

BEST POSSIBLE WORLD

BY

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Synopsis

Australian expatriates Bride and Orla run a former hostel in Ireland, which houses asylum seekers from all around the war torn world. In a place where tensions run high and citizenship can be bought, sold, or snatched away, the two women try to keep their residents safe until their claim for refugee process is processed. When Bride's lover is murdered in the street, she must decide how to create a new life, even at the cost of sacrificing her own identity forever.

BEST POSSIBLE WORLD

CAST OF CHARACTERS

BILJANA	Bosnian woman 30's- rarely smiles in the first act. A former radio announcer, she has unusual vocal dexterity.
BRIDE	Irish/ Australian woman 30's quick to laughter and smiles in the first act. Australian accent stained with travel.
ORLA	Irish/ Australian woman 30's- business like- and becoming sour. Strong Irish accent that she has cultivated in the last seven years- occasional slips into Australian accent.
BEDRIDIN	African man Blind in one eye. 20's- Proud man struggling with the indignity of his situation.
REDJO	Croatian man 30's to 40's. Big hearted Unobserved he is effeminate, as he is macho in public
MASSI	Afghani woman (can double with Orla) 20's. Quietly cheeky
DANNY	Australian Man 40. (can double with Redjo or Bedridin) Most people's idea of a good bloke

CASTING NOTE

Can be performed by a cast of seven – *(4 Female, 3 Male)*

Or with doubling a cast of five *(3 Female, 2 Male)*

Orla and Massi double & Redjo (or Bedridin) and Danny double.

List of Acts and Scene

Act One has 5 Scenes and is set in one room

*The study room of an asylum seeker hostel in Bundoran,
Country Donegal The Republic of Ireland*

Act One Scene 1	Pages 2-4
Act One Scene 2	Pages 5-33
Act One Scene 3	Pages 34-44
Act One Scene 4	Pages 44-56
Act One Scene 5	Pages 56-59

Act Two is set seven years later and has 2 scenes and is set in one room.

A lounge room of a recently renovated house in semi rural Australia.

Act Two Scene 1	Pages 59- 106
Act Two Scene 2	Pages 106-108

ACT ONE - SCENE ONE

*(In the dark the sounds of a busy airport.
A single light reveals an African man, BEDRIDIN, in a messy classroom
reading a white board.
Written on the white board is the homework for the following day;)*

**HOMEWORK FOR NEXT CLASS.
PRESENT TENSE:**

**MY FIRST DAY IN IRELAND
A SHORT (ONE PAGE) ESSAY ON YOUR FIRST DAY IN IRELAND.
PLEASE INCLUDE PEOPLE YOU MET,
FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF THE COUNTRY AND WHERE YOU WENT.
MUST BE IN PRESENT TENSE!**

(Bedridin picks up the white board marker)

BEDRIDIN I walk with the passengers that wave their purple passports at migration.

(He writes on the white board: I want)

Migration is not looking at me. I am at luggage retrieval. I stand here, as still as a tree. I have no luggage. Mobile phones shrill all around me. I am not well. I sweat. A man next to me, a father - heaves at a heavy bag and growls at his small boy who is trying to help.
The remaining passengers are still. They are still. I am still. We wait.
A security officer is looking at me - I see his fear at my fear. No, no. I must not doubt. I am not a drug dealer or criminal or even a particularly good man. I want to roar like a lion but I must just say these words, I wish to seek asylum.

(He writes: to roar)

Security approaches. I don't know what the man is saying. The mobile phones sing far off. The families choose their green or red exit gates. No, no, no. I am quite well now. No sweat, no tremors, no family.

I wish, I seek, asylum. Security is calling Migration.

*(He writes: **like a**)*

Migration want to see my airline ticket. ‘No, No, No!’ One is saying ‘You are to go back on the next available plane to your country’. No, no, no sir please I can’t go back. I can never go back. He yells at me ‘You must go back on the plane!’ But I cannot go back. I am ripping the plane ticket into narrow strips- this I know is stupid- I should not provoke these men- these men who hold my future in their unqualified hands.

*(He writes: **lion**)*

I am shaking. I am shaking. I could run or I could roar or I could fight -but a small cry escapes my throat.

*(He writes: **but I cry with shame**)*

Now there is kindness “Do I want an interpreter?” No, I don’t want an interpreter- if they speak my language they are from my country and that is where I seek asylum from. No, no I am fluent in English. The Europeans may have taken many African resources but they left behind their languages. I wish to seek asylum in Ireland where you have human rights. I am sorry Sir and Madam. I can see I have caused you a problem. I can see that you would just like to go home.

(Single light on the white board)

I WANT TO ROAR LIKE A LION BUT I CRY WITH SHAME

(Bedridin exits)

Modern Irish Music with a melancholy playfulness

Lights up to reveal the full set)

ACT ONE - SCENE TWO

(A study room in a regional back packer hostel, now housing twenty-one asylum seekers. The study-room has six or seven tables with chairs, a large whiteboard and one cubicle that is a language booth. There are three exits. One on either side of the stage and the third exit is partly obscured behind the whiteboard. There is also a sliding window where the residents have to buzz the bell outside and wait for one of the staff to open.)

The heating is often turned off in the hostel so residents wear their coats inside.

Bride, an Irish/Australian woman, in her thirties can be heard talking to Biljana, a Bosnian woman slightly younger.)

BRIDE *(offstage with a hybrid Irish/Australian accent)* I'm walking along the swirling pavements of Copacabana beach *(she enters)* on my way to teaching English and every morning I hear;
(in exaggerated Brazilian accent) "Americana, Americana! You want some Rio De Janeiro Ass? I give you good price"

BILJANA *(at doorway with Bosnian accent)* And what you say?

BRIDE I'm not bloody American but yeah I like the look of your arse!

(The two women laugh. Bride walks towards the board)

BILJANA I get my homework.

BRIDE *(referring to the writing on the whiteboard)* Who did that?

*(Bride reads **I WANT TO ROAR LIKE A LION BUT I CRY WITH SHAME** then wipes the white board clean.*

During this there is a cackle of the loudspeaker and a man's voice clears his throat of cigarette inspired phlegm)

LOUD SPEAKER -

GERARD'S VOICE *(Donegal accent)* Residents. *(clears his throat again)*

BRIDE *(to the voice)* Give up the fags Gerard

LOUD SPEAKER –

GERARD'S VOICE Please be informed that the woman from the Social Welfare is here. If you are not here to sign on every two weeks you will lose your benefit of 19 Euros 10 cent per week.

(He hesitates as he is responding to Orla who is in the office with him.)

What? *(beat)* Orla's saying that you're not to be disturbing the staff when they're going about their business, but sure, we can always have a pint after work *(Orla cuts him off by switching the microphone off)*

(Bedridin, comes out from behind the whiteboard. He puts his hand on Bride's hand. Their eyes meet for longer than a moment.)

Jangling keys are heard offstage. The two of them exchange nervous looks. They exit through one doorway.

Orla enters from the opposite doorway. She strides across the space as if she owns the place (which she does). A large bunch of keys jangle off her belt. When she sees rubbish she sighs in annoyance. She picks up some papers and soft drink cans and spills the soft drink on the floor.)

ORLA Jaysus wept

(She exits. REDJO, a Croatian man (in his 40's), peers through the other doorway to see if the room is empty then enters)

LOUD SPEAKER –

GERARD'S VOICE Residents. *(Clears his throat)* Could we ask you, once again, to please refrain from entering the dining room or the language room without a member of staff with ya.

REDJO *(to the empty room)* Please refrain. Sta Je To? (WHAT IS THAT?)
Please refrain.

(Redjo looks around and claps his hands when he sees that the language booth is open and empty. He enters the booth, puts on a pair of headphones and turns on the tape.)

REDJO *(Listens and answers)* How do you do?... I am Scottish... You are very welcome... I like potatoes very much... Thank you. You are very kind.

*(He shakes his head and rewinds tape.
Redjo accidentally pulls the headphones out of the tape
deck and the sound of an English accented voice booms
throughout the room)*

ENGLISH ACCENT

TAPE VOICE That's two first class tickets to Hastings. Thank-you.
You are very kind.

*(Redjo plugs the microphone back in. BRIDE enters with a
box of whiteboard markers and does not see Redjo.
Bride writes on the whiteboard: -)*

**PRESENT TENSES.
SIMPLE AND CONTINUOUS.**

LOUD SPEAKER –

GERARD'S VOICE Could residents please refrain from hanging washing out of
the window

(Redjo comes out of the language booth)

REDJO Refrain?

BRIDE *(startled and dropping the markers)* Jesus Christ Redjo!

REDJO I sorry. Sto je? What this mean- refrain?

BRIDE Stop

REDJO Sto? (*WHAT?*)

BRIDE Stop! Don't be hanging the clothes out the window

REDJO But how we dry clothes? Madame Orla machine kills..

BRIDE Destroys

REDJO All the clothes- finish- so we wash them bathroom- where we dry?
Gledaj! (*LOOK*)

*(He shows her a hole in the back of his shirt that reveals three
deep scars)*

BRIDE *(reacting to the scars)* God! Redjo! - who did that to you?

REDJO *(referring to his damaged shirt)* Madame Orla Machine. She is my only one.

BRIDE Right. *(beat)* Where is your book?

REDJO Ach! Kitchen *(he goes outside and begins coughing)*

(The sliding window is buzzed)

BRIDE *(To the departing Redjo)* There is cough syrup in the cupboard and tell the others to hurry up

(Bride opens the sliding window)

BRIDE Anwar! Hi. Why don't you come to my class anymore?

ANWAR *(Unseen middle eastern accent)* I work for Orla now.
I here only for social woman.

BRIDE You don't like my classes?

ANWAR *(Unseen)* I like very much, but job- you understand?

*(BILJANA enters with books and some loose papers.
Redjo re-enters with his book)*

REDJO - a sam upravu Da? (I'm right. Yes?)

BILJANA Da, ti si upravu (Yeah, you're right)

BRIDE But if I don't get at least eight students to sign the government will cancel the classes.

REDJO He sign. *(At Anwar through the window)*
Anwar you sign- No! you no come to English- you only sign

ANWAR *(Unseen)* OK

BRIDE Excellent!

REDJO *(looking out the window at other residents walking past)*

Hey Mosa! Muhamed! sign for English OK?

No, no don't come-only sign. *(he gestures a signature)* Sign.

(he sees Cyprian) Ah Cyprian!

You Gade *(BASTARD!)* Gade, Djubre *(SCUM)!*

(Cyprian - a Romanian accented voice off stage- responds by swearing back. REDJO is inflamed and, in his fury, tries to get out the window.)

REDJO Picka Ti Materina!

(BILJANA tries to hold him back. BEDRIDIN hearing the commotion runs inside and pulls REDJO from the window)

BEDRIDIN What's the problem Man?

REDJO Gadovi *(BASTARDS)* Kurve *(PROSTITUTES)*

(Redjo begins coughing)

BRIDE What is he saying?

BILJANA He is calling them prostitutes. They come here seek asylum and then go to Dublin and work underground.

REDJO They are only here for the Euros. *(he coughs again)*

BEDRIDIN *(patting him on the back)* Take it easy Redjo

REDJO Twenty months! Twenty months I wait in this dirty cold hostel for my interview. They don't call me for interview because of so many people, so many Gadovi! *(BASTARDS)* like him. They make money- yet who is real asylum seeker, he don't get! I real! real! not bogus asylum seeker.

(Cyprian call out outside and Redjo runs at the window again)

REDJO Pilda Mater! Jebem Teusta! Govmo Smrdivo!

*(He breaks into coughing again
Biljana gets him some water)*

BRIDE Was Redjo a prize-fighter back in his country?

BILJANA *(Giving Redjo water)* He was a chemist.

REDJO *(to Bride)* Here I am nothing.
 (out the window) And you don't come to class!

BRIDE *(annoyed)* Thanks Redjo. I need every pupil I can get.

REDJO He is Gadovi! They say asylum seeker come to fuck Irish Economy.
 I come and I never don't nobody fuck

BRIDE OK

REDJO No Not OK no OK

BRIDE don't bite my head off all right?

REDJO Oh my teacher - you no understand, I not angry at you.

*(Massi, an Afghani woman in her twenties wearing a head scarf,
 enters with her book)*

BRIDE Right... OK anyone seen Fevzi and Muhumed the second?

MASSI They sleep and Joseph, he sleep

REDJO I get! Nema Problema! *(No worries)* I wake.

BRIDE *(to departing Redjo)* Don't be giving out to Cyprian

(Redjo leaves. Bedridin approaches Bride)

BEDRIDIN *(quietly)* I need to talk to you

MASSI Bride? Can I talk to you woman only?

(Massi pulls Bride to one side and Bedridin walks over to Biljana)

BEDRIDIN Orla says you got the registered letter.

BILJANA Yes I got the letter

MASSI Tell me if you understand
 Could I please have some sanitary towels?

BRIDE Yes I'll get you some now.

MASSI No, No, No

BEDRIDIN Is it the results of your appeal?
 BILJANA Probably, very probably

MASSI This I say at pharmacy and girls not understand.

BEDRIDIN If it's bad news you should leave straight away
(Biljana nods then shakes her head)

BRIDE Probably catty Ursula

MASSI Girl said 'you don't need them'. Do they think me pregnant?

BEDRIDIN I got contacts for Iceland

MASSI Me fat?
 BRIDE No

BEDRIDIN I know a smuggler – good price

MASSI Me I am no! Baby too difficult. Now, no baby. I not like that.
 BRIDE *(correcting her)* I am not like that
 MASSI You, me the both.

BILJANA I hate snow
 BEDRIDIN *(to Biljana)* Open the letter- you could have refugee status

BILJANA *(breaking away from Bedridin)* Bride can we start?
 Orla wants me to finish clean in here before lunch

BRIDE OK. Massi- I'll talk to Michael- Ursula's boss

MASSI In my country I was a teacher like you

BILJANA Yes. You taught Nurses yes?

MASSI But I was good teacher
(Biljana giggles)

BRIDE Oh right.

MASSI I read in newspaper. Ireland need nurse. Shortage Yes?

BRIDE *(to room)* Right. We better make a start

MASSI Could you call for me? I am nurse. Very good

BILJANA Asylum seeker... not allowed to work in real job. You know this

MASSI *(To Bride)* Ireland need nurse

BRIDE *(correcting her)* Ireland needs nurses

MASSI Yes, yes, I know! This is why you call for me Yes?

BRIDE OK, but each time I call the department keeps me on hold / for an hour

MASSI You are very kind

(Redjo re-enters)

REDJO They want to sleep. They depressed

BRIDE But they'll need English / if...

BEDRIDIN To learn English you need hope that you will need it

REDJO I have no hope but I love my teacher.

 Joseph, Fevzi- Nema problema. *(NO PROBLEM)* They sign.

(Proud of the following newly learnt phrase) Leave this to me!

BRIDE Excellent. I've seven- need one more.

BEDRIDIN I'll come to your class

MASSI But you speak English better than teacher

BRIDE Thanks Massi

(quietly to Bedridin) Aren't you working for Orla in the office?

BEDRIDIN No problem I can stay, maybe learn something?

BRIDE Ok let's continue with present tense. Redjo.

 Have you done your homework?

REDJO Yes, yes. Look *(He shows her a page)*

BRIDE *(pleased)* Bloody amazing

REDJO *(a bit hurt)* No. No, it's good

BRIDE Ok. We start. Thank you Mr Redjo please

(Redjo stands next to white board with a big smile on his face.)

REDJO My First day in Ireland. I get off plane.

*(Bride writes: **Off the plane**)*

REDJO Migration Officer he say "Welcome to the Republic of Ireland. Are you here for business or to visit somebody or are you tourist? One thousand welcomes. 'No.' I say, 'No. I come ask azeel.' He say "Azeel?" 'Yes' I say 'Azeel. Yes.' "You mean asylum?" 'Yes' I say 'Yes, azeelium. His Irish eyes is no smiling now

(Redjo body stiffens and he points, mimicking the migration officer)

He say "No You go back on plane" But I don't understand. He angry.

His face is blue but I don't understand what he talk.

Then he... kako se kaze (HOW DO YOU SAY?)

(Redjo points.)

BILJANA Points

*(Bride writes: **what he is saying**)*

REDJO He points - "Go sit there" - I write forms.

BRIDE I fill out the forms

*(Bride writes: **fill out the forms**)*

REDJO Some things I understand, some things I not: I don't know how to say- I don't know; but now I know because of my teacher. *(beams at Bride)*

BRIDE Keep going

REDJO I show him form and he said sit. This second man came with application card. This guy- he nice. Nice guy he say sorry he said something else but I understand only sorry.

BRIDE Excellent Redjo. *(Bride writes and ticks; **I understand only 'sorry'** ✓)*

REDJO He say 'follow me' but I don't understand follow me, and then he take my arm. 'Come' he says and this I understand. He take fingerprints and photo- now I scared because I think- jail. I go to jail and then he say to me 'Taxi waiting for me' and I think that's good Taxi! this mean taxi mean I don't going to jail.

*(Bride writes: **I'm not going to jail**
Redjo bows. The class claps)*

REDJO *(bows again)* You are every kind *(goes back to his seat)*

BRIDE *(correcting him)* You are very kind. Now Massi how did you go?

(Massi walks up to the whiteboard and begins to dance with a cassette tape of The Cranberries to her ear)

MASSI I go like this.

(Massi dances without making any noise)

My first day in Ireland- I go like this

BRIDE Is this your homework?

BILJANA I like

REDJO Massi make music loud

MASSI This is not important. When I have bad days my father help me- he say "When you sad Massi, you must dance, Massi we must dance"
Even in war, always in war, always in war in my poor country- and my father say me; "Dance Massi! We must dance!" but I scare for Taliban Taliban and he say "Hush my girl, don't scare for Taliban we will dance together, like this"

*(She dances very quietly without moving her feet. It is slow and joyful.
Massi encourages the others to join in. They do, quietly and without music)*

REDJO Your father- he wise man

MASSI My father- he dead- no medicine. But my sister is here in Waterford and she is refugee she got green book.

REDJO Excellent! Why you no live with her?

MASSI Yes if Minister say yes- In the office of refugee place. On my first day in Ireland. I tell them I have a sister, a sister- she live in Waterford. I say please, please send me south to Waterford but they send me here. West. I am very sad for I no see my sister for two year -

BRIDE I have not seen my sister

*(Bride writes; **I have not seen my sister for two years**)*

MASSI But my sister she call me at Bridge Bar last night and Michael the bar man he see I am cry.

BRIDE I am crying

MASSI He see I am crying and he bought me Guinness. He is very kind.

BRIDE Ok. That was lovely Massi.

BEDRIDIN Did you drink it?

MASSI I pretend- but really Joseph drink for me

BRIDE Biljana? Have you done your homework?

BILJANA Yes I have but I change homework. I did not like My First Day in Ireland. It was a very bad day so I did. "Our teacher first day in America" which was very good day.

REDJO
&BEDRIDIN *(Mimicking the teacher)* Excellent!

BRIDE What!

BILJANA *(Brandishing her homework)* From your journal

BRIDE You read my journal?

MASSI We all did but I prefer Harry Potter. He more like real life

BILJANA You left in the kitchen.

(Biljana pulls out a hand written script)

MASSI You play Teacher Yes?

BRIDE I think this is a bad idea

BEDRIDIN Why?

BRIDE *(quietly to Bedridin)* Did you read it?

BEDRIDIN No, but now I am curious.

REDJO Are you shame of your life teacher?

BRIDE No!

MASSI You ask all of us to talk about our life in class.

REDJO Is this all about beautiful Australian boyfriend Danny?

BILJANA Beautiful Australian boyfriend Danny is past tense Yes Bride?

MASSI *(To Biljana)* You read now? You play teacher?

BILJANA Yes. Ok. Title of Radio play is 'Our Teacher Bride First Day in America'.
Adapted for radio by Biljana Silajdzic

*(Redjo, Massi and Bedridin clap. Biljana stands
Biljana reads the following shifting through her own accent and
good attempts at both Australian and American accents)*

BILJANA Sounds of a busy street. *(Australian accent)* I never believed in jetlag until
I got to San Francisco. A heavy backpack, thirty-eight shitty degrees and
I'm standing at the bottom of one of those bloody famous hills. Where are
the fucking famous street-cars?

BRIDE We might stop there

- MASSI No I like
- REDJO Bill You sound good. You could be Australian girl
- BILJANA See? I make radio play. This is what I did in my country.
I have good ear for voices. I listen and I practice
(from her script in good Australian accent) I'm late for my job interview
teaching English to Mexicans. I'm waiting for a streetcar named 'Inspire'.
A man is walking towards me. He is a bit of a spunk.
- REDJO Sto je Spunk?
- BRIDE Good looking man
- REDJO But you have boyfriend Danny
- BRIDE Good use of present continuous Bill
- BILJANA Thank you. Now do dialogue -
(in faulting American accent) Hey ma'm! Do you like the theatre?
(Biljana's accent) He has a ticket in his hand.
(American accent) My friends can't get here as the cable cars are on strike
and cabs all full.
(Australian accent) Bugger! I say
- REDJO Is bugger bad word?
- BILJANA A swear word.
- MASSI *(to Bride)* You swear at men in street?
- BILJANA *(To Bride)* Here I did nearly all in present continuous.
(reading from script) He is holding out the theatre ticket to me. I am
taking the theatre ticket off him. God he's handsome, too bloody
handsome. He swaggers off.
- REDJO Swaggers?

(Bedridin swaggers around the room in demonstration)

REDJO I like swaggers

BILJANA I stare at his gorgeous bum

REDJO Sto je Bum?

(Biljana points to Bedridin's bottom)

REDJO *(claps)* Yes! Oh but Bride! You still have boyfriend Danny

BILJANA Ok. If no streetcar comes I'll go and sit in an air-conditioned theatre and hope my destiny is kind.

(in her own accent) And with the gorgeous bum

BRIDE I didn't write that

BILJANA I improve on original. Yes?

(reading script) I sit in the theatre seat. I realise that I have little money, no job and nowhere to go.

REDJO She refugee

BILJANA I fall asleep in the seat.

(American accent) What did you think of the play?

I wake up, the show is over and I look at the handsome face.

(Aussie accent) It was great! Thank you for the ticket. He is sitting next to me. He has make-up on his handsome face... then I understand.

He's an actor

(American accent) What did you think of me?

(Australian accent) You?

(American accent) I was the lead

(Australian accent) I didn't see you.

(American accent) That's a great compliment M'am Thank you

REDJO You are very kind

- BEDRIDIN Shush Redjo!
- BILJANA Suddenly I think I've seen him before and then I realise.
He is an actor, a film actor but my brain isn't at work.
- BRIDE Isn't working- should use present participle there
- BILJANA So, how do you like San Francisco?
(Australian accent) I've only been here five hours.
(American accent) Well then! Let me show you around in my convertible.
(Australian accent) Well. Why the bloody hell not? The End.
(Biljana bows as the class claps)
- MASSI So Bride are you prostitute before you are teacher?
- BRIDE No!
- BILJANA Were prostitute before you were a teacher- past tense.
- BRIDE Guys. It was an adventure. Look one minute I'm anxious and gloomy- the next I'm laughing in a yellow Convertible driving along a wide American highway.

(Silence the students all try and understand)
- BILJANA And he took you to Mexico
- BRIDE Yeah, we ran away together
- REDJO *(to Biljana)* Adventure to je advantura?
(IS ADVENTURE THE SAME AS ADVANTURA?)
- BEDRIDIN You ran away with him? For how long?
- BRIDE *(to Bedridin)* A month maybe in Mexico It was a riot.
- BEDRIDIN Did you love him?
- BRIDE Love him? No way.
- REDJO I run away. After death threats- I took nothing.

I left apartment, auto and many, many friends.

BEDRIDIN I ran away- chased by militia.
Me and my brother nearly starved in a forest in the Cameroon.

MASSI I ran away from Taliban

BILJANA We all ran away Bride.

LOUD SPEAKER -

GERARD'S VOICE Residents please note:
Lunch is only between 12 to 12.30.
Don't be giving out to me if you're late.

REDJO Bugger! I hungry. Bride I love class but we must go to lunch

BRIDE Ok Guys. Next week we do past tense.

REDJO In the past I ate good food not this crap that make me not crap!!
(Redjo, Massi and Biljana leave. Bedridin and Bride hang back)

BEDRIDIN Am I an adventure?

BRIDE That bloody journal

BEDRIDIN Are you ashamed to be with me?

BRIDE No, no God no. It's just Orla made me promise not to get involved...
(with clients)
(She hold his hand)

BRIDE I'll tell Orla... I will. It's tricky
(Bride pulls her hand back when she hears Orla's keys jangle)

*Orla enters with a kettle of hot water.
She is surprised that Bedridin is there.)*

ORLA Bedridin! *(Incredulous)* Did you go to the language class?

BEDRIDIN *(mock Irish accent)* For the craic Orla. Just for the craic.

ORLA Been having trouble opening an important download. Couldn't find you.

BEDRIDIN I'll do it now.

(Bedridin leaves. Orla picks up the scripts and reads a bit)

ORLA You'll give the men ideas. Be careful

BRIDE That was Biljana's homework

(Bride pulls out three flasks and some instant coffee and sugar sachets)

ORLA A lot of them are Muslim

BRIDE So?

ORLA A Muslim will never respect a promiscuous woman.

BRIDE Until they get to know me.

ORLA Look you will keep it out of the hostel won't you?

BRIDE What ever happened to that wild Aussie teenager?

ORLA I'm trying to build something here for all of us

BRIDE Orla's Empire. The British had nothing on you

*(Orla smiles at this as she pulls out two whisky bottles, one full
and pours the remainder of one into one of the flasks.)*

ORLA It hasn't been easy. You know yourself. Mum and your Da
left this place in a mess.

(The buzzer goes off)

BRIDE Who is it?

(Orla looks out through the top of the sliding window to see who it is)

ORLA Jaysus! It's Liam Geraughty

(Instantly Bride hides behind the whiteboard and gesticulates wildly for Orla not to let on she's there)

ORLA (*low voice*) Jaysus on a bicycle- he's after work and all

(There is the buzzer)

BRIDE (*low voice*) You're not going to give him a job?

LIAM (*Donegal accent Unseen*) Are you in there Bride Kelly?

ORLA Jesus Girl! what were you thinking? Liam head-case Geraughty! The town nutter.

BRIDE At the time I thought he was an Irish Stanley Kowalski-

ORLA He hasn't held down a job for ten years

BRIDE It was just a vagina thing- you wouldn't understand

(The buzzer goes.
Orla carefully looks out through the top of the sliding window)

ORLA I can't understand how you can sleep with a thirty four year old man who still lives with his ol Ma. Look he's going. Jesus- he can see Redjo all covered in paint. Shite! He knows I've got that painting contract. You go and tell him that Redjo and the others were professional painters and decorators back in their country.

BRIDE He's a bit thick but he's not a moron

ORLA He'll believe it if it comes from you.
We don't need Liam Geraughty as our enemy.
Go! do your bit for the peace process please and God will love ya!

(Bride reluctantly exits out the front door pushing past Biljana and Bedridin who are about to enter.
Bedridin smiles at her as she exits)

ORLA *(sees Biljana)*
Biljana I thought you would be finished in here I need you to get the kitchen done before the French kids lunch.

BILJANA Kitchen done. Redjo helped me
(Biljana begins cleaning)

ORLA *(quietly to Bedridin)* Did you open that download I had trouble with?

BEDRIDIN Yeah I filed it under Deportations

ORLA You didn't read it?

BEDRIDIN It said that there would be no letter to the clients of impending deportations and you should, under no circumstances, inform the clients of the new measures to be implemented.

ORLA You shouldn't read office mail.

BEDRIDIN Will you warn us if there is a deportation?

ORLA *(quiet voice)* I'd break the law for you.
(pause) Last night.
You were gone all night

BEDRIDIN Couldn't sleep- I've got a lot on my mind

ORLA Gerard's drafting that letter to the Minister as we speak

BEDRIDIN What's it say?

ORLA You've become like a son to him

BEDRIDIN Does that make you my mother?

ORLA What ever it takes

BEDRIDIN How long will it take?

ORLA Depends

(Bride re-enters)

BRIDE Liam disappeared before I could... *(seeing Bedridin)* Hi.

BEDRIDIN Hi

BRIDE We're on our way to the Nursing Home to drop this 'putting me out of me misery' coffee for me Da.

BEDRIDIN You'll be OK?

BRIDE Yeah- My Da barely recognizes his only daughter but it seems he'll never forget the love of his life- Jamiesons

BEDRIDIN That must be hard for you

BRIDE I got used to it a long time ago

BEDRIDIN Are you going to the Bridge Bar later?

BRIDE I'll text you when I'm free. OK?

ORLA We were going out tonight

BRIDE Oh yeah

BEDRIDIN I'll text you.

(He leaves)

ORLA How long has this been going on?

BRIDE I like him

(There is a buzz at the window)

ORLA Jesus Bride you'll be eating that poor guy for breakfast and where will that be leaving me and Gerard.

(There is another buzz at the window)

BRIDE Will I see who it is?

ORLA Bedridin talked us into a new operating system and he hasn't finished training the two of us.

BRIDE Yeah and you don't pay him enough. / Imagine the fee you'd have to fork out

ORLA He gets twice as much as the others. And don't you be telling him about your Da- it's family business- our family business!

(There's a knock)

DIO *(African female voice unseen)* Madame Orla. I am waiting.

BRIDE Hi Miss Dio! *(PRONOUNCED DAY-O)*

DIO *(unseen)* Hello Miss Bride!

ORLA I've got a job for her in Donegal Town

(Calling out to Dio) Dio. I'll drive you there and go over what must be done first. *(to Bride)* - talk about this later

(She exits)

BRIDE To be sure the sun will not setting on Orla's Empire.

(Biljana stops cleaning)

BRIDE *(Sarcastically)* Thanks Bill for the little radio show-

BILJANA *(Australian accent)* No worries – you like my accent? I learn from crocodile man- Here mate. Got you a prezzie.

(Biljana passes over Bride's Australian passport)

BILJANA Found this when I was cleaning your room.

BRIDE Where was it?

BILJANA Under the bed-

BRIDE Oh my Lord what else did you find- brave women cleaning under there

(Bride casually drops her expired passport on the chair/bench etc next to her)

BILJANA You will need this

BRIDE it's nearly expired. I'm not going to renew it.
My Irish passport is the best to travel on.

*(Bride writes on the board. Negation- examples)
(Biljana keeps glancing at the passport)*

BILJANA Why you don't live in sunny rich Australia?

BRIDE It's full of Australians.

BILJANA I don't understand

BRIDE It's a joke. I like travelling in the off season and this is a better base for me

BILJANA So is Ireland your home now?

BRIDE Home is not a concept I think about too much.

BILJANA You never want to own your own house?

BRIDE Be a slave to a mortgage?

BILJANA I would love a home- a small house of my own with a small garden and
bills with my name on it. I would love to have a bill come into those, what
are they called? The little houses outside for the mail?

BRIDE Letterbox

BILJANA I would love to have a bill come into my very own letterbox.

(beat)

Orla is your cousin but she is like your sister

*(Bride writes: Orla isn't Bride's sister
Bride loops is and isn't to demonstrate how to negate)*

BRIDE Both our parents emigrated to Australia. We were born there, grew up in the same house, just like sisters but then Auntie Pat, Orla's Mum, came back here with Orla and soon after that my Dad did as well.

BILJANA After your Mum died in Australia?

BRIDE Yeah. Aunt Pat invited Dad to invest here in the hostel and language school.

BILJANA No brothers or sisters?

(Bride writes: Isn't Biljana curious?)

BILJANA I am a curious person

BRIDE Yes you are

(Bride wipes the board clean)

BILJANA Why are you called Bride? It's not on your Australian passport.

BRIDE There were three Catherine Kellys at our school. Bride is Australian irony. Tall guys are called Shorty. Red heads- Bluey. Independent women- or Tarts- Blushing...?

BRIDE&
BILJANA Bride

BRIDE Exactly- Smiley! Growing up in Australia in the 80's, women who enjoyed a lot of sex were sluts, tarts, molls and floozies- yet men who enjoyed a lot of sex were lucky

BILJANA How can Australian men be lucky without sluts, tart and floozy?

BRIDE Exactly

BILJANA But you kept the nickname Bride?

BRIDE That upset em

BILJANA But don't you miss Australia?

BRIDE Sometimes I do- I miss the light- the clean air- the space- I grew up in a semi rural area- life is slower there- less complicated- I love travelling- I love the energy of somewhere new

BILJANA In your journal you talked a lot of your Australian boyfriend Danny I feel I know him now- this kind man who loves animals.

BRIDE He'd like you too I reckon- shame he's so far away

BILJANA So you talk with Australian boyfriend Danny?

BRIDE Not for years – I hurt him .

BILJANA You have no-one in Australia?

BRIDE Not really- I used to write to Danny's Mum

BILJANA And here you have cousin Orla and now boyfriend Bedridin?
(Bride writes: Bil shouldn't ask so many questions)

BILJANA Bedridin is a good man with a very sad past. A soldier blinded him with his gun. They killed his parents with a machete when they were walking home from church.

BRIDE Yeah he told me.

BILJANA Good man Danny loved you very much and now good man Bedridin loves you very much.

BRIDE I see where this is heading

BILJANA An asylum seeker is not just for Christmas

BRIDE So what about you? I bet you've broken a few hearts in your time.

BILJANA No

BRIDE You must have been in love?

BILJANA No.

BRIDE Have you had boyfriends?

BILJANA Not really.

BRIDE No-one at your radio station?

BILJANA No.

BRIDE So you've never...? (*Had sex*) You're a virgin?

BILJANA Oh no I have plenty of times.

BRIDE Well that's a relief. Who stole your cherry? Who was your first? C'mon

BILJANA You tell me, C'mon, who stole your cherry? Was it Danny?

BRIDE No Gary. On the beach- a quiet back beach. He was trying so hard to be romantic but I just wanted to get rid of it. It was a terrible stigma back then, you know, to be a virgin. So tell me yours.

BILJANA Did you break Gary's heart?

BRIDE Oh God yeah He cried when I dumped him. Begged me! and I just thought he was a wuss. God you're cruel when you're young. What about you?

BILJANA My first time?

BRIDE My turn for questions. What was his name?

BILJANA I don't know

BRIDE You can't remember?

BILJANA No I remember.

BRIDE Just a once off?

BILJANA No

(Bride writes: Women can't bond)

BRIDE C'mon Biljana- women can't bond without talking about sex.

BILJANA There were three... well four- but one man he only watched. I can't remember who went first. They had guns. Three men took my cherry and kept me with them for long time maybe two weeks and then the UN came

to my town. A UN soldier was next. He found me locked in a room and I cried in his arms and then he as well

BRIDE He, he- as well?

BILJANA Not straight away but after he paid for the penicillin to get rid of the infection from the other rapes and after the doctor told him I will probably never have children. He was a British Peace Keeper but I stayed with him. You could say my first boyfriend. He did give me money; American dollars- he was getting \$100 US a day from the UN Tax free.

BRIDE I feel awful.

BILJANA I'm sorry that my experience makes you feel awful.
That is not what I want. What I want is to make you feel good / good very good.

(Biljana is about to pick up the Australian passport when Orla comes back in)

ORLA *(to Biljana)* / Haven't you finished in here yet

*(Biljana returns to her cleaning.
Bedridin sneaks in behind the white board)*

BRIDE *(Quietly)* What is this, a p.o.w camp?- she's a mate

ORLA *(pointing to the other side of the room)* Biljana some drink was spilt.
Biljana mops the spilt drink

(To Bride) I'm telling you now. Don't be friends with them.

BRIDE Why not?

ORLA They have nothing. If you make them your friends –
they'll want too much off you -

BRIDE / You don't even know who they are.

- ORLA Mark my words they'll ask too much of you- you'll let them down and then they could ring the department
- BRIDE Why would they do that?
- ORLA You know yourself there is at least a dozen of them on our books living in Dublin but we still get their welfare money each week- we need that money...and if you go upsetting any of them here... they could blow the whistle on us!
- (A ping of a text message arriving. Bride reads the text and smiles)*
- ORLA Who's that?
- BRIDE *(glancing behind the whiteboard)* Can you go to the nursing home today? Dad keeps calling me Mum- it's too creepy. Got lesson preparation to do
- ORLA Don't be promising that Congelese chancer anything
- BRIDE Bedridin is / not a chancer
- ORLA He's after citizenship
- BRIDE Look, It's none / of your...
- ORLA Business? What about Liam?
- Because you've slept with him- he seems to think I should give him a job- which becomes my business
- BRIDE Liam was a mistake
- ORLA And so is Bedridin. A big mistake! Believe me. Can't you find someone decent who's a local? This town only started accepting me when I got married to Gerard.
- BRIDE Losing the Strine *(Australian accent)* to a Bally Shannon Brogue didn't half help

ORLA Catherine- let's stop the bickering OK? I just wanna have some fun tonight - you and me.
Like old times. What do you say?

BRIDE OK.

ORLA Ok. Good. All right then. *(To Biljana)* Don't forget to lock the doors.
(to Bride) They'll take anything not nailed down.
(seeing Bride's passport) For Jaysus's sake- Don't be leaving your passport lying around like that- what with...
(Orla indicates Biljana then exits with the thermos of whisky coffee)

BRIDE Come out my lovely

*(Bedridin comes out from behind the whiteboard.
He holds out a blanket and candles)*

BEDRIDIN What does chancer mean?

BRIDE It's slang

BEDRIDIN The Irish man with red hair just called me a 'Feckin' Chancer'.

BRIDE Bloody Liam is the biggest chancer in town

BEDRIDIN A chancer is a very bad thing isn't it?

BRIDE A chancer is someone who will use any chance
they have to get what they want and this town is full of them

BEDRIDIN Orla said that the red hair man was your lover.

BILJANA I'll think I'll mop the hallway now

(Biljana, takes her mop and bucket outside the door)

BRIDE Liam is from the past. I want to forget about the past. Don't you?

BEDRIDIN Your past yells at me in the street

BRIDE Ignore him

BEDRIDIN Do you still love that Australian boyfriend?

BRIDE He's totally in the past. Do you still love your last girlfriend?

BEDRIDIN Yes

BRIDE Oh

BEDRIDIN My girlfriend disappeared – Many people disappear in my country.

BRIDE Did you love her very much?

BEDRIDIN My brother and I were nearly killed trying to find her.

BRIDE I've never met a man like you before.

BEDRIDIN And a woman like you is a complete mystery to me

BRIDE You're changing me and I like the change in me.

BEDRIDIN I don't want you to change. I like that you surprise me. People had stopped surprising me. Orla does not surprise me while you- you surprise me everyday.

BRIDE Orla - she had a hard time as a kid, our parents didn't enjoy the Australian life – they missed the pub, the craic

BEDRIDIN Orla thinks I only want you for your papers.

BRIDE Coming back here as a teenager did something to Orla- she became so desperate to fit in – she's not a bad person just...

BEDRIDIN If Ireland doesn't want me we could / go to Iceland.

BRIDE Hey. Hey...

BEDRIDIN Hey what?

BRIDE Just suppose. I'm not from here, I'm not from down under there either and you are not from over there. No countries.

BEDRIDIN Where are we from?

BRIDE We are from under the stars.

BEDRIDIN That is on our passports?

BRIDE There is no need for passports.

BEDRIDIN Can we go there straight away?

BRIDE We are there right now whenever we are alone together

(holds his hands) This is our country.

(wraps her arms around him) These are our borders.

BEDRIDIN *(imitating Orla)* You don't want someone decent who is a local?

BRIDE We are the only citizens in our country

(She kisses him)

And our borders won't let anyone else in. OK?

BEDRIDIN We can stay living here until the Minister's decision.

If the Minister says no - we'll go to Reykjavik.

BRIDE That's under the stars

BEDRIDIN It's even closer

(They kiss. Bride locks the door.

Bedridin rolls out the blanket and Bride lights the candles.

The buzzer rings - Bedridin and Bride ignore the sound)

LIAM *(unseen)* Bride Kelly I know you're in there now!

(Bride stifles a giggle.

Bedridin snuffs out the candles and pulls the blanket over them

Music... Something romantic)

ACT ONE – SCENE THREE

*(Redjo is caught in the light. He stumbles and then sits.
A man's voice comes through a loud speaker)*

OFFICER *(Unseen)* Why are you looking for asylum?

(Now we're in the classroom - Bedridin, Bride and Massi all gather round to read the written report as Biljana reads out Redjo's reply that has been translated into English.)

REDJO *(sitting bolt upright)* Ja sam pripadnik nacionalne manje u Hrvatskoj

(Redjo's voice fades out as Biljana reads out the translation to the others)

BILJANA I was a member of an ethnic minority in my country. When the war broke out I was held in a camp. I am held because I was automatically thought to be against a country that wanted one nationality, one leader one type of thinking. When I was eventually let go I was told that I would be controlled, under supervision every two to three months by non-uniformed personnel.

OFFICER *(Unseen)* What happened after your release from the camp?

REDJO Svaka tri do cetiri mjeseca policija bi me / odvodila na ispitivanje

BILJANA Every two or three month- police would take me in for questions.

OFFICER *(Unseen)* Why did the police take you in for questioning?

REDJO Ja sam bio na listi

BILJANA I was on a list- a so called black book in which there is a list of names of people who are against the country.

OFFICER *(Unseen)* These interrogations were happening how often a year?

REDJO Oko cetiri puta

BILJANA About four times. They knocked out a tooth.

REDJO Mogu vam pokazati oziljak na mojim leđima gdje / su me tukli.

BILJANA I could show you scars on my back where they beat me.

OFFICER *(Unseen)* How did your name get on the black book?

REDJO Poslije kad je / rat završio-

BILJANA Since the war- all people with an ethnic surname are under suspicion, but I first came to their attention when I would not join the army. I said I would not fight for a country that treats its minorities so badly. Whoever does not agree to the government is against the country. That is why my name is in the book.

OFFICER *(Unseen)* What made you finally leave your country?

REDJO Dobio sam anonimnu poruku na / telefonskoj sekretarici.

BILJANA I got an anonymous message on my answering machine.

BEDRIDIN What did / it say?

OFFICER *(Unseen)* What did the message say?

REDJO Da cu biti eliminiran

BILJANA That I was to be eliminated anytime.

OFFICER *(Unseen)* Did you take this threat seriously?

REDJO Da.

BILJANA Yes.

REDJO Znao sam da ce / me zaklati

BILJANA I knew that I would be stabbed in the throat by a knife for it had happened to another witness to what went on in the camp.

OFFICER *(Unseen)* What did you witness in the camps?
(pause) What did you witness in the camps?

REDJO Premlacivanje, mucenje...

BILJANA Beatings, torture I saw such things that all of them could be jailed
(*To Redjo*) Should be jailed -

REDJO za ratne zlocine.

BILJANA - for war crimes

REDJO Toliko mnogo premlacivanja za zadovoljstvo.

BILJANA They beat people for their own pleasure. And they killed a man because his wife once made coffee for a Serb. In front of me, they did not care. I was made to clean up after them in the interrogation rooms, the blood. There were bits of human limbs...

REDJO Stop reading, please stop Biljana!

Lights change- They are all in the language room again

BRIDE Sit down Redjo. Can I get you a drink?

Redjo shakes his head

BEDRIDIN What did your solicitor say?

REDJO Take care.

MASSI Do you think they believe you?

REDJO (*Redjo shrugs*) I seem to interest them.

BRIDE So they didn't yell at you? Joseph told me they can be angry. They can shout at you if they don't believe you and think you are just here for the money.

BILJANA They didn't shout at me but I don't think they believed me.

MASSI They believed me but it still wasn't enough

BEDRIDIN Same with me

REDJO No they did not shout.

BRIDE What now?

REDJO Now we wait

BEDRIDIN More waiting

REDJO Waiting, waiting.

MASSI But Redjo you have Court of Appeal.
I have only Minister compassion now.

(Bride opens a bottle of lemonade and hands around plastic cups)

BRIDE To Redjo!

ALL To Redjo!

LOUD SPEAKER -

GERARD'S VOICE I would like to remind residents to please refrain from consuming
any food or drink in either the television room or the schoolrooms.

BEDRIDIN To Ireland!

ALL To Ireland!

(They drink)

Redjo begins coughing

Bedridin hits him on the back

BRIDE Ok, guys- you better skedaddle.
I have a busload / of Spanish teenagers coming.

MASSI What we do in English class next week?

REDJO Sto je skedaddle?

BRIDE The Future

(Bride writes on the blackboard: FUTURE TENSE)

REDJO Our future-very tense!

(The group laughs)

Redjo coughs

LOUDSPEAKER Could Massi please come to the car-park with her bags.

The Garda are here to escort her to the airport.

(Massi gasps and begins trembling)

(There is a cold silence as the impact of what Gerard has just announced sinks in)

MASSI But the Minister! the Minister!

BILJANA He must have refused you

REDJO Just run away. We will help you. Bedridin you go talk with Garda and Massi we go out back! Bride take the keys to Orla's van we'll meet you at bus stop.

BRIDE Ok

(Bride exits)

MASSI My sister- refugee. My sister. The Minister not separate family.

REDJO He must say no and too many asylum seekers run.

(Bride re-enters)

BRIDE They've got Guards around the back. They're all over the place.

(Massi screams - The others are shocked silent - Massi exits Biljana and Redjo are stunned for a beat before rushing to follow after her. Bedridin is trembling. He goes to follow but Bride pulls him back into the room)

BRIDE They could have come for you.

BEDRIDIN I must see / Massi.

BRIDE They could have taken you.

(Bedridin goes to exit but Bride holds him back)

BRIDE You must marry me.

BEDRIDIN No.

BRIDE Marry me.

BEDRIDIN No.

BRIDE Marry me.

BEDRIDIN Yes.

BRIDE Fuck. OK Good

BEDRIDIN When I have residency and we are equals.

BRIDE Marry an Irish Citizen and you'll have instant residency.

(Bedridin goes to the window and looks out)

BEDRIDIN There is Garda everywhere. You'd think she was a terrorist.

BRIDE But you're waiting for the Minister's decision- like Massi was.
It could be you next.

BEDRIDIN A wife is forever.

BRIDE But I'm worried about now!

BEDRIDIN Now I have to say goodbye to Massi

BRIDE You don't want to marry me?

BEDRIDIN Not so you can save me

(He leaves. Biljana enters)

BILJANA They won't let me near her to say goodbye. She's been here nearly two years. She has no family there, no home, and tonight she will be back in the town where the men who raped her neighbors still walk the streets. The Guards won't even let us say goodbye.

BRIDE I just asked Bedridin to marry me

BILJANA You don't believe in marriage

BRIDE He knocked me back.

BILJANA Of course he did.

BRIDE Bill - if he marries me he will have all the rights of an Irish citizen they
can't deport him.

BILJANA As long as he stays married to you.

BRIDE I thought you'd understand.

BILJANA Bedridin is a proud man. Seeking asylum turns you into a beggar. He feels
very strongly for you - but he must marry as an equal.

BRIDE These feelings are real Biljana, I am trying to save a life.

BILJANA Well, why don't you save mine?

BRIDE I wish I could. I'd hate them to take you away.

BILJANA Then give me your passport

BRIDE What?

BILJANA You always travel on your Irish. Give me your Australian passport.

BRIDE But it has run out.

BILJANA I'll renew it with my photo in it.

BRIDE But it's not that simple- you'll need an Australian citizen as / a witness.

BILJANA Have Orla sign two photos of you and the application. I will copy her
signature on my photographs and take them to the Australian Embassy in
Dublin - if they call Orla - She will say she signed the photographs and
has known you all her life.

BRIDE It's that easy?

BILJANA That easy

BRIDE And you will be me?

BILJANA I will be you in Australia and you will be you in Europe. And you will never go back to the Australia you don't think about anymore.

BRIDE But you could never come back to Europe.

BILJANA I spit on Europe

BRIDE Australia is hostile to illegal aliens. What if you are caught?

BILJANA If you never declare your passport stolen- I will be free forever.

BRIDE You'd be jailed.

BILJANA I'm in jail now -

BRIDE I could get into some serious / trouble

BILJANA - and if I'm deported I could be killed.

BRIDE What would you do in Australia?

BILJANA In my future? Catherine Kelly has a degree from Melbourne University. I will work very hard and buy a house- just a small house, a long way from the city with a garden and a Labrador. I will sit in my garden, have a cup of tea, pat my dog and no-one will bother me or tell me I am a Chancer.

BRIDE But you should hear the result of your appeal soon. The Court of Appeal will surely give *you*, refugee status.

(pulling out a letter from her pocket and giving it to her. Bride reads)

BRIDE The bastards. You must appeal to the Minister.

BILJANA Yes like Massi appealed to the Minister

BRIDE Oh Bil, I'm so sorry

BILJANA Everyone is sorry, everyone feels regret. You are quiet now my friend. Are your feelings not true? You have my life in your heart.

BRIDE Easy with that stuff.

BILJANA Make your decision.

BRIDE I'm just a bit confused

BILJANA Confusion is good. Pretending to want to help is bad.

BRIDE Can't you just buy a false passport?

BILJANA Far too risky- but with yours- no worries mate.

BRIDE Wait until I've weighed this up.

BILJANA Make me your equal Bride.

BRIDE Jesus let me think.

BILJANA Just tell me yes or no because I cannot continue waiting-it might be me they take next... if you say no I must go now and prepare for life as illegal alien. I've been waiting all my adult life for some department to say yes and they all say no- the waiting- no, no more waiting. Bride, in this moment, I am giving you a chance to do something big much more bigger than marry a man who must stay grateful to you.

When you give me your passport, you will never see me again.

I will give you nothing except the knowledge that I am living the Australian life you don't really want.

I will live its every moment, smile every sunny day, obey its laws be exactly what your anti- asylum seeker country wants.

(in the pause Bedridin quietly enters)

BILJANA Bride. Clear yourself from acts of charity for a lifetime and give me your Australian Passport.

(Silence)

BRIDE No.

BILJANA But you weren't going to renew it. I could have stolen it and never told you.

BRIDE I'm.../ (sorry)

BILJANA Don't say you are sorry!

*(Bride turns to leave and sees that Bedridin has been standing there
Bedridin and Bride face each other.)*

BEDRIDIN Massi wants her Cranberries tape

(Bedridin picks up the tape - A police siren wails - Biljana runs to the window)

BILJANA Too late. They take her away.

*(Bedridin and Biljana place their hand out on the window in a goodbye gesture to Massi. Bride stands at the back of the room.
End of scene as music begins
'Empty' by The Cranberries off the 'No Need to Argue' album.)*

ACT ONE – SCENE FOUR

(Bride is pouring the hot water into the flasks getting ready to take to the nursing home. Orla enters)

ORLA Where the feck is Redjo?

(calling out) Redjo! ... I was going to drop the workers off on the way to the nursing home. He's always late. Looks like Biljana's taking off as soon as I give her, her wages- do you know anything about that?

BRIDE The deportation has made everyone depressed- anyone waiting on the Ministers decision is living a nightmare

ORLA Massi will be fine. The Taliban have been kicked out.

BRIDE But thousands of woman are on the streets begging for bread.

ORLA Look it's hard on her but people must return to rebuild their country just like our family did.

BRIDE Our Parents left one rich country for another rich country to make their fortune closer to a pub with better quality stout.

ORLA You got a critical eye on all our family. But you're blind to the opportunism of the people here.

BRIDE Massi has no family in Afghanistan.

ORLA She's not a true refugee.

BRIDE Show some compassion.

ORLA You weep for Massi and I don't weep for Massi.
She still gets deported.
(gathers up the flasks and calls out) Redjo! The lazy Chancer.

BRIDE You make them paint in an airless room for two Euros an hour..
The guy's are getting sick Orla.
Can't you hear Redjo coughing his guts up?

ORLA *(ignoring her)* Redjo!

*(Biljana enters and stands awkwardly waiting for Orla.
Bride wants to talk to her but does not know how to begin)*

ORLA *(To Biljana)* So you've finished up?
Be sorry to see you go. I'll get you your wages in a minute. Ok?

(Biljana exits)

ORLA *(To Bride)* Looks like you're in her bad books!
What did she ask of you that you couldn't deliver?

BRIDE *Shakes her head*

ORLA You better hope to feck she doesn't ring the department

BRIDE What is it with the feck Orla? Its fuck you say fuck- you've always said fuck until you moved back here and now suddenly it's feck and you know something? Coming from you it always sounds so fecking fucking false.

Bride EXITS

(Redjo appears wearing an I LOVE RIO t-shirt. It is a bit too tight for him. He is also wearing paint smattered overalls)

REDJO Yes I'm here Madam Orla

ORLA Stop calling me that.
There's no work for you today.

REDJO What? But tomorrow yes?

ORLA If you stop your complaining. This came for you.
(hands him a registered letter) I signed for it.
(ORLA exits with the flasks.
Redjo picks up the bottle of whisky and sits looking at the letter)
Bride re-enters and writes FUTURE PERFECT on the white board

REDJO Your cousin is not very kind

BRIDE *(not looking at him)* We're all not very kind now.

REDJO I drink to that. *(He takes a long gulp of whisky)*
You know what I miss most all?

BRIDE *(Not looking at him)* We've done past tense Redjo.
We must work on the future.

(Bride Writes: FUTURE PERFECT- I WILL HAVE...
She puts the marker down)

REDJO This is the future. What if... if they give me refugee status.. I still can never go back to my country. What I don't miss, of course, from my country is the persecution. But that is the only thing I do not miss. I had my own apartment in Split, my beautiful city. But now - I sleep - six men

in a small cold room. Madam Orla is always careful with electricity but the heavy breath of six men warms the room. And the man from Ghana...

BRIDE Joseph

REDJO ...his snores do shake my back teeth every night and the boy from Algeria

BRIDE Mustafa

REDJO Yes - Mustafa cries very quiet each morning just before dawn (*stifles a sob*)

BRIDE What's wrong?

(Redjo shows her the letter. BRIDE gasps- It is from the Department of Justice)

REDJO *He nods for her to open it*) Please... I...

BRIDE Oh God!

(She opens it and reads- she reads it again carefully)

BRIDE I am directed by the Minister for Justice...

(She keeps reading) I am pleased to inform... Oh my! *(She reads again)*

And the winner is... Redjo - You've got it! You've got it!

You've got refugee status. Oh Mate! You're free!

REDJO No, no.

BRIDE Redjo! Freedom!

REDJO No

BRIDE No more Madam Orla

REDJO But no

(Bride is pointing to the wording in the second paragraph of the letter)

BRIDE The Minister has declared that you are a refugee! A work permit - you'll get a work permit!

REDJO It won't come. The smile, the happiness, it won't come

BRIDE Something good has actually happened in this awful, awful place!

REDJO No. They made a mistake

BRIDE You can stop breathing in paint fumes- get a proper job, proper wages

REDJO I can't leave here. I'm no good. Massi - they should give to good woman
Massi or Biljana! They refuse Biljana! But me?... I'm no good

BRIDE Just think. No more chips with everything.
(He shakes his head)
No one stealing your tooth paste.

REDJO I lie at interview. He have sixteen years but I didn't know.
He said he was older. He look older.
(beat) He say he love me then tell police I force him.
That's when police smash my tooth. He had son - same age.
But I never had young man, never, never. I am always careful, my secret
with older men. My country hate homosexuals. My country make
homosexuals hate homosexuals.

(BEDRIDIN enters. He has a cut above his eyebrow)

BEDRIDIN What's happening?

BRIDE *(Still looking at REDJO)* Redjo's got refugee status

BEDRIDIN Hey Man. You're going to be an Irish man!

BRIDE *(seeing the blood for the first time)* What happened to your face?

BEDRIDIN A fight. So he will get his work permit?

BRIDE Yes. What fight? What happened?

BEDRIDIN Hey Redjo you stupid fool. What's wrong? You can't even smile at me?

(Redjo walks away)

BRIDE Who hit you?

BEDRIDIN Two Irish men. Locals. That red hair guy.

BRIDE Bloody Liam *(she tries to investigate the wound)*

BEDRIDIN Don't touch it.

BRIDE You should have just walked away.

BEBRIDIN They wouldn't let me walk away.

BRIDE Hold still – you're bleeding.

BEDRIDIN He told me to stop fecking their woman. This drunk girl she came up to me while I was using the phone in the pub to call my brother in Africa. If Orla would just let us use the phone here! This drunk girl she wanted to buy me a drink. I told her I didn't drink and then she pulled up her shirt and showed me her breasts and said. Would you like to drink these? The two guys told me to stop fecking their woman. Orla is going to ring the Department of Justice requesting a transfer telling them I'm violent.

BRIDE I'll speak with her.

BEDRIDIN Orla will ruin any chance I ever had with the Minister.

BRIDE I'll talk to her

BEDRIDIN Your cousin. She knew about Massi.
There was a memo about deportations. She knew the Garda were coming.

BRIDE She knew?

BEDRIDIN She's not going to help an asylum seeker!
Orla hates me because I love you. Because I wouldn't...

BRIDE What?

BEDRIDIN - with her

*(Silence then the jangle of Orla's keys.
BEDRIDIN leaves out the back as Orla enters)*

ORLA Was that Bedridin?!

BRIDE Orla, what's going on?

ORLA I'm just after dropping off the workers when I'm seeing your man in a fight with Liam Geraughty.

BRIDE He said there were two men.

ORLA He was right! They needed more than two to try and pull your man down. Liam's with Declan with a broken arm at the doctors. He's / talking about pressing charges.

BRIDE Liam would have started it- you know / yourself he's a nutter.

ORLA Bedridin's after hitting a woman as well.

BRIDE That isn't true.

ORLA She was a bit pissed, she admitted to coming on to him, but he pushed her to the ground.

BRIDE That's not exactly hitting a woman.

ORLA The man is unstable!

BRIDE So why did you try it on with him?

ORLA You don't know where you are with these people.

BRIDE Did you try it on him?

ORLA I fancied him. OK? He was pretty friendly until you got back from Brazil.

BRIDE Why didn't you tell me?

ORLA Because I knew you weren't serious. I knew you'd tire of him. You'd move on. You always do.

BRIDE But now you've withdrawn sponsorship. Why?

ORLA He's unstable

BRIDE Gobshite!

ORLA Catherine – the truth of it is – we don't need these people.
We're doing all right - the bank just this morning approved the business plan – they said we can start building - we have a future for the Language centre. We'll get a better class of clientele from Europe with plenty of money and none of this trouble. I'll not be accepting asylum seekers, any more.

BRIDE I am serious about Bedridin

ORLA He's just after your passport.

BRIDE That's not true.

ORLA Now he's upset the locals he can't stay here.

BRIDE Bedridin told me you knew about Massi's Deportation order.

ORLA The guy is a troublemaker and he has to go

BRIDE Then I'll be going with him

ORLA There is no legal record of your Dad's investment.

BRIDE What?

ORLA - but you'll be a partner because I want you to be a partner.

BRIDE Dad will leave me all his money.

ORLA All his money is in this place.
You can go if you want – but the money stays here.

BRIDE You can't do this

ORLA I can do whatever I want Catherine Kelly! I don't know if you've noticed my girl, but while you've been flittin' off around the world – I have been

building a standing in my community! It's taken me years, but I am respected. I am listened to - and if I tell The Department to transfer Bedridin – they will. If I tell Gerard to release your Da's money – then he will - and if I tell Liam to drop the charges against Bedridin – then believe me girl, he will! You and I are family and I need you to stay here and work with me. But I'll not be havin' that Congolese chancer comin' between us. Promise me you'll stay and I'll make sure he gets off easy – but Bedridin's made his own bed now – he has to go.

(BRIDE is quiet)

ORLA OK?

(BRIDE nods nearly imperceptibly. ORLA leaves. BEDRIDIN comes out from behind the whiteboard with a medium size bag.)

BEDRIDIN *(holding up his bag)* All I own.

BRIDE She's not getting the Guards

(They look at each other uneasily for awhile.)

BEDRIDIN Gerard has withdrawn his sponsorship. Orla told him to after she found out about us. That's why I went to the pub to call my brother.

BRIDE You could have talked to me

(Biljana, with a little blue suitcase, enters)

BILJANA Bedridin we have to go now!

BRIDE Bill?

(Biljana exits)

BEDRIDIN We are catching the bus to Dublin. I have enough money saved to fly you to Iceland and... I'll smuggle in on a boat. Bride, I want you to come with me? *(She doesn't answer)* Will you come with me?

BRIDE Iceland?

BEDRIDIN They need people. I will get a work permit and soon we will have enough to buy a home, start a family. Bride? The bus goes in five minutes.

(She doesn't respond) You said you'd come with me. It will be an adventure. *(She doesn't respond – he begins to leave)*

BRIDE Wait. No.

(He waits – she is completely overwhelmed and cannot find the words)

BEDRIDIN Good bye Bride

(Bedridin goes to leave)

BRIDE Let me ring for a taxi to the station.

BEDRIDIN A taxi?

BRIDE Liam is on the warpath.

BEDRIDIN What? ...You think I might get hurt?

(Bedridin exits. Bride sits down.

Redjo is outside and has an argument with Bedridin and Biljana

He has a heated debate in Croatian with Biljana then storms through the door)

REDJO Oh my teacher! Oh my teacher you know nothing. - Stop them! Go to the bus stop now, please, my teacher. They need you.

BRIDE My family / need me

REDJO Make them part of your family

BRIDE Orla won't have him, the town's against him. Bill... she's...

REDJO Live in the next town. Or in a city, cities are kinder to difference. You can drive here to work and visit your father. Orla never need see Bedridin again.

BRIDE It's complicated.

REDJO No it's not! I came here the same time as Bedridin. Orla gave Bedridin the small room with one bed and I was put in the dormitory six beds. One week later and Bedridin asks me to change beds. First night in my new room I wake up. Someone in the room. A woman talk softly 'Bedridin, Bedridin' and pulling the sheet. I was back in dorm the next day. Your cousin was wanting love from him!

BRIDE He should have told her to bugger off.

REDJO In the prison camp I learn law between jailer and prisoner. You don't "bugger off" – you do as your told!

BRIDE Orla thinks Bedridin lead her on to get sponsorship

REDJO I would fuck with British Queen's mother if means getting my papers.

BRIDE The Queen mother is dead

REDJO Exactly.

BRIDE Have I done a stupid thing?

REDJO Saying no to good love?... There is no stupider thing.
It's not over until the fat lady is singing.

BRIDE But they'll have got the bus by now.

REDJO I still have the keys to Orla's van. I see if coast is clean.

(Redjo looks out the window)

BRIDE *(correcting him)* Coast is clear.

REDJO *(looking out)* No, no - Orla skinny husband 'Please refrain' is outside.

(There is distant shouting heard offstage)

REDJO Is there football on today?

BRIDE The bus sits at Donegal Town for twenty minutes
if they're heading for Dublin.

REDJO We make it. You have phone? Call Bedridin!

(He looks out the window)

BRIDE Yeah *(She calls Bedridin)* It's on voice mail.

REDJO *(looking out of window at angle)* Ah!! I cannot believe this! This
excellent- Bedridin is coming back!...
You are lucky my teacher! This is the best day of your life –
Don't fuck it up – Bedridin must really love for you!
*(Redjo whole body stiffens when he sees someone hurting Biljana in the
distance)*
Ma jebem mi mater! *(THE MOTHERFUCKERS)*

*(Redjo runs outside leaving the door open.
Bedridin walks in and stands there.
He is in deep shock but Bride doesn't see this)*

BRIDE I'm not saying that I don't love you, I'm saying
I am just bloody crap at...(relationships)

(Bedridin falls to the ground)

BRIDE *(Rushing to him)*

(Blood is coming out of Bedridin's mouth)

BILJANA *(offstage hysterical)* Bedridin! Bedridin!

*(Biljana runs in. She has blood on her shirt
Biljana screams when she sees Bedridin has collapsed)*

BRIDE What happened? / Your mouth is bleeding!

*(Orla rushes in and catches hold of Biljana.
The following dialogue is said very fast and on top of each other)*

ORLA / Biljana did they hurt you? I've called the ambulance

BRIDE Bedridin?!

BILJANA They hit him and he fell and his head hit the road

ORLA *(seeing Bedridin)* Jesus!

BILJANA The man with red hair.
He screamed at me sponger, chancer - scum!

BRIDE *(to Bedridin)* Darling you will be all right.

ORLA Don't move him. He might have spinal injuries

BILJANA The men, many men! They angry! I think they will kill us!

BRIDE Bedridin can you hear me?

ORLA *(to Biljana)* I saw them / hitting you. Are you bleeding? Are you hurt?

BILJANA I try to stop them... *(She slashes the air)* they kick us. So fast. All so fast.
Bedridin was screaming in his African language

(Redjo comes back inside with a brick that has blood on it)

REDJO Look the gadova! Biljana ti si dobro? *(He sees Bedridin on the floor)*
Bedridin, No no no!

(Biljana shakes her head and sobs. Redjo drops the brick & holds Biljana)

BILJANA It is like war. War

(A far off siren)

ORLA The ambulance is coming - it's OK Bedridin we'll get you to the hospital.

BILJANA Three men they hit him and kick him. They hate us!

(Bedridin's eyes open)

BRIDE Can you hear me darling?

REDJO Bridie he's...

BRIDE *(To Redjo's concerned face)* He's awake. *(Focusing back on Bedridin)*
Darling the ambulance is coming.

REDJO Bride he's... Ma jebem mi mater

BRIDE No, no He's going to be fine. Look! He's awake.
I'm sorry darling I never, never should have let you go.

REDJO No Bridie, sorry Bridie. He's not awake.

BRIDE I mustn't move you darling but I'm here.
I will always be here for you now- OK?

REDJO Bridie he's...

BRIDE We will always be together.

REDJO Bridie he is..

BRIDE Bedridin. We'll rent a place by the sea

REDJO Bedridin is dead

End of ACT ONE

ACT TWO - SCENE ONE

(Setting: Australia- seven years later. A Balkan lullaby is being sung in the rising dawn that finishes in a Kookaburra's cry.

Lights up on a recently refurbished lounge room with open plan kitchen and dining area. On the walls are three Sid Nolan prints from his Ned Kelly series. The sunshine brightens to a peak in the music and then fades to a late afternoon light as a kookaburra sings.

A man enters (DANNY) and looks out the back door and checks the window to see if his wife's car is in either driveway. He comes back in and turns on the television. The noise of a football match breaks the serenity and he is immediately over - animated)

DANNY What?!... What?!...

What are you doing? – He's on his own! Look – look –at him he wants it! Give it to him! Give it to him - hurry up - come on! Give it to him - *(he sees the footballer pass the ball to the wrong player)* oh for god's sake!

What did you give it to him for?!

You're supposed to train during the week – are you training at all? - or are you just showing up on the day? Sack the bloody coach. That's the only answer.

You've had your turn, Hird- you're useless!

(Door bell rings. He quickly turns the TV off)

DANNY Did you forget your keys, luv?

*(He opens the door
A woman stands in the door holding her suitcase. It is Bride Kelly.
She looks tired and much older)*

DANNY I don't believe it

BRIDE Hello Danny

DANNY Catherine Kelly- My God the original Catherine Kelly as I live and breathe!

BRIDE It's so great you're here! Where's your Mum?

DANNY Mum... she's not... she's not here. Come in. Come bloody in.
Look at you- give us a hug.
(they embrace)
God... Catherine...
You've been away forever - when did you get back in the country?

BRIDE Just a few hours ago

DANNY You came straight here?

BRIDE Yeah. I was expecting your mum to be answering the door.

DANNY Mum - she's not here – she... She died.

BRIDE No oh Dan no when?

DANNY Seven years ago.

BRIDE Oh right so- God everything... everything changes

DANNY Hey you haven't changed at all.

BRIDE I'm so sorry Danny...

DANNY It's okay – it was good in the end - you know? It was quick.
She had a good innings.

BRIDE I didn't know.

DANNY You've been a bit hard to pin down.

BRIDE Seven years...

DANNY Yeah. What do you think of the old place? Hasn't it scrubbed up well?

BRIDE *(bit dismayed)* I hardly recognize it.

DANNY My wife did it all herself.

BRIDE You have a wife?

DANNY Actually I've had two. This one's wife number two.
 She's a keeper I reckon. I picked a winner
 Here (*he points to where a wall once was*) - remember the wall?
 A fucking wall. Isn't she great?
 And look- new windows – we have a vista now... a vista!
 She is a – bloody - mazing.

BRIDE Where is she?

DANNY She's shopping with Nevenka.

BRIDE Nevenka from next door?

DANNY No, Nevenka from down the road – how many Nevenka's do you reckon I
 know?... Look at you! You must be buggered... sit, sit.
 (*getting her comfortable*)
 I'm so predictable- forty years still in the same town,
 but you- My God the traveller returns.
 Now... Where are you staying?

BRIDE Not sure.

DANNY Well, stay at my old bachelor pad.

BRIDE You have an old bachelor pad?

DANNY Yes - it's not bad actually – an apartment in one of my buildings.
 The Natural Health centre.

BRIDE That new building in town?

DANNY That's the one.

BRIDE You're doin' all right then.

DANNY Lived there after the divorce. It's very swish. Here. (*He gets a key*)

BRIDE That new building. You actually own it?

DANNY Yes. Entrance is around the back. Stay as long as you like.

*(He gives her the key.
She looks to him-a sadness threatens to engulf her)*

BRIDE You always were...

DANNY What?

BRIDE Kind to strangers.

DANNY You're no stranger.

BRIDE You always...favored the lost and the lonely.

DANNY Lost and lonely? Jesus you're not gonna get all Days of our Lives on me
are ya?.... So what's kept you travelling- couldn't find your way home?
How many times have you been around the globe before I found you on
the doorstep?

BRIDE About nine.

DANNY Really?

BRIDE Yeah - I know – I counted it once – it's too much. Travel is meant to
broaden the mind but I met too many pig ignorant backpackers to believe
that.

DANNY I've only ever been to Bali. Hated it- missed Trevor

BRIDE Trevor?

DANNY Terrier dead

BRIDE Sorry

DANNY You still look so great- still have that smile.

BRIDE Saddest word in the dictionary- 'Still'

DANNY Hey. You look great.

BRIDE And you 'still' are too kind. So you live here now? That's grand Danny!
I loved this house. Your Mum was so good to me here.

DANNY Actually; the saddest word in the dictionary is ‘either’.

BRIDE Either?

DANNY When you broke up with me-

BRIDE We both broke up- it was mutual

DANNY No you broke up with me – you were the breaker – I was the break-ee.
I’m the broken one.

BRIDE That was fifteen years ago.

DANNY Yes well - you’d admitted to sleeping with Damien

BRIDE Damien the sculptor?

DANNY No. Damien printed the shop’s magazine. Who was the sculptor? Jesus!

BRIDE Sorry.

DANNY You told me about your affair with Damien the printer!
- and then I asked you -

BRIDE Look don’t...

DANNY I asked you “Do you love him? Do you wanna be with him?” and you said.

BRIDE Dan..

DANNY That’s right - you said “Dan! I don’t want to be with him ‘either’ ”
Saddest word in the dictionary ‘either’.
(pause)
So do you still drink?

BRIDE Well no – but I think I might need something now. I’d murder a beer.

DANNY Don’t worry - I forgave you a long time ago.
Your heart is a tourist.
(he goes to the fridge)

BRIDE *(to herself)* Not any more.

DANNY *(from kitchen)* Your loss anyway- Boutique beer or local?

BRIDE Local. Hey. I saw the red and black hanging out of a car window- why aren't you at the game?

DANNY It's the elimination final - but we're up against the Eagles

BRIDE So let's check the score!

DANNY I don't think we need to do that.

BRIDE We got the beer, we got the couch, the remote- / all we need is the courage

DANNY No, no, no, no, no... *(quick glance at the door)*
All right we'll just be quick

(Danny flicks on the TV)

BRIDE Jesus wept!

DANNY *(surprised)* Hird's a genius!

BRIDE We're at our best when we come from behind. Remember 93?

DANNY The Baby Bombers / we came out of nowhere.

BRIDE /Yes the Baby Bombers! They were great days- were you there in two thousand?

DANNY Yeah I took my first wife- she was a Bomber's freak

BRIDE I saw that game in a bar in Brasilia with some drunken expats.

DANNY Wish I was there

BRIDE But you saw them win live!

DANNY Yeah I know

BRIDE It was history- you two must have been over the moon

DANNY We split up the next day

BRIDE What happened?- couldn't she stand the glory?

DANNY She found the letters I wrote to you after you disappeared.

BRIDE What letters?

DANNY Love letters.
 I never sent them - never knew where you were in the world.
 I kept them.
 She found them the day after the preliminary final- it was a hell of a week

BRIDE But you still went to the match together?

DANNY Catherine we are Bombers people. The millennium premiership was a
 once in a lifetime occasion. We had lined up for tickets. We were taking it
 one week at a time. We won a game and lost a marriage.
 Not a bad result really.
 (They watch a bit more of the game)
 She got the James Hird jumper...Some things are irreplaceable.
 Thank God Kaye showed up.
 (the bombers kick a goal and they both jump into rapture
 they celebrate wildly –)

BRIDE Is your second wife a Bomber's girl?

DANNY *(turns the telly off)* No not really

BRIDE I see.

DANNY She's a bit PC about the word Bombers- what with, you know Iraq and
 stuff.

BRIDE Keep the TV off then shall we?

DANNY I thought you were her – she'll be back soon.
 They must have stopped off at the dog's home.
 The two of them walk the inmates.

You know- my wife is a lot like you. Loves a laugh.
Really good at languages.
Got your smile- your sense of justice- it's uncanny really considering

BRIDE Considering what?

DANNY You'll find out when she comes back.
But there is this one big wonderful difference between the two of you

BRIDE She sticks around

DANNY She loves utility bills! And she wants kids

BRIDE How do you know I don't want kids?

DANNY Bride 'free spirit' Kelly pushing a pram?

BRIDE Yeah you're right - some things never change

DANNY My wife is late

BRIDE Late? Isn't she walking dogs with Nevenka?

DANNY No, no her period is late! Dopey! I could be pushing a pram in
no time at all

BRIDE Oh Dan that's great- you'll be such an excellent Dad!

DANNY Good. I was pricing prams this morning-
Be better off buying a second hand Daihatsu

BRIDE I am so happy it's worked out for you

DANNY Yeah I got lucky- so how's Orla and your Dad? What's news in your
Kelly gang?

BRIDE Dad died six years ago –

DANNY He lasted that long?

BRIDE Irish liver

DANNY Auntie Pat?

BRIDE Just last year.

DANNY So it's just you and Orla?

BRIDE Yeah and we're not on speaking terms- we fought over a guy- we parted soon after.

DANNY So you're all alone in the world?
That's why you've come home?

BRIDE Oh Dan- I so want to come home. I just want to come home where people get my jokes. Be around people who remember me as a cheeky toddler. Be someone's old girl friend, someone's trusted neighbor- just be dull and ordinary

DANNY With our politicians - you've come to the right country for dull and ordinary.
Who got the guy in the end?

BRIDE Some racist thugs.

DANNY Sorry?

BRIDE Neither of us. I went to the Congo.

DANNY The Congo! How cool- you went to the Congo!
So that's a real place- Sounds like a dance

BRIDE That's the conga

DANNY Do they dance the conga in the Congo?

BRIDE Not a lot

DANNY You know Mum had her fridge covered with your postcards? Paraguay- Madagascar- Bolivia. There was one where you were

you smiling from ear to ear inside this big bloody tree

BRIDE That was California!- stuck in a rainstorm I slept in the hollow of that redwood for three nights

DANNY You wrote that you learnt to accept life the way a tree does.

BRIDE I wrote that?

DANNY That was some of the more insightful stuff you wrote during those years. After my divorce I stayed in bed for two weeks and pretty much experienced life as a tree does. Probably drank more than the tree does. Had no root system- that was my problem. If I was a Californian redwood I'd be fine. Then the postcards stopped. Mum got worried.

BRIDE I should have/

DANNY She wanted me to find you -but you never left a forwarding address.

BRIDE Didn't always have a / forwarding address

DANNY What happened?

BRIDE I should have kept writing to her.

DANNY Yeah you were like her daughter you know.

BRIDE I should have... yes

DANNY She loved you

BRIDE I loved her too

DANNY Really?

BRIDE Oh come on Danny

DANNY A couple of lines on a postcard

BRIDE Something bad happened

DANNY What- your fingers got all smashed up? Struck Dumb- couldn't ring her

BRIDE God Danny Jesus mate- I feel bad enough

DANNY So what happened that stopped you writing to me frail old Mum?

BRIDE My boyfriend was murdered by an ex lover

DANNY Jesus

BRIDE Yeah. Stabbed him on the street

DANNY God. You poor love. How do you get over that?

BRIDE How do you make up for it? A man's life lost because you're a fuck wit

DANNY You should have called me.

BRIDE I should have but -I went to the Congo - took his body home.
Oh Dan what a mess. Jesus the suffering- the masses of human despair and
anger... At the funeral I met Bedridin's childhood sweetheart. They went
to school together- she was, she is... (*amazing*) I like her so much and I
want to help her and Christ - it all starts again. I want to help her –A
woman is raped every minute in the Congo- once every minute.

DANNY Christ

BRIDE You see I still cling to a hope that if I could change other people's lives for
the better- I could make up for my boyfriend's death.

DANNY How are you coping now?

BRIDE Now? - now I need to get off the cross I nailed myself to.

DANNY Good- we need the wood.

(*Bride laughs. Dan hugs her*)

DANNY You're home OK?..
Welcome back to Australia. The land of the dull and the ordinary.

BRIDE There's nothing dull about ordinary.

DANNY So you're going to stay this time?

BRIDE Well there's a lot to sort out. Auntie Pat left me the Wattle Avenue house
so I have to / contact Biljana. How is she?

DANNY You inherited the Wattle Avenue house?

BRIDE Me coming back here will give her a mighty shock but I had to- / do you
understand?

DANNY You're a lucky duck- it's worth a fortune these days.
You'll be our neighbor... Fantastic.

BRIDE I know how we can get her identity back.

DANNY ...Her identity, / what are you.... (talking about?) /

BRIDE I flew in on my Irish passport so she's safe for now
But I only have three months, three months in my own country

DANNY Who's safe?

BRIDE Biljana Silajdzic-

DANNY What's that?

BRIDE Biljana - The 'new me' I sent you.

DANNY You sent me someone?

BRIDE She didn't come here?

DANNY What are you talking about? You sent me a person?

BRIDE Oh God- she didn't come here
(Bride begins to feel nauseous)
I feel sick. How the fuck will I find her?

DANNY Is it jet lag?

BRIDE Christ 22 million people – Fuck. I told her to come here

DANNY You've gone pale

BRIDE She promised me. The ground is moving under my feet
I'm sick - I'm going to be sick.

(she heads for the outdoor bathroom)

DANNY It's not there anymore- we have an indoor bathroom now

(He directs Bride the right way. Long pause - Danny waits)

DANNY *(calling out)* You OK? Have a lie down if you need to.

*(Danny checks his watch and the window to see if his wife is coming
he goes to the TV- switches it on)*

DANNY *(mortified at the score- his team are losing)* Oh for fuck sake!

I leave you alone for one quarter Hird and - and...

What happened? How can you do this to me?

(A woman calls out from the back)

WOMAN'S VOICE *(Offstage)* Dan are you home? Nevenka needs your muscles again

*(Danny quickly turns off the TV and opens the back door
Biljana enters in a rush carrying a bag with three smoke detectors in it
She is transformed from the depressed woman from the last act.
Her energy is bigger and happier and she often breaks into broad grins
She is wearing clothes that are similar to Bride's clothes)*

BILJANA: We got these at last. *(Proffering the smoke detectors)* Can you stick them
on the ceiling for her? I tell you- Nevenka made me translate every word
on each model and she's half deaf

DANNY Poor shop assistants

BILJANA I've worked out why Australians dislike people speaking in other
languages. We love to eavesdrop. We are this nation of gossipers.
Australians hate not being able to listen in on what people are saying.
Do you mind getting in her shopping from the car?- She needs her favorite
man to make a fuss of her.

DANNY Still mixed feelings about the rat?

BILJANA Rat?

DANNY The Ratso guy

BILJANA Ratko Mladic

DANNY Is she baking or cleaning?

BILJANA Both- she baked when she heard about the arrest, but she woke up from a nightmare and began cleaning.

DANNY I'll send the team over after footy practice with hungry tummies and muddy boots

BILJANA Excellent idea
I have to finish making up this card-
Nevenka's also upset about the Afghan

DANNY Still not adopted?

BILJANA and there was another labradoodle dumped in Euroa

DANNY Bad enough being dumped- but dumped in Euroa- does human cruelty know no bounds?

BILJANA We have to add urgent to the notice board at the centre- I'm going to update the website

DANNY: Can you do that later? We have a guest.

BILJANA Who is it?

DANNY An old mate of mine. Just got off a plane from Europe.

BILJANA: Good- he can have some Baklava
(She holds up a Tupperware container)

DANNY: I don't think so...
(Biljana takes Baklava out of Tupperware container and approaches Danny)

BILJANA Why not?

DANNY Who made it? – you or Nevenka?

BILJANA: And what difference could that possibly make?

DANNY: Let's just not offer any

BILJANA Your mate will eat this and both of you will love it.
*(She chases him around the room.
 He is caught and she skillfully pulls him down and sits on his back)*

DANNY A curse on women's self defense classes!
(Laughingly she tries to force feed Danny who is laughing helplessly as he tries to avoid eating any of the sweet)

BILJANA: Eat! Eat! and enjoy

DANNY: *(in mock terror)* No. No! We can't upset possible baby!
(She bends his arm) Think of possible baby. Possible baby! No!
(in a bit of pain) No!
*(Bride enters. Biljana sees her.
 Both women stare at each other in shock.
 Biljana drops the Baklava but keeps hold of Danny)*

DANNY: Catherine Kelly - meet Catherine Kelly!
 I've been waiting all day to say that

BRIDE Catherine?... You're Danny's wife?

DANNY *(To Biljana)* Did you get a fright love? *(Biljana keeps him pinned down)*

(to Bride) Are you feeling OK now?

(To Biljana) Um Kaye darling. Can you.... (let me up?)

(Biljana shakes her head at Bride and lets Danny go)

BILJANA: Welcome. You're Danny's first girlfriend. I've heard all about you.
He thought it was hilarious that we have the same name.

DANNY: The numerologist at the Health Centre had a field day.
She believed it was destiny – but then Kelly is the seventeenth most
common surname in Australia- Johnson is the fifth- I checked on
Wikipedia

BILJANA: Dan could you get the shopping out of Nevenka's car? She's got cheese
and yoghurt- will be spoiled in the hot car...there are heavy milk cartons.
I'll make some tea for our guest

DAN *(He picks up the smoke detectors)* I'll take these. Back in a jiffy.
Oh and Catherine Kelly the Original –
I'd pass on the baklavas if I was you!
(He lets out a cheeky laugh- The door closes)

BILJANA God have mercy on me.

BRIDE You married Danny?

BILJANA You cannot be here!

BRIDE I came to this house / to

BILJANA No. no, no!

BRIDE Look I'm sorry / to spring this

BILJANA Go!

BRIDE I need/ to work this

BILJANA Get out!

BRIDE Let me/ talk

BILJANA Get out of my house

BRIDE I'm here/

BILJANA Get out of my home. Get out of my country!

(Bride walks towards her suitcase.

She stands by the case looking at the very shocked Biljana unsure of what to do.

Seconds pass

Dan re-enters)

DANNY Nevenka got the shopping in- she's a funny old bird you'll have to tell her in Croat that smoke alarms really do only come in one color.

(Biljana picks up the tea pot and doesn't know what to do next)

DANNY So have you guys sorted out which Kelly clan you both hark from?

BRIDE No, not yet

BILJANA My family migrated to Geelong- generations ago

DANNY Probably convicts

BRIDE: Like me you have a bit of an accent- Danny told me you've done a lot of travelling? Changes your original accent doesn't it- Aussies think I'm Irish and the Irish just think I'm odd.

(Biljana is still holding the tea pot)

BILJANA Did you empty the compost Danny?

DANNY Yeah- last week

(To Bride) Kaye spent a lot of her childhood in Yugoslavia - well it was Yugoslavia back then - . her parents worked there- before that terrible war of course.

BRIDE I was just there

DANNY Did you pick up the lingo?

BRIDE Pretty quickly (*to Biljana*) Dragi prijatelju. (Hello Friend)

DANNY You're both bloody amazing

BILJANA Molim te ne cini (Don't do this please)

BRIDE Molim/

BILJANA No, no. It's rude to talk in a foreign language when Danny can't understand

DANNY Sorry guys you've got your typical mono- lingual Aussi here – sad to say

BRIDE So your parents took you to Yugoslavia?

BILJANA When I was a child yes but they are dead now. My parents passed away.

DANNY They died in a car accident

BRIDE I'm sorry. No brothers or sisters?

BILJANA No

BRIDE An orphan - Like me.

BILJANA Yes – an orphan

DANNY You've got me and soon maybe...possibly (*he grins*) and we have Nevenka. She can't wait to be Nanna.

BRIDE Bubba. The grandmother is called Bubba. In Bosnia I stayed with a family- children of a mixed marriage of Serb and Muslim- their lives are hard but there are some good changes, / borders have shifted

BILJANA / Nevenka emigrated here from Srebrenica- all the male members of her family were killed in 95. She still suffers nightmares that she is back there Catherine- do you have milk? Dan we seem to be out of milk. Could you go to the shop?

DANNY Really I / thought

BRIDE I don't have milk

DANNY We have a cupboard full of long life milk. You right love?
Is it the Afghan? *(to Bride)* We've got an Afghan on death row.

BRIDE Australia's brought back the death penalty?

DANNY No dopey!- an Afghan Hound. Tell Catherine about the Boxer Cross and Nevenka's animal liberation stunt.

BILJANA You tell her luv

DANNY One time this Boxer Cross was on death row- so the night before his scheduled execution our law abiding elderly neighbor broke into the surgery in the middle of the night and nicked all the euthanasia! She then asked us to hide the needles. Shit we had all these boxes of sodium pentobarbital injections in the house!

BRIDE Did that save the Boxer dog's life?

DANNY Yeah he lives with a lesbian couple in Echuca.

BRIDE Lesbians in Echuca- this country has grown up

DANNY Yeah and the vet nurses have wised up!- so Nevenka won't be doing that again - but hey - maybe you will adopt the Afghan?

BILJANA But Catherine lives in Europe

DANNY She used to! but after fifteen years of global traveling the apple doesn't fall far from the tree. Catherine 'The Original' has inherited the Wattle Avenue house. You know the one with the huge garden? Perfect for a dog.

(Biljana looks ill)

DANNY Hey darling. What's wrong?

(Danny takes her to one side)

DANNY *(quietly)* Oh no, Oh no. It's not?

(Biljana begin breathing deeply trying to deal with her panic)

DANNY You've got period pain?

BILJANA Yes. I'm sorry love

DANNY You're sure?

BILJANA Oh yes it's pretty severe- I'm sorry

DANNY Hey it's OK. We've only just started. I could see something / was

BILJANA / I have no tampons because...

DANNY Oh darling okay, okay I'll go now/ to

BILJANA I didn't buy any / because

DANNY Next month. Okay? We've only just begun

BILJANA You'll have to go to the chemist right now- it will be heavy... I'm...

BRIDE Look I'll come back later guys.

(Biljana smiles at her mirroring Bride's facial expression of earlier years)

BILJANA No you stay.

I've made the tea. Dan could you get the herbal remedy for cramps from Leticia- they really work. Is that – OK and put an urgent sign on both notice boards for the Afghan?

DANNY Righto... I'll try not to be too long.

(Danny leaves. Biljana waits until she hears the car start)

BILJANA What do you want?

BRIDE You married Danny. You actually married him with my identity?

BILJANA You gave it to me. You gave him up. You gave it all up.

BRIDE Look I've been to Bosnia to Mostar.

BILJANA What? You go to a war torn country as a tourist. Got some fun snaps of you beside bombed out buildings, destroyed homes and human misery.

BRIDE I wanted to know what it was that you ran from.

BILJANA What did you find out?

BRIDE I found out.

BILJANA What?

BRIDE It's not safe for you to return.

BILJANA But you still came here. You had no right to come here.

BRIDE After talking with Massi's sister. I went on the net to find out about where you came from and saw they needed volunteers so I went to your city Mostar.

BILJANA My city is Melbourne

BRIDE Biljana.

BILJANA There is no Biljana.

BRIDE Your country's / borders have...

BILJANA Country! My country is the country I love and live in, and pay taxes to. How can you talk about country! You who have never cared about any country- except to visit and boast about it later.

BRIDE I cared about countries and people.
I cared about you. I gave you a new life.

BILJANA And now you want it back?

BRIDE Bosnia and Herzegovina has changed/ its borders..

BILJANA Go live there. Go on! But be Biljana Silajdzic not Irish Catherine Kelly and see how long you'd last.

BRIDE I'm trying for us to make some kind of arrangement.

BILJANA You had no right to come here.

BRIDE I'm Australian.

BILJANA And so am I. More Australian than you ever could be.
This is My Life! My Life Bride! My Life is not negotiable!

BRIDE OK- take it easy all right?

(The two women are quiet)

BRIDE Danny doesn't know anything at all?

BILJANA Nothing

BRIDE Have you told Nevenka?

BILJANA Tell Nevenka that my father was a Serb in the Serbian army?
Serbs killed every man and boy in her family – in her village!

BRIDE But Danny would have understood- would have helped you.

BILJANA Yes, I wanted his love not his pity. Charity is not love. Bedridin knew this.
When will you return to Ireland?

BRIDE I'm asking you to pity me.

BILJANA I can't afford to pity you.

BRIDE Bill. There is nothing for me in Ireland but bad memories.

BILJANA But you can't stay here. You know this.

BRIDE I'm not here to get you into trouble.
I flew in on my Irish passport to find you, but I made sure that you would not be exposed. My name is different. I'm Catherine Mounzéo. I married Bedridin's brother Raza. My Irish passport now has a foreign name.
Straight after you went to Dublin. I flew to Brazzaville with Bedridin's body. Razza had no family left- As a southern tribes person he was living

in daily fear for his life so I married him and brought him back to Ireland- we got divorced as soon as he got his Irish passport but I've kept his name so Australia migration won't trace me. Razza lives and works in Cork City. He works in IT and has bought a flat.

BILJANA So you married him for Bedridin?

BRIDE Yes.

BILJANA Saint Bride- patron saint of sluts. *(pause)* I'm sorry.
I'm sorry. What you did for Bedridin's brother was beautiful but he is safe now and your obligation to him is over but you will always be obliged to me to stay out of this country!

BRIDE I felt obliged to everyone! To everyone I didn't help in time! Biljana I've nearly gone insane by obligation! Massi's sister in Waterford contacted me begging me to help her find Massi. Because of Bedridin-
I lost the right to say no to her - no right to be angry at her for asking me to go to Afghanistan - no right to be terrified.

BILJANA So you went?

BRIDE Yes to their home town outside Kabul but Massi had fled to a refugee camp. I went to the camp just across the border in Pakistan.
Acres of mud and thousands of people.

BILJANA You didn't find Massi?

BRIDE I found thousands of Massi's but -

BILJANA Not our Massi.

BRIDE I found her

BILJANA Massi

BRIDE Didn't look like Massi- this old grey haired woman was calling out Bride Bride and crying, crying so hard and she asked me about Redjo and

Bedridin and you; she asked about you- she asked me if you'd learnt how to smile yet?

BILJANA I have tried so hard not to think of what happened to Massi, to Joseph, Muhammad, Bedridin and Redjo. I had to work so hard not to think of them for it would always make me cry. But then a happy memory will slip in and I will see Massi and Redjo laughing in your 'I love Rio' tee-shirt and I'll say a prayer for them

BRIDE Redjo has opened a café in Dublin with his Irish boyfriend. It's doing really well.

BILJANA Some prayers are heard.

BRIDE Your prayers were- you got the lot- Letterbox, garden, 'Danny the Labrador'.

BILJANA All because of you. I have never stopped being grateful to you. Not only did you answer my prayer but you gave me courage to do all this. God Bride- The first day here. At Tullamarine airport, I was trembling so hard in the queue to get through migration that I knew security would soon notice. The only way I could stop shaking was to close my eyes and imagine I was you, only then did the trembling stop. When I got to the desk, the migration officer studied my passport- she asked me how long I'd been away. I smiled that Bride Kelly smile and said "Far too long mate" then she asked me 'How long would I be staying?' and I said, 'Until the day I die'. She smiled and I was in! I was inside Australia. I got the skybus into Melbourne. Trams passing me, people walking by with their ordinary struggles, ordinary desires- I could have stood on Spencer Street for hours. Relief, glorious relief. Oh Bride this gift you gave me!

There was this woman on the train to come here. She was filling out a crossword puzzle and I'm laughing at her, quietly laughing at her ridiculous calm. Couldn't she see she was in the benign new world, the town of quiet obtainable dreams? She didn't know, will never know that I was home. I was in the place I'd never been and it was my home, always my home. Tears were pouring down my cheeks and I smiled a Bride Kelly smile because why shouldn't I? Why wouldn't I when I'd made it? No longer frightened. Australia welcomed me silently, unofficially she whispered to me 'relax girl and fuck what the leaders say- you may have hoodwinked its people but they don't really mind' How could they mind when they see how ordinary I am, just like them, with my ordinary dreams. You gave someone their dream. Yes your papers but also your life, who you are, inspired all of this. Please! Don't take it back.

(Silence)

BRIDE Why lie to Danny- of all people Danny?

BILJANA Seven years ago Danny was a mess. The mother he loved had just died, still damaged from being dumped by you and guilty about divorcing a woman he hadn't loved.

BRIDE But how do you bear the strain of it?
You don't even speak in your own voice.

BILJANA You told me to come here- remember

BRIDE I know but...

BILJANA To go and ask for help from the good man- you met too early who cries big fat tears when the girlfriend he adores sleeps with the man who prints the shop's magazine.

BRIDE That bloody journal

BILJANA That bloody journal made me fall in love with Danny. When I got here- there was a big for sale sign outside. I knocked on the door and a man answered with the saddest face and the kindest eyes I'd ever seen. He asked me if I was the teacher from Geelong who had come to inspect the house.

BRIDE So you said yes

BILJANA I'd spent all my adult life begging for help and here was this wonderful man needing mine.

From that day on I was no longer a despised asylum seeker
and Danny was no longer a refugee from love.

(silence)

BRIDE And you planned to keep this up forever?

BILJANA Yes

BRIDE What about your happiness?

BILJANA I'm safe, I'm not hungry and I'm loved. That's a lot more than most of the world gets.

BRIDE You even dress like me

BILJANA Sometimes a reproduction can fix the mistakes made in the original. Isn't that what you asked of me when you gave me your passport? I love this country you left and I love the man you left. Bride I will never hurt him. Never have sex with the man who prints his catalogues.

BRIDE Danny wants children.

BILJANA Yes we are trying.

BRIDE Biljana. Is it fair on him?

You told me that you can't have children- the infection from/ ...

BILJANA Yes all right but perhaps a miracle.

BRIDE Miracles are elusive as saints.

BILJANA You were my miracle
(*Silence*)

BRIDE (*looking at the print on the wall*) Ned Kelly-
lived in the mountain ranges out there.

BILJANA I boast to people that he could be my Great, Great Uncle Ned

BRIDE A Horse thief and a cop killer.

BILJANA All of us Kelly's- we continue to fight an unjust system.

BRIDE So Danny doesn't ask you about Geelong?

BILJANA Danny wants the past to stay there

BRIDE This house holds my most cherished memories of childhood. His Mum
never had two cents to rub together but I was always welcomed here with
food, clothes, even school-books when Mum was sick and Dad was drunk.
You've robbed me of my history. I've been burgled!

BILJANA You gave it away.

BRIDE I need Catherine Kelly back.

BILJANA You have her in your own land- Europe.

BRIDE This is my land.

BILJANA This is not your land- maybe technically but not morally

BRIDE You know the law would be on my side.

BILJANA Giving up one of your citizenships to a person who has none- your
conscience knew what was right better than any law.

(silence)

BRIDE On my Irish passport I'm allowed to visit Australia for three months- In twelve weeks I'll be an illegal alien in my own country

BILJANA We could get you false I.D.

BRIDE Me?

BILJANA You're white and you have the accent. It won't be so hard for you.

BRIDE But I want to be me.

BILJANA You are you. Papers cannot change that.

BRIDE They changed you.

(Pause)

You once asked me to spare you the life of an illegal immigrant. Would you spare me the same?

BILJANA You have to go back.

BRIDE My Auntie Pat left me the house on the corner.
It's in Catherine Kelly's name. The trustees know me so I can't inherit the house without exposing you

BILJANA So this is about money?

BRIDE This is about a new beginning.

BILJANA This is bullshit.

BRIDE For all of us.

BILJANA No

BRIDE I want to spend the rest of my life in the house I grew up in

BILJANA I turn myself inside out, risked jail and deportation to be an Australian and you wander back here because you've been offered free accommodation?

BRIDE I was born in that house.

BILJANA Where you are born has nothing to do with you. Where you live and love and make your life in-pay your taxes to- that is your home. This is not your home.

BRIDE I'm worn out from helping other people find their home. Jesus Bil. That house is my childhood- this is the place, the community that formed me into who I've lost. Please, I need to come home- rebuild myself. Try to understand. I haven't taken coming back here lightly- I have a plan.

BILJANA I'll give you all my savings. I'll buy the air-ticket. You have to go.

BRIDE For fuck sake please listen.

BILJANA I'll send you money overseas you wont have to work again.

BRIDE We will work this out.

BILJANA Yes if you promise to go. Will you go?

BRIDE No. No! Bil Can't you see? I'm just like you now!- I'd rather die than go back there.

(Biljana looks at her and walks to the door)

BILJANA I will not let this happen to me

BRIDE I talked with Massi's sister. She knows a forger who can change the photo in my Irish Passport

Biljana locks the front and back doors and walks over to her desk and pulls out a box

BILJANA You want me to live in Ireland?

BRIDE I want to give my Irish passport to Massi
Massi will become Catherine Mounzeo

Silence

BILJANA I kept these just in case I was ever caught.

Biljana opens a box to reveal a syringe

BILJANA One of these knocks out a St Bernard. It's peaceful I've watched.
I can't be an asylum seeker in this country.

BRIDE Biljana

BILJANA My name is Catherine

BRIDE I met with your brother Risto

BILJANA You should not have done that

BRIDE He thought you were dead.

BILJANA It was safer for him to believe that. You put them all in danger by going there!

BRIDE When I told him I knew you –

BILJANA You stupid woman

BRIDE - he wept tears, big fat tears
Risto begged me to find you.
He has remarried. They have a daughter. She's five years old.
Biljana. They called her Biljana.
She is named after you
He asked me to be your most, Mostar- (*Most means bridge*)

BILJANA The bridges in Mostar were destroyed.

BRIDE They've been rebuilt.

BILJANA They can never be rebuilt.

BRIDE They can if people forgive.

- BILJANA How could they forgive me?
- BRIDE It was a war. They blame the war not you.
Your mother is longing to hear your voice
- BILJANA My mother is still...? (alive)
- BRIDE Yes.
- BILJANA Moja majka mi ni bi oprostila. (MY MOTHER WOULDN'T FORGIVE ME)
(*Pr: Moya mika me nebee oprostila*)
- BRIDE Pile Moje! She wants her Pile Moje to talk to her Majka
(*Pr pilla mohya wants to talk to her mika-
meaning: my little chicken wants to talk to her mother*)
- BILJANA Pile moje? She said that to you?
- BRIDE Your mother begged me to find her Pile Moje. She says that the soldiers
burnt down so many houses- that she should not have blamed you for
Tahir's death. It was war and her daughter is not to blame
- BILJANA Mika Moya, Mika Moya. (my mother- my mother)
Moya Majka mi oprasta? My mother forgives me?
- BRIDE She prays for you every day. We could call them now.
- BILJANA No I cannot put my family into any more danger
- BRIDE Risto can get you a Croatian passport.
- BILJANA Impossible
- BRIDE You were born in a hospital that is now Croatia- both of you were. It's
Croatian law.
- BILJANA But I cannot live safely in Croatia- it's too close to Bosnia
- BRIDE But with the Croatian passport - you can enter Italy without a visa- you
can legally marry Danny in your real name- your family could drive to the

wedding. No-one in Bosnia will ever know. Risto has done all the paperwork for you- all he needs is a recent photo.

BILJANA It is such a risk.

BRIDE Danny Thompson can divorce Catherine Kelly and Biljana Silijivic can marry Danny Thompson and enter Australia legally. Massi will be Catherine Mounzeo in Ireland living with her sister and I can come home and be Catherine Kelly.

BILJANA This is your Best Possible World?

BRIDE I believe we can have this world yes

BILJANA This all hinges on Danny- telling Danny the truth

BRIDE Danny is a good man

BILJANA Danny loves Catherine Kelly.

BRIDE He loves you

BILJANA He could not love the desperate lying asylum seeker Biljana Silajdzic.

BRIDE He will forgive – it's his best quality.

(Silence)

BILJANA Do you think people ever really forgive?

BRIDE I got spat on when I returned to Ireland. Orla was quick to tell me that people in the town blame me for Bedridin's death. I saw Liam.

BILJANA Liam the red haired man who...?- he's out of jail?

BRIDE He was on day release with his mother –

BILJANA You talked to this man?

BRIDE No, no I saw him on the street- he had this thing on his leg- he was with his old ma- she was bent over adjusting the thing on his... she was all bent..

BILJANA You're crying. You cry tears for this man?

BRIDE Liam saw me. He called out to me. His Ma, his Ma's eyes.
Bedridin was not he only one that lost his life that day
I can't go back to Ireland Bil. I want to be in a country that has nothing to
forgive me for.

Silence

(Biljana places the euthanasia back in the box)

BILJANA Maybe one day my country will forgive me. Maybe when everyone
who buried their loved ones in graves from the war are themselves in
graves and their children who inherit their parents grief, hatred and anger
are also dead. Maybe when the grandchildren of the war dead are running
the country- maybe then I can return.

(A car door slams -)

BILJANA Unlock the door

*(Biljana hides the euthanasia in the back of her desk. Bride quickly
unlocks the door*

Danny is taking his shoes off outside)

DANNY *(He looks at the two women)* Should my ears be burning?

(Silence - Danny has a paper bag)

DANNY I bought you some Naprogesic for the cramps from the chemist and I got
some herbal remedy from Leticia at work- your choice,

BILJANA Thanks love.

DANNY And I got talking to a friend of Leticia and she knows someone who may
take the Afghan.

BILJANA Oh that's great! I'm... relieved. *(holding the bag up with a big smile)*
Double relieved!

(Biljana takes the bag and goes to the bathroom)

BRIDE You're a good man Dan

DANNY *(touching his ears- to Bride)* Ohh - they're still pretty hot.

BRIDE We were talking about you.

DANNY I knew it

BRIDE We were talking about the healing power of love.

DANNY Love- you only know about love by fucking it up a bit first- that's what is good about getting older you recognize when you get lucky and you don't muck around with it. Any tea in that pot?

(Biljana re –enters)

BILJANA I was telling Bride how it was love at first sight with us

DANNY "Bride"?... You two have bonded- I always hated that nickname.

(The two woman look at each other)

DANNY I never believed in love at first sight- I want someone who I can trust- who is loyal and above all honest- how can you tell all that without getting to know a person- well one day I saw this one on the door step- a vision with a little blue suitcase...

- and I said...

"Are you the teacher from Geelong?

The estate agents said you'd cancelled."

And you said –

"Yeah I'm the teacher from Geelong"

And in that moment I did fall in love. And I fell because immediately

I could tell that she was a really honest person

BRIDE How could you tell she was a really honest person?

DANNY Well someone who admits that she comes from Geelong

would have to be pretty bloody honest"

(Biljana laughs at Danny and smiles at her)

DANNY *(To Bride)* Always gets a laugh- She saved my life

BILJANA How about that. I saved *his* life

DANNY Without you – I'd be...

I was – becoming Mr Embittered. I was walking across the bridge into "Resentmentville"... population – me - one desperate – divorcee.

(He kisses her)

You're everything. You're fun - you're beautiful - you're kind –even your imperfections convince me how perfect you are

BILJANA What imperfections?

DANNY Any normal couple would have been off to Paris for the holiday of a life time by now...

BILJANA You could go on your own.

DANNY *(to Bride)* See Catherine what I have to put up with? I can go on my own? My romantic wife says I can go to Paris on my own?

BILJANA I have been to Paris Danny –

DANNY *(to Bride)* And - she can't cook!

BILJANA You wont let me experiment!

DANNY Because I value life.

(She gives Biljana a warm hug)

You see my love is not blind – which means it will always stay true

(Biljana laughs a Bride Kelly laugh)

And that is the true story of how we met -

BRIDE So you'd like to travel?

DANNY Yes, but not on my own. Now your ancestor's country- Ireland! That's a place I'd love to go to. The mist - the Guinness- the Hurling – now that's a fucking crazy game they run around with sticks and hit each other - that's my idea of sport. How many Kellys do ya reckon there are in the Dublin phone book? We should go and look 'em up – land on their doorstep- don't you reckon? Come on Catherine help me persuade my stubborn wife. We could fly to Paris next weekend – Dublin for the European Summer -miss out on our Winter this year - Looks like the Bombers aren't gunna make the finals- so what do you say?

(pause)

BRIDE Each winter I taught English language classes in Ireland

DANNY But the Irish speak English already don't they?
(The women don't answer) That was a joke by the way.

BILJANA Bride taught English to asylum seekers

BRIDE - in Orla's hostel.

DANNY Oh right. They got them in hostels?

BRIDE That's right.

DANNY We lock ours up in the desert.

BILJANA Yes.

BRIDE It's pretty sad isn't it?

DANNY Sad? Makes me ashamed to be Australian. They're forgotten out there – little while ago people seemed to care - they seemed to be worried about them. There were vigils and protests and petitions – Years ago I signed a petition that I'd be glad to harbour an illegal- bit of civil disobedience is good for the country.

BILJANA I didn't know this.

DANNY It's awful how we are treating these people.
 I'm going to open that Cab Sav

BILJANA Good idea
 Danny goes to get the wine
 Biljana and Bride look at each other and nod

BILJANA That's interesting that you say that about harbouring an illegal.

DANNY *From the kitchen.* You know they are not even technically illegal. It's within the law to arrive at our border and ask for asylum. Bloody politicians who bang on about illegals- They're not bloody illegal. They should chase all the bloody Irish and Brit over-stayers - they're thousands of them doing cash in hand jobs – can't count the times I've got a resume handed into the city store from a back packer wanting cash in hand work.

BILJANA Bride was just telling me about this woman she met in the hostel. A Bosnian woman. Ireland knocked back her request for refugee status

DANNY What happens to people who are knocked back?

BILJANA She smuggled in to Australia.

DANNY Really? - good luck to her. This is from a winery near Greg's place – you know that weekend we stayed at near Hanging Rock?
 Dan hands out the wine.

BRIDE Thanks Dan - Cheers

DANNY *(holding up his glass)* To old friends and illegal immigrants

BRIDE&BILJANA To old friends and illegal immigrants

They take a sip of wine.

Biljana nods to Bride

BRIDE This woman from Orla's hostel. She's a lovely human being, bright, kind to the other residents, intelligent capable of anything except smiling.

BILJANA She learnt to smile in sunny Australia

DANNY How did she smuggle in?

BRIDE She was given a new identity.

DANNY So much for border security

BRIDE She... she needs to move on from where she is- and now she needs help your help.

DANNY Our help?

BRIDE No one would have to know.
She speaks English with an Aussie accent and I've arranged papers.

DANNY You asking us if she can stay here?

BRIDE Yes

DANNY Wow? Really? You want us to harbour her? For how long?

BRIDE That would be up to you.

DANNY Why was she seeking asylum again?

BILJANA Does it matter?

DANNY Yes it does -

BRIDE During the war she... she... well let's say she could never go back to her country and be safe.

DANNY Why not?

BILJANA Let's not put her on trial Danny.

DANNY - but we need to know why she is running away.

BRIDE She was a radio presenter and she spoke up against the Army on her radio station. Her own people shunned her. She was gang raped by soldiers
Soon after her broadcast her brothers house was burnt down and her nephew was trapped inside and burnt to death.

DANNY Christ. What did she say on the radio?

BRIDE She wanted all three sides of the conflict to face up to the part they were playing in the war. Her broadcast angered many in the country and it is still not safe for her to go back.

(silence)

DANNY So is she?... is...you know... mentally... I mean her mental health. Wouldn't she need professional counseling?

BRIDE She's fine. She needs a home that's all.

(pause)

DANNY What would she do?

BRIDE What do you mean?

DANNY I mean - would she work?

BRIDE Yeah, she'll continue doing what she's done before.

DANNY So - she'll be working illegally.

BRIDE She needs a home.

DANNY Look, the timing... I mean we're trying for a family.
I mean the stress. *(to Biljana)* I don't want you stressed.

BILJANA It wouldn't stress me

DANNY We have to be practical. Bloody hell you didn't want the stress of traveling to Europe but this.. No. I don't think we can do it. Telling lies to all our friends- no, no. Jesus the law for harboring an illegal immigrant is pretty fucking frightening - you can get less for murdering someone.

BILJANA You just said that you believe in civil disobedience in this matter.

DANNY In theory yes- I... look... These people shouldn't be locked up.

BILJANA I think this woman should come live with us.

(beat)

DANNY No, sorry love but no.

(Silence)

I'll make a discreet enquiry at the Centre- maybe we'll find somewhere for your refugee but not here, not now, okay? I'm sorry

BRIDE If my friend finds no safe harbor, she will be facing a detention centre, deportation, and possibly death.

DANNY Don't do a guilt trip on me.

BRIDE What is wrong with us? Why do we let people die?

DANNY Look I said I'm sorry / but you are asking too much

BRIDE: Don't say you're sorry to me! Say your sorry to the dead- say you're sorry to people living miserable lives in refugee camps and detention centres!

BILJANA Danny has said no to your asylum seeker. Our life here cannot be changed

BRIDE Why do good people not care anymore?

DANNY I feel for these people. I really do- but when I wanted to sign that civil disobedience register- I wasn't about to start a family.

BRIDE So because it is inconvenient you'll let her be at the mercy of this government? You'll let her future be decided by racist thugs?

BILJANA You still want the world to share your despair don't you?
 Danny can't share your despair.

DANNY Look. I do care /

BRIDE: But not enough to help!

DANNY Look we don't know this women!- we don't really know why she has run off. I mean... she's from Bosnia.

BRIDE What does that mean?

DANNY You know. Look I mean what's the problem there now? They've locked up that Ratso war criminal. If she's still running away- maybe she's involved in something illegal. I have to protect my family from...

BRIDE From what?

DANNY I'm just saying if she was refused asylum maybe there's something we don't know about her.

BRIDE Does it have to be someone you know well before you can feel compassion? - what if it was someone you knew? Really knew?

BILJANA Bride please don't

BRIDE What if it was me? What if I was illegal? What if it was me that had made a mistake that had cost someone their life and because of that I could never return to my home. What if I couldn't stay in this country without your help? Would you help me Danny?

(Silence)

DANNY 'Blushing Bride' Kelly is it getting dizzy up there on the high moral ground?

BRIDE If you don't help her she may kill herself

DANNY Oh Christ!- now you sound like my first wife. Look.

Leave- all right- just get out of my house

(Danny goes into the kitchen)

BILJANA He has said no. Don't cause trouble here please

BRIDE I didn't come here to cause trouble. I don't want to cause trouble.

Pause Dan bangs around in the kitchen for a bit.

DANNY *(from kitchen)* Look Catherine- I'm sorry. You're an old friend and well we've all got a bit emotional here and I'm sorry

BRIDE: *(Angry)* Please don't keep saying you are sorry. You are not sorry you just want the problem to not be yours

(Danny re-enters the room)

DANNY Look if this means so much to you why don't you take her in?
You've inherited the house?

BRIDE I can't help her - only you can help her

DANNY Why? Are you too busy flitting around the world having love affairs?
Upsetting other people's lives? What gives you the right to come here -
demanding that I change everything about my life?
You're being selfish Bride - - if this friend of yours needs help so
desperately - why aren't you helping her yourself?

BRIDE You don't understand.

DANNY No that's right and you know what?...
I don't *want* to know

(He picks up his car keys and leaves the room. The two women are alone)

BILJANA I have known for seven years that my freedom belongs to you. I knew when you gave me your homeland, you were not fully aware of the price. In my every Australian morning I say a prayer to you- a prayer to God for your happiness- A secret prayer for the woman that gave me seven years of dignity, seven years of safety and seven years of belonging.

(Bride pulls up the retractable handle on her suitcase and is then still)

BILJANA What will you do?

BRIDE I'll...

BILJANA What?

BRIDE I'll go

BILJANA No.

Biljana picks up the phone

BRIDE What are you doing?

BILJANA *(into phone)* Please come back to the house- She's still here but we both have something to tell you. *(listens)* No- just come home.

BRIDE You're not going to tell him?

BILJANA You were right

BRIDE No I was wrong I was wrong about Danny.
I see this- Danny is a good man just... (afraid)

BILJANA not good enough

BRIDE No he's just afraid of change. Afraid he'll lose all this, all this...
You have built a happy life here with Danny

BILJANA I want you to tell him.

BRIDE No. I'm leaving. OK?- please Bill, Catherine. Pretend I never came here

You did exactly what I asked you- you have lived my life here and made yourself a much better version of me- please let me at least take this knowledge of you living happily here in my home town back to Ireland. Please. For me?

BILJANA I want to return the favour
Australians like to return the favour

BRIDE You, happy in Australia, is the only favour

BILJANA For Massi

Danny enters

DANNY I've had enough aggravation for one day OK?

BILJANA Prevedi ovu. *(Translate this)*

BRIDE No

BILJANA Prevedi ovu. *(Translate this)*

BRIDE Nemoj mu reci *(Don't tell him)*

BILJANA Ja sam / iz

BRIDE Molim *(Please)*

BILJANA Prevedi. *(translate)*
Ja sam iz Bosne i Hercegovine iz grada pod nazivom Mostar

DAN What have you two cooked up here?

BILJANA Prevedi. *(translate)*

BRIDE *(whispering)* Don't do this

BILJANA Zovem se Biljana Silajdzic.

DANNY Kaye what is going on?

BILJANA Zovem se Biljana Silajdzic.

DANNY What's happened to you?

BILJANA Zovem se Biljana Silajdzic.

DANNY *(To Bride)* Tell me what she is she saying

BRIDE My name is Biljana Silajdzic

BILJANA Ja sam iz Bosne i Hercegovine iz grada pod nazivom Mostar.

(Pause as Bride hesitates.)
 Prevedi molim *(translate please)*

BRIDE I am from Bosnia and Hercegovina from a town called Mostar

DAN Stop this

BILJANA Ja nisam iz Geelong. Nikada nisam bio u Geelong.

BRIDE I am not from Geelong. I have never been to Geelong.

BILJANA Želim da zatraže azil u svom srcu

BRIDE I seek asylum in your heart

BILJANA Molim za siguran azil u svom srcu.

BRIDE I plead for a safe asylum in your heart

DANNY I can't believe this.

BRIDE No government department believed her either that is why I gave her my passport seven years ago.

DANNY You are the asylum seeker Bride was talking about?

BILJANA *(Nods)*

DANNY The asylum seeker that house burnt down killing her nephew?

BILJANA Yes

DANNY You were gang raped?

Biljana nods again

DANNY But you...

*Danny is lost for words
He tries again*

DANNY You... You should have told me.

BILJANA I wanted you to love me as deeply and joyfully as you loved Catherine
Kelly. I wanted you to easily love me.

DANNY You lied to me? - but you never lie to me.

BILJANA Would you have fallen in love with the damaged Biljana Silajdzic?

Danny doesn't answer

BILJANA Will you love Biljana Silajdzic?

Danny stands there.

He cannot speak

Eventually he whispers

DANNY Catherine.

BILJANA&BRIDE Yes?

He looks at both women and walks out the door

*Bride sits down next to Biljana,
Biljana puts her head on Bride's shoulder.*

They sit together and the lights go down.

Act Two Scene 2

*Music- something mournful
A kookaburra brings in the dawn and the lights come up to the two women asleep.
Danny is standing in front of Biljana.
Bijana wakes and this wakes Bride
They both look at him*

BILJANA Where did you go?

DANNY I drank vodka with Nevenka. We drank to The Hague.

BILJANA You told her about me?

DANNY I only told her we had a fight

BILJANA Please don't tell Nevenka – it will...

DANNY Don't tell Nevenka! What? What will it do to Nevenka? You don't want
me to tell Nevenka because what? For Fuck's sake. Why did you tell me?
You wouldn't tell Nevenka - because what? She might get hurt?
She might hate you? What the fuck Catherine. Catherine?-
You're not Catherine – you're Bil bloody...

*He yells out in frustration and bewilderment
A man lost.*

Where is my wife?

I don't know who you are!

I don't know who you are.

BRIDE Yes you do.

DANNY I can't even say her name.

BILJANA You have to practice.

He continues to stand there

BRIDE Biljana Silajdzic. *(pause)* Biljana Silajdzic

He stands there for a long time

DANNY Bil ya

BRIDE Bill ya nah

DANNY Biljana

BILJANA Biljana

BRIDE Sil- I – A- Vitch

DANNY Biljana Sil-i a vitch.

BRIDE Excellent. Say it again Biljana Silajdzic.

DANNY Biljana Silajdzic.

BILJANA Excellent

End of play

AUTHORS NOTE:

The characters and events in this play were inspired by the 32 asylum seekers the author lived and worked with in a former back packer hostel in Donegal. While all the characters are fictional – their stories are based on real life cases.