EXTRACT

THE PRINCE

OF

BRUNSWICK EAST

a play
by
Alex Broun

"Sometime family doesn't always stay between the white lines"

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THE PRINCE OF BRUNSWICK EAST
was Runner Up in the 2005 Rodney Seaborn Playwright's Award.

Characters

STAN WILLIAMS (45 in 1965)

RYAN WILLIAMS, his son (25 in 1965)

LANE WILLIAMS, Ryan's son, (25 in 2005)

Setting

Two seats in a covered grand stand at an Australian Football ground in Brunswick East, Melbourne, Australia.

Time

1960 - 2005

ACT 1

SCENE ONE. 1965 – BULLDOGS VS RICHMOND

SCENE TWO. 1965 – BULLDOGS VS CARLTON, TWO WEEKS LATER.

SCENE THREE. 1968 - BULLDOGS vs DANDENONG DEVILS

ACT 2

SCENE ONE. 1978 - BULLDOGS VS GEELONG

SCENE TWO. 1981 – BULLDOGS VICTORY PARADE.

SCENE THREE. 2001 - BRUNSWICK DEVILS VS SYDNEY SWANS

ACT 1

SCENE ONE. 1965 – BULLDOGS VS RICHMOND

STAN and RYAN enter, STAN carrying a bag. STAN is dressed in his supporters gear, beanie and scarf. RYAN is casually dressed with no supporters gear.

They come down the aisle towards two seats marked D9 and D10.

STAN: Here we are. These are ours. Park yourself down.

RYAN GOES TO SIT.

STAN: Not there. The other one. Nine is my lucky number.

RYAN SITS IN THE OTHER SEAT.

STAN: Asked for the one on the aisle as well – more convenient for trips to the canteen and the gents - so this one was a winner on two fronts. On the aisle and number nine. (HE SITS.) Now just let me get set up.

STAN OPENS UP THE BAG AND STARTS TO REMOVE THERMOS, TUPPERWARE CONTAINERS, CHICKEN LEGS WRAPPED IN FOIL, PLASTIC CUPS ETC.

RYAN: All stocked up.

STAN: Your mother is a wonderful woman.

HE PULLS A CLARET AND ROYAL BLUE BLANKET FROM THE BOTTOM OF THE BAG AND SPREADS IT OVER THEIR LEGS.

RYAN: (REFERRING TO BLANKET) I'm alright.

STAN: You'll be feeling it later.

RYAN RELUCTANTLY ACCEPTS THE BLANKET OVER HIS LEGS.

STAN: How about a coffee?

RYAN NODS.

STAN: Hold that.

STAN PUTS A PLASTIC MUG IN RYAN'S HAND. HE OPENS THE THERMOS AND POURS SOME COFFEE INTO THE MUG. HE PUTS DOWN THE THERMOS.

STAN: Milk?

RYAN NODS. STAN TAKES OUT A TINY TUPPERWARE CONTAINER OF MILK AND POURS IT INTO THE MUG.

STAN: Sugar?

RYAN NODS. STAN TAKES OUT AN EVEN TINIER TUPPERWARE CONTAINER OF SUGAR.

RYAN: Like I said - all stocked up.

STAN: You want it or not?

RYAN NODS. STAN PUTS TWO SPOONFULS OF SUGAR IN RYAN'S COFFEE.

STAN: And last but no means least.

RYAN: What now?

STAN PRODUCES A SILVER HIPFLASK FROM HIS COAT POCKET.

STAN: Snakebite cure.

RYAN: Bit early for that ain't it?

STAN: Never too early for snakebite cure.

RYAN NODS. STAN POURS SOME WHISKEY FROM THE HIPFLASK INTO THE MUG. RYAN TAKES A SIP.

STAN: Good?

RYAN NODS. STAN BEGINS TO MAKE HIMSELF ONE.

STAN: (REFERRING TO SEATS) So, better than wooden planks down by the fence eh? Nails stickin' up your arse. All nice and covered from the wind and rain up here.

RYAN: Guess so. So what's the story again?

STAN: What's that?

RYAN: With the seats?

STAN: Like I told you - they're ours.

RYAN: You mean you own them?

STAN: Good as.

RYAN: They let you buy seats now?

STAN: It's called a Debenture.

RYAN: What does that mean?

STAN: You rent 'em – permanently.

RYAN: Like forever?

STAN: Fifty years. Might as well be forever – for me anyways.

RYAN: So you can come and sit here – whenever you want?

STAN: Just for home games – and the finals. If we have 'em. Not for the cricket.

RYAN: What happens then?

STAN: Somebody else has 'em. We've just got 'em in winter.

RYAN: So that means they sell them twice.

STAN: They don't sell 'em at all. I told you. I don't own 'em.

RYAN: Well rent them.

STAN: I guess so.

RYAN: Crafty buggers.

STAN: Probably got 'em for half price that way. Would've had to pay double if I wanted 'em for summer as well.

RYAN: And you don't have to sit through the cricket. It's even more boring than Ariel Ping Pong. Jesus!

STAN: Eh – Lord's name. Lord's name. (BEAT) Cricket's okay.

RYAN: Not to me.

STAN: Cricket is a lot like life. Nothing happens for a very long time then suddenly everything happens all at once. And besides, cricket or no cricket - it's all for a good cause.

RYAN: What?

STAN: The club.

RYAN: How's that?

STAN: The club wanted a new grandstand see? Needed it really. Old one was pretty well falling down. And we wanted it too - the supporters. But one problem – the old spondooley. So the club offers us – the supporters – debentures in a new stand. That way they raise enough money and we get a new stand. Everyone wins. And they even had enough left over to buy a few new players – so we'll be winning out there a little more as well. Or at least that's the general idea. (TAKING OUT FOIL) Boiled egg?

RYAN: What else you got in there?

STAN: This bag is a real treasure trove. Our very own lucky grab. Who knows what your mother's crammed in. (OPENING FOIL) So?

RYAN: How's it gonna go with the snakebite cure?

STAN: Never had any problems. Peeled them as well.

RYAN NODS. STAN HANDS HIM AN EGG. STAN NOW PULLS OUT THE TINIEST TUPPERWARE CONTAINER.

STAN: Salt?

RYAN: You're having me on.

STAN: Like I said - treasure trove.

RYAN NODS. STAN SPRINKLES SOME SALT ON THE EGG.

RYAN: No pepper?

STAN: Now you're just being cheeky.

RYAN: You got everything else in there.

STAN: Next time.

STAN TAKES OUT AN EGG AND SALTS IT. THEY BOTH EAT THEIR EGGS IN SILENCE.

RYAN: So, who's playing?

STAN: Wait a mo. (REACHING INTO BAGS.) I got the Record here. We'll check out the line ups.

RYAN: Not the players. The teams.

STAN: Ah. We're playing Richmond. The Tigers.

RYAN: And who are we supporting?

STAN: If you're planning on supporting the Tigers you won't be sitting there.

RYAN: Go the Red and Blue.

STAN: Claret and Royal. You better learn to call them that if you're gonna come along every weekend.

RYAN: I never said anything about coming every weekend.

STAN: But that's why I got two seats.

RYAN: I never asked you to.

STAN: You're mother thought it would be a good idea.

RYAN: Well she should've asked me if I like the bloody game first before you go spending all that money.

STAN: Didn't cost that much. In fact your seat cost nothing. They did a special deal for life members – two seats for the price of one.

RYAN: Well why didn't you bloody well say that?

STAN: Because you didn't bloody well ask.

PAUSE. THEY COOL DOWN, SIP THEIR COFFEES.

STAN: Your mother thought it would give us a chance to you know? Talk.

RYAN: What are we meant to talk about?

STAN: I don't know. What would you like to talk about?

RYAN: Nothing.

STAN: Fine. We'll just watch the game then and not say a word. Except for yelling out the occasional "Come on the Doggies!"

RYAN: And "Ball!"

STAN: See - you do remember?

RYAN: Couldn't bloody forget. You yelled it in my ear every three seconds.

STAN: Is that why you stopped coming?

RYAN: Course not. Hasn't been that long. Five years.

STAN: More like eight.

RYAN: Just got you know? Busy.

STAN: What with?

RYAN: Uni. Demos. Simone.

STAN: I see - and now that she's not on the scene -

RYAN: What do you mean by that?

STAN: Well now you two have …

RYAN: We haven't done anything. She's just moved to Sydney.

STAN: If you say so.

RYAN: And what does that mean?

STAN: Doesn't mean anything.

RYAN: Doesn't sound like it.

STAN: Well you know – you're young. So's she. Sydney's a long way away. It'd be natural if you …

RYAN: If we what?

STAN: You know what I'm saying.

RYAN: It's not like that. Not like that at all. In fact I'm going up to see her in a couple of weeks time. Got it all planned. So you'll have a spare seat then.

STAN: But we're playing bloody Carlton. It's the local derby.

RYAN: Like I said – getting the extra seat wasn't my idea. I have to go that weekend. Big demo planned.

STAN: What is it this time?

RYAN: What else? The war.

STAN: Don't know how you can protest about something you know nothing about. I fought for this country –

RYAN: "And your mates died." I know. Does that mean I gotta fight too and my mates die?

STAN: If you have to. Protect your country.

RYAN: But I wouldn't be protecting my country. I'd be protecting South Vietnam. It's got nothing to do with us.

STAN: Bloody will if those Commies get down here.

RYAN: They're not gonna come down here.

STAN: And how do you know that?

RYAN: Because they don't like Aussie Rules. (BEAT) Dad – we're not gonna argue about this here.

STAN: Just tellin' you what I think.

RYAN: Well you've told me what you think seven hundred times and I've told you what I think seven hundred times. Last time we told each other so loud Mrs Hindmarsh from across the streets called the cops.

STAN: Bloody stupid woman.

RYAN: Probably the sound of smashing crockery.

STAN: I dropped that plate.

RYAN: Full of mash potato.

STAN: Not to mention the gravy.

RYAN: Straight on Mum's good rug. Bullseye.

STAN: Still haven't got that bloody stain out. (PAUSE) Got plenty of those bloody protests 'round here. What you wanna go all the way up to Sydney for?

RYAN: I told you. See Simone.

STAN: Well why doesn't she come down here? We can get her a seat as well.

RYAN: Because she doesn't wanna come down here. She wants to stay in Sydney.

STAN: You asked her?

RYAN NODS.

STAN: And she wouldn't come?

RYAN: Not wouldn't. She'd *prefer* me go up there and that's why I'm going to Sydney next weekend. You happy now?

STAN IS SILENT. PAUSE.

STAN: Maybe it's best …

RYAN: You gonna advise me on my love life now as well?

STAN: No but maybe it's best to …

RYAN: Well don't stop now. What is it "best to?"

STAN: You know?

RYAN: No I don't know.

STAN: (RELUCTANTLY) Let her go.

RYAN: "Let her go?" Is that what you'd do? If it was Mum?

STAN: But that's just it. Your Mum didn't move to Sydney. She wouldn't ever have left me.

RYAN: Well what about you? Would you have moved to Sydney?

STAN: Can't think why. No Footy up there.

RYAN: But if you had to – for some reason.

STAN: What reason?

RYAN: I don't know. Any reason. If you had to move up there, before you and Mum were married. Would Mum have followed you to Sydney?

STAN: Guess so.

RYAN: And would've you still married her?

STAN: Of course.

RYAN: Then why shouldn't I go to Sydney for Simone?

PAUSE.

STAN: It's only a weekend.

RYAN: Maybe.

STAN: You're not thinkin' of –

RYAN: Why not? Nothing going on down here.

STAN: But you told your Mum you were going back to Uni next year. Finish your degree.

RYAN: Well I was but …

STAN: But what?

RYAN: Things changed.

STAN: What things?

RYAN: Simone.

STAN: Son, now you listen to me. I know she means a lot to you –

RYAN: More than a lot.

STAN: And I know you can't see your away around this at the moment but you will in time. If you're meant to be together – you'll be together. If you're not – then you won't and there is not one single thing you can do about it.

RYAN: And how am I supposed to know that?

STAN: I think you already know that. In your heart

RYAN: But I love her Dad.

STAN: And in time you'll love someone else.

RYAN: No I won't.

STAN: Yes you will.

RYAN: Could you have ever loved someone else? Apart from Mum.

STAN: Well that was different.

RYAN: How was it different?

STAN: I was about to go to war. That kind of put everything into focus. You realised how much things meant to you. What was important.

RYAN: Maybe I should sign up then.

STAN: You think that would make Simone feel any different?

RYAN SHAKES HIS HEAD.