years we have found a way not to talk about the difficult things. There has been so much that I have wanted to know. And so much that you have been unable to tell me. My father remains a mystery to me. As in many ways you do. But I just wanted to tell you, Mum, that I am happy. Your son, Gabriel." (A wind picks up as it does in the desert just before dawn…)

GABRIEL. It's dawn, Gabrielle. Look... (And light slowly falls upon Uluru as it seems to rise up from the darkness before them. They stand mesmerized before its towering ochre form and graceful curves. It is a sight to behold.)

GABRIELLE. I don't want you to go up there tonight.

GABRIEL. What?

GABRIELLE. Don't climb it.

GABRIEL. I've come a long way to do this, Gabrielle.

GABRIELLE. I don't care how far you've come.

GABRIEL. It's something I have to do.

GABRIELLE. Why?

GABRIEL. Because he went up there. He climbed that rock. A fair-skinned Englishman... And he never came back.

GABRIELLE. Let the dead take care of the dead.

GABRIEL. Are you making me choose?

GABRIELLE. Yes.

GABRIEL. Then I choose him. (Beat — Gabrielle turns to exit.)

Gabrielle... (She hesitates... then exits. Gabriel looks toward the rock. He moves toward it as... Both Elizabeths slowly raise their glasses to their lips and sip their wine as Gabriel disappears into the darkness and Henry Law enters.)

ELIZABETH (YOUNGER). There you are. (And we are in:)

HENRY'S AND ELIZABETH'S ROOM
LONDON, 1968

Henry shakes the water from his umbrella and hangs it on a hook. He removes his raincoat and hangs it beside the umbrella.

HENRY. Wine?... That's not like you.

ELIZABETH. I bought a bottle at the off-license. An Australian Claret. It's a little heavy.

HENRY. Robust, I think they call it. Like the people. Apparently. (Henry moves to the window and looks down to the street below.) Have you heard? The Soviets have invaded Czechoslovakia.

ELIZABETH. No. I missed that.

HENRY. Have you done something?

ELIZABETH. Yes. I've painted the walls.

HENRY. When?

ELIZABETH. As the tanks were rolling into Prague. Apparently. Do you like the colour?

HENRY. Well, it's white.

ELIZABETH. Off-white. Pure white is too stark. Like a hospital.

HENRY. Perhaps you could have chosen something bolder?

ELIZABETH. Bolder.

HENRY. Yes, like a colour.

ELIZABETH. Like Red?

HENRY. Yes, why not?

ELIZABETH. Because it's the colour of blood. (She throws her glass of wine into his face.) And wine.

(Beat.)

Isn't it sad, Henry? Isn't it sad that we have drifted so far from one another that we have nothing left to talk about other than the colour of the walls?

HENRY. Beth...

ELIZABETH. We've drifted so far that I can hardly see you. You're just a shadow. An outline. A vapor of a man.

HENRY. What's happened?
ELIZABETH. Two policemen came here. To our flat.
HENRY. Where's Gabriel?
ELIZABETH. They wanted to question me about an incident in
the park involving you apparently ... and a seven-year-old-boy.
HENRY. There was a misunderstanding.
ELIZABETH. There has been an accusation that you touched
him inappropriately in a public lavatory whilst the mother was
waiting outside.
HENRY. The boy was having difficulty.
ELIZABETH. I don't understand ... What difficulty does a seven-
year-old boy have in a public lavatory?
HENRY. He wet himself. I was helping. He misunderstood and
became upset. He must have said something to his mother. Beth,
don't let your mind run away.
ELIZABETH. Well that's what I thought. I thought my mind is
running away. Clearly, I was going mad. And that's what I told
them, of course. There's been some misunderstanding. I know my
husband. He doesn't interfere with children. He has a son of his
own. He's a father.
HENRY. Where is Gabriel?
ELIZABETH. Nevertheless, they said. They still want to speak to
you.
HENRY. I haven't done anything. This is not right.
ELIZABETH. That's what I said. I said this is not right. How dare
you accuse my husband of such a thing. Against nature. And I sent
them on their way, Henry. I showed them the door. I could not
have been more indignant. And when they were gone and I was
alone it felt to me as if the world had been turned upside down.
And I looked around and saw just how dirty our room was. Filthy,
in fact. In the corners and on the window sills and the ceilings.
Layers of dust and dirt and grime and dead insects. Years of neglect,
Henry. How did we let it come to this? And so I began to clean it.
A bucket of hot water and soap suds. I washed the walls, the ceilings,
even the light fittings were scrubbed. I washed the door handles
and the light switches and the dark corners behind the furniture. I
scrubbed the table and the floor and polished the windows. I dusted
the books and the lampshade and even took to the grouting
between the tiles with a toothbrush. And when I finished I looked
around and it looked exactly the same. So I found an old tin of left
over paint in the cupboard. And as the tanks rolled into Prague I
painted. And I painted. And I painted. Then I hung the pictures back
on the walls. And put the books back on the bookshelves and moved
the furniture back into position and it was when I was moving the
wardrobe that it tilted slightly and something slipped from the top
... and landed at my feet. A leather satchel. Quite old. Quite worn.
Good quality leather. Something you have had since you were a child.
Given to you by an uncle, you once said. And inside there is a collection
of photographs of young children, boys mainly, naked, some
involved in sexual acts with adults. Some of them clearly distressed.
Clearly frightened. And among the photographs. Among the photo-
graphs, Henry, are pictures of our own son. (Silence.)
ELIZABETH. Have you touched him?
HENRY. No.
ELIZABETH. Have you?
HENRY. No.
ELIZABETH. Have you?
HENRY. No ... But I'm frightened, Beth ... that I will.
(Beat.)
What kind of man am I? What in nature makes a man like me?
(Beat.)
I didn't choose this.
ELIZABETH. No, I don't imagine one would ... choose it.
HENRY. Please.
ELIZABETH. You'll have to go, of course.
HENRY. Of course, I'll find a room somewhere.
ELIZABETH. No, Henry, no ... I want you gone ... out of the
country ... out of our lives ... out of existence. If you refuse, of
course, I will hand that satchel to those two policemen. They've left
their card.
HENRY. Where will I go?
ELIZABETH. Australia would be far enough. You're not the first
Englishman to be sent there in shame.
HENRY. And Gabriel?
ELIZABETH. Well, exactly.
HENRY. I want to see him.
ELIZABETH. No.
HENRY. Let me speak to him?
ELIZABETH. No.
HENRY. Beth ... please ... If you have any feelings for me then
let me say goodbye to my son.
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ELIZABETH. No.
HENRY. Let me speak to him?
ELIZABETH. No.
HENRY. Beth ... please ... If you have any feelings for me then let me say goodbye to my son.
ELIZABETH. I have feelings for you, Henry. That's why I'm sending you away and not turning you over to the authorities. I love you. Strangely, as abhorrent as this is, that hasn't changed. I imagine it will in time and whatever I feel for you will turn but now ... I still love you. But you're a thief. Instead of a loaf of bread you have stolen the future. And I will remove every trace of you from Gabriel's life. And every time the boy asks about you, about his father, and inevitably he will, I will remain silent. It will kill me and it will kill him but I will remain silent. It will be as if you never existed. (Elizabeth walks slowly away and with each step she grows a little smaller until she is just nothing at all. A hot dry wind blows across the desert. The older Elizabeth exits. And we are.)

ON TOP OF ULURU
1970/1988

A windswept and bleak terrain. It is night.

Henry looks across the darkness of the landscape below.

HENRY. Dear Gabriel, it is a six-week journey from England to Australia by sea. We encountered many storms and saw many whales along the way. Your loving Father. Dear Gabriel, the city of Perth is among the prettiest cities I have seen. I watch the children playing on Cottesloe beach and think of you. Your loving Father. Dear Gabriel, on the Nullabor the desert holds back the sea. The waves smash against the cliffs with relentless power. And with each onslaught the earth gives way another inch. I miss you. Dear Gabriel, the Coorong is a dangerous place. Caught between the land and the sea it belongs to neither. I miss you. Dear Gabriel, in the Australian desert the earth is the colour of blood. I miss you. Dear Son, in the desert I saw a vision of the end. A fish fell from the sky and the earth became sea. I miss you. Dear Son. In the desert, on a clear night, if you know where to look, you can see the planet Saturn. The word planet derives from the Greek and means wanderer. Saturn is named after the Roman god who devoured his own son. Forgive me. Your loving Father, Henry Law. (Gabriel Law enters ... And moves toward the edge of the fall.)


HENRY. If you look across the desert, the earth takes on the appearance of the sea. You think you're standing upon a rock that rises from solid ground only to discover that you're standing on an island in the middle of the ocean. And you don't know if you're looking back into the past or into the future. (Gabrielle enters. She sees Gabrielle in the darkness.) Water covered this earth and water will cover it again and the days that man walked here will prove just a moment in time. And all our knowledge, all our science, all our money and all our will won't stop it. It's too late. All our magnificent endeavour will come to nothing. And time will go on without us and it will be as if we were never here.

(Beat.)

Come with me, Gabriel.

GABRIEL. Dad?

GABRIELLE. Gabriel?

HENRY. Please Son.

GABRIELLE. Step back from the edge.

HENRY. I'm so lonely.

GABRIELLE. Look ... it's snowing. (And it is. He looks at Gabrielle, illuminated by the snow.)

HENRY. Forgive me. (Then Henry falls into darkness.)

GABRIELLE. Come back from the edge.

Gabriel walks back toward Gabrielle as the snow lights the way.

GABRIELLE. It's beautiful, Gabriel ... It's so beautiful. (They stand on Uluru in the falling snow.)