

GLORIA GADFLY AND THE FASHION FILLIES

A satirical radio play

By

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Synopsis

Former Melbourne gossip columnist, Gloria Gadfly, is planning a fashion contest as part of the Fish Bay Spring Racing Carnival. With Gloria in charge of the fashion fillies and professional photographer, Nigel Boston, taking the shots, nothing could possibly go wrong - could it?

CHARACTERS

- GLORIA GADFLY** A former gossip columnist with a posh Toorak-type voice, aged early forties, who has left Melbourne for Fish Bay
- NIGEL BOSTON:** A photographer with a camp voice who specialises in shots for newspaper gossip columns. Worked with Gloria till she moved
- JODIE BULLMORE:** The owner of the Fish Bay beauty salon, with a strine voice, aged mid-forties, and mother of Amber
- AMBER BULLMORE:** Entrant in fashion contest aged about 17 with a common, uneducated voice. Daughter of Jodie Bullmore
- KYLIE GROSSMAN:** Entrant in fashion contest aged about 17, with a common, uneducated voice
- SERGEANT BLEWITT:** Male police sergeant aged about fifty who investigates the theft of expensive designer clothes

SCENE 1. INT. GLORIA GADFLY'S HOUSE

AUDIO: BOTTLES CLINKING AND SOUND OF COCKTAIL MAKER BEING SHAKEN

NIGEL: Hmm. Tasty. I'll say one thing for you Gloria darling; you certainly know how to mix an excellent martini.

GLORIA: Well I should do, I've had *loads* of practice. (*PAUSE*) Cheers.

NIGEL: Chink, chink.

AUDIO: GLASSES CLINKING

GLORIA: Has it crossed your Melbourne radar that Fish Bay is having a Spring Racing Carnival in two weeks?

NIGEL: Can't say it has. (*PAUSE*) I'm amazed the town even has a race course.

GLORIA: (*WITH A TOUCH OF IRRITATION*) Well it does and I'm organising the Fashions on the Field contest.

NIGEL: *Ooh.* There's nothing like fashion fillies and bitch fights to set your pulse racing, is there Gloria dear?

GLORIA: The thing is Nigel, I need a brilliant fashion photographer. (*PAUSE*) Will you do it?

NIGEL: Flattery will get you *everywhere*, darling. Do you have any sponsors? I'm thinking St Vinnie's or the Brotherhood.

GLORIA: You can jest but the contest is huge news here. And ... the prize is a ten week course with Elli Grange's Modelling School worth \$10,000.

NIGEL: *Really,* I won't ask how you wangled that.

GLORIA: Just because I'm on an extended break from my Melbourne gossip column doesn't mean I don't have all my contacts.

NIGEL: What about the young colts of Fish Bay. Will there be a Men's Race-wear contest?

GLORIA: Of course not. They're too busy milking cows.

NIGEL: Hmm. Dungarees and rubber gumboots. Now there's a thought.

AUDIO: DOG WHINES

NIGEL: What's up Bernie? Do you like cow cockies?

AUDIO: DOG BARKS

NIGEL: Clever dog. You do!

GLORIA: Please be serious, Nigel. I really want this event to be a success.

NIGEL: Now I know why you lured me here with the promise of dinner.
(*PAUSE*) Speaking of dinner, I can't smell anything delicious cooking.

GLORIA: I'm surprised you're surprised. Surely you know meals come from cafes and restaurants.

NIGEL: Lots of those in Fish Bay are there?

GLORIA: (*INDIGNANT VOICE*) We have a Chinese takeaway. And there's the pub.

NIGEL: And don't tell me. The milk bar sells yummy meat pies and Chico Rolls.

GLORIA: Cynic. I'll take it that it's the pub then. My shout. And thanks for saying yes. I knew I could depend on you.

NIGEL: Darling. What with you in charge of the fashion fillies and me as the photographer, what could possibly go wrong?

SCENE 2. INT. BEAUTY SALON

AUDIO: SOUND OF STREET TRAFFIC FOLLOWED BY ELECTRONIC DOOR BUZZER

JODIE: Morning, Gloria. Have a seat over here. What's it to be today, leg wax, lip depilation?

GLORIA: Manicure, *thank you*. Champagne pink.

JODIE: A great match of personality and colour if you don't mind me saying.

AUDIO: SOUND OF CHAIR BEING PULLED UP

JODIE: S'pose you're busy arranging the Fashion contest.

GLORIA: Not that busy I can't have my nails done.

JODIE: My daughter ... you know Amber ... she's off the planet with excitement. But you probably can't say much about the contest.

GLORIA: Correct. I can't.

JODIE: Just between you and me, I'd much rather Amber took up a hairdressing apprenticeship in Fish Bay instead of day dreaming about becoming a model.

GLORIA: Modelling certainly can be a tough gig.

JODIE: She's always had her head in the clouds that Amber of mine. Just like her father. He died five years ago.

GLORIA: Sorry to hear that. It's just you and Amber then?

JODIE: She's the only family I have.

AUDIO: ELECTRONIC DOOR BUZZER

JODIE: Speak of the devil. Here she is. You know Ms Gadfly, don't you Amber?

AMBER: Yep, I do. Hi.

JODIE: Your eyes look red, Amber. Have you been crying?

AMBER: I'm fine.

JODIE: You sure?

AMBER: (*HESITATINGLY*) Not exactly. Kylie's been posting messages on Facebook saying I should have gastric band surgery. The cow.

JODIE: Really you two are the limit. Best friends one minute then cat fighting the next.

AMBER: Well if she doesn't apologise I'm going to stuff her mouth full of toenail clippings.

JODIE: Honestly Amber. You talk such rubbish. (*PAUSE*) Take no notice of her, Gloria.

GLORIA: All contestants know I have zero tolerance of bitchiness.

JODIE: She'll be on her very best, won't you Amber?

AMBER: S'pose I'll have to 'cause I wanna win and get out of this dump.

SCENE 3. POLICE STATION

AUDIO: TRAFFIC NOISE FOLLOWED BY AUTOMATIC DOOR OPENING & CLOSING, HIGH HEELS WALKING BRISKLY ACROSS TILED FLOOR.

GLORIA: Good afternoon, Sergeant.

SERGEANT: Ms Gadfly. Have you been in Queensland? You look ... umm ... like you've been in the sun.

GLORIA: (*CURTLY*) Of course I haven't. I've just come from The Tuscan Spray Tan Salon.

SERGEANT: Oh, that explains it. What can I do for you?

GLORIA: I've come to let you know there may be trouble at the Fashion contest at the racecourse this weekend.

SERGEANT: Better get my note book then.

AUDIO: RUSTLING OF PAPER

SERGEANT: Now, what seems to be the matter?

GLORIA: There appears to be a good deal of nastiness between two of the entrants, Amber Bullmore and Kylie Grossman.

SERGEANT: Those two.

GLORIA: You've heard of them?

SERGEANT: Let's just say they are known to me. What are they up to now?

GLORIA: Well, I suspect Amber arranged for the salon to spray Kylie a deep Tuscan colour.

SERGEANT: And, your point is?

GLORIA: When Kylie emerged from the spray booth she was bright orange – the colour was so bad she could pass for a Halloween pumpkin.

SERGEANT: That bad, eh?

GLORIA: Kylie must have guessed that Amber was somehow involved because she threatened to put hair exfoliator in Amber's shampoo.

SERGEANT: They might talk like a pair of female gladiators but until one of them lodges a complaint my hands are tied.

GLORIA: Surely you can give them a warning.

SERGEANT: (*SIGHS*) OK. Anything for peace.

GLORIA: Thank you, Sergeant. They're probably just trying to rattle each other.

SERGEANT: On the up side, if one of them leaves town it will certainly improve the crime stats.

SCENE 4: DRESSING ROOM AT RACETRACK

AUDIO: MUTED SOUND OF VOICE CALLING: 'THEY'RE OUT OF THE GATES AND RACING IN THE FISH BAY CUP'. CALL FOLLOWED BY EXCITED FEMALE VOICES CHATTERING

GLORIA: (*LOUDLY*) Come along girls. You have half an hour to get frocked up. Can't keep the judges waiting.

KYLIE: We still going in alphabetic order, aren't we?

GLORIA: (*IMPATIENTLY*) Yes Kylie, and I hope your outfit will cover up that dreadful looking tat.

AMBER: Yeah mole, cover up that boob tat.

KYLIE: You're such a bitch.

GLORIA: For goodness sake. Stop the nonsense girls and get a wriggle on.

AMBER: (*SHRIEKS*) Oh no. My dress has gone. It was hanging on this hook. Someone must have taken it.

GLORIA: Why would anyone do that? You must of put it somewhere else.

AUDIO: SOUND OF MURMURINGS FROM GIRLS FOLLOWED BY HANDS BEING CLAPPED TOGETHER LOUDLY

GLORIA: (*IN A LOUD VOICE*) Start looking girls. What colour is the frock Amber?

AMBER: Blue. And it cost me mum over one thousand dollars.

GLORIA: An haute couture outfit. Well, it must be here somewhere.

AMBER: Don't waste ya time looking. It's been stolen and I know who took it.

KYLIE: Whatcha lookin' at me for? I haven't got your dumb dress.

GLORIA: Enough. I'm calling the police.

SCENE 5 DRIVING TO THE BULLMORE'S

AUDIO: SOUND OF CAR DRIVING HEARD FROM INTERIOR OF CAR. DOG WHIMPERING WITH EXCITEMENT

NIGEL: Remind me. Who else will be at the Bullmore's?

GLORIA: (*IMPATIENTLY*) Sometimes I worry about you, Nigel. It was in my email.

NIGEL: Well, tell me again. I don't want to be ambushed.

GLORIA: A journalist from the Fish Bay Times, Amber and her mother, Jodie Bullmore.

NIGEL: And I'm going because ...

GLORIA: I want some decent photos for the Melbourne papers. Don't you see Nigel? It'll be a great story. Beautiful girl stopped from competing in fashion contest because outfit stolen.

NIGEL: *Ooh.* You are the devious one, darling. Anything to get your name in the media, eh?

AUDIO: **SOUND OF DOG GIVING TWO YAPS**

NIGEL: Bernie agrees. *(PAUSE)* You do know the Bullmore's address, don't you? We seem to have driven half way to Sydney.

GLORIA: Have faith Nigel.

NIGEL: Still no idea who nicked Amber's frock?

GLORIA: The goss is Kylie but Sergeant Blewitt has no evidence. *(PAUSE)* That's the house. Number twenty.

NIGEL: *(PANICKY VOICE)* Slow down, Gloria.

AUDIO: **SOUND OF CAR TYRES SCREECHING THEN A BANG**

GLORIA: Blast. I've collected their rubbish bin.

NIGEL: I *told* you to slow down.

GLORIA: I was but my foot hit the accelerator instead of the brake.

SCENE 6 **OUTSIDE THE BULLMORE'S HOUSE**

AUDIO: **SOUND OF CAR DOORS CLOSING FOLLOWED BY
SOUND OF BIRDS CALLING**

NIGEL: *Really,* Gloria. I'm a quivering wreck!

GLORIA: I couldn't help it if the bin hit my car.

NIGEL: Now you've got a new dint in your fender!

GLORIA: Bother. *(LOUDLY)* Bernie! Get out of the rubbish you naughty dog.

NIGEL: Don't you feed him, Gloria? Poor dog's searching for food. Probably some juicy chicken in that bag.

GLORIA: I've never seen blue chicken before. *(PAUSE)* Heavens! It's Amber's missing outfit. Quick, get your camera, Nigel. And while you're at it, call Sergeant Blewitt. I'll tell the Bullmore's Amber's dress has turned up.

AUDIO: **SOUND OF FAST FOOTSTEPS CLACKING ON PATH
FOLLOWED BY DOOR BELL RINGING**

JODIE: Hello, Gloria. The journalist is already here. *(PAUSE)* Why's Nigel taking photos of my bin?

- GLORIA:** I have a small confession, Mrs. Bullmore. I knocked your bin over and Nigel is picking up the rubbish.
- JODIE:** Oh dear, not to worry.
- GLORIA:** The thing is, Mrs Bullmore, my dog found this bag in your bin and Amber's dress is in it.
- JODIE:** You're having me on. Someone must have planted it there.
- GLORIA:** I think you know how the dress got there.
- JODIE:** How could I possibly know?
- GLORIA:** Because you put it there.
- JODIE:** You saying I stole my daughter's dress?
- GLORIA:** I am. I think you were afraid she'd win the contest and leave Fish Bay. Then you'd be on your own, wouldn't you?
- AMBER:** (*VOICE MUFFLED CALLING FROM INSIDE HOUSE*) Mum. Ya comin' in or what?
- JODIE:** (*CALLING OUT*) In a mo. (*IN A QUIETER, CONFIDENTIAL VOICE*) Please don't tell Amber. I was getting desperate. She's all I've got, and if she left town ... I didn't know what else to do. (*JODIE STARTS TO CRY*)
- AUDIO:** ***SOUND OF POLICE SIREN***
- GLORIA:** I'm afraid you're going to have to tell that to Sergeant Blewitt, Mrs Bullmore.
- AUDIO:** ***SOUND OF CAR DOOR SLAMMING AND FOOTSTEPS CRUNCHING ON PATHWAY***
- GLORIA:** (*CALLING OUT*) Over here, Sergeant. On the porch. Look what Bernie found in the rubbish bin.
- SERGEANT:** Well I never. The missing dress! Good boy, Bernie. I'll have to give you a job as a police dog.
- AUDIO:** ***SOUND OF DOG BARKING***
- SERGEANT:** How on earth did Bernie get into the wheelie bin?
- GLORIA:** Chicken. I think he smelt some chicken.
- SERGEANT:** (*DISBELIEVINGLY*) Right. I think we'll talk about that later at the police station, Ms Gadfly. And as for you, Mrs Bullmore, you have some serious explaining to do.

**AUDIO: MUSIC: DE CAMPTOWN LADIES SING THIS SONG, DOO-
DA, DOO-DA, DE CAMPTOWN RACETRACK'S FIVE MILES LONG
OH, DE DOO-DA DAY**

THE END