



Illuminating the Delight in Light®

**FRED SCHEPISI TO DIRECT GEOFFREY RUSH, CHARLOTTE RAMPLING & JUDY DAVIS IN THE SCREEN ADAPTATION "THE EYE OF THE STORM"
THE LITTLE FILM COMPANY TO HANDLE SALES**

Berlin (February 11, 2010) – Paper Bark Films, is set to bring one of Australia's greatest literary works, *THE EYE OF THE STORM*, to the screen, it was announced today by Producers Antony Waddington and Gregory Read.

Award-winning Australian director Fred Schepisi ("*Six Degrees of Separation*") is on board to direct a stellar award winning cast including Geoffrey Rush ("*Shine*"), Charlotte Rampling ("*Swimming Pool*") and Judy Davis ("*A Passage to India*").

The publication in 1973 of *THE EYE OF THE STORM* culminated in author Patrick White becoming the only Australian to receive the prestigious Nobel Prize for literature. This classic novel explores the monumental tides of love and hate, comedy and tragedy, impotence and longing that fester within family relationships. The story has been adapted for the screen by Academy Award winner Judy Morris (co-director/writer - "*Happy Feet*") and the script has already earned the prestigious *Rodney Seaborn Playwright's Award*.

"It is an amazing and a salute to Patrick White's formidable work to attract incredible talent as director Fred Schepisi and writer Judy Morris to capture the real dynamics of family relationships and politics that are still prevalent in today's world," producer Antony Waddington commented on making the announcement. Added his producing partner Gregory Read: "We are so thrilled and honored to have such a tour de force trio in Charlotte Rampling, Geoffrey Rush and Judy Davis, who are such great masters of emotion - collectively it will be electrifying on screen!"

Currently in pre-production, principal photography on *THE EYE OF THE STORM* is scheduled to begin in late April 2010.

The Little Film Company, which continues to build its prestigious line-up, will handle worldwide sales, excluding Australasia, and begin pre-sales with buyers at the EFM in Berlin.

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When Elizabeth Hunter (Rampling) has a stroke, her son Basil (Rush) and daughter Dorothy (Davis), fly across the world to be at their mother's bedside. They are all at a crisis point in their lives, which exacerbates all the old frictions, misunderstandings and resentments that they have tried their hardest to bury or, at very least, avoid for years. They are like many families. Only in this family it's all heightened by their fierce individuality and defenses they have put up to maintain that. At the heart of the story there's a past to be reconciled, a future to be secured. There is a longing to be thanked, forgiven, understood and most of all loved. Entitlement has a hold over all of them. Inheritance even more so... It's the main weapon in their emotional battleground, complicating every conversation, spoken and unspoken.

Legendary British actress Charlotte Rampling will play Elizabeth Hunter, a powerful matriarch and ex-socialite who still maintains a destructive iron grip on her family even on her deathbed. Rampling's impressive career has spanned over 40 years on the screen debuting opposite James Mason, Alan Bates, and Lynn Redgrave in "Georgy Girl." Her impressive list of credits, include most recently "The Duchess" and her critically acclaimed roles in "Swimming Pool," opposite Charles Dance and "Lemming" with Charlotte Gainsbourg.

Known to worldwide cinema audiences for his role as Barbossa in "Pirates of the Caribbean" films, Geoffrey Rush plays Elizabeth Hunter's son Sir Basil whose faltering career is spiraling him into financial difficulties. Rush first shot into the limelight in 1996 with his Academy Award winning performance in "Shine" and has since gone on to earned two Oscar nominations for his roles in "Quills," and "Shakespeare in Love." His other critically acclaimed credits include "Elizabeth," and "Elizabeth: The Golden Age."

One of Australia's finest and internationally renowned actresses, Judy Davis will play Dorothy, whose estrangement from her mother is in desperate need of reconciliation. Davis, who has been nominated twice for an Academy Award for her powerful performances in David Lean's "A Passage to India," and Woody Allen's "Husband and Wives," is no stranger to tour de force roles, earning an AFI Award for portraying screen icon Judy Garland in "Life with Judy Garland: Me and My Shadows." Her debut performance in 1979 earned her a BAFTA newcomer award in "My Brilliant Career" opposite Sam Neill. Davis's other extraordinary credits include "Georgia" and is currently receiving critical acclaim as Joan McAllister in the popular television series "The Starter Wife" with Debra Messing.

Staring mortality in the face, THE EYE OF THE STORM draws you deeply into the lives of this broken family and how they eventually come to terms with who they are, what they mean to each other, how they can best survive one another; and how they will find a peace that they can live with – the Eye of the Storm...

Produced by Antony Waddington and Gregory Read, THE EYE OF THE STORM will be directed by Fred Schepisi whose directorial work was honored in 2003 by the Australia Film Institute for Outstanding Achievement Award. Schepisi's notable credits include "Six Degrees of Separation," "The Russia House," and "Empire Falls."

Executive producer Jonathan Shteinman most recently collaborated with The Little Film Company on the Australian thriller "The Clinic," which is making its European premiere at EFM. Shteinman's numerous credits include "Rabbit-Proof Fence," "Oyster Farmer," and "December Boys" starring Harry Potter actor Daniel Radcliffe.

The Little Film Company is currently enjoying great success with the adaptation of Leo Tolstoy's THE LAST STATION earning Academy Award nominations this week for its stars Christopher Plummer and Helen Mirren. Directed by Michael Hoffman ("Restoration"), the film has also received five Spirit Award nominations and is receiving both box office and critical success in the US under the Sony Pictures Classics banner.

Additional information - www.thelittlefilmcompany.com

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THE EYE OF THE STORM

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Out in the ocean, the pelting rain and wild winds of a cyclone propel us into and through a calm space where seabirds float in glistening water amidst floating debris, seaweed, broken furniture, and thousands of bloodied dead fish...This eerie place is an area of atmospheric low pressure that exists within a cyclone...
The Eye Of The Storm.

Leaving the eye, we are back in the thick of the cyclone...traveling through battering rains and gigantic, black ocean swells...still traveling...the waves decrease in size...the black water changes to deep blue...then lighter blue...then turquoise...the waves roll gently now...one of them carrying us to the shore of a tropical island...where...

MRS ELIZABETH HUNTER, a beautiful, elegant woman of 55, walks out of the front door on to the balcony of her large wooden beach house.

An unexpected gust of wind lifts Mrs Hunter's white chiffon skirt. Then, out of nowhere, enormous drops of rain splatter on the wooden deck around her. She looks up. One small, lone black cloud, in an otherwise blue sky, passes over the sun, blacking it out briefly. The sun re-appears. The raindrops cease as abruptly as they began.

MALE (V.O.)

(voice of a trained actor)

This was the day my mother
remembered most. It is easy to
understand why. It was when she
came to believe that being born of
a certain class entitles you to die
whenever you damn well please.

Mrs Hunter and her exquisite beach house make the perfect picture.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT/INT. SYDNEY MORETON DRIVE HOUSE/BEDROOM - 1970'S - DAWN 2

Another exquisite grand Edwardian house. Moving in, we focus on an upstairs window. A uniformed Nursing Sister, MARY DE SANTIS, (40's), draws open velvet tasselled curtains to reveal...

The same MRS HUNTER, now in her early seventies, in her opulent bedroom, in a plush bed. Her once beautiful face is ravaged by the twenty years since we last saw her. Mrs Hunter is the owner of magnificent real estate, an imperious nature, and a highly developed sense of entitlement. She is half asleep.

MRS HUNTER
(murmurs)
See? Still alive after all.

Her half blind eyes flutter open and she looks around,
confused and disoriented...

MRS HUNTER (CONT'D)
...Where are my children?..Tell
them to come inside. I smell rain.

EXT/INT. A STORMY SKY - 1970'S - MORNING

3

A woman of fifty two, a less distinguished version of MRS
HUNTER, looks tense as a plane is buffeted by rain and
turbulence. This is Mrs Hunter's daughter, DOROTHY, who also
bears the title PRINCESSE DE LASCABANES.

FELLOW TRAVELER
Etes vous nerveux?
Subtitled:
Are you nervous?

DOROTHY
Oui. Mais ce n'est pas le vol que
je crigne.
Subtitled:
Yes. But it is not flying that I
fear.

Dorothy moves an emerald broach to mask a frayed section on
the lapel of her time-worn Chanel suit.

EXT. BANGKOK AIRPORT - 1970'S - MORNING

4

Tropical rain pours down on the 1970's Boeing planes.

INT. BANGKOK AIRPORT DUTY FREE COSMETICS STORE - MORNING

5

SIR BASIL HUNTER (54), a handsome actor and MRS HUNTER's son,
is trying on make-up. Two earnest female THAI AIRPORT WORKERS
assist him with tester cosmetics.

BASIL
Most subtle, dear ladies. Just what
I need.

His distinctive voice is recognizable from the opening (V.O.)

BASIL (CONT'D)
I hate looking like some old drag
queen.

They nod in sincere sympathy.

THAI GIRL

Will you soon be appearing in the
theatre, Sir?

CLOSE ON BASIL's subtly made-up face.

BASIL

Depends entirely on your definition
of theatre.

INT. MRS HUNTER'S MORETON DRIVE HOUSE/BEDROOM - MORNING 6

MRS HUNTER checks her own hazy image in her hand mirror.

MRS HUNTER

Could you fetch my make-up,
dear...dear...It's my favorite
Mary, isn't it?

SISTER MARY DE SANTIS carefully measures clear liquid from a
medicinal vial into a glass of orange juice.

MARY

Once we take our medicine.

MRS HUNTER

This is one of those good mornings
when I see better. I shall see the
kiddies.

MARY

Yes, you shall.

Mary, in her white uniform and veil, gives Mrs Hunter the
juice.

MRS HUNTER

You look like a floating lily. I
hate lilies.

FLORA(26), a working class, sexy free spirit who wears her
own 70's version of a nurse's uniform, enters, rain dripping
from her hair, in time to overhear...

MRS HUNTER (CONT'D)

Where is that day nurse? Sleeping
in with that boy no doubt. Mornings
weren't made for that kind of
thing. That's what night's are for.

FLORA

I'm right here Mrs Hunter. Wouldn't
miss meeting your son for
quids.

MRS HUNTER

Ah my favorite Flora. Are you ready
to transform an ancient ruin of a
Mummy into a work of art?

Flora gathers make-up from an ornate make-up case.

INT. FOYER OF SMART SYDNEY CITY HOTEL - MORNING

7

SIR BASIL HUNTER peeks through the heavy curtains at the
Sydney scape which looks uncharacteristic in the misty rain.

BASIL

It was pissing down the last time I
was here.

Basil turns to instruct a uniformed desk clerk.

BASIL (CONT'D)

I'm not here, understood? If any-
one calls, my flight was delayed.

DESK CLERK

No problems, Sir.

INT. QUEEN VICTORIA CLUB ROOM/SYDNEY - MORNING

8

DOROTHY, dressed in a well worn silk petticoat, places aside
invitations addressed to PRINCESSE DE LASCABANES. Her image
in the mirror is less than elegant as she applies nail polish
to her stocking to stop a ladder.

INT. BASIL'S HOTEL ROOM - MORNING

9

BASIL drinks scotch and flips through a hotel guide. He stops
at an advertisement for a BRITISH THEATRE COMPANY playing in
Sydney. He picks up the phone.

INT. MORETON DRIVE KITCHEN - MORNING

10

LOTTE LIPPMAN (60s), the German Jewish housekeeper, is in a
red faced fluster of preparation for guests.

A knock on the back door is followed by the entrance of a man
in a suit, carrying an umbrella. This is ARNOLD WYBURD (late
60s), the family solicitor.

LOTTE

Why are you coming round the back,
Mr Wyburd?

ARNOLD

Mrs Hunter would expect her
children if she heard the front
doorbell.

LOTTE

I am almost out of myself to see them. Their beds I have made. I have put the flowers.

ARNOLD

You needn't have done the flowers. The children are not staying here.

LOTTE

I will never understand why Anglo-Saxons reject the warm of the family.

ARNOLD

Perhaps they don't know their worth as you do.

INT. MRS HUNTER'S BEDROOM - MORNING

11

FLORA finishes applying heavy make-up to MRS HUNTER.

FLORA

What should I call them? I'm no good with foreign names.

MRS HUNTER

'Madame' will suffice for my daughter. And, of course, you should address my son as 'Sir'.

A knock on the door.

MRS HUNTER (CONT'D)

(coquettish)

Come in.

Mrs Hunter sees a misty image in the doorway.

MRS HUNTER (CONT'D)

Is it you, darling boy?

ARNOLD

Just me I'm afraid.

MRS HUNTER

Arnold, I don't wish to discuss business now.

ARNOLD

...I'm afraid I have some slightly bad news.

MRS HUNTER

Don't tell me. Basil is delayed.
My son knows better than anyone how
to disappoint me.

EXT. MORETON DRIVE FRONT GATE/ARNOLD WYBURD'S CAR - DAY 12

ARNOLD WYBURD exits the gate and hurries through the rain to
get into a waiting Holden car. His homely wife, LAL, is
inside.

ARNOLD

You should have come in. Mrs Hunter
said she'd love to see you.

LAL

That's what she says.

Arnold starts up the car.

LAL (CONT'D)

I have to work myself up into
seeing her.

Opening titles end as the rain does...

EXT. CENTENNIAL PARK LAKE - SUNSET 13

Golden sun rays shine through dispersing dark clouds as the
weather clears.

DOROTHY feeds bread to black swans floating on the lake.
The sun sets, informing Dorothy of the time. She hurries
away...anxiety rising as she walks faster...then almost
runs...She is breathing hard by the time she enters...

EXT. MORETON DRIVE FRONT ENTRANCE - DUSK 14

DOROTHY rushes up the path. She looks up to her Mother's
bedroom window. Lights come on.

Dorothy stands at the front door, too immobilized to knock.
She hones in on a nearby pot-plant and lifts it. There it
is...as it ever was...the spare front door key. She lets
herself in.

INT. MRS HUNTER'S ROOM - NIGHT 15

DOROTHY is inside the room. FLORA stares wide-eyed at Dorothy
who, in turn, stares at her mother who lays there with a
thermometer hanging from her mouth. She is clearly taken
aback by her mother's deterioration.

DOROTHY

O mon dieu. Aidez-moi!...Ma mere...

MRS HUNTER manages to spit the thermometer out of her mouth just before Dorothy clumsily kisses her. She clutches Dorothy in an embrace.

MRS HUNTER

You're late. Look at me. I look a mess. Both my children late.

DOROTHY

Hasn't Basil been?

MRS HUNTER

No he has not. Why are you so late?

DOROTHY

I'm sorry Mummy.

Mrs Hunter strokes Dorothy's hair.

MRS HUNTER

There there duckling. I'll forgive you if you forgive me.

Dorothy gathers herself. She tries to replace the thermometer but Mrs Hunter refuses it.

MRS HUNTER (CONT'D)

Leave it dear. I like my doctor to do it. He's not a very good doctor, but I can tell by his touch that he's the kind of man I might have enjoyed as a lover.

An embarrassed Dorothy turns to Flora.

DOROTHY

Is my mother...alright?

FLORA

Her pain medication makes her mind wander off sometimes.

MRS HUNTER

Morphine Moments we call them, don't we Flora?

FLORA

Isn't she miraculous, Madame? We have lots of fun together, don't we Mrs Hunter?

MRS HUNTER

Sometimes I laugh so much I have a little accident.

DOROTHY

(stern)

To not be fully in control of
yourself is hardly a laughing
matter.

FLORA

Don't worry. We take good care of
her.

Dorothy notices a marquissette watch on Flora's wrist.

DOROTHY

Could I speak to my mother alone?

FLORA

Of course, Madame.

Flora exits the room backwards, eyes still on Dorothy.

DOROTHY

Is that girl wearing your watch?

MRS HUNTER

I gave it to her.

DOROTHY

...For keeps?

MRS HUNTER

You weren't here.

Dorothy would like to protest, but remains silent. Mrs Hunter
tenderly takes Dorothy's hand.

MRS HUNTER (CONT'D)

Dear, would you be terribly cross
with me if I didn't die? I don't
have to if I don't want to...except
perhaps by thunderbolt.

DOROTHY

Who said anything about dying?

MRS HUNTER

You think I don't know why you and
Basil have flown from all ends of
the earth?

DOROTHY

Couldn't you allow for the
possibility of human affection?

MRS HUNTER

Human affection didn't bring you
home when I was bedridden with
brittle bones or when my eyes went.

DOROTHY

We came as soon as we heard you had
a stroke.

MRS HUNTER

Because you thought a stroke might
kill me.

DOROTHY

We came to see if we might be of
help.

MRS HUNTER

Neither of you came to help when
your father was ill.

DOROTHY

That's unfair. I couldn't then.

MRS HUNTER

Because you wanted to punish me.

DOROTHY

Because my marriage was in trouble.

MRS HUNTER

Did you love him enough dear? I
never loved enough. In my life with
your father, I never withheld
myself, but I never touched his
penis.

A disgusted Dorothy turns away.

DOROTHY

Sien au rait ete l'un des peu.

Subtitled:

His would have been one of the few.

MRS HUNTER

Would you stop speaking that
ridiculous language. I know you
only do it so I can't understand.

DOROTHY

...I was just asking if you thought
Daddy was ready to go when he did?
Was it peaceful?

MRS HUNTER

Well there was no thunderbolt, was there? A click of the throat. That's how I knew he was gone. He simply drifted into the calm...

Mrs Hunter is falling asleep.

MRS HUNTER (CONT'D)

(murmurs)

Of course, my husband got his cancer out of town. Choosing to live in the country is choosing death.

Unaware of what she is doing, Dorothy begins kicking a leg of the bed...a nervous habit. This re-awakens Mrs Hunter.

MRS HUNTER (CONT'D)

How many times must I tell you to stop doing that? I hope you didn't go around Paris kicking the furniture.

DOROTHY

Only when my prince left me for a woman whose family makes margarine.

MRS HUNTER

(smiles)

Ah, a little of your mother's spark in there, after all?

Dorothy removes her hand from her mother's.

MRS HUNTER (CONT'D)

Do you think perhaps we could be of some comfort to each other now? Your room is still waiting down the hall. I have a very good housekeeper to take care of us. Poor old Lotte. She had a life of sorts as a dancer but burlesque dies when the Nazis come to town. She lost all her family to the incinerators. Now she dances only for me. I offer a haven here for the disadvantaged.

DOROTHY

I don't dance.

MRS HUNTER

There's no need for insolence. I can't be a threat to you any more, can I?

After a pause...

DOROTHY

I do think, darling, they ought to get you another carpet. This one is threadbare in places...particularly near the door.

The only sounds invading the silence between them is the incessant, percussive orchestra of various ticking clocks.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY/DOROTHY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 16

On her way out, DOROTHY opens the door to her old room. Amidst excessive flowers, a blushing MARY, in a plain cotton petticoat, is changing back into her nurse's uniform.

DOROTHY

What are you doing in my room?

MARY

Mrs Hunter said we may change in her children's rooms since they're not used any more.

Dorothy summons her strength to remain calm.

DOROTHY

I see. I'll leave you to it then.

INT. STAIRCASE/DINING ROOM/ENTRANCE HALL - NIGHT 17

As DOROTHY hurries downstairs, she hears laughter from the dining room. As she enters there, LOTTE and FLORA stop laughing. A silver service meal sits on a hotplate.

LOTTE

I've kept it warm, Madame.

DOROTHY

I'm sorry. I shall be unable to dine here tonight. I am expected elsewhere.

Dorothy exits. Flora takes food from Dorothy's plate with her fingers, eats it, and licks her fingers.

FLORA

Mmmmmmm yummy.

INT. DOROTHY'S CLUB ROOM - NIGHT 18

Alone, DOROTHY eats boiled eggs from a tray. On TV, ATHOL SHREVE, an attractive man in his late fifties and Labour candidate for Australian Prime Minister, is being interviewed.

ATHOL SHREVE

O come on, give the Australian public a bit of credit. They know me for what I am. I was born and bred in a singularly disadvantaged electorate and I'm still a local there. So I fully understand today's problems. And should Australians see fit to choose me as their next Prime Minister, my intention is to offer real equality in health, social welfare and education.

Dorothy lops the top off an egg.

INT. MRS HUNTER'S ROOM - NIGHT

19

LOTTE LIPPMANN enters, wearing a cloak. She gives MRS HUNTER a brandy.

LOTTE

The excitement was not too much for you?

MRS HUNTER

My daughter is not an exciting person. Always skulking away in indignation. She left me before the storm Lotte. Did I tell you that? She never understood that choosing the sublime over the sensible often comes at a cost.

LOTTE

But your son, he must be most ...sublime when he is on the stage.

MRS HUNTER

I suppose. I never saw him perform. Please, let us not dwell on my children. I've had enough disenchantment for one day...tell me...are we wearing our dress?

LOTTE

We are, Mrs Hunter.

MRS HUNTER

Our baubles?

LOTTE

Most definitely.

MRS HUNTER

Then my dear Mrs Lippmann, please
enchant me. Tonight is
unquestionably a night for...

A well worn ritual. Lotte completes...

LOTTE

The Tingeltangel.

As Lotte turns on certain lamps to give the ambience of a stage, she sings the first bars of an emotive German song.

Lotte steps into a 'spotlight', removes her cloak to reveal an overly tight black sequinned dress, and begins a slow dance.

Mrs Hunter conducts ineptly with her arthritic hands.

MRS HUNTER

Faster...faster...

The music paces up from Largo to Allegro as we cross to...

EXT. SYDNEY HARBOURSIDE BAR - LATE NIGHT

20

BASIL drinks with the BRITISH THEATRE COMPANY. Intoxicated actors on an adrenaline high after a show: MAGGIE and JUNE (50's) and cynical. CAROL (40's) and well maintained. DUDLEY (65) with faltering confidence. PETER and JANIE, the ambitious juvenile leads who are extremely confident.

BASIL

The tarts you find at the ass end
of the world. How long is your tour
of duty?

JUNE

Oh our play could run here for
ever. They think anyone with a
British accent is a class act.

DUDLEY

How long are you staying?

BASIL

How ever long my fading mother
needs me. We've always been close
despite the tyranny of distance.

Maggie rolls her eyes at June.

MAGGIE

Back to real life Bas. Have you any nice plays? Some thing old-fashioned and plummy for all of us?

BASIL

There is a play. But not old-fashioned, and if there's a plum, it's mine.

DUDLEY

I wouldn't mind something small. These days...the lines you know...harder to hang on to.

BASIL

Well it's not entirely written yet, but the greater part will be improvised.

MAGGIE

Count me out. I'm not working in the round, swinging my tits and farting in the aisles.

CAROL

(calls to a waiter)
More alcohol.

BASIL

It's just an idea at the moment.

PETER

What's the idea?

BASIL

(slightly abashed)
...um...I have been persuaded by various colleagues that my life has been somewhat extraordinary and may make an entertaining drama.

JUNE

Holy hell! Haven't the shit-bag critics already sliced off your balls?

JANIE

Who's writing it?

BASIL

No-one knows the material better than me. Have to take the plunge sometime and extend myself beyond performing.

PETER
Is it financed?

Basil's silence informs us that it is not.

DUDLEY
(gently)
You know we're usually not at our
best when we're ourselves. What did
we always say before we played our
scenes?

The two old boys go in to their double act, whispering...

BASIL AND DUDLEY
Sshhh. I'm not here.

Janie sidles up to Basil and pours him more wine.

JANIE
Will you be mounting the production
in London?

INT. BASIL'S HOTEL ROOM - LATE NIGHT 21

BASIL lays back as a naked JANIE does her best to excite him.
He makes a drunken attempt to become aroused, then gives up.

BASIL
(a slurry whisper)
Sorry dear. Dead loss I'm afraid.

His meticulously applied mascara is now running slightly.

INT. MRS HUNTER'S BEDROOM/HALLWAY - MORNING 22

ARNOLD'S hand guides a fountain pen into MRS HUNTER's
arthritic hand.

Outside the bedroom door, MARY and FLORA stand, averting
their gazes from the private business being conducted inside.
In the background, Arnold helps Mrs Hunter to sign something.

EXT. LAW OFFICES - MACQUARIE STREET SYDNEY - DAY 23

BASIL struggles to write an autograph on a tissue. He is with
a foursome of middle aged Sydney women.

WOMAN
Sorry I don't have a proper book.

Basil smiles charmingly.

BASIL
Is that Gillian with a G?

INT. ARNOLD WYBURD'S CHAMBERS - DAY

24

Inside, DOROTHY and ARNOLD engage in a wary conversation.

ARNOLD
Are you comfortable at the club?

DOROTHY
(embarrassed)
Yes, thank-you...I am there by
invitation you know.

ARNOLD
Most considerate of them.

DOROTHY
...Is my illustrious brother
intending to grace us with his
presence?

ARNOLD
He is, Princess.

DOROTHY
Dorothy please.

ARNOLD
Thank-you. I must admit my wife and
I privately still call you by that
name in memory of times past.

Arnold refers to an old photograph on his desk of a YOUNG
DOROTHY and BASIL, MR and MRS HUNTER and ARNOLD standing
before an imposing stone and wood country homestead.

DOROTHY
That's when you visited us at our
country place.

ARNOLD
I had business to attend to.

DOROTHY
I believe it was more than
business.

Arnold drops his eyes, self-conscious.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)
I believe my father and you were
close friends.

ARNOLD
...We shared an interest in clocks.

(CONTINUED)

DOROTHY
I've often wondered if Dad
understood how cruelly Mother
treated him. When she deserted him
for the city, did he honestly
believe that it was for the sake of
my bronchitis?

A SECRETARY shows BASIL in. He is at his dashing best.

SECRETARY
Sir Basil Hunter.

BASIL
Hello all.

Basil kisses Dorothy enthusiastically, then appraises her.

BASIL (CONT'D)
You've improved quite a bit,
Darling.

DOROTHY
Where have you been?

BASIL
For God's sake Dotty. After all
this time, allow me the pleasure of
your eyes for a second or two.

DOROTHY
(sarcastically)
Thank-you for leaving me all alone
to deal with our Mother.

BASIL
Sorry Dear-heart. Didn't you hear
about my delay?

DOROTHY
You are just like her. A born
deceiver.

As Basil shakes Arnold's hand...

BASIL
What do you think Wyburd? Is it a
spanking and off to her room?

DOROTHY
Could we please get on with things.
Mr Wyburd may have another
engagement.

BASIL
(a charming smile)
Of course.

Basil helps himself to chocolate biscuits laid on the desk.

ARNOLD
It is not an entirely orthodox
procedure, for your mother's
solicitor to reveal any details of
her private affairs, but when has
anything about your mother been
orthodox?

BASIL
Not in living memory.

ARNOLD
Mrs Hunter has requested that I
acquaint you with the line of
management that I have been
pursuing on her behalf.

DOROTHY
We are most grateful. Considering
mother's current state of health,
it would be more accurate to hear
what's going on from you.

BASIL
What's going on?

DOROTHY
Go and find out for yourself. She
can't see the madness right under
her nose. She's giving away jewelry
and has some crackpot European
cabaret dancer as her cook and...

ARNOLD
(interrupts)
She is a fine cook and has
developed a deep attachment for Mrs
Hunter.

DOROTHY
Is that, in itself, wise?

Arnold hands both Basil and Dorothy an envelope.

ARNOLD
Your mother instructed me to give
you these small gifts.

As Basil opens his envelope and Dorothy slits hers open with
a paper knife from Arnold's desk...

ARNOLD (CONT'D)
She gathered from your letters a
certain desire to discuss what may
be best for her.

Basil and Dorothy take cheques from inside their envelopes.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)
(pointedly)
I believe that Mrs Hunter would
rather die than have her way of
life dictated to her.

All understand implicitly the motive for the gift of money.

INT. SYDNEY CHANEL STORE - AFTERNOON 25

DOROTHY is in the store dressing room in a petticoat that has
seen better days. The lace work is disintegrating and a small
safety pin holds one strap.

Dorothy takes a classic black dress from a padded hanger and
puts it on. She is immediately transformed back into the
image of a well to do woman. This brings a small smile of
relief to her face.

DOROTHY
You may come in now.

A refined, older SHOP ASSISTANT enters.

SHOP ASSISTANT
Ah. Very elegant...Your mother
never wore black.

INT. MORETON DRIVE STAIRCASE - AFTERNOON 26

MRS HUNTER, fully made up in shades of 'dusk mauve', wearing
a lilac wig, is carried down the staircase in the arms of a
young powerfully built man, COL. This is FLORA's boyfriend.
Flora follows, bearing furs and rugs. This small procession
is accompanied by...

A scored instrumental version of LOTTE's Tingeltangel music.

As they reach the bottom of the stairs.

FLORA
Thanks for the lend of your strong
arms Col.
(indicating the direction)
In the conservatory.

MRS HUNTER
(flirting with Col)
Yes, Col, in the conservatory.

Col moves off, the others still trailing behind.

COL
Then you'll be coming home with me?

FLORA
I can't Darl. I still have to help here.

COL
I'll come back in a bit. You'll need me to get her back upstairs.

FLORA
No don't worry. Her son can do that.

The procession heads off through a doorway into the vivid display of ferns in the conservatory.

EXT. SYDNEY HARBOUR - AFTERNOON

27

The green-blue harbour. BASIL sits on the deck of a ferry. He undoes a couple of buttons on his shirt and basks in the sun.

BASIL (V.O.)
The creation of another being from one's own body...A complete and decent human being. A fearsome labour for a mother...and an actor. Now there-in lies the play.

BASIL's ferry passes a 'laughing face' fun fair entrance.

INT. MORETON DRIVE CONSERVATORY - AFTERNOON

28

BASIL is on one knee, his head in his mother's lap. FLORA packs up combs and make-up while surreptitiously checking out Basil.

BASIL
(to his mother)
Bless you darling, for your generosity today. You always had impeccable timing.

MRS HUNTER
Don't spend it all at once.
(turning on Flora)
Must I compete already for my son's attention? Go and help Mrs Lippman with Sir Basil's supper.

Flora, stung by the curt dismissal, still manages a dazzling smile at Basil as she leaves.

MRS HUNTER (CONT'D)
I'm the one that has to nurse the
nurses.

Basil winces from the stiffness he feels as he stands.

MRS HUNTER (CONT'D)
You'll end up crippled like me. All
ailments are hereditary...like
moral flaws...How long since your
last employment?

BASIL
I have several irons in the West
End...one especially exciting...

MRS HUNTER
Don't expect me to come and see it.

BASIL
I stopped expecting that long ago.

MRS HUNTER
O darling, you know I never come to
see you because it would make me
too nervous. If you weren't any
good, it would break my heart.

BASIL
But I just may be very good.

MRS HUNTER
They printed your reviews for King
Lear in the Sydney papers.

Basil remains silent.

MRS HUNTER (CONT'D)
Perhaps you should come home. They
don't expect such high standards
here.

BASIL
They thought enough of me over
there to give me a knighthood.

MRS HUNTER
But that was before your King Lear.

Silence again.

MRS HUNTER (CONT'D)
How's your love life?

BASIL
Brilliant darling...how's yours?

She laughs. He laughs. They both laugh at the current state of their lives until tears come to their eyes.

INT. MORETON DRIVE DINING ROOM - EVENING

29

LOTTE, MARY and FLORA are placing a large spread on the table. Lotte gulps wine as she works.

BASIL is about to enter but halts outside the door when he overhears the conversation.

FLORA

It's not fair. Men get more sexy as they get older.

MARY

He is distinguished, certainly.

FLORA

I wouldn't mind having him.

LOTTE

Leave the leftovers for me.

FLORA

What leftovers?

Lotte and Flora enjoy a dirty laugh. A pleased Basil enters.

BASIL

Well, I'll be off.

LOTTE

Oh but no. Mrs Hunter will be upset if I am not feeding you up.

Basil pats his flat stomach...

BASIL

Well, just a smidge.

FLORA

You've got no worries. You're in great shape...Sir.

Mary steps in to cover Flora's blatant flirtation...

MARY

(to Basil)

Mrs Lippmann is a performer too, you know. Like yourself.

LOTTE

At a different height, it goes without saying. You the great artist. Me, just a dizzy fizzer.

(MORE)

CONTINUED:

29

LOTTE (CONT'D)

But theatre was necessary for both
of us, yes? When we walked out
through the lights, we forgot love,
pain, murder.

All are disconcerted by this inappropriate outburst.

BASIL

For me, performing is probably much
like nursing. You have to feel the
situation but you mustn't drown in
it.

Lotte pulls back a chair for Basil. He takes a mental note of
the excessively laden table

BASIL (CONT'D)

This is for myself and whose army?

LOTTE

I enjoy to feed everybody.

INT. DOROTHY'S CLUB ROOM - NIGHT

30

DOROTHY, still wearing her new black dress, is on the phone.
She holds an invitation that she had put aside.

DOROTHY

Luncheon would be lovely Cherry. It
will be small, won't it? Just old
friends...so we can talk...

INT. MORETON DRIVE UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

31

BASIL carries his sleeping mother. MARY, by his side, carries
a tea tray. FLORA follows behind.

MARY

You may go home now Flora.

Flora lingers, then moves towards...

INT. BASIL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

32

FLORA enters BASIL's room, which is full of the flowers that
LOTTE placed there, and a gallery of photos of Basil as a boy
in various stage costumes.

Flora's clothes are draped over a chair. She slips her
uniform off to reveal sexy cheap underwear. She puts on her
70's miniskirt and is about to put on her tank top but thinks
better of it. In bra and skirt she goes to the door and
leaves it strategically ajar.

INT. MRS HUNTER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

33

As BASIL carries MRS HUNTER to her bed, she stirs and looks around, bewildered.

Mrs Hunter is having a 'morphine moment'...a period of confusion where she hallucinates and has muddled memories of time and place. These occur throughout the film.

MRS HUNTER

I'm wearing the white today.

MARY

You can put her down Sir, I'll do her supper if you can manage her slippers.

Basil seats his mother on the edge of the bed and removes her slippers.

Mrs Hunter's hallucination: The 55 year old Mrs Hunter, in her white dress, is back on the island we saw at the opening. Seated on a rock, She lowers her red toenail varnished foot into a rock pool to watch a sea anemone curl itself inwards to grip her toe. A young male foot, appearing near hers, is gripped by another sea anemone. This foot belongs to a fit, fair skinned MAN in his thirties, wearing a sarong. Mrs Hunter and the man laugh. A shadow falls over them. They look up to see the backlit silhouette of a woman in her thirties.

MRS HUNTER (55)

Want to dip your toe in Dorothy dear?

Back in the present: Mary pours tea...

MARY

Time for tea, Mrs Hunter.

Old Mrs Hunter frowns, disoriented.

MRS HUNTER

Gentlemen prefer a martini

BASIL

...Is she awake or asleep?

MARY

Somewhere in between.

Basil studies his mother as he softly smooths the frown from her brow. He attempts a little joke...

(CONTINUED)

BASIL
(gently)
Don't frown dear. You'll get
wrinkles.

A brief smile appears on Mrs Hunter's face.

MARY
She'll be fine Sir. I'll take it
from here.

BASIL
Thank-you Sister. Good-night.

Basil slips away.

As Mary guides the tea into Mrs Hunter's hands, Mrs Hunter is
returning more fully to her senses.

MARY
I think you might be having one of
your little moments.

MRS HUNTER
No I'm not.

MARY
Let's see what the doctor thinks.

MRS HUNTER
I'm still perfectly...lucid, aren't
I?...Am I?

Mary chooses not to answer this. Mrs Hunter is suddenly
fearful.

MRS HUNTER (CONT'D)
Don't tell the kiddies...

INT. MORETON DRIVE UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT 34

BASIL notices the door to his old bedroom is ajar. He stops
and looks in.

INT. BASIL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 35

FLORA, in bra and mini skirt, feigns surprise at BASIL's
presence there.

FLORA
I was just changing out of my
uniform.

Basil enters and closes the door behind him.

BASIL
It's getting late. I might stay the
night in my room.

Flora puts on her top and crosses to the door where Basil
steps in front of her.

BASIL (CONT'D)
Do you have to go?

FLORA
No...not really.

BASIL
Because there's some thing I'd like
to ask you.

He nuzzles and kisses her gently, then whispers...

BASIL (CONT'D)
Who is the fucking lilac fairy
standing in for my mother?

Flora smiles as he continues kissing her. She pushes herself
hard against him, but feels no hardness in return.

FLORA
It might be good not to talk about
your Mum right now.

BASIL
I'm sorry dear. I've been having a
bit of trouble of late...

Flora, the nurse, is all healing...with kisses...and
caresses...

FLORA
(whispers)
Don't you find it kind of exciting
to be in your old room?
(caress)
Betcha you were quite the wild boy
in here.
(fondle)
Betcha haven't touched yourself as
much ever since. No-one ever wants
us the way we wanted ourselves
then.

Basil is definitely becoming aroused.

BASIL
You are a wonder...

FLORA
How many girls did you have when
you were in here all on your
lonesome?

Flora falls back on to his bed. As she pulls him down towards
her, he falls, rather clumsily, on top of her.

FLORA (CONT'D)
Ouch!

He rolls off her quickly.

BASIL
Sorry.

The heat has passed out of the moment.

Flora sits up and straightens her skirt.

BASIL (CONT'D)
Please don't go...Would it be
alright if I just held you for a
while?

Flora lays down again.

BASIL (CONT'D)
Not much use am I? I've always been
a careless boy with delicate
things.

INT. DOROTHY'S CLUB BATHROOM - NIGHT

36

DOROTHY enters the bathroom wearing a robe. She turns on the
shower and gets the temperature right. Then fixes a large
towel over the full length mirror to cover her reflection.
She dims the lights to practically nothing, before removing
her bathrobe. Her naked body is barely visible...which is
just how she likes it.

EXT. MORETON DRIVE ENTRANCE/GARDEN - DAWN

37

Through the leaves of a bush...
An unidentified POV of FLORA opening a taxi door for BASIL.
Basil gives her a soft smile and gets in. Flora closes the
taxi door behind him.

As Flora returns up the drive, her boyfriend, COL, emerges
from hiding in the bushes, grabbing Flora from behind.

COL
Hey Florrie. I thought you must of
died or something last night.

Flora pulls away from him.

FLORA
What are you doing here?!

COL
(teasing)
You never hold the door open for
me.

FLORA
Piss off. You have to get ready for
work.

COL
It's better to marry a girl with a
bad temper. No disappointments
later on.

He tries to kiss her. She pushes him away.

FLORA
We can't ever marry. We both come
from the same place. We can't
improve each other.

COL
What if I gave you a baby. That'd
be an improvement.

FLORA
No it wouldn't. I plan to better
myself in my children.

Col starts to understand.

COL
...So he deigned to look your way,
did he?

Her silence gives him the answer.

COL (CONT'D)
(angry)
I don't know you. Who are you?

Col grabs his bike from behind the bush and rides off.

FLORA
(calls after)
I'm nobody, that's who.

EXT. CHEESEMANS TERRACE/GARDEN - DAY

38

DOUG CHEESMAN, a cheery man in his late 40's, escorts DOROTHY through glass doors...out onto the terrace of a large, fairly new colonial style house. Dorothy is wearing the Chanel black dress she bought. Doug waves his arms and yells...

DOUG CHEESMAN

Cherry! Here's the Guest of Honour!

Below them, in an exquisite garden, there is a large gathering of people dressed up in everything from extremely classic to gaudy Sydney style. Daddy Cool's 1970's 'Eagle Rock' blares out from speakers. Instead of the promised small luncheon, a party is in full swing. An expensively dressed, tipsy CHERRY CHEESEMAN calls from the centre of the throng...

CHERRY

Dorothy!

Heads turn towards Dorothy as Cherry makes her way up the stairs to join her on the terrace...She embraces Dorothy for everyone to see.

CHERRY (CONT'D)

Thought we'd dine Alfresco. Remind you of Tuscany?

DOROTHY

I live in France.

CHERRY

I know that silly. But you know what I mean. Lots of jasmine and Bougainvillea. Doug, why hasn't Dorothy got a drink?

Cherry steers Dorothy down the stairs. The first person they run into is ATHOL SHREVE the Prime Ministerial candidate Dorothy saw on TV.

CHERRY (CONT'D)

Athol. Meet some-one even more important than our future Prime Minister.

ATHOL SHREVE

It's an honour to meet you Princess.

DOROTHY

Really? I thought your platform was Republicanism.

ATHOL SHREVE

I can forgive a title in a lovely woman.

CHERRY

Time's up Athol.

As Cherry escorts Dorothy down towards coiffed, made-up faces and extended hands, she prattles introductions... 'This is Zillah... she does Chekhov' 'Betty helped design my garden' 'Brian Merchant, I'm sure you've heard of him.' Dorothy is lost from sight as this sea of Sydney society engulfs her.

INT. MRS HUNTER'S BEDROOM - DAY

39

ARNOLD WYBURD sits with MRS HUNTER. He reads aloud a letter from her late husband.

ARNOLD

(reads haltingly)

My dearest Elizabeth, You know you are my greatest source of pride. However, I realize our attempts at marriage bring us no closer to success, and that I should offer to let you divorce me. Whatever our future, darling girl...

MRS HUNTER

Stop Arnold. You didn't read it very well. You sound like some trembly old man.

ARNOLD

I'm sorry. I'm not as eloquent as your husband was.

MRS HUNTER

Don't grovel. I just wished to hear it one last time.

He looks a question.

MRS HUNTER (CONT'D)

I want you to destroy it...and these others...

She indicates other letters sitting on the bed.

MRS HUNTER (CONT'D)

I don't wish the children to ever find my personal correspondence. It may be ammunition I can ill afford to give them.

ARNOLD

I believe they were quite pleased with the cheques you gave them.

MRS HUNTER

I'm sure they expected much more, but cheque book discipline is what allows me regrouping time before their next attack.

As Arnold gathers the letters...

MRS HUNTER (CONT'D)

Basil is not such a threat by himself. He got my looks but his father's disposition. Dorothy got her father's looks and my disposition.

ARNOLD

How do you wish me to dispose of them?

She can't see that Arnold is referring to the letters he holds, and truly believes he is talking about the children.

MRS HUNTER

You should try to keep them apart. When the two of them get together, they play up.

EXT. CHEESEMAN GARDEN - DAY

40

The PARTY dine at a long flower laden table. DALIDA's 1970's French version of 'Save The Last dance For Me' plays from the speakers.

DOROTHY sits at the head of the table. ATHOL SHREVE sits at the other end. No-one talks to Dorothy. They have all reverted to talking about their own lives.

Dorothy sees Cherry staggering off with her high heels sinking into the lawn. No-one even notices as Dorothy excuses herself to follow Cherry...no-one, that is, except Athol Shreve who raises his glass to her.

INT. MORETON DRIVE BATHROOM - DAY

41

From a pack of birth control pills, FLORA releases a pill. She studies herself in the mirror for a second, before discarding the pill down the basin plug hole. She releases the rest of the pills...washing them all away.

INT. MRS HUNTER'S ROOM/WALK IN ROBE - DAY

42

FLORA walks by a sleeping MRS HUNTER into an adjoining walk-in robe. A section of hanging space is filled with dresses in plastic.

CONTINUED:

42

Flora chooses one, removes it from the plastic, and holds it up against herself. It is obviously the same dress that Mrs Hunter wore on the island, except that now the entire bodice is covered in white beading.

INT. CHEESMAN'S CORRIDOR/BATHROOM - DAY

43

DOROTHY stands outside the door. She hears a crash from inside.

DOROTHY

Cherry? Are you alright?

From inside the bathroom...

CHERRY (O.S.)

Dotty?...Come in.

Dorothy ventures into the bathroom. The inebriated CHERRY is on the floor with the shower curtain beside her.

CHERRY (CONT'D)

I fell down...and the curtain came with me.

Cherry holds out her hands to Dorothy for help. Dorothy assists her to stand.

CHERRY (CONT'D)

Are you having a Goddawful time? I shouldn't have done a party I know. But that's all Mummy trained me for.
(smiles wanly)
Couldn't you at least have worn a tiara?

DOROTHY

Have you hurt yourself?

Cherry slumps onto the toilet.

CHERRY

Nothing a bit of powder and lippy won't fix.

With a wash cloth, Dorothy starts to remove Cherry's make-up.

CHERRY (CONT'D)

Not too much. Mightn't like what we see under there.

So Dorothy powders her down.

(CONTINUED)

CHERRY (CONT'D)

Did you get a huge settlement from
your frog Prince?

DOROTHY

Can I trust you not to pass this
on?

Cherry speaks, trying to hold her mouth still as Dorothy
applies lipstick...

CHERRY

(barely enunciated)
Sweetheart, I won't remember a
thing in an hour.

DOROTHY

The one thing I received from my
husband was my title. I live now
only on an allowance from my
mother, who believes that extra
blankets in a Paris winter are more
character building than central
heating.

Cherry closes her eyes for Dorothy to eye-shadow.

CHERRY

How is your Mother?

DOROTHY

...You can't say anyone old is
entirely well. Her mind is...

CHERRY

(interrupts)
Got to keep their minds active.
That's why we got Mummy into
Thorogood village. Lots of card
games.

DOROTHY

Was your mother happy there?

CHERRY

She died soon after being admitted.

Tears seep from Cherry's closed eyes and run down her cheeks.

DOROTHY

I'm sorry.

Cherry opens her grief stricken eyes.

CHERRY

Matron said Mummy appreciated what
Dougie and I did for her.

DOROTHY

...Shall I fetch your husband?

CHERRY

No. Husbands aren't any use...

Cherry leans against Dorothy and weeps. Dorothy strokes her
head with the maternal touch Cherry obviously craves.

CHERRY (CONT'D)

How can you hate your Mother so
much?

Dorothy's face reveals nothing.

INT. MRS HUNTER'S BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

44

FLORA, wearing MRS HUNTER's white dress, stands before the
dressing table mirror. She rubs Mrs Hunter's lipstick into
her cheeks like rouge. She spits into a black mascara compact
to wet it and applies some to her lashes.

Mrs Hunter stirs in the bed and stares intently at the hazy
image before the mirror...another confused 'morphine
moment'...

*Mrs Hunter's hallucination: Back in the living room of the
island house. Mrs Hunter (55) stands before another mirror, a
shell framed one. Mr Hunter wears the same dress as Flora but
without the beading on the bodice. She takes a blue sapphire
ring from a decorative shell on the mantelpiece. As she
struggles to push the ring onto her finger, the MAN in the
sarong from the rock pool appears out of nowhere...*

MAN

Here let me.

MRS HUNTER (55)

This damned heat makes my fingers
swell.

*The MAN takes her finger and licks it to moisten it, which
makes it easy for him to slip the ring over her knuckle onto
her finger.*

MRS HUNTER (55) (CONT'D)

Thank you Edvard.

*Back in the present: As Flora turns from the mirror, OLD MRS
HUNTER is coming back to her senses.*

MRS HUNTER (CONT'D)

Who are you?...

FLORA

It's me...Flora.

MRS HUNTER

Is it you...Flora? Or is it me?

FLORA

I'm just trying your frock on.

MRS HUNTER

Oh, it's you Flora...O yes, I see now. We had so much trouble getting all the blood out of that material.

FLORA

How did you get blood on it?

MRS HUNTER

When the storm hit, of course. I was constantly urged afterwards to throw the dress away, but finally I convinced my dressmaker to replace the bodice. People misunderstood the significance of clothing. They dismiss fashion as frivolous. But how we dress distinguishes the occasion. How could one ever discard the garment that marked such a day?

FLORA

I'm sorry. I shouldn't have touched it.

MRS HUNTER

You might as well get some wear out of it. Dorothy could never pull off a dress like that.

FLORA

(tentatively)

...Would it be alright if I wore this out somewhere?

MRS HUNTER

Not without the sapphire ring.

Flora is not wearing any ring.

FLORA

What ring?

Mrs Hunter looks confused.

MRS HUNTER

Didn't you just put it on?

FLORA

There. There. You just got mixed up that's all. Why don't you have a little nippynap?

MRS HUNTER

Sleep just wakes me up.

INT. CHEESEMAN LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

45

The party is warming up. DOROTHY and CHERRY make their way through drinking, talking and dancing party guests. CHERRY breaks away to sing too loudly with a group of revellers who are singing along with the music. Dorothy moves on and knocks on an open door through which smoke wafts.

DOROTHY

May I enter?

INT. CHEESEMAN STUDY - AFTERNOON

46

DOUG CHEESEMAN, ATHOL SHREVE, and OTHER MEN smoke and watch electoral campaign footage featuring ATHOL SHREVE on TV.

DOROTHY

I didn't mean to intrude.

ATHOL SHREVE

Not at all.

Athol Shreve, on television being interviewed...

ATHOL SHREVE ONSCREEN

Our chances of winning those extra marginal seats were pretty good last time I read the polls...

Athol, in person, refers to himself ONSCREEN...

ATHOL SHREVE

Will that boring man never shut up?

ATHOL SHREVE ON TV

...And that's because I offer a fairer nation.

Athol turns off the TV.

DOROTHY

(to Doug)

Just wanted to say my thank-yous. I would be neglecting my mother to stay here any longer.

DOUG CHEESMAN
Let me call you a cab.

ATHOL SHREVE
Don't worry Doug. I'm heading off
now too.
(An invitation to Dorothy)
Got my driver waiting outside.

DOROTHY
How very egalitarian of you, Mister
Shreve.

INT. BASIL'S HOTEL CORRIDOR - AFTERNOON

47

BASIL opens his door to FLORA who is wearing MRS HUNTER's
white dress.

BASIL
I know that dress.

Flora nods and smiles.

FLORA
(sweetly suggestive)
Mrs Hunter says dresses should mark
an occasion.

INT/EXT. HIRE CAR/SYDNEY STREETS - AFTERNOON

48

ATHOL SHREVE and DOROTHY are in the back seat of a black
Mercedes hire car. Glass separates them from the DRIVER.
Athol immediately moves in for a soft kiss. Dorothy is
somewhat flattered.

DOROTHY
Slow down Mister Shreve.

Athol kisses her harder.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)
Gently good Sir.

ATHOL SHREVE
But that's not my style, is it? All
I can offer the ruling class is a
bit of rough.

Dorothy is enjoying this adversarial attraction.

DOROTHY
Along with your Oxford degree, of
course.

ATHOL SHREVE
I knew you'd have your own
charm...more subtle than
Elizabeth's...

Athol runs a hand up Dorothy's leg.

ATHOL SHREVE (CONT'D)
She was a wild one, that one.

Dorothy pulls away as what he said sinks in.

DOROTHY
Vous etes un homme brut.
subtitled:
You are a crude man.

ATHOL SHREVE
Vous pensez que je ne peux pas
parler Francais?
subtitled:
You think I can't speak french?

DOROTHY
Il ne vous a pas e leve au dessus
de ce qu'etes vous.
subtitled:
It hasn't raised you above what you
are.

ATHOL SHREVE
Va te faire foutre trop Princesse.
subtitled:
Fuck you too princess.

Dorothy stares at him with pure hatred.

ATHOL SHREVE (CONT'D)
Bienque je ne peux pas vous seriez
presque aussi non a lui en tant que
votre mere.
subtitled:
Although, I don't think you'd be
nearly as good at it as your
mother.

DOROTHY
Vous n'etes pas le premier pour
tenir cette opinion.
subtitled:
You're not the first to hold that
opinion.

Athol taps the glass and directs the driver with a hand
signal. The driver takes a turning.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)
Where are you taking me?

ATHOL SHREVE
Wasn't your intention to fulfil
your daughterly duties?

DOROTHY
I wish to go to the club.

ATHOL SHREVE
You might like to arrange to move
back to your family home by the end
of the week.

Dorothy doesn't understand.

ATHOL SHREVE (CONT'D)
Who do you think is paying for your
stay at the club?

DOROTHY
The club informed me...

ATHOL SHREVE
A man in my position must be
cautious.

Dorothy turns away and stares out the window.

ATHOL SHREVE (CONT'D)
Ungracious little wretch aren't
you? Your mother loved gifts.

Tears well in Dorothy's eyes. Passing trees blur into green.

INT. BASIL'S HOTEL ROOM - AFTERNOON

49

On a four poster bed, BASIL makes love to FLORA. MRS HUNTER's
white dress is in wild disarray. Basil is having no problems.

BASIL
Do you think you'd be able to love
me Flora?

FLORA
What else are we doing I'd like to
know.

Basil reaches a climax. With Flora's whimpers, it's harder to
tell.

BASIL
(anxiously)
Have you everything you need, dear
flower?

FLORA

Yes, thank-you very much.

Basil rolls to one side and holds her.

BASIL

Are you comfy?

FLORA

Uhuh. But perhaps I should get back soon.

BASIL

A goddess with a gentle nature. I can see why Mother relies on you... Yours is a true profession. Not like the kindergarten where I amuse myself.

Basil kisses Flora.

BASIL (CONT'D)

Could we perhaps be real Flora? I think I may be ready for something real.

Looking through the draped curtains of the four poster bed ...an image reminiscent of a stage...it's not looking too real yet.

INT. MORETON DRIVE FOYER - AFTERNOON

50

DOROTHY arrives inside. She heads towards the kitchen.

DOROTHY

Mrs Lippmann, I need some tea...

INT. MORETON DRIVE KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

51

DOROTHY enters.

DOROTHY

Mrs Lippmann?

The kitchen is empty. The place is not cleaned up and Dorothy notices an open bin. Checking the contents, she is shocked at the amount of food discarded there. Dorothy strides out.

INT. MORETON DRIVE UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

52

Still striding, DOROTHY hears a German lullaby wafting out from...

INT. MRS HUNTER'S BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

53

DOROTHY enters to find LOTTE singing the lullaby softly to a resting MRS HUNTER. The startled Lotte leaps to her feet.

DOROTHY

I'm sure my mother would prefer something English.

MRS HUNTER

No I wouldn't. I like this one.

LOTTE

I'm sorry Madame. You are too unexpected.

DOROTHY

Where is that day nurse?

LOTTE

Flora had an...engagement and I was offering to help.

DOROTHY

Could you please attend to your duties in the kitchen? It is an absolute disgrace.

Lotte hastens out of the room.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)

That woman has thrown out huge amounts of perfectly good food. Do you know that there is an expensive filet de boeuf putrefying in the bin. Waste. Everything is nothing but waste.

MRS HUNTER

Yes, yes, I get the point. Are you going through a difficult time again?

DOROTHY

Athol Shreve was at Cherry's luncheon.

MRS HUNTER

(trying to remember him)
Athol...Athol?...

DOROTHY.

Yes mother, the man who may be our next Prime Minister.

(CONTINUED)

MRS HUNTER

Oh he won't be dear. He's not nearly well enough endowed to screw the entire nation.

DOROTHY

Excuse me?

MRS HUNTER

Isn't it pleasant now that you've grown and we can talk to each other as women.

An appalled Dorothy breaks away and looks out the window. Outside the front gate sits a large black mercedes.

DOROTHY

Oh my God. He's still there. Why hasn't that awful man gone away? He's not hoping to see you is he?

MRS HUNTER

Who dear?

DOROTHY

Mister Shreve.

The CHAUFFEUR of the Mercedes opens a door and assists a stooped woman in her late sixties from the back seat.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)

Who...who is that woman getting out of that hire car?

MRS HUNTER

That would be my cleaner, Mrs Cush, in my Mercedes dear. I never sold it you know. I keep it to collect her on cleaning day. Wouldn't want to lose her.

It is all too much for Dorothy. She flees the room.

MRS HUNTER (CONT'D)

Dorothy, where are you?
(she calls out loudly)
Are you going to the lavatory?

INT. QUEEN VICTORIA CLUB FOYER - AFTERNOON

54

DOROTHY heads straight for reception. She takes her mother's cheque from her handbag.

CONTINUED:

DOROTHY

I may need to extend my visit.
Would you be able to cash this
cheque for me please?

The DESK CLERK scrutinizes the cheque.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)

For goodness sake. Look at the
signature. It is signed by
Elizabeth Hunter.

EXT. ARNOLD WYBURD'S GARDEN - LATE AFTERNOON

55

ARNOLD stands at an open barbecue with MRS HUNTER's letters
in his hands. LAL arrives with a plate full of sausages.

LAL

Will you destroy her husband's
letters?

ARNOLD

Naturally. Mrs Hunter requested it.

LAL

He offered her freedom.

ARNOLD

You read them then.

LAL

Don't I take care of all your
private paper work?

ARNOLD

Yes you do, Lal, thank-you.

LAL

She would have left him if she'd
thought there was anything better
out there.

Arnold contemplates this briefly before throwing the letters
into the fire.

ARNOLD

Mrs Hunter considered me
uncivilized for eating dinner at
this early hour.

LAL

Our kids loved it though. Full
tummies and still enough daylight
to run around in their pyjamas 'til
they dropped.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Arnold and Lal share a smile.

From inside, the sound of a phone ringing.

LAL (CONT'D)
(pointedly)
That will be for you.

As he leaves to take the call, Lal throws sausages onto the Barbecue grid. Dripping fat makes the fire flare. The letters are consumed in flames.

INT. MRS HUNTER'S DINING ROOM - THE NEXT DAY

56

ARNOLD WYBURD, BASIL and DOROTHY sit on one side of the table. MARY, FLORA and LOTTE are seated on the other side. The lines are clearly drawn.

ARNOLD
Mrs Hunter's children have
requested this meeting to establish
a little more clarity on the
running of the household.

BASIL
(directed towards Flora)
My sister has a few concerns.
(to Dorothy)
Over to you.

DOROTHY
My over-riding issues relate to
domestic costs. Firstly, could we
address the consumption of food.

LOTTE
(flustered)
Address?...I feed who is hungry.
I've seen the hunger, but never in
my kitchen.

54

MARY
It's alright Lotte.
(to Dorothy, Basil and Arnold)
Mrs Lippmann didn't mean to claim
any ownership of the kitchen. It is
simply her language.

DOROTHY
Then perhaps you could shed some
light. Could you take me through
consumption on an average day?
Please spare me no details.

MARY

I shall try to be as...detailed as I can. The beginning of the day. Flora arrives in time to breakfast with myself and Mrs Lippmann before my departure.

DOROTHY

(to Arnold)

I believe Flora is not entitled to that meal, is she Mr Wyburd?

BASIL

(under his breath)

Princess...

MARY

I sometimes arrive in the evenings in time to share dinner with Mrs Lippmann, and occasionally Flora too.

Dorothy turns to Arnold and Basil.

DOROTHY

You see?

(back to Mary)

Naturally, you are entitled to a meal if you are in the house, but if you change the hours of your shift to include a meal, then, in all fairness, you are not entitled.

MARY

(tightly controlled)

And during our working hours? In the middle of the night, I often go to the kitchen to scramble myself an egg. With that egg, I may toast myself some bread. With the toast and egg, I may have one, perhaps several cups of tea. With the tea, I may help myself to one of Mrs Hunter's chocolates.

BASIL

(placatory)

I'm sure we all understand that if you eat a meal at an unconventional hour, it's because you feel hungry.

FLORA

(warmly to Basil)

Mrs Hunter insists we eat all the chocolates that people keep giving her.

DOROTHY

Who is responsible for the purchase of food?

ARNOLD

I believe Mrs Lippmann is.

DOROTHY

Could you explain the mountain of food that was discarded in the refuse please.

LOTTE

I bought extra because it would not be occurring to me that you would not be staying here with your own mother.

An uncomfortable silence. Dorothy changes tack.

DOROTHY

There are also other issues such as mother sending her car to collect the cleaner and keeping a part time gardener as well as a full time.

MARY

Mrs Hunter does enjoy her flowers.

DOROTHY

Surely mother could continue to enjoy her life...if she does indeed enjoy it...within a less pretentious framework...since she does, in fact, appear to be losing her marbles.

The room is briefly silent.

ARNOLD

Though Mrs Hunter's mind does stray at times, it always seems to be searching for subtleties. I'd say she is still the most complex woman I know.

FLORA

It's not her fault the drugs make her hallucinate. We've had to raise the doses to help the pain. But she couldn't help getting the fractures that keep her in bed.

Mary throws Flora a withering look.

MARY

If you'll excuse me. My patient may require my services.

DOROTHY

Thank-you all for such an open and forthright discussion.

Mary, Flora and Lotte file out of the room.

BASIL

(to Dorothy)

Bit bloody brutal, dearie.

DOROTHY

We must speak to Mother's doctor.

ARNOLD

I'm sorry Princess, but Mrs Hunter has requested that her doctor adhere strictly to patient confidentiality.

DOROTHY

And what happens when the day comes that she is not competent to enforce that request? I rely on your support to implement other arrangements. They won't take them at Thorogood if they are too far gone.

ARNOLD

What I think we might bear in mind is Mrs Hunter's need to spend her last years surrounded by dependants to whom she is attached.

DOROTHY

What do you mean, Mr Wyburd, by dependants? These dependants are staff. They can always find another position. Children can not.

INT. MORETON DRIVE KITCHEN - SOON AFTER

57

LOTTE, MARY and FLORA all prepare MRS HUNTER's tray.

MARY

It was most unwise of you Flora, to inform them of the increase in Mrs Hunters's incoherent episodes. She did not wish the children to know.

Flora shrugs, unconcerned.

FLORA

Madame is already onto it. Her brother's a bit slower on the uptake, because he's sweeter.

Lotte places cake on the tray.

LOTTE

Mrs Hunter's favourite.

Mary leaves with the tray.

Flora cuts herself a large chunk of cake and starts eating it. Lotte takes some back.

LOTTE (CONT'D)

You're wanting to get me into more trouble?

FLORA

Don't worry about Milady. Mrs Hunter loves me.
(implying intimacy)
And so does Sir Basil.

LOTTE

Oooo you didn't.

FLORA

Oooo I did. And he thinks we might be 'real' together

LOTTE

What have you done?

FLORA

(pointedly)
...Does the baby of a Knight get some sort of title?

Lotte looks fearful.

LOTTE

Sshssh. Do not even mention that there could be such a possibility. We must be very, truly careful now. This is how it is...It begins with praise, promises, favours. It is their need and ours. Then one day, all new rules. No more business between us. Just Suspicion. Interviews. Isolation. We must give them no excuses.

Flora gives the anxious Lotte a comforting squeeze.

FLORA
Give who, you silly old biddy?

LOTTE
The Nazis, of course.

Flora just smiles at what she considers Lotte's eccentricity.

INT. THOROGOOD RETIREMENT VILLAGE - DAY 58

THOROGOOD is a pleasant, well kept, neat establishment. Lots of foliage.

A MATRON leads BASIL and DOROTHY along a covered wooden veranda where elderly sit quietly, some dozing. One of them looks expectantly with signs of recognition at Basil...

ELDERLY MAN
Don't I know you?

BASIL
(self effacing)
I'm an actor. Perhaps you saw me in
some little something?

ELDERLY MAN
No. That's not it.

The man's gaze drifts away. Basil hurries after MATRON who leads the siblings into...

INT. A LIGHT FILLED CREAM ROOM - DAY 59

BASIL
Most charming. Might be a little
tricky fitting her bed in here. And
some of her paintings.

DOROTHY
Matron has dealt with more
challenging problems than that I'm
sure.

BASIL
(charmingly to Matron)
Hope your handyman is good with a
saw.

The MATRON smiles with courtesy but no real warmth.

DOROTHY
Mother says rooms mean more to her
than people.

MATRON

This way to our famous perfume garden. I have read somewhere that Mrs Hunter loves flowers.

EXT. FLOWERY GARDEN - DAY

60

MATRON

Our elderly guess flowers by their scent once their eyesight goes. I'll leave you here for a moment to enjoy.

The MATRON leaves.

DOROTHY

Ils les yeux bandes ils sils
peuvent immobile voir?

Subtitled.

Do they blindfold them if they can still see?

BASIL

I'm betting that was funny, was it?

DOROTHY

I thought you spoke fluent French.

BASIL

No darling. Only when I fake it for a part.

DOROTHY

You are such a child.

BASIL

Close your eyes. I want to play.

DOROTHY sighs and humours him by shutting her eyes.
As BASIL picks flowers...

DOROTHY

We should put her name on the list straight away. There isn't a vacancy. Somebody has to die first. Matron explained that.

BASIL

Yes. Somebody has to die.

From the lavender, frangipanni and rose that Basil has collected, Basil chooses to hold a rose under Dorothy's nose.

DOROTHY

It's her favourite. She's not going to like it here. The games are too simple.

INT. MRS HUNTER'S ROOM - EVENING

61

MARY arranges roses in a large vase on MRS HUNTER's dressing table.

Mrs Hunter sits in her bed with her jewelry case on her lap. She wears a wig and is fully made up.

ARNOLD sits nearby.

LOTTE and FLORA stand.

MRS HUNTER

Thank-you Dorothy. The scent of roses is intoxicating.

MARY

It's Mary, Mrs Hunter.

MRS HUNTER

Don't contradict. I said Mary, didn't I?...

(to Flora and Lotte)

Please be seated Mrs Lippmann and Flora. I wish to give you something. You carry on Mary. I'm not going to give you anything. You are already complete without adornment.

Mary snip, snips the rose stalks.

Flora pulls up a chair and sits.

Lotte lowers her head. She is nervous.

LOTTE

I would prefer to stand for whatever is to come.

MRS HUNTER

Oh for heavens sake Lotte. I just wish to ask what you would like of mine as a keepsake.

LOTTE

A keepsake? Where are you going?

MRS HUNTER

Nowhere. I simply wish to sort things out while I still make some sense in this attic of a mind.

LOTTE

Then I would like my dress which was your dress, but only if Mr Wyburd would be writing it down that I didn't steal it.

MRS HUNTER

Why else do you think I have invited him here? I wish him to duly record all my gifts so that they shall never be challenged by certain children named...
(a vacant moment)
...We all know who they are.

ARNOLD

I am writing that the dress is now the property of Mrs Lippmann.

LOTTE

(to Arnold)

The black dress where every single sequin was hand sewn in Shanghai.

Mrs Hunter starts scrabbling through all the jewelry in her case.

MRS HUNTER

My husband took to giving me sapphire rings. Pink one year. Blue the next. The blue represents intelligence and intellect. The pink one is for you little Flora.

Mrs Hunter holds it up.

MRS HUNTER (CONT'D)

Is this pink? You'll have to tell me.

FLORA

It's pink.

MRS HUNTER

Are you writing, Arnold? Write that she must wear it to celebrate her engagement or do you think "betrotthal" sounds less suburban.

FLORA

But...I'm not engaged.

MRS HUNTER

The boy might be embarrassed if I gave him the ring and told him to give it to you.

FLORA

What, you're talking about Col?

MRS HUNTER

Isn't he the one who hangs around sniffing after you when you are in season?

FLORA

What makes you think I'd marry him? Don't you think I could do any better? I can tell you I've got something much better on offer.

LOTTE

(anxiously imploring)

Please Floradora, thank Mrs Hunter. Mr Wyburd, write that Flora has accepted the ring.

ARNOLD

(to Flora)

Shall I write that this is the case?

Flora shrugs.

FLORA

As long as it's not on the condition that I marry Col.

MRS HUNTER

Not a condition but a hope my dear. He is a decent young man.

Mrs Hunter scrabbles again in her jewelry case.

MRS HUNTER (CONT'D)

Come closer, Mr Wyburd.

Arnold pulls his chair closer as Mrs Hunter drags out a turquoise pendant.

MRS HUNTER (CONT'D)

This doesn't really fit with my jewelry collection. Quite simple as you can see. I thought your wife might like it.

ARNOLD

I'm sure she will like it.

Arnold slips the pendant into his pocket.

MRS HUNTER

It has some personal significance
as it was given to me by that poor
young man on the island...
Edvard...ah...what's his name?

Flora rolls her eyes.

FLORA

Pehl.

ARNOLD

You know this man?

FLORA

No. I've just heard how he fancied
Mrs Hunter about a hundred times.

MRS HUNTER

Has my generosity offended you in
some way, Flora?

Flora is about to answer but thinks better of it, and slips
the pink sapphire ring onto her finger.

Mrs Hunter closes her eyes. They all sit...waiting.

FLORA

Is that it?

LOTTE

We haven't been dismissed yet.

ARNOLD

Perhaps a few more minutes. To see
if she is really asleep...

*Mrs Hunter's hallucination: Back on the island. Looking out
to sea...silhouetted against the burnt out light from the
bright ocean and sky...Mrs Hunter(55), in her white dress,
and Dorothy(33), in bathers, rest in two separate beach
hammocks hanging on poles. Between them, the young man Edvard
sits, drawing with a stick in the sand.*

*A herd of brumbies appears, racing along the water's edge,
manes flying. One large wave crashes into them leaving them
in the shallows. The wild horses baulk and change course,
galloping now straight towards our threesome. Edvard
scrambles to his feet...but the horses separate and peel off
to either side, some galloping past Mrs Hunter, the others
galloping past Dorothy. Edvard stands in the middle.*

Back in the present: Old Mrs Hunter opens her eyes, and ever
so slowly focuses...

MRS HUNTER

Well, what are you waiting for? You
may be excused.

INT. KINGS CROSS TOURIST SHOP - DAY

62

FLORA, in pale pink toreador pants and top, perspex earrings,
and wearing the pink sapphire ring, tries on a white kangaroo
fur coat. The SHOPKEEPER smokes and reads a paper with
Headlines about the upcoming election. There is a PHOTOGRAPH
of ATHOL SHREVE on the front page. The Shopkeeper checks
Flora out.

SHOPKEEPER

Going somewhere special?

Flora nods.

FLORA

Uhuh. I need something classy to go
with my frock.

Flora painstakingly counts out her money...

INT. THEATRE - NIGHT

63

On stage, performing a drawing room drama, are the BRITISH
THEATRE COMPANY we met earlier.

FLORA sits next to BASIL in MRS HUNTER's white dress and her
newly acquired kangaroo fur coat.

Basil watches the play, entranced. Flora is more enthralled
by Basil. The pink star sapphire ring sparkles as Flora takes
Basil's hand, slips it under her dress, and holds it tight
between her legs. Basil hardly notices. He gives her a
distracted smile before riveting his attention back onto the
stage. Flora realizes she has strong competition for his
affections here.

EXT. CIRCULAR QUAY ITALIAN RESTAURANT - LATE NIGHT

64

The outside section. A place frequented by theatricals. Loud.
Boozy. BASIL sits holding hands with FLORA. The familiar
BRITISH THEATRE COMPANY actors are there. That's MAGGIE,
JUNE, CAROL, DUDLEY, PETER and JANIE. All are inebriated.

JUNE

(to Flora)

What do you do Dear?

BASIL

She is the most wonderful nurse.

CAROL

Good. Bas needs taking care of, God knows.

Flora blushes.

FLORA

I look after his mother.

JUNE

I played a nurse once. In Romeo and Juliet.

CAROL

I find the nurse a rather redundant character, don't you Flora?

FLORA

I haven't seen Romeo and Juliet since I was at school.

MAGGIE

You'll have to remedy that Basil.

BASIL

I will. When we return to civilization in London.

FLORA

How long have you all known each other?

DUDLEY

Since Shakespearian days m'dear.

Basil calls down the table to Janie.

BASIL

Janie, come down here and talk to Flora...

Janie totters down and feels Flora's coat.

JANIE

What sort of fur is it?

FLORA

(with pride)
Kangaroo.

JANIE

(with some distaste)
Oh. I should wear something like this for my character Bas.

BASIL

Janie will be playing you, flower,
when I mount my play in London.

JANIE

So I'd better get in a bit of
research. I'd be awfully grateful
if you'd help me out.

FLORA

Why would you have an English girl
play me?

BASIL

I think you'll sound lovely with an
English voice.

JUNE

Does your mother know you two are
an item Bas?

BASIL

Not yet.
(to Flora)
Better for us, isn't it, to wait
'til after.

FLORA

After what?

BASIL

Oh, you know what I mean. Mother
still has me on a short leash. I
can't afford to piss her off right
now.

FLORA

Why would it piss her off? She
likes me.

BASIL

As her nurse she does, Sweet. It
would be quite a different matter
if she saw you as potentially
carrying on the family line.

Flora is well pissed off herself. She flounces off.

FLORA

Excuse me, I need to go to the
toilet.

MAGGIE

Lavatory dear.

Flora marches straight out to a taxi rank.
Basil stands to follow, but the booze makes him unsteady on his feet.

BASIL
(calling out)
Flora!

Flora ignores him as she gets into a cab. Basil sinks back into his chair.

BASIL (CONT'D)
Well, that was a fucking disaster.
Why did I have to say that?

DUDLEY
Go after her dear-heart. Plead
being a minor under the influence.

Basil is down-hearted.

BASIL
I haven't the faintest idea where
she lives.

EXT. KINGS CROSS - LATE NIGHT

65

The garish night-time world of Sydney's Kings Cross: Drug taking prostitutes. Drunken louts. Sleeping homeless. Flashing neon signs advertising nudie dance clubs. FLORA emerges from a bottle shop, carrying a six pack of beer. With her coat flung over her shoulders so MRS HUNTER's white dress is exposed, she is immediately mistaken for a rich, privileged stranger.

Flora, in a self destructive mood, doesn't care. She leans against a wall with scantily dressed prostitutes to pull a can from her sixpack. In her effort to open the can, she drops the rest. As prowling, drunken TEENAGE BOYS pass by, one collects the six pack from the ground...

TEENAGE BOY
Thanks Lady.

Flora puts on her best fake English accent...

FLORA
Excuse me. I don't believe this
lady offered you her refreshments.

As the BOYS move on, one gives her the finger.

TEENAGE BOY
Stuck up bitch!

Beer sprays over Mrs Hunter's dress as Flora pelts her beer can at the BOYS as hard as she can. The can hits the back of one of them. The Boys turn and move back threateningly towards her, yelping some strange primitive sounds. This shocks Flora back to her senses. She totters away from them as fast as she can in high heels. They are gaining ground, and they look like they mean business.

A black hire car pulls into the kerb and drives along beside her. The back door opens. Flora doesn't want to get in, but the boys are gaining...

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

Will you please get in. My wife is getting cold.

The boys are almost upon Flora. She takes the better of the two bad options and jumps into the hire car. Inside is ATHOL SHREVE.

Next to him is his wife, a thin sickly looking woman with a blanket draped over her legs. Athol Shreve pulls the door closed and taps the window for his DRIVER to drive on.

ATHOL SHREVE

(cross)

What's a girl like you doing hanging around here?

Flora is shaking. She says nothing.

ATHOL SHREVE (CONT'D)

You work for Mrs Hunter, don't you?
You accompanied her to a ball that my wife and I attended.

Flora remains silent.

ATHOL SHREVE (CONT'D)

You obviously come from a good home. Let us take you there.

Still no response.

ATHOL SHREVE (CONT'D)

At least, let us drop you somewhere safer.

Silence.

ATHOL SHREVE (CONT'D)

You don't recognize me do you?...Haven't you seen me in the papers?

Flora stares at him with no recognition.

ATHOL SHREVE (CONT'D)
I've just given a speech at a rally
in Hyde Park.

MRS SHREVE
He was trying to convince a hard
crowd that equal opportunity could
be a reality in this country.

Finally, Flora speaks.

FLORA
But we're all old enough to know
how the world really works, aren't
we?

ATHOL SHREVE
It's my objective to make it work
better.

Flora's not buying it.

FLORA
You can drop me here.

ATHOL SHREVE
I'm not going to do that.

FLORA
But that's where I live.

She indicates a modest boarding house in Kings Cross. ATHOL SHREVE looks sceptical, so Flora explains.

FLORA (CONT'D)
This isn't my dress.

Athol taps on the Driver's window and the car stops.

FLORA (CONT'D)
But I'm allowed to wear it.

Flora opens the door, then stops.

FLORA (CONT'D)
You won't tell Mrs Hunter about
this, will you?

MRS SHREVE
(kindly)
Of course we won't Miss.

FLORA
(heartfelt)
Thank-you.

Flora gets out and heads for her home, the boarding house.

INT. QUEEN VICTORIA CLUB SITTING ROOM - LATE NIGHT 66

On a coffee table: coffee, cream, petit fours, brandy.
DOROTHY reads Le Monde as she enjoys this supper. A CLERK places a small envelope beside her. She opens it and sees that it is an unpaid account.

INT. QUEEN VICTORIA CLUB FOYER - LATE NIGHT 67

DOROTHY approaches the desk.

DOROTHY

I am afraid you have made a mistake. You will remember that I settled my account with you and am now entirely up to date.

DESK CLERK

You are, Madame, as far as your accommodation is concerned. But these amounts are for extras. Meals, phone, French newspapers. Would you care to settle now?

Dorothy looks worried.

DOROTHY

But...I can't possibly have spent this much.

DESK CLERK

Perhaps you would like to check the amounts. The morning will be fine.

DOROTHY

Very well. The morning then.

INT. MORETON DRIVE KITCHEN - MORNING 68

Breakfast is on the table. LOTTE and MARY are seated, eating. An exhausted FLORA arrives, carrying MRS HUNTER's white dress. She dumps it on a chair and sits on another.

FLORA

Where's mine, Lot?

LOTTE

I'm sorry but you are not entitled. We must stick to the rules most strictly now.

FLORA
(disbelieving)
You're not going to give me
breakfast any more?

LOTTE
I must be accounting for every last
piece of food.

MARY
We do have to be more careful. Mrs
Hunter's got it into her head that
her blue sapphire has gone missing,
although she's told me she gave it
away years ago.

Flora digs at Lotte with a malicious edge.

FLORA
She'll probably think you took it
Lotte.

MARY
Not amusing Flora.

FLORA
What, you're going to tell me what
I can and cannot say now?

MARY
I believe, although I have never
exercised it, that I am your
superior.

Lotte examines the white dress.

LOTTE
What have you been doing to Mrs
Hunter's dress? Have you any idea
what it means to her?

FLORA
I'm going to clean it up, don't
worry.

LOTTE
No I must do it. You won't be doing
it properly and then it will be all
my fault.

The stress is showing on everyone.

FLORA
You're right. I'm a qualified
nurse. You take care of it.

Flora dumps it in Lotte's arms.

LOTTE
And could you please stop putting
foreign material down the cloak
room toilet.

FLORA
It's called a lavatory Mrs
Lippmann. Everybody knows that.

Flora storms out of the room.

INT. MRS HUNTER'S BEDROOM - DAY

69

The turquoise pendant gifted by MRS HUNTER lays around the
aging neck of LAL WYBURD. FLORA, now in her nurse's uniform,
serves tea and biscuits to Mrs Hunter and Lal.

MRS HUNTER
It was a charming idea Lal to pay
me a visit. I haven't seen you
since...um...

Lal touches the necklace.

LAL
I wanted to thank you for the
present. Letters are
unsatisfactory. A voice is more
personal, don't you think?

MRS HUNTER
I thought a gem stone may suit you
more so than it does myself.

Mrs Hunter peers at Lal.

MRS HUNTER (CONT'D)
Do you still have your freckles?
They haven't turned cancerous have
they?

LAL
Not that I'm aware of.

Mrs Hunter looks around the room vacantly.

*Mrs Hunter hallucination: A 40 year old Arnold Wyburd, in
Arnold's recognizable style of suit and tie, sits nervously
on the edge of a blue velvet chair.*

MRS HUNTER
Have you offered Mr Wyburd a
chocolate biscuit?

CONTINUED:

LAL

My husband is not here.

MRS HUNTER

Yes he is. He's right here in my
bedroom.

Mrs Hunter glances back at the chair. The hallucination has
disappeared.

MRS HUNTER (CONT'D)

Oh, he's slipped away. Now we girls
can talk about him properly.

Lal becomes nervous.

MRS HUNTER (CONT'D)

Does he treat you kindly Lal? Does
he love you.

LAL

I believe so. He is my husband and
he is an honourable man.

MRS HUNTER

O yes. Honourable certainly. And
so...hairless.

This random pronouncement raises Lal's anxiety.

LAL

How do you mean? He isn't bald even
now.

MRS HUNTER

I liked the feel of his skin. His
was the softest and the whitest of
all.

LAL

What...what are you saying?

MRS HUNTER

It was nothing Lal. Simply flesh on
flesh. It only counts when love is
involved. My husband understood
that we can sincerely love those we
betray.

Flora flicks a glance at Lal to see if she understands
exactly what is being said here. Lal does. A tear drops from
her face into her tea.

Lal can no longer control herself. She retaliates.

(CONTINUED)

LAL

Do you think you shall enjoy
Thorogood village? I believe your
children are confident that they
shall find you suitable
accommodation there.

Flora's ears prick up.

MRS HUNTER

That's where Cherry Cheesman's
mother died.

LAL

Yes. I believe the children are
waiting for another such vacancy.

MRS HUNTER

(spitting at her)

You and Arnold should go there Lal
if you think it would be so nice.

LAL

We couldn't afford it Elizabeth.

MRS HUNTER

I must ask you to leave. I'm tired.
...though not as tired as my
husband was.

Lal stands.

MRS HUNTER (CONT'D)

I returned to Kudgeri for his final
months. I gave him oxygen, do you
remember?

LAL

I was never invited to your country
home.

Lal coldly kisses the air, short of Mrs Hunter's face.

LAL (CONT'D)

Goodbye Mrs Hunter.

Lal Wyburd hurries from the room.

INT. ARNOLD WYBURD'S DINING ROOM - NIGHT

70

LAL and ARNOLD sit over a simple dinner. Lal is finishing off
her food. Arnold hasn't touched his.

LAL

How was the visit?

The normally restrained Arnold is in a fury.

ARNOLD

It was awful! All the staff
grilling me about the children's
criminal intentions to put their
mother away. How the leak occurred
I can't imagine.

Lal calmly lays her knife and fork together in her plate.

LAL

It was I who told.

ARNOLD

You?!

LAL

I always looked up to Mrs Hunter as
somebody who was beautiful, and
sometimes brilliant. But she is too
selfish...and too greedy.

ARNOLD still can't believe it.

ARNOLD

Not you Lal!

LAL

I suppose I didn't stop to think
that you had told me in confidence.

ARNOLD

Didn't stop to think?! After all
these years...not to be ethically
conditioned.

In frustration, Arnold tosses his napkin at Lal.
This is the most violent thing that Arnold has ever done.
Although no physical pain has been inflicted, Lal is deeply
hurt by this aggressive act.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)

Do you understand the consequence
of your actions?! Mrs Lippmann is
rationing herself to one meal a day
and refusing to accept her salary.
Flora has surprised me with her
open condemnation of the children
and Mary can't stop praying. If the
children were to seek Power of
Attorney at present, they would
succeed. An already perilously
fragile house has turned lunatic.

Lal's eye fill with tears. This stops Arnold in his tracks.
After a silence...

LAL
(very quietly)
Is my dinner not good enough for
you?

Tears pour down her completely immobile face.

ARNOLD
There. There. No need to cry. I'm
sure it's quite delicious.

Arnold forces himself to eat his dinner.

INT. MRS HUNTER'S ROOM - DAWN

71

Mrs Hunter is awake, her eyes moist. Flora prepares a needle.

FLORA
Hang on dearie.

Flora pulls back the covers.

FLORA (CONT'D)
Now let's just lift your nightie
eh?...You'll feel better soon.

*Mrs Hunter's hallucination: In the country property bedroom,
Mrs Hunter (much younger), in an exquisite nightgown,
expertly gives a needle in the buttocks of her sick emaciated
husband.*

MRS HUNTER
Won't be long and you'll feel
better.

She sits and takes a book 'The Charterhouse Of Palma'.

MRS HUNTER (CONT'D)
*What a funny thing you are to have
collected books all these years and
never mentioned it...Shall I read
to you?*

*He grips her arm hard as he deals with the pain. She notices
his eyes are filled with tears. She puts the book aside,
takes both his hands and kisses them repeatedly.*

MRS HUNTER (CONT'D)
*Surely now you shall allow me to
tell the children of your
condition.*

He shakes his head 'no'.

MRS HUNTER (CONT'D)
*If...when you go, they haven't been
told, they could resent it
terribly.*

*The drug has kicked in. He visibly relaxes with the relief
from pain.*

MRS HUNTER (CONT'D)
*I shall take it upon myself to
write, dear.*

*Her husband manages a small smile of gratitude.
Mrs Hunter lays down beside him.*

MRS HUNTER (CONT'D)
*As is your wish, you shall see your
time out in this home. But I have
told the Doctor he can't expect to
share your death. That belongs to
the family.*

She kisses her husband's face gently.

MRS HUNTER (CONT'D)
*I'll leave it to you to choose the
moment, old boy.*

EXT. CENTENNIAL PARK - BACK TO THE PRESENT - MORNING 72

Sun shines through a space in the cloud to create one patch
of glittering light on the lake. Swans glide around this
'eye' of golden light. The clouds pass to reveal full
sunlight.

To the haunting strains of LOTTE's music, MRS HUNTER is
carried on a day bed down Palm Drive in Centennial Park by
ARNOLD WYBURD, LOTTE, FLORA and MARY, one holding each
corner. It could look like an odd funeral procession if not
for the brightly coloured sun umbrella set up over Mrs Hunter
to shade her.

The procession approaches the lake.

A taxi pulls up nearby bearing BASIL and DOROTHY.

A fearful Lotte bows her head.

LOTTE
*Is it the murderers come about
their business already.*

FLORA
*Just look them in the eye. They're
not as special as they think they
are.*

A small distance away. Basil and Dorothy are approaching.

DOROTHY
(under her breath)
It's so mother to summons us here.

BASIL
(under his breath)
Is a flair for theatrics genetic?

Basil and Dorothy kiss Mrs Hunter on the cheek.

Basil smiles hopefully at Flora.

BASIL (CONT'D)
Good-morning all.

Flora ignores him. So do Mary and Lotte.

DOROTHY
Please Mother, let's go back to our house.

ARNOLD
I believe it is still Mrs Hunter's house.

Dorothy and Basil note Arnold's rebuke. They immediately know this will not be a pleasant meeting.

DOROTHY
We're making a spectacle of ourselves.

MRS HUNTER
I don't care anymore what people think. I wanted to be outdoors one more time. One has a better chance of being struck by thunderbolt outside.

BASIL
What brought on this little bout of despair?

ARNOLD
Mrs Hunter, and, indeed the entire household, know about your intentions regarding Thorogood Village.

Knowing this will further damage his chances with Flora, Basil looks imploringly towards her. Flora stares back at him with open hostility.

DOROTHY

How could they possibly know that?

Arnold is ever the decent human being...

ARNOLD

It is entirely my fault. I am
afraid I let it slip.

DOROTHY

I am extremely disappointed in you
Mr Wyburd.

ARNOLD

I am disappointed in myself. I can
only offer my most humble
apologies.

BASIL

Not to worry mother. They don't
have a vacancy just yet.

MRS HUNTER

Then I must make sure I die before
they do. I just have to work out
how to stop the machinery.

BASIL

Now we're being morbid.

Lotte starts to cry.

MRS HUNTER

We should do our best to make my
last memories pleasant ones. How
should we say goodbye Basil?...
Should you perhaps recite something
for me?

BASIL

I hate matinee performances.

DOROTHY

(to Basil)

For heavens sake. Just do it.

BASIL

(recites some Merchant of
Venice)

'In such a night,
Stood Dido with a willow in her
hand
Upon the wild sea banks, and wav'd
her love
To come again to Carthage'...

Mrs Hunter interrupts...

MRS HUNTER

Thank-you, dear. Perhaps you would be more suited to something lighter. You have a lovely singing voice. Perhaps you should try something musical.

Mrs Hunter puckers her mouth at Basil, clearly inviting a kiss on the lips.

MRS HUNTER (CONT'D)

Kiss me goodbye, won't you, before I go?

Basil refuses the invitation...

BASIL

Don't be silly, darling. This is not goodbye.

DOROTHY

(flares at Basil)
Of course it isn't.
(back to Mrs Hunter)
Would you like me to come home and care for you for a little while?

MRS HUNTER

Low on funds again, are we?

Dorothy glances at the staff. She feels humiliated.

DOROTHY

Have we been summonsed here for a public execution?

MRS HUNTER

I don't want you at home any more. Mary and Flora shall care for me. I have told Mary she may stay in your room.

An awkward silence.

ARNOLD

(to Lotte, Mary and Flora)
Shall we take a stroll to the lake?

Arnold takes a paper bag from his pocket.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)

I brought some bread for the swans.

Arnold ushers the trio away. As soon as they've gone...

DOROTHY

Is there not one small thing that I can call my own? How could you take my room away from me?

MRS HUNTER

You were perfectly happy to throw me out of mine.

BASIL

It's alright Dotty. Mary can stay in my room.

DOROTHY

(to Basil)

She's a nurse! I wanted to be a nurse once and mother said our family would never entertain such a ridiculous notion.

(back to Mrs Hunter)

I was left in no doubt that nothing short of great social success would satisfy you. And now you are punishing your children for deserting you and a country where the titles you so desired for us don't even exist! Well, you can't have a 'Knight' and 'Princess' and at the same time dutiful children who are here to adore you!

MRS HUNTER

Don't screw up your face, Duckling.

DOROTHY

Do you think I don't know why you call me duckling? Because you found me too ugly to believe I could be yours!

MRS HUNTER

Not ugly. Just Ordinary. Basil and I were not forced into developing deeper qualities, but I knew that women like you must cultivate humour and strength. And then, they may sometimes convince others that they are beautiful.

(turning to Basil)

Aren't I right, Edvard?

DOROTHY

Edvard!?

MRS HUNTER

I can't help it if I get my names mixed up. I meant Basil.

DOROTHY

No you didn't. You are so cruel. I think you know exactly what you say. To bring up Edvard now could only be intended to distress me.

MRS HUNTER

Please be quiet! Your unforgiving nature exhausts me. Go away now! Go away to the island!

DOROTHY

Our island home is gone, you know that!

MRS HUNTER

Then visit your father at our country property. We have excellent staff at Kudgeri.

BASIL

Father has passed away.

MRS HUNTER

Then you must visit his grave. Otherwise he'll be very hurt.

BASIL

(placatory)
Of course, Mother.

MRS HUNTER

And please don't come back until the storm is over. Neither of you possess the qualities to survive it.

DOROTHY

I'm not going anywhere. You can't order me off to the country as if I'm still a child. We shall continue this discussion later in private.

Dorothy strides off. Basil quickly squeezes his mother's hand. As he tries to catch up with Dorothy, he gives a small wave towards Flora. Dorothy notices this.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)

Come now. You're making a fool of yourself.

From above, we see the two sides separate. Basil and Dorothy walk off in one direction towards the waiting taxi. The staff return and reclaim Mrs Hunter by carrying her in the opposite direction.

INT. BASIL'S HOTEL LOBBY - DAY

73

A DESK CLERK is on the phone.

DESK CLERK

Sir, there is a nurse here to see you. She says you'll know who she is.

INT. BASIL'S HOTEL ROOM - DAY

74

BASIL is relieved and excited.

BASIL

Please. Please send her up.

He puts aside the suitcase he is packing and takes out a bottle of champagne.

EXT. MORETON DRIVE ENTRANCE - DAY

75

DOROTHY marches up the pathway to the front door. She retrieves the spare key from the pot plant where it is normally kept...She tries to open the door with it. It doesn't fit. The lock is shiny and new. The lock has clearly been changed to close her out. One swift kick to the door hurts Dorothy's toe.

INT. BASIL'S HOTEL ROOM DOOR - DAY

76

BASIL excitedly opens the door, full expecting to see FLORA there, but instead it is JANIE, the actress, in a nurse's uniform. His letdown shows.

JANIE

What do you think? Will I do?

BASIL

I'm sure you'll do splendidly dear.
Once we start rehearsals.

JANIE

I am not who you expected, am I?.

BASIL

I had held out some hope that Flora may have felt some real affection for me and forgiven my boorish behaviour. But she was raised to be straightforward and already sees that I would fail her.

JANIE
Did you actually fall for her?

BASIL
My heart does seem to have stirred.

JANIE
That will be very good for your
work. You can draw on this
experience.

BASIL
So life may enhance my work. But
shouldn't work enhance my life?

Janie looks past him into the room to see champagne and two
champagne glasses.

JANIE
Shall we discuss this over a glass
of bubbly?

BASIL
Forgive my manners. But there are
certain times when one should drink
alone.

Basil closes the door.

INT. DOROTHY'S CLUB ROOM - DAY

77

DOROTHY closes her suitcase and a PORTER carries it out.

Dorothy leaves some money as a tip on the dressing table,
then retrieves half the tip to keep for herself, before
leaving the room and closing the door behind her.

EXT/INT. MORETON DRIVEWAY AND GARAGE - DAY

78

DOROTHY struggles down the driveway with her suitcase and
enters the garage through the open door. She takes car keys
from a hidden rack and gets into MRS HUNTER's large black
Mercedes.

She drives Mrs Hunter's car out of the garage...away from
Moreton drive...and along the lush tree lined streets.

EXT/INT. AUSTRALIAN OPEN COUNTRY - AFTERNOON

79

The lush greenery of Centennial park dissolves into the vast
empty red countryside of Australia. From a distance MRS
HUNTER's Mercedes travels towards us.

BASIL (V.O.)
The working class seek fantasy
within reality.
(MORE)

CONTINUED:

BASIL (V.O.) (CONT'D)

The upper class seek reality within fantasy. But being replaced by staff in one's own mother's affections carries this concept too far. If I'd wanted life to be that real, I would never have become an actor.

As the Mercedes nears, we see BASIL is now driving with DOROTHY seated by his side.

BASIL (CONT'D)

...Why is the country such a fucking long way from the city?...What are we doing here?

DOROTHY

We had little choice. Mother was obviously in no mood to be offering us any more funds. I must make what she gave me last until...

She doesn't care to finish the sentence.

BASIL

It is wise to give mother a little time to cool down and come to her senses.

DOROTHY

Do you not understand that she shall never fully come to her senses again?

BASIL

...Will she still have the wits about her to choose to die when she pleases?

DOROTHY

I don't know. Small fragments of her brain are being blown away piece by piece.

BASIL

...You don't believe that she would deny us...financially...at the very end, do you?

Dorothy doesn't have the answer to this. She simply stares out at the sparse red desert passing them by.

INT. MORETON DRIVE KITCHEN - DAY

80

FLORA enters to find a red faced, perspiring LOTTE on her knees, scrubbing the floor.

(CONTINUED)

FLORA

Lotte. Get up. The cleaner will attend to that.

LOTTE

Mrs Cush has resigned and so has the chauffeur since Madame took the car.

FLORA

You can't do the cleaning as well.

LOTTE

I must. Madame said my kitchen was an absolute disgrace.

Flora is measuring out some medicines.

FLORA

But Madame's not here right now, is she?

Lotte scrubs harder.

FLORA (CONT'D)

Will you stop it?! Look at the state of your feet. They're swelling up. If you can't dance for Mrs Hunter, you'll be really stuffed.

Lotte looks fearful as she checks her ballooning feet. This convinces her to stand.

LOTTE

Then my usefulness will have no use.

Flora sniffs the air.

FLORA

What's burning?

LOTTE

O no. My strudel.

Lotte gets even more agitated as she goes to the oven and takes out some burnt black pastries.

LOTTE (CONT'D)

Burnt. All burnt. It is all your fault.

FLORA

Oh come off it.

Lotte desperately tries to scrape the black bits off.

LOTTE

It is because I am giving thought to the terrible mess you have us all in. Mrs Hunter is all that can save us now. What if she finds out?

FLORA

Don't worry, it's all over with Basil. It turns out we don't speak the same language.

LOTTE

Do you know that there is a child?

FLORA

I'm regular as clockwork and I'm four days late.

LOTTE

Oh you stupid girl! What if Mrs Hunter finds out. They don't mind the hanky panky with us, but a child? Never!!

FLORA

This has got nothing to do with them. It's for me and my kid. With Basil's breeding and my commonsense, my kid'll stand a fighting chance in this world.

Lotte scrapes the strudel with even more vehemence.

LOTTE

I am knowing how to get rid of it early.

FLORA

You're getting more and more weird.

LOTTE

We begin with a hot bath and brandy.

FLORA

You're not laying a finger on me.

The strudel is now looking a pulpy mess.

FLORA (CONT'D)

And I'd start over with the strudel if I were you?

LOTTE

And how do I explain the spending
of more money on ingredients?

Flora's had enough. She leaves with her medicines.

LOTTE (CONT'D)

(calling after))

You think it's alright to throw
something away just because it is
burnt?

EXT. AUSTRALIAN COUNTRYSIDE - SUNSET

81

BASIL and DOROTHY are some distance apart in an empty
landscape. They hide themselves from each other behind
different bushes. Basil stands, peeing. Dorothy squats,
weeing. Basil lets out an Australian bush call.

BASIL

(in his resonant voice)

COOOEEEEEE.

The Coooeeee echoes and fades.

DOROTHY

I don't have a handkerchief.

BASIL

(singing it like a song)

COOOOOEEEEEEEE

Without something to dry herself, Dorothy jiggles up and
down.

DOROTHY

COOOEEEEEEEE

Her jiggling makes it a very funny Coooeeee indeed.

INT. MRS HUNTER'S ROOM - SUNSET

82

Out of the blue, MRS HUNTER lets out a very loud...

MRS HUNTER

COOOOOEEEEEEEE

A dozing Mary is startled and drops her book.

*Mrs Hunter's hallucination: Back on the island. Mrs Hunter
(55) stands before her beach house in her white dress.*

MRS HUNTER (55) (CONT'D)

COOOEEEEEEEE

She is calling to Edvard and Dorothy(30's) who are on the shore line. Dorothy in bathers. Edvard in a sarong.

DOROTHY
(calls back to her mother)
COOOOEEEE

Dorothy runs into the water and start swimming. Edvard waves to Mrs Hunter before dropping his sarong and diving into the sea, naked. Mrs Hunter gazes out and sees what looks like a dark line along the horizon. Above is clear blue sky.

Back to the present: Mary gently strokes Mrs Hunter.

MARY
Mrs Hunter. It's Mary.

OLD MRS HUNTER is drifting back.

MRS HUNTER
I don't want any Mary. I want to go swimming with Edvard and Dorothy.

MARY
The Princess is not here.

MRS HUNTER
Where is she?

MARY
You sent your children away to your country property.

MRS HUNTER
Don't be ridiculous. Dorothy never swims in the country.

Mary pick up a thermometer.

MARY
Let's take your temperature.

MRS HUNTER
No longer necessary. My children drove the temperature out of me for good and all.

Mary places the thermometer aside.

MRS HUNTER (CONT'D)
I hope you don't mind, but I have organised a placement for you for after I go. A good family. A dutiful politician with an invalid wife. I met her once at the arthritis ball.

MARY

Thank-you for thinking of me.

MRS HUNTER

Don't let anyone say I don't take care of my staff.

Mrs Hunter is all sweetness.

MRS HUNTER (CONT'D)

Dear, you know the nice needles that you give me. I was wondering if you could perhaps give me an extra one this evening.

Mary immediately gets her meaning.

MARY

I would never think of doing such a thing! That would be entirely unethical!

MRS HUNTER

I should have known. You will never blot your copybook for God...I gave my husband his needles until the end, you know. He requested that I do so.

Mrs Hunter's eyes fill with tears.

MRS HUNTER (CONT'D)

He said I had the guts to do what needed to be done without flinching.

Mary understands exactly what Mrs Hunter is saying. She takes Mrs Hunter's hand and holds it.

EXT. COUNTRY TOWN - EVENING

83

BASIL and DOROTHY, in MRS HUNTER's Mercedes, travel down a street lined with weatherboard houses, shop fronts and pubs, towards the town square. In the square stands a large bronze statue of Mrs Hunter's husband, ALFRED HUNTER, with one hand on the head of a merino ram and the other hand cupped, holding coins. Basil pulls up in front of it.

DOROTHY

Father wasn't like that.

BASIL

Can you honestly remember?

She nods her head 'Yes'

DOROTHY

He was softer...more weary
looking...

BASIL

Do you want to get out?

Dorothy walks from the Mercedes to the statue of her father.
She rests her white manicured hand in his cupped bronze hand
for a while before...
She returns to the car and gets back in.

EXT. THE HUNTER'S 'KUDGERI' COUNTRY HOUSE - NIGHT

84

The Mercedes pulls up. BASIL and DOROTHY get out of the car.

DOROTHY

This is what I feared. Arriving
after dark...the staff will hate us
even more for turning up late for
dinner.

She sidles up against BASIL. The twosome look at the grand
Hunter country residence. The awe-inspiring stone and wooden
homestead we saw in the photograph in Arnold Wyburd's office.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)

Are we such extreme monsters that
we shall wreck the lives of normal
people?

BASIL

Almost certainly.

DOROTHY

I can't go in there...not without
Daddy.

Basil is nervous too.

BASIL

O dear. We should have brought a
present.

Dorothy notices a rose patch nearby.

DOROTHY

Roses...Caretakers may enjoy a
simple gift.

Dorothy heads right into the rose patch to reach one large
rose.

On the house balcony, a light goes on illuminating the gold
plaque with the house's name...KUDGERI

CONTINUED:

RORY and ANNE MACRORY (well worn 40's) and a brood of MACRORY CHILDREN pour out of the front door. They are greeted by the sight of a stunned Dorothy, now floodlit, in the middle of their rose patch, picking their rose.

The children, four boys and one little girl, excitedly head towards Basil and Dorothy. But they are stopped by the no nonsense country man, Rory. He whistles them like he would a dog.

RORY

Don't make a nuisance of yourselves.

The children halt. Dorothy seems incapable of moving. Basil holds out his hand to her.

BASIL

Come on Dot.

She walks out of the rose patch and takes Basil's hand. They move towards the MACRORIES, hand in hand like two disobedient children. Dorothy tries to regain her composure.

DOROTHY

I thought une petite fleur pour
Madame de la maison.

Subtitled:

A small flower for the lady of the
house.

The six year old girl, MOGS, steps through the boys to reveal that she is wearing her Sunday best and holding a large bunch of multi-coloured roses. Mogs presents them to Dorothy and curtsseys.

Dorothy takes the bouquet with the most gracious smile that she can muster and hands her single rose back to Mogs.

INT. MORETON DRIVE/BASIL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

85

MARY gathers the now dead flowers that LOTTE had arranged for SIR BASIL's arrival. She discards them into a large garbage bag. Then she unpacks her suitcase. She's moving in to Sir Basil's room. She opens his wardrobe which still bears some of his clothes. With some sensual pleasure, she smells one of his suits. Then she hangs her dresses next to his clothes.

INT. KUDGERI/MR AND MRS HUNTER'S OLD BEDROOM - NIGHT

86

DOROTHY unpacks her suitcase in a large bedroom that has an air of decayed splendour. Dominating the room is a king size bed with a plush cream satin eiderdown that has seen better days. Roses have been placed around the room. The MACRORIES have obviously done their best to welcome royalty.

INT. KUDGERI/CHILDREN'S ROOM - NIGHT

87

BASIL stands in what is clearly one of the children's rooms that has been cleared out for his stay. Basil unpacks his toiletries and puts them into a plastic cup covered in animal transfers. Amongst kid's photographs, there is a photo of Basil dressed in Shakespearian costume. It bears a short message...*To Dad, love Basil.*

INT. KUDGERI KITCHEN - NIGHT

88

A large eat in kitchen. DOROTHY and BASIL, dressed up for a formal dinner in a dining room, sit at a large wooden kitchen table. ANNE MACRORY is frying chops in a big pan. Barefoot, pyjama clad children are playing. RORY sets the table.

Little MOGS painstakingly pours sherry into glasses on a tray. Mogs carries the tray, concentrating extremely hard on balancing the drinks.

ANNE MACRORY

It won't be what you remember, will it Rory? I was going to set the dining room...but have fallen behind as you see.

As Mogs is about to offer the sherry to Dorothy, she loses concentration and drops the tray. Glass shatters everywhere.

RORY

Anyone without shoes, don't move!!

Mogs cries inconsolably. This starts yet another MACRORY BABY screaming in a high chair. Rory lifts Mogs to comfort her. Anne lifts the baby.

RORY (CONT'D)

(to Basil)

There's a dustpan over there Sir, wouldya mind?

Basil fetches the dustpan.

The chops are sending up smoke signals. Dorothy gets up and turns the chops, while Basil does his best to clean up the broken glass.

INT. KUDGERI/MR HUNTER'S OLD STUDY - NIGHT

89

BASIL sit on an old cracked leather sofa. The room is still full of their Father's photographs and other memorabilia. The fire has been lit. BASIL and DOROTHY idly leaf through old books and folders.

BASIL

I think Mrs Macrory was disappointed that I didn't remember Dad's chair.

DOROTHY

Can you believe that Mother left his books here to decay? Books are the most personal of possessions.

BASIL

I'm sure none of these were fathers.

She holds up 'The Charterhouse Of Palma'.

DOROTHY

This was his favourite. It's got his signature in it.

Letters fall out from inside.

BASIL

That's my writing. How sweet of the old fellow to keep my letters.

Dorothy also spots her writing.

DOROTHY

And mine.

As Basil peruses a letter...

BASIL

Oh no. This is the last letter I wrote to him. I don't want to read it.

As Basil starts putting it away, Dorothy grabs it.

DOROTHY

But I do.
(Dorothy reads Basil's letter)
'My dear old dad, You are the last man I'd like to think a victim of this horrible illness. I remember you as the kindest of human beings. I am more depressed for being unable to concentrate all my thoughts on you. I am in rehearsal, opening in a week in Macbeth.'

BASIL

Please...Not aloud.

She reads a little in silence.

DOROTHY

You have to hear this section...
(reading again)
'Oh, if we had our lives over
again, I believe I'd choose to
live. Not renounce real life for
creating some appearance of it.'

Dorothy stops reading and speaks straight to Basil.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)

In real life, one must face the
truth about oneself.

She hands him his letter.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)

And admit that truth to others.

Basil takes a moment to take her words on board. Painful as
it is, he begins to read...

BASIL

(reading his own letter)
'Nobody can realize the strain of
taking on such a role. I'd like to
sit a few moments longer Dad, and
try to share your feelings, but
they are calling for me, so there
is nothing for it but to leave you
most regretfully...Blessings,
Basil.'

Dorothy holds up her own letter. She is mortified.

DOROTHY

Half of mine is in French. My God.
I wrote goodbye to my father in
French.

The siblings share the shame of how little they cared for
their father as he was dying.

BASIL

I think dearie, that we may be
truly awful people.

INT. MRS HUNTER'S BEDROOM - MORNING

90

ARNOLD pulls up his chair to MRS HUNTER's bedside and places
embossed white paper and a fountain pen on her bedside table.

ARNOLD

I've come Mrs Hunter...to discuss
the document you have in mind.

Mrs Hunter doesn't recognise him.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)
You remember me don't you?
Arnold?...Arnold Wyburd?

MRS HUNTER
O yes. It's you. I sent for
you...because...I must try to
remember...

ARNOLD
You wished to make some adjustments
to your...final wishes.

MRS HUNTER
Yes. I would like to leave the bulk
of my estate to my husband.

ARNOLD
Mrs Hunter, your husband is no
longer with us.

MRS HUNTER
Just because Alfred lives in the
country doesn't mean my marriage
isn't the most important thing in
the world to me.

ARNOLD
(humouring her)
Perhaps your husband does not need
the money now, and might prefer
that you consider some-one else.

MRS HUNTER
Alright then, if my husband is
going to be like that, I should
give it to the German dancer.

Flora beckons Arnold to join her at the dressing table where
she pours a glass of water.

FLORA
(whispers)
She's like this nearly all the time
now. It's up to you. You'll have to
decide what her wishes might be.

Arnold looks uneasy with this.

FLORA (CONT'D)
(whispers)
Mr Wyburd. You are a good and
honest man.
(MORE)

CONTINUED: (2)

FLORA (CONT'D)
You understand her better than
anyone and will fairly convey what
she truly wants.

Arnold is still not convinced.

FLORA (CONT'D)
(whispers)
Do you want the children coming
back to declare her incompetent?
They'll put her in that home.

Arnold gives this due consideration. Flora gives him the
water.

FLORA (CONT'D)
Mr Wyburd's got some nice cool
water for you luv.

Arnold helps Mrs Hunter have a sip, collects the paper and
fountain pen, and sits again by the bed.

ARNOLD
Shall we begin then? I have pen and
paper.

MRS HUNTER
Certainly. I wish to leave the bulk
of my estate to you Mr Wyburd. You
have served me with such loyalty
and digression through all these
years and I have given you so
little in return.

Flora gives Arnold Wyburd a 'see what I mean look'. Mrs
Hunter looks around the room vacantly.

MRS HUNTER (CONT'D)
What room am I in?

ARNOLD
You're in your bedroom Mrs Hunter.

MRS HUNTER
In which of my homes? I don't know
where I live anymore...

ARNOLD
You're in the city.

MRS HUNTER
If you say so...let me sign then. I
wish to go to sleep now.

Arnold hesitates, still uneasy with this situation.

(CONTINUED)

MRS HUNTER (CONT'D)

(cross)

Hurry up! Help me sign. I may not
wish to wake up.

Arnold still can't bring himself to do this.

FLORA

I'll help you Mrs Hunter.

Flora reaches for the paper and pen but Arnold pulls it away
from her.

ARNOLD

No Flora...Could you please leave
us. This must be my responsibility
alone.

Flora understands. She leaves the room, closing the door
behind her.

Arnold guides Mrs Hunter's hand in her signature on the blank
paper. When he tries to take his hand from hers, she holds on
to it.

MRS HUNTER

...Don't let go dear...I am a
little frightened...I don't
remember things too well anymore...
I don't remember this morning. I
seem to only remember things that
happened way back whenever...

*Mrs Hunter's Hallucination: MRS HUNTER (40's), wearing a
beautiful blue dress, is in her country home bedroom where
DOROTHY is now staying. Mrs Hunter lays back onto the plush
perfect cream satin eiderdown.*

MRS HUNTER (40'S) (CONT'D)

I have invited you to join me here
Mr Wyburd, because we are alone in
the house.

*A younger ARNOLD WYBURD (40) is seen, as in Mrs Hunter's
earlier hallucination, sitting nervously on the blue velvet
chair. He is clearly overwhelmed with admiration for this
beauty before him. But still holds back.*

MRS HUNTER (40'S) (CONT'D)

Come dear. Life is unforgettable
moments with dull routine in
between. Without the moments, what
shall we have to remember?

*The YOUNGER MRS HUNTER pulls down the bodice of her dress.
It's too much for the YOUNGER ARNOLD and he cannot resist.*

He shyly removes his shoes and lays down, still fully suited, beside her.

The blue star sapphire ring on her finger fills the foreground as she draws his face to hers for a kiss. Then Mrs Hunter pulls the cream satin eiderdown over them.

INT. KUDGERI/MR AND MRS HUNTER'S OLD BEDROOM - MORNING 91

A knock on the door. DOROTHY emerges from under the same cream satin eiderdown.

DOROTHY

Come in.

One of the Macrory children, AN EIGHT YEAR OLD BOY, enters carrying a tray with tea and bread and dripping.

MACRORY BOY

Breakfast Madame.

DOROTHY

M'epouserez-vous?

Subtitled:

Will you marry me?

He doesn't understand.

MACRORY BOY

It's bread and dripping Maam.

EXT. KUDGERI/COUNTRY DAM - DAY 92

BASIL is being tossed around in a utility truck. RORY drives towards a dam. The little girl, MOGS, holds on to BASIL's hand to stop her hitting the roof. Rory pulls up. Basil hops out followed by Mogs. Rory whistles Mogs back into the truck. She happily returns to her father.

RORY

Sure you want to be dropped here?

BASIL

Yes thank-you. Just thought I'd poke around by myself for a bit.

RORY

Not enough water to drown yourself anyway.

Basil is aware of Rory's teasing disrespect.

RORY (CONT'D)

Pick you up later.

CONTINUED:

BASIL

(a loaded question)

You won't be hanging around near
here then?

RORY

Nuh. Doing the west paddock. Why?

Basil shrugs self-consciously.

RORY (CONT'D)

Don't do anything I wouldn't do.

Basil watches them drive out of range. He takes off his shirt enjoying the sun on his back. He takes off his shoes and steps into the dam, luxuriating, like a kid again, squishing mud between his toes.

Basil begins practising his voice exercises. Now we know why he didn't want anyone close by. He walks around in the water trying to find the most resonant acoustics for echo.

BASIL

MmmmmmmNiminyminimyniminyminiminy.

Now, he launches into some King Lear...And he is wonderful. For the first time, we see why Basil received his knighthood.

BASIL (CONT'D)

'No, no, no, no! Come, let's away
to prison: We two alone will sing
like birds in the cage: When thou
dost ask me blessing, I'll kneel
down, And ask of thee forgiveness:
so we'll live, And pray, and sing,
and tell old tales, and laugh at
gilded butterflies, and hear poor
rogues talk of court news;
and we'll talk with them too,
Who loses and who wins; who's in,
who's out; And take upon's the
mystery of things...'

Basil steps on something nasty. Blood floats up through the muddy water as we see he has trodden on a rusty open tin can.

BASIL (CONT'D)

Shitshitshit!!!!

INT. MORETON DRIVE/LOTTE'S ROOM - AFTERNOON

93

Two red swollen feet soak in a basin of water. FLORA is on her knees tending to LOTTE's feet as Lotte applies stage make-up. They are in Lotte's small, simple cell of a room.

The only things of note are some black and white photos of a Jewish family, a battered old leather suitcase and the sequinned black dress. Lotte winces with pain as Flora dries her feet.

LOTTE

Will I be able to dance for her?

FLORA

You shouldn't even be standing on them, let alone dancing.

LOTTE

But she asked for me. Please don't tell her about my feet.

FLORA

Why not?

LOTTE

She does not care for weakness in others. And we must be making her still care for us. Please Floradora. Please.

Flora completely disapproves, but seeing the level of Lotte's anxiety, shrugs and does the best she can for her.

LOTTE (CONT'D)

You will stay with me, won't you?

FLORA

As long as I don't have to watch.

LOTTE

It's not the likes of you I must amuse.

Flora begins to bandage her feet.

LOTTE (CONT'D)

No. I won't be able to fit in my shoes.

FLORA

Then wear your work shoes. Mrs Hunter won't notice.

Lotte shakes her head 'no'.

LOTTE

It is being most important that we keep up the standard of our entertainment. It's the only thing we have to offer them.

INT. KUDGERI LIVING ROOM - DUSK

94

An old DOCTOR, DR TREWEEK who looks like he is on his last legs, stitches BASIL's foot.

DOROTHY sits. ANNE MACRORY and MOGS stand. They all watch the procedure with fascination.

MOGS

You made me come into town to get
my stitches Doctor.

ANNE MACRORY

I think these folk are a bit more
important than a tyke like you.

MOGS

Why?

ANNE MACRORY

Sssshhh!

DR TREWEEK

Last time I treated you was when
you fell out of a tree as a boy.
You broke your arm.

BASIL

Clumsy blighter, aren't I?

DR TREWEEK

Your mother never taught you
children how to look after
yourselves. I never had much time
for her.

DOROTHY

I believe, Doctor, you are the one
and only man I have ever heard
utter those words.

DR TREWEEK

But I came around in the end.

DOROTHY

Ahh. They all do.

DR TREWEEK

Mr Hunter wanted to finish it up
here in his own home.

ANNE MACRORY

Your mother bathed and fed him. She
stayed with him around the clock.

DR TREWEEK

When I couldn't call in every few hours, She took over giving him his needles.

DOROTHY

Did it take a lot to ease the pain?

DR TREWEEK

Enough to kill a horse.

Dorothy and Basil are obviously affected.

ANNE MACRORY

She gave him his final shot. Then she lay down with him until he went to sleep. He was in such pain you know. She couldn't bear to see him in such pain...I loved your mother.

INT. KUDGERI/MR AND MRS HUNTER'S OLD BEDROOM - EVENING

The light is on. DOROTHY removes the towel that covers the full length mirror and stands before her reflection, naked. BASIL enters without knocking. But seeing the sight of her undressed, quickly turns his back. Dorothy pulls her nightie on and throws herself under the eiderdown.

DOROTHY

Do you need something? Is your foot still hurting?

BASIL

A little.

DOROTHY

You can turn around now.

Basil turns and limps over to sit on the side of the bed. He takes some time before he speaks.

BASIL

You looked not bad. For an old duck.

A gentle smile from Dorothy.

DOROTHY

I would never let my husband see me naked. He could never understand it. He said Les Francais celebrant la forme nue

Subtitled:

The French celebrate the naked form.

(MORE)

CONTINUED: (2)

94

DOROTHY (CONT'D)

Finally he bullied me into standing
naked before him in full
daylight...He left me soon after.

They share a smile.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)

The only time I had stood publicly
naked in my life before that was at
the beach with Edvard.

BASIL

Who was this damned Edvard?
(teasing)
Was he a cad dear?

DOROTHY

A cad and a bounder my dear.

They laugh at their own little joke.

INT. MRS HUNTER'S BEDROOM - EVENING

95

MARY draws morphine into a measuring syringe. She sees MRS HUNTER's face grimace with pain. Mary returns the syringe to the morphine vial...drawing more...upping the dose. She squirts the morphine into a glass of orange juice. And holds the juice to Mrs Hunter's mouth.

Mrs Hunter's hallucination: Back on the island. Day. Instead of morphine, Mrs Hunter(55) is sipping a martini.

DOROTHY (V.O.)

Edvard was a marine biologist from
a poor background who was impressed
by our way of life. He beguiled me
with the irresistible lie that I
was more lovely than Mother...

Mrs Hunter's hallucination con't: Sipping her martini, Mrs Hunter watches exotic multi coloured tropical fish in a glass fish tank. As the fish dart and circle around each other in a courting ritual...

DOROTHY (V.O.)(CONT'D)

Of course Mother couldn't bear all
the attention he showed me. I, poor
fool, was lapping it up. So
confident had he made me that he
convinced me to swim naked with him
amongst the fish. He got terribly
sunburnt and said he would swim
home because the water soothed him.

INT. KUDGERI/MR AND MRS HUNTER'S OLD BEDROOM - NIGHT

96

DOROTHY

I was still naked when I walked
back along the beach. That was the
one moment in my life when I was
perfectly, splendidly happy.

Mrs Hunter's hallucination cont: Day. On the island. In the ocean shallows, large schools of fish are behaving aberrantly. They are clearly disorientated and swimming agitatedly and chaotically in different directions to each other. A naked Edvard appears swimming through them. As Edvard stands and walks out of the water, it is not Dorothy, but Mrs Hunter(55) that stands on the beach waiting for him. A breeze blows her hair and white chiffon skirt.

INT. KUDGERI/MR AND MRS HUNTER'S OLD BEDROOM - NIGHT

97

DOROTHY

I put my swimming costume back on
before I reached the house in case
mother was home.

Mrs Hunter's hallucination con't: Day. Edvard sits on a chair, naked except for a small towel draped over his privates. Mrs Hunter(55) rubs Edvard's pink back with sunburn cream. He slips his hands up under her dress and removes her pants. He removes his towel. Mrs Hunter sits astride him. Although her voluminous white skirt covers their actions, it is quite clear that they are making love under there. When Dorothy(33) opens the door, she is behind Edvard and he does not even turn to look. But Mrs Hunter and Dorothy are looking directly at each other. Dorothy's face is full of hate...

DOROTHY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

She was there. In the kitchen.
Making love to...no...not making
love...screwing my lover.

INT. KUDGERI/MR AND MRS HUNTER'S OLD BEDROOM - NIGHT

98

BASIL gently strokes DOROTHY's frowning face.

BASIL

Poor petal.

DOROTHY

I had survived countless assaults
from Mother. It's not the ferocity
of the assaults, but their
relentless, repetitive, predictable
nature.

INT. MRS HUNTER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

99

MARY gently strokes MRS HUNTER's frowning face.

MARY

There, there.

Mrs Hunter's hallucination con't: Day. The wind is up. At the water's edge, Edvard, in a sarong, gets into a launch boat. In the distance, on the beach, Mrs Hunter(55) and Dorothy(33) can be seen fighting.

INT. KUDGERI/MR AND MRS HUNTER'S OLD BEDROOM - NIGHT

100

DOROTHY

You are gradually...inexorably
unravelling without even noticing
it...

Mrs Hunter's hallucination con't: Day. As Edvard's boat leaves the beach, the black line out on the horizon (from Mrs Hunter's earlier hallucination), expands into dark cloud.

DOROTHY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Edvard fled immediately to escape
my indignation and hurt.

Mrs Hunter's hallucination con't: Day. Island sky. A helicopter, with Dorothy's silhouette inside next to a pilot, is tossed in an updraft/downdraft. The chopper flies across the sun drawing a pallid veil over the bright orb.

DOROTHY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I left the island soon after
Edvard.

Mrs Hunter's hallucination con't: Day. Mrs Hunter, standing alone on the beach, turns her attention from the helicopter in the sky back to Edvard's launch which is quite some distance out now. Her attention focuses acutely as she realizes that what appeared to be a low black cloud on the horizon is something quite other...something much more sinister...it is a black mass of rain and wind...a cyclone in all it's force, moving across the water in huge relentless phalanxes of giant black waves...

Towards...

Edvard's boat. Edvard, inside the cabin, hasn't noticed yet.

MRS HUNTER

(screaming)

EDVARD! EDVARD!!

Edvard emerges from the boat's cabin. Facing back towards Mrs Hunter on the beach, he doesn't see the broiling storm approaching, at breakneck speed, from behind him.

A bruised dark is also racing across the sky.

Rain suddenly pelts down onto him.

Now Edvard understands.

Blue lightning rents the sky. He turns to see the large waves and storm bearing down on him...

Edvard tries to turn the boat back towards the shore but can't control it as the first waves hit, rolling and heaving the boat around.

On shore, Mrs Hunter watches, riveted, immobilised, as Edvard's boat is lifted onto crests and then dropped from sight by large waves, before being lifted again.

It drops down behind one of these larger waves...

and doesn't reappear...

Until a much bigger waves hits where Edvard's boat disappeared from view. The boat is seen one last time as it is tossed high in the air...

The waves and storm move onwards...and the boat somersaults higher into the air...

Before crashing down into...

The EYE OF THE STORM that we saw as the beginning of the film. The boat breaks apart as it lands in this eerie calm space amidst the floating seabirds, debris, seaweed and broken furniture. Blood streams from Edvard's fractured body which floats face down...his sarong slips away leaving him naked...his bleeding corpse sinks amongst the thousands of floating, bloodied dead fish.

Beyond the EYE, the storm still rages.

On the beach, Mrs Hunter(55) watches immobilised as the rain, wind and black phalanx of waves speeds onwards towards shore...heading straight for her...

DOROTHY (V.O.)

I was back in Europe when Mother rang. She said how very sad it was that Edvard didn't have the privilege of choosing when to die....I couldn't stop crying. I didn't go outside my apartment for months.

Mrs Hunter's hallucination con't: Mrs Hunter springs into action. She turns and runs away from the approaching storm as fast as she can. Before she can reach her house, the cyclone hits her with full brutal force. She is tossed and turned by its ferocity. Her billowing white skirt is pulled inside out over her head, then returned, ripping her dress and exposing a breast. A flying board, torn from the house, grazes her classically chiselled face. Blood pours from her gashed cheek turning her white bodice red.

INT. KUDGERI/MR AND MRS HUNTER'S OLD BEDROOM - NIGHT 101

BASIL tenderly takes DOROTHY's face in his hands and looks deeply into her eyes.

BASIL

Mother's bad behaviour saved your
life.

Dorothy doesn't immediately comprehend.

BASIL (CONT'D)

You would never have survived the
storm had you stayed. Mother only
survived it through sheer
bloodymindedness.

Dorothy, in an instant, fully comprehends his point...

DOROTHY

...Do you think me strong enough to
survive it now?

BASIL

I know that I am not.

DOROTHY

You wouldn't come back if I go?

BASIL

I might stay here...do a bit of
work on my show.

Dorothy understands.

BASIL (CONT'D)

No-one will ever know what we know.
No-one will know us as we do. That
makes us dependent, doesn't it, on
each other for kindness.

They both smile wanly at each other. Basil suddenly leans in and kisses her on the mouth. All the desolation that both know and understand is felt in this longing kiss. All protective pretences have been ripped away.

CONTINUED:

BASIL (CONT'D)
...What would we live for if not to
condemn our mother?

Dorothy knows what he means. She invites Basil to join her by
pulling back the satin eiderdown. He lays down beside her.

Basil pulls the eiderdown over them, and turns off the light.
They lay, holding each other in the darkness.

DOROTHY
...But when mother dies...How shall
we ever settle for living an
ordinary life?

*

*Mrs Hunter's Hallucination con't: Day. Lacerated and
bloodied, Mrs Hunter(55) ferociously fights her way through
the wild storm towards a bunker. She manages to fall in and
pull the trapdoor shut over her. She is ankle deep in water,
enclosed in cobwebs and darkness.*

INT. MORETON DRIVE/MRS HUNTER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 102

Out of darkness...LOTTE is hit by a spotlight. She sings her
German lullaby with heart breaking passion.

OLD MRS HUNTER, lost in her hallucinatory memory, is not
acknowledging her. Still wearing her make-up, Mrs Hunter is
in a feverish sleep.

MARY takes her temperature. FLORA moves about attending to
bedclothes. It's as if Lotte isn't even there.

Increasingly desperate, Lotte moves to a more up tempo German
song, dancing from one pool of lamp light to the next. Trying
to mask the excruciating pain all this toe pointing and
hopping is causing her, Lotte sings louder and louder...

*Mrs Hunters hallucination con't: In the bunker. The roar of
thunder and rain above the frightened Mrs Hunter is
deafening. Suddenly, a huge explosion! The trapdoor above her
is ripped away. Mrs Hunter's body is flung onto the watery
floor. Above her, fireballs shoot across the sky.*

Mrs Hunter, eyes still closed, is becoming increasingly
disturbed.

Mary draws morphine into a syringe...not a measuring syringe
this time...but a needle.

Lotte huffs and puffs, now in real agony.

FLORA
Stop it. You'll hurt yourself.

CONTINUED:

Lotte is beyond any rational behaviour and begins her pirouettes.

FLORA (CONT'D)

Stop now!

Lotte can't control her twirling which is heading towards the bed...she trips and falls...hitting her forehead on the end bedstead...blood runs from her forehead onto her dress. Lotte weeps loudly.

Mrs Hunter's eyes snap open and she spits out her thermometer

MRS HUNTER

STOP THAT GHASTLY RACQUET!

Mrs Hunter is still in her other world.

MRS HUNTER (CONT'D)

(agitatedly to no-one in particular)

Did you see the fireballs?

The weeping Lotte walks on her knees to kiss Mrs Hunter's hand.

Mrs Hunter is repulsed. She looks at Lotte with no sign of recognition.

MRS HUNTER (CONT'D)

Who are you?! Did a fireball hit you?!

FLORA

This is Mrs Lippmann, love. You remember Lotte.

LOTTE

(sobbing)

Ich halt's nicht aus? Ich halt's nicht aus?

Subtitled:

What more do you want of me?

A furious, highly agitated Mrs Hunter struggles to comprehend what is going on.

MRS HUNTER

(to Lotte)

Are you German?

(to Mary and Flora)

IS SHE GERMAN?!

FLORA

She is but...

Mrs Hunter over-rides...

MRS HUNTER
(to the nurses)
Why is she wearing my dress?

MARY
(to Mrs Hunter)
Sssh. Ssshhh now.

MRS HUNTER
(spits at Mrs Lippmann)
I don't like you. You show too much
of yourself. Go away!
(Mrs Hunter turns to Mary and
Flora)
SEND HER AWAY!!

Mary gives Mrs Hunter her needle.

Lotte sobs uncontrollably as Flora helps her to her feet.

FLORA
(soft and tender)
Come on, you mad bitch. I'll have
to give you something if you can't
get hold of yourself.

LOTTE
(sobbing)
It is as I have already always
known. This is what it inescapably
must come to.

FLORA
(under her breath)
Couple of mad bitches.

As Flora puts an arm around Lotte and escorts her from the
room, we settle back on a still disoriented old Mrs Hunter.

*Mrs. Hunter's hallucination con't: Down below, through the
fireballs and pelting rain we see Mrs Hunter begin to
struggle up a ladder towards the opening above...rain and
blood pouring down on her. Near the bunker, her beach house
is hit by a fireball and explodes into sticks propelling a
flame torch upwards into the downpour.*

INT. KUDGERI LIVING ROOM - DUSK

103

CLOSE ON BASIL's face...

BASIL
Cue music for Act 3.

Basil swings around on a stool towards a piano and plays flawlessly, talking as he plays.

BASIL (CONT'D)

It is the end of the day. The only stage lighting is the rosy hue of dusk and the lamp by mother's bed. Mother contemplates the importance of perfect timing for her exit as she awaits the ministrations of her nurse.

The MACRORY BOYS and MOGS sit squashed together on the sofa, watching Basil in wonderment.

BASIL (CONT'D)

That's your cue Mogs. You enter stage right with the medicine.

Basil is directing the children.

MOGS

No. I'm not going to be the nurse. I'm going to be the princess.

BASIL

The nurse is very pretty. The Knight adores the nurse.

MOGS

I don't care. She's not a Princess. (in a perfect imitation of Dorothy) The princess must be the one that enters stage right.

BASIL

O very well then...make your entrance through that door...

Basil continues playing piano over...

INT. MORETON DRIVE/MRS HUNTER'S BEDROOM - DUSK

104

MRS HUNTER lays staring ahead. Her eyes are vacant. She has now almost completely lost her mind. Her garish make-up is running. The piano music fades as hands holding cotton pads appear, and gently wipe the make-up from her face.

MRS HUNTER

Don't leave me completely naked
Flora.

We see now that the hands belong to DOROTHY.

DOROTHY
It's not Flora mother. Its me,
Dorothy.

Mrs Hunter scrutinizes her as Dorothy removes more make-up.

MRS HUNTER
No, it isn't.

Mrs Hunter's face is shiny clean.

DOROTHY
Don't you know me anymore?

MRS HUNTER
Of course. You're the day one. But
is it still day?

DOROTHY
It's just getting dark now.

MRS HUNTER
Just a little lipstick then, for
dinner?

Dorothy picks a soft subtle pink and draws it on her mother's
mouth.

DOROTHY
There...

MRS HUNTER
And rouge so I may glow.

Dorothy applies rouge. Just the right amount.

DOROTHY
Perfection.

MRS HUNTER
What about my back rub?

DOROTHY
Should I roll you over?

MRS HUNTER
(suddenly cranky)
Are you a nurse or not?!

DOROTHY
Come on then. Over you go.

Dorothy gently rolls her mother to face away from her. She
pulls aside Mrs Hunter's nightdress, and pours massage lotion
into her hands.

MRS HUNTER

No-one ever touched me as a child
in case I got dirty.

Dorothy massages lotion into her Mother's back. Mrs Hunter
recognizes the scent. She relaxes, content.

MRS HUNTER (CONT'D)

Aaaah lovely. Jasmine. I like to
smell nice after I've had sex.

DOROTHY

You've just had sex have you?

MRS HUNTER

Haven't you?

Dorothy allows a little laugh.

MRS HUNTER (CONT'D)

That's why I like you more than my
daughter. I like a little slut in a
woman. You have some slut in you
Flora and so do I. You and I need
to taste everything, but everything
Dorothy puts in her mouth turns
into a sour lemon.

DOROTHY

Yes. Dorothy is a prissy woman. She
nearly died of shame when you said
the word 'penis' out loud.

MRS HUNTER

And penis is not even a dirty word.
I think it's a lovely word.

DOROTHY

Sounds lovelier than it looks.

Mrs Hunter laughs at this. Really laughs until tears come to
her eyes and Dorothy can't help but join in.

MRS HUNTER

Whoops. I think I need the seat.

DOROTHY

I'll fetch a pan.

MRS HUNTER

No. I wish to go to the lavatory.

DOROTHY

Would you like me to get the night
nurse?

MRS HUNTER
No. You can do it.

INT. MRS HUNTER'S UPSTAIRS BATHROOM - NIGHT 105

DOROTHY lifts MRS HUNTER from a wheel chair and struggles to sit her on an ornate gold commode that looks like a throne.

Dorothy loses control at the last moment and dumps her mother on the seat.

MRS HUNTER
Careful you clumsy duckling.

Hearing her name, Dorothy believes she has been recognized.

DOROTHY
...Mum?

Mrs Hunter look at her with no sign of recognition.

MRS HUNTER
I haven't seen my children since I
was a girl.

As Dorothy guides Mrs Hunter's hand onto the mahogany rail...

MRS HUNTER (CONT'D)
Please wait outside.

DOROTHY
I'll leave the door open so you can
call out if you need me. Or here's
your little bell.

Dorothy takes a bell and places it on a stool for Mrs Hunter.
As Dorothy leaves...

DOROTHY (CONT'D)
Got your balance, have you?

MRS HUNTER
Balance is always a matter of
chance, but yes. I believe I am
steady.

Mrs Hunter's hallucination con't: Day. Down below, Mrs Hunter(55) arises, Lazarus like, from the bunker into a glistening calm. The EYE OF THE STORM has moved to the shore, and she walks through it, bypassing the dead fish, debris and weed. She does not even notice as she passes by a section of Edvard's destroyed boat. Without pause, she walks into the water, her full skirt billows around her so she becomes one with the carpet of white seabirds resting on the shimmering ocean.

CONTINUED:

105

Beyond the centre of this jewel of light, the dark storm still visibly spins and boils. As Mrs Hunter offers handfuls of some floating sodden bread to a group of black swans, her bloodied face is serene and full of wonder.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE UPSTAIRS BATHROOM - NIGHT

106

DOROTHY, waiting outside for MRS HUNTER to complete her business...

DOROTHY

Have you finished Mother?...Mum?...

INT. MRS HUNTERS UPSTAIRS BATHROOM - NIGHT

107

Old MRS HUNTER kicks off her slippers on to the green tiles...

Mrs Hunter's hallucination con't: Day. Instead of the bathroom tiles, Mrs Hunter(55) sees wet golden sand. Instead of her old feet, she sees her own red toenail varnished feet from the day of the storm. The feet move forward, leaving a couple of footprints in the wet sand behind them.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY OUTSIDE BATHROOM - NIGHT

108

DOROTHY hears the crash of her mother falling inside the bathroom. She turns to the bathroom door and looks in.

DOROTHY

Sister de Santis!! MARY!!!

MARY appears from BASIL's room in her nightdress. She pushes past the frozen Dorothy and kneels by MRS HUNTER to check vital signs. There are none.

MARY

Could you help me get her back to bed. I don't wish Lotte to see her like this.

INT. MORETON DRIVE UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

109

Between them, DOROTHY and MARY carry MRS HUNTER. They turn into her bedroom.

INT. MRS HUNTER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

110

DOROTHY and MARY place MRS HUNTER on the bed.

MARY

Why don't you leave this to me?
There are certain procedures that I must follow now before the Doctor comes.

DOROTHY
I could stay...if it would help.

MARY
Just leave her to me, Madame.

Dorothy leaves the room.

INT. DOWNSTAIRS CORRIDOR/LOTTE'S ROOM - NIGHT 111

LOTTE, totally dishevelled in her black dress, sits up straight on the edge of her bed. Her forehead is bruised and swollen. Everything has been packed away. The room is now totally bare apart from Lotte's suitcase at her feet.

FLORA knocks on the door.

FLORA
Lotte?...

LOTTE
I cannot see you Flora.

FLORA
But I have something important to tell you.

LOTTE
You need not tell me. The house already knows.

FLORA
If you already know then...

There is no reply from inside.

Flora waits, and then walks away.

INT. ARNOLD WYBURD'S HOME STUDY - NIGHT 112

ARNOLD puts down the phone. He heads to a bookcase, takes out a large law book, and pulls out a velvet pouch that was concealed behind it. On the pouch, embroidered in gold thread, is a message...*TO ARNOLD*. From the pouch, Arnold pulls the blue star sapphire ring.

He sits and puts it on his small finger. Lights go on outside his study. LAL is obviously up. Arnold struggles to get the ring off his finger. He does so, hiding it in his hand, just before Lal appears at the door.

ARNOLD
It's over.

Lal nods, immediately understanding Mrs Hunter's gone.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)
Would you mind awfully if...

Arnold thinks better of completing his request.

Lal approaches and gives him a gentle kiss on the head...along with her permission.

LAL
Go on dear. Clean yourself up and
get over there.

INT. KUDGERI LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

113

ANNE MACRORY is crying. MOGS and the other wide eyed children watch BASIL to see his reaction.

Basil stands, in his dressing gown, hands shoved in the pockets. He appears to be immobilised by shock.

ANNE MACRORY
How sad for you.

After a long time...

BASIL
She would have died peacefully I
suppose. In her sleep. That's how
it takes old people.

Anne Macrory wipes her nose with a tissue.

BASIL (CONT'D)
So tenderhearted. I do appreciate
your sympathy. It's been so
wonderful getting to know you all.

Another long silence.

MOGS
Aren't you going to cry, Sir?

BASIL
I imagine everybody would agree
that with her...social activities
so curtailed, she would not have
regretted dying. But might one who
has led such a privileged life be
afraid at the last moment. I
hope...I hope Mother was not
afraid.

Another pause. No-one quite knows how to respond.

ANNE MACRORY
Shall I pack your suitcase sir?

BASIL

If you don't mind I would like to stay on here for a few more days. After all, Mother isn't there any more, is she?

ANNE MACRORY

(trying to hide surprise)
Of course Sir. Let me move you into the princess's room now that's she's gone. It's more...befitting.

BASIL

No. Please. I feel more comfortable in a child's room.

INT. MORETON DRIVE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 114

LOTTE draws the curtains closed.

INT. MORETON DRIVE DINING ROOM - NIGHT 115

LOTTE draws the curtains closed.

INT. MORETON DRIVE STUDY - NIGHT 116

LOTTE draws the curtain closed.

INT. MORETON DRIVE/DOROTHY'S ROOM - NIGHT 117

LOTTE draws the curtains closed.

INT. MORETON DRIVE/BASIL'S (NOW MARY'S) BEDROOM - NIGHT 118

LOTTE draws the curtains closed.

INT. MRS HUNTER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 119

LOTTE draws the curtains closed on the tableau scene of a DOCTOR and MARY by the deceased MRS HUNTER on the bed.

EXT. MORETON DRIVE GARDEN - DAWN 120

Perfect roses are being cut and gathered by MARY.

ARNOLD WYBURD arrives dressed, as always, in his suit. The dawn sky is perfect pink and gold. Arnold stops by Mary and gives her a sad smile...

ARNOLD

What a morning she's making.

They both pause for a moment to take in the dawn light, before proceeding towards the house with every curtain drawn.

INT. MRS HUNTER'S BEDROOM - MORNING

121

ARNOLD sits watching MRS HUNTER. She has been laid out properly now and looks at peace. They are alone in the room.

ARNOLD

(softly)

I remember the moment.

He takes the blue sapphire ring from his pocket, stands and fetches Mrs Hunter's jewelry box. He puts the blue sapphire ring back in under the velvet lining so that it looks as if Mrs Hunter could have overlooked it there.

INT. MORETON DRIVE KITCHEN - MORNING

122

DOROTHY is putting breakfast onto the table. She has cooked eggs and bacon.

ARNOLD, MARY and FLORA are standing there.

DOROTHY

It's been a long night. I thought
you might require a little
sustenance...

They all stand, awkwardly.

FLORA

I'll just fetch Mrs Lippmann.

Flora goes.

DOROTHY

Please sit down.

MARY

After you Madame.

Arnold walks to the head of the table and pulls back a chair for Dorothy...his acknowledgment of the new head.

This simple act of kind respect brings tears to Dorothy's eyes. As she sits she can barely manage the words...

DOROTHY

Thank-you Mr Wyburd.

Arnold and Mary seat themselves.

MARY

Would you like to say Grace,
Madame?

They see that Dorothy is now silently shaking with tears pouring from her and is unable to speak. She has been finally hit with shock and a multitude of other feelings.

ARNOLD

Perhaps you would like to do so
Mary.

Mary bows her head.

INT. DOWNSTAIRS CORRIDOR/LOTTE'S ROOM - MORNING 123

The door to LOTTE's room is wide open. The room quite bare.

FLORA notices a slit of light coming from under the bathroom door.

INT. DOWNSTAIRS CORRIDOR/STAFF BATHROOM - MORNING 124

FLORA knocks on the bathroom door.

FLORA

Mrs Lippman?...Lotte?...

She listens against the bathroom door. No sound.

FLORA (CONT'D)

Lot?

LOTTE lays in the bath. The water is red with blood. She has cut her wrists.

Lotte's suitcase stands by the bath.

Flora turns the knob and enters.

Sobbing, Flora tries to pull Lotte out of the bath, covering her white uniform in Lotte's blood.

INT. SYDNEY - CHURCH OF ENGLAND CHURCH - MORNING 125

The sound of a choir fills the beautiful large church. The church is packed.

In the front pew, on the right, sit DOROTHY and BASIL.

ARNOLD and LAL WYBURD sit centre right. So do ATHOL SHREVE and his INVALID WIFE and DOUG and CHERRY CHEESEMAN. CHERRY, wearing sunglasses, cries as she clutches Doug's arm. *

FLORA arrives with MARY and MRS CUSH, and they seat themselves at the very back on the left.

The choir's voices cross fade into...

INT. SMALL SUBURBAN SYNAGOGUE - AFTERNOON

126

LOTTE's lullaby. The synagogue is empty apart from ARNOLD and LAL WYBURD, FLORA and MARY who all sit up the front.

BASIL arrives, carrying a gift bag, and sits up the back.

Flora's old boyfriend, COL, enters. He gives Basil a dirty look as he passes him.

Col sits next to Flora. She looks grateful to see him. He takes Flora's hand. When Col glances back to where he saw Basil, there is no-one. Basil has gone. But he has left the gift bag behind. It is open so the contents are visible. A card with the written message *Thank-you Flora* alongside the gift of Mrs Hunter's white dress that Mrs Hunter wore on the island and that Flora had borrowed.

INT. ARNOLD WYBURD'S CHAMBERS - DAY

127

The white embossed will that MRS HUNTER signed with ARNOLD's assistance, sits on the desk. Her recognizable signature is there. And now the rest of the page has been typed in.

BASIL and DOROTHY sit opposite ARNOLD. Dorothy wears her classic Chanel black dress.

ARNOLD

I trust you shall find Mrs Hunter's will quite straightforward. Apart from a few bequests, it is the equal division of a fortune between yourselves.

A subtle look of relief passes between Basil and Dorothy.

DOROTHY

To whom did she leave the bequests?

ARNOLD

To her latter day dependants, the nurses and the housekeeper. And the Macrory family since, if you choose to sell the country house, they shall have to move on. Your mother felt that the amount of fifteen thousand each would be appropriate.

BASIL

By all means. Something for the staff and the nurses...for little Flora.

ARNOLD

Unfortunately for Mrs Lippmann, she
did not know before she died how
deeply your mother valued her.

An abashed Basil and Dorothy remain silent. Finally, Basil
clears his throat.

BASIL

Did Mother make no allowance for
you, Arnold?

ARNOLD

No, no. I don't expect it would have
crossed her mind.
(hurriedly changing the subject)
...Now, finally, the question of
her belongings. Is there anything
that you would like to keep?

DOROTHY

...Perhaps if there is any jewelry
left over...

ARNOLD

In the clean out, her blue sapphire
ring was found. It was gifted to
you in the will, Princess. I'm sure
your mother always saw you as the
rightful owner.

Dorothy is genuinely touched.

BASIL

I wouldn't mind my father's
books...and my mother's make-up.

They all smile politely at his little joke.

ARNOLD

Shall we then dispose of everything
else by auction?

BASIL

Yes fine. Do you agree Dorothy?

Dorothy nods.

DOROTHY

(to Basil)
But would you mind handling the
auction?

BASIL

I thought it would have been cozier
to see it out together before we
both slink away.

Dorothy rises. So Basil rises too.

DOROTHY

(kindly)

Let us not misjudge one incident
that occurred between us when we
were both under great stress for an
ongoing alliance.

Basil clearly understands her dismissal of any intimacies
shared at Kudgeri. He look lost and crestfallen.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)

We must learn how to live now
without mother. And I fear we can
not do that together.

Dorothy shakes hands with Arnold.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)

Thank-you for everything. Do give
my regards to your wife.

Dorothy kisses Basil goodbye lightly on the cheek.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)

Goodbye dear. Be lucky.

Basil kisses her hand gently.

BASIL

Goodbye Princess.

Basil opens the door for Dorothy and she exits.

Is that a tear in Basil's eye?

Arnold waits for a discreet moment, then...

ARNOLD

Are we alright Sir?

BASIL

I don't know old mate. Are we?

Basil returns to sit opposite Arnold.

BASIL (CONT'D)

I don't really know where I belong
any more.

ARNOLD

I hope I'm not being impertinent
but would you care for me to
continue to conduct your family's
business, on behalf of your sister
and yourself.

BASIL

Would you really do that after all
we have put you through?

ARNOLD

It would be an honour, Sir.

BASIL

Thank you. I'm sure Mother would
consider that a blessing...I would
have just mucked it up anyway.

ARNOLD

Oh no Sir, I wasn't inferring...

BASIL

(interrupting)

I didn't even say good-bye to her
Arnold...At the end, somewhere in
the recesses of Mother's mind, she
knew that Dorothy was courageous
enough to say goodbye, and that I
was not.

ARNOLD

It's not too late, Sir.

Basil considers this. Arnold makes his message even clearer.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)

I imagine your true calling does
not lie in this country.

Basil and Arnold share a soft, understanding smile.

EXT. LONDON - NIGHT

128

Through fog and drizzle, we see the Old Vic Theatre in
London. Lotte's bittersweet lullaby plays over...

INT. OLD VIC THEATRE STAGE - NIGHT

129

BASIL stands in a spotlight. He wears stage make-up. He is
clearly addressing an audience.

BASIL

Mother's belief that those of a
certain class die whenever they
please never faltered.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BASIL (CONT'D)

But Mrs Lippmann was not born of
that class, and she selected the
timing of her own demise with
devastating accuracy.

EXT/INT. PARIS STREET/CAFE - NIGHT

130

A lovely Rue de Paris, lined with fairy lit trees.

BASIL (V.O.) (CONT'D)

So, regardless of birth or origin,
the right to devise our own final
exit must be bestowed on us all.

Inside an open fronted cafe, an exquisitely dressed DOROTHY
sits with her small dog.

A FRENCH WAITER guides a cart laden with pastries and rich
mud chocolate cake.

FRENCH WAITER

Pourrais je tenter la Madame avec
une mort par chocolate?

Subtitled:

Could I tempt Madame with a Death
By Chocolate?

DOROTHY

(blithely)

Merci, non. Ce n'est pas mon jour a
mourir

Subtitled:

Thankyou, no. This is not my day to
die.

The waiter gives a puzzled smile.

As Dorothy contentedly drinks coffee...

BASIL (V.O.) (CONT'D)

We must presume then, that we who
choose to remain do so because we
still relish the joys and torments,
the terrors and exhilarations of
the storm.

The perfect star thrown out from Dorothy's sapphire ring
takes us back to...

INT. OLD VIC THEATRE STAGE - NIGHT

131

...A pool of light, centre stage. MRS HUNTER (played by
actress Maggie), is seated on her gold throne like commode.
Our other main characters, in a semi circular tableau, watch
'Mrs Hunter'.(Basil's actor friends play our characters).

LOTTE (actress June) stands centre, behind 'Mrs Hunter'. A thin blood-red scrim drops from above concealing 'Lotte'.

'Mrs Hunter' is lowered from sight through a stage trapdoor ...and the pool of light fades to black...

The tableau of our characters who 'choose to remain' in life breaks up, and the whole stage lights up...

'Basil' 'Dorothy' 'Arnold' 'Mary' 'Flora' 'The Wyburd's' and 'The Macrories' form a line.

They join hands and raise them above their heads triumphantly as they walk towards us for the curtain call...

The glare of light intensifies... Fade out to white.

THE END

(All music subject to Director's choice and copyright).