

13.

Stolen – Scene analysis (Group 2)

Activity sheet

In this exercise, you have the opportunity to explore the issues raised in *Bringing them home* by performing excerpts from a 1998 play, *Stolen*. Working in groups, you will develop your own production of these pieces. The aim is not so much an accurate representation of the scenes, but to explore how performance can be used to understand a social issue.

Throughout this exercise, you are encouraged to draw on what you have learned about the removal of Indigenous children from the material in this unit and bring that to your discussions and performance.

1. Reading

Read the following scenes. The background gives you some information about how these scenes work within the rest of the play.

Scenes

- 'Your Mum's Dead' – pages 11–13
- 'Jimmy's Story' – pages 26–28

Background

In both these scenes Jimmy appears on stage with a voice-over of his mother's letters being read. They are obviously not read in his 'world'. We learn that Jimmy is told by the authorities that his mother is dead, and about Jimmy's feelings of loneliness and dejection.

In the second scene, Jimmy is leaving a prison cell. It opens with a voice-over of another letter from his mother, this time written to the authorities. It gives more background about his mother and what has been happening in his parents' lives.

Jimmy goes to a pub where he is recognised as being the son of Nancy Wajurri. He realises what he has felt for a long time – that his mother is actually alive. We get some history about what happened to Jimmy when he was removed.

Characters

- Jimmy, Matron, Jimmy's Mother (3)
- Jimmy, Jimmy's Mother, Man, Sis One, Sis Two (5)

2. Discussing

In your groups, start discussing how you might perform these scenes. Consider the following production elements:

- Characterisation
- Staging (How would you use lighting? What props do you need?)
- Performance (What actions will reveal something about the issue?)
- Tone of voice

Here are some discussion questions to guide you.

Scene 1

- What are some of the effects of having voice-overs for both the Matron and Mother?
- Compare the tones of the Matron and Mother.
- What effect do you think is the Mother's appearance on stage meant to have on the audience?
- What emotions/moods are being suggested to the audience by:

- The voice-overs
- The mother standing off-stage
- The letters being projected over Jimmy's face.
- What is happening while the letter is being read out? What do you think is the play's intention here?
- Can you think of any similarities between this first scene and the stories you read from the Inquiry?
- What do you make of Jimmy's speech on pages 12–13?

Scene 2

- Compare the letter in this scene to the previous one. What do you think the mother is trying to say?
- Why was Jimmy put in prison (this is revealed earlier in the play)? How would the audience know this scene opened in a prison setting?
- Why do you think Jimmy responds to the people in the bar with an angry or serious tone?
- 'It's been a long time since I've seen my people'. What did the Inquiry have to say about Indigenous children being removed from their culture and people?
- Why do you think Harrison leaves it to this later scene to tell the audience what happened to Jimmy?
- What feelings and thoughts would be going through Jimmy's mind after he learns his mother is still alive?

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3. Developing

Now you can develop some of the ideas that came out of your discussion and see how they will work in performance. Your group will present these scenes to the class, so the next stage is rehearsal.

- Amongst yourselves, decide who will play which part. If there are more people in your group than characters, you may want to rehearse it a couple of times with different people playing different characters. Alternatively, you may be able to think of other ways to incorporate the extra people into the scenes.
- Run through the script once by just reading lines.
- Start preparing the scenes as they will be performed. Use your discussion time to make decisions about movement, props etc.
- Obviously, you will not be introducing lighting or sound into your performance, but it is a good idea to think about how you would use these if you could.

4. Performing

Each group will present their scenes to the class.

Each performance will be followed by a discussion of the performance and what elements of the issue were brought out. Feedback on further work and development can also be provided.