

## ASHES TO ASHES

by Jill Curran

Cast: 2 females (50's - 60's)

1 Male (40's, 50's)

**BRONWYN:** *Rather forthright, bossy and impatient*

**FIONA:** *Impractical and a bit of a dreamer*

**BARRY:** *Cheery Yacht Club Manager*

### ***Sitting room of Bronwyn's house***

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*The play opens with Fiona and Bronwyn sitting on a settee, staring at an urn on a coffee table in front of them. The sisters are soundly at odds.*

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**SFX 1 :** ***Music to introduce the mood of the play***

**FIONA:** Well Bronwyn, now that we've brought Dad's ashes home, what are we going to do with him?

**BRONWYN:** We should have left him at the Crematorium.

**FIONA:** What? – In a dreadful niche in the wall.

**BRONWYN:** Lots of people are in niches.

**FIONA:** *(rolling her eyes)* Dad would hate it, he was a free spirit, he hated being confined.

**BRONWYN:** *(stodgily)* We could have put him under a rose bush.

**FIONA:** What? Dad never went near the garden, besides flowers gave him hay fever.

**BRONWYN:** We should have buried him next to Mum.

**FIONA:** Next to Mum!! They never got along in life and you want to bury them together.

**BRONWYN:** Well Fiona, at the rate we're going, he'll end up as a doorstep somewhere.

**FIONA:** I've got an idea. We could circle high in the clouds and let the ashes loose to fly in the wind. Dad would love that.

**BRONWYN:** *(bringing her down to earth with a thud)* So how are we circling in these clouds – on a broomstick? It costs money to hire a plane, even a small one and I don't see Qantas letting you hurl them out the window on our next flight.

**FIONA:** *(dreamily)* I saw it in a movie once. The plane flew out over the ocean and set the ashes free to drift down to the water. Oh! It was so moving, I couldn't stop crying. *(she gives a gulping sob)*

**BRONWYN:** I should never have let you talk me into bringing him home. There's nothing for it but to take him back and put him under a bush or something. I'll do it now. *(she stands to move towards door)*

**FIONA:** Oh! No you don't! I know you, you'll put him under a cactus plant. *(chasing after her)* He's not going back to the crematorium. *(firmly)* Give me that urn.

**BRONWYN:** *(offended)* How dare you! Stop it. Stop it. Stop pulling, give it back to me. *(Bronwyn makes a grunting noise as she pulls hard at the urn)*

*There is a noise as the urn hits the floor.*

*There is a horrified gasp from both women.*

**BRONWYN:** Oh! my God Fee! – look what you've done, you've tipped Dad out on the floor.

**FIONA:** *(shrieking)* Me?.....Don't be ridiculous. It was your fault .

**FIONA:** *(on bended knee)* Dad, I'm so sorry.

**FIONA:** *(looking up to Bronwyn)* Well, don't just stand there – get the dustpan.

**BRONWYN:** Oh! all right, but it was your fault as much as mine. *(said exiting)*

**FIONA:** *(in a contemplative mood)* Still causing problems eh? Pops.

What are we going to do with you?

*Slight pause as Bronwyn enters.*

Thank you Bronwyn, I'll take that dustpan.

**BRONWYN:** Not likely! You'd probably sweep him under the rug.

*A few sweeping noises are heard.*

There you are Dad, all swept up. Now I just need to think of somewhere to put you...

**FIONA:** Oh! for heaven's sake, this is ridiculous.

**BRONWYN:** We're back where we started, only worse. *(pause)* Hang on. It's bin day tomorrow perhaps we could just.....

**FIONA:** *(horrified)* I'm not hearing this.

**BRONWYN:** Just a thought, any other suggestions.

**FIONA:** We could take him out to sea and drop him over the side. I saw that in a movie once it was very.....

**BRONWYN:** *(rolling her eyes)* m-o-o-ving, yes I know. Your problem is you watch too many movies, besides, we don't have a boat.

**FIONA:** It's traditional in some countries to float the ashes out to sea on a wreath. The mourners light candles and float them out at sunset. It's so *(pausing dramatically)* m-o-o-ving.

**BRONWYN:** *(groaning and muttering)* Oh! spare me! Dad hated sailing. He was pea green before the boat got out of the harbour. The Yacht Club was just his regular watering hole. Everyone knew him down there.

**FIONA:** *(getting agitated)* He must have had some hobby or interest.

**BRONWYN:** Only his Captain Marvel Comic Book Collection. He even bought the costume and scared half the kids in the neighbourhood, jumping out at them yelling “**Shazaam**” at the top of his voice.

**FIONA:** *(laughing)* Remember the night of his birthday party when he blew up the barbecue trying to perfect his Captain Marvel magical lighting technique.

**BRONWYN:** *(joining in laughter)* I thought Mum was going to kill him. The dog went berserk, the steaks were ruined and Dad ended up in casualty with minor burns, singed hair and his costume in shreds. The nurses still laugh about it.

**FIONA:** You must admit Bron, there was never a dull moment with Dad around, although he was more Hoges than hero.

**BRONWYN:** OK, but we still have the problem of what to do with Dad’s ashes. *(she sighs)* There’s only one thing for it. We each take half and do with them what we will.

**FIONA:** Split poor dad in half like a melon. Nooooooo!

**BRONWYN:** Oh! for Heaven’s sake don’t be ridiculous. Here you take him and put him on your mantelpiece.

**FIONA:** On my mantelpiece? No you take him and put him on yours.

**BRONWYN:** Oh! please let’s not have all this again.

**FIONA:** You started it.

**BRONWYN:** Did not.

**FIONA:** Did so too.

**BRONWYN:** Now you listen here.

*(The girls start to bicker loudly)*

**FIONA:** No, you listen!

**BRONWYN:** What do you think I’ve been doing?

**FIONA:** You reject my every idea.

**BRONWYN:** Only because they're just so fanciful.

**FIONA:** Oh, go on!

**BRONWYN:** No, you go on and on.

**FIONA:** And you don't.

**BRONWYN:** How do you mean? I'm just at the end of my tether.

*A loud knock at the door interrupts the bickering.*

*Bronwyn and Fiona are silent immediately.*

*Bronwyn goes to doorway or side curtain to usher the visitor in.*

**BARRY:** I'm Barry. Commodore at the Yacht Club. Came round to pick up your Dad. ....Oh, I see he's ready to go.

**FIONA and BRONWYN:** *(jointly)* WHAT!!

**BARRY:** Your Dad! .....said to leave it for a day or two and, if you're not still bickering, you'd be ready to hand him over.

**BRONWYN:** Hand him over?

**BARRY:** *(very enthusiastically)* Yeah! You knew what your Dad was like... wanted to go out with a bang! Last time he was at the Yacht Club, we made all the arrangements. We've got a fireworks display tomorrow night for the whole community. All we have to do is pack your Dad's ashes, along with the gunpowder into a whopping great rocket, light her up and boom he's away. He'll light up that sky for miles around. Can't go better than that!!

**BRONWYN:** *(perplexed)* But, I don't get it. Why on earth would Dad make such bizarre plans for his ashes?

**FIONA:** Bronnie, don't you see – he always wanted to fly like his hero.

**BRONWYN:** Oh! my God! you don't mean.....

**FIONA and BRONWYN:** CAPTAIN MARVEL !!!

*(turning together in a Captain Marvel stance)*

**BARRY:** I think I've missed something.

**BRONWYN:** *(very happy and with enthusiasm)* Trust Dad to do something different, the old rascal.

**FIONA:** *(enthusiastically)* This calls for a toast. Come on Barry, grab a glass and hold up that urn.

**BRONWYN:** Here's to you Dad – may you fly as high as you always dreamed.

**FIONA and BRONWYN:** Captain Marvel Forever! Shazaam!!

**SFX 2:** *The Captain Marvel theme plays.*

*The End*

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