



## EDUCATION NOTES

# ALL THE BLOOD AND ALL THE WATER

## By Suzie Miller

### Synopsis

Angel's dad is a Muslim from Iraq, his mum is second generation Australian of Italian heritage. His childhood best friend Ryder, and their extended social group are all Anglo Aussies, while his family friends are from his dad's culture. Angel finds he is falling in love with an Aussie beach girl called Honey. But Honey is unsure of herself and easily led. She falls under the influence of Lola, a girl with emotional problems and prone to self-harm.

Ali, Angel's father, a refugee, suffers from post stress trauma and is unable to work or leave the house. When Ali is taunted by Lola he defends himself by throwing a bucket of water over her. Angered and humiliated, she swears to 'Get the old man'.

Ryder's older brother Jax is serving time. In prison his dislike of the people he calls 'Lebs' has been hardened. On release, he heads for the beach where he encounters Aziz. He is about to dive into his favourite rock pool when Aziz asks him not to swim there, to respect the privacy of the Muslim women in the water. Jax infuriated by the request, questions his right to be on the beach.

**JAX** I don't know who the hell you think you are mate, but see that street up there? Well, there's a little place behind that street where I was born. Right there, stones throw from this rock pool.

They exchange threats:

**JAX** ...What? What you gonna do? Blow me up?

**AZIZ** Don't think I don't wish I could. I'm warning you, don't get in. You do it. I'm warning you. If you disrespect those women, you disrespect me, you disrespect all of us. And you'll be sorry.  
Don't think I don't wish I could. I'm warning you, don't get in. You do it. I'm warning you. If you disrespect those women, you disrespect me, you disrespect all of us. And you'll be sorry.

With Jax's return Ryder is forced to question his friend Angel's allegiance and Angel finds himself under pressure to choose between his two worlds, to choose a label as an 'aussie' or a 'leb' throwing him into a war of his own. Young and struggling with his own sense of self, he is faced with a calamitous betrayal when Honey and Lola return to his home and terrorise his father.

Shocked and hurt, Angel is forced to defend his family. He heads to the beach where a showdown between Jax and Aziz ends with calamitous results for all.

A play about how we define who we are and where we belong. In our new multicultural world when is blood thicker than water? And which blood is your truth?

## CAST

Jax SEAN BARKER  
Angel FAYSSAL BAZZI  
Honey EMILY BRENNAN  
Ali PATRICK DICKSON  
Aziz JOHN NASSER  
Lola BILLIE ROSE PRICHARD  
Ryder WILL SNOW

Director JOHN SHEEDY  
Lighting Designer NICHOLAS HIGGINS  
Co Designers BRADLEY CLARK AND ALEXANDRA SOMMER  
Sound Design ROBIN McCARTHY  
Fight Choreography KYLE ROWLINGS

## THE CRONULLA RIOTS

On Sunday 11 December, 2005 Cronulla Beach erupted into violence as a mob of 5000 Anglo Australians assaulted anyone suspected of being Lebanese or of Middle Eastern origin. Fuelled by alcohol, an angry crowd of mostly men, chanted racist slogans as they marched along the foreshore, attacking anyone who came to the assistance of their victims including police, security guards and ambulance officers.

The rioters were summoned to the beach by text messages urging them to revenge the bashing of two life guards earlier in the week by two Arabic youths. Alan Jones the breakfast announcer on 2GB, a Sydney talk-back radio station, was accused of fanned the flames of vigilante action by repeating the text messages on air, calling for Cronulla residents to defend their territory and reclaim the beach.

Many in the crowd were neo Nazi's and white supremacists from such organizations as Australia First party, Patriotic Youth League and the Newcastle- based Blood and Honour

Shouting anti Muslim slogans, the mob marched along the foreshore chanting 'Aussi, Aussi, Aussi, Oi, Oi, Oi.' Many waved Australian flags or draped them over their shoulders. Much of the action was centred on the memorial to the Bali Bomb victims. A woman wearing a veil was chased into a kiosk on the beach where she sheltered with police protecting her. The attackers surrounded the kiosk and climbed onto the roof chanting "Kill the Lebs". Police were pelted with bottles and rocks as they attempted to subdue the rioters.

Twenty five people were injured, forty cars were vandalised and sixteen people were arrested and charged with offences including possession of a prohibited drug, offensive manner, threatening violence, affray, possessing a knife in a public place, and driving in a manner dangerous. Only some of the arrested came from the local area, others were from Mortdale, Bondi Junction, Kareela, Granville, Lugarno, Greenacre, Mascot, Northmead, Jannali, Sutherland, and Riverwood. a manner dangerous. All of those charged were men between 17 and 40 years of age.

Further violent incidents occurred overnight including two stabbings, in Maroubra and Brighton-le-Sands.

The following day carloads of Arabic Australian men drove to Cronulla where a mob of over three hundred armed locals waited for an arranged confrontation. Carrying guns and crowbars they rampaged through the suburb damaging shops, business and cars and bashing residents who got in their way. Police called in riot equipment and arrested five men.

At the Lakemba Mosque two hundred men, some armed with pistols, assembled to protect the building from a threatened attack. Police surrounded the mosque and dispersed the crowd.

Images of the two days of violent and ugly riots were circulated around the world while the Australian media reported the event as horrifying and 'un Australian' prompting comparisons with the race riots of 1930's Berlin.

In response the Premier Morris Iemma, recalled the New South Wales Parliament which passed emergency legislation enabling the police to shut down bottle shops and hotels, close off areas and to search vehicles. The following year in February 2006 a "Public Order and Riot Squad" was established.

Community projects to rebuild the social fabric of the Cronulla area were set in place including attracting young people from Arabic backgrounds to join the Surf Life saving movement.

Sources

<http://www.theage.com.au/news/national/islamic-leaders-say-riots-are-unaustralian/2005/12/12/1134235972001.html>  
<http://www.wsws.org/articles/2006/nov2006/rio1-n30.shtml>  
<http://www.smh.com.au/news/national/mob-violence-envelops-cronulla/2005/12/11/1134235936223.html>  
[http://en.wikinews.org/wiki/Violence\\_at\\_Cronulla\\_Beach\\_as\\_5000\\_people\\_gather](http://en.wikinews.org/wiki/Violence_at_Cronulla_Beach_as_5000_people_gather)

## **Racism in Australia.**

Australia has a history of legislation related to racial immigration. The White Australia policy is said to have laid the foundation for racism. The term refers to legislation introduced following Federation in 1901 correctly titled the Immigration Restriction Bill, which restricted non-white immigration to Australia. Racially based immigration laws were first introduced to limit the influx of Chinese prospectors during the gold rush era of the 1850's. In 1896 a dictation test was introduced requiring migrants of non-European background to write a paragraph in a European language. Those that failed were refused admission. This test lasted until 1958. The White Australia policy was partially dismantled following WWII and became defunct in 1973 under the Whitlam Government. In 1975 Whitlam passed the Racial Discrimination Act which made racially based immigration selection illegal.

The Prime Minister at the time of the Cronulla riots John Howard, refused to call Australians "racist" although he had been accused of creating racism when in 1988 he claimed that the rate of Asian immigration into Australia was too high. Politician Pauline Hanson had also successfully exploited this claim and her QLD based One Nation Party. In her maiden speech in Parliament Hanson warned that Australia was "in danger of being swamped by Asians" due to high immigration, asserting that Asian immigrants "have their own culture and religion, form ghettos and do not assimilate." The Prime Minister John Howard acknowledged that her views were shared by many Australians.

Many of the initiatives relating to migration, illegal refugees and detention centres during the ten Howard years of government have been highly controversial. 'The Tampa Affair' and the 'Children Overboard' incident were both used to political advantage and became instrumental in creating a climate of fear and distrust towards people seeking refugee status in Australia. Most of the refugees involved in both incidents were of Middle Eastern origin.

On the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2007 the Liberal Government introduced an Australian Citizenship test requiring applicants to answer questions on Australian history, culture, values and sport in order to be awarded citizenship. The test resulted in a sharp falling off of applications. According to the January 30 Melbourne Age, immigration department figures in July 2007 reached a peak of 21,110, then dropped to 2,170 last October. In November the number was 3,190. 18% of applicants failed with the highest rate among humanitarian applicants from Sudan, Iraq and Afghanistan.

Senator Chris Evans, the new Labor Party immigration minister has confirmed that the test will stay with modifications to the questions and a relaxation of the English language proficiency requirements.

References and sources:

<http://www.reasoninrevolt.net.au/pdf/a000101.pdf>

<http://www.citizenship.gov.au/test/index.htm>

<http://www.greenleft.org.au/2008/744/38479>

[http://news.sbs.com.au/worldnewsaustralia/sports\\_trivia\\_in\\_citizenship\\_test\\_govt\\_539197](http://news.sbs.com.au/worldnewsaustralia/sports_trivia_in_citizenship_test_govt_539197)

<http://www.immi.gov.au/>

## Notes By The Playwright Suzie Miller

### Where does a play come from?

How many times am I asked this question? But it's also a really good question and it makes me ponder its answer for some time even after I have appeared to have answered it.

There are so many sources for stories how does a writer decide which story is the one to write a lengthy play or book about? Well I can only speak for myself and for me it is clear that there is an actual moment when you realise that this is something I need to write about, there is something that goes through my mind when I hear or think about an issue or idea and it is something like this:

‘This story is not like the others, this one has me listening harder, has me thinking about it beyond the day, has my sense of questioning sharpened – this one makes me wonder, and makes me ask WHAT IF?’

Which brings me to this play - ALL THE BLOOD AND ALL THE WATER – where did it sprout from?

Clearly this play has some resonance with the racial violence that occurred on Cronulla Beach in 2005, that of course is the obvious source for it BUT it goes way beyond that story and actually was triggered by a range of stories and experiences that I came into contact with well before the riots took place.

**Firstly** I am a human rights lawyer who works with young people under 25 many of which are disadvantaged in various ways So in working at this job I

was in the unique position of having young people confide their thoughts and worries to me. This is in the context of many of them having gotten into trouble and having to go to court. The young people I represent are often challenged in various ways by virtue of not having had families that could support them emotionally and financially throughout their childhood, or who have drug and mental health issues. We also represent many young people from various non-English speaking backgrounds.

Well before the Cronulla riots and then for a long period after them, I would talk to my clients about violence perpetrated both against them and by them, and in my unique role had to ask them questions that no one else would have dared ask them. In the course of representing them I was someone who would ask the hard questions and discuss their ideas with them, challenging them often but mainly just listening. Of course their confidentiality is protected at all times, and in no way do any of my characters represent any particular person, they are purely fictional characters that my clients assisted me with language and ideas about.

The play came about as a result of the questions I asked and them about RACE and IDENTITY. These are the central idea to ALL THE BLOOD, and as such I was able to draw on much more than just the Cronulla riots.

**Secondly** I was more interested in what led up to the riots. How did it happen that there was such a division?

### **Getting to Work!**

What primary research did I do other than talking to young people?

Well in truth the talking to young people was the best research I could possibly do. However I also read pages and pages of transcripts of interviews by ABC radio with young Muslims as well as reading many of the Islamic guides. It was indeed fascinating reading but just the beginning.

I read all of the newspaper articles about the riots and then found myself in the position of representing young people who were on both sides of the riots – i.e. young people from Anglo and also from Middle-Eastern backgrounds. There were more people arrested on minor charges than people would know of, many people were stopped in cars on the way down and arrested if there was something amiss. Others were arrested in the days that followed. My clients were of this group.

The thing I found most interesting was that all the young people I spoke with regardless of whether they were of the so-called anglos or the middle-eastern clients said the SAME THING!! They all said that they felt misunderstood and disrespected!! This was so interesting for me as the 'disrespect' came from racially stereotyping people as well as misunderstanding and being confused or not caring about what was important to others. It seemed to me that while

the issues were not simple, there was at the basis of it a chronically untreated background of misunderstanding and miscommunication that came about as a result of ignorance.

Furthermore it was not until I was asking hundreds of questions that the ridiculous irony of the issues and language usage became clear. In fact they became clear to me in a way they are still not clear with the media.

All the 'middle eastern appearance' young people (and I don't like the new use of 'middle eastern appearance' in the media as it is supposed to be politically correct but is just a euphemism for 'other'), anyway all the middle eastern appearance young people are referred to as 'lebs' this is bizarre for two reasons: 1. It is assumed that all Australians that have a middle-eastern appearance are from Lebanon!!! Which is so ignorant, and 2. The other issue is that it is Muslim culture that seems to be a reason for racial/ethnic hatred, relating to extremist behavior, and when young people refer to 'Lebs' they also assume that they are of Islamic faith, now we all know (don't we?) that there is also a huge population of Lebanese Christians in Australian.

In any event, even the young people of middle-eastern appearance (there's that term again) who are from a variety of backgrounds recognize that anglo Australians refer to them as Lebs and know that that is the street word for them, so that they may even use it themselves!

On the other hand, all the middle eastern appearance kids I spoke with referred to the anglos Australians as the 'Aussies'. As did the anglo Australians themselves. I would be confused by this and say "but you are all Australians right? Isn't that what we are at pains to establish?!" Answer: "Well yeah of course, but we all know that those guys are the Aussies"!!!

Then to make matters worse the Australian flag, a flag that had previously been benign or even thought of as a remnant of our past British heritage (with kids in schools all over having a go at redesigning it) became the symbol of white extremists deciding that they owned the flag, and as such a symbol of threat to anyone who was not ANGLO AUSTRALIAN – that includes any person who despite having been born here, maybe even had family here for generations, if they didn't fit a certain stereotype of anglo Australian they were 'other'.

SO MY PLAY HAD LEGS – now I had to decide on characters and start to flesh it out further.

## **The characters**

The main 'WHAT IF?' question I came up with was:

What if you were a kid who had a middle-eastern father who was Muslim and a second generation Australian mother who had an Italian catholic heritage, you were culturally and possibly quietly Muslim to please your dad, and you went to

the local school where you had always been friends with a guy who stood by you through thick and thin?

What happens if someone tells you have to choose?? What identity do you choose?

This is the basis for the character of ANGEL.

And in many ways Angel is a metaphor for Australia itself.

We have all these cultures living alongside each other. We are in fact unique in the world for the layered nature of our multiculturalism. Long ago we gave up the notion of assimilation being our aim, instead we have as a nation decided that our multicultural nature is what makes us interesting.

But who are we as a nation if we are forced to decide our identity, if we are told to choose?

And does Angel decide he is of his family or of his new world? Why in fact does he have to decide between the past and the future like this?

Both Angel and Ryder are young men who have never questioned their loyalty to each other. In fact it is only in the resurgence of anti-Muslim racist ideas that has made Ryder think about his friend's background. Ryder is trying to be a best friend and a brother to Jax who requires his loyalty. Up until now, Angel being of Muslim faith has meant nothing. With the overseas fundamental extremist attacks in the US and Bali, Ryder like so many of us is asking questions and is uneducated in the fact that there are extremists and 'regular' Muslims, who are just people with a gentle non-violent religion.

The questions that Ryder asks of Angel are indicative of his ignorance of this fact, and also are a terrible hint of what now seems to be creeping up on Angel's life. He feels he has to explain himself and his dad, and also that there is something about him that is not accepted all of a sudden, through no fault of his or his religion.

Jax is a damaged man who has had a bad relationship with his parents and a tough time in jail. He is angry and needs to feel powerful again.

In many ways Aziz is similar, having suffered the loss of his dreams, and having been on the receiving end of being the 'other' he doesn't understand why after rejoicing at being in a new wonderful country he is suddenly treated with such disrespect. He came here keen to contribute and work hard only to find he is unwelcome. He is angry and feels a need to fight for the respect he knows he deserves. While at first he tried hard to be understood a part of him has given up on that now.

Both Aziz and Jax are the older members of each of Angel and Ryder's families. Aziz is Angel's cousin and Jax is Ryder's brother. Both are asserting some sort of claim on the soul of one of these young men, and questioning

the relationship between Angel and Ryder based on their own angry feelings about race. Aziz feels worried for Angel and wants to teach him what he has learned the hard way, Jax thinks he knows what is right and wants to assert himself.

Ali, Angel's father arrived in Australia a long time ago, after the last war in Iraq. He was tortured and saw many terrible things, arriving here as a refugee. He met and married Angel's mother – a cleaner at the local hospital now desperately trying to support the family – and soon after Angel was born suffered from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. This is a common mental health illness after a war experience or a life-threatening situation, which makes the sufferer feel extreme fear and anxiety, agitation and worry. Ali is afraid to go out, is always fearful, has flashbacks, nightmares and occasionally hears voices.

Sadly it is his fear at hearing loud voices, which is misunderstood by the young women in the play that ultimately leads to catastrophic results.

The level of misunderstanding about Ali shouting at them, is taken by Lola as a racial slur and as such inflames Lola in particular who has been let down by the world and needs to prove herself. Ultimately when Aziz speaks to Honey about not spending time with Angel, she interprets this as a racial slur (which it is) and allows herself to assist Lola take revenge against Ali in lieu of fighting Aziz and his insulting words.

The young women characters came about as a result of another news event. In Sydney 2006 two young girls both of 14-years of age, beat a middle eastern taxi driver so that they caused the heart attack that killed him. He was a disabled older man and they were both, difficult and challenged young girls who were expressing some horrific and violent need to assert themselves and to have power over 'other'.

It was after reading this news article that the play started being drafted. Lola and Honey are two characters that required less research. I have spoken in my job as human rights lawyer with hundreds of young women who, while not killing people, have expressed misplaced anger at either themselves by cutting themselves and/or at much younger or much older individuals. Usually abused themselves they fight back or use the learned violence against those they can have power over, or any group that they can dehumanize. They tend to claim that their victims are 'wrong' or 'other'.

While Honey is not the sort of girl who would think up this behaviour on her own, she is extremely needy of Lola and of Lola's approval. Despite her mother's drinking and her resultant isolation, Honey could have gone either way and through a series of events ends up at Ali's house on the fateful day.

## **DEVELOPMENT of the work**

So now I had a first draft. Having scribbled it out long hand and then typed it up (as I always do, I write faster than I type and so feel I can get hold of what

a character is saying if I am writing it down). I wrote the play from beginning to end.

Ultimately the first draft ended up with the Cronulla Riots being the finale.

I was really interested in how the riots came about, and so it seemed natural to actually end with them, however I was not entirely comfortable with the ending.

The first draft was clearly an exploration of a whole lot of small miscommunications and misunderstandings adding up to the ultimate riot - a way of trying to establish for each group their sense of belonging to a 'tribe'. I was fascinated in the way all Australians have this thing where they are tolerant of the:

"bloke next door who is from another culture - he cooks some great food, and comes around sometime and has a beer" yet when it is not the one-on-one relationship, it seems easy to dismiss "all of them are taking jobs or selective high school places"!

It seems that it is only at this individual level that people are not intimidated or in 'fear' of.

The play was fortunate in then winning the Inscription / Theatrelab open award, the Holmes a Court award, entitling me, as part of that award, to a 2 week with Edward Albee, working on my play.

Edward Albee is the iconic playwright of the USA who wrote amongst other extraordinary works "Whose Afraid of Virginia Woolf?"

That play is one of the US works that has defined that country's theatre culture. While in his late 70s he was nevertheless completely formidable and as sharp as a tack. Albee was really supportive of ALL THE BLOOD and celebrated a play that was about racism and its causes. He had lots of ideas and questions about that first draft.

The two weeks were amazing, his main issue with the work was that in the first draft the girls did the cutting scene in the early part of the play but it was never mentioned again. He felt that such a dramatic thing had to be referred to again and resolved. This resulted in the scene in Act 2 where Honey refuses to participate in the process thereby ultimately ending her relationship with Lola.

Albee was also concerned that we rethink the ending – particularly as we had talked about the play not being about the Cronulla riots but about the build up of hatred that could allow something like that to happen.

John Sheedy was the director throughout this whole workshop – sitting with me as Edward Albee commented on the work. John then directed 5 actors

through the first 3 scenes of the play for an audience of industry professionals.

Luckily for us Camilla Rountree and Robert Love of Riverside Theatre were in that audience and offered us further support.

Riverside paid for a script workshop as part of their new Breakout Series, where we could have a full cast, work on the script for a day and have a read that night of the entire script. This is an exciting thing for a writer, especially as there are 7 characters in this work, which means it is an expensive show!

### Arabic Content

The play was finessed, the extra scene was written for Lola and Honey with the blades, and the most exciting thing happened for me as a writer and for the play as a whole – Fayssal Bazzi who plays Angel in this premier production, and who has worked with me before on a play of mine Cross Sections that went to the Opera House, and I had a play-changing conversation. While I have known Fayssal for years he had never mentioned to me that he was of Muslim faith and that he spoke Arabic. We had a great discussion just before the Riverside read where he said, “You know Angel is like ME. My Dad’s Muslim and my mum’s Christian; and my best friend is an anglo guy who picks the ham off any pizza we eat so I don’t end up eating it.” This was an amazing confirmation of everything the play was saying. I started asking Fayssal questions and then we started translating some of the text into Arabic. The Arabic language allowed some of the scenes to really come alive. Fayssal could also offer some ideas on how he would be with his own dad, a successful dentist, at home, and which could inform Angel’s relationship with his own dad.

Days before the Riverside read I had spent a few days wandering around Auburn and just talking to people in the shops and on the street. I explained I was writing a play and was welcomed and spoken to frankly. I bought books and videos from the Islamic bookshop which I read into the night, and had some great chats to some of the women of Islamic faith. For me personally it made the ‘other’ so familiar, and real.

While the Riverside public read still had the riot ending, the audience responded extremely well with emails being offered in support weeks afterwards. But it was clear that it was too big an ending rather than one that was just amongst the characters we had followed and come to know. The ending would have to be much closer to home.

### The Production

When Riverside announced that they would be producing the play I was thrilled, not just because I love the size and the feel of the Lennox theatre, but because I was excited about the audiences we could reach. The production was still a way off, but I kept revisiting the issues over and over both at my legal job and with John the director.

When rehearsals began the ending was still being written, and the actors in this show were fabulous in helping to shape it.

## The Set

The set design by Bradley Clark and Alexandra Sommer was an amazing thing to behold albeit in miniature on first day of rehearsal. The sound guy Robin McCarthy's ideas and the lighting designer Nicholas Higgins and fight director Kyle Rowlings all put things in place, layered beautifully by John's direction to create the show.

I think the most important thing about theatre is that when the show goes to the audience it is so much more than a writer's work. Sure, right back when I had that original spark it was my work, and then suddenly it is moulded and loved and pushed and layered by the producer, the director, the designers and the cast. Things that I forgot were in the stage directions suddenly came alive, ideas that were mainly in my head became part of an actor's characterization, relationships that I had laboured over were filled with the complexity of real relationships and language performed its multitude of functions.

I couldn't be more thrilled with this production, but it is the hard work of both Camilla Rountree and John Sheedy that breathed air into the story, that gave it a voice and a reality and I have to thank them both so profoundly.

## CLASS ROOM ISSUES TO CONSIDER AND DISCUSS

1. What are we afraid of in the 'other'?
2. What is it about tribal belonging that makes us feel part of something and yet sometimes conflicted at the same time?
3. With actions that you may not actively 'do' but are there to be a witness to, or are the non-active partner to – are you just as liable?
4. What needs to be done to allow a true multicultural nation to exist harmoniously?
5. If you could design a school program, drama class or a computer game that was intended to show people what it felt like to be told that you didn't belong, or that you were unacceptable being who you were, how would it look/be?
6. Are the female characters in this play also part of some sort of group or tribal behaviour? How does it differ to the boys?
7. What are the responsibilities of Jax and Aziz in this play? How could

they have handled their conflict differently?

8. If so much of our self is about trying to fit in, what do we do if we stand up for something that means we are no longer in the 'group'?
9. Is it possible to think that theatre can have an effect on changing the way we think about things? Or are we just speaking to the converted?
10. If drama is about conflict (as often it is!) what are the many conflicts of this play?

## CLASS ROOM ACTIVITIES

### 1. **Belonging is a major theme in *All The Blood and All The Water*.**

Angel wants to belong to the Aussie world he and Ryder have always shared but his family background prevents him from being fully accepted.

Honey wants to belong to the group that Lola has introduced her too but the price is often very high.

Ali wants to belong in Australia but he is too traumatised by his past to fully engage with the Australian way of life.

Ali does not want to belong. He would prefer to remain separate and be respected as a Muslim. He distrusts Australians.

Jax resents the newcomers particularly the Muslims, and wants to fit back in to the world he came from, far away from jail.

Lola is a misfit who can only feel she belongs by manipulating those around her.

Appoint different class members to each assume a character from the play and write a short description of how they feel about belonging to a social group. Read out the results and discuss. Then ask the students to swap and become the opposite character. Describe how it feels to be someone else and to face his or her dilemma or situation. Write an essay about belonging.

### 2. **The Status Game.**

Status and who has the right to call themselves Aussie is at the heart of *All The Blood and All The Water*. Explore who is the dominant character in each scene by playing the Status game.

Take a deck of cards and remove the court cards. Distribute a card to each character and ask them to play their roles according to the level of the cards. If for instance, if the scene selected is between Lola and

Honey and Lola draws a nine and Lola a five, they will play the scene with Honey as the dominant character. Then reverse the cards and play it again with Lola dominant. In this way the power plays and the dramatic thrust of the scene is revealed and it becomes easy to understand which character the playwright intended to be driving the scene. Try the same game with Aziz and Jax in the rock pool scene at the beach also in the scenes between Ali and Lola and Honey.

3. **Moral Dilemma:**

Ask one of the students to be Angel and other students to take the roles of the other characters in the play. Angel sits facing Ryder, Aziz, Ali, Honey, Jax, and Lola. They each put forward an argument as to why he should or should not deny his father's Muslim heritage and declare himself an Aussie. When all the arguments have been put Angel must make a decision – will he deny his heritage and family or not and why and how has he come to this conclusion.

4. **What do we learn about the characters of Lola and Honey?**

How does the play suggest they relate to each other?

Describe their self-image and their home backgrounds. How do these two concepts affect their behaviour in the play?

Examine the first scene between the two girls. Can you see the scene being played another way? Describe.

5. **The role of the Media in the Cronulla Riots.**

Research the background of the riots using the newspaper links below and discuss this quote:

*'Sections of the media took this issue far too far and one can only surmise that the way this issues was dealt with on talkback radio amounts to incitement,'* Islamic Friendship Association of Australia president Keysar Trad.

6. **Examine the newspaper reports on the links below**

<http://www.smh.com.au/news/national/mob-violence-envelops-cronulla/2005/12/11/1134235936223.html>

<http://www.theage.com.au/news/national/islamic-leaders-say-riots-are-unaustralian/2005/12/12/1134235972001.html>

<http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2005/12/12/1134235970427.html>

**Discuss how the events were recorded and described using the following topics:**

What is the moral responsibility of the press when reporting race related incidents?

What was the attitude of the Muslim community to the riots?

What was the attitude of the Cronulla locals to the riots?

7. **Examine and discuss the following newspaper quotes**

*'Australia is pluralist society, with many faiths and traditions all ravelled into one'* Kuranda Seyit, director of The Forum on Australia's Islamic

## Relations (FAIR)

*'White supremacists were among those who took part in yesterday's race riots in Sydney's south.....There appears to be an element of white supremacists and they really have no place in mainstream Australian society, those sort of characters belong in Berlin 1930s.'*  
Police Minister Carl Scully.

"Disgusting, un-Australian and shameful behaviour," by Sutherland Shire Mayor Kevin Schreiber.

8. **Discuss racism in Australian society.** What is the responsibility of Government in promoting and maintaining racial harmony? How could racially based prejudice or violence be avoided in your school or community?
9. **Describe a typical dinner at home.** What food do students eat at home? Have a day when students bring typical dishes from their home cultures to school and share it with classmates. Discuss the difference between a typical Aussie meal and the meals from different cultures. Discuss the etiquette at the table and the cultural differences in the student's homes, food and dietary rules.
10. **Discuss what it means to be an Aussie. What does the class understand Multiculturalism to mean?**
11. **Ask the class to study the *Becoming an Australian Citizen* booklet and answer the test in class.** Discuss the outcome with the students.
12. **Read the following account of the girls killing a taxi driver**  
<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2007/04/20/1902746.htm>  
<http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,20867,21674784-2702,00.html>

### **Discuss using the following topics:**

- the role of alcohol and drugs in violent crime
- teenage binge drinking and responsible drinking among people

**13. Topics for class discussion, essays or debates:**

"What happened to the Australian idea of a fair go and tolerance?"

Outside court following the trial of the two girls who attacked the taxi driver his wife said: "They shouldn't have been out there at two o'clock in the morning," "Their parents should be right there with them, serving their sentence with their kids."

*Notes prepared by Camilla Rountree and Suzie Miller*