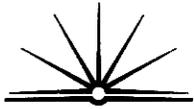


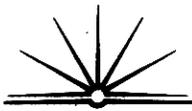
After fifty years, the reunion of Bridie and Sheila reveals the unresolved problems of their relationship in The Shoe-Horn Sonata by John Misto. These past problems are revealed through the interviews with host Rick, dialogue, images, music, sound and voice-overs.

Fifty years after Sheila and Bridie's freedom from their Prisoner of War camp in World War II, responders notice the obvious tension between the two women at their reunion. Bridie is so excited to see her very best friend Sheila after all this time and says, "Awe, it's good to see you." The stage directions say that Sheila "appears to ignore this remark." This shows the tension between the two women and responders can understand that there must be a reason behind Sheila's hiding for the



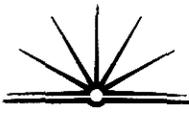
past fifty years. The tension at Bridie and Sheila's reunion reveals that there must be unresolved problems in their relationship.

At the reunion, while speaking to host Rick on the television show, we know that there are underlying problems from their past, which began in the South China Sea. Bridie and Sheila recount their experiences with the use of dialogue and we see how the two women met. After the Japanese bombed their ships, the *Vigor Brooke* and the *Ciang Bee*, whilst almost drowning in the ocean, the very proper Sheila ~~st~~ stated, "weather's turned a bit chilly for this time of year." followed by, "I don't believe we've been introduced." The sound of waves lapping is used in the background to make the scene appear more realistic, and we see from the beginning one of the ^{many of the} women

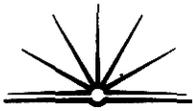


survival techniques. Sheila is singing "Jerusalem," a very patriotic, Christian song, which ~~to~~ gave her hope and endurance. The voice-over of young Bridie and young Sheila is singing Jerusalem in the background recaptures the event and makes ~~viewer~~^{responders} feel that they are there. The blood red Japanese flag is projected on the screen to emphasise the terror and reality when the Japanese picked the women up and took them to the camp in which they were beaten, starved, tormented and humiliated. At this stage of the play, responders realise that there is an ~~unsettled~~ unresolved problem in Bridie and Sheila's relationship, although they do not yet know what it is.

Responders are aware of the unresolved problem in Bridie and Sheila's relationship, and realise that the problem must be

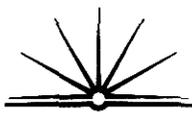


huge considering how good a friends they were, and the many painful experiences they had together. Bridie and Sheila once were the very best of friends and they shared everything. In the three years they spent together in their camp, for many reasons they needed the other to survive. They shared a chop bone in which they called "Old Reliable," where they would ~~swap~~ "swap recipes," and "hold ~~imaginary~~ imaginary dinner parties." The projected image of a starving, emaciated woman is shown to enforce the inhumanity of the Japanese guards and responders ^{see} ~~understand~~ how starving the women really were. Another survival technique the women use was ~~for~~ that fifty of the women formed an orchestra, and sang Ravel's "Bolero." This gave the women strength, hope and will power to last the war, and as



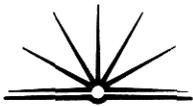
Sheila said "fifty voices set us free." This shows that while they were singing, they felt as though they were free. Some of the women sold themselves for food in order to survive, and when this is mentioned, responders start to question if this is the reason for these two women's tension due to their varied responses.

Fifty years after the war, there is an ~~un~~ unresolved problem in Bridget and Sheila's relationship, and through dialogue and sounds, we soon discover what it is. ~~Many~~ ^{Some} of the women sold themselves for food for themselves and their children, and as Sheila said "They had children to feed - we didn't judge - we accepted it." Bridget's view is noticed when she said - "I didn't to go with a Sap - to give him pleasure. How could you ever live with yourself?"

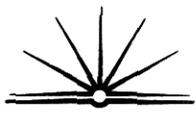


Bridie's uncompromising view is noticed further after an intoxicated Sheila said "with hate, "Don't come near me Bridie." Bridie asked "Why did you push me away? Last night...and for fifty years. Why did you leave me?" When Sheila began to explain that she slept with a Japanese guard to receive quinine tablets to save Bridie's life as she had cerebral malaria, Bridie said, "Don't, I don't want to hear this!" As Sheila told her story, Bridie the noise of crickets were in the background to emphasise the cruelty of it and to make the situation appear more real. After fifty years, Bridie finally found out why Sheila left her because she could not deal with the pain any longer, but the unresolved problems are still ~~was~~ unresolved, only aware of.

After fifty years, we know the



unresolved problems of Bridie and Sheila's relationship, and we see why they are unresolved. Bridie could not accept or excuse Sheila's "shameful" behaviour and when Sheila asked if Bridie would have done the same for Sheila, she said, "I'd have starved for you. Died for you. Anything but..." Responders understand why Sheila ran away, because Bridie would never forgive her. Bridie thought for all of those years that Sheila she meant nothing to Sheila, until Sheila said, "I could not get used to walking around and not seeing your shadow beside me. And I could not get used to saying "Goodnight" and not hearing your voice in reply." Sheila always loved Bridie, although "It hurt too much." After fifty years, Bridie and Sheila's unresolved problem



is noticed and understood, although still not resolved.

Finally, fifty years after Bridie and Sheila's freedom, the unresolved problem in their relationship is resolved. When on Rick's show Sheila lied to Rick about how she got the quinine tablets and Bridie said, "That can't be the truth love. Do you want me to see the truth?" This demonstrates Bridie's acceptance and forgiveness of Sheila and "she reached out and took Sheila's hand" and told the truth. Sheila had "never really left the war" as "keeping a secret wears you down," and now that Sheila's secret has been made public, she can leave that part of her life behind. Bridie and Sheila reconcile fifty years after the war as Bridie knows, understands and forgives Sheila's secret. Their unresolved problem is now resolved.