role by calling 'freeze', tapping a student on stage on the shoulder so they know to leave the stage and tapping a student in the audience on the shoulders so they take over the role on stage. This provides students with an opportunity to perform as well as making sure the students are following the script in their books.
- **Side Coach**  
While the students read the text, the teacher side coaches by calling out directions for the performance, based on the elements of drama for example:
  - bigger gestures/voice/movements etc.
  - smaller gestures/voice/movements etc.
  - whisper, yell, change the pitch, change the accent, change the emphasis
  - more menacing/scared/timid/angry/happy etc.
  - less menacing/scared/timid/angry/happy etc.
  - create a soundscape
  - use your bodies to create the scenery.

Individually students record their reflections in a digital drama journal that they use for this unit of work. They should reflect on what they enjoyed when they were on the stage performing and what they enjoyed when they were in the audience. Where possible, students should attempt to articulate why they enjoyed these aspects of the workshop.

# WORKSHOP ACTIVITIES: YEARS 5 AND 6

## WORKSHOP ACTIVITY 2

### The lives of children

Using a KWL chart (see [graphics organiser](#) at the end of these notes), or a similar graphics organiser, students research the lives of children in a war or conflict zone of their choosing, for example Afghanistan, Syria, Bosnia–Herzegovina, Serbia, etc.

Using the information gathered from the research, students create a series of three to five freeze frames (frozen statues or post cards) that show the 'day in the life' of a child in the chosen war or conflict zone. Working in small groups students show each other their freeze frames and take photos of each other's work. Students discuss the photos, their research and any assumptions they have made about the lives of children in war affected areas. Using a mind map or a similar graphics organiser, students record their discussion.

Working in the same group's students complete the following tasks.

- Create three to five freeze frames that reflect the lives of children who have been affected by war.
- Create a soundscape for each of the freeze frames.
- Create a transition between each of the freeze frames that uses movement but no sound.
- Practise holding the freeze frame and soundscape for 10–15 seconds and then, using the transitions, move to the next freeze frame to create a whole and cohesive performance.
- Rehearse the piece until the movement between freeze frames and transitions are seamless.
- Perform the piece for the class, recording the work at the same time either as a series of photos or a video.

Working individually, students reflect in their digital journals on the challenges of working in a group and how their emotions (both positive and negative) affect their learning and the learning of others. They should also reflect on what went well in their group work and what strategies they could employ to ensure they are a productive member of the group and promote effective group work.

As a group, students should review the recording of their work and evaluate the effectiveness of the performance based on the elements of drama (see [graphics organiser](#) at the end of these notes). Students record their evaluation in their digital journals. In recording their evaluation, students may wish to write 2–3 things that they thought they did effectively and 1–2 thing(s) they would do differently next time.

# WORKSHOP ACTIVITIES: YEARS 5 AND 6

## WORKSHOP ACTIVITY 3

### Working with character

Begin by using a focus walk. After 1–2 minutes, progress the focus walk to a string walk. In a string walk, the teacher calls out a part of the body, and the student walks as if that part of the body was being pulled by a piece of string and therefore leading the body. For example, if the teacher calls out 'right elbow', the students walk around the room with their right elbow leading their body. Allow the students 15–30 seconds before calling out a new body part. At the end of the activity the teacher calls 'freeze'.

As a whole class, discuss what kinds of characteristics you would expect a person to have based on the way they walk. For example, if you walk with your right elbow first you may be a sly, shifty character who is up to no good.

Repeat the string walk exercise, but this time students create a sound or repeat a word as they walk. For example, if the teacher calls out 'right elbow' the students walk around the room with their right elbow leading their body and they may make a sound like a hiss. Allow the students 15–30 seconds before calling out a new body part. At the end of the activity the teacher calls 'freeze'.

Divide the class into 3–5 groups. In small groups, read through Act One Scene Four ('Lazy Gus', pp. 18–22), and then negotiate with the group the character they would like to explore further. Once each student has been allocated a character, students complete a character profile as individual work (see [graphics organiser](#) at the end of these notes for an example). Before beginning the profile, students should pose a number of questions to help them develop their character. Questions that students might pose include:

- if my character was frightened, how would they sound?
- if my character was frightened, where would they feel it in their body?
- if my character was frightened, what would their body look like?
- if my character was frightened, how would they walk (what part of their body would be in the lead)?
- if my character was in love, how would their voice change?
- if my character was in love, where would they feel it in their body?
- if my character was in love, what would their body look like?
- if my character was in love, how would they walk (what part of their body would be in the lead)?

After working on their character profiles, students rehearse and then perform a moved reading of the scene, in character, for the other groups. The teacher and/or the other students take photos of the moved reading.

Using the photos and their own memories of the performance, students reflect on their performance and one other group's performance. The reflection should focus on the mood and atmosphere created in the performance. Students record their reflections in their digital diary.

# WORKSHOP ACTIVITIES: YEARS 5 AND 6

## WORKSHOP ACTIVITY 4

### Working with fabric and rostrum

Different coloured squares and lengths of fabric are an easily sourced prop that can be used to create scenes, atmosphere, mood and costumes. Traditional rostra or other boxes help create levels as well as assisting in quick scene changes.

Divide students into groups of 3–5. Allocate each group a selection of fabrics and rostra/boxes. In groups students take it in turns to describe the mood a piece of fabric creates. The students then use the fabric in as many different ways as they can both with and without the boxes. For example, with a piece of blue fabric students may:

- swish it on the floor like a river
- run around the room with it over their heads like the sky
- place it on a rostrum and then stand behind the rostrum imagining they are in the ocean
- wear it as a cape as if they are royalty.

Students repeat this exercise in pairs or small groups using multiple pieces of fabric and rostra/boxes. At the end of the exercise, students record their ideas in their digital journals.

As a class, read Act One Scene Seven ('The Singing Bones', pp. 27–31). After reading through the text, brainstorm all of the settings that are used and any props that would be required to stage the scene.

Read through the scene again. After the second reading, as a class complete the following tasks.

- Identify the moments of dramatic tension.
- Discuss how the moments of dramatic tension develop.
- Discuss how the moments of dramatic tension can be portrayed to the audience.
- Identify the social hierarchy of the characters.
- Discuss how the social hierarchy of the characters can be portrayed to the audience.

Divide the class into small groups and rehearse the scene using the knowledge gained from the previous activities also using the fabrics and rostra/boxes to help create mood and setting. After rehearsing their scenes, students take it turns to perform the scenes for each other. At the end of each performance, students provide feedback on the effectiveness of the performance and use of the fabrics and rostra.

After all of the performances are complete and the feedback has been given, students evaluate the effectiveness of their own production in their digital journals.

# WORKSHOP ACTIVITIES: YEARS 5 AND 6

## WORKSHOP ACTIVITY 5

### Fairy tales and folk tales

Before the lesson, ask students to bring to class a fairy tale or folk tale of their choice.

As a class conduct a moved reading of Act Two Scene Five ('The Ice Dragon and the She-Wolf' pp. 42–47). After the reading, as a class, identify the moments of dramatic tension, the mood and atmosphere that are in the scene.

As a class, choose one or two of the fairy tales or folk tales that the students have brought to class and read these aloud. Using a compare and contrast chart (see [graphics organiser](#) at the end of these notes), or a similar graphics organiser, examine the different ways the texts communicate meaning. Explain how these different methods can help or hinder a reader and affect communication.

In groups, students either create a multimedia presentation of 'The Ice Dragon and the She-Wolf' or create a live performance of the scene. After creating a draft of the multi-media presentation or rehearsing the performance, students present their work to another group for feedback. Students should record their feedback using the elements of drama as a framework (see [graphics organiser](#) at the end of these notes). After receiving their feedback, the students make any adjustments that they think are necessary before presenting their final work. Students present their multi-media presentation or performance to the class.

Working in the same small groups, and working in the same medium (multi-media presentation or live performance), students create a multi-media presentation or live performance based on one of the fairy tales or folk tales. After creating a draft of the multi-media presentation or rehearsing the performance, students present their work to another group for feedback. Students should make their feedback using the elements of drama as a framework (see [graphics organiser](#) at the end of these notes). After receiving their feedback, the students make any adjustments that they think are necessary before presenting their final work. Students present their multimedia presentation or performance to the class.

In their digital journals, students reflect on the following.

- How did you ensure you communicated the main ideas of each of the scenes clearly and effectively to the audience?
- How did you respond to receiving feedback from another group? Was it easier to receive feedback the second time? Why/why not?
- To what extent did you use the feedback in improving/refining the final presentation?
- What was more fun to create a presentation based on an existing script or a presentation based on a fairy tale? Why?

## WORKSHOP ACTIVITIES: YEARS 5 AND 6

### WORKSHOP ACTIVITY 6

## Concluding the unit

In concluding the unit on scripted drama, students should compare their initial research into the experiences of children in war-affected countries to the experiences of the characters in *Stories in the Dark*. Using any form of communication that they prefer, students create a response to the statement: 'By engaging with *Stories in the Dark*, I have learnt...'

In their digital journals, students reflect upon the performances they have created. They identify which of these was the most effective performance with reference to the elements of drama (see [graphics organiser](#) at the end of these notes).

Using their initial research, their experiences with the text and their own life experience students create a letter to either Tomas, Anna or the playwright Debra Oswald. The letter should reflect on their initial assumptions and what they have learnt about children, different cultures, drama or any other relevant topic as they have completed this unit.

# WORKSHOP ACTIVITIES: YEARS 9 AND 10

## WORKSHOP ACTIVITY 1

### Getting started

At 56 pages, *Stories in the Dark* is a play that can be read from start to finish over only a few lessons. With the use of magic realism, opportunities for physical theatre and soundscape as well as realism, the play offers students a great opportunity to engage in a number of dramatic forms and performance styles.

To begin working with the script, start with a moved reading in small groups. Use the following techniques so each student has an opportunity to read from the script, engage with a number of characters and experiment with the elements of drama.

- **Tapping In and Out—advanced**  
The teacher moves around the room to the various groups. When the teacher calls 'freeze', all of the groups freeze. Any group members who have been in the audience move into the performance space and tap another group member on the shoulder. The group members on the stage leave the performance space and become the audience. The students in the performance space become the actors, taking up the same position that the previous performers were in and continue on with the scene.
- **Side Coaching—advanced**  
While the students read the text the audience members can side coach in order to encourage experimentation and play with the script as well as develop an awareness of the elements of drama. As well as calling out normal side-coaching instructions, students may use the instruction 'rewind and repeat with...'. Examples of what the students may call out include:
  - bigger gestures/voice/movements etc.
  - smaller gestures/voice/movements etc.
  - whisper, yell, change the pitch, change the accent, change the emphasis
  - more menacing/scared/timid/angry/happy etc.
  - less menacing/scared/timid/angry/happy etc.
  - create a soundscape
  - use your bodies to create the scenery.

Individually students record their reflections in a digital drama journal that they use for this unit of work. They should reflect on what they enjoyed when they were on the stage performing and what they enjoyed when they were in the audience. Where possible, students should attempt to articulate why they enjoyed these aspects of the workshop.

# WORKSHOP ACTIVITIES: YEARS 9 AND 10

## WORKSHOP ACTIVITY 2

### Fairy tales and folk tales

Before starting the unit, ask students to bring a fairy tale or folk tale of their choice to class.

In small groups, students choose one of the fairy tales or folk tales and complete the following tasks.

- Identify the main moments of dramatic tension in the story.
- Create a freeze frame for each of the moments.
- Take a photo of each of the freeze frames.
- Using the photos and the story as a foundation, create a storyboard for a multi-modal text that conveys the central meaning or moral of the story using metaphor and minimal written text.
- Once the storyboard has been completed, students share this with another group for feedback.
- After taking in the feedback where appropriate, students create their multi-modal text.

Students present their work to each other. After each presentation, the audience members provide feedback to the group. The feedback should focus on how meaning has been communicated through the elements of drama and the multi-modal text.

Individually, students reflect on the task in their digital drama journal. They should reflect on the challenges of creating meaning through frozen images and using metaphor to communicate ideas. They should also reflect on the challenges of working in a group and what strategies they used to overcome these challenges.

# WORKSHOP ACTIVITIES: YEARS 9 AND 10

## WORKSHOP ACTIVITY 3

### Before, during and after

Students begin with a focus walk. After approximately 1–2 minutes the teacher asks the students to continue with the focus walk, but to add a sound when they hit the spot they are focusing on. The sound should reflect the word the teacher calls out from the following list.

- lazy
- rude
- smell
- old
- hungry
- lean
- run
- river
- spasm
- die
- struggle
- thief
- funeral
- orphan
- grief
- children
- guilt

Students form groups of 2–4, then as the teacher calls a selection of words from the same list, students create a freeze frame with sound. When the teacher calls 'unfreeze' the students return to a neutral position until the teachers calls out the next word. Students should remember the freeze frame and sound for each word as the teacher may choose to repeat the word and the students should repeat the same freeze frame and sound rather than create a new one.

As a whole class, conduct a moved reading of Act One Scene Four ('Lazy Gus', pp. 18–22). After completing the moved reading, students work individually to complete the following tasks.

- Choose one character from the scene and imagine what they were doing before the action and after the action.
- Create five freeze frames, one for before the scene, three for the main points of action in the scene and one for after the scene.
- In small groups, present the series of freeze frames to each other for feedback. The feedback should be framed around the elements of drama (see [graphics organiser](#) at the end of these notes).
- Using the feedback, students adjust their freeze frames where necessary.
- Students add a transition between each frame.
- Where appropriate the students add sound to the transitions and/or the freeze frames.
- In small groups, present the series of freeze frames to each other for feedback.

The feedback should be framed around the elements of drama (see [graphics organiser](#) at the end of these notes).

- Using the feedback, students adjust their freeze frames where necessary.
- Present the final work to the class.

In their journals, students reflect on the following.

- How were symbol and imagery used to convey meaning to the audience?
- Evaluate the effect of feedback during the creation process and how this influenced the final product.
- Identify the challenges of working in groups and taking in feedback. How did this affect you emotionally and what did you do to overcome any negative emotions? How do you think you would react in the future?
- Evaluate your own ability to provide effective feedback in order to support and develop others work. How can this be improved?

# WORKSHOP ACTIVITIES: YEARS 9 AND 10

## WORKSHOP ACTIVITY 4

### Soundscape and movement

As a class, read through Act One Scene Seven ('The Singing Bones', pp. 27–31). After reading through the text, complete an element of drama analysis (see [graphics organiser](#) at the end of these notes).

Using the analysis, in small groups, create a soundscape for the dominant mood and atmosphere. After creating the soundscape, add movement to the scene. Present the scene to the class and discuss the similarities and differences between each group's scenes. Identify what was most effective in communicating the chosen mood and atmosphere.

In small groups, rehearse a moved reading of the scene being aware of the use of sound and movement as a tool for enhancing mood and atmosphere. Present the moved reading to the class and discuss how the use of voice and movement communicates ideas and action in the scene.

As a group, discuss the elements of production in performance and choose the costume, setting, sound and lighting that will enhance and compliment the performance. Perform the piece for the class using the elements of production where available/appropriate. During the performances, either the teacher and/or other members of the class record the performance as a series of photos or a video recording. After all of the performances are complete, pairs of groups (two groups of students) join together to reflect on their own and each other's performances using the photos/video and their memories.

In their journals, students reflect on the following.

- The way sound and movement enhanced or detracted from the performance.
- The aesthetic effect of the elements of production in their performance.
- The challenges they faced when working in a group and how they overcame these challenges.

# WORKSHOP ACTIVITIES: YEARS 9 AND 10

## WORKSHOP ACTIVITY 5

### Plotting the tension

Divide the class into small groups. Each group reads through the whole of Act Two Scene Five, pp. 38–51. After reading the scene, plot all the points of dramatic tension. Students then create a freeze frame for each of these moments. Students should ensure they have a freeze frame to open and end the scene.

Using the text, students begin a moved reading from one freeze frame to the next. As students reach each freeze frame, they re-evaluate the image to ensure they are communicating their intended meaning. Students repeat this rehearsal process until they can move smoothly through the text without having to pause at each moment of tension (unless required for dramatic effect) and without losing meaning.

Students perform and record their work. As a group, the students watch their performance and analyse the effectiveness in terms of the artistic choices they have made, and the use and awareness of the elements of drama.

In their journals, students reflect on this approach to scripted drama discussing: what worked and why; what challenged them; how they overcame these challenges; and how they would use this approach in the future (if they do not want to use this approach again then they should discuss this instead).

## WORKSHOP ACTIVITIES: YEARS 9 AND 10

### WORKSHOP ACTIVITY 6

## Concluding the unit

In concluding the unit on scripted drama, students should compare their initial experiences with fairy tales and fables to the use of story in *Stories in the Dark*. Using any form of communication that they prefer, students create a response to the statement: 'By engaging with *Stories in the Dark*, I have learnt...'.

In their digital journals, students reflect upon the performances they have created. They identify which of these was the most effective performance with reference to the elements of drama (see [graphics organiser](#) at the end of these notes) and the artistic choices they made with reference to the elements of production in performance.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### 'Not in Print'

- *Stories in the Dark*—Debra Oswald  
<https://itunes.apple.com/au/podcast/stories-in-dark-debra-oswald/id603327157?i=158950911>
- <http://app.stitcher.com/browse/feed/32468/details>

### Interviews and articles

- 'Debra Oswald', *Local conversations with Richard Fidler* (audio)  
<http://www.abc.net.au/local/stories/2011/06/06/3236566.htm>

### Video

- Writing tips—Debra Oswald  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QB3u2tGQP3s>

# GRAPHICS ORGANISER

## Elements of drama analysis

ELEMENT OF DRAMA	EVALUATION, ANALYSIS, SUGGESTIONS
Role and character	
Situation	
Voice and movement	
Focus	
Tension	
Space and time	
Language, ideas and dramatic action	
Mood and atmosphere	
Audience	

# GRAPHICS ORGANISER

## K.W.L Chart

**TOPIC:**

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<b>K</b> WHAT I ALREADY KNOW	<b>W</b> WHAT I WANT TO KNOW	<b>L</b> WHAT I HAVE LEARNED

# GRAPHICS ORGANISER

## Character chart

<b>GENERAL INFORMATION</b>	<b>PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>ATTRIBUTES AND ATTITUDES</b>
Name, age, nationality, socioeconomic status, occupation, skills, family members	Height, weight, ethnicity, eye colour, hair colour, distinguishing features, style, mannerisms, favourite sayings, speech patterns	Short term goals, long term goals, life ambitions, self-image, strengths, weaknesses, motivations, fears

# GRAPHICS ORGANISER

## Compare and contrast chart

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ALIKE

DIFFERENT

## OTHER TEXTS FROM THE AUTHOR

All texts are available from Currency Press, [www.currency.com.au](http://www.currency.com.au)

### Dags

Gillian is 16, suffers from the occasional 'ack-attack', and is worried about not having a boyfriend. She loves chocolate and is infatuated with the best-looking boy in school.

A funny and compassionate look at adolescence.

### Gary's House

Gary has failed in everything he has attempted. But now he has inherited a block of land and with Sue-Anne, his angry and pregnant girlfriend, he gets an urge to build a nest. Satire becomes drama as the battlers reach for their dreams.

### House on Fire

Things aren't going well for the Conway sisters. Dad's just married the geography teacher, oldest sister Bec's been evicted and Evie's suffering serious issues with her new besties. Michaela has twenty-four hours to solve her sisters' problems before she sits the most important exams of her life. What else could go wrong?

*House on Fire* is guaranteed to put a smile on your lips and light a small flame in your heart.

### Mr Bailey's Minder

Leo Bailey is one of Australia's greatest living artists, whose genius battles to survive the effects of alcohol, cynicism and self-loathing. Only one of his many children, his daughter Margo, is prepared to help but she does so at arm's length. Margo finds a live-in-minder, Therese, who is fresh out of prison and desperate for a home. Then along comes Karl, a handyman who has the job of removing a valuable mural but who keeps returning with offers of practical friendship.

A funny and deeply moving play about friendship, ego, art and the secret longing for a better life.

# The Peach Season

After the murder of her husband, Celia has shut herself and her 16-year-old daughter Zoë away, toiling on a peach farm in the middle of nowhere. The arrival of two young people to help during picking season heralds the beginning of the end for Celia's safe existence.

Her daughter falls in love with enigmatic, erratic Kieran, but when the relationship is threatened, they run away together. The safe, perhaps smothering, world that Celia has created unravels; her paranoia and insecurities amplified to full volume. Playing out alongside her fear, we see the increasingly degrading and dangerous lifestyle that the two elopers have fallen into.

*The Peach Season* is a powerful, salutary tale showing what it's like to be a young person desperate for independence, but also, crucially, what it's like to be a parent during the painful process of letting children fly the nest.

# Skate

Inspired by true events, *Skate* is about a group of kids battling with their local council to get a skate park. When tragedy strikes, the battle grows into a struggle for acceptance and unity.

A turbo-charged, moving and funny account of the mates, mothers, tricks and traumas of a group of young skaters. Enhanced by live skateboarding, the play is full of the emotional awkwardness of adolescence, its adrenalin, compassion and humour.



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