

LAB KELPIE PRESENTS

A PRUDENT MAN



**TEACHERS'
RESOURCES**

YEARS 10 - 12



LAB KELPIE

An Australian New Writing Company

A PRUDENT MAN

Teachers' Resources

ABOUT THESE TEACHERS' RESOURCES

A Prudent Man provides rich stimulus for students studying a range of Arts and Humanities based subjects from Year 10 through to Year 12.

The Teachers' Resources are a collection of thoughts and activities by the writer/director of *A Prudent Man*, Katy Warner, designed to prompt discussion and ignite ideas back in your classroom.

If you would like to know more about how the piece can relate to your subject's specific state syllabus, or have any other questions regarding this material, please do not hesitate to get in touch with us at education@labkelpie.com

INDEX

BACKGROUND	2
About the Show	3
About the Company	4
The Creatives	5
THE THEMES	7
1. Political Speeches	8
The Forgotten People	8
2. Identity	10
Average Aussie Bloke	10
Labels	12
Australian Values	13
3. Themes and Issues	14
Fact and Fiction	14
Border Protection	15
THE PLAY	17
1. Monologue	18
2. What's in a Name?	19
3. The Antagonist	20
4. Memory	22
5. Actor/Audience Relationship	23
6. Writing	24
7. Direction and Design	25
8. Performance	26
RESOURCES	27
Further Reading	28
Reviews	29
Appendices	29



A PRUDENT MAN
BACKGROUND

A PRUDENT MAN

Teachers' Resources

ABOUT THE SHOW

A conservative politician, a leader, a man in a snappy suit, an athlete in a bad tracksuit. Meet *A Prudent Man* - an amalgamation of the right-wing politician that haunts us all.

Written and directed by Katy Warner and performed by Lyall Brooks, *A Prudent Man* takes an unapologetic look at a man in control of everything on the edge.

A darkly comic mixture of the Howards, the Abbotts, the Camerons and the Thatchers of the world, *A Prudent Man* explores what it means to be a decent human being, and what it means to be right - in more ways than one.

What makes the Cory Bernardis and Pauline Hansons of this world tick? What would happen if their world started to shift ever so slightly?

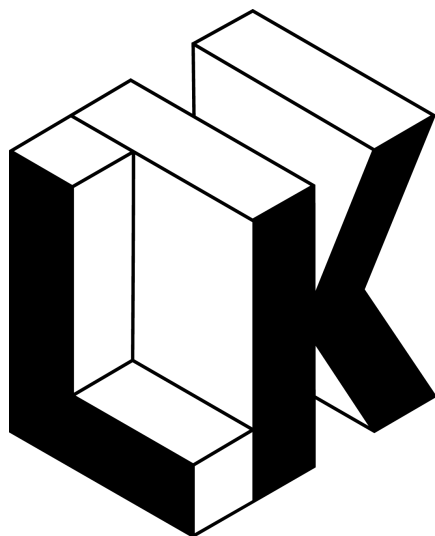
This is not a show about one politician or political event, this is a speculative piece inspired by real life events and people.



A PRUDENT MAN

Teachers' Resources

ABOUT THE COMPANY



Lab Kelpie is a theatre company dedicated to the production of new work by Australian playwrights.

They actively seek out works that engage audiences by interrogating with intelligence and vigour how relationships, power, family, love and politics function in the twenty first century.

As strong advocates of new writing, they support Australian playwrights by commissioning, developing, presenting and touring their work, encouraging their writers to take risks and inspire audiences with the themes and messages they want to explore.

Originating from the green hills of Gippsland, Victoria and now based in Melbourne, Lab Kelpie was founded in 2012 by Artistic Director Lyall Brooks and Creative Producer Adam Fawcett.

Their critically acclaimed production of *Elegy* - about the plight of LBGT refugees - was a Premier Event for the 2016 Midsumma Festival, while their production of Katy Warner's *A Prudent Man* was nominated for Best Performance and won the WA Tour Ready Award and the Bank Australia Audience Choice Award from over 400 shows at the 2016 Melbourne Fringe Festival. Both works will enjoy national tours in 2017 and 2018.

Previous works have toured to regional Victoria and interstate including Queensland and Western Australia.

Lab Kelpie acknowledges the Traditional Owners of country throughout Australia and recognises their continuing connection to the land we perform on. We pay our respects to them and their cultures; and to elders both past and present.

A PRUDENT MAN

Teachers' Resources

THE CREATIVES

KATY WARNER

Writer/Director

Katy studied at the Victorian College of the Arts, receiving a Master of Writing for Performance in 2012.

Her plays have been presented across Australia and in Edinburgh as part of Festival Fringe. Katy received an AWGIE award for Best Children's Theatre for her script, *Reasons to Stay Inside*. Her play, *nest*, recently made the long list of Theatre503's Playwriting Award (UK) and is in rehearsal for debut season in London with director Yasmeen Arden.



Plays include *A Prudent Man* (Winner: People's Choice Award and WA Touring Award and Nominated: Best Performance, Melbourne Fringe 2016), *Reasons to Stay Inside* (Winner: Best Kids Show, Melbourne Fringe 2015 and Winner: Best Children's Theatre, AWGIE 2016), *Dropped* (Highly Commended: Best Emerging Writer, Melbourne Fringe 2013) and *These are the isolate* (Winner: Best Emerging Writer, Melbourne Fringe 2010). She is writing a commission for the Old Fitz's New Voices Program (Sydney) and was selected to be a part of the Malthouse Theatre's Besen Family Artist Program (Writer Development).

Her fiction has received the Rachel Furnai Prize for Literature (Lip Magazine) and has been shortlisted for awards including the Lord Mayor's Creative Writing Prize, Overland Magazine Neilma Sidney Short Story Prize and Grace Marion Wilson Emerging Writers Prize. She is currently working on her debut novel, *Regime*, to be published by Black Inc. Books in 2017.

Her next play, *Spencer*, is being produced by Lab Kelpie for a 2017 season at Chapel off Chapel. She is a proud member of the Australian Writers' Guild.

katywarner.com

A PRUDENT MAN

Teachers' Resources

LYALL BROOKS

Actor

Prior to *A Prudent Man*, Lyall's recent professional theatre credits included *The Heretic* (Melbourne Theatre Company), *Savages* (fortyfivedownstairs), *Penelope* and *The Pride* (Red Stitch Actors Theatre), and *Fat Pig* and the premiere seasons and national tour of *SuperGirly: Return of the Pop Princess* and (Lab Kelpie).

His musical theatre credits include *Sunday In the Park with George* (Victorian Opera), *Sexercise* (Alex Theatre), *Urban Display Suite* for Ross Mollison International, *Guys & Dolls* for Donmar/Ambassador, *Vaudeville X* for High Performance Company, and *Sugar and Mame* for The Production Company.

He has received three Green Room Award nominations for *Savages*, *The Pride* and *The Thing About Men* (Magnormos).

Lyall has recently been seen in both *Neighbours* and HBO's *The Leftovers*. Other screen appearances include ABC's *The Divorce*, dramas *Winners & Losers*, *The Time Of Our Lives*, *The Dr Blake Mysteries*, *Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries* and *Rake*, gameshow *The Mint*, sketch comedies *Ben Elton Live From Planet Earth* and *You're Skitting Me*, and feature film *Any Questions for Ben?*.

He is also an established voice over artist, working on international animations *Sumo Mouse*, *SheZow*, *Kuu-Kuu Harajuku*, the AACTA-nominated *Flea-Bitten!* and AACTA- and Emmy-nominated *Get Ace*.

Lyall has trained at 16th Street Acting Studio in Melbourne and Renegade Theatre Group in Los Angeles.

lyallbrooks.com



ADAM FAWCETT

Creative Producer

Adam is Lab Kelpie's award-winning creative producer, having presented their productions since the company's inauguration in 2012.

As well as producing Neil LaBute's *Fat Pig* and *SuperGirly: Return of the Pop Princess* (Lulu McClatchy/Lyall Brooks) for Lab Kelpie, in 2016 he produced *Elegy* as a Midsumma Premier Event and Katy Warner's *A Prudent Man*, which won the WA Tour Ready Award and the Bank Australia Audience Choice Award from over 400 shows at the 2016 Melbourne Fringe Festival.

As a freelance producer for Influx Theatre he also collaborated with Susie Dee, Nicci Wilks and Kate Sherman to present *Animal*, a work exploring violence against women, which premiered at Theatre Works as part of their Selected Works Season in November 2016.





A PRUDENT MAN
THE THEMES

A PRUDENT MAN

Teachers' Resources

1. POLITICAL SPEECHES

A Prudent Man is pure fiction, based on some facts. To understand the show, it is not vital to know these references however teachers make like to use *A Prudent Man* as a starting point to explore some important speeches in Australian political history.



THE FORGOTTEN PEOPLE

In *A Prudent Man*, the unnamed MAN tells the audience:

Let me tell you a story.

It is a story about the hard-working beef producers of ... No, no, no – wait – no, it is a story about the forgotten people, the forgotten families, the forgotten ... no ... The lifters and the leaners ... no, no ...

At least four speeches/moments from Australian politics can be found within this very short excerpt.

John Howard's 1996 victory speech is directly quoted at the start of the excerpt above.

Let me tell you a story. It's a story about the hard-working beef producers of Australia.

John Howard, 18 February 1996

You can read the entire speech - as well as the sources for all the following quotes - by following the links in the Resources section at the end.

<http://electionspeeches.moadoph.gov.au/speeches/1996-john-howard>

The start of this Howard speech gives way to Robert Menzies' 1942 Forgotten People speech. It has been said that this famous speech was, itself inspired by the Fireside Chat speeches of President Roosevelt in America.

Over the page is a very quick look at how the idea of 'Forgotten People' has been recycled in political speeches and/or moments.

A PRUDENT MAN

Teachers' Resources

In Australia:

But if we are to talk of classes, then the time has come to say something of the forgotten class - the middle class - those people who are constantly in danger of being ground between the upper and the nether millstones of the false war; the middle class who, properly regarded represent the backbone of this country.

Robert Menzies, Opposition Backbench
The Forgotten People, 22 May 1942

Mr Howard, I think, has an entire group of people now who have become the new forgotten people.

Kevin Rudd, Opposition Leader
Election Campaign, 1 August 2007

My commitment to the forgotten families of Australia ...

Tony Abbott, Opposition Leader
Budget Reply Speech, 12 May 2011

And in the United States:

These unhappy times call for the building of plans that rest upon the forgotten, the unorganized but the indispensable units of economic power, for plans like those of 1917 that build from the bottom up and not from the top down, that put their faith once more in the forgotten man at the bottom of the economic pyramid.

Franklin D Roosevelt, President of the USA
Fireside Chat, 7 April 1932



I have visited the laid-off factory workers, and the communities crushed by our horrible and unfair trade deals. These are the forgotten men and women of our country. People who work hard but no longer have a voice. I AM YOUR VOICE.

Donald Trump, Republican Nominee
RNC Nomination Acceptance Speech, 19 July 2016

DISCUSS

- Why do politicians use the idea of ‘forgotten people’? What do they achieve by referring to this term?
- Who are the forgotten people / families?
- Which groups of people in Australian society do you view as the forgotten people? Are your views aligned with that of any of the politicians above? Why or why not?

A PRUDENT MAN

Teachers' Resources

2. IDENTITY

AVERAGE AUSSIE BLOKE

Throughout *A Prudent Man*, the MAN insists that he is someone the public can relate to. He tells us:

Here I am. Just an ordinary bloke. Someone you could have a beer with, a friendly, neighbourly chat with, someone who'd stop to help you change your tyre, someone you'd trust to water the pot plants and collect the mail when you're away, someone ...

During his 1996 election campaign, John Howard told Liz Jackson in an interview for Four Corners, "I'd like to be seen as an average Australian bloke. I can't think of a nobler description of anybody than to be called an average Australian bloke."

DISCUSS

- What is an average Australian bloke? How would you describe this person? Can you describe them? Do you identify with them?
- Why would a potential political leader want to be seen as an ordinary bloke?
- Explore other political leaders who have aspired to be labelled 'ordinary' or 'average'. How have they used this point in their campaigns and speeches?

CONSIDER

Research and consider Peter Drew's *Real Australians Say Welcome* project, in which he pasted up thousands of posters of people from across the globe who made Australia home in spite of the White Australia Policy. Speaking about the project, Drew says:

The aim of my work over the last year has been to pose a question about the casual assumptions that underlie Australia's identity; does 'Aussie' describe the people who wrote the white Australia policy, or does 'Aussie' have more to do with the people who survived it? I see more to admire in the courage of those who chose to make Australia their home, despite the racial discrimination of its government.

In the Appendices is a page of some of the posters Drew created. Some students may have seen these posters on the streets of their own cities or suburbs.

- How do these images subvert the idea of the average Aussie bloke?
- Does the average Australian bloke actually exist? Should it?

A PRUDENT MAN

Teachers' Resources

CONSIDER

According to the 2011 Census, the average Australian is a 37 year old woman, born in Australia and with both of her parents also born in Australia. She has English, Australian, Irish, or Scottish ancestry. She speaks only English at home and belongs to a Christian religion, most likely Catholic.

She is married, and lives with her husband and two children (a boy and a girl aged nine and six) in a separate house with three bedrooms and two cars in a suburb of one of Australia's capital cities. They have lived in that house for at least five years, and have a mortgage where they pay \$1800 a month.

She has a Certificate in Business and Management, and drives to her job as a sales assistant, where she works 32 hours a week. She also does unpaid work around the house for five or more hours a week.

While many people will share a number of characteristics in common with this "average" Australian, out of the nearly 22 million people counted in Australia on Census Night, 9 August 2011, no single person met all these criteria.

While the description of the average Australian may sound quite typical, the fact that no-one meets all these criteria shows that the notion of the "average" masks considerable (and growing) diversity in Australia.

CREATE

- What would your "AUSSIE" poster look like?
- What is your story? Would you be considered an average Aussie?
- List-making can be used as a device in non-naturalistic performance. Companies such as Forced Entertainment (in the UK) have used lists to great effect in their productions. In *A Prudent Man*, the MAN often talks in lists to get to a specific point or to emphasis his agenda:

Blood. Bloodbath. Riot in the streets. Terrorism. Threat. Security and Safety and make the nation great once more. Once more.

Using this idea, create a list of adjectives / describing words or phrases around the notion the average Aussie bloke and then create your own list. A list that describes YOU. Find a way to meld both lists into an interesting vocal performance. Find similarities, contradictions, moments of absolute division and read the lists out loud. This could be an interesting starting point for a solo performance.

A PRUDENT MAN

Teachers' Resources

LABELS

In the play, the MAN uses labels and stereotypes to dismiss his opponents and build up his followers.

The following is a list of terms you may hear during the performance:

THE LIFTERS AND LEANERS
THE MEDIA ELITE
PC POLICE
THE LATTE DRINKERS
DESTROYERS
BATTLERS
BLOKE
THE LUCKY COUNTRY

It could be useful for students to explore these terms that have entered the national psyche.



DISCUSS

- Have you heard any of these terms? In what context? What do you think they mean?
- Where did these terms originate and what do they mean?
- How do these labels create division in Australian society?
- What image of Australia do these phrases create?

CREATE

What are all the cliches we know about Australia? Brainstorm and search for all the labels and stereotypes you can find and try to fit all these terms into a short speech about The Lucky Country.

A PRUDENT MAN

Teachers' Resources

AUSTRALIAN VALUES

In *A Prudent Man*, the MAN tells us

A society cannot survive without the same basic values. We have nothing without our values.

DISCUSS

What are Australian values? Are these values any different to the values of other nations?

Students can read Australia's Values Statement online at <http://www.border.gov.au/Trav/Life/Aust/living-in-australia-values-statement-long>. Compare this statement with the students' ideas of our values.

- What are the similarities and differences?
- Do you agree with the official values?
- What would you like to see added or altered?

Look at the Values Statements of other nations and compare these with Australia.



A PRUDENT MAN

Teachers' Resources

3. THEMES AND ISSUES

A Prudent Man touches on many pertinent issues facing contemporary Australia. Some of these issues are touched on only briefly by the MAN in a barrage of slogans and opinion. Others recur throughout the performance.

After viewing *A Prudent Man*, it would be interesting to brainstorm with the class all the issues they remember from the performance.

FACT AND FICTION

There are glimpses of factual story within the fictional world of *A Prudent Man*. The playwright has used some lines from speeches or interviews with politicians along with key images or moments from Australian and international affairs.



Stories that are hinted at or suggested in the play include:

- The Tampa Affair
- The Children Overboard Affair
- The Death of Alan Kurdi

Moments, or key images, from these stories are interwoven into the fictional story of *A Prudent Man*. The play does not attempt to retell these important stories; it simply alludes to these moments.

- Before viewing the performance, students may like to undertake some research to understand these events.
- After viewing the performance, you may like to discuss with students where they saw these stories or moments peeking through the fiction of *A Prudent Man*. What was the effect of these moments?
- Can you identify any other factual stories that make their way into *A Prudent Man*?

A PRUDENT MAN

Teachers' Resources

BORDER PROTECTION

There is a line in *A Prudent Man* which has been borrowed from Tony Abbott. At the 2015 Margaret Thatcher Gala Dinner in London, Abbott said:

A country that can't control its borders starts to lose control of itself.

DISCUSS

What does this statement mean? What does this statement mean for Australia? What does it mean internationally?

ACTIVITY: *The Barometer*

Step One: Ask students to reflect on the statement privately in their journals. While students are writing, place a piece of paper at either end of the room. At one end place Strongly Agree and at the other Strongly Disagree.

Step Two: Reiterate the need for respect. Respect of opinions and voices of others. Encourage students to be honest but not insulting. Remind them to use 'I' statements rather than accusatory 'you'.

Step Three: Ask students to take a stand by physically positioning themselves somewhere on the barometer (between Strongly Agree or Strongly Disagree).

Step Four: Each student has a time limit in which to explain their position.

Step Five: Debrief. In their journals, ask students to reflect on how this activity changed or reinforced their original opinion.

VARIATION: Create a continuum on the board (strongly agree at one end of the line and strongly disagree at the other). After reflection, ask students to place a Post-It note on the place that best indicate how they feel about the statement. This variation is less about individuals explaining their point of view than about illustrating the range of agreement or disagreement in the class.

This could be a good starting point in preparation for a more traditional debate or public speaking activity.

A PRUDENT MAN

Teachers' Resources

INVESTIGATE

The United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (commonly known as the Refugee Convention) is the main international legal document relating to refugee protection. It defines who is a refugee and outlines the rights of refugees and the legal obligations of states towards refugees and asylum seekers.

The Refugee Convention was adopted by the UN in 1951 and became a legally binding document on 22 April 1954. It was originally designed to respond to the needs of European refugees in the years following World War II. In 1967, the Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees removed the limitations of the Convention. It became a legally binding document on 4 October 1967.

Australia was one of the first countries to become a state party to the Refugee Convention (22 January 1954) and it became a party to the 1967 Protocol on 13 December 1973.

- What are Australia's obligations under the UN Refugee Convention?
- How does Australia's stance on asylum seekers compare to the rest of the world?





A PRUDENT MAN
THE PLAY

A PRUDENT MAN

Teachers' Resources

1. MONOLOGUE

Monologue comes from the Greek word MONOS meaning alone and LOGOS meaning speech.

There are two major types of monologue:

The **Interior Monologue** is one in which a character externalises their thoughts. The audience can witness the experiences which might otherwise remain internal. The Interior Monologue can also be known as a **Soliloquy**. Soliloquy is used throughout the plays of Shakespeare. The character speaks as if no one else is listening. They express their thoughts to themselves and no other characters are involved.

In a **Dramatic Monologue** (what most people often mean when they refer to "a monologue") a character reveals their thoughts / speak to a silent listener (another character or the audience). Shakespeare does also use monologue, as well as soliloquy, in his work.

Both types of monologue share the same function: to convey an idea or a viewpoint.

A Prudent Man is an example of a dramatic monologue.



DISCUSS

- What are some examples of soliloquies?
- What are some examples of dramatic monologues?
- What makes *A Prudent Man* a monologue?
- What is the idea or viewpoint the production is attempting to convey?

A PRUDENT MAN

Teachers' Resources

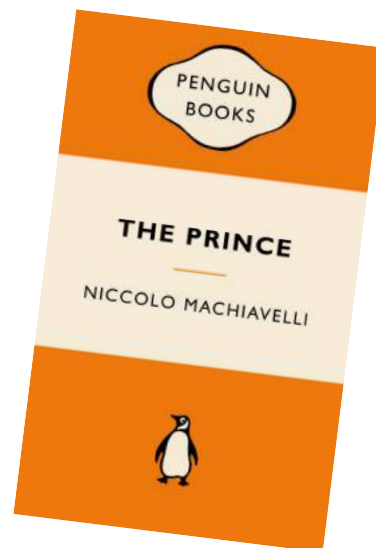
2. WHAT'S IN A NAME?

The title, *A Prudent Man*, was inspired by a line from Machiavelli's *The Prince*.

"A prudent man should always follow in the path trodden by great men and imitate those who are most excellent, so that if he does not attain to their greatness, at any rate he will get some tinge of it."

In his review for Stage Noise, Michael Freundt wrote: "...this Prudent Man can't understand why Machiavelli's words no longer work, or don't work for him."

- Why has the writer chosen *A Prudent Man* as the title for the play?
- Does the title give any clues about the nature of the character?
- Do you agree with the reviewer? Why? Why not?



The character in *A Prudent Man* is simply referred to as MAN. The only name given in the text is that of his dog, Winston.

- Does the character need a name? Would a name add or detract something from the production?
- If you had to name him, what would you call the MAN?
- Does this character have to be played by a male actor? Would the play change if the role was played by a woman?

A PRUDENT MAN

Teachers' Resources

3. THE ANTAGONIST



In his review for *The Music*, Maxim Boon wrote: "Warner's masterstroke is to make this unlikable protagonist vulnerable enough to provoke our pity."

These sentiments were echoed by Michael Freundt (Stage Noise), who wrote: "It's revealing of the artistic process that, given a writer's and a performer's search for nuance and balance in their creation, and presentation of a stage character, what we see on this stage

is a flawed, troubled man desperately trying to justify his political beliefs. I didn't want to, but I felt sorry for him."

The MAN of *A Prudent Man* is an unlikeable character. In this production, the protagonist (the leading or major character) is far more akin to an antagonist (the opponent).

DISCUSS

- Protagonist vs. Antagonist. Who are they? What are they?
- Where does the MAN from *A Prudent Man* fit on the protagonist / antagonist continuum?

WRITE

What is the nature of an antagonist? Brainstorm with the class all the words and ideas that come to mind when you think "antagonist".

Choose a well-known villain. This could be a character from fiction or someone from history, perhaps the antagonist from a play script you are currently studying. Ask students to consider the differences and motives of the character. Undertake a quick writing activity in which students write from the point of view of this character - something the character wants to get off their chest. Let the (silent) listener know about him or herself.

Read/perform the pieces to the class.

Did writing as the villain make the character seem more understandable? Or were they still despicable? Perhaps a mixture of the two?

A PRUDENT MAN

Teachers' Resources

CONSIDER

Playwright, Katy Warner, wrote from the viewpoint of a character she did not understand nor agree with.

Why do you think a writer would choose to write a play from this point of view?

Warner has written from this viewpoint before. Her short story, *One Hundred and Fifty Seconds*, is another example of how a writer can look through the eyes of a character they don't agree with to send a strong message to the reader / audience. You can find this story in the Resources section at the end.

Create a list of issues or situations that have made you angry or upset or confused in some way. Things that you have strong stance against. Now, consider a character who may agree with these things you disagree with.

Start writing their story. What does the world look like to them? Who are they? Why do they have these opinions?

A PRUDENT MAN

Teachers' Resources

4. MEMORY

Throughout *A Prudent Man*, the MAN changes the way he remembers things he has done or said. Memory and how we remember plays an important role in the text. How reliable is our memory?

ACTIVITY: *Reliable Narration*

Warm-Up

Send students outside for a walk. On their return ask them to write 10 things they saw and 5 things they heard. Ask them to be very specific.

Memory: personal and shared memories

Ask students to write down three memories.

- The first should be very personal (only they and perhaps friends or family will recall this memory)
- The second is a local memory (something that the town or city or state would remember)
- Finally, a global memory (something the world would remember).

Unreliable Narrator

Discuss famous unreliable narrators in fiction. Why are these characters so interesting? What is the role of the reader and/or audience when dealing with these narrators?

Could we suggest that the MAN in *A Prudent Man* is an unreliable narrator? Why? Why not?

Using the idea of the unreliable narrator, consider the memories written above. Are you a reliable narrator?



Speak with others who remember the same local and / or global memory. How does their memory alter to your memory? How about the personal memory? How does that alter when you hear it from another view point?

Rewrite a memory or chose another global memory and retell it from the view point of the unreliable narrator. Consider what about the character will make them unreliable.

A PRUDENT MAN

Teachers' Resources

5. ACTOR/AUDIENCE RELATIONSHIP

In *A Prudent Man*, the MAN speaks directly to the audience.

Throughout the play, he poses questions to the audience. These are rhetorical questions; they are not designed to be answered.

How does the audience know not to respond to the questions?

The audience has been put in the position of listener. It is the role of the audience to make meaning of the work.

Yet, while the audience is encouraged to remain silent and be witness to what is happening on stage, they are, in a way, another character in the play. It is this audience to whom the MAN is speaking. He directs his whole performance out to the crowd who sit in darkness. You can see him... but he can't really see you.

So who is his audience?

Reviewers of the debut season at the Melbourne Fringe season suggested a variety of locations for the play - each of these offering the audience a different 'role'. Suggestions included:



A TELEVISION INTERVIEW?

A POLICE INTERVIEW?

A POLICE INTERROGATION?

IN COURT GIVING EVIDENCE?

Do you agree with any of these locations? Or do you have your own idea as to whom the MAN is speaking?

What do you feel the role of the audience is in this production?

How does actor Lyall Brooks make the audience feel they are a part of this performance, without inviting them to answer or respond to his words?

A PRUDENT MAN

Teachers' Resources

6. WRITING

Consider how poetic and heightened language is used to create mood, rhythm and tension. Where is this language evident? Why has it been used?

Repetition is an important element in the text. What does repetition do? When is it used and to what effect? What does it tell us about the character?

How does the use of memory play into the performance?

What images are evoked by the text?

What is a motif? Can you identify a motif in the play?

What is Stream of Consciousness? Did you hear any elements of this style of writing in the performance?

A PRUDENT MAN

Teachers' Resources

7. DIRECTION AND DESIGN

A well-groomed, confident-looking man enters the room and sits on a comfortable and expensive-looking leather chair. A bright light shines on him. There's water and a glass on a table, but that's all. Perhaps this is an investigation. What has he done wrong?

Dani Rothwell, Theatre People



The set is very simple. Explain what you saw on stage. What did the set remind of you, if anything? Would you use the same set design? What would you do differently? Why?

How did the actor use the performance space? Did you expect the MAN to stand at some point? The decision was made to perform this piece entirely in the seat. What is the effect of this direction?

Take note of the lighting states throughout the performance. There are very subtle changes to the lighting as the play progresses. How does this reveal character and story?

Did you notice the music playing as you entered (and left) the performance space. Why do you think this song was chosen? What expectations did it set-up? Did it meet these expectations? Was it supposed to?

How does costume portray character? What did you notice about the costume?

A PRUDENT MAN

Teachers' Resources

8. PERFORMANCE

Lyall Brooks' mannerisms and stutters and body language are perfect. His slightly-too-small, attempting-to-look-expensive suit and thin tie show how much of a puppet this politician is. Brooks is the perfect vessel for Warner's informed and undeviating words and direction.

Dani Rothwell, Theatre People

How did the actor use his expressive skills to convey character? Consider Lyall's use of:

- Facial expression
- Voice
- Movement
- Gesture
- Posture
- Body Language

How did the actor use his performance skills? Consider Lyall's use of:

- Focus
- Timing
- Energy
- Audience-Actor Relationship

How does Lyall use the acting space? Consider his use of movement and stillness.

How does the physicality of the character change as the show progresses? Compare the first image we see of the MAN with the final image.





A PRUDENT MAN
RESOURCES

A PRUDENT MAN

Teachers' Resources

FURTHER READING

4 Corners Liz Jackson interview with John Howard, February 1996

TRANSCRIPT: <http://www.abc.net.au/4corners/content/2004/s1212701.htm>

VIEW: <http://www.abc.net.au/4corners/stories/2011/08/08/3288524.htm>

Election Speeches: Museum of Australian Democracy

<http://electionspeeches.moadoph.gov.au/>

Peter Drew, *Real Australians Say Welcome*

<http://www.peterdrewarts.com/>

John Howard, Election Speech 1996

<http://electionspeeches.moadoph.gov.au/speeches/1996-john-howard>

Robert Menzies, The Forgotten People

<http://www.liberals.net/theforgottenpeople.htm>

Kevin Rudd, Election Campaign 2007

<http://www.theage.com.au/news/National/Howard-forgetting-the-battlers-Rudd/2007/08/01/1185647962218.html#>

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A PRUDENT MAN

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APPENDICES

1. Selected images from Peter Drew's installation, *Real Australians Say Welcome*
2. *One Hundred and Fifty Seconds* by Katy Warner, winner of the 2016 Rachel Funari Prize for Fiction



One Hundred and Fifty Seconds

By Katy Warner

We were helping. That's why we were there. I told her that. We're helping, I said, but she didn't hear me or she didn't care. Probably both. She was like that. I was used to it by then.

At first it drove me insane, mad, crazy. Like this lot, here, with their head-banging and cutting and nail scratching craziness. Drove me insane. She did. I'd say, why aren't you listening? I'd say, there'll be a pop quiz at the end of this. I'd say, hello hello hello anyone home? But she didn't care. She knew she was listening. She didn't need to prove it to anyone. I could admire that. Eventually. But, like I said, at first it drove me crazy.

We were standing outside the shower block. We had to stand there, just in case. Showers were a place where things happened. Naked people. Hot water. Blood runs quicker in the shower. Things happened. In the past. Not anymore because we stood there now and we watched and we waited. A presence. That's when she said what's the fucking point? And it took me by surprise because she rarely spoke and she never swore. Never. Or maybe she did and I just didn't notice because her words all tended to be grunts of agreement or disagreement. Over the months I had learnt to recognise both – The Yes and The No. But not at first.

At first I just thought she was always disagreeing. That she might have been one of those people they'd describe as "contrary". I sang her that song, that nursery rhyme. Mary, Mary, quite contrary. I sang badly but it usually made people laugh. She didn't laugh. She rarely laughed. Unless she was playing with the kids. Then she was a different person. The kids liked her. The mothers liked her. She learnt some broken words from some of the languages even though I said don't, don't do it, you'll make it too easy, you'll give them a false sense of security, an expectation, you know? She stared at me for a bit and I smiled at her and she said what kind of expectation, even though she rarely asked questions. She was not a question asker. I'd written that in her report. I'd also written that she becomes a different person when she is with them. They found that interesting. Interesting, they said. Tell us more, they said but there wasn't any more to tell. Not them. Not then.

I explained because I always had to explain that nothing could be promised to these arrivals, that we could not encourage them to expect anything. These women and these children. We couldn't get their hopes up. We were here to help that process, to help them understand that life isn't any easier here, life is not easy, go home where you are understood, where you

should be. We're helping, I told her. And that's when I couldn't tell if she hadn't heard me or didn't care.

The showers were a boring job to be honest but I was good at it. I was strict. I timed them, mentally, as soon as I heard the first drop of water fall. I counted. Kept time in my head. I could keep time, in my head, even as I held a conversation. I could be talking away and I would know, yep, one minute has passed. Multitasking. Mental multitasking. Not many people can do that. Anyway, I would keep time, in my head, on shower block duty. Two and a half minutes. One hundred and fifty seconds. That was enough. It really was. After two and a half minutes I'd turn off the water and sometimes they'd yell out and I'd shout watch it and she'd roll her eyes and turn the water back on and call out something in that language. Something soft and cooing, which I'd try to remember for my next report. But I never knew how to spell that stuff. What letters could capture that sound?

I explained to her, as I always did, that you can do everything you could possibly need to do in the shower in two and a half minutes. I'd experimented at home. It was possible. It wasn't inhumane. It was responsible and better for the environment. Of course.

Home was also where I'd practised my timing skills. I'd set the timer on my mobile phone and turn away from the screen and count in my head. One hippopotamus, two hippopotamus... I got good. I'd impersonate the beep of the alarm in time with the timer. Then I started to practise how to keep time while I watched my shows or ironed my shirts or dried the dishes. Not that I watched a lot of television. Not that I had a lot of dishes to dry. But I did iron my shirts. I was proud of my shirts, with the company's logo, the world resting in the palm of a hand, embroidered on the pocket. It meant safety. It meant peace. It meant protection. It said that too, in scrawly letters under the logo. Safety dot Peace dot Protection. I'd point that out to her from time to time, when she said crazy things like what's the fucking point. Safety, Peace, Protection, I'd say and run my finger across her shirt pocket. She'd stepped away from me. I'd invited her to dinner once but she said no. No reason or excuse. Just no. I respected that.

I'd been at the Centre for a few years before she came along. It was the first of the new Centres built to deal with the onslaught of these arrivals. The old Centres were overflowing because the top half of the world was breaking. It was splitting itself apart. So they got out. I think I'd stay and fight. Isn't that what you do? When you love your country? I asked her that once and she

grunted. I thought it was yes but now, maybe, maybe it was one of her no grunts. I can't remember.

The Centre was no longer new when she started working with me and neither was I. I'd watched arrivals come in and sit down and wait for something that was never going to happen and then be taken away again. There'd be someone new in their place in an instant. They all looked so similar I'd only realise they were new because of their numbers. 83037 became 10651. Same face. Same look in the eye.

She didn't call them by the numbers they'd been given. She learnt names. She spoke from the back of her throat when she said them, rolled her tongue, and I said she sounded like a retard and she shook her head. I explained the numbers were for their own safety and we're helping. She shook her head again and went off to join in with a ball game some of the kids were playing. I wondered where they got the ball and did a random check on Block E. They shouted at me because they always shouted at me as I looked under mattresses and inside pillows. I messed up the room a little and told them to clean it up. They always looked so bored and I'd given them something to do. I was helping.

She was still playing some ball game with the kids. Dust fogging up at their feet. Tangled bodies. I couldn't follow what they were doing, couldn't understand the rules of the game. Now I think of it, I don't think there were any. She was never good at rules, she would forget them or bend them, ever so slightly, and I was constantly reminding her. She'd just shrug her shoulders or squeeze her eyes shut very tightly for a second and then continue like I wasn't even there. That was the problem. I should have written that down somewhere, told someone. There seemed to be no rules to this game so I shouted out towards them, what are the rules but they were laughing with those shrill, alien laughs that they couldn't hear me or didn't care. Probably both.

And then they all stopped.

We all heard the scream. It cut through everything. Like the low, haunting wail of the Code Four siren but not quite. Worse. Because this was human. Human but not quite human.

I could hear them running behind me as I approached the shower block. It was off-limits at that time of day. There was a set period of time for showers. Seven to seven forty five. We were strict on that. It was for their own safety, of course. So we could be there, of course. So things like this wouldn't happen. Of course. They could not be trusted.

She caught up with a sea of little faces and long limbs hovering behind her. She said nothing so I yelled at them all to move back, move back and I motioned to

the taser gun because that always helps in these situations. They understand the taser.

We went in together. The two of us. I gave her a wink but she was blank and I'm sure she was shaking. Or maybe that was me.

The small body had a small cord wrapped around its small neck. The cord was attached to the tap. The small body was slumped, awkwardly. Not quite standing, not quite sitting, not quite hanging. It was still. The larger body swayed back and forth and up and down and wailed and screamed and hit and pulled and fell down. I started keeping time in my head.

I think she said fucking snap out of it. I think she cut the wire away. I think she laid the small body on the shower floor. I think she pressed its chest. I think she shouted for back up. I think she hit me across the face and spat at me and pushed me and kicked at me. I think her face was streaked with tears and snot and sweat.

I think she gathered them together. The women and the children. They were her people after all. They understood each other with their thick, harsh voices and their lack of rules. She said what's the fucking point but I didn't hear her or didn't care. Probably both. And they tore down the Centre with their fists and their teeth and their wails. Like a mad hurricane. All of them. Her and them when I'd thought it was us and them. Them and Us.

And I stood in the shower block, my black boots on the damp concrete floor, and I kept time. In my head. In my head.