

SIX PLAYS ON

SEX

John Walsh

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INTRODUCTION

This volume was written to fill what the author considered to be a gap in Australian dramatic writing - competent modern pieces capable of reasonably easy casting and staging by small groups. They are plays where one does not have to endure an actor or actress trying to portray a dyed-in-the-wool Oxford don, a French professor, an Irish peasant - plays, where Australians can 'be themselves'. They can therefore be, to a greater or lesser degree, 'Australian plays.'

Also, as the title suggests, plays dealing with varying relationships between men and women: sex relationship is a dominating theme that links the plays. In Picture Night the old problem of woman's choice of a mate: whether to follow the dictates of her heart or settle for security as the wife of a doctor, a house and family. Glamour deals with the heartbreak and the problems of attraction and rape. In The Claw the difficulties that can arise from a disparity of social class and the suppression of truth. The Factory deals with that an intelligent woman makes by subduing her own personality in becoming someone's wife. The Maoris of penniless everyday marriage: while The First Mrs Peters moves among the old and the de facto

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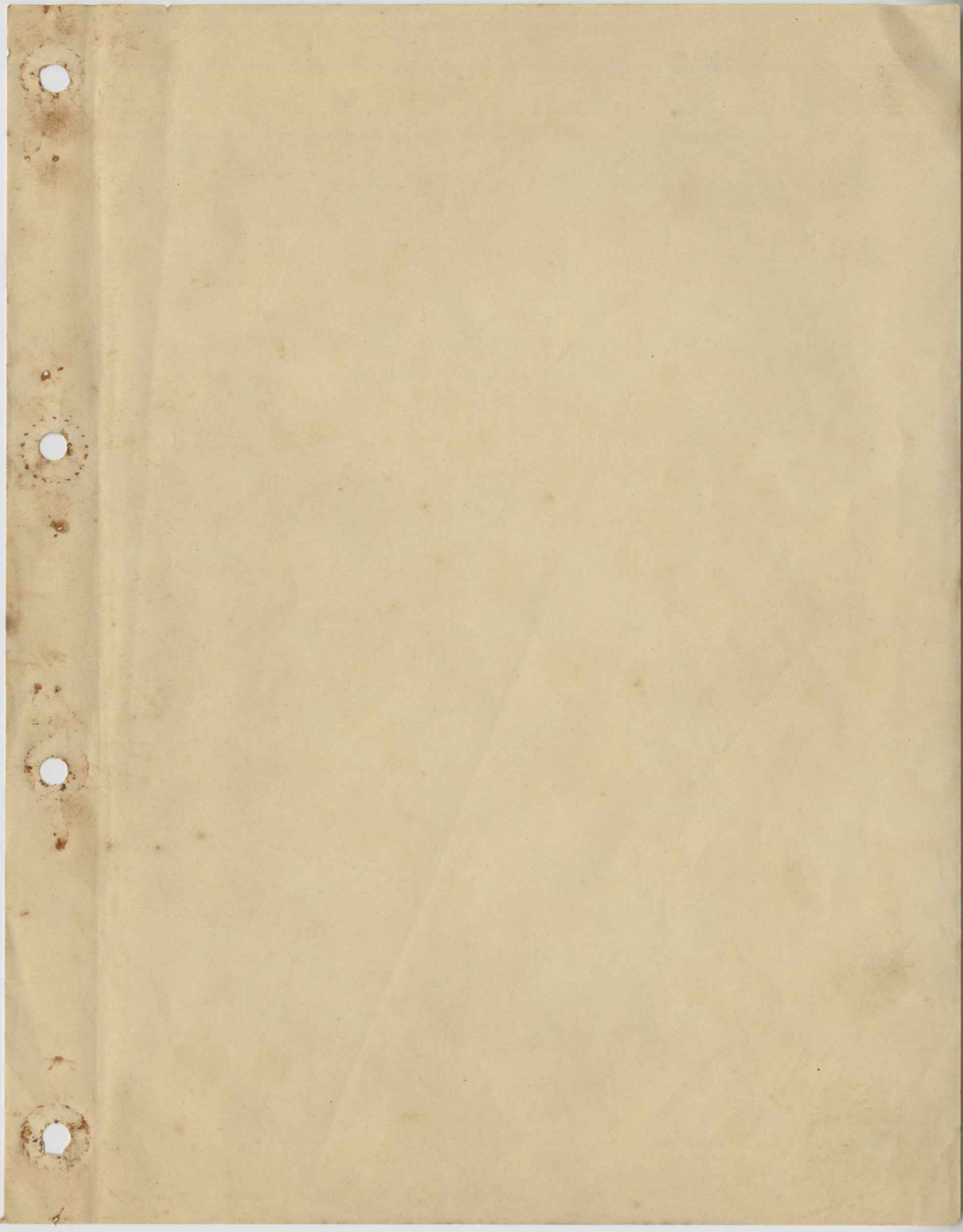
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## INTRODUCTION

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This volume was written to <sup>help</sup> fill what the author considered to be something of a gap in Australian dramatic writing - competent modern adult pieces capable of reasonably easy casting and staging by small amateur groups. They are plays where one does not have to endure an Australian actor or actress trying to portray a dyed-in-the-wool Cockney, an Oxford don, a French professor, an Irish peasant - plays, in short, where Australians can 'be themselves'. They can therefore be said to be, in greater or lesser degree, 'Australian plays.'

They are also, as the title suggests, plays dealing with varying aspects of the relationship between men and women: sex relationship is the common, and dominating, theme that links the plays. In Picture Night it is the ageold problem of woman's choice of a mate: whether to follow the 'dictates of her heart' or ~~settle~~ for security as the basis for her future home and family. Glamour deals with the heart-aches of plain Janes, and the problems of attraction and rape. In The Claw one sees the difficulties that can arise from a disparity of intellect in a marriage, and the suppression of truth. The Factory deals with the sacrifice that an intelligent woman makes by subduing her ambitions and even her personality in becoming someone's wife. The Maoris shows the grind of penniless everyday marriage: while The First Mrs Peters deals with love among the old and the de facto arrangement.

Strong subsidiary themes and conflicts are to be found in the

plays. For example, in Picture Night one can't escape the nagging tedium of small-town country life: while in The Claw the despairing forces that exist in mainly physical, or mainly intellectual man, clash ominously. The six plays are all one-acters of about half an hour's duration, and it was intended to give them sufficient diversity of setting, character, and action, to enable any three or four of them to be presented as an evening's drama on the central theme.

At present it is possible to attend an Australian drama festival, and find six plays out of nine quite unsuited, for varying reasons, to the players involved. It is hoped this volume will help in some way to remedy this condition of the Australian theatre. It is perhaps only fair to sound a warning; sex is here treated as a serious rather than hilarious topic - to such an extent that only one play, The First Mrs Peters, can even remotely be described as a comedy.

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