# Yield

Matt Williamson | Act One, Scene 3 | Carmel arrives

Tasmania, 2047. After losing her Melbourne home to flooding, Carmel arrives at her daughter Asher's farm. Asher and her younger sister, Layla, welcome her and sit down to dinner. Charlie is their brother.

**SETTING / STAGING NOTE**

Yield should feel recognisably rural and immediate, not like distant science fiction.

**READING THIS SAMPLE**

Stage directions appear in italics. Words in {braces} are unspoken responses, expressed physically. A / marks where the next speaker begins, interrupting or overlapping the current speech. ... indicates speech trailing off or being drowned out. (CONT'D) means the same character continues speaking. (CONTINUED) means the scene continues on the next page.

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## A FARMHOUSE

*Layla and Asher are cooking and setting the table, they work together in a flow that's reserved for siblings.*

*Lights flicker and go dark.*

*Asher rummages around. A small LED lamp flicks on. She puts it on the table.*

*The lights come back. Asher, annoyed, turns the lamp off.*

*They continue for a bit.*

*Asher stops, as if sensing.*

*A loud alarm sounds.*

*The two sisters stand in the kitchen.*

*Beat.*

*A FLOODLIGHT erupts.*

*CARMEL (60's) stands frozen in the light, a bag in hand and a large suitcase on the ground next to her. A felt hat. Rugged, knee length coat.*

*She's tired, puffed, but ecstatic.*

*Asher runs to the gate, overjoyed to see their mother.*

*The flood light cuts out.*

**CARMEL**

What a bloody welcome! Don't shoot! Don't shoot!

*The three women hug for a long moment.*

*Asher lets go but Layla hangs on, burying her head in Carmel's neck.*

*She breaks away and Carmel uses both thumbs to wipe away Layla's tears.*

**CARMEL (CONT'D)**

Oh, you...

*They help Carmel get her bags inside.*

*Asher looks her mother up and down.*

**ASHER**

Hello!

**(CONTINUED)**

**CARMEL**

The car had no idea down those back roads, I still prefer driving, actually.

**ASHER**

Is it really you!

*Asher pinches her Mum, who bats her away.*

*Layla hugs her again.*

**ASHER (CONT'D)**

How did things go at the port?

**CARMEL**

Fine! I did what you said, but it felt bloody ridiculous! My own country! A permit? But they actually checked Asher's credentials and the paperwork! Bloody bizarre! Men with big black guns absolutely everywhere!

*(Beat.)*

I gave them a serve!

**LAYLA**

Bet you did...

*Asher brings over a pot of food and wine. They sit down at the table. Layla pours wine, Asher, remembering, goes and pours a jug of water.*

**CARMEL**

There were dodgy people all over the port!

*Layla moves to take her mother's coat.*

*Carmel is flustered, manic. Layla taps her shoulder. Carmel takes a second to register and then stands and takes off her coat.*

*Asher brings the water jug over.*

**CARMEL (CONT'D)**

I didn't even bring anything!

**ASHER**

It's okay Mum!

**CARMEL**

It would have been nice to bring something!

*A distant gunshot. Yelling. Dogs?*

**ASHER**

This is your house now. Okay? Both of you. Okay?

*Carmel puts down her drink. Emotional.*

*Beat. Carmel takes a deep breath. She looks around.*

**CARMEL**

It's a beautiful house! You know, it's times like this that you realise you have a family culture! I look around at this place...

*Asher serves the food in silence.*

**LAYLA**

I see it!

**(CONTINUED)**

**CARMEL**

What is it?

**LAYLA**

I dunno... the colours? Perhaps the colours? Those cast iron pots that are way too expensive.

**ASHER**

They’re copies.

**LAYLA**

And everything is round! There’s no squares!

**CARMEL**

No squares?

*Asher points to the square table, the chopping board under the pot.*

**ASHER**

{Like this table you dill?}

*Layla laughs joyfully, grabs her mothers’ arm. Nervous energy.*

*Dinner is served. Asher sits down.*

**CARMEL**

Is that a “companion planting guide”?

**ASHER**

Mhmm. Yep. {But I’m hungry and I put effort into this dinner.}

**CARMEL**

Well. It’s a beautiful place. In Tasmania!

*(Becoming emotional.)*

I can’t believe...

*(Beat.)*

I wish Charlie was here, he would have made this just...

*Awkward pause.*

**ASHER**

It’s “local venison” with red wine and cannelloni beans... kind of French.

**LAYLA**

Oh la la! Beans!

*Carmel is upset.*

**ASHER**

Mum/....

**LAYLA**

Mum... it’s just what’s happening!

**ASHER**

Come on. Let’s just eat, it’s amazing you/ are here!

**CARMEL**

I mean. How did we end up here like this!

**(CONTINUED)**

**ASHER**

“This”.

**CARMEL**

I didn’t mean it like that...

**LAYLA**

...Any news on the house?

**ASHER**

{Layla! Leave it.}

*Beat.*

**CARMEL**

Let her ask! Let her ask...

*(Beat.)*

Well, okay, well there’s nothing... {left}. It’s nearly the whole of Port Melbourne, parts of Elwood, Middle Park.

*(Pause.)*

You know I got offered 4.9 million dollars five years ago?

*(Beat.)*

I didn't tell you because I was embarrassed.

**LAYLA**

Someone else would have lost out.

**CARMEL**

Yes, but I turned it down!

**ASHER**

No one was saying how fast this was going/ to happen.

**CARMEL**

Then, that agent comes over and I think “he’s trying to rip me off!”, offers 1.9!

*(Beat.)*

I’m thinking, “Hey buddy! I used to own a farm worth thirty times that!” Then the next year... insurance? Nup!

*(Pause. Layla rubs her mothers’ back.)*

And then! Sewage and sea water and the floorboards... original 1905 Kauri Pine! It was like her skin was cracking?

**LAYLA**

They should have built more levees...

**CARMEL**

The money Charlie gave me - all I had, I was going to leave it to you three!

*(Beat.)*

I am glad Dad didn’t see this. I mean, I miss him.

*Distant barking.*

**(CONTINUED)**

**ASHER**

Mum, Charlie/ didn’t...

**LAYLA**

Dad would be proud of you.

**CARMEL**

Ha! He... he would have been a lot smarter! He would have taken the 4.9 and haggled up a bit. Probably.

*(Beat.)*

And I heard what you said.

**LAYLA**

And left it for someone else to deal/ {with}...

**ASHER**

{Layla!}

**CARMEL**

...don’t moralise. I don’t think there's much room for it anymore.

*(Beat.)*

**LAYLA**

It’s just not something I would do.

**ASHER**

{Layla... Christ.}

**CARMEL**

Anyway, we will look back on this all as a blip.

**ASHER**

A blip?

**LAYLA**

This? It’s just the... what’s that thing at the start of a fancy meal?

**ASHER**

Mum, Charlie didn’t help with shit. And I note that you are here, not with him in Stawell.

*Beat.*

**CARMEL**

What?

**LAYLA**

{Was that really necessary?}

**CARMEL**

He runs the farm Asher, and he is very busy!

**ASHER**

I run a farm and am kind of busy!

**(CONTINUED)**

**CARMEL**

You might look like me but help-me-god if that tongue is me. It’s like a carbon copy of your Dad! Couldn’t say a thing without him having a go, correcting me, trying to fix it all.

*(To Layla.)*

Amuse-bouche...

**LAYLA**

He loved us Mum. Let’s just eat?

**CARMEL**

No, he loved the idea of us. The little imperfections were not in his plan!

*(The sisters start eating.)*

Remember that time Asher got an ‘A’ for the essay on a

*really hard Shakespeare play?*

**ASHER**

The Tempest.

**CARMEL**

Yes, I remember it. It was good. Really good. And you talked about how the storm represented... what's the character?

**ASHER**

Prospero.

**CARMEL**

Yes. And that it represented power and climate change... or something.

*(Beat.)*

First thing you got was “is this AI?”, then “why do they get you to read that shit?”

**LAYLA**

Both reasonable questions...

*Asher punches her sisters arm and they laugh.*

**CARMEL**

No, your Dad did love us. Of course. But sometimes I think too much.

*They eat.*

**ASHER**

Mum, why don’t you call Charlie? You come here with a suitcase and nothing else... it’s just disgraceful.

**CARMEL**

He organised the money for my house in the first place!

**ASHER**

Yeah, nah, sorry! It was your share!

**LAYLA**

He took the farm because, why?

**CARMEL**

Took over! Because your father/...

**(CONTINUED)**

**ASHER**

Died... and he got everything?

**CARMEL**

Yes. The debt, the responsibility...

**ASHER**

The two thousand acres. Four of us. Eighty million? {Let’s add that up.}

*Carmel looks down for a long time.*

**CARMEL**

I’d forgotten about this. How naïve. Could we have waited an hour?

**LAYLA**

Mum. Asher's been here, setting up for years, and it’s been tough. And he has control of that massive landholding and we see nothing unless he decides?

**CARMEL**

Get him to buy you out! I did! He will if he can...

**LAYLA**

For half of what it was worth? Anyway, I tried. He laughed. Then I blocked his number.

*(Beat.)*

Anyway. Thanks Ash, for this meal, and for everything really!

**CARMEL**

You blocked your own brother?

*Carmel breathes deeply. Shakes her head slightly.*

**CARMEL (CONT’D)**

Yes. Asher. Thank God for us that you have made such... smart decisions, and such a great meal! I’m proud of my beautiful, wise, smart daughter.

**ASHER**

Daughter-zzzz.

*Beat.*

**CARMEL**

Zzzz.

**BLACKOUT.**

End of scene. Original script pages 6-15.