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BURNT





Stephen Davis

Addicted to writing from an early age, his first play, *A Very Black Comedy Indeed*, penned when Stephen was fifteen, was published by Queensland's Playlab Press in 1989. Since then Playlab have also published his plays *Juice* and *Blurred*.

Stephen has been commissioned by a number of Australian theatre companies and universities to write plays which have included *Drown* for Queensland Theatre Company, *Scar* for La Boite Theatre, *Turtle Island* and *Wet Dogs* for Barking Gecko Theatre Company, *Tranzitions*, *Juice* and *Blurred* for Queensland University of Technology, and *Burnt* for Central Queensland University.

His first feature film, *City Loop*, was filmed in Brisbane in 1999. His second feature, *Blurred*, which is based on his play of the same name, was filmed on the Gold Coast in 2001.

Stephen has also written for television, including the series *Pirate Islands* and *Crash Palace* and the animated TV series *Fairy Tale Police Department*, *Hoota and Snooz* and *Dog & Cat News*.

Burnt was first performed by The Central Queensland University Theatre-in-Education Company at Yeppoon State High School on 21 July 2000 with the following cast:

| | |
|------------------|-------------------|
| Simon | Daniel Murphy |
| Emily | Marion Welsh |
| Jack | Jon Wright |
| Hann | D.J. Bolton |
| Richard | Jaron Winter |
| Director | Howard Cassidy |
| Dramaturg | Reema Petrushev |
| Research | Dr Vivienne Watts |
| Design | Adrienne Wall |

Original Production Photos:

Peter Lawrence and Collette Hooper



It Tastes Like Fart

(Simon sits alone. He stares at the audience.)

SIMON: I used to light matches and put the burning match in my mouth. It didn't taste very nice. It tasted like ... sulphur or ... something like that, you know, like ... it tasted like hell. Brimstone, sulphur, you know. It tasted like fart. That's what it tasted like ... it tasted like fart. Not that I've tasted fart. I've not tasted fart. But it's what I imagined fart would taste like ... that strong, slightly sweet taste. So I put the match in my mouth and it's alight and ... and I'm momentarily scared that the match will burn the roof of my mouth ... but you see, what I do is, I close my mouth over the match. I cut out the oxygen that's in my mouth. The flame can't burn without the oxygen and the match goes out. Like ... it just goes out. I take the match out and I blow the smoke away. Just a little bit of smoke. Not much. And I feel I've conquered it. I've conquered the match. I've beaten fire. I can control it. But there's an awful taste left in my mouth ... and it stays there for too long. I have to rinse with water, just to get the taste away. That doesn't work. I have to get a mint. A strong mint. Just to get that taste away. The taste doesn't go. It's stuck there in my mouth. Around my teeth. On my tongue. It's just there. I can't forget the taste. As hard as I try, I can't forget the taste.

Buy the Matches

(Simon is running down the corridor of the school. Behind him we hear voices.)

EMILY: Simon ... come back ...

JACK: What are you doing, Simon?

HANN: Simon ... Simon ...

(Simon reaches a classroom. He opens the door and closes it behind him. Just as he does, Emily, Hann and Jack enter running after him.)

EMILY: Come out of the classroom, Simon.

(Jack tries the door.)



Burnt Student Book of Plays

BURNT

JACK: It's locked.

HANN: Simon ... open the door!

(Simon starts to barricade the door.)

SIMON: No way ... I'm not opening the door.

(Hann, Emily and Jack hear noises.)

HANN: What's he doing?

JACK: I don't know.

EMILY: What are you doing, Simon?

SIMON: What do you think I'm doing ... hear the noise ... I'm barricading myself in ...

EMILY: Come on, Simon.

SIMON: Leave me alone would you!

JACK: Come on, mate ... you don't need to do this.

SIMON: What the hell would you know? You know nothing!

JACK: But think of your future, mate.

SIMON: My future ... future is just an all-consuming VR environment. The future is just robots and overpopulation. No trees. No flowers.

HANN: Look ... Simon ... look ... this is like a hero thing. This is like a revenge thing. This is like a James Dean, Christian Slater ... *Heathers* ... you know, knock off the pretty Heather girls and blow up the school thing, right. This is like Jason with the hockey mask wreaking revenge on the society that did him over on Friday the thirteenth. Use the axe, use the piano wire type of thing, right? Am I right? Well they don't work, they're just movies. Crap but good movies, but just movies.

SIMON: Hann ... look, Hann ... this is something I have to do ... I don't need your movie bull ...

EMILY: But you could get hurt.

SIMON: It doesn't matter. I want to get hurt. I like pain. Pain is good.

EMILY: It matters to me.

SIMON: It doesn't matter, Em ... it doesn't matter. No-one cares. Empathy is just for guidance counsellors.

EMILY: It really matters to me. I don't want you to get hurt ...



SIMON: Why, 'cause you like me? You want to go out with me. You want to go out with the freak?

EMILY: Maybe, maybe yeah ...

SIMON: You don't like me, Em ... no-one likes me ...

JACK: I like you, mate.

SIMON: Thanks, Jack ...

JACK: So why don't you just come out from the classroom and we'll go get a pizza or something.

SIMON: Can't do.

JACK: Simon.

SIMON: Can't do.

He's Just Like Lee Marvin

(Jack, Hann and Emily talk in the playground.)

EMILY: We did try to stop him, we really tried to stop him, didn't we?

JACK: We tried really hard.

EMILY: But he wouldn't listen.

JACK: Nup.

HANN: Hey ... I was the only one who really tried ... I ... I ... I tried to speak to him on his level, you know.

JACK: He still didn't listen to you.

HANN: Is that all you can say?

JACK: Yeah ...

EMILY: I mean, we knew stuff was going down, but we didn't know to what extent.

JACK: I knew.

HANN: That's because you're a genius.

JACK: That's right. That's me ... Genius ...

EMILY: If only I'd seen the signs, you know. If only ... I don't know ... we could've stopped it.

HANN: We couldn't have.

EMILY: Of course we could have.

HANN: No way, Em ... we couldn't have. He was a man with a mission, like