



Originally from Scotland, **Mary Morris** has lived in Australia since 1971 and is based in Sydney. She has written a number of award-winning plays. Her adaptations include *Two Weeks with the Queen* and *Blabbermouth* from novels by Morris Gleitzman, *del-del* from a novel by Victor Kelleher, *Jimmy and Pat meet the Queen* from a book by Pat Lowe, and *Boss of the Pool* from a Robin Klein novel. Her original plays include *Too Far to Walk* and *Voices*. Mary has written for mainstage theatre companies, physical theatre, community theatre and theatre for young people. She also writes film and television drama for adults and children. To date *Two Weeks with the Queen* has had productions in London, Cuba, South Africa, Canada, Portugal, Japan and the United States.

Morris Gleitzman began his career as a screenwriter on *The Norman Gunston Show*. He has written many screenplays including the AWGIE-winning *The Other Facts of Life* and *Second Childhood*, both produced by the Australian Children's Television Network and subsequently developed into his first two books. Morris has won many awards and wrote a regular column in the *Good Weekend Magazine* for many years. His other books include *Misery Guts*, *Worry Warts*, *Puppy Fat*, *Belly Flop*, *Water Wings*, *Wicked!* with Paul Jennings, *Sticky Beak*, *Blabber Mouth* and *Toad Rage*.

TWO
WEEKS
WITH
THE
QUEEN

The Play

BY MARY MORRIS

ADAPTED FROM
MORRIS GLEITZMAN'S
BEST SELLING NOVEL

CURRENCY TEENAGE SERIES

First published in 1993
by Currency Press Pty Ltd,
PO Box 2287, Strawberry Hills, NSW, 2012, Australia.
enquiries@currency.com.au
www.currency.com.au

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Reprinted in 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2008, 2009.

This edition printed 2011.

Reprinted 2013.

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NATIONAL LIBRARY OF AUSTRALIA CIP DATA

Two weeks with the queen / Mary Morris ; adapted from Morris Gleitzman's novel.

Morris, Mary, 1944–

Rev. ed.

9780868199320 (pbk.)

Target Audience: For secondary school age.

Subjects: Brothers—Juvenile drama.

Cancer—Juvenile drama.

Terminally ill—Juvenile drama.

Other Authors/Contributors:

Gleitzman, Morris, 1953– Two weeks with the queen.

Dewey Number: A822.3

Typeset for Currency Press by Paul O'Beirne.

Printed by Ligare Book Printers, Riverwood, NSW.



Publication of this title was assisted by the Commonwealth Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body.

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Front cover Nicholas Eadie as Dad and Rosemary Harris as Mum in the STC production at the Wharf Theatre, 12 September 1992. Photographer Branco Gaica. Back cover Arky Michael as Alistair in the STC production. p. i Mary Morris photo by Stuart Campbell, Morris Gleitzman photo by Nick Gleitzman. p. 3 Nicholas Eadie and Rosemary Harris in the STC production. p. 26 Michael O'Neill as the Spanish tourist, Arky Michael as the guard and Tamblyn Lord as Colin in the Festival of Sydney production. Photographer Sandy Edwards. p. 38 Arky Michael as Alistair and Tamblyn Lord as Colin in the STC production. Photographer Branco Gaica.

First Production

Two Weeks with the Queen the play was first produced by the Sydney Festival in January 1992 at the Riverside Theatre in Parramatta, the script having originally been developed through Toe Truck Theatre. Later in 1992 it was presented in the same production by the Sydney Theatre Company and its original production at the Wharf Theatre was extended and moved to the Footbridge Theatre. The original cast are as follows:

Colin	Tamblyn Lord
Dad, Uncle Bob	Michael O'Neill
Luke, Alistair	Arky Michael
Ted	Danny Nash
Mum, Auntie Iris	Rosemary Harris
Nurses, Doctor Grahame	Tracy O'Neil

Directed by Wayne Harrison

Characters

Colin Mudford	a twelve-year-old boy
Luke	Colin's younger brother
Mum	
Dad	
Auntie Iris	Colin's aunt in England
Uncle Bob	Colin's uncle in England
Alistair	Colin's cousin in England
Griff	an AIDS patient in hospital
Ted	Griff's partner

The play is usually staged by six actors using character doubling for the extra roles

Businessman
Guard
American tourist
Spanish tourist
Patient
Airport check-in-staff
Café staff
Doctor 1
Doctor 2
Nurse
Matron
Flight attendant
Captain
Policeman
English nurse
English doctor
English student doctors
Dr Graham

Setting

The Mudford's home; hospital in Australia and London, the home of Colin's relations in London; outside Buckingham Palace; on a plane and at the airport in Sydney and London.

Act I

Scene I

The music of God Save the Queen is heard, followed by the plummy voice of Her Majesty delivering her Christmas message.

At the Mudford's place MUM and DAD, barefoot and dressed in shorts, singlets and paper hats, are fanning themselves with a bit torn off a beer carton. They are watching the Queen's Christmas message on TV. COLIN, also in shorts and very scuffed brown shoes elastic-sided boots, sits some way from them glaring at an open shoe box containing a pair of sensible black school shoes. His kid brother LUKE runs in and out strafing everybody and everything with his new MiG fighter plane. COLIN picks up a shoe and looks at it with distaste.

Queen And a very merry Christmas to you all.

Colin Merry flamin' Christmas. [*LUKE strafes him.*] Gerroff!

Luke Wannu go?

LUKE does a circle of the room shooting down the enemy and swoops on COLIN again. COLIN throws a shoe at him.

Luke He hit me! Dad, he hit me!

Dad Don't hit your brother Colin.

Colin I didn't...

Mum You heard your father.

Colin It was him, he started...

Dad That's enough! We're trying to listen to the Queen here.

Colin Nobody ever listens to me.

Luke That's 'cos you're not the Queen.

Dad Just keep it down to a roar, eh?

DAD snuggles MUM closer to him and they settle back with the Queen who rabbits on about equality and justice for all.

Colin [*Quietly in LUKE's direction*] Lucky for you I'm not the Queen. If I was I'd have you locked in the tower and torture you and put you on the rack till your bones creak and then I'd have your fingernails pulled out one by one and then I'd pour boiling oil on you and hang you from the battlements and then I'd...

Luke Mum, I don't feel well.

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Colin Then I'd have you cut open right down the middle and your guts would hang out and all the blow flies would come and the crows would peck out your eyes...

Luke [*louder*] Mum, I feel sick.

Mum Serves you right for having four serves of chrissie pud.

Colin Four? I only got three!

Luke I do, but. [*He goes back to playing with his MiG*]

Colin Prob'ly a strain of heat resistant bacteria in the chrissie pud. If I'd got a microscope for Christmas instead of a pair of school shoes I could have run some tests and spotted it. We'll prob'ly all come down with it now.

Dad Colin, go and shut the back door mate – keep some of the heat out.

Colin Why can't he go?

Dad 'Cos I asked you to.

Colin Yeh, well he'd be quicker, he's got turbo thrusters, I've only got lace-ups.

MUM and DAD exchange a guilty glance.

Mum Luke, go and shut the door. [*LUKE goes, DAD turns the Queen off.*] Love, about the microscope...

Dad Next time, eh?

Mum We just couldn't stretch to it.

Colin I know, the recession.

Mum Besides, you needed shoes.

Colin [*looking at his appalling boots*] No I didn't.

Dad [*picking up a shoe*] They're pretty snazzy shoes. Bloke could end up Prime Minister in shoes like those.

Mum They are the ones you liked in the shop – aren't they?

Colin Yes, they're, um they're good.

Mum Colin love, is there something else bothering you?

Colin [*shrugging*] Nuh.

Dad You can talk to us mate, you know that.

Colin Well...

Mum Yes love?

Colin It's just that... well...

Dad Yes?

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Colin Nobody ever...

Luke *[entering room]* Mum. Mum!

As they turn towards LUKE, he collapses on the floor. MUM and DAD rush towards him.

Colin Pays any attention to me.

The sound of an ambulance is heard.

Scene 2

At the hospital MUM and DAD are waiting anxiously for news. COLIN is fidgeting. There is a table nearby, laden with medical bits and pieces including a microscope.

Colin Why wouldn't the ambulance driver let me in the ambulance? Eh? I've never been in an ambulance. Why wouldn't she?

Mum *[absently]* Mmmmm?

Colin Not as if there wasn't any room.

Dad Just leave it, son.

Colin No Christmas spirit, I reckon.

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A DOCTOR enters.

Doctor I Mr and Mrs Mudford?

Mum & Dad How is he? Is he alright?

Doctor I Don't worry, it doesn't look too serious, probably just the excitement of the season.

Colin I reckon it's gastric.

Doctor I Gastric, eh?

Colin If it's any help I can tell you what he's eaten today: one bowl of Coco-pops; three jelly snakes; some Licorice Allsorts; a packet of Minties; six gherkins; half a giant pack of Twisties and five chocolate Santas. Then for lunch...

Doctor I Enough already!

Colin You can faint from overeating, I've done it with jelly snakes. You see, the large intestine blocks the flow of blood to the brain...

Doctor I Thanks for the tip.

Colin Maybe an enema would help, or a very large dose of castor oil...

DAD grabs COLIN and under the guise of putting an arm round him, clamps his mouth.

Mum You're sure it's nothing serious?

Doctor I We've taken a few blood tests and sent them off to Sydney, results will be back in a couple of days. We'll know more then.

Mum A couple of days!

Dad There's no way of doing them sooner?

Doctor I The top people don't live out here, unfortunately.

Mum But you said it wasn't serious.

Doctor I It's just a precaution. I'm sure you'll have him home again in a couple of days.

Dad The Doc knows what he's talking about, love. Couple of days and he'll be falling out of trees with the best of them.

Mum Ray! [*Not in front of the NURSE!*]

Dad Alright, um... catching snakes with the best of them? [*MUM rolls her eyes.*]

Colin Playing cricket.

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Dad Yes, that's it. Playing cricket. [*He winks at COLIN.*]

Doctor I I'm sure you're right. If you'd like to pop into the office, we'll get a few details.

Mum [*to COLIN*] You wait here love. We won't be long.

Colin But I could have important medical information...

Dad Stay!

COLIN stays. The others leave. He discovers the microscope then goes out and returns pushing the trolley upon which LUKE lies.

Luke Put me back, I'll tell Mum, put me back.

Colin Here, give us your arm.

Luke What for?

Colin I told ya. I just want a little bit of blood to put under the microscope.

Luke No.

Colin Come on, it won't hurt. [*He takes out his Swiss army knife.*]

Luke Help! Mum! Dad! Help!

Colin Shut up will ya. Look, if you could see how worried they are having to wait for Sydney to do the tests. Just give me a little bit of blood, I can check it out for germs and put their minds at rest.

Luke I don't want to.

Colin How could you be so selfish – at Christmas too.

Luke Don't care.

Colin But it's for Mum and Dad.

Luke I gave them place mats.

Colin Okay. Forget it.

Luke Put me back now?

Colin Yea, alright. Hey, I just had an idea. You know when you fell in the creek and scraped your elbow on the old ute chassis that was in there?

Luke Yeh.

Colin You could have got metal poisoning.

Luke But it's nearly better.

Colin Yeh, but infection could have got in. Better let me have a look at the scab.

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Luke You reckon?

The LUKE twists the elbow to look. COLIN looks too. He suddenly picks the scab off.

Luke Ow! What did you do that for?

Colin I told you, I just want to check for wriggly things.

COLIN dabs at the elbow with a hanky and gets to work at the microscope.

Luke I'm gunna tell on you.

Colin At school we looked in this dead frog through the microscope and there was all these wriggly things and Mr Blair our biology teacher reckoned they were germs.

Luke That was my best scab.

Colin [*still looking*] Hey there aren't any. You're a faker. There's nuthin' wrong with you. Not a single germ.

Luke Are you sure?

Colin Not a single wriggle.

Luke Maybe people's blood doesn't wriggle like frogs.

Colin It's not the blood that wriggles, it's the germs. Your blood is as healthy as mine.

Luke How do you know? You haven't tested yours.

Colin I just know.

Luke You have to test it, otherwise it's not scientific.

Colin Alright, alright. [*He takes out his knife and with great trepidation prepares to cut himself.*]

Luke No! Not with that. I got a safety pin in my underdaks. [*He fumbles under the covers.*] Here.

COLIN pricks himself with the pin and puts a spot of blood on the hanky. He puts it under the microscope.

Well?

Colin Oh no!

Luke What?

Colin Wriggly things. Omigod. I've got it.

Luke Got what?

Colin I dunno do I? Something worse than you've got. I'm gonna die.