

SAM *laughs*.

ROSE: Doesn't matter, Dad. You're okay.

DOLLY: What are you going to do for a quid? Sam?

SAM: I'll go to work for cousin Joel. He'll give me a job. Joel's a lightning rod for luck. He bought that pub on his winnings from a horse called Eurhythmic. Did you know that? Now, that's luck.

But I got my old man's blood. Dead unlucky.

ROSE: Until your luck changes, Dad.

SAM: Luck don't change, love. It moves.

*Funeral bells. The PICKLES FAMILY assemble with their bags.  
A LAWYER reads a will.*

#### SCENE 6

LAWYER: 'I, Joel Morris Bloom...'

DOLLY: A heart attack at fifty. You call that lucky?

SAM: Well, he died haulin' in the biggest fish he ever caught.

LAWYER: '... direct that the Eurhythmic Hotel be sold, and the proceeds, together with the residue of my estate, be given to—'

SAM: My cousin Sam.

LAWYER: '... the Geraldton Turf Club, except for the sum of two thousand pounds, which I bequeath to my cousin Samuel Manifold Pickles...'

CHUB: Who's that?

ROSE: Shut up!

LAWYER: '... together with a property at Number One Cloud Street, Perth...'

TED: Perth!

SAM: Good old Joel! I knew he wouldn't forget me.

LAWYER: '... on condition that the said Samuel Manifold Pickles will not sell the said property for twenty years.'

DOLLY: Well, we're not movin' to Perth!

SAM: Nowhere else to go, Doll.

#### SCENE 7

*Cloudstreet. The PICKLES FAMILY approach the trumbledown old house.*

SAM: It's bloody huge!

DOLLY: Bloody strange, if you ask me.

*SAM leads them inside. They explore the house.*

TED: Where do we sleep tonight?

SAM: There's twenty rooms, son, take your pick.

CHUB: I'm hungry!

DOLLY: Suck your thumb.

TED: I hate it.

SAM: Go on, take a look around. Cloudstreet...

ROSE, TED and CHUB go to explore.

Got a good sound to it, don't you reckon? It's a bit run down, needs a paint, but your old man's had a win, love, a big win. The Shifty Shadow's shifted. Can't you feel it?

*He's heading out.*

DOLLY: Where are you going?

SAM: Nowhere.

DOLLY: Sam Pickles...

SAM: There's a horse running today called Silver Lining. That's got to be a sign, eh?

DOLLY: What are you bettin' with?

SAM: Have some faith, Doll.

DOLLY: Joel left that money to all of us.

SAM: Don't worry. I always come out even.

DOLLY: Sam! That horse'll be legless. Don't do it!

SAM: See you.

*He's gone.*

DOLLY: You bastard!

*She chases after him. ROSE finds the windowless room.*

ROSE: Hey, this room's got no windows...

#### SCENE 8

*ROSE explores the room, which is shadowed by ghosts of the house.  
She sees a piano.*

**AGORIC MAN**

**BLACK-MAN:** Once upon a time there was a big house owned by a respectable white woman who had cheated several people to get

it. But the local Anglican minister believed there is good in every heart, and it only needs to be nurtured. He put a proposition to her: 'Why not make your house a mission for young native women? Then all of Perth would remember you with gratitude.'

She filled her house with black girls. She aimed to make ladies out of them so they could set a standard for the rest of their sorry race. She showed them how to serve at table and how to wear hats in church, and she locked them in at night. The girls climbed into bed with one another and cried. They had been taken from their families and were not happy. They crawled out of windows but were tracked down and brought back.

One night one young girl went into the library, a room that had no windows. There she drank ant poison and died. The widow kicked out the rest of the girls and burned their linen under the fruit trees in the backyard.

A few weeks later she was at the piano when her heart stopped. Her nose hit Middle C. That's how the minister found the woman. Her smell knocked him over like a shot from a .303. The house was boarded up and it held its breath. Until today, no-one ever lived in it again, though some swore they could hear Middle C ringing from it at night.

ROSE hits Middle C. She feels the presence of the ghosts and flees the room.

#### SCENE 9

SAM hangs a sign—ROOMS TO RENT—on the front of Cloudstreet.  
DOLLY watches, smoking.

DOLLY: Two thousand quid down the dunny. More dough than we'd ever seen in our lives. We're poor again, dammit, shitpoor with a house as big as a church that we can't bloody sell.

SAM: I always come out even...

DOLLY: You're on a losing streak, Pickles, and it'll last as long as your life.

CHUB, TED and ROSE come home from school.

TED: Hey, the door of my room's locked!

DOLLY: 'Cause it's not your room anymore. You'll be in with Chub.

TED: Rather sleep with you, Ma.

DOLLY hoots, ruffles his hair.

CHUB: They're all locked. All this side.

DOLLY: Your father's had an idea! He's renting out half the house. I'm going to be a friggin' landlady. Twenty years. I'm too young to be tied down like that. Twenty friggin' years.

TED: That's our friggin' luck. House and no money.

CHUB: Ponds and no fish.

TED: Trees and no fruit.

CHUB: Arm and no hand.

ROSE: Oh, you're a pair of real cards. Real funny blokes.

TED: I reckon this is a friggin' house of cards. And guess who's the bloody joker?

DOLLY, TED and CHUB go inside the house. ROSE finds her father dividing the house in two.

ROSE: What's all this?

SAM: Bet you never thought you'd be a landlord's daughter, Rosebud.

ROSE: A person like you shouldn't even say the word bet.

#### SCENE 10

The LAMBS arrive at Cloudstreet, perhaps in their old truck piled with furniture. ORIEL has a newspaper.

LESTER: You sure this is it?

ORIEL: Last on the page. Number One Cloud Street. Go on, Lest. Go in and tee it up. The kids are exhausted. Tell them what we want.

LESTER heads towards the front door.

QUICK: Looks flamin' haunted.

ORIEL: We'll be haunting it from now on. But don't worry. We're not here to stay, kids. This is just temporary. Till we get back on our feet.

LESTER knocks. DOLLY opens the door.

DOLLY: Yeah? Sorry, mate, we're not buyin' nothin'. Try up the street a bit. You're as white as a ghost.

LESTER: It's limestone dust. We came up from the country. Margaret River.