

**Whitefella Yella Tree** (Extract)  
**Dylan Van Den Berg**  
Currency Press in association with Griffin Theatre Company

**1**

*A lemon tree.*

*Thorny, knotted branches stretching out and up.*

*Greeny-yellow leaves.*

*Tiny white blossoms with yellow pistils.*

*(That's what the centre of a blossom is called)*

*There's a bit of scrub.*

*Maybe we can hear the river.*

**TY** *sits under the tree, impatient.*

*Suddenly –*

*Some movement.*

**NEDDY** *darts between bushes.*

*Rolling, leaping, tip-toeing.*

*Trying to move, unnoticed, towards the lemon tree.*

*He settles in a bush nearby, watching.*

*Some silence.*

TY: You can come out.

**NEDDY** *doesn't move.*

I'm not dumb.

I know you're there.

*Silence.*

Look, you're late enough already.

Really late.

*TY picks up a rock.*

*He lobs it into the bushes.*

*It lands on **NEDDY**.*

NEDDY: Oi! What the fuck -

TY: Sooner you get your arse out here, sooner I can leave.

NEDDY: Chuckin' rocks like a - a - a -

TY: What?

NEDDY: Fuck you.

Say sorry.

TY: What?

NEDDY: For chuckin' the rock.

TY: Sorry?

Pfft.

Wish I found a bigger one. Could've knocked you out cold and left you here for the birds.

Where've you been?

NEDDY: Been sneakin', haven't I?

***NEDDY** emerges from the bushes.*

*But then -*

Hang on hang on -

***NEDDY** retreats again.*

What's your code-name?

TY: Seriously?

NEDDY: Told ya last time –  
Arrive at the tree -

TY: Got it.

NEDDY: Announce yourself – but with ya code-name.  
Then –

TY: Shut up, Neddy -

NEDDY: Oi! No real names around here!

TY: Sorry Neddy.  
Whoopsie.  
*TY covers his mouth with his hands.*

NEDDY: You better pull ya head in before I... get up and –  
Biff ya nose.

TY: Scary.

NEDDY: Just give me ya code name!

TY: Are you fifteen, or five?

NEDDY: Code name -

TY: I don't remember.

NEDDY: Don't remember? Pretty fuckin' important.

TY: What's yours?

NEDDY: Feisty Fish.

TY: Because you're... tough and *slippery*?

NEDDY: Yeah.  
No.

'Feisty' as in, like, you know -

TY: I don't.

NEDDY: And 'fish' as in -

TY: Cold blooded?

NEDDY: No - ? Fish as in -

TY: You don't have eyelids?

NEDDY: Fuck off!

Fish as in *quick*.

Your turn now - I ain't comin' out for just anyone.

TY: You know who I am -

NEDDY: Your code name.

Starts with 'S'.

*Pause.*

TY: Ssssss...

**NEDDY** *nods encouragingly.*

'Slinky'...?

NEDDY: Nah.

TY: 'Sneaky'...?

NEDDY: No.

TY: Saucy -

NEDDY: *No* -

TY: Stylish -

NEDDY: No -

TY: Super fuckin'... Slick.

NEDDY: No!

TY: I don't know –

NEDDY: It's 'Silent'!

Silent Moth.

*Pause.*

TY: Yeah. I'm gonna pick something else.

NEDDY: You can't just *change* ya code name –

TY: Don't remember coming to any kind of *agreement* –

NEDDY: You got somethin' better?

*Pause.*

TY: I'll stick with the moth.

NEDDY: Good.

**NEDDY** *emerges from the bushes.*

I reckon you are who you say you are.

**NEDDY** *comes out from behind the bushes.*

This might all seem dumb to you, but people die all the time when they let their guard down.

So, yeah.

*Pause.*

My name's Neddy. Code name Feisty Fish. I'm *Mountain Mob*. Here to pass on information about the whitefellas.

**NEDDY** *makes a strange movement.*

*Kind of like when someone does a 'dab'.*

*The kind of move that says –*

*"There, I said it – whatchagonna do?"*

TY: My name's Ty.

Code name: Silent Moth.  
River Mob.

Now, can we just get this done?

Don't fancy walking back in the dark.

*Pause.*

NEDDY: Ok.

TY: Ok.

Feel free.

To exchange.

NEDDY: I ain't goin' first.

*Pause.*

TY: Well.

Last time there were only a few of them. Now they've like doubled. Cleared a spot beside the river – right at the neck that goes into the ocean. The ground'll be too salty for them to plant anything, but that doesn't seem to be stopping them. They take up space – with their bodies and piles of shit – but also their... voices? The air gets filled up with their *sound* – gets thick with grunting and snorting and it's almost like you could rest your head on it –

Like, the air.

You know?

*Pause.*

NEDDY: Yeah nah.

TY: Well –

Anyway.

We counted at least six different words they used, over and over.

We think one means 'water'.

And another one probably means 'fuck'.

They said that the most.

You?

NEDDY: We're high up, so we get the best view of what they're doin'.

TY: Sure.

NEDDY: Little white specks trippin' over rocks and trying to build shelter.

Saw one take a dump on an ant nest.

*Pause.*

Exchange over.

TY: Is that all?

NEDDY: Yep.

TY: Where are they located? How many are there? Have they moved any closer?  
What weapons do they have?

You got anything?

NEDDY: Nah.

Just the ant nest thing.

TY: I gave you words – *actual* words and specific locations -

NEDDY: You gave me a shit poem, basically.

How am I gonna take that back to the Elders?

'Oh, Uncle – sorry, nothing much to report, but I *do* have this description of the air and how *thick* it becomes when a whitefella does a burp.'

TY: And I'm supposed to go back and say –

'Oh, Aunty – you know how we were *just* saying the ants have been smelling a bit like poo lately? Turns out whitefellas are shitting at the source!'

NEDDY: You're welcome.

*Pause.*

TY: Exchange over.

*TY reaches up and picks a blossom from the tree.*

*He looks at it closely.*

NEDDY: That wasn't here last time.

TY: That's how trees work. Dickhead.

NEDDY: You don't know all the trees, so maybe stop being such a stuck up prick.

TY: Pricks can grow – just like trees. You're learning.

NEDDY: Shut-up, dipstick.

TY: Shut-up, shit-for-brains.

NEDDY: Butterfly dick.

TY: Wet log.

NEDDY: Wombat... licker.

*TY and NEDDY try to hide their amusement.*

*TY smells the blossom.*

How is it?

*TY holds out the blossom. NEDDY sniffs it.*

Kind of nice.

TY: Not bad.

*Pause.*

NEDDY: Do you mind if I –

Like, can I have that?

TY: You want it?



NEDDY: Yeah.

For my sister.

She loves flowers and the way they smell and she dries 'em out in the sun 'til they're crunchy and she makes these, like, little... groups? Like, arrangements. And they're so fucking pretty -

*Pause.*

*NEDDY's voice goes a bit deeper.*

Promised I'd take her somethin' back.

You know what sisters are like.

TY: I don't.

Hope she likes it.

*TY gives NEDDY the flower.*