

“DOWN AN ALLEY FILLED WITH CATS”

A Stage Play

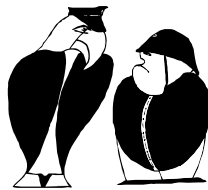
by

Warwick Moss

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Act One commences on Page 7

Act Two commences on Page 54



The outside door is locked

The inside one is not

But if it were

And the other weren't

What happens to the plot

PRODUCTIONS

Productions from 1983 to 1987

(Reviews available)

SYDNEY

PERTH

MELBOURNE

ADELAIDE

AUCKLAND

DALLAS (USA)

LINCOLN (UK)

LONDON (The Mermaid Theatre: West End)

DORSET (USA)

NEW YORK (The Quagh Theatre: Off Broadway)

BACKGROUND NOTES FROM THE PLAYWRIGHT

Mystery thrillers are pretty precise. Having directed or performed in several productions of the play then travelled and honed it as it worked its way to London and the USA, I leant over several years what interpretations worked and what didn't.

This script is the result of all those travels. It is not the Samuel-French published version which evolved from the London and USA productions. It is my preferred version; with my preferred ending. They wanted a clear victory to one of the characters. I wanted an enigmatic draw that continued after lights out.

Therefore this script is riddled with stage directions. My apologies but little things, like the specific placement of items on the set can make or break the production. Even set structures like 'transom window' are vital, or the plot will trip over itself right at the end. Then sin of all sins I also suggest character interpretations. Trust me. These two characters are great liars. Enjoy.

Warwick Moss

HISTORY

The play was accepted into the Australian Playwrights Conference of 1982

It won the NSW Premiere's Literary Award in 1984

It had its world premiere at The Stables Theatre

In Sydney, Australia on August 30th 1983 with the following cast:

TIMOTHY TIMMONY	-	BARRY LOVETT
SIMON MATHEWS	-	WARWICK MOSS

DIRECTED	by	PAULA ILAND
DESIGNED	by	ANTHONY BABICCI
STAGE MANAGED	by	PATRICK ROWE

Produced by WARWICK MOSS in association with his bank.

The play opened in London at the Mermaid Theatre on

November 27th 1985 with the following cast:

TIMMOTHY TIMMONY	-	DAVID DE KEYSER
SIMON MATHEWS	-	ADAM FAITH

DIRECTED	by	JOHN WOOD
DESIGNED	by	JOE VANEK
LIGHTING	by	JAMES BAIRD

Produced by KEN MYERS in association with PAUL ELLIOT

Stage Manager	-	Nicolas Harris
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CHARACTERS

TIMMOTHY TIMMONY

He is about sixty; Polish background; neat and precise.

Correct in speech and manner.

SIMON MATHEWS

He is in his late thirties: Anglo Australian; athletic.

A roguish, opportunist bearing.

CHARACTER RELATIONSHIP

The two men meet on a night when both are ready for change.

From the night's activities, they discover themselves through each other.

SETTING

The action occurs in Sydney in 1984. The entire play takes place in the one setting: 'Timmony's Bookshop'; situated on the third floor of a turn of the century building in the forgotten end of the city. (In reality, around Haymarket).

The building, 'Montier', is the last left standing in a four-block area, almost completely demolished for reconstruction.

Timmony's Bookshop is the last remaining business still operating in Montier.

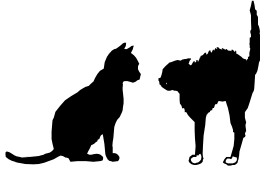
THE STAGE

(In general: the ambience)

Consists of one large room, lined with shelves of books. On one shelf is collected bric-a-brac; some of value, some not.

Included amongst these are two vases, of enough quality for their value to be obscure. In centre stage is a large table with books scattered; a reading table perhaps, with a chair or two. At stage right, is a door which leads to the landing and corridor outside. At stage left is a window, through which can be seen fading daylight and half demolished buildings opposite. Near it is a desk with one chair. The desk is cluttered, but included on it are; a telephone, an obscure figurine, a particular book and a packet of cigarettes. At the rear is a door which leads to the storeroom – (NEVER SEEN). There is also a small cabinet with a pot of coffee sitting on a warmer, on top. There is a small step-ladder somewhere for reaching higher books. There is one section of books in particular, of valuable old editions. There is an overcoat hanging on a hook near the closed stage right door. That door has a **transom window**. There is a small table near that door. There is an old, musty look about everything; boxes lying about; organised disarray: the lighting dim.

ACT 1



It is almost 5.30 on a winter's evening. The muffled sound of a jackhammer is heard through the closed window, from the street below. The stage is unoccupied. A pot of coffee bubbles away on a thermostat warmer, which sits on top of an old cabinet.

We hear footsteps climbing some stairs and then walking along a landing outside. The door opens and SIMON MATHEWS enters, smoking a cigarette. He expects someone to be there and mouths, almost to himself:

SIMON

Hello?

(He looks about then sticks his head back out into the corridor, calling out)

Anyone there?

(He wanders about the room a bit, then approaches the storeroom door, calling through it, but not too loudly)

Hello.

(A little confused, he settles a bit when he sees and feels the warm coffee pot. He approaches the central table, more at ease and sits to wait, fiddling without much thought with books which are scattered on the table.

The storeroom door edges open and TIMMOTHY TIMMONY stands, unnoticed, observing Simon for a moment, wiping his hands with a dust-cloth)

TIMMOTHY

Can I help you?

(Simon turns, a little surprised, but glad to see someone)

SIMON

Oh, G'day.

(They stand eye to eye for a moment, Timothy reiterating quite formally)

TIMMOTHY

Can I help you.

SIMON

Ah. Yeh... I came for a book.

(The Jackhammer stops. Timmothy crosses to the cabinet, switching off the coffee)

TIMMOTHY

Unfortunately, it's after five o'clock, sir.

SIMON

Yeh, I'm sorry about that. The bridge was a real tangle Bomb scare.

(Timmothy continues to close up; light switches etc; step by step)

TIMMOTHY

Another bomb? Shocking isn't it. It seems only yesterday we were immune to that sort of thing.....By heavens George was close.

(Simon perhaps thinks George is the old man's partner or something; might even be around somewhere)

SIMON

George?

TIMMOTHY

Orwell.

SIMON

Oh. Right.

(Timmothy continues to close up; Simon growing a little more concerned, yet attempting to remain polite.

Ah. Since you're still here

TIMMOTHY

I open at nine, sir. Right on the dot. And I close at five Right on the dot.

(Timmothy goes to his overcoat and starts to put it on: things getting more urgent for Simon)

SIMON

There was no way I could get here on time (Timmothy closing up)

The traffic!.....

I had to jump out of the cab and run three blocks!.....

I rang earlier..... (Timmothy opens the door for Simon)

Mathews.....Simon Mathews.....

(Timmothy stalls in his actions)

'The Napoleonic Wars'? You promised to hold it for me!

TIMMOTHY

Oh..... Yes. By Watstead and Steiner.

(He closes the door, then heads back into the centre of the room,
Simon now relaxed; victorious perhaps)

SIMON

Quite a climb up those stairs of yours.

(There is a short burst from the Jackhammer.
Simon's attention is taken by the window. Timmothy has gone to his
desk, fiddling with a book and things on his desk, tidying up. He happens
to cover the book with a newspaper perhaps, then sees the cigarettes,
placing them in his overcoat pocket)

SIMON

Made a real mess of it, haven't they.

TIMMOTHY (Thoughtfully)

Reminds one of a bombed city, doesn't it. Only demolition workers Like ants. Scurrying
about and feeding off the skeletons. They're knocking down this entire area, you know Four
blocks.

SIMON (Less than interested)

Really.

TIMMOTHY

Only my old, faithful customers bother now.....
Not a soul out there of a night No one....
Except for the odd tramp of course. But the pickings are a bit scarce, even for them.

SIMON (Impatient once more)

Ah. Yeh.... Look, I'm in a bit of a hurry.

TIMMOTHY (Seeming quite dithery)

Yes. Yes, of course. (off you go then)

(PAUSE)

SIMON

'The Napoleonic Wars'?

TIMMOTHY

Oh, yes. Yes.

(He heads towards some bookshelves)

A reasonable coverage. There ARE better studies. Britannica have done a wonderful version.

SIMON

Why should ... (I) You DO still have it.

TIMMOTHY

Actually.....

SIMON

I only rang an hour ago!

TIMMOTHY

People telephone all the time, Mr Mathews.
Then fail to turn up. This is a small business. I can't afford to....

SIMON (Now exploding)

I need that book!
You don't realise how much trouble I've gone to!

TIMMOTHY

Are you a student?

SIMON (Thrown off guard)

Do I look like a student?

TIMMOTHY

It's hard to tell nowadays.
Yes. Yes, you could be a student. Of Political Science perhaps.

SIMON (Disbelievingly)

Have you got the bloody thing or not!

TIMMOTHY (Wandering away; Simon following)

It's an incredible coincidence. I've had 'The Napoleonic Wars' in stock for some time. No one's ever given it a second glance. Then shortly after you rang This gentleman arrived. Asking for the same book.....I assumed he was you.

SIMON

And?

TIMMOTHY

I sold it to him.

(Pause. It all sinking in for Simon; holding in his fury)

SIMON

This, ah.... 'gentleman'.
Was he about forty Stocky.... Hair thinning on top?

TIMMOTHY

I believe he was sir. Yes.

SIMON

I don't suppose he wore a red carnation by any chance?

TIMMOTHY

I believe he did, sir. A very nice touch. You don't see much of that any more.

SIMON (Reeling away)

Stan-bloody-Jackson.

TIMMOTHY

I beg your pardon?

SIMON

Eh? Oh. A friend of mine.

TIMMOTHY

Oh, that's good. You'll be able to borrow it from him.

SIMON (back to business: urgent)

How long ago did he leave?

TIMMOTHY (Pulling out and looking at his fob-watch)

Not that long ago, sir.

(The Jackhammer starts up. Simon heads for the door;
I do have other versions. Some really quite excellent.

SIMON

I wanted the one by Watson and Steiger.

TIMMOTHY

Watstead and Steiner

SIMON

Yeh.

(Simon reaches the door, opens it, then turns for one last look at the weird old
gent)

Doesn't that racket get you down! (The Jackhammer)

TIMMOTHY

One can grow accustomed to anything Mr Mathews.

(An eye to eye)

I'm terribly sorry about

(Simon exits, slamming the door)

The mix-up.

(We hear Simon's footsteps disappearing, this time with some urgency to them.
Timmothy looks at the closed door for a moment, then with similar urgency goes
to his desk, pulling out the packet of cigarettes from his pocket, then fetching the
book he covered earlier. He takes them both into the storeroom then exits,

locking the door with a KEY FROM HIS TROUSER POCKET. The Jackhammer stops. He crosses to the cabinet and takes out a small carton of milk. We hear Simon's footsteps, with more urgency. He enters, quite out of breath)

TIMMOTHY

You've changed your mind?

SIMON

The front door. It seems to be locked.

TIMMOTHY

Locked?

SIMON

Yeh. You know that great slab of steel downstairs? It doesn't open.

TIMMOTHY

That's peculiar.

SIMON

Yeh.

(PAUSE)

Well? Do you have a key?

TIMMOTHY

Yes. Yes, of course.

(PAUSE)

SIMON

Well, are you going home? I'll come down with you.

TIMMOTHY

I do have one or two things left to do.

SIMON

Could I borrow it then? I'll run it back up to you.

TIMMOTHY

Yes. Yes.

(Timothy goes to his desk and rummages through a small box of bits and pieces; Simon waiting impatiently. Timothy finds a key and hands it to Simon)

SIMON

I could do with the exercise.

(He heads for the door, mumbling)

It's only three floors.

(Simon exits and we hear him running down the stairs.
Timmothy exits to the corridor with the carton of milk)

TIMMOTHY

Wladyslaw. Where are you?

Here, puss, puss, puss Wladyslaw?

(Timmothy re-enters, crosses to the cabinet, pours himself a glass of milk, then reaches into the cabinet for a half empty bottle of scotch, adding it to the milk.

He thinks for a moment, then with final conviction mixed with apprehension, he goes to the telephone, bending and unplugging the cord, placing some books and bits and pieces over the wall plug etc. We hear Simon's footsteps, now slower and more exhausted than before. Timmothy takes his glass and stands at the window, looking out. Simon enters)

SIMON

Are you **sure** this is the right key.

TIMMOTHY

It doesn't work?

SIMON

Ah. No.

TIMMOTHY

Strange.

(He takes the key from Simon, goes to the little box and checks)

Oh dear.

SIMON

Oh dear?

TIMMOTHY

Do you happen to know the date, Mr Mathews.

SIMON

Friday the thirteenth?

Ah.... The twentieth. Today's the twentieth.

TIMMOTHY

Oh my God

SIMON

Oh my God, what?!

TIMMOTHY

My memory's not what it used to be

SIMON

Neither is my patience.

TIMMOTHY

Are you sure?

SIMON

Positive. I can feel it in the back of my neck.

TIMMOTHY

I mean the date.

SIMON

Yeh, I'm sure. I flew back in on Sunday. That was the fifteenth.

TIMMOTHY

I think you should prepare yourself, Mr Mathews.

SIMON

What for.

TIMMOTHY

It's a long story.

SIMON

Could you give me the Reader's Digest version.

TIMMOTHY

Thirty one years I've been here Mr Mathews. Thirty one years.

I'm not sure you can imagine what that is like. This building'Montier'; and all the others which were out there once; standing proud.

It was a precious corner of the city down here; basically untouched since the turn of the century.... (SIMON goes to interrupt)

Longevity. You don't find much of that in this country.

SIMON

Thank you Tolstoy. Now do you think you could give me a quick 'resume' of how to get out of here.

TIMMOTHY

I think we may be here for the night, Mr Mathews.

(Through the horror of it all, Simon offers a false chuckle)

SIMON

Candid Camera. That's what it is. Candid Camera. Very funny.

TIMMOTHY

It is no joke Mr Mathews. We are locked in.

SIMON (Exploding)

What do you mean, locked in?!

TIMMOTHY

I mean unable to leave the premises.

(Simon starts to surge around the place, thinking, searching for some solution)

You see I've been having a spot of trouble with the landlord.

I was given notice; and was supposed to be out of here a month ago.....

But it slipped my mind.

SIMON

It slipped your mind?!

TIMMOTHY

Yes. Well.... I get confused.

SIMON

And?

TIMMOTHY

There have been no other tenants here for almost a year.

Two weeks ago... Yes. Two weeks ago, the landlord threatened to change the lock downstairs
.... Whether I was here or not On the twentieth. You say that is today.

SIMON

He can't do that!

TIMMOTHY

It seems he has.

SIMON

It's against the law!

TIMMOTHY

Do you think so?

SIMON

Of course! This is 1984. Not the dark ages!

TIMMOTHY

Which law?

SIMON

Well, I don't know The law of common-bloody-decency!

TIMMOTHY

I did have sufficient warning when you think about it. My lease **has** expired. I'm afraid Mr
Heinz is simply proving a point. No doubt he'll arrive some time tomorrow with that nasty grin
of his and let us out.

SIMON

Well, he won't be grinning for long.

(PAUSE)

TIMMOTHY

Do you play chess?

SIMON

Not for fifteen hours, I don't. No!

TIMMOTHY

We could have a tournament.

SIMON

You're off your bloody rocker!

TIMMOTHY

No use getting upset, Simon.

SIMON (It all getting the better of him)

Mathews. **Mr** Mathews is me.

The nice, calm 'chap'; who wandered in to buy a book and got locked in?!

TIMMOTHY

We'll be out in the morning.....**Mr** Mathews.

SIMON

I CAN'T WAIT 'TIL MORNING!

There's got to be some way out of this joint.

(He runs out the door, leaving it open. We hear him running up and down the corridor, thumping on doors and calling out. Timmothy takes his overcoat off and hangs it near the door, then returns to his desk, pulling out a small chess set and setting up the pieces. On his way back to the desk he flicks the coffee back on. We hear a yell from Simon just outside the door)

SIMON (OS)

Shit!

(Simon walks fragilely into the room, closing the door firmly behind; trying to tough it out, but literally feeling sick. Timmothy watches)

TIMMOTHY

Something wrong?

SIMON

There's rats as big as Wombats out there.

TIMMOTHY

Mice.

SIMON
There's a couple all dead.....and torn.....and

TIMMOTHY
Ah, Wladyslaw.

SIMON
Wladyslaw?

TIMMOTHY
A rather territorial and bombastic old tom cat..... Quite a warrior.

(Simon starts to dry retch; holding his stomach).

Are you alright?

SIMON
Yeh. Sure.

TIMMOTHY
Afraid of mice?

SIMON
Only when they're bleeding all over the floor.

TIMMOTHY
The sight of blood upsets you?

SIMON (Yes. But turning defence into attack)
They've bricked in all the windows down there, you know.

TIMMOTHY (At the coffee pot: nodding)
Against vandals..... Coffee?

SIMON (Referring to storeroom door)
What's in there.

(He heads towards it: Timmothy replying quickly)

TIMMOTHY
Storeroom..... full of mice

(Simon recoils)

It's a sealed box.

SIMON
If I get hold of that landlord of yours, I'll put him in a bloody sealed box.

TIMMOTHY
Would you like some coffee.

SIMON

No, I don't want any damned coffee! I just want to get out of here!

TIMMOTHY

I don't particularly relish staying here either, Mr Mathews. We're just going to have to make the best of things I have two cats at home. They'll be waiting for their dinner.

SIMON (Exploding)

And I've got a wife and four kids!

(Calming; using it as a ploy)

Fifteen years; I've been arriving home at exactly the same time. The wife pours me a beer while I play with the kids and she puts on dinner. The same routine. Every night She'll think I'm dead or something.

TIMMOTHY

Oh dear. You should telephone and reassure her.

(Simon looks at the phone; a little more the fool for not having thought of it before. He pulls out a notebook and looks up a number: then picking up the phone, checking it a couple of times, then slamming it down)

Don't tell me he's cut off the phone too.

SIMON

Ten points!

TIMMOTHY

I hope she won't worry too much.

SIMON

Who?!

TIMMOTHY

Your wife?

SIMON

Eh? Oh. Yeh. Right.

(He starts to pace)

Jesus I hate confined spaces. I get itchy all over. It goes right against my grain.

TIMMOTHY

Go for a stroll in the corridor.

SIMON

Oh, yeh, Terrific. Exercise yard, is it.

(He tries a businessman's sales approach: softer)

Look. I've really got to get out of here I'm a businessman.
I have responsibilities. I had an extremely important appointment tonight.

TIMMOTHY

With Mr Jackson?

SIMON

No. Well.... Yes.... In a way.

TIMMOTHY

And to think you only just missed him.

SIMON

I'd prefer not to.

(The Jackhammer starts up and Simon realises that's his way out. He runs to the window and opens it: yelling out)

Hey! Up here! Oy!
You stupid looking idiot! Up here!

(He turns back in to Timmothy)

SIMON

You wouldn't believe it. There's a bloke down there bouncing around on the end of that jackhammer and he can't even hear me.

(He gets an idea and runs for an old figurine on the desk: Timmothy going after him)

TIMMOTHY

What do you think you're doing!

SIMON

I'm going to attract his attention.

TIMMOTHY

Not with that, you're not!

SIMON

We've got to get out of here somehow!

TIMMOTHY (Taking the figurine)

If you don't mind!

SIMON

Alright! Don't spit your dummy out.

(Timmothy places the figurine back on the desk. Simon grabs a book from the book table)

TIMMOTHY

Now what.

SIMON

I'm going to hit him on the head with a book.

TIMMOTHY (Blocking access to the window)

You can't do that.

SIMON

He's got a helmet on!

TIMMOTHY

You're not going to throw one of my books out the window!

(Simon tries to get past; Timmothy persistent)

That will be four dollars fifty.

(Disbelievingly, Simon opts for paying the money as the quickest route to the window. Timmothy holds out his hand to be paid)

SIMON

Shit.

(He hands over a five dollar note)

Keep the change.

(Simon runs to the window and throws the book out; obviously missing his target)

SIMON

Bugger it.

(He runs for another book)

TIMMOTHY

That one is twelve dollars.

SIMON

Twelve bucks? What a rip-off.

(He grabs another book)

TIMMOTHY

Eight dollars.

(Simon slams ten dollars into his hand, this time waiting for the change. Timmothy dithers about, Simon conscious all the time of the jackhammer. Timmothy eventually hands Simon the change; in change. Simon lurches for the window, throws and misses again; with a curse)

Would you like to try the Oxford Dictionary.
It's on special offer this week.

(Simon is half tempted)

Forty eight dollars.

SIMON

That's special??

TIMMOTHY

For the Oxford, it's most reasonable.

(Simon has had enough. He storms to Timmothy)

SIMON

Charge it.

(The jackhammer stops. A truck starts up, but Simon is not paying attention. Timmothy is. He allows Simon to take the book; who then hears the truck leaving, lurching for the window and yells out desperately)

Hey! Oy! Come back here! Hey!

(The truck disappears)

Ah, you can go to bloody hell!!

(He turns disgusted, slamming the book down. Timmothy fetches and returns it)

TIMMOTHY

Could you please close the window.

(Simon stares at him hard and long, then eventually closes the window and slumps into a chair; the reality of it all finally hitting home: quietly disgusted)

SIMON

Well that does it, doesn't it. We may as well be stranded at the South Pole!

(PAUSE)

Bloody Stan Jackson.

(Timmothy is fiddling about; preparing coffee)

Five years. Five years! And I get pipped at the post by the peanut
You've really ruined my day.

TIMMOTHY

Coffee?

SIMON

What am I supposed to do all night?

TIMMOTHY

Read a book?

SIMON

Very funny.

TIMMOTHY

Have a look. You may find something to your liking.

SIMON

Anything by Houdini.

TIMMOTHY (Shaking his head after thinking about it)

How do you have your coffee.

SIMON

With arsenic will be fine.

(Simon is engrossed in his own misery. Timmothy shrugs and puts two sugars in anyway)

TIMMOTHY

It's a pity you don't feel like a game of chess. I love playing it on winter's evenings. It reminds me of home.

SIMON

It reminds me of watching paint dry.

TIMMOTHY

But you **do** play?

SIMON

I used to, but I progressed.

TIMMOTHY

To checkers?

(PAUSE)

SIMON (Calm; controlled: quite threatening)

To life.

TIMMOTHY (After a moment)

I can see it now. Snow falling outside. But inside; everything warm and comfortable. My sister Katia and I, by the fire, playing chess.

Father puffing on his pipe; overseeing our battle; always with one of his old books in hand.

And in the kitchen; Mama humming softly while she cooked. Lids dancing on the pots from the steam. The aroma of cabbage filling the house.

(Simon has hardly been listening; thinking of his own woes)

SIMON

Sounds terrific.

TIMMOTHY

And at Easter and Christmas, Mama would gather cuts of pork she had saved and.....Ah. That reminds me.

(He opens a desk drawer and pulls out a paper bag and from within it, a horseshoe of Polish sausage. During the next few lines he places it on a plate from the cabinet, from which he also gets a knife and cuts some pieces)

SIMON

Rations, huh?

TIMMOTHY

Kielbasa. Not like my mother's own. But still Kielbasa.

SIMON

Don't you think we should save it.....in case we're here for a couple of years?

(Timmothy presents a piece to Simon on the end of the knife. Simon sniffs it)

We should save it.

TIMMOTHY

Have some. It's a fine **Polish** Salami.

(Simon reluctantly takes the piece and eats it)

TIMMOTHY

Good?

SIMON

Oh, yeh.

(He washes it down with the sugared tea, which only confuses his taste buds more. Timmothy is quite chuffed by the two having supper. He presents his hand)

TIMMOTHY

Timmothy, Simon. Timmothy Timmony.

(Simon almost chokes)

SIMON

Timmothy Timmony. Any relation to Jimminy Timmony?

TIMMOTHY

No, Nor Nimmony Pimmony.

(PAUSE)

I changed my name.

SIMON

I'd try again.

The first one must have been a doozy.

TIMMOTHY

Partlemiej Topolsky. (Pronounced with a 'Bart...')

(Simon sniggers into his coffee and salami, then suddenly stops; realising what he is doing)

SIMON

What am I doing?

I can't believe this. Here am I chomping away on salami.....I don't even like salami.

My whole future lurking around in the shadows out there; and I'm stuck in here for the night!

Surrounded by books! and, and, and a communist cat..... that massacres rats! AND, it's cost me thirteen dollars for the privilege.

TIMMOTHY (Fumbling into his pocket)

Have it back, Simon. I wasn't serious.

SIMON

No, no, no. If you out-conned me, that's my fault. A deal's a deal.

TIMMOTHY

That's an enviable attitude.

SIMON

You win some; you lose some.

TIMMOTHY

Very sporting.

SIMON

You learn to be sporting when you wrestle with the Pacific.

(He pulls out a packet of cigarettes. Timmothy commences to tidy up their supper; both in their own world)

TIMMOTHY

Ah. The Pacific.

SIMON

Jesus.

TIMMOTHY

Michener; Gaugin.

SIMON

I've only got one cigarette left.

TIMMOTHY

The South Seas. The moon reflected in the deep darkness of night.....

SIMON

Do you smoke?

TIMMOTHY

I almost went there once. One of my customers.... Retired sea captain, he was. Asked me to go..... begged me, but my shop..... my books.

SIMON

Do you smoke?!

TIMMOTHY

Is it really as exotic and seductive as they say?

SIMON

Do you bloody well smoke!

TIMMOTHY

No. No I don't. Ironic. I know all there is about this world; yet I confine myself to one tiny corner of it.

SIMON

For Christ's sake, will you shut up!
We've got a major emergency here!

TIMMOTHY

What's that, Simon.

SIMON

I've only got one cigarette left.....to last all night. What do I do?

TIMMOTHY

Give it up? (Smoking)

SIMON

Do I smoke it now, or save it?

TIMMOTHY

Have some coffee, Simon.

SIMON

I'll save it. That's what I'll do. Save it.

TIMMOTHY

Did you know that Gauguin spread Syphilis throughout the entire south Seas.

SIMON

Lucky him.

Ah. What time do you think they'll open the door up in the morning?

TIMMOTHY

Actually. I've been thinking about that.

SIMON

Oh?

TIMMOTHY

Yes. It's become a bit of a concern.

SIMON

Meaning?

(He lights the cigarette: engrossed)

TIMMOTHY

I'm not sure he'll be in any great hurry to let me out.

SIMON

Who?

TIMMOTHY

Mr Heinz. My Landlord. You see, about two years ago, when property prices were very high, he had a good offer for Montier. He wanted to buy out my lease. I refused. Now, there's been a large slump in values. I suppose I cost him a great deal of money. So I imagine he would take great pleasure in letting me 'sweat it out' here for a while.

SIMON

You mean we could be locked in here for bloody days?!

Jesus this is giving me the shits!

(He throws the cigarette on the floor, stamping on it; realising instantly what he's done)

TIMMOTHY

I'm sure we'll attract someone's attention.....

(He sees Simon just staring down at the floor)

Is something the matter?

SIMON

I put it out. I don't even remember lighting it and I put it out.
I didn't even enjoy the bloody thing!

TIMMOTHY

You'd think you'd just lost your best friend.

SIMON

Why didn't you stop me lighting that. You did that on purpose, didn't you!

TIMMOTHY

For heaven's sake.

(Simon advances towards Timmothy)

SIMON

You do smoke, don't you. Everyone smokes. You must have an old packet somewhere. Where are they! Come on! Give them to me!

TIMMOTHY (Pushing Simon away)

For God's sake! Pull yourself together man!

(Simon drops to the floor and examines the bumper)

SIMON

Split right down the middle.....

Agh, who needs them. I'll give them up. Starting now. Always just needed a reason.

TIMMOTHY

Cancer wasn't good enough?

SIMON

Christ. it's going to be tough though. Inactivity. That's what makes you smoke. But I'll keep my cool.

TIMMOTHY

I have another game.

SIMON (Exploding)

I don't want to play!!

(He storms around; now absolutely and totally furious; taking it all out on Timothy)

SIMON

What sort of a crank are you. How could anyone hide themselves away in this.....mausoleum for 31 years?

TIMMOTHY

I do believe I'm almost as desperate for you to have a cigarette as you are yourself.

SIMON

It's alright for you to sit out the night here, buried in books.
You've got nothing happening for you. Tomorrow; or the day after that; or the day after that.
I've got a **dream** waiting for me out there.

TIMMOTHY

Ah. A dream.

SIMON

What's wrong with that!

TIMMOTHY

Depends on the dream.

(Simon now vents his fury on the books: the connection)

SIMON

Bloody books. Look at them, sitting up there.....
Pompous bastards!
Bloody knowledge. Hasn't done the human race much good, has it.

TIMMOTHY

I suppose not.

SIMON

I've got a lot of friends who are educated, you know.

TIMMOTHY

Really.

SIMON

Boring, academic arseholes.....
'Political Science'. (Plucked from Timothy saying it earlier).....
'Greek Mythology'Bloody lot they've got to do with what train you catch to work.

TIMMOTHY

With the state of our trains they could only help.

(PAUSE. Watching Simon fiddle about: fume)

TIMMOTHY

Books scare you?

SIMON

A lot of people who read them scare me.

TIMMOTHY

Do **I** scare you?

SIMON

You? No mate.

TIMMOTHY

I could be planning anything. Using centuries of knowledge

SIMON

I'd back gutter smart any time.

(Tension is building between the two; the personal combat)

TIMMOTHY

My fears And my **dreams**; are all in here.

(He looks around at all his books)

Strange isn't it. Books are full of wisdom, yet they don't make a sound.
Perhaps ultimate knowledge is absolute silence.....
But none of us ever reach that level of understanding.

SIMON

Until we're dead.

(A plain statement of fact: Timmothy returns it: enjoyably surprised at Simon's succinctness)

TIMMOTHY

Until we're dead.

(They maintain eye to eye, Timmothy then quietly and controlled, reciting his poem)

"Down an alley filled with cats
Through a door like a crack
Past the sullen Roman Knights
Into the smoke and dancing candlelight
Amongst the bubbling broth and conscience wrath
With mettle melted and a liar
We become dark shadows of the fire."

(Simon holds the eye to eye)

SIMON

I know some good footy songs.

(The tension is broken)

TIMMOTHY

Yes. I imagine you would.

(Simon moves to a section of books which are obviously valuable, picking up one and flicking through it)

TIMMOTHY

I think I am beginning to regret tonight more than you, Simon.

SIMON

It's not costing you as much.

TIMMOTHY (Picking up on it)

The Napoleonic Wars?

(Simon slams the book closed to clearly stop Timmothy enquiring. A noise from the street below breaks the tension, after a moment, Timmothy running to the window opening it and yelling out)

Stop that! Scoot! Go on! Go away or I'll call the police!

(Simon rushes to the window, heaving Timmothy aside; calling out below)

SIMON

Hey! Oy! Don't run away! Hey, boys, I won't hurt you! Hey!

(They have run off. He turns on Timmothy; furious)

What the hell did you do that for!

TIMMOTHY

I'm sorry. I didn't think. They were vandals. Tearing at Montier!

SIMON

Jesus-bloody-Christ!

(Simon storms away, slamming the book on the table. Timmothy has closed the window)

TIMMOTHY

Careful of that book. Please!
It's one of the few copies in existence.

SIMON

Really!

TIMMOTHY

It's not for sale.

SIMON
I don't want to buy it!

TIMMOTHY
Good

(PAUSE)

SIMON
What's it worth?

TIMMOTHY
It's difficult to gauge.

SIMON
Well, say I wanted to buy it.

TIMMOTHY
For you Simon. Since you are so interested in culture.....
Eighteen hundred dollars.

SIMON (Truly amazed)
And if I wasn't interested in culture?

TIMMOTHY
One thousand eight hundred dollars.

SIMON
Christ. I'm in the wrong game. Are there more like this?

TIMMOTHY
Several. But I would only sell them to a purchaser I considered suitable.

(He takes the book from Simon; replacing it in the valuable book section)

SIMON
You're a nut. Stark raving bonkers.

TIMMOTHY
Because I care for books?

SIMON
Because you don't care for yourself mate. Number one. That's the only one that counts.

TIMMOTHY
We need to have a link to something. Tradition. Heritage.
Books are that link. The veins that carry the blood of Europe.
Oh. It's so different down here. Especially for your generation.
You've never been affected by war. Not really.

SIMON (Beginning to seethe)

Who the hell wants to be.

TIMMMOTHY

So, you have no respect for things.... Or people.
That infamous Australian apathy.

SIMON (Apathetic)

Ah, who gives a shit.

(Simon realises what he has said. He looks at Timmothy who is grinning and goes on the attack)

You pompous old bastard. You self-righteous old turd. I know your type mate. You and your airs and graces. A pack of fuck'n lies it is! Tell me, Jimminny Thingimmy.....What the fuck are you doing here!?

TIMMOTHY (PAUSE)

It is said that the use of expletives is a sign of limited vocabulary. Care for a game of Scrabble?

SIMON (In control: taking the challenge)

Poo..... Bum.....Wee.

(Timmothy's answer it to quietly go to a corner behind his desk where he stores THE GAME. NB HOW IS THIS STRUCTURED IS UP TO THE DIRECTOR/DESIGNER OF EACH PRODUCTION.
Timothy fetches the game and calmly starts to lay it out, whistling happily; this making Simon stew all the more.
Simon tries to seem disinterested.
Eventually he can't help himself, idling over to Timmothy, who places game pieces out on a board)

SIMON

What's that bloody thing.

TIMMOTHY

Mmm? Oh. Just a game.

SIMON

I can see that.

TIMMOTHY

I invented it.

SIMON

Oh.

TIMMOTHY

I made all these pieces myself.

Really.

SIMON (It is more than obvious)

It takes about three hours to play.

TIMMOTHY

Three hours?!

SIMON

You have something else to do?

TIMMOTHY

Of course it's better played by four.

SIMON

I'll get a couple of the rats in.

TIMMOTHY

Mice But it works well enough with two.

SIMON (Picking up a piece)

What's this.

TIMMOTHY

Uranium.

(Simon drops the piece)

SIMON

Shit.

TIMMOTHY

It **signifies** Uranium.

If you take that: you also nullify the Atomic Reactor..... That's this piece.

SIMON

That so?

TIMMOTHY

You see, each player represents a different nation. And each nation has wealth in some areas; and deficiencies in others. 'Imbalance'. The root cause of greed which is the embryo of paranoia. Understand?

SIMON (A little paranoid)

Sure.

TIMMOTHY

Greed..... fear of loss, isn't it.

SIMON

Yep.

TIMMOTHY

So one attacks.....

SIMON

“The best form of defence is attack”.

TIMMOTHY

Very good. And once committed to that ploy, there are only two options. To win, Or to lose. Victory requires total Control.

SIMON

And how do you get that.

TIMMOTHY

By taking government.

SIMON (Now sarcastic)

Ooh. Is that all.

TIMMOTHY (Using pieces flamboyantly)

Aha! But **BEWARE THE OBVIOUS.**

To capture Government, you first have to take Knowledge, Culture, Faith and Justice. But with them destroyed; there is no Society. You have Total Control..... of nothing!

(Timmothy is like the mad professor)

SIMON

Good.

(Simon walks away)

TIMMOTHY

You don't want to play?

SIMON

No, I don't want to play.

TIMMOTHY

Why not?

SIMON

It looks boring.

TIMMOTHY

It's far from that..... You **do** understand.

SIMON

‘Course I fuck'n understand!

How long did it take you to dream that up?

TIMMOTHY
Centuries! It represents my philosophy on Philosophy.

SIMON
Jesus, you're a worry.

TIMMOTHY (Proudly)
“We are the Universe unto ourselves”..... Krishnamurti.

(PAUSE)

SIMON
“Money makes the world go ‘round; and **greed** is the axis on which it spins”.

TIMMOTHY (Pleasantly surprised: ‘greed’ from the game)
Welll...What’s that from?

SIMON
Mash..... Hawkeye.

TIMMOTHY
That’s your interpretation of life?

SIMON (Had enough)
I don’t try to interpret it! I just live it!

(Timmothy waits, then claps three times slowly and sarcastically.
Simon keeps the eye contact for a moment, then breaks away; utter contempt for
Timmothy)

SIMON
Where do I have a piss around here.

TIMMOTHY
At the far end of the landing..... Turn left at the mice.

(Simon goes to exit, then can’t help himself)

SIMON
What have the Poles ever done, eh? Tell me that.

(He exits; door open. We hear him call out)

SIMON
And salami doesn’t count.

(Timmothy takes the room in; talking quite happily to himself)

TIMMOTHY

The poles? Nothing much really. Just the finest collection of Renaissance Art north of the Alps. The second oldest university in all of Europe. King Wladyslaw the first. Frederick Chopin. Madam Curie. Lech Walensa..... The pope!.....

(He sneaks a cheeky look in Simon's direction)

And....Kosciusko.

(We hear a saucer rattle in the corridor and a couple of steps. Simon enters; a possibility he may have overheard)

SIMON

That Wladyslaw sure is a mean looking cat. Does he normally do press-ups?

TIMMOTHY

Ah, he's out there, is he.

(Simon goes to the window and turns)

SIMON

You know what I think? I think you should go back to Poland.

TIMMOTHY

Do you?

(Simon nods: eye to eye)

Perhaps.

I would like to go back. For a while. But at the moment they have problems which remind me a little too much of the nineteen forties.

SIMON

Eh?

TIMMOTHY

Father lectured in....Political Science. He was a little too outspoken. They took him away. They took everyone away.

PAUSE

Now it's happening again. 'Montier' is to be erased as if she were a pencilled error. The tree is to be chopped down. And with it tumbles the nest. It makes me feel very tired.

PAUSE

I may not move the books. I may leave them here.

SIMON

You can't do that.

TIMMOTHY

Why not?

SIMON

I don't know..... Because.....!

(Timmothy takes a moment, then breaks out of it all)

TIMMOTHY

Would you like a drink of Scotch?

SIMON

You've got some Scotch??

TIMMOTHY

Would you like some?

SIMON

Was Napoleon a general.....**was** Napoleon a general?

TIMMOTHY (Pouring Scotch)

Rumour has it.

PAUSE

Are your parents still alive?

SIMON

I don't know.

TIMMOTHY

But you have your own family now.

SIMON

Ah.....no.

(Timmothy chuckles wagging a finger at Simon's earlier lie. Simon has wandered to the shelf with the ornaments)

Where did you get all this junk from?

TIMMOTHY

Junk to some.

I find them. Or perhaps they find me.

SIMON (PAUSE)

I'm a collector (too).....

Into the Fine Arts, you might say. Sort of an 'independent trader.'

TIMMOTHY

Around the South Pacific you say?

SIMON

Yeh. That's my stomping ground now. Has been for nearly ten years.
Cut my teeth as a used car salesman on Parramatta Road.

(Seeing the irony of it all)

Purveyor of fine Japanese limos I was. But now; artefacts.... Rare bric-a-brac....(live)
Cockatoos.
I suppose you'd call me an import/exporter in fact.

(Simon is in fact looking for communication. Timmothy just nods. There is the
sound of a cat at the door, Timmothy jumping into a realisation).

TIMMOTHY

Oh. Wladyslaw. Your supper. I'm sorry old man.

(He fetches a tin of food from the cabinet and exits to the corridor)

Hello old man. How's the Empire? Oh, you've been in the wars again.
Soon you'll have no ears left at all.

(Simon stares at the game; curious come suspicious, but not sure of his instincts.
He picks up a piece and tosses it about in his hand, it falling and landing near the
cabinet. He bends to pick it up and sees something; reaching under the cabinet
and pulling out A RED CARNATION. Timmothy enters and he sticks it in his
pocket unseen. Simon is looking at the game. Timmothy pauses).

He fought hard for his ground. He lost his lady friend last year. It was very sad. He has a proud
name.....Wladyslaw. Unifier of Poland. Bohemia, Brandenburg, Hungary and the Teutonic
Knights.
He herded them all back across the mountains.

SIMON (Pouring a scotch: settling)

That's some cat.

TIMMOTHY

But not as great as your friend Napoleon.
Tell me, Simon. Tell me about your dream.
Five years: pursuing the Napoleonic Wars. Why?

SIMON (Aware but obscure: the game)

Greed

TIMMOTHY (PAUSE)

How did you know it was here?

SIMON

The Customs Office.

TIMMOTHY

They told you I bought the book there

SIMON

No.

TIMMOTHY

No?

SIMON

That you bought a **carton** of books there.

TIMMOTHY

Yes. Yes. A carton of books. Dozens of them. Most of them paperbacks. Still, that's the gamble one takes..... the unclaimed property auction. I always attend. Can never resist the mystery. (PAUSE) But what led you to customs.

SIMON

I finally tracked down the bloke who had 'Napoleon'. In a Bangkok Brothel. Had just had his throat slit. (PAUSE) I think Stan did it. (Throat cutting action)

TIMMOTHY

My.

SIMON

Well I was about to get out of there before the cops arrived, and the Madame..... a 'distant' friend of mine gave me the bloke's wallet. One of the girls had knocked it off. Inside was a shipping ticket....A carton of books to Sydney.

TIMMOTHY

Which he was never able to collect. I see. (PAUSE)
What was so important about the book that somebody would kill for it?

(Timmothy thinks he is getting all this information at no cost. Simon is happy to give it to test out Timmothy's ground)

SIMON

It had an address in it.

TIMMOTHY

An address? What sort of an address?

SIMON (Acting hesitant)

A secret address.

TIMMOTHY

A secret address?

SIMON

Yeh. You know. Like in Agatha Christie.

TIMMOTHY

She's not one of my best sellers.

PAUSE

What was the significance of the address?

SIMON

I'm not boring you.

TIMMOTHY

No, no, no. (Go on)

SIMON (Enjoying telling the tale)

In the early seventies, the Chinese did a culture tour of the West. You know, artefacts and stuff.

TIMMOTHY

I remember. In the Nixon era.

SIMON

Well. When the exhibition came to Australia; one particular item was sort of 'mislaid'.

TIMMOTHY

Mislaid?

SIMON

Yeh. It was so politically embarrassing at the time, no Government ever admitted it was stolen.

TIMMOTHY (PAUSE)

So now, it's finder's keepers.

SIMON

Correct.

TIMMOTHY

Oh my. And I sold Mr Jackson the book. So he now has the address. (I'm so sorry)

PAUSE

SIMON

Half the address.

(He picks up a book to illustrate)

Half was written on the inside of the front cover..... you know..... this paper bit.

TIMMOTHY

The dust jacket.

SIMON

Yeh, the dust jacket. And the rest was written inside the back. (PAUSE)
I've got the **front** part of the address.....
Got close enough to **tear** it off once.....
And Stan never knew.....

(Simon rumbles into a chuckle)

Christ he'll be shitty.

Just as well we're locked in, in some ways, Timmothy.

TIMMOTHY

Heavens. Then you and Mr Jackson have a hand in each other's pocket, so to speak.

SIMON

You could say that.

TIMOTHY

Agatha Christie dims. (PAUSE)
What was the 'item' which was.....'misaid'?

(Simon shakes his head: Timmothy expansive; affable)

Come on, Simon. Just a hint. I feel as if I've read a novel to the end and found that someone's torn out the last..... (REALISING THE BAD PARALLEL TO THE DUST JACKET)..... page.

SIMON (a friendly chuckle and a pause)

It's a thousand years old.

TIMOTHY

Anything else?

(Simon shrugs and Timmothy goes to a book excitedly, looking through the index etc)

TIMOTHY

A thousand years old. Chinese Older than Ming..... (Then reading)
970 to 1140..... Sung. Sung dynasty. A time of perfection.

SIMON

All I know is it's my way out. I can almost see it.

TIMMOTHY

You've seen it?

SIMON

Figure of speech mate. Figure of speech. Since it was stolen, no one's seen it. No one alive, that is. Although Stan brags he knows **what** it is.

(Simon calmly pulls out the carnation. Timmothy almost has a seizure but covers well)

TIMMOTHY (Doing his best to cover real shock)

What's that?

SIMON

A red carnation. It was on the floor.

TIMMOTHY

That's strange. I wonder....?

Of course. Mr Jackson must have dropped it.

Now that I think about it, he wasn't wearing it when he left.

SIMON

Obviously.

TIMMOTHY

What are you implying, Simon.

SIMON

It's all crushed.

TIMMOTHY

It's been in your pocket!

(He gets up in quite a huff, edging towards his desk)

I **do** have other customers, you know. Some of them even wear flowers.

(Timmothy moves into eccentric excitement; Simon relaxed; overly confident)

I tell you what we should do. We should write this down. It'd make a wonderful story. I have some paper here somewhere.....

(He opens a drawer, then spins around, aiming a pistol shakily at Simon. Simon gives it a moment; can't believe it)

SIMON

You've really fucked up my day.

TIMMOTHY

I'm sorry to have to do this, Simon.

(Simon makes a move for him)

SIMON

I knew you were up to something!

(Timmothy raises the gun nervously, Simon backing off; he more concerned that Timmothy has never held a gun before; that it might go off accidentally)

Be careful with that, will you!

TIMMOTHY

Give me your gun. Very slowly.

SIMON

I don't have a gun!

TIMMOTHY

Liar!

SIMON

I never have. They scare the shit out of me. Now, will you be careful with that, please.

(All through this, Timmothy is very mindful of the distance between the two, Simon wary of the gun rather than Timmothy)

TIMMOTHY

Take off your clothes.

SIMON

What?!

TIMMOTHY

Take them off and throw them over here.

SIMON

Like bloody hell!

TIMMOTHY

Take them off!

SIMON

What are you? Some sort of closet freak or something? Look, I haven't got a gun. Why don't you just frisk me, like they do in the movies.

TIMMOTHY

Oh, you'd just love me to come closer, wouldn't you.

SIMON

Not particularly, no!

(Timmothy raises the gun, now more in control of his nerves; perhaps a rush of adrenalin at his new-found power)

SIMON

Shit.

(Reluctantly, he kicks off his SLIP-ON SHOES and removes his jacket, Timothy signalling to throw it on the ground near him)

TIMMOTHY

Over here.....
And the rest.

(Timothy watches Simon carefully as he feels through his jacket for a gun or weapon. Simon takes off his trousers)

SIMON

Jesus I'd love a fag.....
Cigarette. Cigarette. (Not a gay: could be Timothy: sarcastic)

(Simon throws over the trousers and takes off his shirt)

This is the middle of winter, you know. I've just shaken off a cold.

(He throws over the shirt)

SIMON

Happy? Nothing up my sleeves. Nothing in my hat. Nothing any-bloody-where!
Now, do you mind if I get dressed.

(Timothy has left the clothes in a tight bundle near the window)

TIMMOTHY

Sit in that chair.

SIMON

Oh, come off it.....

TIMMOTHY

Sit!

SIMON

Woof!

(Timothy raises the gun)

Shit!

(Simon drops into the chair. PAUSE)

I couldn't put on your overcoat, I suppose.

(Timothy circles around Simon, heading for the door and his overcoat. During the following, he locks the door and puts on his overcoat)

TIMMOTHY

Just sit there.

SIMON

“Timmothy Timmony”. Timmothy Jimminy Timmony. My God. This **is** your bookshop of course.

TIMMOTHY

It is.

SIMON

And you’ve slaved away for thirty one years, rushing home to feed your cats; ‘Honest’ and ‘Trustworthy’.

TIMMOTHY

Isobel and Sam.

SIMON

Come off the diggings cobber. You really had me in bloody tears. What was your sister’s name again? Eva Braun?

(Timmothy cocks the gun with manic intent, This stops Simon)

Just a little bit of light hearted repartee Timmothy. No offence.

(Timmothy is now near the window)

SIMON

Ooh Jesus it’s bloody freezing. Do you mind if I put my clothes on.

(Timmothy opens the window)

TIMMOTHY

Yes I do.

SIMON

Why!

TIMMOTHY

Because I wish to debilitate you.

(In a flash he picks up Simon’s clothes and throws the out the window)

SIMON

What the hell did you do that for!

TIMMOTHY

I have nullified your Atomic Reactor.

SIMON

I just bought that coat in Hong Kong!.....What did you say?

TIMMOTHY

I have just taken your Uranium!

SIMON

You need a nurse!.....Jesus it's cold.

(Simon takes a punt and slowly stands, they watching each other closely. To test Timothy, he drops to the floor and starts doing press-ups; Timothy confused)

Couldn't you just pull out my fingernails?.....
Someone's going to find those clothes you know.

TIMMOTHY

At the end of an alley? Even then they'll think they're some tramps.

SIMON

Thanks very much.

(Timothy approaches closer: Simon's senses honed)

TIMMOTHY

Now. What did your part of the address say.

(PAUSE)

SIMON

Gordon, in Perth!.....

TIMMOTHY

Don't lie to me! What was on the **back cover**!

SIMON

Gordon, in Perth!.....

(Simon stops doing his press-ups, turning around to Timothy, who senses something is wrong)

I told you I had the **front** cover. It's the back that was torn off, wasn't it Timothy.....

(Slowly rising; Timothy backing off)

You've still got the bloody book.

TIMMOTHY

Stay away, or I'll shoot.

SIMON

Like you shot Stan?!

(Simon lunges for Timothy, the gun getting knocked in the struggle and going off; they both cringing fearfully at the same time)

What the hell did you do that for!

(Simon goes for the gun, grabbing it and lunging back at Timmothy, holding him down; gun at his head. This is all a real threat; it seeming that Timmothy is definitely going to get shot; he pleading desperately)

TIMMOTHY

I didn't know it was loaded. I don't understand guns. Really, Simon.

SIMON

How did you shoot Stan?

TIMMOTHY

I didn't shoot him. I swear.

SIMON

Did you hold him down and let him sweat it out?!

TIMMOTHY

No, Simon. Please!

SIMON

You were going to do that to me too, weren't you!

TIMMOTHY

No! Please, Simon!

(Simon has the gun at Timmothy's forehead for what seems like ever; a slaughter; in a rage. Finally he drops away the gun, staring hard at Timmothy)

SIMON

Justice.

(Timmothy collapses to the floor, recovering from the panic. Simon walks away, past the game, slamming a piece off the table in anger. He grabs the bottle of Scotch and sits: the victor)

TIMMOTHY

Simon. There's something I must tell you (I think I have what you are after)

SIMON

Where's Stan!

TIMMOTHY (Okay, we'll play a little longer)

He's dead. I didn't shoot him. You must believe me.....
He's in there. (The storeroom)

SIMON (feeling instantly ill)

Jesus! He is dead.

(Timmothy drags himself up, through the following edging towards the storeroom and unlocking it at an appropriate moment: Simon the cocky winner)

TIMMOTHY (With wonderful desperation)

He brought it all on himself. Once he saw that the back page of the dust jacket was torn, he went totally insane. I told him I bought it that way but he didn't believe me. He started pushing me about, screaming. Well I panicked; took out my gun. I've had it for years and never touched it. It was just for security. He wrestled it from me.

Then..... I had to go to the toilet.

SIMON

He had the same effect on me.

TIMMOTHY

I couldn't tell you before, but there **is** one in there. (The storeroom)

He followed me into the storeroom and stood outside the toilet; threatening; ranting and raving; accusing me of knowing all about the address.

Well. After I flushed the toilet, I pushed open the door. He must have been standing too close. The door hit him and the gun went off. I heard him fall, then the door closed in on me again. I was afraid to move. I could hear him moaning, then blood. So much blood. Started to seep under the toilet door.

(Simon does not feel well)

TIMMOTHY (Noticing Simon's reaction to blood))

Soooo much blood....It was horrible. I had to use all my strength to push the door open.

He was lying there; moaning; mumbling on about The Napoleonic Wars And a vase..... Then he just stopped.

SIMON

A what?

TIMMOTHY

A vase!

(He ducks into the storeroom, locking the door behind. Simon grabs the gun and charges for the door, trying it and realising it's locked, thumping it in frustration; screaming)

SIMON

Stan told you it's a vase?

Did he tell you it was a vase?!

(NOTHING)

Give me that book, Timmothy!

(NOTHING)

Come out of there, you bloody cretin!

(Simon aims the gun at the lock and pulls the trigger, wincing in anticipation. It just clicks. PAUSE)

Come on Timmothy, I won't hurt you. There's no more bullets in the gun. Listen.

(He holds it in the air. It goes off on the second pull, he almost having heart seizure)

TIMMOTHY (OS)

Once car salesman..... (Always a car salesman)

(Simon recovers and opens the gun)

SIMON

Really. There are no more bullets now, I promise. Listen.

(He clicks the gun six times)

TIMMOTHY (OS)

I don't trust you, Simon. I'm waiting in here 'til morning.

SIMON

I'll freeze to death out here!

(He slips on his shoes and closes the window, returning)

At least let me have your overcoat, huh?

(There is still no response from Timmothy)

SIMON

Fine. Terrific. I mean, certainly when I lean out that window tomorrow and call for help, dressed in socks and knickers, I'm going to have a few questions to answer. But I'll handle them. I'll tell them there's a lunatic upstairs with the body of a man he just killed!

TIMMOTHY (OS)

Who are they going to believe? The man in the knickers? Or the sweet, simple old bookshop proprietor.

SIMON (PAUSE)

For God's sake Timmothy, it's bloody snowing out here!

(NOTHING)

How's Stan going? Any weevils coming out of his ears?
Must be cosy in there, just the two of you.
Has he turned green yet?

(We hear the sound of a toilet flushing. Simon Sniggers)

TIMMOTHY (OS)

It may not be pleasant in here. But at least I have Napoleon.

(Simon curses to himself, then stalks around the room, looking for an idea. He sees the valuable book section and strides to it, grabbing one of the larger volumes and returning to the storeroom door)

SIMON

Well, well, well, What have we got here.

'New Voyage Around the World'? Published, London, 1696..... William Dampier? Mmmm. It's falling to pieces.

TIMMOTHY (OS)

Be careful with that book please.

SIMON

Why? It can't be worth much. The cover's all torn.

The book's ruined Timmothy. You don't mind if I use a couple of pages to light a fire, do you? I'm very cold, you know.

(He fetches the metal waste paper bin, finds some matches; that he needs to have left somewhere earlier; perhaps singing "It's falling to pieces.....")

TIMMOTHY (OS)

Simon, don't. Please. That book is beyond value.

SIMON

So's the one you've got in there.

(He tears a couple of pages from the book, places them in the bin and lights them)

TIMMOTHY (OS)

Don't, Simon. Don't harm that book!

SIMON

(The flames have caught, Simon rubbing his hands over the fire)

Ah. Snug as a bug in a rug.

(He wafts some smoke towards the storeroom door, then places the bin down stage, waiting a few yards away. Timmothy bursts from the storeroom, carrying his overcoat and The Napoleonic Wars; placing the book down near the rubbish bin as he uses the coat to put out the flames, then trying to salvage the pages, slowly rumbling, with much sadness into his poem. Simon is a little surprised by the extent of Timmothy's anguish)

TIMMOTHY

"Down an alley filled with cats
Through a door like a crack
Past the sullen Roman Knights
Into the smoke and....."

(He is almost in tears, turning to Simon with real venom.)

Why did you have to do that?

SIMON (Quite affected)

It takes two to tango, mate.

TIMMOTHY

Why my books. What have they done to you?

They are my family.

(PAUSE)

SIMON

There's still a few cousins left.

TIMMOTHY

This is one father gave me.

(Simon is as close as he'll ever be to saying 'sorry')

THE FOLLOWING HAS TO BE CHOREOGRAPHED VERY CAREFULLY,
AS SIMON HAS TO BE KEPT SO BUSY OR OCCUPIED, HE DOES NOT
GET A CHANCE TO LOOK AT THE NAPOLEONIC WARS CLOSELY.

(Timmothy slides The Napoleonic Wars across the floor to Simon)

Take your damned book!

(Timmothy hurls his overcoat at Simon)

Get out of here! Leave me alone!

(Timmothy throws the shop door key to him, Simon scrambling for all three, then standing, looking at Timmothy)

TIMMOTHY

Get out!!

(Carrying his bundle of goodies, Simon unlocks the door and is about to leave, then stopping coyly, Timmothy back to his ruined book by the bin)

SIMON

I, ah..... I can't.

(He signals to the downstairs door: locked.
Reality replaces Timmothy's personal tragedy.
The night shall continue. He offers a little chuckle;
Simon a bit relieved)

TIMMOTHY

I think we should get drunk.

SIMON (NB PLACES KEY ON DESK)

Yeh.

(Timmothy is on his feet; still a little dazed from it all)

TIMMOTHY

Did you get the cigarettes?

SIMON (Wriggling into the overcoat)

What cigarettes?

TIMMOTHY

Mr Jackson smoked

SIMON

He did too.

(He heads for the storeroom and stops at the door, turning coyly...the blood)

Ah. Would you mind?

(Timmothy enters the storeroom, Simon standing outside, now looking at The Napoleonic Wars for the first time.
He speaks disbelievingly)

Where's the cover.

(Exploding)

Where's the bloody dust jacket?!!

(Timmothy waddles from the storeroom, placing a packet of cigarettes in Simon's hand and closing the door: he crosses to the central table where there is the bottle of Scotch, the two glasses; and the game)

TIMMOTHY

I flushed it down the toilet.

SIMON (Aghast)

That's lovely. Bloody marvellous!
Any other tricks up your sleeve?!

TIMMOTHY

I memorised the front portion of the address first.

(Simon is fuming. Timmothy has poured Scotch. He raises his glass)

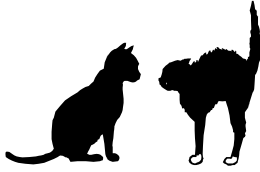
To Knowledge.

(Simon is on the boil: motionless)

END ACT ONE

ACT II

Scene One



The action is continuous. Timmothy holding his glass up in the toast. Simon gives it a moment then lashes out at the game in a fury, scattering pieces all over the floor.

SIMON

I'll give you Knowledge you twisted old bastard!

(The pieces scatter everywhere and he storms over to the Scotch, pouring a drink and lighting a cigarette with a **small** cough.

Timothy calmly begins to gather up the pieces)

You're in the big league now mate! This isn't one of your fantasy war games.

(The more calm Timmothy shows, the more rage Simon feels)

You tell me the **front** part of the address and I'll make sure you're looked after.

(Still no response from Timmothy)_

Look Timmothy We're grown men. Surely we can handle this little, ah

TIMMOTHY

Impasse?

SIMON

Impasse.

(Timmothy calmly looks up)

TIMMOTHY

Half.

SIMON

I've slogged my way around the stinking bloody Pacific for five years and you expect me to give you half?!

(Timmothy continues to gather the pieces, place them in a box and put them away; replacing the paper bin BY HIS DESK)

TIMMOTHY

Simon. The information you require to find the vase..... is in here. (His head) Half.

SIMON

The address simply marks the spot!

What if it's..... a warehouse..... or an office block?

TIMMOTHY

We can look for it together.

(Simon almost drowns in his Scotch. He gives it a moment, watching Timmothy merrily dither about)

SIMON

Agh, you're a bloody thief! (PAUSE)

Alright!..... It's a deal..... Now what was on the **front** of the dust jacket.

TIMMOTHY (PAUSE)

13, Glen Street.

SIMON (PAUSE)

13, Glen Street

TIMMOTHY (PAUSE)

Gordon in Perth.

(Simon offers his hand; Timmothy getting quite a thrill)

SIMON

Put her there 'pardner'.

(All mutual smiles and mateship; perhaps the paranoia under the surface that the other may have lied but too early to jump to conclusions. They drink)

TIMMOTHY

Partners..... Ah, yes.

SIMON (PAUSE)

Terrific eh?

TIMMOTHY (PAUSE)

Together it is then.

SIMON

Together it is.

(A pause; both relishing their own dream)

TIMMOTHY

I hear it's a nice city, Perth.

SIMON

Yes. Yes it is. Lots of culture.

(Pause)

TIMMOTHY

How much do you think we'll get for it?

SIMON

About twenty years.....
Nah. About half a million.

TIMMOTHY

Half a million?!

SIMON

All we do is fly to Hong Kong; place the right ad in the paper; then the contracts'll come running, believe me. (PAUSE)
After we've found it of course.

(Simon has a drink and gazes about, his eyes settling on the shelf of bric-a-brac, where two vases sit; perhaps just dreaming of the real vase; perhaps not: obscure. Timmothy joins the direction of his gaze; quite openly; quite uncomplicated: dreaming also)

TIMMOTHY

Five hundred thousand dollars.

SIMON

A bit less probably. It's not a good business really. Expenses are higher than you think. Air tickets; hotels.....Customs (paying them off)
And of course women. Amateur or professional they cost the same....
And a man's got to dress well.

(Simon empties the bottle exaggerating the fact)

TIMMOTHY (Dreaming of it all)

Partners.

SIMON (Re the empty bottle.

Alas, poor Yorick. I knew him well..... Shakespeare.

(Timmothy rises and crosses to the bookshelf)

TIMMOTHY (Re the quote)

Shakespeare....Well.

SIMON

Classic Comics.

TIMMOTHY

Have you heard of Dylan Thomas?

SIMON (Trying to place the name; perhaps at the track)

Thomas. Thomas. No. Can't say I have.

(Timmothy pulls out a book and then a bottle of Scotch behind)

TIMMOTHY

If you had heard of him, you'd know why I store this..... behind his collected works.

SIMON

Liked a drink, did he.

TIMMOTHY

It killed him.

SIMON

Them's the breaks.

TIMMOTHY

At thirty nine.

SIMON

Shit.

(Simon pours himself a Scotch anyway; Timmothy prepares to read from the book; Simon taking some time to get into the swing of things)

TIMMOTHY

"I would like to have the men of Heaven
In my own home
With vats of good cheer
Laid out before them.
I would like them to be cheerful
In their drinking.
I would like to have Jesus too
Here amongst them.
I would like to have a great lake of beer
For the King of Kings
I'd love to be watching the family of Heaven
Drinking it through eternity."

(Simon turns; quite affected)

SIMON

Well, what do you know..... That's..... That's nice.
The other poem (you recite). Is that one of his too?

TIMMOTHY

No. It's mine.....I wrote it a long time ago.

(A cherished thought)

T S Elliot and his cats. (The influence) (PAUSE)
I too steal a bit. In my own way.
A little here. A little there.
A leech on the words of others.

SIMON

You're a funny old bugger Mister Timmony.

(The **sincerity** of this encourages Timmothy to go on)

TIMMOTHY

When I arrived here as a lad; my only intention was to write.(PAUSE)

All I had with me was a sack of father's books.....The remnants. (PAUSE)

So. With a sack full of books and a promise, I arrived.

Learn the language father had said. Learn it well. And then when you're ready; begin to write.

Then write more 'til you're as good as the best. (PAUSE)

Oh yes..... That morning when the ship sailed in through The Heads; with the sun pushing up from behind; painting the cliffs with gold: as gold as I've ever seen; I promised to write. To write the kind of literature my father used to love. So that he'd know and be proud. Proud of me..... the famous writer. (One lousy poem!)

(Timmothy trials off, unable to announce the obvious failure)

SIMON

I wanted to be Billy The Kid.

TIMMOTHY (A wonderful break out of it all)

Aha. At least some dreams do come true.

SIMON

Trouble is, horses give me hay-fever. (PAUSE)

I **can** feel them, you know.

TIMMOTHY

Who?

SIMON

All of them. All of them bastards (The books)

Dylan, Shakespeare.....The whole gang. (PAUSE)

It must be nice to have friends like them.

TIMMOTHY

Sometimes. But friends can have apower.

I am unable to write for comparing myself to them.....

So instead. I invent childish games. I create great battles on vast, distant continents.....

Yet I am not....'game'to step outside this place.

SIMON

Nose to the window of the lolly shop eh?

(Timmothy queries)

Every now and then they'd let us go into town. I'd stand with my nose pressed up against the window of the lolly shop: and not have a penny to buy with. Yeh. That was me. All angry and hurting and saying, smash the bloody thing.

TIMMOTHY

Smash the bloody thing. Yes.
That's what I should do.
'Smash the bloody thing.'

SIMON

Put your foot right through it!

TIMMOTHY

And take what you want!

SIMON

And take what you want! That's what I aim to do with Lady.

TIMMOTHY

Lady?

SIMON

The thing. The vase. They call it Lady.

TIMMOTHY (He now knows what Lady is)

'Lady.' Oh, that's beautiful.
The Lady of the Sung dynasty.

(A police siren passes by in the far distant streets)

SIMON

The boys are busy tonight.

(Simon has wandered to the window. Timmothy watches for a moment)

TIMMOTHY

What are we going to do with Mr Jackson!

SIMON

Mm? Oh. Shit.
Ah. Let me see. He came in, right. Ah. He was looking for a book.

TIMMOTHY

It's a bookshop.

SIMON (acting it out)

Yeh. Right. He was looking for a book..... But finding you alone.....'the simple old bookshop proprietor'.....He decides to rob you.

TIMMOTHY

I don't carry very much cash.

SIMON

He didn't know that.

TIMMOTHY

Yes. You're right. Sorry.

SIMON

You, ah..... told him you didn't carry very much cash. He didn't believe you.....so he pulled out a gun....you grappled with him....and he shot himself. Happens every day.

TIMMOTHY

But how did **you** happen to be here.

SIMON

Mmm? Well, ah....No. How it went was.....he was standing over you; I came in to buy a book.....and....ah.....leapt on him.... And the gun went off. No, no, I don't like that. I came in just after it all happened.

TIMMOTHY

Why aren't you wearing your clothes?

SIMON

Because some geriatric dick-head chucked them out the window!

TIMMOTHY

And won't they know there've been three shots fired?

SIMON

Who are you? Sherlock-bloody-holmes?!

TIMMOTHY

Well, what are we going to do, Simon?

SIMON

'What are we going to do, Simon?' I don't know!
You want to be a writer. Think of a plot!

TIMMOTHY

Perhaps we should move him.

SIMON

Stick to reading mate. I'm not going anywhere near him.

TIMMOTHY

I know. We could throw him out the window.

SIMON

Oh yeah. Great. They wouldn't think of us at all. That's stamping 'guilty' right across our foreheads.

TIMMOTHY

They might think he was shot somewhere else and staggered to that spot.

SIMON

Of course. Silly me.

With just enough energy to drag himself up three flights of stairs and hurl himself out the window!

Jesus, for a man with your education!

TIMMOTHY

Well, there aren't many books on how to get rid of a corpse!

(Simon slumps into a chair with frustrated fury)

SIMON

Agh shit!

(A pause. Timothy takes the moment to manoeuvre on)

TIMMOTHY

Simon. I think there's something you should know. (PAUSE)

I didn't quite tell you the truth about the front part of the address.

SIMON

You what.

TIMMOTHY

I was concerned you might.....outflank me.....I'm sorry.

SIMON (PAUSE)

Well it's just as well I did then, isn't it.

TIMMOTHY

Simon. You didn't.

SIMON

You deceitful old bugger. I trusted you!

TIMMOTHY

Well, I didn't trust you and it goes to show my judgement was correct!

SIMON

I'm disgusted! Absolutely disgusted!

I mean, it's my business to lie and cheat. That's what I've been trained for! You're a decent citizen; you're not allowed to!

TIMMOTHY

You were going to take it all for yourself, weren't you.

SIMON

Of course not. I just wanted to make sure. Five years mate. I'm not going to let it slip now!

TIMMOTHY

So we're back where we started.

SIMON

Yes! (PAUSE)

Now. What was the number and the street.

TIMMOTHY

We go together?

SIMON

Like two peas in a pod.....Agreed?

TIMMOTHY

Agreed.

SIMON

Right. Now to show you my trust, I'll tell you my part first.....
Annandale, in Sydney. I mean, it makes sense, doesn't it.
It's just a spit away.

TIMMOTHY (PAUSE)

The street number was not 13. It was 98.

SIMON

98, Green Street.

TIMMOTHY

Johnston Street.

SIMON

Johnston Street.

TIMMOTHY (PAUSE)

Annandale.

SIMON

Annandale.

(The old flavour is back. Rejoicing at finally having the correct address, but still
with some doubt)

Right! That feels better doesn't it. Cleared the air. After all, I've grown to quite like you.

TIMMOTHY

And I you, Simon.

SIMON

We don't need to lie to each other.

TIMMOTHY

Not any more.

SIMON

Good. Because I am starting to get pissed.

TIMMOTHY (Reaching for the bottle)

Dylan wouldn't have stopped.

SIMON

That's right.
To Dylan.

(They settle; slow, reflective, moody. Simon gazes into his Scotch and slowly rumbles into 'The Wiffenpoof Song': half spoken; passionately close to him, especially when he hears himself singing the words 'doomed' and 'eternity: then he trips to a fatalistic halt)

"We are poor little lambs
Who have lost our way
Baa, Baa, Baa.
We are little black sheep
Who have gone astray
Baa, Baa, Baa.

Gentlemen songsters out on a spree
Doomed from here to eternity
Lord have mercy on such as we.....

Baa. Baa. Baa."

(Simon settles back into his Scotch; Timmothy observing. PAUSE)

TIMMOTHY

You like love?

SIMON

Yep.

TIMMOTHY

Anyone special?

SIMON

You mean besides the wife and the four kids?.....
Agh. Free as a bird. Playing the field.

TIMMOTHY

You.....'Play the field'?

SIMON

There's nothing wrong with that. I'm a bachelor. It's quite legal.

TIMMOTHY

And you go to brothels.

SIMON

All the time.

(PAUSE)

TIMMOTHY

Why.

SIMON

(He has to think about it. Then quite innocently offers the only answer)

For a fuck. (Then defensively)

I'm in the prime of my life mate. Sometimes you don't have a woman around.

I mean I'm not the most secure proposition in the world, am I.

TIMMOTHY

Would you like to get married.

SIMON

Hold your bolting brumbies! What is this? Agony column?

TIMMOTHY

I'm sorry. I thought you wanted to talk about it.

SIMON

Well I don't.

(Simon has closed things off. He struggles back to communication)

Is there....Was there.....a Mrs Jimminy?

TIMMOTHY

Almost.

SIMON

You're not gay are ya?

TIMMOTHY

If I was? (Does it matter)

SIMON

Oh, no, that's all I fuck'n need, isn't it.

TIMMOTHY

Are you?

SIMON

I'm as gay as a bloody funeral.

(Another distant pause settles, but they are on Scotch and Simon can't help himself. He looks at Timmothy for a long time before going on: quiet; factually reflective)

I haven't been able to get it up lately.

TIMMOTHY

Oh.

SIMON

Yeh. Bit of a worry actually. Never happened before. Always had me old mate there on a lonely night.....It's sort of like he's got the shits about something.

TIMMOTHY

Don't worry. One day you'll wake up and receive a pleasant surprise.

SIMON

Yeh? That's a relief. (PAUSE)
There's been a lot of strain chasing Lady of course.

TIMMOTHY

Too much pressure at the office.

(Simon hardly hears, lighting a cigarette, then coughing hoarsely)

SIMON

That's a bad cough I've got in that lung.....
Do you know what I'm going to do when I....We sell Lady?
Buy a square rigger and sail around the world. Ah, you'd love 'em.
All timber; just like the old sailing boats. You get on one of those and you feel totally part of nature.....They sort of talk to you..... when they trust you. Every creak and moan meaning something.

Got my eye on one in New Guinea. Plantation bloke owns it....
Yeh. Me, the square rigger and the ocean.....**That's** the dream.

(Timmothy struggles from approaching slumber)

TIMMOTHY

What are we going to do with Mr Jackson.
(Unseen by Simon, Timmothy snuggles back to sleep)

SIMON

I'm going to miss him, you know. A pair of idiots we were.
Totally incompetent when you come to think about it.
Always been my strongest point; 'total incompetence'.
Opens up all sorts of avenues.
See? Lack of Knowledge. Worth a fortune.

(Towards the very end of this, Simon has turned to Timmothy only to find he is asleep and has missed his moment of sharing. A shrug and a bit of a grin at the sleeping old man. He raises a quiet toast)

SIMON

'Night me old mate.

BLACKOUT

END OF SCENE ONE

ACT II

Scene two

The blackout between scenes serves the purpose of night having passed. Light through the window depicts early morning. Both men have moved position from where they fell asleep at the end of the previous scene (At central table). Timmothy is now asleep at his desk, arms folded over The Napoleonic Wars; Simon on the floor, one shoe as a pillow.

Gradually Simon stirs, with quite a hangover; neck stiff etc: a tragic, comic sight. He orientates himself and staggers to the window, opening it up, taking a deep breath and breaking into a hoarse cough. He looks back out the window, sees his clothes are gone and curses: Timmothy fast asleep. He stirs when Simon goes to him, fumbling through his pockets in search of his fob watch.

TIMMOTHY

Eh? Ugh. No. No, Simon. No.

SIMON

Alright. Don't fall off your perch.

TIMMOTHY

What are you doing?

SIMON

What's the time?

TIMMOTHY (pulling out his fob-watch)

Eh? Oh. Just after seven.

SIMON

Someone's nicked my clothes, you know.

TIMMOTHY

Mm? Right. Good.

(Timmothy snuggles back to sleep. Simon shakes his head, then lights a cigarette, coughing once more. He sees the Scotch bottle fetches it and drops it into the metal paper bin. The noise wakes Timmothy again)

TIMMOTHY

Do you mind?

SIMON

Sorry Rip. (Van Winkle)

(Simon settles somewhere, engrossed in his hangover. Timmothy goes to the window, quite sprightly, barring **a twinge in his back**)

TIMMOTHY

Ooh What a beautiful day. You can almost see Annandale from here.
Oh I love winter mornings. We used to ski to school sometimes, you know.

SIMON

Yeh, yeh, yeh. You told me.

(Timmothy sees the coffee which has been on the warmer all night, trotting to it)

TIMMOTHY

Ah. Coffee. There's a lovely pastry shop in Macleay Street. I buy my croissants there. The best I've been able to find in Sydney.
I'd love some now. Lots of butter.

SIMON

I'd like my stomach pumped.

(Timmothy prepares coffee, whistling away. Simon watches for a while)

You've got no right, you know.

TIMMOTHY

What's that, Simon

SIMON

You've got no right to be so..... so chirpy.

TIMMOTHY (Handing Simon a coffee)

Oh, I'm sorry.
I really did enjoy our drink last night.

SIMON

I haven't had this much fun since I broke my back.

TIMMOTHY

It is exciting though, isn't it. I mean, you and me and 'Lady'.
When do you think we'll go to Hong Kong.

(The last thing Simon wants is a discussion, especially about things he can't quite remember, particularly exaggeration when drunk)

SIMON

Step at a time mate. We've got to find Lady first.

TIMMOTHY

Oh, we will. We will.

(Simon has to dampen the enthusiasm)

SIMON (Moving away)

Besides, I don't know whether the two of us should go.
It's silly for you to put yourself at an unnecessary risk.

TIMMOTHY (Following)

I could meet you there.

SIMON

Yes. Yes, I suppose so..... but it would be a lot safer for you if you just opened an account in
.....Switzerland. I could forward the money to you there.

TIMMOTHY

You **would** send it to me, wouldn't you Simon.

SIMON

Timmothy. After all we've been through?

TIMMOTHY

Yes. Yes.
The shop window. (We'll kick it in)

(PAUSE)

Simon. Do you think we could work together.

SIMON (This wakes him from his hangover)

What. You and me on the circuit?!

TIMMOTHY

Well, with your energy and experience andand gift of the gab.
And me with my.....ah.....

SIMON

Brains?

TIMMOTHY

Not so much brains. But perhaps logical approach.....a different approach.
And people trust me, Simon. Look at me. You trusted me.
I could be the perfect foil.

SIMON

At your age? You want to start playing my game?
Do you want to spend your last years in a room eight by eight?

TIMMOTHY

I've spent thirty one years in **this** room.

SIMON (PAUSE)

No. No to be quite honest mate, I couldn't let you.

TIMMOTHY

Why not?

SIMON

Because.....Because.....I don't want you to!!

TIMMOTHY (Pushing through)

Simon. I want to use my senses again. Live 'life'. Like you.

Last night was superb. The two of us, matching wits. Imagine if we joined forces; worked together....

And I could write about it. Oh, the books I could write.

SIMON (Now very cornered; with his emotions)

You can do that here!

TIMMOTHY

No, I can't!

Don't you understand? That's what you've done. For the first time I have a Tomorrow! I don't feel as if I **have** to write. I want to write.

It's like there's another person inside. Rolling and twisting and steaming.

Pumping passion through my veins.

SIMON

Could be heartburn.

TIMMOTHY

We'd be walking across the pages of a novel as it was being written.

(Timothy has at last tapped into Simon's ego)

SIMON (PAUSE)

And I'd sort of be the star, eh?

TIMMOTHY

Yes!!.....Well?

SIMON

Oh, I don't know.....

TIMMOTHY

Simon. You know Asia. But I know Europe.

SIMON

You haven't been there since you were a kid.

TIMMOTHY

But I know it. It's in my blood. I know it.

The two of us....A partnership!

SIMON (PAUSE: A thought: a possibility)

We could work from the boat.

TIMMOTHY

Yes! We'd be like a couple of Tramp Steamers.

SIMON (Loving the parallel)

Yeh. Yeh. Very well put Timmothy.

Choofing around the world. In and out of any port we want.

TIMMOTHY

Do you think it could work?

SIMON (Now in a real spot: the old and new)

I don't know. I'd need to think about it....

I'm not very good at sharing.

(Timmothy waits, still with hope. Simon breaks away; confused but feeling some connection; the first real sign of a possible future together. He heads towards the desk and behind; enthusiasm growing).

Oh you'd love the Pacific. Hate it too. That's what it's like.

(He stops, looking down at his feet. He bends and slowly stands, holding the phone cord that Timmothy disconnected right at the start of the play. Timmothy takes on a totally surprised attitude, having in fact forgotten entirely about the cord)

TIMMOTHY

My goodness.

SIMON

Yeh.

TIMMOTHY

I wonder.....Of course. In the struggle with Mr Jackson

SIMON

Sort of like the carnation, eh?

TIMMOTHY

What are you saying, Simon.

SIMON

I'm saying the only struggle here, is to keep up with you!

(We hear a car pull up in the alley below the window, and two doors open and close)

TIMMOTHY

Don't be ridiculous.....

(He stops in mid-sentence, looking towards the open window. Simon rushes to it expectantly, then ducks to the side)

SIMON

Shit!

TIMMOTHY

What is it?

SIMON (Easing the window closed)

There's a police car down there.

(Timmothy trots to the window, peering down; Simon thinking)

SIMON

Stan. They're after Stan.

TIMMOTHY

Perhaps they've just stopped for a cigarette.

(Simon pulls him away from the window)

SIMON

Get away from there!! (PAUSE) They've traced Stan to here, but how?.....
The phone.....

(He stalks Timmothy; they back away from the window)

You rang the cops while I was asleep.

TIMMOTHY

No Simon.

SIMON

What have you been up to you conniving old bugger. Get rid of the body and the guy in the knickers in the one move?!

TIMMOTHY

Don't forget you're the thief!

SIMON

And who wanted to be the new recruit?.....Besides I'm not a thief, I'm..... an entrepreneur.

TIMMOTHY

Oh yes. Jail record; smuggling. What else? Murder?

SIMON

Pretty blood soon if you don't shut up.

(He goes to the window)

Shit, I can't see them.

They're probably coming in the front door.

TIMMOTHY

It's locked.

SIMON

They're police, not boy scouts!

(A thought stops him before he reaches the door)

Oh, Jesus. That real estate deal on Dunk Island.....The resort at the bottom of Lake Peddar.....Now a body. I can't afford this.

TIMMOTHY

Perhaps we should tell them he's dead before they discover him.

SIMON

Good one Jimminy. We can also tell them that that gun, with our finger prints all over it, was the one he shot himself with.

TIMMOTHY

We should give ourselves up. It would sound better in court.

SIMON

For the first time in my life I'm not guilty, and I'm giving myself up?
Not on your sweet pussy?

TIMMOTHY

They might understand.

SIMON

Understand? Here am I, running around like the local flasher. While any ID I have is walking around on some well-read tramp by now!

TIMMOTHY

Oh dear.

SIMON

Oh dear, he says. And we've got a stiff in there!

(Timmothy is at the window, looking out; Simon having a listen at the door. He backs off, starting to walk in circles)

Jesus. It's on rare occasions like this I wish I was Stan. A genius with locks, he was. Could get in and out of anything.

TIMMOTHY

Why don't we put him in the corridor toilet.

SIMON

That's a stupid bloody idea!

TIMMOTHY

I have a key. We could lock it. He mightn't be discovered for days.

(Simon gives it a moment's thought, then heads for the door)

SIMON

Right. Grab Stan.

TIMMOTHY

I couldn't.....(My back)

SIMON

Well I'm not going to touch a bloody corpse!

TIMMOTHY

I would not be able to lift him!

SIMON

Oh, Jesus.
Get the door.

(He signals to the door, then runs into the storeroom. Timmothy heads for the door, rattling the handle. Simon storms from the storeroom)

He's not there!

TIMMOTHY

The door's locked!

SIMON

What do you mean, the door's locked!?

TIMMOTHY

What do you mean, he's not there?!

(Simon runs to the door, as Timmothy runs into the storeroom. As Simon rattles the door knob, Timmothy exits)

Where could he have gone?

SIMON

Where would you go if you were dead! Out for a snack?!
Where'd you put the key!

TIMMOTHY

You had it. (When he was going to leave at end Act One)

(Simon fumbles through the coat pockets then remembers)

SIMON

The desk!

(Timmothy runs over and they both look for it)

It's gone. (PAUSE)

Just how...dead....was he.

TIMMOTHY

Dead, dead.

SIMON

Did you feel his pulse?

TIMMOTHY

Well, no.....I.....I didn't think.

Did he look dead to you?

SIMON

I didn't go in there! (TIMMOTHY NODS IN AGREEMENT)

You didn't even kill him. Can't you do anything right?!

TIMMOTHY

He must have locked us in.

SIMON

If you say the obvious once more, I'm going to jump out that window and save everyone a lot of trouble.

Now. When exactly did you and Stan have your little.....altercation?

TIMMOTHY

Not long before you arrived.

SIMON (Laying it out clearly as he works it out)

Right. So he comes to..... from whatever 'nasty wound' you inflicted.....

Hears my voice; and settles in for the night! (PAUSE)

Once he hears the address, he waits for us to drink ourselves to sleep; pinches the key to lock us in. And strolls out!

TIMMOTHY

But the door downstairs is locked!

SIMON

Agh, pinch of piss for Stan. He could get out of a coffin!

TIMMOTHY

It'd be open then.

(Simon grabs the door knob and rattles it furiously)

SIMON

Well that's not much bloody use now, is it!

(At that moment, through the window, we hear two car doors close. Simon takes a moment to realise he now wants the police. He sprints for the window as we hear the car drive off; he opening it and leaning out desperately)

Hey! Oh! Hey, come back here and let us out! Hey!

(They have gone. He turns back in)

What sort of police force have we got protecting us out there!

(He slumps back into the room)

They didn't want anything. Nothing!

TIMMOTHY

I said (They had only stopped for a cigarette)

SIMON

I know what you said! (PAUSE)

Terrific. Bloody wonderful! Here am I, stuck in here; and Stan's out running all the way to Annandale.....

(He stops; the tiniest of chuckles; at realising that Stan has gone to the wrong address. Timmothy observes and can't resist a chuckle himself)

TIMMOTHY

It's a lovely trip to Annandale.

(Simon quite clearly sees that Timmothy lied also)

SIMON

You lying old bastard.

(Timmothy nods his head)

TIMMOTHY

I wonder if there is a 98 Johnston Street..... In Annandale.

(They both roll into laughter)

SIMON

Ah, you're good Timmothy. Bloody good.

TIMMOTHY

And you, Simon

SIMON

Stan's going to be in one hell of a stew when he gets out there.

(Timmothy is laughing merrily away. Simon stops)

Hold on. Timmothy.....Me old mate.....buddy.....pal.

It comes to mind that we still have one small problem to sort out.

TIMMOTHY

No we don't.

(Timmothy goes to one of the vases on the shelf of bric-a-brac. Simon watching every move. Timmothy turns, holding the vase with great care)

SIMON

No.

TIMMOTHY

Yes.

SIMON

No.

(Timmothy presents the vase to Simon)

TIMMOTHY

Simon. This is Lady. Lady, meet Simon.

(He hands it to him, Simon taking it as if holding a baby for the first time)

SIMON (Quietly awe-struck)

That's fuck'n amazing.

TIMMOTHY

So how do you feel?

SIMON

Fuck'n amazed.

TIMMOTHY

Isn't she beautiful?

SIMON

I.....Yes.....Yes, she is.

TIMMOTHY

You perhaps expected something.....bigger?

SIMON

I suppose so.....I don't know.

TIMMOTHY

If you're a thousand years old, you don't have to be big.

(Simon comes back to reality a little, hiding any suspicion absolutely)

SIMON

But how? (Did she get here)

TIMMOTHY

She was in the carton of books.

SIMON

What.

TIMMOTHY

The poor man in Bangkok; must have had her all the time.

SIMON (PAUSE)

Five years? And the address was just a red....fish?

TIMMOTHY

Herring.

SIMON

Herring.

(Now a little more suspicious but still totally covering)

SIMON

It's been here all the time? You knew all along?

TIMMOTHY

Not the faintest idea. Of course when I first saw her I fell in love instantly. A feeling, I suppose.

Then your phone call. Then Stan; then you: both in a panic. The book, the Sung dynasty; Lady.....All the pieces started falling into place. I just had to find out.

SIMON (PAUSE)

You played with the address like it was a.....**game**?

TIMMOTHY (The mad professor)

Yes. Fun, wasn't it!!

SIMON (PAUSE)

You've got kangaroos in the top paddock.

(Simon's attention is once again totally focused on the vase. He circles with it, the full reality of what he has happened

SIMON

I've got her. Five bloody years and I won. Me!
Oh. Lady. You and me and the world. I'm going to be rich.
Stinking, filthy bloody rich.

(Through this Timmothy has saddened at hearing Simon's singular approach to the outcome)

TIMMOTHY

You would never have found Lady without me, Simon.

(Simon doesn't respond)

Do you think we **could** travel together?

SIMON (With little intent)

Yeh. Sure.... Well, not all the time.

TIMMOTHY (Still trying to reconnect)

There are parts of Europe which would simply fascinate you.
And the possibilities. The possibilities, Simon, for a partnership like ours.

(Simon stops, holding his hand up to Timmothy and looking towards the door)

SIMON

Shhh! Quiet!

TIMMOTHY

What's the matter?

SIMON

I heard something.

TIMMOTHY (Moving towards the door)

Ah.....It's Wladyslaw. Breakfast time.
Sorry old man. We're locked in.

(Simon puts down the vase and heaves Timmothy away from the door)

SIMON

Shut up, will you!

(He edges to the door and listens)

There's somebody out there.

(He grabs a ladder or chair and climbs up, looking through the transom window; ducking out of sight)

Shit. It's Stan. He's been out to Annandale. He's seen there's nothing there.

(NOTE: Whether Stan has been to Annandale or not, Timmothy knows that he is definitely out there somewhere and that he can be very violent)

TIMMOTHY

Surely he'll be reasonable.

SIMON (All the time aware of the corridor)

Look. Stan has been after Lady for as long as me. He's not going to stop now. You saw his temper. He can kill; do you understand?
The bloke in Bangkok!

(Talking through the door)

Stan? Just take it easy, huh? I know you think the old man lied to you.....

TIMMOTHY

No. No, Simon, I didn't.

(Simon sneaks a look out the transom and down the corridor)

SIMON

He's gone down the end of the corridor. Come and have a look.

(Timmothy starts to climb up and is stopped suddenly)

Shit! He's got a gun.

(Simon shows real fear)

We're gone, Timmothy.

(Timmothy grabs the vase from the table and presents it to Simon)

TIMMOTHY

Give her to him.

SIMON

You don't mind?

TIMMOTHY

We have to!

SIMON

You don't mind at all? Just like that?

TIMMOTHY

He'll kill us!

Go on! Give her to him.

(Simon thinks long and hard, always aware of outside. Suddenly he jumps down and grabs the other vase that's been on the shelf all along)

TIMMOTHY

What are you doing?

SIMON

He's never seen the real one. He only knows it's a vase.
We'll give him this one.

(He bursts past the floundering Timothy and up to the transom.
He edges open the transom and starts to hand the vase through.

TIMMOTHY

No, Simon. No!!

(Simon closes the transom and slowly turns)

SIMON

"No, Simon. No"?

TIMMOTHY (An absolute mess)

Yes. That's her. Lady.

(Simon makes a slight turn back to the transom)

She's been lost for a thousand years, Simon. A Thousand years. Feel her. She's warm.

SIMON

Probably wants a piss by now.

TIMMOTHY

Give him this one. Please!

(Simon takes all the time in the world)

SIMON (Quiet, matter of fact)

He's not out there.

(Timothy collapses in a heap in one of the chairs)

TIMMOTHY

Oh fuck.

(Simon is still on the ladder (or chair): victorious: the vase held high: ropable;
perhaps hurt)

SIMON

"Partnership", he says.
I'd have to have eyes in the back of my bloody head!

(Simon climbs down, holding the vase with great care.
He stalks around Timothy: a quiet, cold venom)

SIMON

You get nothin' now Timmothy. No dream. Nothin'.

(Timmothy looks up at him, then quietly walks to the door, taking a key from his pocket and unlocking it. Simon just can't believe it)

You locked the door. (PAUSE)

Stan wasn't even in there all night?!

TIMMOTHY

After the struggle, he noted down the front of the address.....and left.

SIMON

He wasn't even in there all fucking night?!!!

TIMMOTHY (A test)

Go on. Go.

You have Lady. Take her.

Let her rot in some millionaire's safe for another century or so. (PAUSE)

Call that 'Victory' if you wish.

(Simon walks to him and stands: mixed, confused emotions: rage, yet the reality that this is the end)

SIMON

Yeh. Yeh, I'll go.

I'm gonna kick in the window.

You can stay and rot in your bloody bird's nest as far as I'm concerned..... mate!

(Timmothy waits, eyes unflinching; Simon positively torn between staying and going. He eventually exits, Timmothy waiting for his inevitable return re the downstairs door. Simon does return after a few paces: Timmothy speaking calmly and succinctly)

TIMMOTHY

The door downstairs is open.

Mr Heinz locks it at 5.30 each evening: and unlocks it at 7.30 each morning.....Vandals. (The explanation)

(Simon shakes his head in disbelief: at Timmothy's skill: at the entire night. He takes a step and stops: a long moment: the personal connection: hard to leave)

SIMON

I'll see you then.

(Timmothy nods: the same mood as Simon: close. One more nod and Simon exits. Timmothy listens to his footsteps for a while, then closes the door. He stands, looking around the room; what he is left with; his life. He then looks down at the remaining vase, giving it a moment, then picking it up gently and taking it back to the shelf. He looks around again, then tidies up one or two things, seeing the carnation, picking it up and taking it to the paper bin and dropping it in. He goes to his desk, pauses, then picks up the figurine that Simon almost threw out the window in the first act. He holds it with great care and love. The door bursts open and he spins around. Simon stands, still with the other vase; a broad, cheeky, roguish grin)

SIMON

“Beware the Obvious” he says

(Timmothy smiles enigmatically)

BLACKOUT

END PLAY

