

ACT ONE

Scene One

[We open in the small rural town of Wickliffe, set in country Western Victoria. Around are signs of a dying town - houses up for sale, closed down shops. A bridge is off to one side, and we can see open fields on the backdrop. We see the sunrise. Cue Song 1: Time Marches On.]

KATE

IN THE YEAR OF EIGHTEEN THIRTY SIX
EXPLORER THOMAS MITCHELL FOUGHT THROUGH SHRUB AND STICKS
AND FOUND WATER CLEAR AS CRYSTAL

HE NAMED THE RIVER "HOPKINS" AND WROTE THESE WORDS PROFOUND

MITCHELL

"A LAND MORE FAVOURABLE FOR LIFE COULD NOT BE FOUND."

KATE/MITCHELL

TIME MARCHES ON, TIME MARCHES ON

KATE

JOHN FARRELL AND HIS WIFE ARRIVED IN EIGHTEEN FORTY THREE
AND ERECTED BY THE RIVER

FARRELL

FARRELL'S INN AS IT CAME TO BE
A HOME FOR THE TRAVELLER AND THE LONELY

KATE

PEOPLE CAME BY HORSE AND CART
AND STOPPED AS THEY PASSED THROUGH
AND THERE THE TOWN OF WICKLIFFE SWELLED
IN EIGHTEEN FIFTY TWO

ALL

TIME MARCHES ON, TIME MARCHES ON
WHILE LIFE IS SPARKING
TIME MARCHES ON, TIME MARCHES ON
AND KEEPS ON MARCHING
ON...

WYSELASKIE STARTED BUILDING HIS NARRAPUMELAP

WYSELASKIE

COMPLETED IN EIGHTEEN SEVENTY EIGHT
A BUILDING THAT PROUDLY STANDS STILL TODAY

KATE

A COMMUNITY THRIVED AND PROSPERED,
THROUGH FLOOD, AND FIRE AND WAR
A PEOPLE PROUD OF WHAT THEY'D BUILT
ON THE HOPKINS RIVER'S SHORE

ALL

TIME MARCHES ON, TIME MARCHES ON
WHILE LIFE IS GROWING
TIME MARCHES ON, TIME MARCHES ON
AND KEEPS ON MARCHING
ON...

A TOWN OF SPORTING PROWESS, THE MAGPIES PREMIERES
RACING, CRICKET, TENNIS, GOLF, ALL MADE THE LAND AWARE
THAT HERE WAS A PEOPLE FULL OF PROMISE

KATE

BUT IN THE 1980'S, THERE CAME A SHIFT IN TIDE
SLOWLY PROMISE FADED AND WITH IT WENT THE PRIDE
OF A TOWN ONCE STRONG AND STABLE

AS THE YEAR TWO THOUSAND CLOSED,
MORE FAMILIES LEFT THE LAND
AND WHISPERS OF THE HISTORY
WERE TOO HARD TO UNDERSTAND

ALL

TIME MARCHES ON, TIME MARCHES ON
WHILE LIFE IS DYING
TIME MARCHES ON, TIME MARCHES ON
AND KEEPS ON MARCHING
ON...

*[Everyone exits. Kate sits down on the bridge,
admiring the view, while the townspeople head off to their daily
lives. Jane, Stuart and Wendy walk onto the bridge.]*

JANE

Hey Kate!

KATE

Hi Jane. Stuart. Wendy.

STUART

Hey.

WENDY

Hey.

JANE

Watcha doin' for summer hols?

KATE

Nothin' much. Reckon I'll just hang out here. You?

JANE

Same - unfortunately.

STUART

My dad's gotta shear the sheep - he's got a few with flies up their bum.

KATE

Gross.

STUART

Meh - happens every year.

KATE

What are you doin' Wendy?

WENDY

Mum says we can't go away this year - we didn't make enough money from the last wheat sale. So, we're stuck here.

JANE

Boring!

STUART

You said it.

KATE

What are you talking about? Wickliffe is a great place to be!

WENDY

You serious?

KATE

Of course.

JANE

No, really.

KATE

Yes, really.

STUART

Hell, I want to be anywhere but here. This place is a hole.

WENDY

The black hole of the Western District!

[Jane, Stuart and Wendy laugh.]

JANE

I thought that was Hamilton!

WENDY

Nah - even Google says it's Wickliffe!

[The three laugh again.]

KATE

Get off it, guys. There's heaps to do.

JANE

Like what?

KATE

The river. The old church. The old school. Go bike riding.
Climb a tree. Picnic.

STUART

Yadda yadda yadda - boring!

[Cue Song 2: How Can You Love A Dump Like This]

WENDY

Anyone would think you want to be here.

KATE

So?

JANE

Let me get this straight - you actually like Wickliffe?

KATE

What's wrong with it?

JANE

What's wrong with it? Kate, are you nuts?

JANE

I GOTTA TELL YA STRAIGHT RIGHT NOW, MY GIRL
YOU GOT ME WORRYING
I CAN'T BELIEVE WHAT YOU ARE SAYING NOW
YOU GOT ME ON A STRING - STRUNG OUT!
HOW CAN YOU THINK THAT THIS IS EVERYTHING
ALL YOU'LL EVER NEED
THERE' S ANOTHER WORLD NOT FAR FROM HERE
BEYOND THE GRASS AND SEED
YOU CAN THROW ROCKS INTO A RIVER OR
YOU CAN GET OUTTA HERE
I KNOW WHICH ONE THAT I'D BE CHOOSING, GIRL

BUT LET ME MAKE IT CLEAR

HOW CAN YOU LOVE -

STUART/WENDY

HOW CAN YOU LOVE -

JANE

A DUMP LIKE THIS?

STUART/WENDY

A DUMP

A DUMP LIKE THIS

JANE

HOW CAN YOU SAY -

STUART/WENDY

HOW CAN YOU SAY -

ALL THREE

THIS IS WHAT YOU'LL ALWAYS MISS

JANE

YOU GOTTA LOOK BEYOND THE SKYLINE

AND SEE WHAT IS WAY OUT THERE

ALL THREE

TELL ME HOW CAN YOU LOVE

JANE

A DUMP LIKE THIS!

KATE

You guys are full of it.

WENDY

But Kate, you don't understand!

YOU'RE ONLY TWELVE AND YET YOU THINK THAT YOU
HAVE SEEN AND DONE IT ALL

YOU'VE GOT A LIFE THAT'S FAR AHEAD OF YOU
MORE THAN THE COUNTRY SPRAWL

I'M ONLY WAITING FOR THE MOMENT WHEN
I START MY CAR AND DRIVE

DOWN THE HIGHWAY I'LL GO CRUISING AND
THE CITY I'LL ARRIVE.

YOU'RE IN A TOWN THAT'S CLOSE TO DYING AND
WHY SHOULD YOU DIE WITH IT?

IT'S TIME TO LOOK AT WHAT IS COMING NEXT
AND PACK YOUR BAGS AND SPLIT!

HOW CAN YOU LOVE -

STUART/JANE

HOW CAN YOU LOVE -

WENDY

A DUMP LIKE THIS?

STUART/JANE

A DUMP

A DUMP LIKE THIS

WENDY

HOW CAN YOU SAY -

STUART/JANE

HOW CAN YOU SAY -

ALL THREE

YOU ONLY WANT TO REMINISCE

WENDY

YOU GOTTA SEE THAT THIS IS NOTHING
COMPARED TO WHAT'S WAITING WAY OUT THERE

ALL THREE

TELL ME HOW CAN YOU LOVE

WENDY

A DUMP LIKE THIS!

STUART

I hate to say it, but the girls are right.

KATE

What?

STUART

STAY HERE AND YOU WILL MISS SO MUCH YOU'LL NEVER KNOW
WHILE EVERYONE ELSE PASSES BY
STAY HERE AND YOU WILL ALWAYS BE JUST "GOING SLOW"
THE FAST LANE'S WAITING, ALL YOU GOT TO DO IS
BID THIS TOWN GOOD BYE!

JANE

HOW CAN YOU LOVE -

STUART/WENDY

HOW CAN YOU LOVE -

JANE

A DUMP LIKE THIS?

STUART/WENDY

A DUMP
A DUMP LIKE THIS

JANE

HOW CAN YOU KNOW -

STUART/WENDY

HOW CAN YOU KNOW -

ALL THREE

THIS IS WHAT YOU'LL ALWAYS MISS

JANE

IF YOU DON'T LOOK TO THE FUTURE
THEN YOU'RE STUCK LIVING IN THE PAST

ALL THREE

TELL ME HOW CAN YOU LOVE
TELL ME WHY DO YOU LOVE
TELL ME HOW CAN YOU LOVE
A DUMP LIKE THIS!

KATE

You guys sound like my parents.

STUART

That's 'cause we hear it from them...

ALL FOUR

...All the time!

[They laugh together.]

KATE

So, what are you guys going to do today?

JANE

Nothing.

WENDY

Nothing.

STUART

Nothing.

KATE

Well, that's exciting...

JANE

And it proves our point - there's nothing to do in Wickliffe.

STUART

And there never will be.

WENDY

What are you going to do?

KATE

Maybe do some fishing.

STUART

Ugh.

JANE

Double ugh.

KATE

It's better than doing nothing like you guys.

WENDY

Dunno about that. Maybe you could come up with something that makes Wickliffe into a tourist attraction!

STUART

Ooh - a waterslide!

JANE

A themepark!

WENDY

A castle!

[The three burst into hysterics. Cue Song 3: This Is My Town.]

KATE

Funny guys, real funny!

JANE

See ya later!

[Jane, Wendy and Stuart start to leave.]

KATE

Yeah, see ya.

[The others leave and Kate sits on the pier.]

A castle. Morons.