



Cambridge IGCSE™

DRAMA

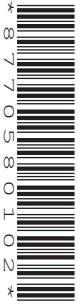
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Paper 1

May/June 2024

COPY OF PRE-RELEASE MATERIAL

2 hours 30 minutes



INSTRUCTIONS

- The questions in Paper 1 will be based on the **two** play extracts provided in this booklet.
- This copy of the pre-release material is for you to use in your responses.

This document has **28** pages. Any blank pages are indicated.

EXTRACT 1

Taken from *The Big Time* by David Williamson

These notes are intended to help you understand the context of the drama.

The extract is taken from *The Big Time* by David Williamson, the most prolific and performed Australian playwright. It was first performed in Sydney in 2019.

The play is about the entertainment industry, where a few people are successful, in demand and treated with respect. Others do not get chosen, have their scripts read or get treated seriously. Old friendships and relationships count for nothing in the cut-throat, back-stabbing world of entertainment.

The play comprises two acts; the extract consists of the whole of Act One.

Characters

CELIA (37, woman, successful soap actor)

ROHAN (46, her partner)

VICKI (39, Celia's 'old friend')

ROLLY (46, Rohan's old school friend)

NELLI (53, Celia and Vicki's agent)

NATE (40, a producer)

ACT ONE

Scene One

[ROHAN sits thinking. He's not an overly impressive man, with thinning hair and a sallow complexion. He's totally inert as if frozen stiff. Suddenly he leaps up.]

ROHAN: Celia! Celia!

[CELIA appears holding her iPhone, annoyed.]

5

CELIA: What?

ROHAN: Listen to this.

CELIA: I'm in the middle of something.

ROHAN: Facebook? Ninety percent of your waking hours you're on Facebook. You only got fifteen likes one day so you start counting the number of sleeping pills you have. It's sick. Social media is sick!

10

CELIA: Everyone needs to feel connected.

ROHAN: Do you think any of them would help if you were in *real* trouble?

CELIA: A lot of them.

ROHAN: [sceptical]: Sure.

15

CELIA: I know it's hard for you to believe, because you don't have any, but friends enrich your life.

ROHAN: I've got friends.

CELIA: Like?

ROHAN: [thinking hard]: Rolly.

20

CELIA: Oh, yes, that old school friend Rolly. The one you groan about every time you have to meet.

[Incoming message on her phone, glances at it.]

ROHAN: Celia, please! Switch it off and listen.

CELIA: [reluctantly looks up]: To what?

25

ROHAN: A killer pitch that's going to make me a fortune.

CELIA: Like all the other ones?

ROHAN: This is a game changer. Just listen.

[Suddenly he transforms into pitch mode. Something emerges that could be called charisma, but isn't quite.]

30

Nate!

CELIA: Nate? Nate Macklin?

ROHAN: Cut and Thrust Productions. Four series and three movies, all financed.

CELIA: I know who Nate Macklin is. He's agreed to listen to your pitch?

35

ROHAN: Why so surprised?

CELIA: He's the big kahuna. Obsessed with *new* talent.

ROHAN: I kept demanding he speak to me personally, and when he finally did, he picked up on the excitement in my voice. There's a great role in it for you.

40

CELIA: I've got a great role.

ROHAN: Celia, it's a soapie. And you've been in it far too long.

CELIA: Don't *ever* call it a soapie. It's a continuing drama series.

ROHAN: Call it what you like. Your self-respect is being slowly eroded because you know your talent isn't being fully utilised.

45

CELIA:	It's utilised enough to let you enjoy a rent-free harbour-side lifestyle in the world's second most expensive city.	
ROHAN:	Okay, I'm not pulling my weight financially at the moment –	
CELIA:	At the moment?	
ROHAN:	Honey, this series will change everything.	50
	<i>[Her phone pings again. She looks at it.]</i>	
	Turn that thing off!	
	<i>[He goes into pitch mode again.]</i>	
	Nate, mate –	
CELIA:	Nate, mate?	55
ROHAN:	It's an invitation to bond.	
CELIA:	It's pathetic.	
ROHAN:	Pathetic?	
CELIA:	This is not 1945. He's not your mate.	
ROHAN:	None of them are. They're sharks circling the creative pond, feeding off other people's talent. But they get funding.	60
CELIA:	Just say, 'Nate, I've got a great idea which I'd like to share with you'.	
ROHAN:	That's too California.	
CELIA:	Okay, do it your way. But please, not 'mate'.	
ROHAN:	<i>[irritated]</i> : Okay. Okay.	65
	<i>[He leaps into pitch mode again.]</i>	
	Nate, my friend. This is a series concept that's so good it doesn't need the hard sell. In just one log line I'm going to hook you.	
	<i>[Her phone beeps. She eagerly looks at it and goes next door.]</i>	
ROHAN:	You haven't heard the log line!	70
CELIA:	<i>[offstage]</i> : It's Vicki. She's having a rough time.	
ROHAN:	When isn't she?	
	<i>[He sighs and sinks back into his frozen pose.]</i>	

Scene Two

	<i>[In Nate Macklin's reception, ROHAN psyches himself up for the pitch. NATE enters.]</i>	75
NATE:	Sorry.	
ROHAN:	You're a busy man.	
NATE:	Too busy.	
	<i>[ROHAN rises, waiting to be shown to NATE's office.]</i>	
	Sorry we can't go to the office. I stupidly double-booked and I've got Mitch Rasfari halfway through a pitch in there, so if you don't mind, can we just do it out here. That okay?	80
ROHAN:	Sure, mate, sure.	
NATE:	So what've you got for me, Rick?	
ROHAN:	Rohan.	85

NATE:	Rohan! Sorry. I've just had a pitch from young Rick Rivers. Name was still in my mind. You know Rick?	
ROHAN:	Never heard of him.	
NATE:	You soon will. Brilliant. Only twenty-three, but does he know his generation. And his generation are rapidly becoming our audience. We shook hands before he'd even walked out of the boardroom.	90
ROHAN:	If the boardroom's empty, maybe we could do it in there. I just feel a bit ... Sort of ... exposed.	
NATE:	Exposed?	
ROHAN:	Out here in the foyer. Three paces from the lift.	95
NATE:	If you've got something worth hearing I'll hear it.	
ROHAN:	I guess my point is, why can't we go to the boardroom!	
NATE:	I don't use the boardroom for pitches.	
ROHAN:	Mate, you just did.	
NATE:	I made an exception for young Rick. What's your problem, Roger?	100
ROHAN:	Rohan. I guess I was hoping to be shown a little ... Respect. A strange word to be using in our industry.	
NATE:	Rohan, I <i>am</i> busy, but I agreed to see you and frankly I don't appreciate this kind of attitude.	
ROHAN:	And I don't appreciate being told that you've just treated a twenty-three-year-old to a personal audience in your boardroom, while I'm supposed to stand and deliver in the anteroom!	105
NATE:	Okay, you want to play nasty? You had one success fifteen years ago and the fact you've done nothing since then doesn't inspire great confidence. Do you want to do this pitch or don't you?	110
ROHAN:	Mate, if I pitched something twice as good as 'The Sopranos' right now you'd hate it.	
	<i>[He turns to go.]</i>	
NATE:	A word of advice. If you don't command respect, never demand it. And don't call people 'mate'. It's a relic of an Australia my generation are embarrassed by.	115
ROHAN:	A word of advice for you, Nate. Get lost.	
	<i>[He goes.]</i>	

Scene Three

	<i>[ROHAN sits in his frozen position in his apartment. CELIA stares at him.]</i>	120
CELIA:	You didn't pitch?	
ROHAN:	I didn't pitch.	
CELIA:	Why?	
ROHAN:	Because I was offered a few minutes in his vestibule while one young writer was halfway through a pitch in his office and he'd just optioned another in his boardroom. I told him to get lost.	125
CELIA:	I know.	
ROHAN:	How?	
CELIA:	Nelli rang. It was overheard by a PA and it's already right around the industry. Nelli wants to hear your pitch.	130
ROHAN:	She's your agent. She's not a producer.	
CELIA:	She's already optioned two projects. She's on her way. And she loves it that you told Nate Macklin to get lost.	
ROHAN:	Is it a good idea?	

CELIA:	It's got promise.	135
ROHAN:	You're just being kind to me.	
CELIA:	It probably does need a rethink.	
ROHAN:	Is it yet another rip-off of 'Breaking Bad' with a bit of Ozark.	
CELIA:	And a touch of 'Sons of Anarchy'.	
ROHAN:	Give up on me, honey. I'm a loser.	140
CELIA:	You're having a bad run.	
ROHAN:	That's gone on for fifteen years.	
CELIA:	You want me to go?	
ROHAN:	No. You're the single best thing that's ever happened in my life but I'm certainly not the best thing that's ever happened in yours.	145
CELIA:	You're not when you wallow in self-pity.	
ROHAN:	Face it. I sit round depressed most of the time and the rest of the time we fight.	
CELIA:	Yes, you're sometimes depressed, but so am I. We often fight, but not for all that long, and the rest of the time you make me laugh.	150
ROHAN:	Could you record that on a voice memo and send it to me?	
CELIA:	See? You are funny.	
ROHAN:	Okay, I'll accept funny, but there's still the elephant in the room.	
CELIA:	Which is?	
ROHAN:	You want kids.	155
CELIA:	Yes. When the time's right.	
ROHAN:	And you'll have to drop out of the series, and our income'll drop to near zero. You're young, you're beautiful, the whole of the country loves you, so why not ... Marry a rich guy and have an easy life?	
CELIA:	I <i>have</i> been getting a lot of fan mail from an orthopaedic surgeon –	160
ROHAN:	There's your man. This city is full of fitness freaks jogging their way to hip, knee and ankle replacements.	
CELIA:	I can't have a man who saws human bones. I can hear it.	
ROHAN:	They use power saws these days.	
CELIA:	I'll keep an eye on other options, but not the ortho.	165
ROHAN:	I don't want you to go.	
CELIA:	Then you'd better decide on your attitude to fatherhood, hadn't you?	

Scene Four

[CELIA is having coffee with her friend and fellow acting school graduate VICKI, an intense actress whose default position towards the world is hostility.] 170

VICKI:	Is he insane? Nate is right up there.	
CELIA:	He was being treated really badly ...	
VICKI:	He's a writer. He should be used to it by now.	
CELIA:	It's normal to want to be treated with respect.	
VICKI:	Respect is directly proportional to the money you can earn. How long since his last success? Ten years?	175
CELIA:	Fifteen.	
VICKI:	Ceels, he's a loser ... You're not going to have kids with this guy?	
CELIA:	No.	
VICKI:	Don't tell me you love him. Please.	180
CELIA:	What if I did?	
VICKI:	I'd wonder whatever happened to the brilliant and feisty young actor I trained with. It doesn't worry you when you go out that people are thinking, 'Why is she with that loser?'	
CELIA:	No-one thinks that except you.	185

VICKI:	The one thing that's always puzzled me about you is that you're always willing to accept second best. In life, in your career.	
CELIA:	My career? I've been a major character in one of our most popular continuing drama series for eight years.	
VICKI:	Who got all the great roles in our final year productions? You. Masha's confession? So tortured, so layered, so moving. Audience in tears. And what was I playing? The maid.	190
CELIA:	You should've been playing one of the sisters.	
VICKI:	But I was 'difficult, demanding, fractious'. Our performance day for the agents? Your pigeonhole was stuffed with eighteen, twenty offers? How many in mine? Six, and none of the top ones.	195
CELIA:	You're with Nelli now.	
VICKI:	Yeah, but that took years. Who wants to represent difficult? But you? You had everything going for you, so why have you spent eight years of your life on autopilot playing a character that's all orange juice and sunlight.	200
CELIA:	[<i>defensively</i>]: I've created a character that people love.	
VICKI:	[<i>sighing</i>]: Oh, dear. How complex is Emma compared to Masha?	
CELIA:	Emma has her problems.	
VICKI:	Like not being able to find her yoga mat? The great characters like Masha, are being psychically torn apart. The sad thing is you <i>could</i> play darkness and despair. But I knew you were going to put that off limits that day at college when we had to act out the darkest moment in our lives, and the best you could come up with was your father asking you why in the hell you thought you could be an actor when you didn't get the lead in the school play.	205
CELIA:	I made it up. I did get the lead in the school play and Dad boasted about how brilliant I was.	
VICKI:	The point was to be totally honest!	
CELIA:	You all had such hideous tales of abuse, poverty and bullying, I couldn't compete.	215
VICKI:	You're not stretching yourself, Ceels. Get out and do a real role in theatre before it's too late.	
CELIA:	How much do your 'real' roles in theatres earn you?	
VICKI:	Self-respect. That's what they've earned me. Slept on friends' sofas twice, only. I'm doing work I care about.	220
CELIA:	Vicki, why do we keep playing out this little fiction that we're friends? A real friend doesn't call someone's life choices into question as often as you do.	
VICKI:	Friends are prepared to challenge each other when they feel it's necessary. And I do. You were the star graduate of our year and everyone knew it.	225
CELIA:	You're still angry because you think you should have been acclaimed best actor of our year?	
VICKI:	Whatever theatre pays is immaterial. It's demanding and tough to create a complex character over two and a half hours every night. But it's art. Art with integrity. And the reputation it's earned me is finally starting to pay off. I'm also in the running to direct an independent movie. I'm late for rehearsals.	230
CELIA:	Don't worry. I'll pick up the tab.	235

Scene Five

[ROHAN is waiting at a bar. He looks impatiently at his watch, and is about to go when ROLLY bears down on him and gives him a bear hug of unwanted force.]

ROLLY: Rohan! Mate! Sorry I'm late. Looking great, mate. Looking great. 240
 ROHAN: Looking okay yourself, Rolly.
 ROLLY: Actually, Leonie has left me for a real estate agent.
 ROHAN: No? You two were solid.
 ROLLY: Turns out she's been having an affair with him for twelve years. He found our house for us. She just kept it secret till the kids were off our hands, then – whoosh – come home, her wardrobe's bare. Lets me know what happened via text message. 245
 ROHAN: Hey, that's really ... awful.
 ROLLY: Get laid off at work and three weeks later she's gone.
 ROHAN: You've lost your job at the credit union?
 ROLLY: Couldn't make my quota. I couldn't stomach steering trusting old retirees into lousy investments. I just couldn't learn to look someone in the eye and lie to them. 250
 ROHAN: So what are you going to do now?
 ROLLY: Late forties, mate. Options extremely limited.
 ROHAN: Tell me about it. 255
 ROLLY: At the moment I'm an Uber driver making six hundred bucks a week.
 ROHAN: Gees, mate. That's tight.
 ROLLY: We'll sell the house and split what's left after paying off the mortgage. I can live off capital for a while.
 ROHAN: You've had a rough time, mate. 260
 ROLLY: It doesn't end there, mate. Private medical ran out two weeks ago and I just found out I need a triple bypass. And I just found out young Jackson spends his weekends drinking. There's more. Madison is pregnant. How are things with you?
 ROHAN: I thought not so good until you got here. 265
 ROLLY: You got problems too?
 ROHAN: Story ideas. I live by them and they're just not coming.
 ROLLY: I still remember every episode of that miniseries of yours. Brilliant. That bikie shootout at the pub. Shotgun blast point-blank range. How do you do that? 270
 ROHAN: Easy, mate, I just write shotgun blast point-blank range. Someone else has to work out how to do it. That was nearly fifteen years ago.
 ROLLY: I saw your name on the credits of something just a few months back.
 ROHAN: I got an episode of a Netflix series.
 ROLLY: Netflix! Don't be modest, mate. You had something about you even in school that marked you out. I always knew you were going to do something special. You always had the smart comeback, the witty line. 275
 ROHAN: It wasn't hard to shine conversationally in our school. Anyone with an IQ around a hundred was a relative genius. 280
 ROLLY: That's pretty cruel, Roh. Okay, there were some of us who weren't the brightest rockets in the fireworks display, but they were still a great bunch of guys. And the girls were great too. I searched on the web and found quite a few of them. They're still exactly the same. I've found Helen Seaton. Helen Federici now. You remember how you had an absolute thing for her? 285
 [ROHAN *nods.*]
 ROLLY: She's single again. Hubby killed in a fork lift accident. Still looks great.
 ROHAN: I think maybe let sleeping dogs lie.
 ROLLY: [He gets out his phone.] 290

ROHAN:	Here's her photo.	
ROHAN:	<i>[glancing at the photo]</i> : That's Helen Seaton?	
ROLLY:	She's still beautiful and she had a lovely personality. Still does. But why would you be interested in her? You're with Celia Constanti.	
	Wow. How is that, mate?	295
ROHAN:	<i>[looking at his watch]</i> : Actually, Rolly, I'm a bit rushed.	
ROLLY:	Hey, mate. I've come eighty clicks to get here.	
ROHAN:	Appreciate that, mate, but –	
ROLLY:	Roh, sometimes I think you just don't appreciate just how special our friendship is to me.	300
ROHAN:	I do, mate, I do. And to me.	
ROLLY:	Last time you raced off too. Mate, if our friendship has worn its course for you after all this time, then be up-front and tell me.	
ROHAN:	No, mate. Very important to me too.	
ROLLY:	Last thing I want is to be a hanger-on. Past my use-by date. I will never, ever forget what you did for me, mate. I'm in your debt.	305
ROHAN:	Rolly, you're not.	
ROLLY:	I'd be shattered if I thought I was past it with you.	
	<i>[He brings out a heap of printouts from a case.]</i>	
	Now that I've managed to locate most of the old gang, I hoped you'd have time to hear a bit of news about them. You remember Shorty Kavanagh?	310
ROHAN:	Not really.	
ROLLY:	Shorty? The tall, skinny guy. Mate, if you've really got to go –	
ROHAN:	No, no. I'll text and cancel the meeting.	315
	<i>[Back at their house, CELIA receives a text message and reads it, puzzled.]</i>	
CELIA:	'Cancel meeting'? What meeting?	
ROLLY:	You remember, the girl I went after when I got nowhere with Helen Seaton? Sue Seabury? The little sporty one. She's had seven kids.	320
ROHAN:	Wow.	
ROLLY:	Dodged a bullet there.	
	<i>[ROHAN takes the printout and starts reading. ROLLY remembers something and dives into his bag.]</i>	
	Oh, almost forgot. I was on the train a few weeks back and heard these two women talking to each other in the seat in front. Their story was so fascinating I thought, 'Rohan could turn this into a movie', so I wrote it all down before I forgot.	325
	<i>[He fishes in his bag and hands ROHAN a pile of printed papers with a bulldog clip. ROHAN looks at it.]</i>	
		330
ROHAN:	<i>[surprised at the size of it]</i> : How long were they talking?	
ROLLY:	Oh, I sort of expanded it a bit. Made up some stuff.	
ROHAN:	Thanks, Rolly. I'll give it a read.	

Scene Six

[ROHAN is sitting back in his apartment in his frozen mode when CELIA comes in.] 335

ROHAN: How was your lunch with Vicki?
 CELIA: Horrible.
 ROHAN: What kind of horrible?
 CELIA: She told me I'm a coward who's betrayed my talent.
 ROHAN: Stop having lunch with her. 340
 CELIA: I am. Definite. How was your lunch with Rolly?
 ROHAN: He's lost his job, his wife, and his kids are in crisis.
 CELIA: I'm sure he felt better being able to tell someone. He's grateful. You saved his life.
 ROHAN: Wasn't a huge deal. 345
 CELIA: You dived in and dragged him out of a river in flood. You got a top bravery award.
 ROHAN: I was a good swimmer – he wasn't. I was never in any danger.
 CELIA: He was. That's the point.
 ROHAN: I only did it because Helen Seaton was watching. 350
 CELIA: Who was she?
 ROHAN: The girl I was desperate to be with.
 CELIA: She was really attractive?
 ROHAN: I thought so. Until Rolly showed me a photo of what she looks like now. To be fair she still looks ... comely. But the sizzle has gone. 355
 CELIA: I'm sure she'd think the same about you.
 ROHAN: Thanks.

Scene Seven

[The next day. CELIA is having coffee with her agent and friend NELLI.]

CELIA: That's the last time ever I have coffee with her. 360
 NELLI: That bad? Why do you keep having coffee with her?
 CELIA: She kept insisting. On the grounds we were supposedly best friends at college.
 NELLI: You were more forgiving of her than most people. It makes you the nearest thing to a friend she had. Blame your kind nature. 365
 CELIA: I just try and avoid confrontations.
 NELLI: Vicki couldn't live without them.
 CELIA: I'm totally over her. Do you honestly enjoy being her agent?
 NELLI: It's a challenge. But she is very talented. Her talent deserves more roles than she gets, but directors don't like her telling them how to direct, and actors don't appreciate her giving them performance notes at the end of each show. 370
 CELIA: Strange that. She told me she's in the running to direct a big movie.
 NELLI: That has to be a fantasy, surely? She's never directed film before. 375
 CELIA: She did the accelerated director's course. Her graduation film was very good. Lots of people in the industry saw it. I went with her to see Nate Macklin and she swanned in radiating confidence and told him he'd be crazy to let anyone else do it.
 CELIA: Nate Macklin's producing?
 NELLI: [nodding]: 'Nate, mate,' she said, 'give this one to me and I'll deliver you a masterpiece.' Producers react to confidence. 380
 CELIA: I couldn't bear to push myself like she does.

NELLI:	No. I sometimes wonder if it's your best career move.	
CELIA:	There's something wrong with my career?	
NELLI:	Not if you're happy with it. It earns <i>you</i> quite a bit of money. I can still remember being dumbfounded when you did ...	385
CELIA:	Masha's confession to her sisters. I wish I'd played the maid.	
NELLI:	I'd be more than happy to make less money from you if you felt you did want to stretch yourself a little.	
CELIA:	Maybe I don't want challenging. Maybe I like playing a warm and positive human being. Maybe I like the feeling that a million people are out there watching me. I like what I'm doing.	390
NELLI:	Is it partly because you're supporting Rohan?	
CELIA:	Is that what you and Vicki think?	
NELLI:	Okay, I agree with her that perhaps your relationship is offering more to him than it is to you.	395
CELIA:	None of you could understand why I broke up with charming and wealthy Ed.	
NELLI:	Not entirely.	
CELIA:	At least Rohan doesn't come home every day, flop down in front of the television with a drink in his hand and watch motorbike racing on cable. Don't assume you know anything about a relationship by viewing it from the outside. Was my Masha really that good?	400
NELLI:	Yes. And so were all the other great roles you did.	
CELIA:	Okay. Get me out of the show. Don't renew my option. Find me something more challenging. What's the film Vicki's wanting to direct?	405
NELLI:	Top secret at the moment. Brilliant script adapted from the novel <i>Sins of the Father</i> . It won just about every prize it could last year. About a woman who suddenly finds out her mother's accidental death was probably engineered by her beloved father. The Katherine role would be perfect for you, actually.	410
CELIA:	If Vicki does get the gig she'd never cast me. I don't want to give her the pleasure of rejecting me.	
NELLI:	You'd be perfect for it.	

Scene Eight

	<i>[CELIA's at home reading scripts in the kitchen while ROHAN is preparing the evening meal. Her phone rings. We see on the other side of the stage that the caller is NELLI.]</i>	415
CELIA	<i>[phone]:</i> Nelli?	
NELLI	<i>[phone]:</i> Thought you'd like to know, or not, that Vicki got the movie.	
CELIA	<i>[phone]:</i> Oh.	420
NELLI	<i>[phone]:</i> You're sure you don't want me to put you up for the Katherine role?	
CELIA	<i>[phone]:</i> No. I couldn't bear the humiliation.	
NELLI	<i>[phone]:</i> It could transform your career.	
CELIA	<i>[phone]:</i> No.	425
NELLI	<i>[phone]:</i> You're that certain she wouldn't want you?	
CELIA	<i>[phone]:</i> Totally.	
	<i>[CELIA ends the call and looks at ROHAN.]</i>	
ROHAN:	Humiliation? What humiliation?	
CELIA:	Vicki got the movie.	430
ROHAN:	<i>Sins of the Father?</i>	
CELIA:	Yeah.	

ROHAN: Kidding. She's never done a feature before.
 CELIA: She impressed Nate with her confidence.
 ROHAN: Kidding. I've heard it's a great script. You don't want Nelli to put you up for the lead? You could be wrong. She might give you the role. 435
 CELIA: I'm not wrong.

Scene Nine

[VICKI sits opposite NATE in his office.]

NATE: So who's our Katherine?
 VICKI: Rose Byrne. She'd be very good. 440
 NATE: That's who I was thinking of. Do you think she'd do it?
 VICKI: I've already talked to her. She's read the book and loved it. I know I should have cleared it with you but I asked her agent Chloe Pachello to put her on hold, pending your approval.
 NATE: You've got it. 445
 VICKI: Just in the interests of being absolutely certain, and this is a little out of left field, I'd like to audition Celia Constanti before we confirm Rose.
 NATE: Celia Constanti? As our lead? She's a soap star.
 VICKI: She has a quality of unforced ... naivety that gives her the vulnerable quality we need when the shock comes. I trained with her. There's a risk that years of lazy acting could have imprinted bad habits – 450
 NATE: Then let's not waste time.
 VICKI: I know what she was capable of and I'm reasonably confident I can get that back. I think she's worth a test. We'll keep it under wraps so Rose doesn't hear. 455
 NATE: Rose has an international reputation. But if we have Hugh Jackman for Greg we can afford a lesser name for Katherine. Celia would be a lot cheaper than Rose.
 VICKI: Honestly, it's a long shot, but I'd like to do it.
 NATE: Okay. 460

Scene Ten

[NELLI's office. She hears a knock at the door and beckons CELIA in with urgency.]

NELLI: Sit down.
 CELIA: What is such big news you can't tell me over the phone?
 [CELIA sits and waits expectantly.] 465
 NELLI: Katherine in *Sins of the Father*. Vicki wants to cast you.
 CELIA: Kidding!
 NELLI: Called this morning. Thinks you'll be perfect.
 CELIA: I can't quite believe this. Vicki?
 NELLI: She wants the best possible film. If she thinks you're perfect for the role that's all that counts. 470
 CELIA: Katherine? Opposite who?
 NELLI: Hugh Jackman.
 CELIA: [shrieking]: Hugh Jackman! Is he signed?!
 NELLI: Apparently. Dead keen to do it. 475
 CELIA: And happy with me? Has to be a dream. They've sent a deal memo?
 NELLI: They will, subject to a screen test.
 CELIA: Screen test?

NELLI: Total formality. Vicki assured me. She's talked Nate into it. He's totally
onside. 480

CELIA: Then why a screen test?

NELLI: So they can assure the investors you're perfect. No-one else is being
tested.

CELIA: [*anxious*]: They said that?

NELLI: Vicki swore to it. The other agents have been throwing names at Nate
for testing and they've all been ignored. Stop this needless panic.
You've got the role. Vicki assured me. And it's very good money. 485

[NELLI *shows her a figure on a pad.*]

CELIA: Wow.

NELLI: The downside of being an agent is I spend most of my life telling
actors they didn't get the role. Today is the upside. 490

[NELLI *gets up from behind the desk and they hug each other and
dance around like excited schoolgirls.*]

Scene Eleven

[CELIA *walks into the auditioning studio and hugs VICKI.*]

CELIA: What can I say? I love the role and I'm just so delighted you think I'm
right for it. 495

VICKI: You wouldn't be here if I didn't. You've met Nate?

CELIA: At industry functions.

NATE: With Rohan Black.

CELIA: Not your favourite person at the moment, I believe. 500

NATE: No. But we're here about you, not him. I'm sorry to have to ask an
actor of your experience to audition but –

CELIA: You have to reassure your investors. I understand totally.

VICKI: Nate and I need to feel certain that you can do it.

[CELIA *frowns.*] 505

NATE: I'm sure you're going to be fabulous. We've got Geoff Morell in to read
the Hugh Jackman part. I've got it all set up next door.
I'll leave you to it.

[*He smiles and goes. VICKI turns to CELIA.*]

VICKI: Celia, don't worry. I know what you're capable of. 510

Scene Twelve

[*On one side of the stage VICKI and NATE sit watching audition tapes
in NATE's office. On the other side CELIA bursts into her apartment
and embraces a startled ROHAN.*]

ROHAN: Seems like it went well?

CELIA: I flew. 515

ROHAN: You got the gig?

CELIA: As soon as I was finished, Vicki gave me the thumbs up. She knew.

ROHAN: You got the gig.

CELIA: Nate has to see the tapes but it'll be fine. I became Katherine. I

	stretched acting muscles and it felt great! I realised what I'd been missing all these years. I wasn't reciting lines I was <i>acting</i> .	520
ROHAN:	So when are they going to confirm it?	
CELIA:	Nate'll call Nelli. Don't worry, it's fine.	
ROHAN:	That is great. We are going out tonight to your favourite restaurant and celebrating.	525
CELIA:	I'll pick up the tab.	
ROHAN:	No you won't. I got some good news today too.	
CELIA:	Really?	
ROHAN:	Well, some sort of reasonably good news. Well, some mildly okay news. I got an episode of a series but it pays okay.	530
CELIA:	That's wonderful.	
ROHAN:	Well, it's better than being unemployed. Let's have a great meal at our favourite Vietnamese restaurant. Sorry, I've been so morose for the last couple of months.	
CELIA:	We're in a roller-coaster profession.	535
	<i>[Back in NATE's office. NATE and VICKI watch CELIA's audition tape.]</i>	
ACTOR	<i>[voice]:</i> There were things happening between your mother and I that –	
CELIA	<i>[voice]:</i> That justified you killing her!?	
ACTOR	<i>[voice]:</i> I never meant to kill her.	
CELIA	<i>[voice]:</i> Dad! She died. She died horribly. In agony. But that's okay because you only meant to give her a little shove?	540
ACTOR	<i>[voice]:</i> I wasn't ever intending to touch her, but your mother had a tongue like acid. She was brilliant at humiliating and belittling. I never intended to –	
CELIA	<i>[voice]:</i> Dad, when you shove someone hard enough to crack their skull it's called murder. I don't want to hear another word of your rationalisations and justifications. Whatever she was to you, my mother was someone I loved, and someone who cared for me more than you ever did – You were the one I looked up to and worshipped.	545
	<i>[NATE switches off the tape. They both sit in silence for a while.]</i>	550
NATE:	I'm amazed. Your hunch was right. She's perfect. You think?	
VICKI	<i>[shaking her head]:</i> She failed to convince me her world had been rocked to its foundations.	
NATE:	She convinced me, totally.	
VICKI:	The dam has to burst at that moment. The emotions have got to be in flood.	555
NATE:	They were.	
VICKI:	Nate, I'm sorry. It was worth a try, but I was wrong.	
NATE:	That was a great audition.	
VICKI:	It was competent. But as I feared, years of soapie laziness have blunted her edge.	560
NATE:	Vicki, that was a top performance.	
VICKI:	I'm sorry, I disagree.	
NATE:	Let's both take the tapes home, look at them again, then get together a little later in the week. Okay?	565
VICKI:	I'm directing this movie. I've got to have confidence in everyone I cast.	
NATE:	And I'm producing this movie and I've got to have confidence in your decisions. Watch it again and we'll meet later in the week.	

Scene Thirteen

[CELIA and ROHAN are walking home from the Vietnamese restaurant later that night.] 570

CELIA: All doubts gone?
 ROHAN: Yes. Vietnamese is definitely my favourite cuisine.
 CELIA: No, the other thing.

[He thinks.]

ROHAN: Ah, yes. Baby. Yes. All doubts gone. Straight after the movie. All your next roles, they can fit around it. Cate Blanchett had three and it certainly didn't stop her. 575

CELIA: I'm never going to be Cate Blanchett.
 ROHAN: Cate Blanchett wasn't Cate Blanchett until she was Cate Blanchett. I'm ready to be a father. I really am. 580

CELIA: And ready also to be ...?
 ROHAN: A husband maybe?

CELIA: Marriage? [Puzzled] I didn't think you were a fan. Well, not totally.
 ROHAN: Okay, fine. Happy to do it. I just never asked because I didn't think you'd approve. 585

CELIA: A public declaration of our love for each other isn't totally off my agenda.

ROHAN: I'd always assumed that the only time people would gather to mark a significant moment in my life was my funeral. And even then, not many. That's great. Do we need to get engaged? 590

CELIA: No, but you can still buy me a ring.

ROHAN: Not long till Christmas.

CELIA: That would be a lovely present.

ROHAN: Oh. No. The crackers. They've usually got quite nice cutglass rings inside. Joking. A ring. Great. You don't have to take my name. 595

CELIA: I didn't intend to.

ROHAN: Wow. All settled then. Fame, baby, marriage.

CELIA: You still have to –

ROHAN: What?

CELIA: Ask. 600

ROHAN: You said you wanted to.

CELIA: Rohan, is there one tiny bit of romance in your body? No, don't get down on your knees. Just ask.

ROHAN: Celia Imogene Constanti. Will you marry me?

CELIA: No. You're so hopeless I've changed my mind. 605

[He looks stricken. She grabs him. They kiss.]

Scene Fourteen

[Next morning in NELLI's office, CELIA is looking worried.]

CELIA: They didn't get back to you?

NELLI: Well, actually Vicki did.

CELIA: When? Before I rang? 610

NELLI: Yeah.

CELIA: Why didn't you tell me?

NELLI: She asked me not to. She didn't want you to get worried.

CELIA: Worried about what?

NELLI: Vicki said you were brilliant, but Nate had doubts. 615
 CELIA [starting to panic]: Doubts, he seemed pleased.
 NELLI: Apparently he isn't, but Vicki says she can talk him around. She said
 in the last resort she'll threaten to walk if he tries to stop you. He's a
 typical nervous producer. A mistake can mean he drops millions.
 CELIA [in full panic]: I knew this was too good to be true. 620
 NELLI: Ceels, stop panicking. It's all going to happen.
 CELIA: She really thinks she can talk him around?
 NELLI: She's certain she can. She said the trouble was that he had this
 fixation that he wanted Rose Byrne.
 CELIA: Rose Byrne. Oh, hell. 625
 NELLI: Vicki feels Rose is too brittle for the role. It needs your warmth and
 empathy.
 CELIA: She said that?
 NELLI: She said that it may take a day or two but it's going to happen. Calm
 down. It's going to happen. 630

Scene Fifteen

[NATE is still arguing with VICKI a few days later.]

NATE: I watched it again and I'm convinced Celia is right.
 VICKI: I watched it too and the truth is you were right in the first place and I
 was wrong. Rose Byrne would be perfect.
 NATE: We've still got her on hold. And she is a more saleable name. But I 635
 still think –
 VICKI: Look. Celia is better than I expected. I admit. But I've still got a very
 strong feeling Rose will be even better. It could make the difference
 between a good movie and a masterpiece.
 NATE [hesitating]: Okay, if you're that convinced, we go with Rose. 640
 [VICKI smiles.]
 VICKI: You won't be sorry. But, Nate.
 NATE: Yes.
 VICKI: Celia's an old friend. I might've given her the impression she was
 more likely to get the role than she was. 645
 NATE: She knew that Rose was on hold?
 VICKI: No, I didn't tell her.
 NATE [getting it and nodding]: I take the rap?
 VICKI: Please.
 NATE: It was my decision in the end. Okay, I'll be bad guy. That's what 650
 producers are for.
 VICKI: Thanks.

Scene Sixteen

[VICKI is in NELLI's office.]

NELLI: You told me she practically had the role.
 VICKI: Nate had other ideas. 655
 NELLI: He saw the tapes?
 VICKI: He felt she was almost there but not quite.
 NELLI: And you agreed.
 VICKI: He's the producer. He had final call.
 NELLI: This is awful. 660

VICKI: Nelli, disappointments are part of being an actor.
 NELLI: The best role in her life. Promised, then whisked away?
 VICKI: She's my friend. You think I enjoy this?
 NELLI: You'd better tell her yourself.
 VICKI: She's your client. That's your job. 665
 NELLI: She's my friend too.
 VICKI: This isn't a friendship agenda, this is professional. I'm a director, she's an actor, you're her agent.

Scene Seventeen

[CELIA is with ROHAN in their apartment. CELIA is stunned. ROHAN is furious.] 670

ROHAN: She promised she'd fight for you.
 CELIA: Yeah, sure.
 ROHAN: What do you mean?
 CELIA: I ran into Rose Byrne's agent, Chloe Pachello.
 ROHAN: And? 675
 CELIA: She assumed I knew Rose had been on hold for weeks.

Scene Eighteen

[CELIA waits for VICKI in a coffee lounge. VICKI comes in, a script and papers under her arm, looking annoyed.]

VICKI: No-one could be sorrier for what's happened than I am, Ceels, but it's happened, I'm in pre-production and I just have to get on with it. 680
 CELIA: I just need a few words.
 VICKI: There's nothing I can do to reverse the decision, if that's what you're hoping.
 CELIA: I'm just stunned that you'd wait all these years till you found the perfect way to inflict your revenge. I ran into Chloe Pachello. You had Rose on hold. 685
 VICKI: I thought it through and thought you could be better. I was confident you could do it.
 CELIA: I've done enough auditions to know when I hit the mark.
 VICKI: Nate had second thoughts. You're totally paranoid. 690
 CELIA: It was all carefully managed. Making me wait a week and then my worst fears realised via a phone call from Nelli. You didn't tell me yourself because good actor though you are, you wouldn't have been able to totally hide your triumph. Tell the truth, Vicki. I was never going to get that role. 695

[She holds eye contact. VICKI looks away.]

Don't lie any more.

[There's a silence. Suddenly the dam of old resentments that's been simmering away inside VICKI for years, bursts.]

VICKI: No, you weren't. Right from the very first day at college I knew you were going to be the golden girl. You knew all the tricks. Everyone wanted to be your friend. I am what I am. Life is kill or be killed. We were all happy friends together in this wonderful acting school? Give me a break. In a profession where a tiny handful of those who 700

graduate make it to the top? I don't think so. While I fought and fought to get the roles that would stretch me, you took the easy option every time. You mouthed your clichéd soapie lines for years on end, I did the hard yards to make sure every bit of the talent I had been given was developed and tested. 705

[She turns to go.] 710

CELIA: Maybe I didn't stretch myself. Maybe I don't deserve the role. But what you did – raise my hopes and gloat about the fact you were about to smash them – is cruelty beyond belief. I still have ten great friends from those years who are important to me while you go through life assuming that everyone you meet is a potential rival and enemy. Count your real friends, Vicki. I doubt you've got any, but that's really of no concern to you, is it? You just want to be number one. That's all that really counts. 715

[She turns to go.]

VICKI: Unlike you, I'm going to make it. 720

END OF ACT ONE

TURN OVER FOR EXTRACT 2

EXTRACT 2

Taken from *Kantan* by Yukio Mishima

These notes are intended to help you understand the context of the drama.

Kantan was written by Yukio Mishima in the 1950s. The extract is an abridged version of the whole play.

Noh is an ancient Japanese dramatic form dating from the 14th century. The original Japanese Noh play, *Kantan*, has been reinterpreted by Yukio Mishima for a twentieth-century audience.

In the tale, a spoiled young man sleeps on a magic pillow while his old nurse prepares breakfast. He dreams of riches and power as a financial tycoon and dictator and as a result awakens a changed man.

Mishima suggests that his plays should be adapted to suit modern locations wherever they may be performed.

Characters

JIRŌ (*man, 18*)

KIKU (*woman, former nanny, 40*)

BEAUTY

DANCERS

SECRETARY

PHYSICIAN

Notes

Shōji – Japanese double panelled paper door

[*Night*]

KIKU

[*offstage*]: It's so wonderful you've come.

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It's strange ... The garden has come back to life.

CURTAIN

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