



Source: Chris McGreal, 'Defiance, anger and tears...then the inevitable farewell to Gaza', *The Guardian online*, 18/08/05.

Tags: [death](#), [disenchantment](#)

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Thank you.

Thank you.

Yes, well, thank you all very much for coming, ah...and, oh yes, a very special thank you too to the East Narrangimbie Junior Ballet Class for that beautiful dance. It certainly — Sorry?

Apron? What apron pet?

Oh...OH!

Yes.

Well anyway, next on the agenda, as part of tonight's entertainment —

What's that?

Well, ah, yes actually, it is blood.

Sorry.

Ah...sorry everyone about the apron. So, as I was saying, ladies and gentlemen, hold onto your hats —

Where's Russell?

Ah well, Russell is ah, seeing to something...out the back.

Ah.

An emergency. But there's no need to panic. Ah. He didn't want me to say anything. And so I'm trying really hard.

Not to say anything. Ah. So, he'll be back after the next

act or the next after that to continue as usual with the

entertainment for tonight and I'll be back, out the back —

Oh dear.

Sorry.

Sorry.

I'm not cut out for this...speaking in public...or not

speaking...or,

Ah...blood.

Never been good with blood.

And there was so much of it.

Yes. Well. I was, ah, out the back, fixing the sandwiches and I heard something at the wire door and I didn't think anything of it because that wire door has never been tight enough and whenever there's any kind of a breeze it can move around a bit and bang, you know, well, all of us who've used the kitchen, and I guess actually that's most of us, know that it bangs. Anyway it was banging, a little, and so it took me a while to realise, but I did finally realise, that there was something there, maybe a dog I thought or one of the little ones who'd got bored with the ballet dancing and was looking for something to eat.

So I opened the door.

There was nothing I could do, the blood was pouring out of her, through all of these cuts all over her body, and in her hand she still held the razor. I managed to prise it out of her hand and at that point she seemed to relax a little but there was nothing else I could do; the blood kept on pouring. Russell came to thank God and went to call the

ambulance, so I waited with her. I could see that she was scared and I didn't want to call anyone else because I didn't want any of the kiddies to see her because who knows what nightmares they might have had after seeing something like that. Also there was this quiet around her like a bubble it was like the whole world had suddenly calmed down and closed down to be with her at the end and I didn't want to break it by calling out, I couldn't even hear the music from Swan Lake anymore there was so much quiet, so I sat down on the step and I took her in my arms. Yes. I had to breathe quite a bit to stop myself from trembling or crying out and I was very frightened because this girl with all the cuts all over her was Karen Dalton whose mother I knew and who I'd seen growing up and who'd been friends for a while with my Susan and what was she doing there in my lap with her body all cut open like that and what had caused her to do such a thing? So I rocked her and I tried to calm her and I tried to tell her that it was all okay and that we loved her all of us and that we would look after her and that I was sorry so sorry that she had felt like she had to do something like that and that nobody had been there and I kept saying sorry I couldn't stop.

In the end she started to cry and that was good because in the tears, ah, I felt that perhaps she had some peace because they were quiet tears, gentle tears, you know. But it was also very difficult yes very difficult because, well, bubbles of blood started coming out of her mouth. And, ah...she was very pale, so I stroked her forehead and said not to be scared and that she would surely be going to a much more beautiful world than this one, where the people would know how to run it better than we have and where they would know how to look after each other and where the kind of pain that she had been feeling would not be there any more. Yes that was what I said yes something like that at the end. And then the ambulance came but there was nothing they could do.

I want to know what did we do wrong that I had to hold our own Karen Dalton in my arms, one of our young, only fourteen, and watch her die? What did we do wrong?

Ah. Yes. Well. I've done everything Russell told me not to do. At the side here Alan is waiting patiently to go on next, as per the schedule of entertainment for this evening. But...I think we should break here, at least for a bit. ah, have a cup of tea, a chat, some fresh air. I think this will be the, ah, the interval.

Thank you.

Thank you.

*Adapted for performance by Barbara Campbell from a story by Caroline Lee.*