

AUDITION PACK

SUMMER OF THE SEVENTEENTH DOLL
by RAY LAWLER



Hello!

Thank you for your interest in auditioning for Beenleigh Theatre Group's production of Summer of the Seventeenth Doll by Ray Lawler. My name is Timothy Wynn and I'm super excited to be directing this Australian classic as my second production for Beenleigh Theatre Group. This will be a new and thrilling production of an iconic Australian play, and I'm truly looking forward to sharing it with a talented cast. I strongly encourage people of all ethnicities, abilities and levels of experience to audition for this production.

Auditions will be held over two sessions on **Sunday the 7th of January 2018** at the **Crete Street Theatre**. In this Audition Pack you will find the following:

- Information about Beenleigh Theatre Group
- A biography for Ray Lawler
- A short synopsis of Summer of the Seventeenth Doll
- How to apply to audition and what you need to prepare
- Character breakdown and role descriptions

I hope to see you on audition day!

Warm Regards,

Tim

About Beenleigh Theatre Group

Beenleigh Theatre Group is committed to all aspects of Community Theatre. Our mission is “Quality theatre for our Community at affordable prices”. We believe everyone in our Community should have access to the joy that is live theatre. Our “theatrical home” is the Crete Street Theatre Complex, corner of Kent and Crete Street Beenleigh. The Complex containing a 150 seat theatre (suitable for all aspects of modern theatre), with a large rehearsal space/green room, props and wardrobe space and two large dressing rooms. Beenleigh Theatre Group welcomes members of all ages to join in our “BTG Family”. From on stage to off stage; performers, builders, technicians, seamstress, bar staff, administrators, whatever your skill or background there is a place here to create at BTG.



Who is Ray Lawler?

Ray Lawler is an actor, producer, and playwright whose *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll* is credited with changing the direction of modern Australian drama. Lawler left school at 13 and worked in a variety of jobs before joining the National Theatre Company in Melbourne as an actor, writer, and producer. In 1955 the newly formed Elizabethan Theatre Trust chose his *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll* for its first staging of an original Australian play. Lawler played the lead in Melbourne (1956); the play's success led to productions in London (1957; with Lawler again in the lead) and New York City (1958), and a film version was made in 1959. Its criticism of Australian cultural stereotypes—combined with a natural style and a language free of cliché—represented a major break with tradition and inspired a new phase of dramatic realism in Australia. Lawler's other plays include *Cradle of Thunder* (1949), *The Piccadilly Bushman* (1959), *The Unshaven Cheek* (1963), *A Breach in the Wall* (1967), *The Man Who Shot the Albatross* (1972), and two additional plays in “The Doll Trilogy”: *Kid Stakes* (1975) and *Other Times* (1976). His play *Godsend* was produced in 1982.



What is Summer of the Seventeenth Doll about?

The play is set in Australia, in the Melbourne suburb of Carlton and it details the events of the summer of 1953, in the lives of six central characters. The summer that the story spans marks the 17th year of an annual tradition where Roo and Barney, two masculine sugarcane cutters, travel south to Melbourne for five months of frivolity and celebration with two city women, Olive Leech and Nancy (Roo bringing with him as a gift for Olive a kewpie doll). One of the women, Nancy, had apparently married some months ago, so in her place Olive has invited Pearl Cunningham to partake in the tradition.

Also in the play are Bubba Ryan, a 22-year-old girl who has been coveting Olive and Nancy's lifestyle from her neighbouring house almost all her life, and Emma Leech, Olive's cynical, irritable, but wise mother.

As the play progresses, it becomes obvious that, for many collective reasons, this summer is different from others; it is full of tensions, strains to recreate lost youth, and from what is said of previous years, not a fraction of the fun that others have been. Steadily things become worse; Roo is revealed to be broke and is forced to take a job in a paint factory. He is disillusioned with his age and weaknesses, while relations between Barney and him are in doubt, due to a recent question of loyalty. The situation is agitated in part by Pearl's uptight indignation and refusal to accept the lifestyle she is being presented with as "proper" or "decent".

The play ends with a bitter fight between Olive and Roo after he proposes marriage to her and she is affronted, threatened by the prospect of any lifestyle other than the one to which she is accustomed. In the final scene, the two men leave together, the summer prematurely ended and the characters' futures uncertain.

HOW TO BOOK AN AUDITION

1. Find the Summer of the Seventeenth Doll Audition form at: <http://beenleightheatregroup.com/whats-on/auditions/>
2. Fill it out and return via email to the Artistic Director: aimee.monement@beenleightheatregroup.com.
3. In your email **specify which audition session you would like to attend** (please see session times below). You will be required to stay for the duration of your session time.
4. Come to your audition and strut your stuff!

Session 1: 2:00pm - 4:00pm

Session 2: 6:00pm - 8:00pm

WHAT TO PREPARE?

Please prepare a 1-2min monologue from an Australian play of your choice. You should also familiarise yourself with the script excerpts relating to the character/s you are auditioning for (see below). Some characters will have two excerpts - please familiarise yourself with both. These excerpts do not need to be memorised.

CHARACTERS

BUBBA RYAN

Age: 22

Bubba is a young girl who has lived next door all her life and grown up knowing Olive, Nancy, Roo and Barney. To her they are family. The lay-off season when Roo and Barney come to stay has always been a source of excitement in her life too and each year she engages in a fond joke that sees her give the two men ribbon wrapped walking sticks. Despite not being a child anymore, the men and Olive still think of her that way, using her pet name Bubba as they did when she was a young girl. Bubba looks up to Olive and her life with the men, seeing this way of living as a viable option, this is the main reason she is attracted to Johnnie Dowd. She doesn't understand or realise the pain that Olive, in particular, has endured and can't see why it is ending.

Script Excerpt: If you are auditioning for Bubba you will need to familiarise yourself with **Script Excerpt #2**

PEARL CUNNINGHAM

Age: late 30's / early 40's

Pearl is a widow in her late thirties. She is the mother of eighteen year old Vera who lives with relatives. She works with Olive at the hotel and has been invited to join Olive this summer when Roo and Barney arrive for the lay-off, but she is clearly an outsider to the group. She is somewhat conservative in her views and dresses accordingly, but aims to impress and puts on airs and graces about the whole situation. She is obviously nervous, as the situation is frowned upon by society, but she is secretly hoping to perhaps marry again. Pearl is cynical of Olive's life, which she perceives as less than respectable.

Script Excerpt: If you are auditioning for Pearl you will need to familiarise yourself with **Script Excerpt #5**

OLIVE LEECH

Age: Late 30's

Olive is the central character who drives the action of the play and ultimately leads us to the dramatic climax. She is thirty-nine, but has a youthful optimism that tends toward naivety. She lives with her mother, Emma and works as a barmaid. Olive lives for the lay-off season when she gets to spend five months with Roo, the man she loves. She feels betrayed by her best friend, Nancy and has talked her friend and work colleague, Pearl into replacing Nancy this year. Olive is a dreamer and strives to hold onto the idealised life she has created, but it's her desire to keep the dream alive that finally destroys it.

Script Excerpt: If you are auditioning for Olive you will need to familiarise yourself with **Script Excerpt #3**

EMMA LEECH

Age: Late 60's/ Early 70's

Emma is Olive's mother. She is shrewd, having saved quite a sum of money throughout her life. She is protective of Olive, even though it comes across as sharp and unaffectionate. She is exceptionally proud of her piano playing and voice, attending regular 'community singing' sessions, but the difficult life she has experienced has left her cynical and unoptimistic, always expecting the worst of the world.

Script Excerpt: If you are auditioning for Olive you will need to familiarise yourself with **Script Excerpt #1**

Barney Ibbot **Age:** Early 40's

Barney is a larrikin and Roo's best mate. He has a weakness for women and has a history of winning them over with his charm, confidence and sexual prowess. He has two adult sons and a younger daughter, all by different mothers, for whom he pays maintenance. For the past sixteen years, Barney has been partnered with Nancy during the lay-off, but this year Pearl has been brought in as a substitute following Nancy's marriage. Barney begins to realise that he is losing his prowess with women.

Script Excerpt: If you are auditioning for Johnnie you will need to familiarise yourself with **Script Excerpt #4 & Script Excerpt #5**

Roo Webber **Age:** Early 40's

Roo is a cane cutter and well respected foreman of a labouring group up North. He is good at his job, but is slowing with age. He and Barney are best mates and have worked and enjoyed the lay-off together for the past sixteen years. He is described as physically large and is incredibly proud and defensive of his masculinity. Roo has had a few setbacks in the last year, walking off the job in the cane fields and turning to alcohol to get away from his troubles. Without the usual wad of money to enjoy the lay-off season, Roo takes up a job in a paint factory to earn a living as his pride won't let him live off loans or handouts from Olive, Emma or Barney.

Script Excerpt: If you are auditioning for Johnnie you will need to familiarise yourself with **Script Excerpt #1, Script Excerpt #3 & Script Excerpt #4**

Johnnie Dowd **Age:** 25

Johnnie is a twenty-five year old cane-cutter; strong, fast and good at his job. He was taken on by Roo as part of his gang, but when Roo leaves, he takes over as the gang leader, liked and respected by the men. When Dowd visits Roo at the house in Melbourne to make amends, he makes a mockery of the lay-off situation that Barney and Roo have. He wins Bubba's affections by treating her as an adult.

Script Excerpt: If you are auditioning for Johnnie you will need to familiarise yourself with **Script Excerpt #2**



Script Excerpt #1 - Act 1, Scene 2 (Emma & Roo)

EMMA: (*slyly*) Was that why you only gave me a quid at the Airways?

ROO: Why?

EMMA: 'Coz you're broke?

ROO: Who says I'm broke?

EMMA: Heard you yellin' it out yesterday - flat, stoney, stinkin' broke, y'said.

ROO: Nothin' wrong with your hearing, is there?

EMMA: I 'ave to keep me ears open in this house. Learn enough to perfect myself. Got a bit of a cheek, haven't yer, turnin' up like that?

ROO: (*equably*) Lay off, Emma. I'll make it up to you.

EMMA: Yeah, I've heard that before, too.

ROO: This place - (*Reading*) Lyman Paint Company, Weston Street - is that anywhere near here?

EMMA: Around the corner, 'bout three blocks down.

ROO: (*a grunt of satisfaction*) Ah.

EMMA: That Barney - is 'e broke too?

ROO: Don't reckon so. He oughta have pretty near his usual packet.

EMMA: Just as well. I wouldn't think of helping him out.

ROO: (*twinkling*) Was you thinking of helping me?

EMMA: I might. (*Hastily*) Only a loan, mind yer. I'd want it back again.

ROO: How much - a fiver?

EMMA: (*coolly*) Smart Alec, ain't yer? What d'yer say to fifty?

ROO: Quid? (*As she nods*) You got fifty quid?

EMMA: (*triumphantly*) I got more, I got nearly - well, never mind. And don't you let on to anyone I even got fifty. But that's what I could let you have, if you want it.

ROO: (*admiringly*) You beaut! Who'd you pinch it from - Olive?

EMMA: Her? What I get from her hardly pays for me community. No, I got my own ways of earnin' a few bob.

ROO: I'll bet you have. Keepin' nit for the SP bookies, eh? Drummin' up trade for the sly grogs -

Script Excerpt #2 - Act 2, Scene 2 (Bubba & Johnnie Dowd)

DOWD: I want to give you a chance. You don't like the idea of goin' to the races with me, you tell me now.

(He pauses, but BUBBA waits for further enlightenment and he is forced to stumble on.)

You won't have to worry over what he'll say, I'll fix that.

BUBBA: But I'd like to go to the races.

DOWD: You looked to me as if you were holdin' back a bit.

BUBBA: It was a surprise, that's all. Roo and Barney, they've never brought anyone from up north here before.

DOWD: *(looking around)* I know. They've sat pretty tight on this joint, haven't they? D'you live here?

BUBBA: No, I'm from next door.

DOWD: Oh. That makes it a bigger hide than ever, then.

BUBBA: What?

DOWD: Him askin' you to go out with me.

BUBBA: No, it isn't. Not really. I been comin' in here a long time.

DOWD: Have yer? *(Glancing over the room)* Funny thing. I imagined this place pretty often. *(In answer to her puzzled look)* Oh, of course, I've never been here, it's just the reputation that's been built up among the boys. I reckon you could say it's almost famous up north.

BUBBA: Things Barney said?

DOWD: Yeah. And bits of talk the boys picked up. Or made up, by the looks of it. *(He eyes the souvenirs disparagingly).*

BUBBA: *(nervously)* It's not a - a big place.

DOWD: Size is nothin'. It's the other things - like all the fun they're supposed to have here. I just can't see it.

BUBBA: *(defensively)* You don't know.

DOWD: No? You tell me then.

BUBBA: *(turning away, shakily)* H-how can I? All that's happened in a house makes a feeling - you can't tell anyone that. It's between people.

DOWD: Oh. *(Indicating the dolls on the mantle piece)* What are the dolls in aid of?

BUBBA: Roo gives one to Olive every year when he arrives. Like a mascot.

DOWD: (*snorting in coarse amusement*) Dolls? Is that the best he can do?

(*BUBBA flinches.*)

You didn't like me sayin' that, did you?

BUBBA: No.

DOWD: What are you, relation or something?

(*She shakes her head.*)

What's the matter then? I've hurt you some way.

BUBBA: (*turning on him*) You shouldn't have said that about the dolls. They mean something to Olive and Roo, it's - it's hard to explain. You wouldn't understand it.

DOWD: (*summing up her reaction and , and asking her directly one of the big questions of his life*) Tell me somethin', will yer? Why is it anytime I come across anything connected with Roo, I'm supposed to act like I was too young to live up to it?

BUBBA: (*withdrawn, all of a sudden touched by the coincidence of their youthful insecurity*) I don't know. Maybe it's like the walking-sticks.

DOWD: The what?

BUBBA: The lolly walking-sticks. They're a sort of present - a joke we have every year when they come down.

DOWD: Beats me. (*Abandoning the puzzle*) Anyway, what's it matter, tomorrow's the thing. That is, if you'll still come with me after the cracks I've made. Will you?

BUBBA: Yes. I'd - like to.

DOWD: What did he say your name was again?

BUBBA: Bubba Ryan.

DOWD: Bubba? Is that what they call you? (*As she nods*) Seems to me they're keeping you in the cradle, too.

(*They look at one another in a moment of perfect understanding.*)

What's your real name?

BUBBA: (*softly*) Kathie.

DOWD: Kathie? Well, that's what I'll call you.

Script Excerpt #3 - Act 3, Scene 1 (Olive & Roo)

ROO: Have you really got to go to the pub today?

OLIVE: Yes, I ought to.

ROO: *(rising)* Take the day off, and we'll go for a picnic, just the two of us.

OLIVE: I'd like to, but there's Pearl away already and I said I'd sling a line to Clintie for her. I just know what I must look like.

(She goes to her bag on the mantelpiece. As she fumbles with the catch she speaks more brightly.)

Why don't you and Barney come down for the afternoon?

ROO: He's going to the races with the boys.

OLIVE: Oh. *(Inspecting the damage in her purse flat mirror)* Talk about the wreck of the Hesperus. *(Fishing for cosmetics)* Is it the boys he's nicking off with on Monday?

ROO: Yeah. Up the Murray for the grapes.

OLIVE: *(Diverted from her search for the moment)* It'll be funny without Barney around. Can't you get him to stay?

ROO: *(Negatively)* He won't take a job in the city.

OLIVE: Well I don't blame him for that.

(ROO reacts stiffly. Moving slowly towards him, she enquires somewhat nervously:)

Would you like to - to go up the Murray with him?

ROO: No.

OLIVE: *(Not looking at him)* 'Coz if you would - I mean, I wouldn't mind it for just this once.

ROO: Are you tryin' to get rid of me?

OLIVE: No, but other times you've always left together; it doesn't seem right.

ROO: Olive, I'm staying here with you.

OLIVE: *(Staring at him now)* Well - how will you meet up together for the season?

ROO: Say we don't? Barney'll get along, he doesn't need me any more, he knows plenty of fellers. And this young Dowd, it looks like they're gonna team up together.

OLIVE: But you, Roo - what'll happen to you?

ROO: Nothin'. I'm not goin' back, Olive. Not for this season or - or any other. *(Moving in to take her stiffened, bewildered body into his arms.)* Let me get rid of this for a moment ...

(He takes her handbag from her unresisting fingers and drops it aside on the table.)

OLIVE: *(almost whispering)* You're not going back?

ROO: *(tenderly)* Look, I know this is seventeen years too late, and what I'm offering is not much chop, but - I want to marry you, Ol.

(There is a moment of frozen horror and then she pushes herself away from him, almost screaming with quivering intensity.)

OLIVE: No!

ROO: Olive ...

OLIVE: You can't get out of it like that - I won't let you ...

ROO: *(appalled)* Olive, what the hell's wrong?

OLIVE: You've got to go back. It's the only hope we've got.

ROO: Stop that screamin', will yer ... ?

OLIVE: You think I'll let it all end up in marriage - every day - a paint factory - you think I'll marry you?

ROO: *(grabbing her and shouting back)* What else can we do? You gone mad or something? First you tell me I've made you low, and now look - you dunno what you want!

OLIVE: *(breaking away, possessed)* I do - I want what I had before. *(Rushing at him pummelling his chest)* You give it back to me - give me back what you've taken.

ROO: *(grabbing her wrists and holding them tight)* Olive, it's gone - can't you understand? Every last little scrap of it - gone!

(He throws her away from him, and she falls to the floor, grief-stricken, almost an animal in her sense of loss.)

OLIVE: I won't let you. I'll kill you first!

ROO: *(lashing at her, hurting himself at the same time)* Kill me, then. But there's no more flying down out of the sun - no more eagles. *(Going down on one knee beside her and striking the floor with his hand)* This is the dust we're in and we're gonna walk through it like everyone else for the rest of our lives!

Script Excerpt #4 - Act 2, Scene 1 (Barney & Roo)

BARNEY: I didn't tell you, did I? Meant to when I got in. Some of the boys are down.

ROO: (*stiffening*) What boys?

BARNEY: The gang: Bluey, Freddie Waye - that lot. Got the shock of me life, walked into Young and Jackson's this mornin' and there they were, cocked up in the bar. Didn't know a word about it. They've come south for the fruit pickin', a course, and Bluey got 'em to take a coupla week off for a booze-up in town.

ROO: And just by accident you bump into them a Young and Jackson's?

BARNEY: (*protestingly*) I've been drinking there a lot lately, with you not around. What's the matter, d'you reckon I met 'em by 'pointment or somethin'?

ROO: I wouldn't be surprised.

BARNEY: Gawd, what a low suspicious sort of coot you are. Just a chance -

ROO: All right, no need to harp on it. What did they have to say?

BARNEY: Well, they wanted to know where you was, a 'course. I said you was workin', but I didn't tell 'em where.

ROO: I'll bet you didn't.

BARNEY: I didn't - I didn't think you'd want me to! 'Struth, don't you believe anythin' I tell you?

ROO: Not much. I been listenin' to you shovelling it out for a long time, don't forget. What else did they say?

BARNEY: (*hurt*) Aaah, don't fell like tellin' you now. Just bits of stuff from up north. Oh - and they wanted to know if we'd go out with them on the tear sometime.

ROO: How about young Dowd?

BARNEY: (*cautiously*) Well yes, he's with 'em but there's a lot of -

ROO: There ain't no buts to it!

BARNEY: (*losing his temper*) S'help me, how long you gunna keep this up? He don't hold no grudges, he'd like to see you, he told me so.

ROO: I don't want to see him.

BARNEY: Well, that puts me in a fine spot, doesn't it?

ROO: How the hell does it affect you? You want go, you go.

BARNEY: (*fiercely*) You know I wouldn't without you -

(*ROO turns his head to look at BARNEY directly, and the little man wilts, then speaks quietly and honestly.*)

BARNEY: Righto, so I didn't walk out with you up north. But that was the only time I ever slipped. I've stood by you other times, haven't I?

ROO: *(away from him)* I didn't need you other times. That was once I did.

BARNEY: All right, I was in the wrong. But give me a chance to make it up, won't yer? Twenty years of knocking around together, I oughta deserve that much.

ROO: *(after a pause, softening)* What is it you want to do?

BARNEY: *(eagerly)* Help you get back on top with the boys.

ROO: How?

BARNEY: *(joining him on the sofa, the enthusiastic planner)* Well, you workin' in that paint dump and me with me money runnin' out, first of all I thought we might go up to the Murray with 'em for the grapes.

ROO: *(catching on to what BARNEY is scheming, in a stillness)* Walk out on Olive and Pearl? Is that what you want?

BARNEY: We could explain it to them. Gee, you can't say there's been much fun in tithes time., you workin' and Nancy gone.

ROO: *(rising, grimly)* I forgot. That's your rotten form, ain't it? Once the fun goes -

BARNEY: *(angrily)* Don't start on that, it's not like that at all. They're not enjoying it any more than we are.

ROO: Who says they're not?

BARNEY: Oh, maybe Pearl thinks it's all right, but she doesn't know what it used to be like before.

ROO: And Olive?

BARNEY: Well, you could put it up to her, couldn't you? At least ask her!

ROO: You selfish little bastard! You listen to me - we come down here for the lay-off, five month of the year. December to April. That leaves another seven months still having - what d'yer reckon Olive does in that time? Knocks around with other blocks, goes. out of the loose every week? No, she doesn't, she just waits for us to come back again - 'coz she thinks our five months is worth all the rest of the year put together! It's knowin' that that brought me down this time, broke and - and when I would have given anythin' to have stopped yup there. But I couldn't let her down - and if I hear you mention either grapes of the Murray to her now, I'll kick you so far they'll have to feed you with a shanghai.

Script Excerpt #5 - Act 1, Scene 2 (Barney & Pearl)

BARNEY: (*interposing*) Wait a minute, first I got to apologies to yer. Roo says I kicked up a row outside your door last night.

PEARL: Don't you remember?

BARNEY: Well, this p'bably sounds like a fair bit of bull, but I don't. Most likely it was all that beer I put away, then it being my first night down here, and Nancy always havin' had that room other times. . .

(He leaves a delicate pause.)

PEARL: Ye-es. But it was my name you kept yellin' out.

BARNEY: Was it?

PEARL: Pearlie, you kept sayin', it's me, Pearl.

BARNEY: That's interestin'. Even when I didn't know what I was doin', I could still remember your name. Just shows you what an impression you must have made on me.

PEARL: (*still suspicious*) Umm, I don't think you can judge by that. Anyway, it's not what I've come to see you about. Olive said I ought to . . .

BARNEY: (*quickly*) Yeah, she told me too - we're to have a quiet little chat. That the idea? Well, there's no reason why you should stand up for it, is there? Take the weight off your feet.

(He places a chair for her. She hesitates for a moment and then sits gingerly. He has robbed her of the advantage of a firm opening, and she now starts a little uncertainly.)

PEARL: It's no business of mine, you understand, and you might reckon I've got a bit of cheek, but there's something Olive didn't tell me when she first asked me if I'd like to be. . . . (*choosing the word carefully*) a friend of yours.

BARNEY: Kept something back, did she?

PEARL: Yes. (*girding herself*) Like I say, it's really no business of mine, but until last Saturday I didn't know you had any . . . de facto wives.

BARNEY: But I haven't! Ooh, what you mean is my kids? (*As she nods stiffly*) I tipped it'd be like that. Yes, kids I got all right. In three states.

PEARL: (*Swallowing hard*) Well, that's it. I didn't want to have to talk about it, but Olive said I couldn't walk out without tellin' you, so . . .

(She makes a move as if to rise, he checks her.)

BARNEY: Hold on a bit . . . did she tell you the rest of it? That I paid maintenance on every one of them till they got old enough to work? - that I'm still payin' for the youngest girl?

PEARL: (*bursting in*) Maintenance? Do you reckon that's the only claim they've got on you? Honest, when I think what their mothers must have gone through! I'm a mother myself, I can . . . (*Words fail her.*)

BARNEY: You're real mad at me, aren't yer?

PEARL: Yes, I am. There's no excuse for that sort of thing, you're just a no-hoper. You must be!

BARNEY: (*sincerely*) Maybe I am. But I can't help it. Honest. Ever since I was a kid, whenever I met a good-looking woman, I've always felt like an excited eel in a fish basket.

PEARL: Don't make jokes about it.

BARNEY: I'm not. I know it's nothin' to be proud of - but I'm not gunna apologies for it, either.

PEARL: (*outraged*) And that's that! Just sayin' you're weak gives you the right to run around and have kids wherever you want to -

BARNEY: No, it doesn't. But the ordinary bloke's got a way out, he can get married. There's always been a reason why I never could . . .

PEARL: (*incredulously*) With children in three states? I'd like to hear of any reason that big!

BARNEY: (*bluntly*) Righto then, you listen. My eldest boys, the two of 'em, are both the same age.

PEARL: Well?

BARNEY: Well, use your nut, don't you see what it means? Their mothers was in trouble at the same time. Oh, I'm to blame for that, and I'm not saying I ain't, but I was a only a silly kid when it happened. Eighteen, I was.

PEARL: Old enough to face up to your responsibilities.

BARNEY: Maybe it is, but it's hardly old enough to face up to a big decision like - which of the two I was s'posed to marry? You just think of it: two good decent girls, and you can only make it right for one of them. I nearly went mad. Whichever one of them I married, I thought it'd be a rotten insult to the other. And it would have been. Both of them said so.

PEARL: (*dogged*) You could have done something.

BARNEY: What?

(She is stumped for an answer.)

Anyway, I didn't have time. My old man found out about it, and he kicked me out. Gave me a quid and a blanket, nearly twelve o'clock at night. Little place called Makarandi it was, up in New South Wales. Well, that settled it. I knew I 'ad to make some big money fast, so I went where the big money was, then - off to Queensland.

PEARL: What you mean is, you run out on the girls!

BARNEY: I was doin' the best I could for everyone.