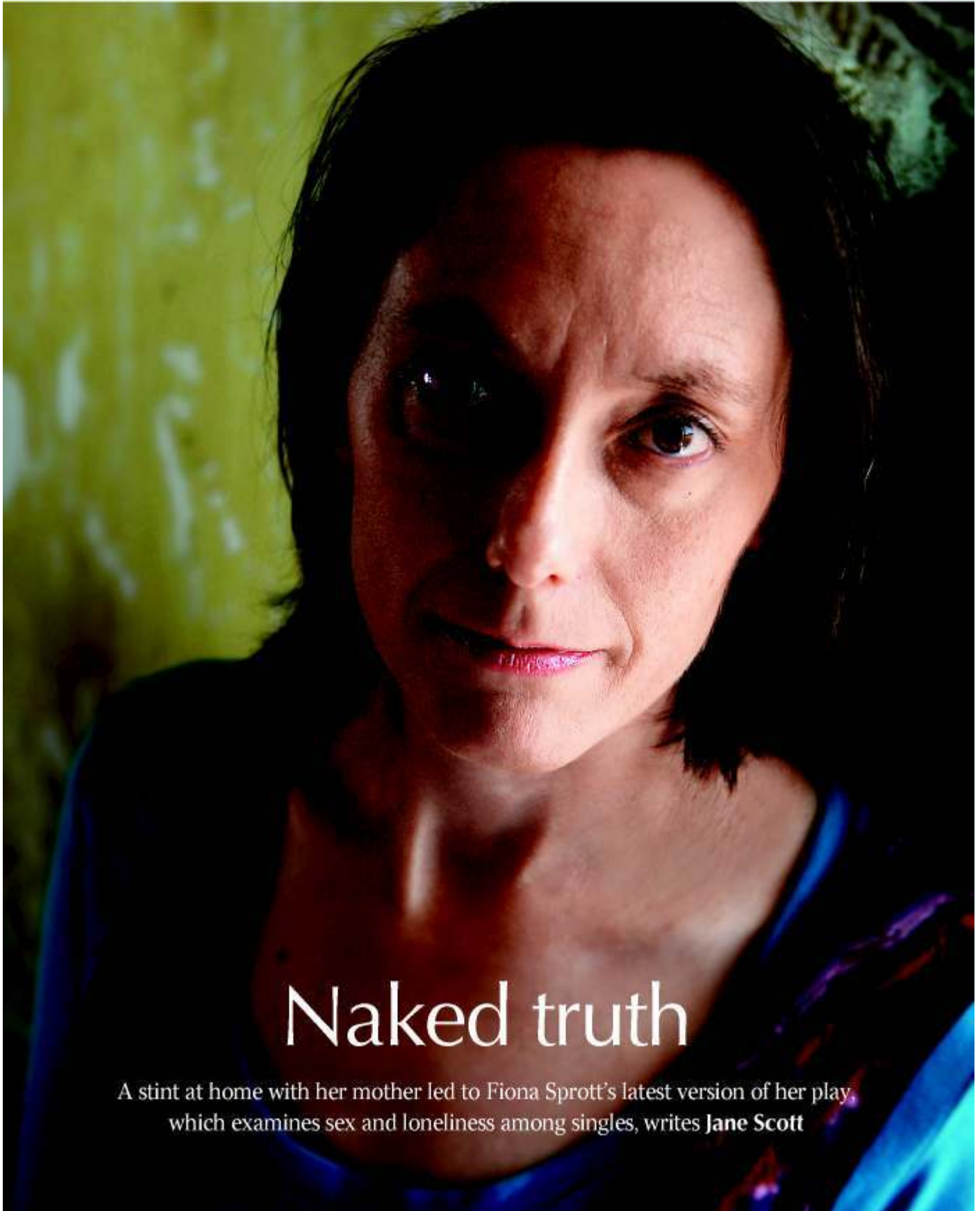




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Naked truth

A stint at home with her mother led to Fiona Sprott's latest version of her play, which examines sex and loneliness among singles, writes **Jane Scott**



Popular culture would have us believe there's never been a better time to be female, sexy and single. From *Sex and the City* to Paris Hilton, life's an endless round of cocktails, designer handbags and no-strings-attached liaisons, isn't it?

Playwright Fiona Sprott, whose play *Often I Find That I Am Naked* premieres in Brisbane next week, is not so sure. The 39 year old, who produced a version of the play in Sydney 10 years ago, peeks beneath the shiny surface of life as a successful, self-made career woman, and what she finds is not all pretty.

"The play is the story of Jezebel, a contemporary woman looking for love in all the wrong places," Fiona says. "While a lot of it is comical, underlying it are a lot of the issues facing women in their 30s – what does it mean to still be a bit of a teenager at heart as you're hurtling towards 40? And at what point is casual sex deepening your sense of loneliness?"

Not that Fiona advocates a return to the days of marriage and babies at 21, rather she's saying that it might be time to ask some questions about new behavioural norms and where they are taking us.

"This is a new version of a script I wrote about 10 years ago; a lot has changed in the realm of dating since then," she says. "Website dating is a whole new way of meeting people and there was no danger back then of someone taping your bad behaviour and uploading it on YouTube.

"We used to talk about a one-night stand, but at least you had an entire night, now it might be 20 minutes in a toilet cubicle. At what point does this dancing across the surface of life start to damage us?"

Brisbane's Jo Thomas is producing this production of the play, while also playing the role of Jezebel. She is a friend of Fiona's family, but the play's production here is the serendipitous result of an illness that forced Fiona to spend the past few years in suburban north Brisbane with her mother. The arrangement has also allowed her to get plenty of writing done.

"I'm working in screenwriting, working on a novel, and academic writing is one of my passions – I just love it all," she says. "The most rewarding thing is when you provide actors with a script that gives them something exciting to work on, and gives them work."

All going well, *Often I Find That I Am Naked* will tour nationally following the Brisbane run.

OFTEN I FIND THAT I AM NAKED, Thu-Sat, Aug 13-15,
from \$27, Judith Wright Centre, Fortitude Valley,
ph: 3872 9000. www.judithwrightcentre.com