

EXTRACT

australia is a tree growing in a garden in chennai

a short play

By

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Characters

ED

LAWRENCE

Setting

The top deck of a ferry in Mumbai Harbour, heading back from the Elephanta Caves to the Gateway of India.

Time

Dusk on a sweltering day in late May.

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Dusk on a sweltering day in late May. The top deck of a ferry returning to Mumbai from the Elephanta Caves.

LAWRENCE sits on a bench on the top deck of the ferry, gazing out to sea. After awhile **ED** enters, a camera slung around his neck.

ED sits nearby **LAWRENCE**. They catch each other's eyes. **ED** nods, **LAWRENCE** returns the nod.

ED takes out a packet of smokes.

ED: Do they mind if you smoke up here?

LAWRENCE: They don't. (BEAT) But I might.

ED: Fair enough.

ED PUTS THE CIGARETTES AWAY.

LAWRENCE: Get some good ones?

ED LOOKS AT HIM.

LAWRENCE: The camera.

ED: Oh no I'm just the carrier. My girlfriend takes the shots. (BEAT) She's downstairs.

LAWRENCE: Taking a breather?

ED: Something like that.

BEAT.

LAWRENCE: Enjoy the Caves.

ED: Monkeys were a bit frisky. I bought these chips, local stuff, and I was walking up to see the Cannons. This big one comes at me, hissing, he wasn't mucking around. Started throwing the chips down, then this other one appears. Even bigger. In the end I just threw the bag down and got out of there. Greedy bastards.

LAWRENCE: It' the bag.

ED: Yeah?

LAWRENCE: The bright colours. They remember. Means food.

ED: Keep it in mind for next time.

BEAT.

LAWRENCE: First time?

ED NODS.

LAWRENCE: How you finding it?

ED: Good. Great. (BEAT) To be honest, hard work. It's so hot and dirty and the people. They're everywhere – it never stops.

LAWRENCE: How long you been here?

ED: A week. Thirteen days to go.

LAWRENCE: Counting down the days already. Where else you going?

ED: Agra, Goa, Bangalore –

LAWRENCE: They call it Bengalaru.

ED: Girlfriend's got us flying all over.

LAWRENCE: Not your idea.

ED: If it was me - Gold Coast. But this is what she wanted. So here we are.

LAWRENCE: Good of you to play along.

ED: She deserves it. Works bloody hard. Done enough for me. Just hope she doesn't want to come back here on our honeymoon.

ED HOLDS UP A FINGER SHOWING A RING.

LAWRENCE: When's the big day?

ED: Couple of months. If we survive that long.

LAWRENCE: Weddings. More trouble than they're worth.

ED: The wedding's okay. You can control that. It's this ... country. It's so ... full on. In your face – all day, all night.

LAWRENCE: Appearances can be deceptive.

ED: How's that?

LAWRENCE: The focus is not on the exterior. More of an internal journey. Looking inside, rather than out. It's not just about who has the most stuff. The spiritual rather than material.

ED: Well I'm glad they've got something going on. Because if this is all they had to look forward to they'd all top themselves.

BEAT.

LAWRENCE: (HOLDING OUT HAND) Lawrence.

ED: (SHAKING IT) Ed.

LAWRENCE: Where you from?

ED: Rocky.

LAWRENCE: Be hot up there.

ED: Nothing on this. They reckon it's going to be 46 tomorrow. You?

LAWRENCE: Melbourne.

ED: The rainy city.

LAWRENCE: Gets hot there too. Ever hear of Black Friday?

ED: Sorry. That was terrible. (BEAT) So who dragged you over here? Wife?

LAWRENCE: Divorced.

ED: Oops. My bad.

LAWRENCE: It's okay. Long ago. Only lasted a year. Hope you fare better.

ED: Me too.

LAWRENCE: I'm here on my own.

ED: Work?

LAWRENCE: I guess you could say I'm on my own internal journey.