

HOTEL MANAGER: Ms Pepper?

The MANAGER opens the door and it snags on the chain.

The breakfast chute opens and the tray of food and a newspaper is delivered into the room.

JACINTA: Mm-mm, cold toast for breakfast and the *Herald Scum*, compliments of the house.

SCENE 7—MORE SUPERVISION

SUPERVISOR's office. JACINTA enters.

SUPERVISOR: I read your last draft.

JACINTA: And?

SUPERVISOR: What's this section here? The blacked-out bits?

JACINTA: I haven't decided whether that goes in yet.

SUPERVISOR: Why not?

JACINTA: It's secret business.

SUPERVISOR: What?

JACINTA: I've gotta talk to my Elders.

SUPERVISOR: Well, does it answer your academic question?

JACINTA: Of course it does.

SUPERVISOR: Then put it in.

JACINTA: I'm not sure yet. I don't want any more people going down to this cave. I think this should be for Gunaikurnai women's eyes only.

SUPERVISOR: Stop being so secretive. That won't help your publishing prospects.

You have to have evidence to support your arguments. Why didn't you cite Spencer like I told you?

JACINTA: What if the archives lie? Rosaldo says 'will to truth suppresses the equally present will to power.'

SUPERVISOR: All history has happened, otherwise it wouldn't be history—it'd be a fiction. And besides, Rosaldo is an anthropologist.

We are engaged in the writing of history here.

JACINTA: He's saying that the powerful can control the narrative.

SUPERVISOR: Rosaldo doesn't know whether he's an ethnographer or a poet.

JACINTA: So you've read him then?

SUPERVISOR: A little. Look, it's okay to critique and examine the archives. They're full of valuable stuff to use.

JACINTA: How valuable can they be when my people's voices are absent and the language is offensive and racist.

SUPERVISOR: The archives are an historian's primary source. They are of a time.

JACINTA: They're full of inequities. I've been looking at 'citational bias'.

SUPERVISOR: Citational justice is a fad.

JACINTA: Says who? I'm going to write my thesis without referring to any of the archives.

SUPERVISOR: What will you use then?

JACINTA: I'm going to cite Bung Yarnda.

SUPERVISOR: Who?

JACINTA: Our lake ... Near my grandmother's tree.

SUPERVISOR: You can't cite an object.

JACINTA: These are not objects to us.

SUPERVISOR: A lake and a tree?

JACINTA: That lake and our birthing trees are like family.

SUPERVISOR: That's not academic. These are not literary sources.

JACINTA: They're living, breathing things that speak to us. Why can't I cite them?

SUPERVISOR: Don't be ridiculous!

JACINTA: The Maori of Aotearoa have had their Whanganui River recognised as a legal person. 'Te Awa Tupua': The River Claims Settlement Act.

SUPERVISOR: A river is a river. Not a person.

JACINTA: But it is to us.

SUPERVISOR: Have you considered writing a novel or going for a journalism cadetship?

JACINTA: What?

SUPERVISOR: It'd make good use of the material you've gathered thus far.

JACINTA: The material? This is deeply considered research. I want to be an historian.

SUPERVISOR: Why?

JACINTA: Because 'White Australia Has a Black History'.

SUPERVISOR: Your thesis has to be more than a T-shirt slogan Jacinta.

JACINTA: Doctor Romaine Moreton says:

‘The struggle for Indigenous writers is that not only must we write in order to move towards that space beyond western language, but that it is necessary to enter into a ‘war of fictions’ so that we may be free of it.’

SUPERVISOR: You have two days to submit your proposal before you launch into World War Three. This is a university, not a battleground.

JACINTA: Is it?

Beat.

SUPERVISOR: You’ve got two days.

*The figure of the WHITE WOMAN in possum-skin cloak walks by.
JACINTA follows her.*

SCENE 8—MOTEL ROOM—HISTORY REPEATING

JACINTA *paces in a rage. A distant figure of the WHITE WOMAN in possum-skin cloak appears through the walls.*

JACINTA: Nobody hears or sees the White Woman for three whole years and the wild frontier continues to rage. Gunaikurnai are killing the sheep and the squatters are killing the Gunaikurnai.

Two TROOPERS appear in silhouette and stalk the WHITE WOMAN.

They use blackfella troopers from the next-door mob to try and control us.

Jacky Jackies

Doing the white man’s work

Puffed up

Riding horses

Getting a feed

Reckons they saw that white woman

Reckons she wore a possum-skin cloak

Reckons she ran

Reckons she dropped her cloak

In the swamp

Reckons