

# The Silver Tunnel

A Stage Play

by

Warwick Moss

## **Background**

The Silver Tunnel was first performed in 1987 starring Warwick Moss and Michael Cadogan.

In 2020 it had an extended season in Ashfield Uniting Church presented by the Rev Bill Crews Foundation. Directed by Warwick Moss and starring Ric Herbert and Tim Matthews.

In 2022 under the banner '*A hell of a play in a holy place*' the same team then toured The Silver Tunnel to Uniting Churches in Manly, Liverpool, Windsor, Katoomba, Wollongong, Berry, St George's Basin, Adamstown, Bathurst, Parkes and Dubbo. Touring Stage Manager was Justin Bianchi.

## **Staging**

Staging varied depending on the structure of each church. Milk crates covered in hessian were the 7 tombstones. Milk crates covered in ochre material were the rocks in Hell. The grave was always front of stage, simply outlined with white tape on the floor. Items such as a shovel were mimed. Disco lights and sound effects were used for, wind, thunder and lightening, as well as scene changes and transitions.

The one act play ran for approximately 50 minutes.

## Scene One

It is dawn: Winter. The setting is a small section of one of Sydney's oldest graveyards. There is the feeling that it is on a hill, it dropping away Back Stage to what would be the city, with distant mountains far off. There are seven headstones scattered about the slope. Stage Back is a rough mound of soil; a grave half dug; a shovel standing in the soil. Early morning mist floats about. A wind, like that whistling through coastal pine trees is heard.

ON LIGHTS UP, we see a handsome lad sitting quite motionless on a mound, looking front to what is in reality a view of the ocean. His name is JASON. After a few moments a combined whistle/singing is heard of the tune, *'Bound for Botany Bay'*. JASON jumps to his feet in shadows and turns - motionless. HARRY, a quite worn sixty year old enters, rugged up in a heavy overcoat. He does not see JASON, wandering through the head stones, giving a jolly, slightly subservient greeting.

**HARRY:**

Mornin' Rose, my sweet. You're lookin' good today.

He pauses at another head stone.

**HARRY:**

Cap'n. You been on the rum again, sir. Listen to that wind. Straight off the Antarctic, that one. It's bringin' somethin' with it, don't ya think, Cap'n?

He senses that someone is watching and spins around to where JASON sits. He immediately reacts: both at being caught talking to the dead, and suspicious of an intruder. He approaches.

**HARRY:**

What are you doin' here boy?!  
No one comes up here. What are you doin' here?!

**JASON:**

The job.

**HARRY:**

What job?

**JASON:**

Assistant grave digger.

**HARRY:**

I don't need one.

**JASON:**

It was in the paper.

**HARRY:**

Well, I didn't bloody put it in.

**JASON:**

It was in.

**HARRY:**

I don't care. I don't need anyone. Now off ya go.

JASON gets up, moves a few paces and stands; waiting for something.

HARRY doesn't see this. There is a rumble of thunder off in the distance. He looks to the heavens, then down into the half dug grave. He turns for the boy, a little surprised at seeing him standing there.

**HARRY:**

Boy....  
I suppose I could use a hand. Just for today, mind ya.

He looks at JASON: head to toe.

Do any diggin' before?

JASON shakes his head.

No. Course not.  
I've had the likes of you in before. Bloody hopeless. See the work: and piss off.  
You gonna piss off? Probably will. Go back and pick up the dole for sittin' 'round  
and watchin' T.V. Pokin' around on the 'world wide watsamacallit'.

Well. In ya get. (THE GRAVE)

It's hard work, you know boy.  
Back breakin'.  
Done mine in, it has.  
Thirty four years. Thirty four years today.

**JASON:**

Congratulations.

HARRY doesn't quite know how to take this.

**HARRY:**

You should've waited at the gate, boy.  
You shouldn't go strollin' through grave yards.

**JASON:**

I didn't want to be late.

**HARRY:**

Yeh?  
Give me your hand.

JASON holds out his hand. HARRY studies it.

North Shore, eh.  
Let me see. Father's a doctor.  
Mother was from the country....  
And you've got two sisters; younger.

He eyes JASON, who is legitimately surprised.

There ya go. The life's in the hands.  
That's where the life is.

**JASON:**

You read palms?

**HARRY:**

Couldn't read a paper.  
Nah. Texture, boy. 'Feel'.

He looks back at JASON's hands: a moment's concern.

**HARRY** Cont                    Mmm. There's somethin' in your hands I can't quite pick....

JASON takes his hands away.

JASON proceeds to climb down the wooden ladder into the grave. The depth of it allows us to see him from the chest up.

**HARRY:**

Bit of a rush on this one.  
When that wind changes, we'll get some rain.

JASON starts digging, soil being shovelled up onto the surrounds of the grave. HARRY sits: rolling a cigarette. Slow and relaxed.

Don't dig no further than four foot. Tha's the length of the shovel. Ya hear me? The last two's the tricky stuff. Yes, sir. The last two foot's the killer. That soil's real damp. A bit more rain and she'll collapse for sure.

Happened to me once. Usually only happens once.  
Down in the bottom section.  
Buried up to me neck, I was.  
Two days before someone found me.

He chuckles.

This whole funeral comes marchin' in and there's me 'ead stickin' out o' the grave: big cheesy grin. Old ladies passin' out all over the place.

Soup? (A NIP FROM HIS HIP FLASK OF SCOTCH)

JASON shakes his head.

Good.....  
Smell that.

JASON sticks his head up.

The winter wind. Oocean. Thousands o' miles of it. The great southern ocean. The last free ocean.  
Clearest air in the world.

Pretty soon you'll smell the chemical plant down the road there. Then later on, Pizzas. Then the smog'll circle 'round and you'll smell the stale breath o' three million people.

JASON starts digging again.

Hear that?

JASON stops digging.

Listen.  
On the wind. You can hear sailors.

He bellows.

'Reef in the Mainsail!'

"Come about!"

JASON is staring in both awe and disbelief. HARRY gets to his feet, calling out to sea.

**HARRY** Cont

"Hard about!"

Can you see that boy? Can you see?  
Look! Through the mist. They're comin' in.  
You can see them, boy.  
Twenty Tall Masters comin' in to the Bay.  
Fourteen thousand mile, they've come.  
A year, it's taken 'em.

He turns to JASON.

Can you see 'em?!

JASON takes a while, then nods enthusiastically: perhaps through duty.

Yeh!  
Knew you could, boy.  
I knew ya could!

HARRY strides to the top of the mound, looking west, away from the ocean. To the city.

That's winter. (THE EAST)  
That's summer. (THE WEST)  
You look this way in summer.  
Just as the sun bubbles down over the mountains; way off over there. And you see  
the city light up.....in a blue, hot, stinkin' haze. Like it's floatin'. And you can hear it  
drummin'. Thumpin' away. Great worms of white light headin' home. If you really  
listen, you can hear T.V. sets and sizzlin' steaks and babies bein' put to bed.

Ever been across the mountains, boy?

He continues, not taking much notice. JASON in fact shakes his head.

I came from out there. From out in the 'Centre'.  
Almost died out there.  
Yeh. Out there where the Rusty Red rocks talk to ya.

He turns to the graves.

So I came 'ere. Slave to these villains.

He takes on a false joviality; calling to the graves.

A bunch o' rascals, aren't ya.  
Pushed the Abos clear off the cliffs, didn't ya.

He takes on a more realistic intent, turning to JASON.

Yes, sir. Best spot in the country here. The doorway. And that's the best plot. (THE  
GRAVE)

**JASON:**

Who's it for?

HARRY breaks away, walking off the mound: evasive.

**HARRY:**

Don't know.  
Some big wig, I s'pose.  
Probably a Polly,  
Some thief who's been promisin' lies and gettin' paid for it.

He takes a pace or two, chucking at something private. He breaks out of it.

Dig boy. Dig.

JASON starts digging. HARRY wanders down amongst the other graves. He stops, seeing one in particular which is smashed across one corner of the head stone. He rushes to it then down on his knees.

**HARRY:**

Jesus Christ!

JASON pops his head up.

Jesus bloody Christ.  
Someone's had a go at Mary's head stone.

In a total fury, he storms up to JASON.

Did you do that, boy?! Did you smash Mary's head stone?!

**JASON:**

No. No.

**HARRY:**

I'll bloody kill ya, boy. I'll bloody kill ya if ya did that!

HARRY is circling the grave; JASON taking evasive action; quite fearful.

**JASON:**

I didn't. Honest.  
I just got here before you arrived.

**HARRY:**

Yeh?  
That's what you say.  
What ad in the paper, boy? What ad?  
I didn't put no ad in the paper.

**JASON:**

Well it was there!

HARRY takes a long moment: calculating. He becomes more logical.

**HARRY:**

Bloody kids. Get in all the time, down the bottom there. Never got up this far though. Not up on the hill.  
Smashin' head stones.  
Specially down the Catholic belt...  
You a Tyke?

**JASON:**

Protestant.

**HARRY:**

Same diff. 'Cept there's more weeds in your section.

He starts to circle the grave again.

I'm not sure about you, boy. Not sure at all.  
Doctor's son takes a job in a grave yard.

Wouldn't be too good for his business, would it.  
I mean what would his patients think?  
That you know something they don't?

Doesn't your dad want you to have a career?  
What are ya? A dumbo or somethin'?  
Didn't pass your exams?

**JASON:**

I passed.

**HARRY:**

Well?

**JASON:**

He wanted me to be a doctor.

**HARRY:**

So?

**JASON:**

I don't want to be a doctor.

**HARRY:**

I s'pose you want to be a rock star, or somethin'.

**JASON:**

I don't know.

**HARRY:**

You must have some idea.

**JASON:**

I don't know.

**HARRY:**

You must have had some dream when you were a kid: train driver or somethin'.  
You must have some idea what you want to do!!

JASON explodes.

**JASON:**

I don't want to do anything! I just want to be! I just want to EXIST!

In a real fury, he finds he is holding the shovel in an attacking way. He drops it and climbs out of the grave, storming away. HARRY is quite surprised by the outburst.

**JASON:**

No wonder no one stays to work for you.  
You're mad.  
Calling out to invisible ships and invisible sailors.  
You're mad!  
Talking to the dead like they're still here.

JASON strides off.

It's none of your business, what I want to do!

JASON EXITS, HARRY calling out:

**HARRY:**

Go on. Run away.  
Go and ask your daddy for some milkshake money.  
Go on. Piss off! Ya lazy jerk.

JASON is gone. HARRY stands for a moment. He mumbles to himself then turns to the head stones.

"Like they're still here."  
What do ya think about that, Cap'n?  
Are you still here?  
Bloody want to be after two hundred years, eh?

He walks towards Mary's grave, mumbling to himself.

Doctor's son, workin' in a grave yard....Bloody sick.

Suddenly HARRY directs his comments to another head stone.

They all run off, don't they, Alfred.  
Yep. You scare 'em all off, don't ya, ya cranky ol' bugger.

Do you reckon he did this to Mary?....'Lord's whore.'

HARRY takes on a different intent. He moves to the centre of the head stones: more serious, but carefully hiding a truth.

So who saw it? Mmm?  
Who was it? Some kid?

He approaches one of the head stones.

Alright Rocco, ya pirate.  
Was it Rocco, Mary?  
One of his layabout, discontent descendants?  
Jails are full of 'em, aren't they, Rocco?  
Agh, why couldn't you have hung yourself back in England.

Rose? Did you see it. The poisoned Rose? Mmm? Oh we're all quiet today, aren't we. Why. What's happening. You can tell your old mate, Harry.  
Harry's your Keeper.

He waits, but obviously there is nothing. He opens up his lunch pail, pours coffee into a mug and adds whiskey from a quarter bottle.

**HARRY:**

Yeh. Alright. Do what ya bloody like.  
Start a war in here if ya want to; I don't care.

HARRY stands. There is a rumble of thunder in the distance. He looks up, with a little concern, then heads off to the half dug grave; stopping and looking back.

Thought you had this section all to yourselves, didn't ya. Yeh. Well there's a new boy comin' down. A real big wig. He'll sort you out. He'll sort you out.

He climbs down and starts digging. We see dirt being shovelled up and hear HARRY singing along quite merrily to the tune of 'Waltzing Matilda'. On the line 'catch me alive said he': he pokes his head up cheekily. He sings on. After a while, JASON enters and stands above the grave, watching the unaware HARRY. Eventually he speaks, quite matter of factly.

**JASON:**

I've been hearing voices.

HARRY pops his head up: thinking he's heard a voice.

**HARRY:**

What.

**JASON:**

I've been hearing voices.

**HARRY:**

Where?

**JASON:**

At night.

**HARRY:**

So?

**JASON:**

There was no ad in the paper.  
I was told to come here.

**HARRY:**

Listen boy.  
Go home will ya. I've got work to do. It's gonna rain. I gotta beat the rain.

**JASON:**

For God's sake, I've been hearing voices!

**HARRY:**

Everyone hears voices!

**JASON:**

I'll help you dig.

HARRY climbs out of the grave; a realisation: concerned and annoyed.

**HARRY:**

I don't want your help. I don't want anyone's help. Ya stink. Go away!

**JASON:**

I smashed Mary's head stone.

**HARRY:**

No ya didn't. Piss off!

**JASON:**

She was talking to me!!

**HARRY:**

Boy. There are ten thousand people dyin' every minute on this earth. There is a vast shortage of grave diggers. The world is your oyster. Go!

Suddenly JASON turns his head towards Alfred's grave; having heard something.

**JASON:**

What?

**HARRY:**

What.

**JASON:**

What?

**HARRY:**

What!

**JASON:**

Freddy wrote a book.

**HARRY:**

Freddy who.

**JASON:**

Alfred.  
The writer. Alfred.

**HARRY:**

How did ya know we call him Freddy?  
Did I call him Freddy?  
Yeh. Must've.

JASON's attention is to the grave again.

**JASON:**

Sad.

**HARRY:**

Sad?

**JASON:**

Took him all his life to write his book.  
Eight hundred and twenty three pages.  
Then he cut his own throat.

HARRY backs off, in a real stupor. JASON listens in the direction of the grave.

**JASON:**

What Freddy.

HARRY looks in disbelief.

**JASON:**

At the breakfast table?

JASON is listening. He starts to laugh.

**HARRY:**

What are you laughin' at.

JASON rolls into a huge laugh.

**HARRY:**

What are you laughin' at?!

**JASON:**

Alfred was just describing the look on Beth's face.

**HARRY:**

Beth?

**JASON:**

His wife.  
Eyes popping out: porridge dribbling down her chin.

HARRY is looking from Alfred's grave to JASON. He goes to the grave.

**HARRY:**

How'd ya know that!

JASON is still talking to Alfred.

**JASON:**

No. Maybe we shouldn't.

HARRY reels back a bit.

**HARRY:**

You're talking to him.

**JASON:**

Yeh.

**HARRY:**

You're talkin' to him.

**JASON:**

Yeh.

HARRY goes up to the head stone.

**HARRY:**

He's talkin' back?

**JASON:**

Of course.  
They talk to you, don't they?

**HARRY:**

Yeh, but I didn't hear any o' that.

HARRY listens to Alfred's head stone.

**JASON:**

What's he saying?

HARRY steps back; confused and frustrated.

**HARRY:**

Well, I...  
Oh you got me confused now. I...

HARRY is walking around in a daze. Suddenly JASON turns to the Captain's head stone.

**JASON:**

No Captain!

HARRY spins around.

No. I'm not going to tell him.  
I don't think we should tell him.

He turns to Rocco's head stone. HARRY spins around. JASON shows some fear.

No. Don't Richard.  
Alright. I'm sorry. Rocco. Your name is Rocco.

**HARRY:**

Richard?

**JASON:**

Not keen on it, is he.

Suddenly HARRY explodes in a manic fury.

**HARRY:**

Stop it! Stop it!  
I talk to them. No one else talks to them.  
They talk to me. I hear them!

**JASON:**

Then what are they saying?

He spins around; challenging the graves.

**HARRY:**

Talk to me!!

He turns his head, trying to listen: confusion growing. He turns on JASON, stalking him.

You're lyin' you little bastard.  
You're lyin' aren't ya.  
You're playin' games, aren't ya.  
Anyone can talk to the dead.  
But I'm the only one that can hear 'em.

**JASON:**

Then what are they saying, Harry?

**HARRY:**

How'd you know my name. How'd you know my name?!  
So what's your name, smart arse.

**JASON:**

Jason. Jason Rickards.

HARRY wanders down through the graves.

**HARRY:**

Rickards. Rickards.  
Anyone here know a Rickards?  
Rocco?  
He'd be one of yours I  
Father's probably rippin' off Medicare.

Answer me.

He turns, in a fury again.

**HARRY:**

For Christ's sake, they're not talkin' to me!  
Why aren't they talkin' to me?!

He rushes up and picks up the shovel, running back down to the head stones and hurling it about threateningly.

My time's up isn't it. That's what they've been sayin' to you. That's why they called you in. I got called in 34 years ago. From way out in the Red Centre. So I came on in. Not knowin' why. That night, the old bloke who worked here walked out and got hit by a bus.

See boy, these seven buggers - the 'super seven' - had one thing in common. They were all First Fleeters and they all took their own lives - one way and one year or another - on the third day of the fourth month.  
Them all bein' planted so close together has created a power; like nothin' else. It's connected here: and won't let go.

All of them cut their lives short...their allotted time...by exactly thirty-four years...Thirty Four. 'Lucky seven'. We're the counter balance. The pay back. The last gravedigger died right on his thirty fourth year of 'tenure.'  
So did the one before that. And the one before that. And the one before that. - on the third day of the fourth month..... That's today.  
I'm dyin' this very day, whether I like it or not. My thirty four years as 'keeper' is up.

They've chosen you to look after 'em now, boy.  
You've found your existence...You're their *new* Keeper. Thirty four years - exactly - of 'bliss'.

JASON is deeply absorbed. Almost in a trance.

**JASON:**

I should have gone all the way.  
I should have done it.

**HARRY** (Knowingly)

Killed yourself?

HARRY spears the shovel into the soil around the grave, handle first, blade sticking out.

Well, here's your chance. Use the blade of the shovel. Take a runnin' jump boy.

Aren't ya game,  
Aren't ya game, boy?  
Ooh. Ya don't want to lose life. Ooh.  
What are ya gonna lose? Now you've been chosen.  
Takin' these bastards to bed with ya?  
Some woman ya love, leavin' ya because she can't stand ya screams in the night?  
People laughin' at ya because ya twitch and shiver and shake?  
Wishin' you were dead every moment of your life?

**JASON:**

The Silver Tunnel.

Father...I can't talk to father. As long as I can remember, he's always been two old hands behind a newspaper. He sent me to a boarding school...A mile from where we lived. At first I used to run home on weekends; hoping that just once, he'd want to come to the park with me, or go to the cricket, or just sit around; talking. I always wanted to hear him laugh. That man-laugh I'd heard in other boys' fathers. I'd wait outside his surgery for hours. I knew he knew I was out there. He just wouldn't come out.

One day I got in there. I wasn't allowed in there. None of us were allowed in there....He'd gone. The surgery smelt like him: like his grey suits. The room smelt like an old grey suit. I was having trouble at school. I spent my time hiding in toilet blocks and empty class rooms....

I was staring at his drug cabinet; just at the glass. The old, warped glass; moving my head a little, so it would blow out in bubbles....  
So I took some drugs: a bottle of something....

The Silver Tunnel. So beautiful. So bright. So peaceful. I must have been on the floor: the ceiling light spinning around and around. The Silver Tunnel, the Silver Tunnel, the Silver Tunnel. Dragging me in. So soft. Then there was a smile. Just a smile; came into the room. Through the door: right into the room. A BIG smile. And a finger: a long finger; beckoning me into the Tunnel. 'Come on.' 'Come on Jason.'

I so wanted to go down the Tunnel.... But then....I looked closer at the teeth: into the cavities....Snakes; fat and wet; curling out and over me....

And the finger....old, like leather. Great mounds of dirt under the nail. Empty skulls with red eyes staring at me.

JASON breaks down.

**HARRY:**

The Silver Tunnel's a trick, boy. A Temptation. You saw the snakes and skulls because you didn't want to go in.  
You wanted life.

**JASON:**

I don't want life. I want to see the Silver Tunnel again.  
I want to go in this time!

**HARRY:**

You won't come back!

**JASON:**

I don't want to come back!!!

HARRY refers to the shovel: CONTINUING THE TEST.

**HARRY:**

Well, there you go. Take a flyin' leap. It's the key to the doorway to the Silver Tunnel boy. Go and stoke the fires for me.

JASON waits and waits. HE TAKES UP THE CHALLENGE.

**JASON:**

You go first.

HARRY thinks about this for a while.

**HARRY:**

Got a coin? Winner jumps.

JASON pulls one from his pocket. HARRY tosses it.

Heads, or tails.

**JASON:**

Heads.

HARRY tosses the coin.

**HARRY:**

Heads it is.

HARRY waves an arm in the direction of the shovel.

**JASON:**

How do I know you'll bury me here.

**HARRY:**

My boy. Admittedly I will not allow you to have my plot. But I will, with my very own hands; crook back and all, find you another spot.

**JASON:**

On this hill?

**HARRY:**

Of course on this hill.  
Who'd you like to be close to?  
Let me see. No, not the Capt'n. Snores like a diesel.  
Mary? No, I wouldn't trust you too close to Mary.  
Alfred. Good old Alfred. Mumbles a bit but he's alright. You can have a talk about his book. What do you think?

**JASON:**

I suppose so.

**HARRY:**

Good. Off ya jump.

**JASON:**

What if I don't kill myself?

**HARRY:**

Well, just aim right. Just above the groin there. In the soft part of the stomach.

**JASON:**

If I don't kill myself, don't you finish me off.

**HARRY:**

No, no, no. I'll just let you lie there.  
You'll bleed to death or something.

Take a couple of days at the most.

**JASON:**

A couple of days?!

**HARRY:**

At its worst, yeah. I mean, if you're lucky you'll get an artery or somethin' and it'll be over in a flash. You're pretty safe, you know. The whole system's right here. It'll just slice through your guts, take out your spleen, spear into your kidneys and settle in our liver. With a bit of lick you'll cut your spinal chord. You won't feel a thing from the waist down. We can have a bit of a chat before ya croak it.

**JASON:**

You go first Harry.

**HARRY:**

Are you sure? You don't mind.

HARRY prepares to run at the upturned shovel.

**HARRY:**

Hold it. How do I know you'll bury me there?  
How do I know you won't shift me off the hill?

**JASON:**

Does it matter?

**HARRY:**

Course it bloody matters. This is Suicide Hill boy. The M4 to Hell.

HARRY prepares to run.

**JASON:**

Wait Harry! No!

**HARRY:**

What?!

**JASON:**

Don't leave me here Harry.

**HARRY:**

Look after yourself, boy.

HARRY still looks like he's going to do it.

**JASON:**

I won't bury you there...I'll bury you off the hill...or throw you in the ocean.

**HARRY:**

Just go home, Jason!  
These bastards called you in because they sniffed out the evil in ya...  
Whatever that evil is, you've got to dig it out: yourself.

I mean you're only young. You can't have done much bad. Knocked off a couple of cars maybe. As long as you haven't done somethin' drastic, you'll be O.K.

**JASON:**

I killed my father last night.

HARRY stops in his tracks. He walks to JASON: speechless.

**HARRY:**

We got problems, boy. We got problems.

That's evil. Even if he did never talk to ya.  
That's definitely evil.

HARRY paces about.

**HARRY:**

Are you sure he's dead?

JASON nods

**HARRY:**

Well, do you feel guilty, or somethin'?....repentant?

JASON shakes his head. HARRY builds up into a very annoyed state. He strides around JASON.

**HARRY:**

That is a really stupid thing to do!  
What about your mother? And your little sisters! I mean, they're sittin' at home,  
bawlin' their eyes out. They loved him.  
the doctor: the soft, gentle doctor.

Boy. You may as well leap into that old Silver Tunnel right now.

**HARRY:**

It's such a shame though, boy. You could've done somethin' good up 'ere. Bugger!

**JASON:**

Dad used to beat mother up.

HARRY gets all excited again.

**HARRY:**

Aha!  
Badly?

JASON nods.

**HARRY:**

Often?

JASON nods again.

**HARRY:**

What about your sisters?  
Did he beat them up too?

**JASON:**

He.... He used to.... He committed incest.

**HARRY:**

Fantastic!  
Now we're talkin' turkey. Yes sirree.

I want you to do somethin' for me boy.  
I want you to go back there.  
I want you to care for our mother and your sisters....  
After ya get out o' jail.

And don't do nothin' stupid while you're locked up.  
Ya hear me?

Go on. Off ya go. Go home, Jason.

There is a real and deep relationship between the two. HARRY speaks softly but firmly.

**HARRY:**

Go on, boy.

JASON starts to walk off, finding it hard to leave. He stops.

**JASON:**

Harry?

**HARRY:**

Yeh?

**JASON:**

I had to do it. I had to kill him.

**HARRY:**

Course ya did.

PAUSE

**JASON:**

Will you talk to me....If you can?

**HARRY:**

I'll never shut up.

PAUSE

**JASON:**

Make sure you hit the blade of the shovel right.

**HARRY:**

Not using the shovel boy.

**JASON:**

Who's going to bury you?

**HARRY:**

The rain, boy. The rain. I've dug the grave so she'll collapse.  
Sheer engineering genius.

**JASON:**

I'll see you, then.

**HARRY:**

Yeh.

JASON sadly moves off. This has nothing to do with death, but PARTING.

**HARRY:**

Take care, boy.

JASON turns and wants to continue on, but HARRY nods for him to go.  
JASON exits.

HARRY waits for a moment, until JASON has well gone, then turns to the graves, screaming at the top of his voice. Uplifted.

**HARRY:**

Stop screamin' ya bastards! He can't hear ya anymore, can he?!  
Ya didn't get 'im, did ya!

You're never gonna get 'im.  
Ya never gettin' no one anymore!

He rushes up to the grave, leaping in, starting to dig frantically; still yelling at the other graves. There is the sound of nearby thunder, then rain.

Go on! Scream your heads off!  
That rain's here. And I'm comin' down to get ya!

He starts yelling encouragement at himself as he digs.

See Cap'n. I can do it meself.  
Kill meself and bury meself. Right in amongst ya.  
The doorway to the Tunnel.  
Ya never counted on that one, did ya?  
I'm gonna break the cycle!

He digs frantically, then when satisfied, peers out of the grave with a wide grin; hurling the shovel away.  
He calls out with a joyous theatricality.

So now I lay me down to rest.

It starts to rain. HARRY sings the first verse of "Rain Drops Keep Falling On My Head". He bursts into hysterical laughter, then yells out.

Here I come, ya bastards!!!

BLACKOUT

**END SCENE ONE**

## Scene Two

NOTE: A DREAM feeling should be created in the remaining scenes.

It is two years later. The setting is 'heaven' or whatever the afterlife means to whoever needs it.

JASON hurls himself on stage. He wears a plain unbranded turtle green prison T shit. He reaches centre stage and stands, looking about in awe. He hears '*Bound For Botany Bay*' being sung off stage and turns.

**JASON:**

Harry?  
Is that you Harry?

The singing stops: JASON confused and disappointed.

**JASON:**

Voices. Still hearing voices.

The singing starts again. JASON spins around. HARRY strolls on stage, dressed in the same clothes we last saw him in.

**JASON:**

Harry!

**HARRY:**

How are ya boy?

**JASON:**

Dead.

**HARRY:**

Yeh.

**JASON:**

Where's this?

**HARRY:**

Heaven boy! Well, the start of Heaven.  
It's the corridor...the Transit Lounge.  
I'm your Guide. Some Guide, eh?

**JASON:**

What are you doing here?

**HARRY:**

Ooh. I stuffed it up, boy. Stuffed it up real good. There was I. Died of 'natural causes'. All ready for battle. All ready to take on the Silver Tunnel and the Cap'n and that motley crew...Then turnin' you away from that graveyard cleaned me slate; and they whipped me up here.

**JASON:**

Who?

**HARRY:**

God, or whatever it is.  
All white and bland and peace.  
Drives me around the twist, it does.

It's good to see ya, boy.

**JASON:**

You too Harry.  
Two years Harry.

**HARRY:**

Goes quick doesn't it.  
I saw it. We all saw it.

**JASON:**

What.

**HARRY:**

Just then.

**JASON:**

What?!

**HARRY:**

When you got knifed...in the jail.  
Third day of April eh? Lucky seven.

HARRY raises his eyebrows friskily. He reaches out for JASON's stomach. (THE KNIFE WOUND)

How is it? Alright?

JASON pulls up his shirt and looks.

**JASON:**

There's nothing there.

**HARRY:**

Yeh. Pretty tricky, eh.

JASON wanders about, looking about in awe.

**JASON:**

So this is heaven.

**HARRY:**

Depends where ya from.  
Got Hindus here; Buddhists, Bahais, Moslems....  
Stacks of Catholics. Real tossed salad it is.  
Communists; agnostics; atheists....The works.

**JASON:**

Everyone?

**HARRY:**

Sure.  
What'd you expect? It was reserved for your street?

**JASON:**

Where are they?

**HARRY:**

Right here. Trillions of 'em.

Something attracts his attention. (Maybe walks through him)

Piss off!

Them American Indians give me the shits. Think they own the joint. Can't even thump anyone up here.

He becomes sarcastically theatrical.

'Violence: The only evil. Violence: the ultimate sin';  
How does nothin' thump nothin'.

**JASON:**

I can't see anyone.

**HARRY:**

Takes a while to settle in.

This is the last of your 'physical being'. Ah it's all terms up here boy. Load o' crap if ya ask me.

Saving you really stuffed me up boy. Jesus Christ!

**JASON:**

Is he here?

**HARRY:**

Who.

**JASON:**

Jesus.

**HARRY:**

Want to be.  
Billions up here lookin' for him.

**JASON:**

Have you met him?

**HARRY:**

Sure. Had a beer with him the other night.

**JASON:**

You eat and drink?

**HARRY:**

Course. If ya want to.  
It's all up here. (THE MIND) Good way to lose weight.

**JASON:**

How come I can see you.

**HARRY:**

'Cause you want to; I'm still part of your 'Earth consciousness'.

Christ I hate it up here.

He yells out challengingly.

I hate it up here!



**HARRY:**

Mate. I'm more evil than Evil Kineval but it don't help. I have tried everything believe me. Racism, narcism, sexism....every 'ism' in the book! Trouble is, they keep forgivin' you up here.

He whispers into Jason's ear.

I think they know I want to beat the shit out of 'Hell'. And they can't have that. Because without no 'Hell'; nothin' to fear; there's no guilt. And without no guilt; there's no 'eaven. It's a con. The whole thing's a con!

I don't want to come up here and waft around like some bloody politically correct PC fairy for millions o' years. I don't want to be eternally NICE. I want to get angry. I want to get jealous. I want to hate. And I want some response!

**JASON:**

The lesson in life is to learn love.  
Unequivocal love.

**HARRY:**

Don't give me that shit.  
I heard you preachin' that shit down there.

**JASON:**

Love is peace. Peace is love.

HARRY starts to stalk around.

**HARRY:**

Is that right? Well then can you tell me, boy -  
why Napoleon is wanderin' around up here?  
Why Hitler is up here?! Mussolini?! General Macarthur?  
Osama Bin Laden? Huh!? Peace and love?!

**JASON:**

Bin Laden's here?

**HARRY:**

Well....They're not actually sure. Can't find him. But he'll end up here. Just as boring and bland and nice as the rest of 'em.

**JASON:**

I don't believe you.

**HARRY:**

They're up here boy.  
Every murderer of all time, is up here. 'Bonding' with the innocent.  
Look at you. You're here.

There is only one Hell. To take your own life. That one, bacon and eggs then have a shit EXISTENCE.

**JASON:**

Spirits return. They simply take new bodies.

**HARRY:**

What, as a cat or something? To be splattered on some road; or wrapped up in a dim-sim?!

**JASON:**

To learn the unlearnt.

**HARRY:**

No. No more hypothesising.  
No more punts on philosophy.  
One life.  
One chance.

**JASON:**

Then what's the purpose?!

**HARRY:**

To live, to breed, to die, and to piss off. Like everything else on that silly dew-drop of a planet. What makes us any different.

**JASON:**

The way we live it. The way People live it! Faith. Hope. Courage!

**HARRY:**

Alright!  
But for every one of those poor brave buggers that comes up here, there's 1,000 times more middle o' the road, play it safe, be a good boy and hope to go to heaven hypocrites who blew it. And they blew it because they didn't really eat great mouthfuls out o' their life because they thought they had another chance coming: and they don't!

**JASON:**

Thirty-four years in a grave yard?

**HARRY:**

They had me trapped.

**JASON:**

Fulfilling, was it Harry?  
Twitchin' and shiverin' and shakin'?  
'Screamin' in the night'?

JASON starts to circle HARRY.

Haunted by the dead.  
Did you eat 'great mouthfuls' out of your life?  
Did I? A newspaper for a father: two years in a cell: then a knife in my stomach?!  
Did I eat great mouthfuls??

HARRY explodes: madly passionate.

**HARRY:**

I don't care how rotten it was; I want it back!

**JASON:**

Who wants that back!?

HARRY becomes softly reminiscent: near tears.

**HARRY:**

I do.  
I want to smell the ocean.  
I want to smell pizzas.  
I even want to smell the stale stench of the livin'.

**HARRY** wanders off. He starts to growl with venom.

Oooh. That Silver Tunnel. That pretty, shining, Silver Tunnel. One way or the other, I'm gonna destroy it.  
No temptation; no Hell. No Hell; no Heaven. Just life.

He turns and yells at 'God'.

I'm bad. Ya hear me?!  
Let me outa here! God, or Buddha, or Ala, or knee, or whatever you are!  
Let me go to Hell.  
I want to go to Hell.

**JASON:**

Harry, do you think...I mean...if you could get back to Hell. And if the Silver Tunnel goes from Life to Hell...Maybe you could get back to Life through the Tunnel.

**HARRY:**

Maybe you could, boy. If you really wanted to.

JASON takes a moment.

**JASON:**

They let me out one weekend. I went to the grave yard. No one looks after it anymore. It's overgrown. I did smash Mary's head stone. It was windy like that morning. I smelt the air.  
I smelt the Antarctic and heard the Fleet coming in.. "*Reef in the mainsail. Come about, Hard about*" I put my palm on the tip of my nose. A soft dot of cold; and felt so...human.

PAUSE

**JASON:**

Would you come back with me Harry.  
If you could.

**HARRY:**

If I could boy. If I could.

HARRY hugs JASON, then breaks away as he sees 'something' approach.

Oh oh. Here's trouble.

**JASON:**

What.

**HARRY:**

Your old man.

**JASON:**

Dad??

**HARRY:**

Yep. Grey suit and all.

JASON looks about but can't see him.

**HARRY:**

George.  
How's tricks.

HARRY stands back to watch father look at son.

**HARRY:**

The boy looks good, doesn't he.  
Well I'll leave you two alone.

**JASON:**

Harry!  
I can't see him.

**HARRY:**

Oh shit.  
Can't hear him either, I suppose.  
Not that he ever says much.

HARRY starts to be the medium.

Ah. Your father says you're lookin' good.

JASON is still searching about for him. HARRY gives him a rough position.

Here boy. Here.  
You can speak to him. He can hear you.

**JASON:**

Ah....

**HARRY:**

Tell him you're sorry.

**JASON:**

Ah....

**HARRY:**

He's sorry.

PAUSE

Your dad forgives you.

HARRY looks from one to the other.

**JASON:**

I love you dad.

Somehow it is obvious the father does not reply, but HARRY makes it up.

**HARRY:**

He loves you too boy.

There is another pause, HARRY watching in the father's direction.

For Christ's sake speak to him, George!

JASON breaks away.

**JASON:**

He won't. He won't. He never could. He can't.

HARRY gets into a bit of a panic; there is a hint from his eye line that the father has in fact gone. HARRY is

making up dialogue.

**HARRY:**

Ah. He says...he wishes....  
He'd like to have it all over again.

He...wants...He'd like to go to the cricket with ya. He wants to go for a long walk in the park with you. And have a talk.

JASON turns.

**JASON:**

Oh dad....  
Would you? Would you come to the park with me?

**HARRY:**

Yeh. Yeh. He would.  
He's sorry, boy. He's so sorry.

JASON is breaking into tears: HARRY just holding them back.

**JASON:**

I loved you so much dad.  
Laugh for me dad. Laugh for me.  
Would you laugh for me?

HARRY can't take it any longer and he drops to his knees; crying.

**HARRY:**

He's not there Jason. He's gone. He won't talk!! He won't talk.  
I'm sorry boy.

JASON storms at HARRY, smashing into him. It is real.

**JASON:**

Bastard!! I trusted you. I trusted you.

He thumps and thumps into him. HARRY just takes it all. Suddenly there is a loud, swirling, wind sound; the stage flashing with lights. It becomes more and more red. JASON stops and looks around. HARRY does also, then realises; screaming out.

**HARRY:**

Keep hitting me boy! You've found the key. 'Violence!' The 'Ultimate sin!' You're hittin' a spirit, boy. You're hittin' a spirit in Heaven and we're on our way to Hell!  
Keep hittin' boy. Hit me!!!

JASON starts hitting again. HARRY starts to hit JASON.

Here we come, Cap'n!!!

The lights and wind continue to swirl, more and more violently; until the stage is totally black. The sound continues in the black.

**END SCENE TWO**

### Scene Three

The lights and wind sound continue to swirl, the lights gradually taking on a rusty-red tone. there is a shaft of bright white light coming from stage left. The stage has a hint of the colours and tones of Central Australia. There are seven boulders scattered about. The lights stop flashing and the wind noise settles to a low drone. (Suddenly HARRY and JASON come sliding across the floor to centre stage.)

**HARRY:**

Jeesuus!!!

**JASON:**

Fantastic!!

**HARRY:**

Now that's what I call technology!

HARRY immediately scrambles to his feet, taking up a fighting stance and looking about.

Alright Cap'n. Come on! Where are ya!  
Rocco! Thirty-four years o' lip. I'll give ya lip. I'm here for ya, boy!

He prances about but there is nothing. He loses the momentum and settles, quite disappointed. JASON has been just gazing about.

**JASON:**

Do you suppose this is it?

**HARRY:**

Course it's it!

**JASON:**

Well where are they?

**HARRY:**

Hidin' boy. Hidin'.

He looks behind the boulders.

They're scared. Ya scared, aren't ya!!  
Harry's here. Harry's here to get ya.

**JASON:**

It's not hot.

Do you think this is just our own reality?  
I mean. Hell is how we see it?  
Just OUR reality?

**HARRY:**

You worry me sometimes, boy.

**JASON:**

I'm just saying that Hell might be our own...Choice...what we want to see it as...Like  
Heaven....  
Our own reality.

**HARRY:**

Fine. Well my Choice is that this is Hell. I see Hell. What do you see? An ice  
cream factory?

**JASON:**

I see red rocks....and cliffs.

**HARRY:**

Me too. Pretty short odds us both seein' the same thing, isn't it.

**JASON:**

It's quite pleasant.

**HARRY:**

Yeh, it is, isn't it...Bit of a rip-off.

**JASON:**

It's not very black.

**HARRY:**

Bit quiet.

Shit. I hope we haven't made a mistake by comin' down here. I mean, this makes Heaven look like a rock concert. Ha. Ha. Rock concert. Look at all 'em rocks.

Jesus. This reminds me of somewhere.  
(CENTRAL AUSTRALIA)

**JASON:**

Harry!!

HARRY spins around and sees the white shaft of light for the first time.

The Tunnel!  
I knew it had to come out here.  
I knew it!

They approach it gently: JASON in awe.

**JASON:**

It's beautiful.

**HARRY:**

It's here, boy.

**JASON:**

Are you going to destroy it?

**HARRY:**

Sure.

**JASON:**

How?

**HARRY:**

Block it up with these rocks or somethin'.

**JASON:**

I think it may involve more than that.

**HARRY:**

You tell me. You're the whiz-kid.

**JASON:**

Well....  
Perhaps it's some kind of spiritual cross over.  
No....I don't know!

**HARRY:**

You go ahead, boy.  
I'll work it out.

**JASON:**

I'm not going without you!

**HARRY:**

I'll follow you.

**JASON:**

No! I don't trust you.!

**HARRY:**

There's no goin' back for me Jason. I'm a suicide.

He looks around.

I'm stuck here now.  
The Silver Tunnel's blocked off to me, because I made that final decision to die. You didn't...You can go back.

JASON breaks into a fury.

**JASON:**

I thought we were going to go back together, Harry. That's why I came down. I don't want to go back by myself. I'd prefer to go back to Heaven!

**HARRY:**

Would you, boy?

JASON can't answer: then explodes.

**JASON:**

Damn you, Harry! Damn you! I'm not going in!

**HARRY:**

Then go back to Heaven. Go on! They'd love to have ya back! You're just a murderer.

Go on. Off ya go.

JASON takes up the challenge, standing centre stage: 'omming'.

**HARRY:**

That's the way boy.  
Summons the 'Universal Consciousnes'.  
Summons up the experience of all man-kind.  
'Beam him up, Scotty!'

Can you feel it boy?  
Can you feel the power?  
The wisdom. The lessons man has learnt?

JASON defies HARRY; concentrating deeply.

Go on up there to Heaven and exist, boy.  
No more ocean.  
No more wind.  
No more frost cracklin' underfoot.

**HARRY** Cont            No more End to anythin'.

JASON is still trying hard.

Are they helpin', boy??

JASON breaks out of it.

**JASON:**

Stop it! Stop it!  
They're not helping because you don't want them to!

**HARRY:**

They're not helping because you don't want them to. Just make the decision that you want Life back...Do you want it or not!!!

**JASON:**

Yes!!!!

Suddenly we hear laughter: first one, then others, coming from somewhere. JASON and HARRY look about.

**HARRY:**

Did you hear that?

JASON nods.

Shit...Seven rocks...Seven red rocks!...The Capt'n, Rose, Rocco...(and the rest).

HARRY realises; breaking into a huge laugh; the other laughter fading.

They're all bloody rocks.  
Ya ugly bunch of bastards.  
You're all rocks!

Well Capt'n. Your looks haven't improved.  
I'm gonna turn ya into a sand-pit.  
I'm gonna turn ya all into a bloody sand-pit.

Quick. Go Jason.  
It's your last chance. Your only chance.

**JASON:**

I want to stay and help you.

**HARRY:**

You'll end up like them.  
Ya stay here and ya end up like them.

**JASON:**

Then come back with me, Harry!

**HARRY:**

I can't!

**JASON:**

You've got to try, Harry!

HARRY is seizing up.

Harry!

**HARRY:**

Leave me boy.  
I'm turning to a rock.  
You'll be next. Leave me.

**JASON:**

No Harry.

**HARRY:**

Please Jason. Please.  
Just make the decision that you want life!  
Finally JASON steps into the light - into 'the Tunnel'.

**JASON:**

I love you, Harry.  
Talk to me, Harry. (when I'm back there)

JASON disappears into the Tunnel. Lights go to black. Lights up. Eventually HARRY suddenly breaks out of the stiff state.

**HARRY:**

Got ya! The boy's free. They're all gonna be free.  
You're not gonna get no one anymore!

I know how to destroy the Tunnel.  
I've always known. All I had to do was get to Hell. This pathetic little Hell.

Suicides aren't meant to want Life back, are they? Well I'm here. And I do.  
I want it back like you wouldn't believe. Every miserable moment of it.  
I want it back. That's my decision.  
That's my power. And that's what's going to destroy you - and the Tunnel - forever!

HARRY steps into 'the Tunnel'.  
Effects occur and he bellows out.

I want Life!

He disappears. To black.

**END SCENE THREE**

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**Scene Four**

The setting is exactly the same as Scene One. Seven headstones. JASON sits on the mound looking out to sea. The wind blows. After a pause we hear HARRY'S voice off stage singing '*Bound For Botany Bay*'. JASON jumps to his feet and turns - motionless - exactly as in Scene One.

**JASON:**

Harry?

Lights fade out.

IE: Has Harry made it back? Is it his spirit? Or was the whole thing a dream.

**END**

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