

Old Cockatoo

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Based on the book of the same name.

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Scenes are numbered for flashback sequencing.

1. EXT. RUGBY FIELD

BLACKNESS: The sounds of a rugby league match i.e. grunting, body contact sounds, running sounds.

2. EXT. RUGBY FIELD -- LATE AFTERNOON

FADE IN. Bare ground. Silence. A WELLINGTON PLAYER in his early teens, carrying the ball, runs through frame. Pause. A pack of MUDGEE PLAYERS storm through frame, chasing him.

The game continues. MELLENEY 1] and DAVID 1] are among the players on the WELLINGTON TEAM. The scoreboard reads: WELLINGTON 13 MUDGEE 15. Some 50 SPECTATORS are on one sideline.

In the background are adjoining paddocks where numerous wagons and drays are parked. LADIES among the wagons lay tables and prepare fires. At a distance is the township of Wellington.

On the field's other side stands a lone figure, conspicuous by his isolation, distinct by his size and stillness - JOE McCALLISTER, a big man. He holds a half-full beer bottle, stoppered by his thumb. The wind whistles dry dust round him as he watches.

Joe's interest is the intense concentration of a drunk.

On the other sideline the TIMEKEEPER sits behind a table near halfway. On the table is a clock and a cow bell. He checks the clock and places his hand on the bell.

David makes a break from his own twenty five, gets to halfway but is caught. Holding off two defenders he hands off the ball to Melleney, who sprints for the try line. He beats the open winger, then the fullback, angles for the corner post and opens up. The blindside winger, an aboriginal, cover defends. He makes a desperate dive for Melleney and tackles him. They crash to earth just over the line, taking out the corner post.

The REFEREE, overweight and hobbling with blisters, arrives. Those on the sideline intensely await his decision. Reluctantly, he awards the try. Immediately equal halves of the crowd express outrage or delight. The scoreboard changes to read: WELLINGTON 16 MUDGEE 15. The second hand on the timekeeper's clock reaches the twelve. The Timekeeper rings the bell, ending the game. Melleney shakes the Winger's hand, and both teams leave the field,

exchanging jerseys as they go. The crowd as a whole moves across to the other field, where the wagons are located.

On the opposite sideline Joe stands alone. He drinks the remainder of the beer. The bottle falls from his hand into the loose soil by his boots. The wind comes up, gusting round him. He stands alone on the windswept field, a lone, lonesome figure.

3. EXT. THE RUGBY CAMPSITE -- NIGHT

In darkness Joe enters frame and leans against a tree. He observes the scene at some 50 yards distance: groups of people around large fires, drinking. There is a large wooden beer keg mounted on the back of one of the wagons. Conversation and laughter drift in. Joe, now very drunk, drinks from a bottle.

The CLUB PRESIDENT stands on a box and calls for attention. The crowd falls silent. The Club President begins to make a speech, though at such distance he is mostly inaudible. He indicates a shield trophy, held by a man beside him, then indicates Melleney in the crowd and introduces him to light applause.

Watching, Joe pays closer attention.

Melleney is handed the shield, and holds it up for his TEAM MEMBERS, who applaud triumphantly. He shakes various people's hands, and stands on the box. The crowd falls silent, and he begins to make a speech.

Joe looks down at the bottle he holds. He studies it momentarily then drinks, forcing it down, spilling some. As the crowd applauds in the distance he finishes and throws it down, smashing it. The applause, which was dying away, ceases abruptly, and heads turn in his direction.

Melleney looks into the night, toward the sound. But nothing can be seen beyond the fringe of light from the camp fires.

Joe lurches away.

Losing focus, the light from the fires balloon to...

4. EXT. McCALLISTER HOMESTEAD -- DAWN

... the sun breaking the horizon. The new light shows a rundown homestead. As the light increases the shadow of a bird in flight is cast upon the walls - that of OLD COCKATOO.

The bird lands on a branch of a large dead tree, not far from the homestead. Craning down, Old Cockatoo in the foreground, the layout of the dwelling and yards is apparent: There is a workyard constructed of rough hewn fenceposts, and it encircles three horses. A roundyard adjoins, and beside this there is a subdivided shed made of wood and roofing iron. One side of its division is for farriering, the other for grain storage and saddlery. Fowls and pigs graze throughout. The feeling one gets is of neglected industry; of dreams and plans that once were.

5. INT. McCALLISTER HOMESTEAD - LIVING ROOM -- DAWN

A baby grandfather clock ticks loudly. The bare walls have only two decorations: an old prizefighter's belt, and a faded photograph. The photograph is of Joe, younger, in boxer's garb, and wearing the belt. A buckling title reads : "BRITISH BARE KNUCKLES CHAMPION. HEAVYWEIGHT DIVISION. 1889." There is a distant sound of snoring.

6. INT. Mc/HOMESTEAD - MASTER BEDROOM -- DAWN

Snoring loudly, Joe sprawls across a sagging double bed. He wears the same clothes as the night before. Anna is in the small sleepout adjoining. She is against the diffuse glow of sunlight through windows. Dressed for the day, her back is to us, she pins up her hair. Before her is a canvas stretcher/bed where she has spent the night, the blankets and sheets already folded. She enters the bedroom, stops, and stares at her husband.

7. INT. LIVING ROOM -- DAWN

Anna's hand winds the baby grandfather clock with a brass key.

8. INT. SECOND BEDROOM -- DAWN

David stirs at the distant sound of his mother winding the clock. He looks across at Melleney, who sleeps peacefully on.

9. INT. DINING ROOM/KITCHEN -- MORNING

Melleney and David sit at the breakfast table, eating bread and waiting for Anna to bring fried eggs from the kitchen.

ANNA (Welsh accent)
Win yesterday?

MELLENEY

Yeah.

Anna enters, carrying a skillet of fried eggs. She dishes them up.

ANNA

Score one of them try things?

MELLENEY

Mmmm.

Anna looks at David.

DAVID

Kicked a field goal.

MELLENEY

With your knee.

DAVID (unsure\defensive)

Still went over.

Melleney and Anna stare, then find his reaction amusing. Slower, David also grins.

Just risen, Joe appears in the hall doorway. The amusement ends abruptly and the boys get on with eating. Anna exits to the kitchen. As she passes Joe:

ANNA (muted)

Morning.

Joe watches her into the kitchen. He looks at his sons. They concentrate on eating. He walks through and out the back door.

Anna wipes the skillet in the sink. She pauses, dejected.

10. EXT. McCALLISTER HOMESTEAD - BACK YARD -- MORNING

By the water tanks, Joe splashes water into his face. It runs from his features and he opens his eyes. He looks at his surrounds, not really seeing them. He is confused, angry, sad.

11. INT. KITCHEN/DINING ROOM -- MORNING

Joe enters the house. The boys are elsewhere. He enters the kitchen and finds Anna tidying. He stares at her as she goes about her chores, ignoring him.

JOE (Scots accent)
About last night...

Anna continues to work.

JOE
Can you not stand still?!

Anna freezes.

12. INT. LIVING ROOM -- MORNING

Melleney packs books into his schoolbag. He tenses, listening.

BACK TO.

JOE
Trying to talk.

She waits.

JOE
I need...needed you.

She does not react.

JOE
Hear me?

ANNA
Then come to me sober. Share your
sons' company as a father should.

She looks at him.

ANNA
Ask why I'm not loving, and I'll
ask why you're not brave anymore.

Joe stares at her, anger rising. He moves suddenly toward her.

JOE

Why...

Anna holds her ground. He stands over her, but hesitates. He suddenly leaves. Anna's releases her breath with relief.

BACK TO.

Melleney has not moved. The sounds of Joe leaving the house can be heard. Melleney is also relieved.

13. EXT. A STREAM BY THE ROADSIDE -- DAY

NICKY 1] splashes water and giggles. ROSEMARY LEE, her mother, sits on a rug. Some food is laid out. Her wagon is in the background, parked by the roadside. Rosemary grins at her daughter's innocent play.

14. INT. KITCHEN -- DAY

Anna watches as Joe gallops his horse away. She hears a slight sound behind her and glances around to see Melleney.

15. EXT. A STREAM BY THE ROADSIDE -- DAY

Rosemary helps Nicky into the wagon.

16. EXT. BUSHLAND -- DAY

Joe furiously uproots saplings, smashing them against trees, and in a blind rage breaks everything he can get his hands on.

INTERCUT with SUBLIM FLASHES [Refer to Sc. Page]: In the ring (bare knuckles) Joe (younger) punches a battered and bleeding GUNTHER SCHILT. Schilt goes down. Joe turns and looks at Anna, sitting in the front row, his expression savage. Anna (younger) is afraid.

In the bush, Joe stops, exhausted, demented.

17. EXT. THE ROADWAY TO TOWN -- DAY

Rosemary Lee's wagon in progress. She tends to Nicky, sleeping beside her, and grins lovingly.

Joe bursts from the bushland. He seizes her horse by the bridle and pushes it toward the roadside, leaving the wagon side on.

He hesitates, panting, holding the horse, and looks at Rosemary.

Instead of Rosemary sitting with Nicky he sees a young Anna in her place.

Sexual desire overtakes Joe. His eyes drop to Rosemary's breasts. She realizes what is happening and what will happen. Joe moves slowly toward her. She suddenly produces a large knife, and raises it threateningly. Joe keeps coming. Rosemary strikes but with deft speed he intercepts and disarms her. Dragging her down from the wagon, he shoves her toward the bush.

ROSEMARY

Please...don't hurt the child.

He does not answer. He pushes the knife into his belt and halts before her, his bulk blocking her sight of Nicky, and vice versa.

Rosemary and Joe are in profile. [Refer to Sc]

Joe's expression softens. He pulls a pin from her hair, and it cascades to her shoulders.

JOE

Don't be afraid.

Anna looks up at him. [Extracted from Sc] Their first meeting. Refer also to Sc .

Joe embraces Rosemary with such urgency that her face thuds into his chest, causing her nose to bleed. Pulling her hair, he bares her neck, kissing it with slavering passion.

Nicky wakes groggily and looks toward them, frowning.

Rosemary's eyes peep over Joe's stooped shoulder. She sees her child waking and attempts to push him off, gently at first, and when he does not respond, more urgently. He stops and looks at her. The blood from her nose streams into her mouth but she bravely forces a grin.

ROSEMARY

The baby.

He looks round at the child. Understanding, he nods. He picks her up, and carries her into the bush. [Refer to Sc]

Nicky on the wagon, looks worried, groggy, confused. She whimpers, and looks around. In a tree above, she notices a cockatoo watching her.

FADE OUT.

18. EXT. ROADWAY TO TOWN -- DAY

FADE IN.

Nicky sleeps on the seat, sucking her fingers. The sky has clouded and rain seems probable. There is a sudden scream within the bush. Crows take flight, calling, but their noise quickly fades. Nicky sleeps on. A few moments pass. Suddenly she wakes.

NICKY

Mummy!

She slides off the seat to the flooring and crosses to the edge, urgently trying to find a way down. But it is too high.

Joe, leading his horse, watches from the bush. He is disheveled, sweating. He carries the knife by his side, now dripping blood.

Nicky has not seen him. Unable to get down, she stamps her feet in frustration and bursts into tears. Joe emerges onto the road. Immediately on seeing him Nicky becomes watchful.

Joe draws near and she presses against the seat. His hand moves slowly through the air toward her, but he becomes distracted. He has heard something, although no noise is immediately apparent. He listens intently and the faint sound of hoofbeats becomes audible. He mounts and directs his horse up a nearby slope, Nicky watching him disappear among the trees. The sound of hoofbeats grows louder. Nicky looks at the road behind her. Presently NIELS NIELSEN (60's) approaches. He halts his horse.

19. EXT. THE ROAD TO TOWN -- DAY

Neils peers into the distance, frowning, suspicious.

20. EXT. THE ROAD TO TOWN -- DAY

Neils approaches the wagon. The brake is not applied.

NIELS

Hello.

Nicky stares.

NIELS

Where is your daddy?

Nicky does not understand his Danish accent. He speaks louder.

NIELS

Daddy! Where is daddy?!

Nicky pouts. Niels gives up, not wanting to scare her. He yells to the bushland nearest:

NIELS

Hello!...Hello!

Joe, in bushland above, watches.

Niels lowers his voice and smiles and nods in encouragement.

NIELS

Has daddy gone to the toilet has he?

Nicky points in the direction she last saw her mother. Niels forgets himself and shouts:

NIELS

I understand!

He tethers his horse to the wagon and applies the brake.

NIELS (muttering)

Stupid people. (To Nicky, over articulating)
You wait here! I will fetch daddy!

He enters the bush at the same point used by Joe and Rosemary.

Joe watches impassively. He tosses the knife aside. It clunks against an exposed tree root.

Nicky looks toward the sound and tries to locate him, but cannot.

21. EXT. THE ROADWAY TO TOWN -- DAY

Niels emerges onto the roadway, ashen, shaken. He releases a branch absently and the sound attracts Nicky's attention. He studies the child, but Nicky's interest in him quickly wanes, and she resumes her search for sight of Joe. Niels looks down, pondering. He suddenly realizes his eyes have fallen on a boot print. He crosses to it, kneels, and examines it. [Refer Sc]

Joe watches.

Neils' finger traces the outline of a large boot heelmark and notes where the impression shows a corner missing. He freezes. A terrifying thought has occurred to him and he looks up at the child. She is still looking toward the hillside. He looks at the trees, his face tight. He decides to bluff it out and assumes a jovial manner as he crosses to the wagon.

NIELS

Well, can't find your mummy!

He mumbles quietly to himself as he realizes his blunder:

NIELS

Daddy.

He climbs the wagon and takes the reins.

NIELS

Come on. We'll go to town and
find your p'parents!

Glancing warily at the bushland, he kicks off the brake and hits up the horse. Nicky whimpers and points at the bush where she believes her mother to be.

NIELS

Oh shush shush shush. Don't cry.
We'll find them in town.

He slaps the reins harder, and the horse breaks into a trot.

22. EXT. BUSHLAND -- DAY

Joe watches the wagon leave. After it is gone he is still, locked into tormenting thoughts. With explosive force he suddenly sobs.

JOE

Anna...Anna...Anna.

It begins to rain. He looks to the heavens, the droplets splashing against his face. Camera tilts revealing Old Cockatoo on a branch, behind and above him. Camera continues to tilt until it is on the grey sky. The sky slowly darkens, and the sound of the rain increases to...

23. EXT. THE ROADWAY TO TOWN -- NIGHT

...a roar. Camera tilts down to find the forms of two men with three horses approaching along the roadway below.

Niels dismounts and leads his horse. He looks about, trying to get his bearings. Police Sgt. HAYNES follows, leading two horses: his own mount, and a horse for the recovery of the body.

NIELS

Somewhere here!

A flash of lightning, a crash of thunder close behind.

NIELS

(Looking about excitedly)

Here! Yes Here!

HAYNES

Y' sure?

Niels begins to go into the bush.

NIELS

Yes! Yes! Through here!

His horse almost pulls him off his feet, refusing to follow.

HAYNES

Hang on.

He tethers his two horses. Niels follows suit. Haynes takes a folded sheet of canvas from his saddle bags. They enter the bush.

24. EXT. IN BUSHLAND -- NIGHT

They approach Rosemary's body. Her twisted hand in the foreground, reaches out to them.

HAYNES

Sweet Jesus.

25. EXT. NIELSEN'S HOMESTEAD -- DAY

Establishing. Haynes, on horseback and at some distance, approaches the homestead.

26. INT. NIELSEN'S HOMESTEAD, NICKY'S ROOM -- DAY

Nicky plays with a large homemade dollhouse. She picks up a small model bed. A leg is broken. She exits to find Niels.

27. INT. NEILS' HOUSEHOLD THE KITCHEN -- DAY

Niels sits at the table, packing his pipe. HELLE, Niels' wife, cooks. Nicky enters and hands the toy bed to Niels.

NIELS

Oh, it's broken? Oh, that shouldn't
be too hard. I should have made it
in stronger wood, ja?

He laughs and pokes Nicky playfully. Helle turns and grins lovingly at them. They hear the sound of approaching hooves.

HELLE

Hvem er det? (Who is that?)

From his position Niels can see through the back doorway.

NIELS (downhearted)

The Sergeant.

Helle becomes anxious.

28. INT. THE KITCHEN -- DAY

Niels stands, forcing cheerfulness. Haynes comes up the stairs.

NIELS

Ah, Sergeant!

He shakes his hand, bringing him into the house.

NIELS

Helle, Sergeant is here! Come in,
come in, sit down!

HAYNES

Morning, Mrs. Nielsen.

HELLE

Oh, please. Helle. Call to me Helle.

Haynes grins and an awkward silence ensues. Niels grabs Nicky, sits down, and puts her on his lap.

NIELS

You remember Sergeant, don't you?
You remember Sergeant Haynes?

The child buries her face against his chest.

NIELS

Ah, she is shy! Yes you are shy,
aren't you?!

All three grin at the child. Niels looks up at Helle and nods.

NIELS

Helle...

Helle understands. She composes herself as if about to recite poetry. She looks at Haynes, but is unable to hold the moment.

NIELS

No no, go on, go on!

Helle composes herself once more.

HELLE

Sergeant Haynes, would you be delighted
to have a cup of tea with us?

Niels slaps his knee in triumph.

NIELS

Ha ha! Pretty good, huh?! I teach her everyday English! Soon she talk it just as good as me! Fair dinkum!

HAYNES

Meget godt, Helle. Du har forbedret dig meget.
(Very good, Helle. You've improved very much.)

HELLE

Ah! Du taler Dansk!
(Ah! You talk Danish!)

HAYNES

Kun lidt. Min mor var Dansk. Jeg vil meget gerne have en kop te. Tak.
(Just a little. My mother was Danish. I'd love a cup of tea. Thanks.)

Helle and Niels laugh, delighted. Helle prepares the tea.

HAYNES (to Neils)

Come to see you about the little 'un.

Beat.

HELLE (fearfully)

(not turning round)

Yes?

HAYNES

(finding notes)

Name is Nichole Lee. L double E. Mother was a prostitute over in Newcastle. Father unknown. According to those interviewed her mother decided she'd had enough and so set out with the bub three weeks back. Came out here to start a new life for the kiddy's sake.

HELLE (sympathetically)

Oh, so sad.

Haynes takes an opened envelope from his pocket.

HAYNES

Took the liberty of writing the
Adoption Society. Got this back.

Haynes extracts the letter and hands it to Neils.

HAYNES

Said you were a bit old.

Niels unfolds the letter and reads. His face brightens suddenly.

NIELS

But they say...she is ours!

Helle begins to cry. She rushes to Niels, who still holds Nicky, and they embrace. Amidst so much apparent grief, Nicky bursts out crying also. This causes the adults to laugh.

HELLE

Oh, we are so happy! Oh, thank you,
thank you!

NIELS

Yes, thank you my friend! Thank you!

Haynes grins broadly, warmed by their joy.

29. INT. THE PUB, WELLINGTON -- DAY

Joe sits at a table, a pint glass of beer before him. A man (JOHN HAWTHORNE), as yet unidentified, drinks at a table at the rear of the room. A young BARMAN reads the Victorian equivalent of a girlie magazine, opened on the counter. Joe is lost to his thoughts, his mood reflective. We regress to his memories...

30. INT. A HOTEL ROOM (LIANHARAN, WALES) -- DAY

An opened card. In poor printing, it reads, "MERRY CHRISTMAS, LOVE, MOTHER. P.S. UNCLE MICHAEL AND AUNT LORNA SEND THEIR LOVE."

Joe's eyes drift up from the card. He looks through the window by which he stands. Down in the street, on the far side of the road, there is a cobbler's shop. Anna arranges a small display of boots in the window. She appears young. Joe watches her. Anna finishes what she is doing and looks idly out the window and up the street. Her eyes eventually find their way up to Joe's window and

she sees him looking at her. Unable to hold the moment, she moves back into the shop. Joe is strongly attracted.

31. EXT. WELLINGTON TOWNSHIP. -- DAY

Sgt. Haynes and Niels dismount and tether their horses. They shake hands and part. Haynes toward the police station, Niels toward the hotel. Following Niels: He smiles enthusiastically as he enters the bar.

32. INT. WELLINGTON HOTEL. -- DAY

Niels enters and throws his arms joyously in the air.

NIELS

I would like to buy everyone in
the drink a bar!

He realizes his mistake, and laughs...

NIELS

I mean, I mean....

His voice trails off as he sees the bar is all but empty. The young Barman has snatched the magazine from the counter, guilty at being caught. Joe watches Niels coolly. As yet obscured by the bar, JOHN HAWTHORNE stands and looks round. With some relief Niels spots a friendly face, and fully enters the room.

NIELS

Ah, Mister Hawthorne. Oh, I have good
news. Little Nicky, we can keep her!

John crosses to the bar with his empty glass.

JOHN

Really? Wonderful. Congratulations.

He shakes Niels' hand.

NIELS

Yes, yes! We are so happy! I'm going
to buy everyone a drink! Mister
Hawthorne, what would you like?
Anything you like!

JOHN

John, John, call me John. Look, I'm sorry but I'm already late for the dentist.

He indicates his empty glass.

JOHN

Just getting a little Dutch courage.

He shakes Niels' hand.

JOHN

Good news though.

NIELS (disappointed)

Oh!

JOHN

Thanks anyway.

John pats Niels on the back and begins to walk on, but hesitates.

JOHN

Ah...You're not Dutch are you?

NIELS (not understanding)

No.

John grins and exits. Niels turns to the Barman.

NIELS

Well, what about you my friend?!

BARMAN (overtly masculine)

Oh, not me, mate. Boss'd skin me alive.

He is rolling up the magazine and hiding it under the counter. Niels turns to Joe.

NIELS

Mister McCallister. Joe. Would you like a drink? A Beer?!

Joe hesitates.

NIELS

Oh yes, yes, yes! A beer for my friend, please, make it two!

He crosses to Joe and extends his hand.

NIELS

You must congratulate me, I am so happy. Today, I become a father.

Joe hesitates momentarily, but takes his hand.

JOE

Congratulations.

Niels laughs. He sees the drinks are ready, and crosses to fetch them. He slaps two shillings on the counter.

NIELS

Keep the change! Buy yourself a dirty picture book!

Niels laughs at the young man's embarrassment. He takes the beers and crosses to the table. Joe drinks his beer in deference to the new one. His leg rests on the only other chair at the table. Niels looks down. The smile drains from his face.

Close on Joe's broken boot heel.

Joe finishes his beer and looks up. He catches Niels' expression. Niels grins and nods at the leg, so that he might sit down.

SUBLIM FLASH: Extracted from Sc page . Niels kneeling by the roadside, tracing the boot imprint.

Joe lifts his leg slowly and pushes the chair out. Niels sits.

33. INT. PUBLIC BAR -- DAY

NIELS

Skal.

JOE

Cheers.

Niels drinks. Joe watches.

NIELS

Ahh! I love that first swallow. Nothing like a cold beer on a dry throat is there?...I, uh,...I have a horse I would like trained you know. It is just a pony though. I bought it for little Nicky.

JOE

How old?

NIELS

About three.

JOE

The horse.

NIELS

Oh! A year. One. Too young?

Joe shakes his head.

NIELS

Well...I'll bring it over then.

He sips his beer and his tone changes to thoughtfulness.

NIELS

You know, I...your face...I swear I know you before.

JOE

Oh?

NIELS

Ja. Often I think this. I don't suppose you were any time in Denmark by chance?

JOE

Yes.

Niels is surprised.

JOE

Had a fight there. Fought Gunther Schilt, the Prussian.

NIELS
 Gunther Schilt?

SUBLIM : Joe lands a final blow to GUNTHER SCHILT.

[Extracted from Sc page . See also Sc page]

Realization dawns.

NIELS

You...you are Joseph McCallister.
 The Scotsman! Th..The heavyweight!
 Oh min God! I saw you fight! Min God,
 Joseph McCallister. I never joined
 you and him...I...Did you fight for
 world title? I lost the track of you.

JOE

(shakes his head)

Got married. Wife had a bairn. That
 was that. So we emigrated.

NIELS

Uhh! You were so good!

JOE

Well...those days have passed.

Niels looks long and hard at the big man.

SUBLIM : Rosemary's eyeless face at the murder site.

NIELS

So what do you do now, Joseph?

Joe grunts in question.

NIELS

Well...you still train?

Joe shakes his head.

NIELS

So you do nothing? Must be hard
 to give up the violence.

The grin drains from Niels' face. He stands, picks up his glass.

NIELS

You should get your heel fixed, my
friend. Not good for a fighter.

He turns to leave. Joe's leg lashes out from beneath the table, tripping him. Niels staggers, falling against the bar. The impact shatters the glass in his hand. The Barman, back to him, ordering bottles on a shelf, is hit by flying glass. He turns, sees Niels turn to face Joe, the core of the glass still in his hand. Joe stands, appearing immense. Niels realizes his life is on the line. He glances at the door, sees he would never make it. Shouting, he attacks, lunging at Joe's face with the broken glass. Joe guards, but a shard of glass pierces his hand. He punches Neils in the stomach, hard. Niels falls down the face of the bar, gasping. Joe looks at the young Barman. He jerks his head toward the street and the Barman rushes out. Niels sees him go, but is incapable of speech. Joe pulls the glass from his wounded hand, crosses to the old man and kneels. He props him against the bar, places his hand over his mouth, and suffocates him. The faint sounds of men running outside can be heard.

34. EXT. WELLINGTON TOWNSHIP -- DAY

Haynes and the Barman run along the verandas toward the hotel.

INTERCUT Niels dying, the eyeless, pale, contorted death face of Rosemary Lee, the legs of the men running, Joe watching Neils, and Gunther Schilt being knocked down in the ring.

Niels succumbs. Joe places his fingers along the carotid artery, pretending to search for a pulse. Haynes and the Barman burst into the room and stop. Joe looks round, concern on his face.

JOE

Get help. He's not breathing.

35. EXT. A HILLTOP GRAVEYARD -- DAY

An ant crawls over loose soil. Helle collects a handful of soil, and with it the ant.

COFFIN'S P.O.V.: The grave mouth and sky. Helle's hand appears as she releases the soil. A small shower of dirt rains down upon us.

The soil drops hollowly onto the polished lid of the coffin.

ECU: The soil is motionless, then a few pellets of earth stir, the ant emerging, pulling itself to freedom. Suddenly a spadeful of earth is thrown on top, eliminating all chance of survival.

MOURNERS move away as the GRAVE DIGGERS fill in the grave. Weeping, Helle holds Nicky. The PARISH PRIEST gives her comfort.

John Hawthorne looks across at Anna, standing with her sons. Anna's eyes drift up from the grave and meet his. They exchange a look for more than a moment, Anna breaking the exchange. She guides her sons away. John watches her leave, troubled.

36. INT. COURTROOM -- DAY

ECU: A piece of paper. Already printed on the paper:

VERDICT: _____

A nib appears, scratching the word - GUILTY - in the interstice.

BAILIFF (O.S.)

Prisoner will rise.

A bare wall - Joe rises into frame.

The JUDGE drinks from a glass of water. The courtroom is full of TOWNSPEOPLE, among them Anna, and in the row behind her, John. The room is so silent the sounds of the Judge swallowing are audible. He puts the glass down and looks at Joe.

JUDGE

Joseph Stanley McCallister, you have been found guilty of the crime of manslaughter of the man, Niels Nielsen. In view of the fact that you were seen to be attacked, that the attack was apparently unprovoked, and that you have no previous convictions against you, the court should necessarily be lenient.

However, testimony from character witnesses before this court has indicated that you are by nature a violent man, given to barroom brawls and street fighting. And indeed, as the council for the prosecution

JUDGE (Cont'd)

so aptly highlighted, you are an expugilist of considerable renown. So it would seem an event such as this was largely inevitable, and now, a good man is dead.

I am aware you have a wife and two young children, and that to sentence you will leave them without a provider and protector, but I remind you that such a situation now exists on a permanent basis in the Nielsen's household as a result of your actions. Weighing these factors leads me to only one conclusion. A considerable sentence, with the maximum punishment. Three years hard labor. This court is dismissed.

BAILIFF

Be upstanding!

Everyone rises. Between GUARDS 1& 2 Joe is lead toward the rear of the courtroom. Anna watches, hoping he will look for her, but he does not. They pass through a doorway in the rear of the courtroom, and it shuts behind them. Anna remains, staring at the door, tears in her eyes.

As others vacate the court, Haynes, in the first row of seating, turns and looks at Anna. In the row behind Anna, John watches her. Eventually, she turns and walks by him. Her sons follow. John is thoughtful, considering her reaction.

Haynes is left alone in the courtroom. He unfolds a piece of paper. On it is the outline of a boot heel, one corner missing. He looks thoughtfully toward the door through which they took Joe, folds the paper, puts it in his pocket, and pats it.

37. INT. VICTORIAN ERA PRISON -- NIGHT

Blackness. A heavy door swings open in front of us, revealing a poorly lit passageway with cell doors along one side.

Joe, in prison uniform and wearing leg irons and wrist bracelets, enters the passageway. He carries a folded blanket, an uncovered pillow, and a metal handbasin in which sits a chamber pot. TWO

GUARDS follow. Joe is halted beside a cell door. It is opened, revealing a small cell with no windows. He enters.

38. INT. PRISON CELL -- NIGHT

Joe enters and turns to watch the Guards. The door is shut, and bolted. Only faint light enters the cell via a small grate in the ceiling. There is a thin bed hard up against the wall, the cell's only furniture. Joe is still, listening to the sounds of the Guards moving away outside and through another door. Then there is silence. He remains looking at the cell door. His expression one of anticipation/confusion. A hymn is sung...

39. INT. A CHURCH, WELLINGTON -- DAY

...by a CONGREGATION. John stands in the pew behind Anna (same positioning as per court). He watches her desirously.

40. EXT. A CHURCH, WELLINGTON -- DAY

The Congregation files from church. TWO FEMALE PARISHIONERS are already outside, talking. Anna emerges and the two women stop talking and watch her. She walks on, mindful of their stares. After she has passed, the women again comment, nodding.

41. EXT. ROADSIDE, NEAR THE CHURCH -- DAY

Anna approaches her wagon. John leads his horse toward her.

JOHN

Mrs. McCallister.

ANNA

Mr. Hawthorne.

JOHN

Couldn't help noticing your horse is a bit lame.

ANNA

Oh?

JOHN

Yes. That cannon bone there, it's swollen. Laminitis.

ANNA

You know horses?

JOHN

Better than most. Needs the shoe off
and to be stood in a running stream.
Then a poultice. I'd be happy to
see you home and do it for you.

ANNA

Why?

JOHN

Why? I'd...just...like to help.

ANNA

I hardly know you.

JOHN

Well, if you're worried about
what people will think I under...

ANNA (snapping)

I couldn't give tuppence for what
people think!

JOHN

Well...

He tips his hat, turns and blunders into his horse. Embarrassed,
he leads it away.

ANNA

Mister Hawthorne.

John stops and turns. They survey each other.

ANNA

I would appreciate it if you could
drop in for tea tomorrow. Perhaps
you might look at the horse then.

John grins politely, tips his hat, and leaves. Anna glances
behind her. A MAN and his WIFE, at another wagon, stare. They
pretend to go on with their business.

42. EXT. McCALLISTER HOMESTEAD -- DAY

Old Cockatoo perches in the tree overlooking the homestead.

Anna, grasping wildflowers, crosses to the back stairs.

43. INT. HOMESTEAD - DINING ROOM/KITCHEN -- DAY

David makes himself a bread, dripping, and raw sugar sandwich. Melleney watches absently. As David has almost finished the masterpiece, Anna enters. She sees what David is up to. He realizes he has been caught, but Anna pretends not to notice. She collects a vase and crosses to the sink. David somewhat irrationally wolfs down the sandwich. Melleney watches his mother arrange the flowers.

MELLENEY

What're those?

ANNA

Have you never seen flowers before?

MELLENEY

Yeah, but what're you bringin' 'em in here for?

ANNA

Brighten the place up.

MELLENEY

What for?

David takes a huge last swallow that sounds like a muffled cry.

ANNA

To make us happy.

MELLENEY

I'm happy.

He looks at David for backup.

DAVID (gasping)

I'm happy too.

ANNA

Well now you're happier.

MELLENEY

They'll die now.

DAVID

Yeah, they'll die.

Anna turns and looks at the sugar packet. David stiffens.

ANNA

Mr. Hawthorne will be over soon.
Go clean up the living room.

MELLENEY (excited)

Is he gonna help me train the horses?!

ANNA

Maybe.

MELLENEY

Oh, bewdy!

He rushes out and down the stairs. David attempts to follow. Anna arrests him with a digit to his shoulder.

ANNA

One can do that.

She picks up the sugar packet.

ANNA

Clean up the living room, you.

She cleans up the kitchen. David lingers.

DAVID

Hey, mum, d'you bring them flowers
in for Mister Hawthorne?

ANNA

Just wanted to cheer things up.

DAVID

How come you never did that before?

ANNA

Don't know.

Anna raises an eyebrow impatiently. David takes the hint and exits to the living room. She considers what he said.

MELLENEY (O.S.)

Mum! He's here!

Snapped from her thoughts, Anna's is apprehensive.

44. EXT. MCCALLISTER HOMESTEAD -- DAY

Anna appears in the back doorway. David pushes past, rushing downstairs to be with his big brother. John shuts the sidegate. He carries a fistful of wildflowers, the same variety as Anna's. Melleney points at John as one would a war criminal.

MELLENEY

He's been killing flowers too!

DAVID

Yeah!

Anna comes down the stairs, taking off her apron.

ANNA

Hush!

JOHN

Just thought they'd cheer you up.

MELLENEY

I'm happy.

He looks at David for backup.

DAVID

I'm happy too!

ANNA

Hush!

John thinks the boys are a little odd. Anna takes the flowers.

ANNA

Thank you, John. Come up for a cuppa won't you.

John nods. Melleney takes his horse's reins.

MELLENEY

Mister Hawthorne, you gonna help
me train the horses?

JOHN

Oh...um. Certainly.

ANNA (to Melleney)

Brush him down and give him water.

David begins to follow his mother and John in for tea.

ANNA

It takes two to do that.

David stops dead.

45. INT. HOMESTEAD - DINING ROOM/KITCHEN -- DAY

Anna and John sit at the table drinking tea. Through the back doorway Melleney can be seen brushing down John's horse, while it sucks water from a bucket. David sits on a fence, watching.

ANNA

Poor little beggar. He's no idea. He's
only ever seen his father work, and that's
a lesson in cruelty. He's trying so hard
not to let me down.

JOHN

Why's he called Melanie?

ANNA

Wanted a girl.

John nods, attempting to seem to understand.

JOHN

Nice scones.

Anna grins, pleased.

JOHN

Chopped currants really make it.

Anna's grin turns to a troubled frown. She plucks it from his hand just as he is about to finish it off. She examines it, then lowers her eyes, ashamed.

ANNA

Thought I got them all out.

She takes them to the kitchen and scrapes them into a bin. John wonders what he has eaten. Anna comes back and sits. John sighs a laugh, embarrassed for her. There is a long, awkward silence. David appears at the back doorway. Finding their silence strange, he knocks on the door.

ANNA (snapping)

And why are you knocking at your own door?

David is a bit astonished.

DAVID

Melleney said we're ready now,
Mr. Hawthorne.

John nods. As David turns to go down the stairs, a look of pain crosses his face.

ANNA

What's wrong?

DAVID

Stomach.

John watches Anna. There is a slight grin on her lips. John is having difficulty understanding all the contradictory behaviour.

JOHN

I'll just...ah...

He signals he will go along. Anna nods and grins. John exits.

46. INT. DINING ROOM -- DAY

Anna is thoughtful. She reaches out and touches a petal on one of the flowers in the vase.

47. EXT. A HILLOCK -- DAY

Anna's fingers feel the petal on a wildflower. She plucks the flower, bringing it to her nose. Joe is beside her in the grass.

ANNA

Sorry you gave it up and came out here?

Joe kisses her.

JOE

Sorry you asked me to?

ANNA

No.

JOE

I miss a stranger wanting to shake my hand. I miss little boys holding my fingers while I walk down a street.

ANNA

But now you have a little boy of your own.

They look across to their INFANT CHILD (Melleney) playing.

JOE

Aye.

He holds up his hands.

JOE

And all these fingers. We'll just have to make more little boys.

He kisses her, and begins to undress her.

ANNA

The baby.

He nods. Picks her up, and carries her a small distance away.
[Refer to Sc page]

48. EXT. McCALLISTER HOMESTEAD -- DAY

David watches from the workyard fence as John fits a bridle to a horse. John hands the reins to Melleney while he crosses to the fence to collect a saddle and blanket. Unexpectedly, Melleney begins slapping the horse with the rein end.

MELLENEY

C'mere, y'mongrel! C'mere!

JOHN

Hey hey hey! What're you doing?!
Stop that! Stop!

He shoves Melleney aside, which causes him to fall down. He takes the reins and calms the animal.

JOHN

Easy, easy boy. It's alright now.
It's alright.

As the horse calms, John looks at Melleney.

JOHN

What'd you do that for?

MELLENEY (grudgingly)

Show 'im who's boss.

DAVID

Yus want the stick?!

JOHN

What stick?

David jumps down and holds up a cane whip.

JOHN

No. Come here.

John considers Melleney as David arrives.

JOHN

Listen to me, and think on it. A horse is too big to be a pet, but he can be your friend. He can work for you, or he

JOHN (Cont'd)

can work because he fears you. But a horse that's been abused will let you down just when you most need it, same as people. Horses have their own special way of thinking, and that's what you have to understand before you try to teach them....

As the boys listen, John's voice fades. Camera selects Melleney, the feeling being that John's words impress him greatly.

DISSOLVE TO:

49. MONTAGE:

A] John shows the boys how to lunge a horse.

B] John bandages a horse's fetlock. Melleney assists.

C] John takes books down from a library shelf and puts them on top of an existing pile, which Melleney holds.

D] Anna affectionately covers Melleney with a blanket. He has fallen asleep in a chair, one of the books in his hands, the others on a table. She turns down a lamp.

E] Anna stirs a large pot of toffee-like liquid on the stove. She appears to be working very hard, and in hot conditions.

F] She delivers a large bottle of humbug lollies to a STOREKEEPER. She is paid for it.

G] David wipes down a shop front window with a rag. A SHOPKEEPER appears and points to a spot he's missed. David attends to it.

H] In John's presence, a FARMER hands Melleney the reins of a horse - His first professional task of training.

I] Anna works over a flourishing vegetable patch. She stops work, as John arrives on horseback. He is delivering a new cow.

J] Melleney trains the horse shown in H. John observes.

K] Melleney puts the horse through a series of 180 degree standing turns, and makes the horse back up. He gets down and

hands the reins to the farmer, as seen in H. The farmer is impressed and pays him. Melleney looks happily at John.

L] Seasons change. Summer to autumn, etc. Old Cockatoo sits timelessly in the tree, overlooking the house.

M] MELLENEY [2] and DAVID [2] ride together. Behind them are John and Anna. The boys decide to race, and head off. John and Anna watch them go. They look at each other, very content. However something still sits uneasily with Anna. She nudges her horse on. John watches her, disappointed but patient.

54. EXT. NIELSEN'S HOMESTEAD -- DAY

NICKY [2] plays tea party with a doll near the rear of the house. She stands on a toy chair to fill her china teapot from the tank tap. She gets the tap on and begins to fill the pot as she turns and addresses her doll, sitting on another toy chair.

NICKY

Won't be long now!

As the doll is shown, Helle is in the background at considerable distance, bending over, working in a harrowed field.

Nicky's distraction with talking causes her hand holding the pot to move. Water runs down her arm and into her dress. She squeals and laughs with the thrill of the cold water.

INTERCUT:

50. EXT. NIELSEN'S HOMESTEAD FIELD -- DAY

Helle glances up at the sound of Nicky's laughter, decides it is nothing, and goes back to her backbreaking chore. Her face glistens with sweat. She drags a heavy bag of cornseed to a mound of dirt and kneels to dig drills with a hand hoe.

The old woman's face shows the strain. Helle begins to feel faint. She looks across to Nicky.

In the distance Nicky carries her teapot over to the doll. The image comes in and out of focus.

Gasping, Helle gets slowly to her feet.

SFX : The call of the Cockatoo.

Helle looks toward a nearby, dead tree. The image of the tree, still blurring, contains the white, glowing body of Old Cockatoo in the branches. Helle staggers for the shade the tree offers.

Helle's face collapses against the rough tree bark.

Nicky holds the dolly by the hands and 'walks' her along.

Helle sits at the base of the tree, looking toward the house. Her dry tongue touches her dry lips.

In the distance the house comes into focus. Nicky is apparent on the chair, with her dolly on her lap.

Closer, Nicky puts a cup of 'tea' to the doll's lips, oblivious to her mother's need for water.

A slight grin comes to Helle's lips.

An ANT runs across Helle's hand.

Helle looks down at her hand then back up. A blankness comes to her eyes as she succumbs.

Old Cockatoo observes intelligently.

The ant continues up Helle's arm.

Helle's face in profile.

L.S.: The same angle to Helle, removed to a great enough distance to encompass Nicky at the rear of the house and Old Cockatoo apparent in the tree. Nicky gets up, crosses to the back stairs, and climbs them.

51. EXT. NIELSEN'S HOMESTEAD -- SUNSET

Nicky stands in the back doorway, frowning.

Helle is in the distance, the sun setting behind the tree, thereby placing her in shadow.

52. EXT. NIELSEN'S HOMESTEAD FIELD -- DUSK

Moving. The doll's head, upside down, bumps along the ground behind Nicky, its Cupid bow grin contradicting its rough journey.

Nicky stops. Helle sits within deep shadow and seems to look her way. Bewildered, Nicky frowns and hugs her doll to her face.

NICKY

Mummy?

53. EXT. NIELSEN'S HOMESTEAD -- DAWN

Nicky lies with her head in Helle's lap. She sucks her fingers and hugs her doll. She looks up into the tree to find Old Cockatoo staring down at her.

Ants run through Helle's hair, and across her face.

Old Cockatoo flies off toward distant mountains. Nicky gets up, and follows. She stops and looks sadly at Helle, then continues.

54. EXT. MOUNTAINOUS BUSHLAND -- DAY

Melleney chases a brumby up a slope. The brumby cuts into a runoff ravine. Melleney goes back and enters the ravine.

A game of cat and mouse ensues. Melleney halts his horse, listening. He begins to move off but simultaneously the distant sound of a child crying is apparent. Melleney halts his horse once more, frowning and listening intently.

INTERCUT:

55. EXT. MOUNTAINOUS BUSHLAND -- DAY

Nicky sits, sobbing. She pulls a burr from her foot. Old Cockatoo is apparent in a tree above her.

Melleney is still, listening.

SFX: A Cockatoo's screech.

Melleney decides that was the noise. The brumby suddenly shows itself, sprinting down the mountain. Melleney gives chase.

56. EXT. MOUNTAINOUS BUSHLAND -- DAY

Melleney and his horse move quickly down the slope. Nicky suddenly appears in front of them. He jerks on the reins and he and his horse fall heavily.

Nicky stands, stunned, her doll at her feet. The insulating moment of shock ends, and she bursts into tears. Melleney is slow to his feet. Hobbling, he crosses to her and picks her up. He begins to carry her to his horse but Nicky lets out a loud cry. She points over his shoulder at her abandoned doll. They go back and retrieve it and move back to the horse.

57. EXT. McCALLISTER HOMESTEAD -- NIGHT

Old Cockatoo is perched in the tree, watching the house.

58. INT. McCALLISTER HOMESTEAD - BATHROOM. -- NIGHT

Anna, on her knees by an old iron tub, bathes Nicky. David sways on a chair while Melleney leans against the doorframe. As Anna applies a sponge gently to Nicky's feet, the child pays close attention to her hand. She looks up, urging care.

ANNA

I know, darlin'. It'll only hurt
a little. This'll make it better.

A pause.

DAVID (overt, almost indignant)
What's she got that crack for?

ANNA (nonchalant)

Same reason the roan mare has one.
Same reason you've got a peg between
your back legs, like the black stallion.

Realization dawns slowly. David is mortified.

DAVID

I saw...hang on. The stallion
was...Hey wait a minute!

ANNA

You're not just a pretty face,
David McCallister.

DAVID

Owh! Hey?!...Owh!

ANNA

S'true.

DAVID

Owh! Hey?! Fair go!

He stares at his mother to ascertain if she is having him on. He begins to realize she isn't.

DAVID

I'd never do that!

ANNA

We'll see.

MELLENEY

Already did.

ANNA (innocent)

What?

MELLENEY

Stuck mine in that shiela down the road.
Betty Drable.

Anna is stunned, but rallies.

ANNA

Oh, did you now?

MELLENEY

Yep, put a collar on the baldy dog.

ANNA

And what have you got to say for yourself?

MELLENEY (particular)

Wasn't much chop.

Anna controls herself and goes back to cleaning Nicky.

ANNA

Do me a favour will you. Don't stick
it in anyone else until you've had
a talk to John Hawthorne.

MELLENEY

Hey? Lost me. When'd he get in the picture?

ANNA

I'm talking about what he knows that you should know. Things that sound best coming from a man. And...your father's not here, so John will take care of it.

MELLENEY (voice breaking, overtly confident)

Awh!

He saunters over-confidently down the hall.

MELLENEY

What's to know?

Anna rolls her eyes, takes a towel and lifts Nicky from the tub. David wanders despondently from the room. Anna folds the thick towel around Nicky and rubs her shoulders briskly.

ANNA

I always wanted a little girl you know.

She grins as she takes a pair of Nicky's panties and splays them for her. Nicky places a steadying hand on her shoulder.

59. INT. A COBBLER'S SHOP, LIANHARAN, WALES -- DAY

A man's hand touches Anna's shoulder. She looks up, startled. (She is on her knees by the counter edge, sorting shoe boxes.)

HER P.O.V.: Joe towers above her. [He is dressed as in Sc .]

She stands and looks up at him. [Refer Sc page & Sc page] Joe is embarrassed he startled her. He places a pair of boxer's boots on the counter. It is raining outside.

JOE

Got these boots.

ANNA

Papa!

JOE

Don't be afraid.

ANNA

Papa!

Her father comes through a curtained doorway.

ANNA'S FATHER

What? What?

He sees Joe and stops dead, shocked. He puts out his hand and comes forward. Joe backs off slightly, unsure.

ANNA'S FATHER

Well, well, well. Joe McCallister.

He shakes his hand.

ANNA'S FATHER

Come to take the belt off a Welshman have you? You're a game one, I give you that.

He turns to Anna.

ANNA'S FATHER

Joe McCallister.

ANNA

I know.

She grins shyly at Joe. He is entranced by her.

BACK TO.

NICKY

Is mummy gone to heaven?

Anna watches her sympathetically, then nods. Nicky's chin quivers. Anna watches her brave attempts not to cry. Tears come to her own eyes. They burst into tears, embracing each other.

60. MONTAGE/MUSIC SEQUENCE

Suggested sequences:

A] Nicky helps Anna sweep. She uses a toy broom.

B] Nicky watches David milking the cow. She asks if she can pull the teat. He lets her, and she goes all silly over the feel of it. David squirts her with some milk. Nicky screams with delight.

C] Anna hoes her vegetable patch. A pig runs through the patch. It is followed by a string of piglets, and last of all, Nicky. Anna laughs and shakes her head lovingly.

D] Nicky holds the reins of a draught horse, while Melleney nails a shoe to a rear hoof. Melleney looks round at her and grins. Her face is a picture of concentration as she looks up at the face of the horse towering above her.

E] John hands Anna up a can of white paint. She is on a plank, between trestles. Seated on the plank beside her is Nicky. They are painting the house (white with chocolate trim). On a trestle further down, Melleney and David work, also painting. Anna talks to Nicky and smiles. Nicky works with a little brush.

F] It is night. John, Melleney, David and Nicky are seated at the dining table, smiling. David turns down a kerosene lamp. Anna enters with a birthday cake with 6 candles on it. They sing "Happy Birthday" to Nicky. She is delighted. As the children cut the cake, Anna looks up at John. Their eyes meet, and hold.

61. EXT. OPEN BUSHLAND -- DAY

Anna and John ride at a gallop. John indicates a ridge. They head toward it. John is the first to the crest. He reins up his horse and points to a billabong below.

JOHN

There!

62. EXT. BY A BILLABONG -- DAY

John's and Anna's lips peel apart. They lie together on the billabong bank.

JOHN

It can go on like this. We can raise Nicky as our own.

Anna watches him. John's fingers undo the last button on Anna's blouse, and pull on her belt. She places her hand on his, stopping him. She watches him for some moments, deciding. John watches, waiting. Anna moves away, and through John's eyes we ascertain she is standing. The last of Anna's clothes fall to the ground. She walks into the water and glides out. John undresses hurriedly and follows.

63. EXT. IN THE BILLABONG -- DAY

John moves to her and they kiss. Her legs drift up around his waist, and they begin to make love. He pushes her to the steep bank. As they make love Anna's fingers dig into the soft mud.

64. EXT. BY A BILLABONG -- SUNSET

On the opposite bank: Wild horses drink.

Anna and John doze together, naked, their bodies entwined and coated in places with dried mud. Anna wakes. She lifts her lips to John's and kisses him gently. He wakes and caresses her cheek. A horse snorts. John notices, only mildly concerned.

JOHN

Cold?

She shakes her head and nestles against his chest, troubled.

JOHN

Anna.

He lifts her chin and kisses her. She looks away, unable to give him the answer he requires. He makes her look at him.

JOHN

Just take it...Just take it.

Her eyes fill with tears. She moves away to wash the mud from her body. John watches her sadly.

65. INT. PRISON -- NIGHT

A GUARD walks down the dimly lit passageway outside the cells. As he passes a cell he stops and listens. There are faint grunting sounds from within. The guard opens a small viewing window. Joe, bathed in sweat, does push ups. The Guard shakes his head.

66. EXT. McCALLISTER HOMESTEAD -- DAY

The house is newly painted. Camera cranes over the front of the house and down the side. At the rear a scene is already being played out. MRS. ROBERTS, a social worker from the Adoption Society, stands in front of a wagonette, not far from the back steps. Melleney stands at the base of the steps on one side, holding his horse's reins, David on the other side. Anna and Nicky are in the doorway, Nicky well dressed, and a child's suitcase on the floor nearby. Everyone is solemn. David spits on the ground and idly grades dirt over the spittle with his boot. Mrs. Roberts shifts uneasily in the hostile atmosphere.

MRS. ROBERTS

Look if it was up to me, Mrs. McCallister...

Her voice fades. This argument has been going on for some time.

ANNA

The poor little thing's never known a safe future. I can give her that.

MRS. ROBERTS

No, you can't. You rely on your fifteen year old son's...

MELLENEY

Sixteen.

MRS. ROBERTS

Well sixteen, then but...

MELLENEY

I bring in about four quid a week, missus. We painted the house. I could feed her and four more billies.

MRS. ROBERTS

Yes, we know but look...

DAVID

Soon as I finish grade six I'll help too.

MRS. ROBERTS

Please!!...I didn't want to say this, but the fact is we judge a family not only on its finances but on its

MRS. ROBERTS (Cont'd)
 character. Your husband is a convict,
 Mrs. McCallister. After three years of
 rubbing shoulders with hard bitten
 criminals we've no reason to expect
 he'll be a better man. She'll get
 training at the orphanage. She can
 become a housemaid, or a nurse...

ANNA
 Or an unloved child. Why don't you people
 ever use your brains instead of your
 little pieces of paper.

She kneels beside Nicky. Anna cradles her chin and kisses her.
 They exchange a long, sad look. Anna hands her the suitcase.

ANNA
 Go along.

Nicky walks down the steps. Mrs. Roberts waits for her. She
 appears like an executioner waiting by the gallows. Nicky looks
 at Melleney. He lowers his eyes. Suddenly her nerve fails. She
 drops the suitcase, and turns to run crying to Anna. Before she
 has gone two steps Melleney grabs her and puts her in the wagon.
 He pushes Mrs. Roberts roughly up into the seat beside her and
 throws her the reins. He slaps the horse's rump with his hat. As
 the horse gallops out of the gate, down the side rut and into the
 road, Nicky reaches out, calling.

NICKY
 Mummy!...Mummy!...Mummy!

As Nicky's voice fades to nothing, Anna remains in the doorway,
 her head against the frame. She looks into the distance, her face
 impassive, tears in her eyes and down her cheeks.

67. INT. McCALLISTER HOMESTEAD -- NIGHT

The dining room. John, Anna, Melleney and David eat a meal in
 silence. Eventually...

JOHN
 What time does his train get in?

ANNA
 Eleven.

They continue eating, except for John who looks disconcertedly from one face to the other for a trace of emotion, hurt by their silence. As the camera holds on John:

DAVID (O.S.) (subdued)
Can I have some more please.

68. EXT. MCCALLISTER HOMESTEAD -- NIGHT

Anna and John sit on the back stairs. John smokes a pipe.

JOHN
The...um, the boys...shouldn't speak
of me to him.

Anna nods.

JOHN
You should leave this man. His sons
fear him. You lost Nicky because of him.

She squeezes his arm, stopping him.

ANNA
I married him.

John shakes his head, unable to fathom her.

ANNA
Would be the same if I'd married you.
There's something you should understand.
He believes that I believe in him. That's
all he has. He gave up what he had when I
asked him to. I just asked too much.

JOHN
You can't ask too much of another person,
Anna, no one can. It's always given. If it's
not a gift, it's a lie.

John taps out his pipe. He walks down the steps to his horse.

ANNA
John...I'll leave a rag on the line...
when you can visit.

John considers. He mounts up and watches her for a long moment.

JOHN

I like chopped currants in my scones.

He leaves. Anna is sad.

69. EXT. McCALLISTER HOMESTEAD -- DAY

The dirt road at the front of the property. Looking at the crest of a small rise, bushland either side, the heat shimmering off the road - a dark speck appears among the haze above the crest. It grows to form a hat, then a man's head carrying it. Joe walks toward us. As a third of his body comes over the crest, he suddenly stops. He has seen the homestead.

70. EXT. McCALLISTER HOMESTEAD -- DAY

Joe is confused, his anger mounting. The house is newly painted...and a man is working a horse in the roundyard.

71. EXT. McCALLISTER HOMESTEAD -- DAY

Melleney lunges a horse. As he rotates he sees his father standing in the backyard. He drops the long rein and stares at him. Joe throws off his blanket roll and surveys the improvements to the house and yards. Eventually he looks back at his son.

JOE

Why d'you no bring a horse for me
to the station?

Melleney does reply. Anna comes to the back doorway.

ANNA

I told him not to.

Joe turns, his eyes hungry for her. He is torn between his desire and defending his pride.

JOE

Oh? A man is away for three years
and he returns to a welcome like this!

ANNA

There'll be no pretending here. You'll earn your respect back or get none at all. I for one have missed you at times, but there's been many more I didn't. Other times I was glad you were gone. As for the boys, they got their own minds.

JOE

Where's Davey?

ANNA

School.

He looks back at Melleney.

JOE

And what of you? Miss your father?

Melleney merely stares.

JOE

D'y'ever think to write? Either of you? Might have appreciated a letter once in three years!

ANNA

Strange coming from you.

JOE

Had plenty of time to think.

ANNA

Mrs. Nielsen died in the field trying to run her farm on her own. Think about that.

He is silent, her argument undermining his.

JOE

Who painted the house?

ANNA

Boys and me.

JOE

Done alright for y'self?

He waits for a reply. None is forthcoming. He looks at Melleney.

JOE

Saddle the mare. I'll sleep in town.

MELLENEY

You got arms.

JOE

What?

A dangerous silence falls between them.

ANNA

He's fed us these three years.
Give him his due.

JOE

I'm still the father. That's a high
horse you're on, laddie. I'm back now.
Do as I say.

Melleney watches him unflinchingly. After a moment's deliberation he obeys. When he is beyond earshot Joe nods with subdued pride.

JOE

He's grown somewhat.

ANNA

David's as tall.

JOE

As tall you say? At eleven?

He shakes his head at the fact, and the pity of his wasted years.

ANNA

Joe. Don't come here drunk, or
there'll be trouble.

JOE

Mind your place. The Judge punished me hard enough, all for defending meself. I'll stand so much judging. There's no love for me at all now, is there?

ANNA

Had a lot of dreams once. Dreams die hard.

Joe watches her, nods, grateful she gives as much ground as she does. Melleney approaches with the mare.

JOE

Join me for a beer?

He mounts up.

MELLENEY

Not old enough.

JOE

Walk in with me, who'll say no?

MELLENEY

Not a drinker.

JOE (irritated)

Can you watch?

MELLENEY

Y'that good?

A grin plays round the corners of Joe's mouth. He looks at Anna.

JOE

He's got your wit. Pity for his nose he's a man.

He spurs the horse and leaps the side fence. He accelerates to a gallop down the side rut and throws it into a violent turn on the town road. Melleney, stunned by the amazing feat, looks at his mother. He is surprised to find her already watching him.

ANNA

He's right. Learn to duck.

She goes inside.

72. EXT. McCALLISTER HOMESTEAD -- EARLY MORNING

Old Cockatoo sits on a branch of the tree overlooking the homestead. Joe, mounted, trains a horse in the workyard. David emerges from beneath the house, carrying two steel buckets of pig slop. He walks toward the pig pens, passing the yards en route.

SFX : The faint, distant sound of rolling thunder.

David halts and listens, looking toward the horizon. It is a cloudless day. Mystified, he continues on.

SFX : The same sound, louder.

David looks at his father and sees that he too is still and listening. He is looking toward the horizon at the rear of the property. David looks in the same direction. There is a far off dust cloud. David puts down the buckets and climbs excitedly onto the roundyard rails to get a better view.

DAVID

He must have a whole pack!!

INTERCUT:

73. EXT. OPEN COUNTRY -- EARLY MORNING

Melleney on horseback, in full gallop, a stockwhip in his hand. He pushes a dozen or more BRUMBIES before him. As the horses gallop the homestead can be seen in the far distance.

David climbs down and rushes to the holding yard in order to open the slip rails. As he pulls on a rail...

JOE

Leave it.

David stops, confused.

Melleney cracks the stockwhip, pushing the pack on. The homestead is considerably closer.

CRANE: As with the opening shot, Old Cockatoo sits in the tree. Joe is in the workyard, David is by the holding yard, the pack and Melleney approach.

Melleney frowns as he looks ahead. David stands before the workyard, Joe is on his mount inside the workyard.

MELLENEY

Open the yard!

David looks imploringly at his father. Joe remains impassive, watching Melleney's approach. Anna appears in the back doorway.

MELLENEY

David! Open the yard! David!

Distressed, David looks round at his father.

JOE

Out of the way.

David moves back round the fenceline. The pack is almost home.

74. EXT. McCALLISTER HOMESTEAD -- MORNING

The pack comes in and splits on the fenceline. Melleney tries to control them back into a bunch, loses half, but realizes it is futile. He lets the other half go. As the horses retreat and the dust clears, Melleney sits motionless on his horse. He dismounts, and looks accusingly at David. David redirects his attention to their father. Melleney walks round the holding yard, his eyes all the while fixed on Joe.

Melleney halts beside David, and looks at him. David is surprised to find his brother's gaze now upon him. Suddenly Melleney hits him, knocking him down. He looks contemptuously at his father, turns, mounts the stairs, and disappears into the house.

David sits up, his mouth bloodied. He looks up at his mother, then hangs his head in shame. Anna and Joe exchange a long look, pleading in her eyes, disregard in his.

Melleney reappears, carrying a blanket roll and saddlebags. He walks down the stairs and crosses to his horse. As he ties on the blanket roll, he addresses his mother:

MELLENEY

Taken twelve quid from the jar.
Mine by rights.

He glances at his father.

MELLENEY

We'll see who sits that high horse.

Joe merely watches. Melleney mounts and nods toward his mother.

MELLENEY

Touch her and you're dead.

He leaves, walking his horse out.

Anna and Joe exchange a look once more. Joe breaks it and goes back to work. Anna watches Melleney leave, then goes inside.

David gets to his feet. He looks at his father working. His expression is one of contempt and deep self-disgust.

75. EXT. McCALLISTER HOMESTEAD -- PRE-DAWN

There is a grey drizzle in the air.

76. INT. McCALLISTER HOMESTEAD - MASTER BEDROOM -- PRE-DAWN

It is very quiet, with only the squeaking of the bed, and their breathing. Anna's face is framed by her husband's shoulder. She is being taken and merely doing her duty. Occasional flinches of pain dart into her expression. She gasps suddenly. He stops moving. There is a long moment of tension between them. Anna's expression is one of anticipation. Eventually...Joe rolls off her and turns away. Anna does not move. Tears form in her eyes.

ANNA

I just...I started to think of Melleney.
He's just a child, all alone...

She weeps silently. He swings his legs out of bed.

JOE

Tears for him Anna, but never for me.

ANNA

They are for you. It's all for you.
He's our son.

He gets up, dressing. She rolls her head away, weeping.

77. INT. SECOND BEDROOM -- PRE-DAWN

David listens to his mother's faint sobs.

78. INT. MASTER BEDROOM -- PRE-DAWN

Joe is dressed. He sits beside Anna and wipes her eyes dry.

JOE

I hope one day he knows the good
mother he has.

He crosses to the door but hesitates, his hand on the door knob.
He looks round at her, but can't express himself further.

79. INT. MASTER BEDROOM -- PRE-DAWN

Joe opens the bedroom door. David, standing naked in the hallway,
steps back. He is surprised and fearful. Joe places his hand
reassuringly on his son's shoulder.

JOE

Women cry. They cry from time to time.

He moves up the hall. David looks at his mother, then after his
father.

80. EXT. OPEN COUNTRY -- DAWN

Joe rides. He senses someone is following. He halts his horse and
turns. David, trailing at some distance, halts his horse. Joe
looks at him thoughtfully. He continues on.

JOE (VO)

...And not far from my uncle's,
about a dozen miles, there's this
big stone wall.

81. EXT. A CAMPSITE -- NIGHT

Joe sits against a fallen tree, a mug of steaming tea in his hand. David is nearer the campfire, enthralled in their conversation. There is a relaxed rapport between father and son.

JOE

Huge. Goes for miles.

DAVID

Is that the wall the Romans built to keep out the Highlanders?

Joe looks at him in mild surprise and nods. He stares.

DAVID

Learnt it at school.

Joe's head goes back in understanding and he studies his son.

DAVID

Did you and Grandma have to live at your uncle's when your father was killed?

JOE

Mmm.

DAVID

What was the place? Isa...?

JOE

Isandhlwana. Father was a rifleman in the Fusiliers. Was a massacre. Zulu warriors. Thousands and thousands of 'em. Mother got a letter. Said he died brave. Said God looked over Britain, and all Britons, and all deaths were for the glory of the Empire, and therefore to the glory of God.

DAVID

What did he look like?

JOE

God?

David is confused. Joe looks away with a slight grin.

JOE

I don't know. Never met him.
Was but a bairn when he died.

David grins.

DAVID

And because he died you had to live
at your uncle's?

JOE

Aye.

DAVID

What was he like?

JOE

Oh. Hard. Very hard.

DAVID

Tough?

JOE

There's tough and there's hard,
sometimes together. He was just hard.

82. EXT. A CAMPSITE -- NIGHT

The fire has burnt out and is smoking. David sleeps by it. Joe sleeps against the tree. David shivers in his sleep. Joe wakes and sees his son's discomfort. He takes his own blanket, and careful not to wake David, places it over him. He moves away. He resumes his position by the tree, prepared to suffer the cold.

83. EXT. AN ALLEYWAY -- NIGHT

Close on a fist slamming into TOMMY'S (18 y.o. Aboriginal) face.

He is knocked to the ground. Melleney circles, panting. There are numerous ABORIGINIES watching. Among them stands BILLY PRESTON. He is flanked on one side by an old, totally bald Chinese, CHARLIE, and on the other side by an old, silver haired aboriginal, WILLIE.

Tommy, gets up. He knocks Melleney down. Both boys are nearly finished; bloodied, sweating, close to exhaustion.

Melleney gets up, knocks Tommy down, and in the process falls down himself. They both try to get to their feet once more.

PRESTON

Alright. Help 'em up.

Two aborigines help Melleney to his feet and hold him steady. Preston crosses to him. He lights a cigar then holds the match out to examine Melleney's face.

PRESTON

Well, you're not a bleeder. That's good.
How old you say you were?

MELLENEY

Nineteen.

PRESTON

If you say so.

He comes to a decision.

PRESTON

Alright. If the bulls find out you're
not over eighteen then I didn't know. Right?

Melleney nods. Preston indicates to his men to take Melleney away. He looks at Tommy as Willie cleans him up.

Preston's head goes back in question.

TOMMY

Tough bloke. Good right hand.

PRESTON

What's the jaw like?

TOMMY

Knuckle buster.

PRESTON (chuckling)

Knuckle buster.

He looks at Charlie to share the joke. Charlie spits tobacco.

CHARLIE

You're not hiring a white bloke?

PRESTON (feigned indignation)

Why not? We got rights too y'know!

Preston hugs him and laughs. He walks off.

84. MUSIC/MONTAGE.

Suggestions for TIME ACCELERATION MONTAGE:

A] MELLENEY [2] stands on an elevated platform within a line of ABORIGINAL BOXERS. Billy Preston roves up and down the platform, speaking through a tin megaphone. Willie beats a base drum on the end of the platform. A large sign on the canvas facade reads "BILLY PRESTON'S BOXING TROUPE". The boxer next to Melleney stands forward from the line. A MAN IN THE CROWD comes to a decision and waves to Preston. The boxer next to Melleney steps back into line. Melleney steps forward. Preston arranges his fight. A man in the Crowd gives Preston a wave.

B] Melleney 2 fights the man. (Bare knuckles) A BETSMaster is frantically taking bets. Melleney defeats his opponent. However the fight has cost him dearly; he is a bloodied mess.

C] Round a campfire at night. Preston coaches Melleney 2. He spars him with another BOXER. The boxer knocks him down. Melleney sits on the ground and spits a molar tooth into his hand. Preston helps him to his feet and gives him instruction. Melleney joins with the Boxer once more.

D] Joe rides out from the homestead toward town, Anna watching him leave. She crosses to the clothesline and pegs a white cloth to the wire, then continues to watch her husband leave.

E] John rides across country. He halts his horse, and looks into the distance. HIS P.O.V.: The rear of the McCallister homestead. The white rag is obvious on the otherwise bare clothesline. John nudges his horse on.

F] MELLENEY [3] stands on the elevated platform. He is matched with a big man.

G] Melleney beats the man with considerable ease. The Betsmaster is raking in the money.

H-K] Melleney fights different opponents. Defeating them all. INTERCUT Preston watching him develop. He smiles with satisfaction at a Betsmaster, taking plenty of money.

L] Melleney fights a very big man, a hard fight. He finally knocks the man down and stands in the middle of the ring, bloodied. The CROWD cheers maniacally. He watches them, his expression fierce. [Refer to Sc page & Sc page]

85. EXT. WELLINGTON TOWNSHIP, MRS. PARKER'S HOUSE -- DAY

The house where Nicky now works and resides. NICKY [3] works in the front garden. As she weeds a patch, a twig drops on her head. She brushes it off and continues working. Another twig hits her. She looks up. In the tree above her Old Cockatoo sits with another twig in his mouth. Nicky points at him and smiles. She notices a rider approaching. She crosses to the garden fence.

Melleney approaches. (He has a moustache, and is unshaven) An expression of joy comes to Nicky's face. Melleney sees her staring but does not recognize her. Nicky smiles warmly at him. He halts his horse and studies her.

NICKY

It's me!

He guides his horse over. They exchange an admiring look.

MELLENEY

Well... Almost a woman.

NICKY

Mrs. Parker said next year I can grow bosoms!

MELLENEY

Who's she?

NICKY

The crippled lady. Sergeant Haynes got me from the orphanage. I keep house for her.

NICKY

Where did you go?

MELLENEY

Traveled.

NICKY

When did you get back?

MELLENEY

Now.

NICKY

Doesn't mummy know you're home yet?!

Melleney raises an eyebrow in query.

NICKY

Well, I still call her mummy. She comes and sees me twice a week and brings me things.

She indicates her rather large blouse.

NICKY

She made me this.

MELLENEY

Plenty of room for bosoms.

Nicky smirks.

MELLENEY

She well?

Nicky nods, but there is an ambiguity to her expression. Melleney's head goes back in question.

NICKY

Can't put it into words. She isn't sick...but...

Nicky shrugs and smiles, unable to explain herself.

NICKY

Oh, I wish I could be there when you come home.

MELLENEY (ambiguously)

Mmmm.

He pulls his horse away. Nicky watches him go a little way.

NICKY

Melleney!

He halts and looks over his shoulder.

NICKY

You home for good?

He thinks about it, nods. She tugs at the fence with undisguised delight. Flattered, Melleney nudges his horse on. As he passes the police station, Sgt. Haynes is watering a small garden bed on the front porch. He glances up and stares in recognition.

86. EXT. MCCALLISTER HOMESTEAD -- DAY

DAVID [3] in the shoeing shed. Joe, in farrier's leg chaps, cradles a horse's hind leg and is nailing a shoe. David holds the horse steady. The horse shifts weight.

JOE

Don't let her sit down, lad. Hold her.

David steadies the horse momentarily. Joe manages to drive in a nail. But David notices Melleney in the far distance. His attention wanders as he becomes more certain it is his brother. Not held, the horse shifts weight. Joe hits his thumb with the hammer. He runs into the yard, throws down the hammer and spitting out nails as he bellows in pain:

JOE

Jesus!! Y'friggin!!...Jesus bloody
curse the saints!!

He kicks the horse in the hind leg. It objects furiously. David strains to hold her.

87. EXT. OPEN COUNTRY -- DAY

Melleney approaches the homestead from the rear, advancing at the walk. He halts his horse, and musters determination.

88. INT. McCALLISTER HOMESTEAD -- DAY

Looking out through the back doorway, Joe in the yard, Melleney in the distance. Anna, carrying folded sheets, is a silhouette as she crosses the light of the doorway. She is attracted by the noise of the horse acting up, and crosses to the door.

89. EXT. McCALLISTER HOMESTEAD -- DAY

Anna, in the doorway, watches her husband.

JOE

Hold her down tight! Tight, boy!
Can you not do the simplest thing
like hold a bloody horse?!

Anna decides it is nothing and begins to go inside. She hesitates, however, as she sees Melleney approaching in the distance. Unsure if it is her son, she watches carefully.

David lets the frenzied horse go. It gallops past Joe.

JOE

What the...?!

Joe picks up a bridle and makes to hit David.

JOE

Go catch the damned thing! What's
got into you?

David looks away to Melleney. Joe catches sight of his wife in the doorway and finds she too is looking off into the distance. He looks also. Like David and Anna, he is unsure if it is Melleney. He looks to the other side of the roundyard. A stockwhip is coiled over a fencepost. He walks toward it.

Melleney's horse breaks into a canter. Joe hurries. David realizes what is happening and runs after his father. Anna rushes down the back steps. When David is past she picks up the hammer her husband threw down and hides it in her apron pocket.

Melleney's horse gallops. Joe runs. They close on each other as the race reaches its climax:

90. EXT. McCALLISTER HOMESTEAD -- DAY

Joe reaches the whip, grabs the handle and flicks it. The tip cracks harmlessly in the air, above the saddle where Melleney should have been. The horse passes, revealing Melleney on the ground, having dismounted and avoided the blow. The two men face each other. David and Anna arrive and stop. Melleney looks at his mother. Joe draws the whip back suddenly and strikes. Melleney dives to one side.

DAVID

No!

He rushes to his father and tries to get the whip off him. Joe backhands him, knocking him down. Melleney tackles his father, driving him through holding yard railings. As they fight, David, badly dazed, gets up to rejoin the fray. Anna, however, holds him back. During the fight it becomes obvious that Melleney is up against a far superior opponent. He is dazed, and caught in a hammerlock. Joe pushes his head underwater in a horse trough. As the drowning continues, Anna's hand tightens on the hammer she holds. When it seems that Melleney will drown, however, Joe looks up at her. His face softens. (David is too dazed to comprehend the exchange) Joe releases Melleney.

Melleney simultaneously struggles, pushing his father off. Believing his father meant to kill him, Melleney attacks with total fury. The fight concludes with Melleney, in a killing frenzy, strangles his father. Locked into a deep psychosis (as indicated in the earlier montage). David has recovered somewhat. Anna pushes him forward and David pulls his brother away, saving his father from certain death. Melleney recovers, and stands over his father. Finally he turns away.

L.S.: Melleney, followed by Anna, then David, moves toward the house and up the stairs. Joe remains where he lies.

91. INT. McCALLISTER HOMESTEAD -- DAY

The kitchen. Anna pumps water into a basin. Melleney sits at the kitchen table, staring, locked into troubled thoughts - his expression is one of confusion, worry. David sits on a chair by the wall, watching.

SUBLIM FLASHES: Images (no sound) taken from montage in Sc page . Melleney 3 fighting the big man and winning.

The images are broken as Anna places the basin on the table in his line of sight. As Anna bathes the wounds on his face, David shifts uncomfortably.

DAVID

What do we do now?

Melleney attempts to find an answer, and appears momentarily about to cry. His mouth moves, but no sounds come out. Anna maintains composure.

ANNA

Is he still lying there?

David looks out the window. Joe lies in the same position on the ground. Old Cockatoo is now perched on the workyard railing behind him.

DAVID

Yeah.

Anna dips a piece of cloth in the water, and hands it to him.

ANNA

Offer to clean him up. He won't let you, but offer.

DAVID

Why?

ANNA

Do it for me.

Reluctantly, David exits. Anna goes back to bathing Melleney's wounds. Her hand to his face stops moving. She searches his eyes. She hugs him to her, rocking him.

92. EXT. McCALLISTER HOMESTEAD -- DAWN

Joe mounts his horse and looks up at a rear window of the house.

INTERCUT:

93. INT. McCALLISTER HOMESTEAD - REAR ROOM -- DAWN

Anna watches through a window. They exchange a look of understanding and Joe rides out.

LOOKING THROUGH THE WINDOW: Melleney appears beside his mother and also watches his father.

ANNA

He's going after the wild horse. You and David do the training now.

Joe is a small image in the distance. Anna leaves frame as Melleney stares after his father.

94. EXT. BILLABONG -- DAY

John stands, his back to Anna. She watches him, distraught. He turns to her.

JOHN

No...No.

ANNA

We're a family again.

JOHN

Family...Your husband's a murderer, Anna. He killed old Niels Nielsen just as sure as...

ANNA

You don't know that!...He needs me.

JOHN

I need you. God, woman. Why do you think I've been skulking round like this? For years! What will it take to make you see? When all is said and done there'll be nothing but waste. Waste of life. You can change it. All of us can be happy...

ANNA

All of us?

JOHN

Yes! Even him! You feed his weakness!
Don't you see that?!

ANNA

I have to...I have to go.

John grabs her roughly.

JOHN

I'll kill him, Anna. I mean it.
I'll kill him!

ANNA

No. You stay away. Stay away! You
don't know him! He's so strong!
He'll kill you!

JOHN

Good!...Anything would be better
than this.

Anna bursts into tears.

ANNA

I'm sorry...I'm so sorry.

She hugs John quickly, rushes to her horse, mounts, and spurs it
to the gallop.

JOHN

Anna...Anna!!

95. EXT. McCALLISTER HOMESTEAD -- DAWN

Super: Five years later.

The sun breaks the horizon. The homestead is run down. The white
and chocolate paint has cracked and peeled. The house is
returning to its former state.

The sound of wingbeats. The shadow of a bird crosses the
weatherboards. Swinging onto the giant, dead tree, Old Cockatoo
perches in one of the branches.

96. INT. MASTER BEDROOM -- DAWN

Anna's head rests on Joe's shoulder. He is asleep, while she is awake, thinking. She gets up.

97. INT. SECOND BEDROOM -- DAWN

DAVID 4 and Melleney sleep. Melleney now has a full, long beard.

98. INT. LIVING ROOM -- DAWN

Anna's hand winds the baby grandfather clock.

99. INT. SECOND BEDROOM - DAWN

David stirs. He listens to the sound of his mother winding the clock in the living room. The sound ends. He looks across at Melleney. His brother sleeps peacefully on.

Old Cockatoo squawks. Melleney wakes. He looks across at David, and finds him staring.

DAVID

Gonna fight today.

Melleney merely stares.

DAVID

I am.

Melleney sighs with disapproval and looks away.

MELLENEY

Don't be stupid.

DAVID

Why not? You did.

MELLENEY

I had to.

DAVID

Still gonna.

MELLENEY (feigned indifference)
Your teeth.

There is a creak in the floorboards outside and a shadow breaks the light under the door.

DAVID (threatening, imploring)
Don't tell mum.

The door opens. Anna enters, dressed for church. She picks up dirty clothes from the floor. Eventually she looks at Melleney and indicates Joe in the other room with a nod of her head.

ANNA
Going to town with him later?

Melleney looks at David. His brother's face goes tight.

MELLENEY
Mmmm.

Anna picks up David's shirt on the floor by his bed and makes a point of catching his eye as she straightens up.

ANNA
I better not hear about you fighting
at Preston's today young David
McCallister. Come home without your
teeth and you'll be in the henhouse.
S'where creatures without teeth belong.

DAVID
Why not? Melleney did.

ANNA
Melleney had to. Y'father said to
cut that chaff before you go anywhere.
Help yourselves to breakfast.

She slaps him lightly in the face with his shirt sleeve and exits. David looks at Melleney as if betrayed.

DAVID (semi-whisper)
Still gonna.

Melleney drops his eyes to the considerable bulge in the blanket overlying David's groin.

MELLENEY

I'd get rid of that first.

100. EXT. McCALLISTER HOMESTEAD -- EARLY MORNING

Steam rises off an old copper boiler. The dirty clothes Anna collected are thrown into the boiler. She is at the rear of the underhouse. She pokes the clothes into the water with a well worn stick then crosses to a wagon and climbs up, hits the horse up, and steers it out the gate.

101. INT. CHURCH -- MORNING

The CONGREGATION sings a hymn, Anna among them. She is merely going through the motions of worship.

102. EXT. A CHURCH, WELLINGTON -- DAY

The PARISH PRIEST stands by the church door, saying goodbye to the congregation as they file out. Anna exits and crosses toward her wagon.

103. EXT. ROADSIDE -- DAY

Members of the congregation move toward their wagons, Anna among them. She stops as she sees someone. John, mounted on his horse, waits beneath a tree. He now has a beard, streaked with grey. Anna looks at him sadly and crosses to him.

104. EXT. TREE OFF ROADWAY -- DAY

Anna approaches John and reaches up, placing her hand on his.

ANNA

I heard you'd gone to England.

JOHN

I did.

ANNA

For five years?

JOHN

I've been married and divorced.

Anna is surprised by the news. John explains:

JOHN

She wasn't you.

105. EXT. McCALLISTER HOMESTEAD -- DAY

Melleney and David work in the yards, Melleney lunging a horse, David mounted on another. Anna hangs washing on the line as Joe appears at the back doorway. He surveys the scene and reaches to a hat peg just inside the door. As he puts on his hat:

JOE

Dave! Grab the mare!

Anna, at the end of the line nearest the house, has hung the final garment. She looks up at her husband as he watches Melleney work. She looks down at the washing basket. It is empty barring a single item: a white rag. Anna comes to a decision, picks up the rag, and pegs it to the line.

106. EXT. McCALLISTER HOMESTEAD -- DAY

Joe, Melleney, and David are on horseback. David leans down and shuts the sidegate as his father and brother continue on. Anna, standing in the back doorway, watches. David shuts the gate and waves to her. As he continues on, Anna goes back inside.

The white rag flutters on the clothesline.

107. EXT. THE ROADWAY TO TOWN -- MIDDAY

The riders advance at the walk; Joe in front, his sons either side. Joe rides a small roan mare, Melleney a quarter horse, and David on a very tall and powerfully built gelding. Melleney looks across at his brother, and his stare attracts his attention. Melleney indicates their father with a nod.

DAVID

Preston sent a note, Dad. Said
he'd give you four quid to stay away.
And that that's ten bob up on last year.

Joe gives no indication he has heard. Eventually...

JOE

Is he going to fight?

David is unsure if Melleney will answer directly.

DAVID (hesitant)
Well, nobody knows he ever fought
for Preston so...

MELLENEY (wearily)
Shuddup.

Shaking his head in comment, Melleney looks away. David lowers his head despondently. Melleney, however, has noticed something in the bush. A man on horseback, well into the bush, is concealed. Melleney checks his father. Joe's head is to the front. Melleney watches him then looks for the man once more. The man has moved to the other side of the tree, thereby revealing his features to better light. It is John. As the riders approach a fork in the road (Jacob's Fork) where their road joins a higher road, Melleney detects fresh markings on the road siding where a horse has recently left the road. Mildly alarmed, Melleney again checks his father. Joe still looks straight ahead, apparently oblivious to the evidence. Melleney is now suspicious. They swing into the main road to town.

108. INT. McCALLISTER HOMESTEAD -- DAY

Anna sits at the dining table folding dried washing. The rag on the line, the only thing on the line now, can be seen through the doorway. The sound of the clock ticking is all that can be heard through the house. Anna notices something outside.

INTERCUT:

109. EXT. McCALLISTER HOMESTEAD -- DAY

John, leading his horse, opens the sidegate. Anna appears in the back doorway. John tethers his horse to the stair railing and climbs the stairs.

110. EXT WELLINGTON TOWNSHIP -- DAY

Joe, Melleney, and David approach the town outskirts. There is the percussion of a base drum in the distance.

111. EXT. WELLINGTON TOWNSHIP -- DAY

The riders enter town. Preston is on the platform, arranging fights with a CROWD. When he sees Melleney his spiel falters slightly. Otherwise there is no recognition between them.

PRESTON

(referring to a boxer, out from the line)

Now this man, for those of you
who don't know, is a middleweight.
But he's not a heavy middleweight,
he's not even a middle middleweight.
He's a light middleweight,
more like a welterweight really.
Now I'm prepared to match him with
a man right up to light heavyweight.
That's right, you heard me, light
heavyweight. Now if that's not
bending over backwards to make a
match then I'll kiss old Willie
over there fair on the backside.
And I'll tell you this, there
are few more horrible sights
in nature than Willie's backside.

Willie beats the drum three times. The CROWD laughs.

112. INT. WELLINGTON TOWNSHIP -- DAY

NICKY [4] stands on a shop veranda, talking to a young SHOP ASSISTANT, who has a broom in his hand. Melleney, riding by, studies her. Nicky looks in his direction, very glad to see him. Melleney looks shyly away. Having seen Melleney, Nicky is immediately thrown into the dilemma of wanting to go to him, but at the same time not offend the Shop Assistant. The Shop Assistant, however, gets the message. Thus freed, Nicky hurries along the verandas after Melleney.

113. EXT. WELLINGTON TOWNSHIP -- DAY

HOWEY, David's best friend, stands at the rear of the crowd outside Preston's. He notices David and runs after him.

HOWEY

Hey, Dave! Dave!

David turns in the saddle but does not halt his horse.

DAVID

Hang on!

Howey waves acknowledgment and walks after him.

114. EXT. WELLINGTON TOWNSHIP -- DAY

There is a CROWD OF MEN spilling into the street from within the Wellington pub. HECTOR NUGENT, a diminutive man wearing an oversized hat, sees them coming. There is a small table set on the edge of the veranda. The hitch rail is conspicuously bare.

HECTOR

(fighting through the crowd and into the bar.)

Hey! Here he comes! Here he comes!

The men about him look toward the riders.

115. EXT. WELLINGTON TOWNSHIP -- DAY

Nicky appears beside Melleney. She loops her arm around his leg.

NICKY

Hello.

Melleney peers down in surprise, and then looks around self-consciously. Nicky walks alongside, grinning.

MELLENEY (mumbling)

Don't do that.

NICKY

What?!

He leans down.

MELLENEY

Don't do that.

NICKY

Why?!

MELLENEY (mumbling)

S'embarrassing.

NICKY

What?!

He leans down.

MELLENEY

S'embarrassing.

She lets go of his leg and stops, hurt. Melleney continues but turns in the saddle to look back at her.

116. EXT. WELLINGTON TOWNSHIP - DAY

The Men in front of the hotel fall silent and part as Hector emerges from the bar, carrying a pint glass of beer. He places it on the small table. Melleney and David pull their horses into a hitch rail where other horses are tethered. Joe halts his horse in front of the vacant hitch rail, the horse parallel to the street. He nods to the Men and they nod back respectfully. He dismounts and 'dead reins' his horse, the Men watching in awe.

117. EXT. WELLINGTON TOWNSHIP -- DAY

Melleney and David part company; Melleney to the public bar, David toward Howey. David, however, stops and turns.

DAVID

Hey, um...

Melleney stops.

DAVID

How 'bout acting as my second?

Melleney shakes his head and begins to go inside.

DAVID

Why not?

Melleney keeps walking.

DAVID

You'd think your own brother'd back you!

Melleney stops. David stalks off angrily. Melleney glances further up the street. Nicky leans against a hitch rail, watching him. Howey is apparent in the middle of the road further down as

David walks into frame. As Melleney enters the pub he nods a greeting to Sgt. Haynes, who sits on a chair near the door.

118. EXT. WELLINGTON TOWNSHIP -- DAY

Joe finishes rolling up his sleeves and walks round to the far side of his horse. The men watch, captivated.

INTERCUT.

119. EXT. WELLINGTON TOWNSHIP -- DAY

David walks past Nicky.

NICKY

He be long?

DAVID (brusquely)

Dunno.

Nicky pouts, her feelings hurt by Melleney, and now by David.

Joe leans under his horse. He loops his arms round a front and hind leg, and balances himself.

120. EXT. WELLINGTON TOWNSHIP -- DAY

LOOKING OVER HOWEY'S SHOULDER: David approaches, Joe etc., in the background.

Howey's attention is fixed on Joe.

HOWEY

How y'goin'?

DAVID

G'day.

David attempts to continue but Howey remains, watching Joe.

HOWEY

Still gonna do it?

DAVID

Yeah.

LOOKING OVER HOWEY'S SHOULDER: Joe lifts the horse on his shoulders. The crowd applauds.

 HOWEY
Seemed pretty easy.

 DAVID (excusing the feat)
S'his first go.

Joe gets out from under his horse and Hector passes him the pint of beer. He begins to drink.

David attempts to continue on once more.

 HOWEY
Hang on, like this bit.

Joe finishes the beer, holds out the glass, and shatters it with a squeeze of his hand. The crowd applauds.

121. EXT. WELLINGTON TOWNSHIP -- DAY

David and Howey turn and walk toward Preston's tent. David reaches into his pocket and pulls out a roll of pound notes.

 DAVID
Here.

 HOWEY
What's that?

 DAVID
S'all I got. Put it on me.

Howey pushes the roll back into David's hand.

 HOWEY (nervous chuckle)
Hey? You must be troppo.

 DAVID
No. Take it.

 HOWEY
Nah, can't do that.

 DAVID
Take it.

HOWEY

Nah.

David grabs him by the shirt. Howey sees how determined he is and takes the money. David continues on.

HOWEY

Strewth.

Howey watches him, confused. He catches up.

HOWEY

Suppose you lose?

DAVID

Won't. Been training.

HOWEY

Yeah? Old man been teaching you?

DAVID

Nah. Been punchin' a tree.

HOWEY

Oh well, bark's worse than its bite.

He laughs, but it fades quickly as he sees David is not amused.

HOWEY

What d'you want me to bet all y'money for?

DAVID

Got m'reasons.

PRESTON

Now there's a couple of likely looking gents!

He points at David.

PRESTON

What about you, sir?!

122. INT. WELLINGTON PUB/PUBLIC BAR -- DAY

The bar is crowded. Melleney drinks with a large group of Men. He is uninterested in the conversations and wanders over to an open window. REGINA SMITH is in the beergarden, she and her two young brothers and little sister are at a table, looking bored. Melleney leans against the casement - a hawk watching a mouse.

123. INT. SMITH'S HOMESTEAD -- NIGHT

Melleney and Regina kiss passionately on the lounge. Melleney's hand is very busy inside her unbuttoned blouse. She is highly excited. He reaches down and pulls up her dress.

124. INT. BEERGARDEN -- DAY

Regina looks despondently at a glass of sarsaparilla cordial in front of her. Melleney carries three drinks: two gin and lemonades and one beer. He also carries hot chips rolled up in newspaper. Regina looks up, surprised.

REGINA (self-conscious)
Oh, hello.

125. INT. SMITH'S HOMESTEAD -- NIGHT

Melleney has his hand up Regina's dress. There is the noise of a carriage outside. Regina gasps and sits up.

REGINA
It's Dad!

Back to .

Regina blushes.

MELLENEY
You look bored.

He puts the drinks and chips on the table. The kids eye them.

REGINA
Oh...well.

REGINA'S LITTLE SISTER
Are they chips, Melleney?

Melleney grins, but does not look at the child. His eyes remain on Regina, taking pleasure in increasing her discomfort. Despite her embarrassment, she cannot contain a small grin. Eventually...

MELLENEY

Thought you'd like a drink.

REGINA

Oh, already got one.

Melleney looks at the kids. He picks up the chips and places them on a nearby table. As he walks back he motions with his head for the kids to go get them. They rush for them. He picks up Regina's drink and pours it into his beer.

MELLENEY

Y'mind? I like a dash o'sars.

He pushes one of the gins across the table to her.

MELLENEY

Here, this one's fresh.

REGINA

Oh, thanks but I'm not very thir...

MELLENEY

Old man left you in charge of the kids again?

She nods as if it were her cross to bear. He indicates her glass.

MELLENEY

You'll like this. Home made lemonade.

REGINA

Yeah?

REGINA

(sipping)

Oooh, tastes funny.

MELLENEY

(grinning)

Grows on you.

126. INT. WELLINGTON HOTEL -- DAY

Through the window and into the public bar: The PARISH PRIEST is talking to the group of men Melleney was with earlier. One of the men looks round, locates Melleney, and points him out. The Priest thanks him and hurries for the door.

BACK TO:

Regina sips her drink.

REGINA
(enjoying)

Mmmm. Did Mrs. Howard make this?

Melleney raises his eyebrows.

REGINA
Mrs. Howard. The publican's wife.

MELLENEY
Yeah. Old family recipe.

The Priest's hand suddenly slaps Melleney's shoulder.

127. EXT. PRESTON'S TENT -- DAY

Melleney and the Priest approach the tent and enter.

128. INT. PRESTON'S TENT -- DAY

Melleney stops just inside. David, in the ring, is out on his feet, taking a beating. As blows fall, Howey, acting as David's second, cringes in horror. Melleney watches the scene intently.

Close on Melleney's eyes, watching. The shouts of the crowd, the images of the fight, is affecting him strongly. The calls of the crowd take on an echoing quality.

Howey turns and winces as David is hit (boxers now wear gloves). He suddenly sees Melleney pointing directly at him, his face fierce. Howey stiffens as Melleney's threat takes precedence. Melleney signals him to throw in the towel. Howey instantly does so. The referee, Charlie, stops the fight. The crowd gives David conciliatory applause as he weaves about the ring.

129. INT. VISITOR'S CHANGE TENT -- DAY

David sits on a bench as Howey cleans him up with a moistened towel. The sounds of another fight in progress next door can be heard. Melleney crosses to David and pushes back his head. He peels back his swollen lips and inspects his teeth.

MELLENEY

Open.

The gums are bloody and Melleney tests the teeth.

MELLENEY

Y'lucky.

Preston enters.

PRESTON

G'day, kid.

They shake hands warmly.

PRESTON

God, y'lookin' fit. Hey? God. (indicating his beard) Look at you. Ned Kelly.

Melleney grins. Preston looks at David.

PRESTON

Friend of yours?

MELLENEY

Little brother.

PRESTON

Oh Christ, why didn't you say so?

MELLENEY

Sink or swim.

Howey appears troubled. Melleney notices.

MELLENEY

What?

Howey hesitates, scared. He suddenly blurts.

HOWEY

Lost his money.

DAVID

Shut up, Howey!

MELLENEY

You bet his brass?

HOWEY (panicking)

Don't go at me! He made me!

Preston takes out his wallet. Melleney sees what he is doing.

MELLENEY

Bullshit.

Preston hesitates. Melleney looks at David.

MELLENEY

Why'd you do it?

David ignores him.

MELLENEY

Why?

David ignores him.

MELLENEY

Why?!!

DAVID

'Cause I'd rather die fighting than spend another day with you and him, that's why!

MELLENEY

So why not just leave?

David ignores him.

MELLENEY

Why not leave?!!

DAVID

Leaving!!...Leaving like a coward.

MELLENEY

Getting your head knocked in here doesn't make you brave, just makes you stupid!

David shouts into his brother's face and pokes his chest.

DAVID

Yeah, well that's me! That's me, Melleneey, stupid! Stupid David! Stupid! Just a good f'nuthin' stupid...

A hard poke to the chest makes Melleneey see red. He lashes out. David is laid out cold. Melleneey recovers. He looks at Howey.

MELLENEY

Get Frosty's wheelbarrow. Take him up the pub. Take him round the back.

Howey nods obediently and begins to exit.

MELLENEY

Here.

Melleneey holds out a ten shilling note. Howey collects it.

MELLENEY

Get him a drink.

HOWEY

Right.

Howey exits. Preston examines David to see if he's alright.

PRESTON

Haven't lost your uppercut.

MELLENEY

Set up, Ronnie.

PRESTON

Y' sure?

Melleneey nods.

PRESTON

Nobody knows you fought with us?

Melleney shakes his head.

MELLENEY

Forty quid?

Preston considers the offer. It is big money.

PRESTON

Yeah.

Convinced.

PRESTON

Yeah. Last bout's on now. 'Bout ten minutes?

Preston crosses to the doorway. He indicates a pair of boxing gloves, hanging on a hook.

PRESTON

Ever fought with these?

MELLENEY

Can't be that hard.

Preston exits. Melleney sits on the form and looks down at his brother's now peaceful face. The flap to the tent is pulled back. Two men carry a man, JACK, one of the townspeople, on a stretcher. They place him on the ground beside David, and exit. Jack looks deliriously round the room. His teeth have been knocked out, and he is a bloodied mess. His eyes meet Melleney's.

JACK

Oh... 'Day, Mel.

MELLENEY

Jack.

130. EXT. MRS. PARKER'S HOUSE -- DAY

Nicky exits from the house, having collected a shawl. MRS. PARKER sits in a wheelchair on the front veranda. There is a teapot etc., on a table near her.

NICKY

There's nothing else, Mrs. Parker?

MRS. PARKER

No, I'm fine. Thank you, Nicky.

Nicky leaves the yard and follows a path which runs behind the town buildings.

131. EXT. WELLINGTON TOWNSHIP - DAY

Within an alleyway almost opposite the hotel - Joe crosses the main street and enters the alleyway.

132. EXT. WELLINGTON TOWNSHIP -- DAY

Dejected, Nicky continues along the path. A girl's laughter comes from nearby bushland. Nicky stops and looks in that direction. There is a small creek crossing not far off. A GIRL, around Nicky's age, runs hand in hand with a YOUNG MAN up the other side of the bank. Nicky watches as they continue on along a small track and disappear into the bush. She is curious and envious.

133. EXT. ALLEYWAY -- DAY

Nicky rounds the end of the alleyway. She almost bumps into Joe. He is urinating against the wall. Embarrassed, Nicky turns quickly and takes to the path once more.

JOE

You...

Nicky stops dead, too frightened to move. As he approaches she presses against a building wall. He stops very near, towering over her.

JOE

You afraid?

She trembles, unable to answer.

JOE

You...you like my boy? My boy, Melleney.

She nods once, slowly. He frowns in confusion.

JOE

Don't...

A change comes to his eyes. Distant memories invade his mind.

JOE

...Don't be afraid.

FAST DISSOLVES from Nicky's face to Rosemary's Sc page , just prior to Joe saying "Don't be afraid." and from Rosemary's face to Anna's face, as in Sc page , just prior to Joe saying "Don't be afraid" and back to Nicky's face in the present. Joe clasps her chin and looks into her eyes. There is great sadness, regret in his expression.

JOE

Run along.

He lowers his hand. Nicky pushes along the wall, then turns and hurries away. He watches her leave, his sanity on a knife's edge.

134. INT. PRESTON'S TENT -- DAY

Melleney, ruthlessly aggressive, hits RONNIE.

135. EXT. PRESTON'S TENT -- DAY

Sgt. Haynes walks by the side of the tent. He notices one of the stays is loose and adjusts the wooden slide. He notices Nicky sitting on the grass at the rear of the tent.

INTERCUT.

136. INT. PRESTON'S TENT -- DAY

Melleney exchanges blows and knocks Ronnie down. Preston frowns.

Haynes watches Nicky. She cries softly, and has not yet seen him.

Melleney knocks Ronnie down once more. Preston snatches a cigar from his mouth. Before Ronnie is counted out, however, the bell ends the round. The Betsmaster is inundated with bets. Preston looks at Melleney. But Melleney faces away, captivated by the crowd's cheers and calls. Preston hurries to Ronnie's corner.

PRESTON

How is he?

Willie shakes his head, worried. Preston taps Ronnie on the leg.

PRESTON

What's going on?

RONNIE

Tell me. He's fair dinkum!

PRESTON

You upset him?

RONNIE

Just did what you told me!

Preston looks across at Melleney, still unable to catch his eye.

PRESTON

Can you take him?

RONNIE (incredulous)

You kiddin'?

Preston nods sourly, acknowledging he is asking too much.

PRESTON

Do your best.

BETSMASTER

Last bet!

BESTSMASTER

(slamming his bag shut)

Closed!

TIMEKEEPER

Round three!

He rings the bell. Melleney and Ronnie come out. Melleney lands quick blows to Ronnie, staggering him back. Preston is confused.

Nicky sits on the grass. Haynes' leg intrudes into frame.

HAYNES

Hello.

Nicky nods and half grins.

HAYNES

Why you sitting there?

NICKY

The sun's nice. Not so hot now.

HAYNES

Funny place to sit.

He glances at the tent, indicating Melleney inside. He looks at her affectionately. They exchange a grin. He leaves. Nicky's eyes are filled with tears.

Melleney's eyes are fierce, determined.

Charlie, the referee, counts. Ronnie drags himself off the canvas and makes it to his feet by eight. Melleney knocks him down again. The count reaches seven before the bell saves Ronnie once more. Melleney crosses to his corner. He looks out at the crowd. Preston studies him, convinced something is very wrong.

Close on Melleney's fierce eyes.

Nicky's eyes: she weeps, tears streaming down her cheeks. As she weeps a twig, with flower, drops into her lap. A second flower falls beside her. She looks up. Old Cockatoo is in a tree branch above her. He is breaking off twigs (as seen before with NICKY 3). Nicky looks at the flower and considers it.

137. INT. PRESTON'S TENT -- DAY

A large, burly man, MAN 1, slaps Melleney's shoulder.

MAN 1 (viciously)

Good on y'Mel! Got ten quid on y'son!
Knock the coons head off!

Man 1 departs. A changing calm comes over Melleney.

Nicky's hand holds the flower. She lowers it to her lap. Her other hand slides up across her belly and cups her breast through her dress. The camera continues up to her face. Her lips part. She breathes heavily, aroused.

ANGLE: Melleney's heaving chest. He looks round and his eyes lock with Preston's. He looks at the Betsmaster. The Betsmaster takes a bet. He hands out a ticket and looks for another punter.

BETSMASTER

Anymore bets, please?! Anymore
before I close?!

No one is forthcoming. Melleney looks back at Preston. He nods.

TIMEKEEPER

Seconds out!

Preston races to Ronnie's corner.

TIMEKEEPER

Round five!

Timekeeper rings the bell.

PRESTON

This round!

Ronnie looks round in confusion as he moves to centre-ring. Preston watches anxiously as the fighters engage. After exchanging blows, they go into a clinch.

MELLENEY

Make it good.

CHARLIE

Break! Break, boys!

They break. Ronnie hands out a right left combination, concluding with a right cross to the jaw which floors Melleney. Melleney drags himself groggily from the canvas, only to be flattened by a full haymaker. He doesn't move for the count. The Crowd is in stunned silence as Charlie counts him out. They are still in silence as Ronnie's hand is raised in victory by Charlie.

138. INT. VISITOR'S CHANGE TENT -- DAY

Melleney sits on the form. He pats at a split lip with a moistened rag. The canvas flap to the main tent is pulled back.

PRESTON

What was that about?!

Melleney dresses.

PRESTON

Well?! Ronnie nearly didn't get up
in the second!

MELLENEY

I know how hard to push.

PRESTON

The hell you do! A troupe boxer'll
lay down if he can't win, you know that!
I tell them to!

MELLENEY

I know you made a lot of money...

PRESTON

We would've been happier with less!
Now I have to rest him for two weeks!

Subdued, Melleney acknowledges his fault with a nod.

PRESTON

What is it, kid?

Melleney shakes his head, not understanding himself.

MELLENEY

Tell Ronnie I'm sorry.

PRESTON

You were always too good for this
game. A man that fights like you,
is smart enough to hate it.

Preston breaks the moment and moves away. He takes out his
wallet, counts out some money, and hands it to Melleney.

PRESTON

That's forty, plus the four for y'old man.
Still lifting his horse for free beers?

MELLENEY

Pope a Catholic?

139. EXT. WELLINGTON HOTEL LATE AFTERNOON

LOW ANGLE: The back of Joe's trembling legs, surrounded by his horse's legs. His legs straighten, and the horse's legs come off the ground. The crowd cheers with less enthusiasm.

Melleney walks toward the pub along the verandas. He is thoughtful, troubled. Joe steps out from under the horse and their eyes lock momentarily. Joe breaks the exchange and takes the beer offered him. Melleney watches his father down the beer. Before it is consumed he walks away. As the crowd cheers (the beer downed) Melleney enters the beergarden.

140. INT. BEERGARDEN -- DAY

Melleney enters, but stops just inside. David sits in a wheelbarrow alongside a table. Regina and Howey sit at the table. The Kids run about the beergarden, playing. Regina laughs far too long and hard at something David has said. David and Howey exchange a look of enchantment with her. Melleney realizes they are all drunk. He grins and begins to exit. But he halts at the door, having caught sight of something through the glass. At the end of the alleyway opposite, in the fading sunlight, stands Nicky. She looks fixedly toward him.

141. EXT. WELLINGTON PUB -- DAY

Melleney is looking out through the glass in the door. He opens it and steps onto the veranda. Nicky twirls one of the flowers seen earlier. The other, is in her hair. She allows the flower in her hand to fall to the ground, turns, and walks along the track that will take her to the creek crossing. Melleney considers her invitation. He steps off the veranda and crosses to the alleyway. Sgt. Haynes is still sitting on the chair by the public bar door. He has observed the exchange and frowns as he watches Melleney.

Joe McCallister leans against a hitch rail, drinking alone, a lonely, dejected figure.

142. EXT. BY A STREAM -- LATE AFTERNOON

Melleney and Nicky lie naked. As she talks, Nicky takes the flower from her hair and releases it to the stream.

NICKY

You remember when Mrs. Roberts
came and took me to the orphanage?

The flower is borne away by the stream.

NICKY (O.S.)

You remember I cried? Well, it wasn't
so much I was scared. I was... but
what hurt most was that it was you
who put me in the carriage.

Nicky lies back. Eventually...

MELLENEY

When I want you again, I'll love you
again. That's the truth and usually
the way.

NICKY

It won't be our way.

She reaches up and pulls him down to her. They kiss.

143. INT. THE BEERGARDEN -- DUSK

David and Regina kiss. They separate and reveal Howey sprawled
across the table, asleep. David is still in the wheelbarrow.
REGINA'S LITTLE SISTER half lies across her lap, exhausted and
asleep. REGINA'S SECOND ELDEST BROTHER is sprawled across David's
lap in the wheelbarrow. The ELDEST BROTHER lies asleep on a bench
seat under a nearby table. David and Regina grin stupidly at each
other. Regina speaks with a metronomic nodding of her head.

REGINA

I ne-ver knew-Melleney had such-a
nice-little-brother.

Some time passes. Regina frowns, perplexed.

REGINA

Did you say something?

David looks around drunkenly, wondering.

DAVID

One of us did.

They burst out laughing. Suddenly a man's hand grasps Regina's wrist, pulling it out from under her chin.

REG

What's this?!!

Howey yelps in fright and falls off his chair. The Eldest Boy under the table sits up and bumps his head.

DAVID (cheerily)

Oh, hello, Mr. Smith!

Her father picks up her glass and smells it.

REG

What's this?!!

REGINA (slurring)

S'lemonade.

He slams the glass down.

REG

Laced with gin!

He shoves Howey as he is finding his feet.

REG

Which one of you laced my daughter's drink?!

DAVID/HOWEY

He did!

Howey falls backward over a bench. REG SMITH picks up the child on Regina's lap.

REG

Help your brothers!

He kicks the bench on which his Eldest Boy lies. David ejects the Second Eldest on his lap and Regina takes the boy by the hand. Howey gets to his feet.

REG

If I catch you two near my daughter
again it'll be curtains! Understand?!

The family marches to the door. Howey stumbles out of the way.

REGINA

Bye.

DAVID/HOWEY

Bye.

HOWEY

Sorry, Mr. Smith.

Reg turns at the door.

REG

You will be if you're here when I
get back!

He flings the bar door open, but the spring on the door brings it
quickly back. He turns and walks straight into the door edge.

REG

Gaaaaargghh!!!

HOWEY

Aaaaahhhh!!!

David cringes. Reg staggers, clutching his nose and almost
dropping his crying child. Reg looks round at them slowly. David
and Howey fear the worse. Regina, however, quickly reopens the
door and guides Reg through. The family exits. David and Howey
are despondent in the wake of such a bawling out. Eventually...

HOWEY

Time for bed.

DAVID

Thought I was gettin' somewhere then.

HOWEY

Yeah. Covered your groundwork I reckon.

David is unable to extricate himself from the wheelbarrow. He holds out his hand. Howey crosses to lend him assistance.

DAVID

Yeah. Did the groundwork. Got nipped in the bud.

HOWEY (straining)

Yep. Nipped in the bud.

His hand slips suddenly and he flies across the room. David and the wheelbarrow fall over as Howey crashes backward. He has fallen over another bench, and ends up under a table.

HOWEY (shocked)

I slipped.

The two see the funny side and burst out laughing. Their laughter escalates. Close on David's straining face as he laughs.

144. EXT. WELLINGTON PUB -- DUSK

Close on Joe's face, straining. He gives up on the lift suddenly and falls forward. He looks up at the men on the veranda. They are silhouettes against the hotel windows. Hector Nugent can be identified by his height and hat size. Joe crawls out from beneath his horse.

HECTOR

Givin' up, mate?

JOE

Aye, m'last performance.

The pint glass of beer on the table is illuminated by a shaft of light from the hotel window. Among the shadowy figures of the men it shines out, golden amber. Joe reaches for the glass. As he is about to take it, it is snatched away.

HECTOR

Aghh! No lift-ee, no drink-ee!

The men laugh. Joe's face darkens. Laughter tapers quickly and Hector realizes he's out on a limb. He offers the beer.

HECTOR

Only jokin', Joe.

Joe makes no move to take it.

MAN 2

Look out, he's turnin' mean.

JOE

Yes. He's turnin' mean. Look out.

He looks at the men.

JOE

Cat got your tongues? Or you just
afraid? Don't be afraid...Don't
be afraid.

Haynes comes forward, watching carefully. Joe cries out in anguish. He breaks the hitch rail with a two fisted blow. He slumps. When he looks up, he is weeping.

JOE

What is it? What is old Joe? What am I?
I could have been something...
I could have... but when you're so
strong...people...people...

He weeps.

Haynes comes to a decision, and walks along the veranda to the beergarden door. He looks at Joe and pushes the door open.

145. EXT. MRS. PARKER'S HOUSE -- EARLY EVENING

Nicky places her hand on the screen door. She pulls it open and it squeaks on rusty hinges.

MRS. PARKER (O.S.)

That you, Nicky?

NICKY

Yes, Mrs. Parker.

She turns to Melleney and they kiss. She begins to go inside, but unable to part without a longer kiss she lets the door fall back, then reluctantly watches him go.

146. EXT. WELLINGTON PUB -- EARLY EVENING.

Sgt. Haynes sits on the chair on the now deserted veranda. Only the lower half of his body is in moonlight. Watching the alleyway opposite, he lights a cigarette.

147. EXT. WELLINGTON TOWNSHIP -- EARLY EVENING

Melleney approaches the alleyway along the same path that Nicky used earlier. He looks to the eastern sky. There are storm clouds approaching. Although there are lightning flashes, they cannot as yet be heard. He enters the alleyway.

148. EXT. WELLINGTON PUB EARLY -- NIGHT

Melleney emerges onto the main street and notes the hitch rail is broken. As he approaches his horse, he notices Haynes.

MELLENEY

Old man drop his horse?

HAYNES

Something like that.

MELLENEY

They gone?

HAYNES

Twenty minutes back.

MELLENEY

Together?

Haynes nods. Melleney mounts. Haynes leans forward, his face out of shadow.

HAYNES

A word.

Melleney, about to move on, pauses his horse. Haynes doesn't continue. Melleney's mood darkens.

HAYNES

She's underage.

Melleney suddenly pulls his horse round, all but mounting the veranda so that the animal traps Haynes in his chair.

MELLENEY

Uniform's nothing to me.

Caught between duty and personal survival, Haynes softens.

HAYNES

I'd hate to see her hurt.

He waits for comment. None comes.

HAYNES

Just don't know how much of you is your mother, or your father.

Eventually...

MELLENEY

You waste your time.

He pulls his horse away, walking it out.

MELLENEY

They're not black and white either.

He moves off, Haynes relieved.

149. EXT. THE ROAD FROM TOWN -- NIGHT

Melleney dozes in the saddle, the storm closer now. The horse approaches Jacob's Fork. Correctly, it takes the lower road but wanders to the roadside and stops. Melleney dozes a further moment, then jerks awake. He dismounts, and decides to urinate.

MELLENEY

S'gonna rain.

The sound of peeing.

MELLENEY

Told you.

There are a series of lightning flashes and thunder claps. He looks toward the upper road. During a brief flash Joe's roan mare is suddenly seen. Melleney freezes. The sound of peeing stops. He

watches. Another longer flash of lightning reveals the horse once more. Melleney tethers his horse and moves up the slope. Halfway up he hears a groan from nearby underbrush. He moves across the slope.

150. EXT. BUSHLAND -- NIGHT

Melleney pushes aside a bush and halts. Joe is stretched out before him. A flash of lightning reveals that his eyes are open and looking skyward. Melleney approaches and stands over him. It starts to rain. Joe makes no move to shield himself.

JOE

Horse slipped...neck's broke.

Melleney bends down, affording him a little shelter.

MELLENEY

Where's Dave?

JOE

D'nay know.

There is a pause. Melleney is deciding. Joe awaits the decision. Melleney stands and takes hold of a sapling, bending it.

JOE

What're y'doing?

MELLENEY

Making shelter.

JOE

Get the hell away from me.

Melleney stops.

JOE

You deaf? I said...Get away.

Melleney begins to leave. The rain increases in strength. Melleney turns. He can barely make out Joe's form through the deluge. Melleney leaves. The rain smacks mercilessly into Joe's face.

151. INT. McCALLISTER HOMESTEAD -- NIGHT

Anna spreads hessian bags on the floor near the hatrack. Melleney thumps up the back stairs and enters. He stands on the bags, while Anna helps him off with his coat. He looks round for a towel and she points to one across a chair. He crosses to it.

ANNA

Where's y' father and David?

MELLENEY

Not back yet?

ANNA

Been fighting?

MELLENEY

Just for beer money.

ANNA

Give us a look.

He moves away irritably. She tuts in disgust.

ANNA

Thought you were finished with all that. S'a fine example you're setting your brother.

MELLENEY

Any tucker?

ANNA

Rats bait and cold porridge.

She moves into the kitchen.

ANNA

Hungry?

MELLENEY

Don't bare any flesh.

As he sits he looks up to see his reflection in the window, the image appearing demonic. He is snapped from his thoughts by:

ANNA

Anything exciting?

MELLENEY

No...John Hawthorne should be more careful.

Anna comes to the door.

MELLENEY

Spotted him on the way in. When did he get back?

ANNA

Y' father see?

MELLENEY

Ever seen anything he didn't first? S'that bread?

ANNA

(nods)

He say anything?

MELLENEY

(shaking his head)

How long?

ANNA

Not long.

She returns to the kitchen.

ANNA (OS)

Maybe I should tell him.

Melleney cannot bring himself to answer. She enters and places a hot meal before him.

ANNA

He wouldn't understand friendship between a man and a woman.

MELLENEY

And John Hawthorne does?

ANNA

You think I'm not fair to John?

MELLENEY

Or us.

David can be heard coming up the back stairs.

152. INT. McCALLISTER HOMESTEAD -- NIGHT

David enters. Anna points to the hessian bags. David crosses to them and begins to get out of his wet clothes. Anna crosses to help. She sees his face.

ANNA

My God, David McCallister!
Have you still got your teeth?!

He nods.

ANNA

Show me.

She inspects his mouth roughly.

ANNA

You deserve a good thrashing!

David, his jacket half off, freezes. Despite herself, Anna finds his reaction amusing.

ANNA

Suppose you've had one already.

She helps him off with the jacket.

ANNA

Want me to stitch that eye?

DAVID

Looks worse than it is.

He stands before her as though still in trouble.

ANNA (impatiently)

Well, sit down. I'll fetch your supper.

DAVID

Not hungry.

Anna looks at him, surprised. David sits. Anna crosses to the window and looks out.

ANNA

Where's your father then?

DAVID

He not home?

ANNA

Supposed to be with you.

DAVID

Had a barney just out of town.
Went back in.

MELLENEY

Didn't see you.

DAVID

Cut through Delaney's.

ANNA

What was the barney about?

DAVID

He was just pickin'.

Anna sighs worriedly and looks up the hall.

ANNA

Suppose I better make up the sleepout.

Anna exits to the hallway. Melleney and David exchange a look that they quickly break. Melleney takes a wad of notes from his pocket and puts it on the table.

DAVID

What's that?

MELLENEY

Y'money. Plus the old man's four.

DAVID

Heard you lost.

MELLENEY

Took a dive.

Melleney eats on but senses David's reaction. He indicates their mother with a nod of his head.

MELLENEY

Don't leave it lie.

David stares despondently at the money. Melleney finishes his meal, stands and takes his plate to the kitchen. En route he pushes the wad into one of the pockets in David's coat. Melleney reappears at the doorway, tea mug in hand.

DAVID

Don't see I can keep it.

MELLENEY

Just paper. Dirtier hands than yours
have held it.

David stands. He looks humbly at his brother. Unable to express his confused feelings, he exits to the hall. Anna comes back to the kitchen to check on the bread in the oven. Melleney sits. He listens to the rain on the roof. His eyes drift to the ceiling.

153. EXT. McCALLISTER HOMESTEAD -- NIGHT

The rain beats on the roof.

154. EXT. JACOB'S FORK -- NIGHT.

The rain beats down on Joe.

155. INT. McCALLISTER HOMESTEAD -- NIGHT

David comes back up the hall carrying a blanket rolled in oilskins. Anna notices. He puts on his hat and coat.

ANNA

Where you going?

DAVID

I'll sleep out.

ANNA

Wait a minute.

MELLENEY
Going to the big tree?

David nods.

MELLENEY
Saw death adders last time.

David nods.

MELLENEY
Got matches?

David nods, uncomfortable under his brother's gaze. Anna enters wrapping half a loaf of just baked bread in a tea towel. She pushes it down his coat.

ANNA
That'll stick to your ribs. Come home
for breakfast, you.

David nods. He leans down and kisses her cheek. He exits.

156. EXT. McCALLISTER HOMESTEAD -- NIGHT

David comes down the stairs and crosses to his horse, which is tethered beneath the shoeing shed. Anna is at a window.

157. INT. McCALLISTER HOMESTEAD -- NIGHT

At a window Anna watches David.

ANNA
He's a funny one. Always loved the rain.

She begins to go back to the kitchen.

MELLENEY
Maybe he just doesn't want to be here.

Anna stops and looks at him.

MELLENEY
Maybe he's sick of the tension.

ANNA

I've always appreciated your staying for my protection. But did you ever consider that the tension now comes from having three big males under the one small roof? Your father's getting old. He'll live quieter now. But he can't rest without his pride. I'm in more danger with you here. I'm the one way he can hurt you.

MELLENEY

Then fix it. Leave.

ANNA

You fix it.

MELLENEY

That's my thanks.

She cups his chin.

ANNA

Freedom is thanks enough.

She looks into his eyes, considering something further.

ANNA

When you fought your father...he let you up...He let you win.

MELLENEY (incredulous)

I beat him.

Anna shakes her head. She exits up the hall.

MELLENEY

I beat him.

The sound of the rain builds to a roar.

158. EXT. BUSHLAND -- NIGHT

Raining heavily. David sits in the hollow of a huge, fallen tree. A fire flickers by him. He turns from the rain and looks at his leg stretched before him. By the fire's half light a DEATH ADDER

slips smoothly across his boot. David does not react and merely looks out at the rain once more.

159. EXT. JACOB'S FORK -- NIGHT

Joe lies still, the rain pounding him. He remembers...

160. EXT. ROAD. SCOTLAND -- DAY

A murky day. Joe is a tiny, dark figure on top of a hill, looking toward his childhood home, his uncle Michael's horse property.

161. INT. A DERELICT COTTAGE -- DAY

The tiny cottage in which Joe was raised. A door fills the frame, pushed open toward us. Joe stands, looking in. The room is derelict - holes in the thatched roof, etc. Joe is concerned and looks up toward the main house.

162. INT. THE MAIN HOUSE -- DAY

A door fills frame. There is a knock on it from the other side. Joe's uncle, MICHAEL, shuffles to the door and opens it. Joe fills the space. His uncle is now very old.

FLASHBACK:

163. JOE [2] takes a beating from his uncle, MICHAEL [2].

BACK TO:

MICHAEL

Yes?

Joe's aunt, LORNA, comes into the room behind her husband.

JOE

Ah...I'm Joseph.

They do not recognize him.

JOE

Joseph...y'nephew...I'm back.

They suddenly realize who he is.

MICHAEL

Joseph? Joseph, Lorna, Joseph has
come home.

LORNA (stunned, worried)

Oh.

Joe enters and kisses her cheek.

MICHAEL

God, but you've grown, lad. T'll be
you takin' t'switch t'me now.

Joe grins, not amused.

JOE

Where is everyone?

They look at him questioningly.

JOE

Susan, Patrick...

LORNA

Ohh! They're all married now.
Nearest lives ten mile away.

MICHAEL

Ten mile.

JOE

I see the little cottage is run down.
Mother's in here with you then?

Lorna's face drops. Michael frowns in confusion.

MICHAEL

Melanie's dead. Y'mother's been dead
nigh on seven year.

JOE

What?

Lorna comes forward, urging her husband's silence.

LORNA

Joseph.

JOE

Seven years?

LORNA

Joseph.

JOE

But...But the Christmas cards?

LORNA

I sent them.

He stares at her incredulously.

LORNA

Was your mother's dying wish. She wanted you should get on. That you should n'worry about her or feel guilt.

JOE

Why?

LORNA

She never blamed you for leaving. If you'd known she was ill you'd have come back. It was her wish you were deceived this way, Joseph. I should have written, but...it was her last wish...and...easier.

JOE

What'd she die of?

LORNA

Pneumonia.

Joe turns slowly to his uncle. Suddenly he leaps at him, strangling him.

JOE

You bastard!! You miserable stinking bastard!!

LORNA

No! No!

JOE

You left her in that pig sty!

LORNA

No, God, no! He's just an old man!
He's just an old man! Don't kill
him Joseph, please!

The strangling continues. (The strangling should be identifiable with attempting to drown Melleney.)

LORNA

Please, Joseph! He's all I have!
All I have! Please, don't!

He releases Michael. The old man falls to the floor, choking, gasping. Lorna collapses onto him, sobbing and hugging his chest protectively. Joe stands over them, weeping silently.

164. EXT. McCALLISTER HOMESTEAD -- DAWN

The sun breaks the horizon. Camera investigates the homestead. Droplets of rain hang from rusted guttering. Horses graze. Water in the tanks is brimful still. Hens scratch in the dirt, etc.

165. INT. McCALLISTER HOMESTEAD -- DAWN

Sitting room: The clock ticks loudly on the shelf.

Master bedroom: The double bed is made up, untouched. Anna in the sleepout adjoining, pins up her hair. She enters the bedroom, notes the empty bed, and walks through.

Anna's hand winds the clock.

The kitchen: A raw egg slaps onto a hot skillet and sizzles in the fat. Another follows.

Anna fuels the wood stove. She catches a glimpse of Melleney's naked form passing the kitchen door. He carries a towel.

An old tin kettle is filled with water and placed on a stove hotplate. The whistle is secured.

166. EXT. BUSHLAND -- EARLY MORNING

David leans over a rainwater puddle and scans his reflection. In the background is the hollow tree in which he spent the night. On the ground is the discarded bread given by his mother, as well as scattered notes of the money roll given him by Melleney. David breaks the water and splashes his face.

167. EXT. McCALLISTER HOMESTEAD -- EARLY MORNING

Water splashes into Melleney's face. He stands beneath a pull-chain bucket next to the water tank. Anna appears at the back door, a plate of eggs and bread in her hand.

ANNA

It's on the table.

MELLENEY

Look.

He indicates his father's mare standing by the workyard. They stare at the horse. The sound of the kettle whistle rises and continues. It goes unheeded.

168. INT. McCALLISTER HOMESTEAD -- MORNING

Melleney comes down the hall, dressed, a towel in his hand, drying his hair. He throws the towel over his chair and digs into breakfast. The sound of horse hooves. David comes up the back stairs, nods, and sits down. Anna places a meal before him.

DAVID

Old man go for a tumble?

Anna and Melleney exchange a look.

ANNA

Why?

DAVID (nodding toward the horse)
Mud on its flanks.

Anna crosses to the door and looks out at the horse.

MELLENEY

He's not home.

David hesitates, about to put food in his mouth. He looks at his brother, but Melleney continues eating. Eventually he looks up.

MELLENEY

Eat up. We'll check the road.

169. EXT. JACOB'S FORK -- MORNING

On horseback, Melleney and David approach the fork, Melleney ahead of his brother. As they pass the fork, David checks Melleney. Melleney however looks straight ahead. The bushland at Jacob's Fork seems to stare down at them.

170. EXT. WELLINGTON TOWNSHIP, POLICE STATION -- MORNING

Sgt. Haynes waters plants on the front porch.

MELLENEY (OS)

'Day, Bill.

Haynes' reaction is cool.

MELLENEY

Seen the old man?

HAYNES

This morning?

MELLENEY

Didn't come home last night.

HAYNES (to David)

But he was with you.

DAVID

Had a barney. Left him at Delaney's.
Came back in.

Haynes is thoughtful.

MELLENEY

His horse came home. Looks like it
took a fall.

HAYNES

I'll organize some lads, meet you
at the pub.

171. EXT. McCALLISTER HOMESTEAD -- DUSK

Anna stands in the back doorway. RIDERS make their way through
the sidegate and into the back yard. Melleney and David dismount.

HAYNES

Shown up, missus?

Anna shakes her head.

HAYNES

Ah...I dunno. Searched high and low.
Wouldn't be in the bush, would he?
Having a sulk?

ANNA

Not his way.

HAYNES

Rain's washed everything clean.

He indicates BILLY, his aboriginal tracker.

HAYNES

Even Billy's stumped.

He looks skyward.

HAYNES

More on the way.

ANNA

I'll fix you tea.

HAYNES

No. Don't want to get caught.

He catches Melleney's eye.

HAYNES

See you boys in town, first light.
G'night, missus.

Anna nods. They ride out.

172. EXT. JACOB'S FORK -- DAY

Old Cockatoo stands at the base of a tree on the high road.

Hector Nugent drives his wagon. His dog, TOBY, is on the tray behind. Hector eats a carrot. He offers some to Toby.

HECTOR

Go on, have some. Go on.

Toby is not interested. They round a bend in the road. Toby suddenly sees something. Old Cockatoo hobbles off the roadside and down the embankment. Toby springs from the wagon.

HECTOR

Toby! Toby! Come back here! Come back here! Toby!

Toby disappears down the bank. When it seems he should be upon Old Cockatoo, the bird flies up and perches in a tree. Hector arrives and halts his horse. He whistles his dog.

HECTOR

Toby!

He whistles again. He gives up, applies the brake, and goes after the dog. Toby is rushing about in the underbrush, barking.

HECTOR

Stupid bloody dog. Toby! C'mon, stupid. Look he's up in the tree now, stupid dog. Toby!

Toby's barking and movements cease abruptly.

HECTOR

Toby...Toby?

He scans the shrubbery. It is dead still.

173. EXT. JACOB'S FORK -- DAY

Hector pushes through a bush and stops in shock. Toby sniffs round Joe's left leg. A small portion of the flesh of his leg is

visible and is flyblown, infested with maggots. Hector produces a handkerchief and holds it over his nose.

174. INT. McCALLISTER HOMESTEAD -- DAY

Anna and David sit at the dining table. Tea and biscuits are laid out, but neither partake. Through the back doorway Melleney can be seen approaching on horseback. He ties off, climbs the stairs and halts.

MELLENEY

Tea and biscuits?

ANNA

Just wanted something to do.

Melleney drops his hat on the back of a chair and sits opposite his mother. Melleney pours himself a cup of tea and dunks a biscuit. David watches disapprovingly.

MELLENEY

How you feel?

ANNA

Bit of a shock. Not so much he's dead, just that he could die.

MELLENEY

Well...it's for the best.

Anna nods, deeply tired. David frowns, confused.

DAVID

What do you mean?

Melleney looks to his mother to answer, but sees she will not.

MELLENEY

Best he's gone. Mum can marry John now. You and I can do as we please. Don't have to be ashamed now.

DAVID

I was never ashamed.

Melleney dismisses him with a look.

DAVID

Wasn't. Was proud of my father.

MELLENEY

Proud of what? A drunk and a bully?

DAVID

You shouldn't speak about him like that.

He looks at Anna.

DAVID

Well, he shouldn't. You shouldn't let him. Was your husband.

ANNA

My husband's dead.

DAVID

How can you say that? He was my father. What's wrong with you?

MELLENEY

What's wrong with you?! Making a silk purse out of a sow's ear. Grow up!

DAVID

Watch your mouth!

MELLENEY

Watch yours! It your manure, you eat it. Your father...you wet your pants for fear if he looked sideways at you. Now you're defending him!

ANNA

Look, it doesn't matter now what...

DAVID

I wasn't so frightened. You never saw the way he talked to me when we were alone. He spoke to me like a friend.

MELLENEY

Course he did! Who else'd listen?!

ANNA

Enough of this! This isn't...

DAVID

If I hadn't been his friend, what would he have done to you two? Remember when you came back? It was me you sent to be friends with him. I did it to save your hides!

MELLENEY

Yes, I remember! I was fighting a man twice my size! Where were you?! Where was my brother then?!

ANNA

Stop it!

DAVID

Who took the whip off him? Me! He would've cut you in two with that!

MELLENEY

And where were you the rest of the fight?! Where were you when he was drowning me in the trough?! Where?!

DAVID

She stopped me!

MELLENEY

And you let her!!... Don't talk to me about respect for the dead 'cause I've got no respect for you! I bore the brunt! Me! I fought him alone all these years...

DAVID

Nobody ever asked you to!

MELLENEY

I fought him alone!!...and now you give me shit about respect for him!!

DAVID (overlapping)

Well you better just get some respect, Melleneey! Because I've had enough...!

MELLENEY (overlapping)
 You wouldn't know what real respect
 was! You don't have the brains to
 know what...

ANNA (overlapping)
 Stop it! Stop it! The pair of you
 just stop! Don't do this now! Don't!...

Melleney and David attack each other. They struggle to the back door and tumble down the stairs.

175. EXT. McCALLISTER HOMESTEAD -- DAY

Melleney and David fall down the stairs, breaking the handrail. As they get to their feet, Anna appears at the back doorway.

ANNA
 Stop it! Melleney, stop it!

They fight on. During the fight David breaks a section of the handrail across Melleney's knees. The fight culminates when David, wielding bolt cutters is hit from behind. As the dust settles, Anna stands with a piece of the railing in her hand. David looks up at her incredulously. Anna drops the wood.

ANNA (Close to tears)
 Just stop. Please.

Trembling with resentment and frustration, David looks at Melleney. He leaps to his feet and charges. Melleney diverts him and David crashes to the ground. Anna turns from them, weeping. Melleney looks at her sympathetically. He walks to the stairs.

DAVID
 You fight! Fight me! You fight me!

Melleney hesitates. He continues up the stairs. David stands and looks at his mother. He walks out onto the plains.

DISSOLVE TO: Continuation of Sc page .

Haynes looks at Joe, then puts his hand on the beergarden door and pushes it open. (As already seen.) David and Howey are laughing together, getting up and righting the wheelbarrow.

HAYNES

Dave.

David and Howey stop laughing.

DAVID

Oh, we were just...See I was stuck
and he...

HAYNES

Better take your father home, mate.

DAVID

Oh...Yeah, righto.

176. EXT. THE ROAD FROM TOWN -- NIGHT

Joe and David ride. Eventually...

JOE

Think I'm stupid?

DAVID

What?

JOE

Think I don't know?

He is silent for some time.

JOE

This morning. Think I didn't see...
I saw, I saw. Don't miss much. Not old
Joe. How long's he been seeing her?

DAVID

Who?

JOE

Oh...D'nay come the fool with me, laddie.
Answer y'father like a good boy.

DAVID

Don't know what you mean.

Joe grabs David's shirt, pulling him closer.

JOE

You too, Davey? John Hawthorne ring a bell?

DAVID

He's in England...He's a friend.

Joe backhands him.

JOE

A friend is it that hides behind trees.
Why do you lie to me, boy?!

DAVID

I'm not I swear!

Joe backhands him again, knocking him from the saddle.

JOE

Deceit! You against me too?! You too?!

DAVID

You're wrong! I'm not against you!
He's a friend is all!

JOE

A friend doesn't hide in the bush.
A friend doesn't turn son agin
father! D'you know what you've done?
D'you know what you've done to me?!
She was all that was left. Now...

His voice trails off. A powerful thought has occurred to him. He
digs in his heels, pushing his horse to a gallop.

DAVID

No!

David mounts and gives chase.

177. EXT. THE ROAD FROM TOWN -- NIGHT

191.

David, on the bigger horse, quickly catches his father.

DAVID

Dad!

Joe backhands him and he falls behind once more. As David draws near again a stockwhip appears in Joe's hand. As they continue, Joe keeps his son at bay with repeated strikes of the whip. They approach Jacob's Fork. David accelerates to catch his father on the side away from the whip. This has the dual effect of forcing Joe to stay on the high road, as well as making him turn in the saddle to direct the whip at David. He therefore falls victim to his own weapon: the whip becomes entangled in his horse's legs. The horse falls heavily and he strikes the roadside, tumbling down the embankment. David reins up and rushes down the bank.

178. EXT. JACOB'S FORK -- NIGHT

David locates his father, lying as seen earlier. However his head is positioned at an awkward angle to his body. As David kneels over him a fist-sized lump is protruding from within Joe's neck.

JOE (gasping)
Move...move m'head.

David lifts his head and repositions it.

JOE
There...There.

The pain subsides to a degree.

JOE
Can't...move...can't move m'self...Davey!

DAVID
Y'neck's broke.

Joe absorbs the information.

JOE
Well...that's that then.

DAVID
I'll go for help.

He stands and moves away.

JOE
Davey.

David halts and looks back.

JOE

Shake m'hand once, before y'leave.

David comes back and stands over him

JOE

Help me with it.

David kneels and picks up the lifeless hand. He folds the fingers round his own. Joe looks at the sky. It is choked with stars.

DAVID (weeping)

You know...You know I won't come back.

JOE

Have n'seen the stars for so long.
Huh...forgot to look.

David sits back.

JOE

I d'n'take the road, Davey...It just went
this way.

DAVID

The road?

JOE

I loved her more than life...more than
m'dreams...gave up myself for her...
don't ever love so hard, Davey, always
hold to y'dreams...y'dreams.

David weeps fully.

Do n'cry, laddie. You're a good boy,
Go along. Go along now.

David places his father's hand by his side and stands.

179. EXT. JACOB'S FORK -- NIGHT

On the upper road David crosses to the old mare. He picks up his father's whip and coils it. He hooks it onto a snare just behind the saddle and 'dead reins' the old horse before crossing to his own. As he rides off, the old mare stares after him.

FADE OUT.

180. EXT. JACOB'S FORK -- NIGHT

FADE IN.

Rain falls heavily toward us. Tilt down to Joe's face, the rain hitting it mercilessly. He remembers...

Rain falls toward us...

CROSSFADE TO:

181. EXT. A HOTEL/COPENHAGEN -- NIGHT

The rain turns to snow. Tilt down to the hotel and move up to a window. Inside, Anna is on the bed, propped up with pillows.

182. INT. A HOTEL ROOM -- NIGHT

Anna is 7 months pregnant. She reads a Danish newspaper. The door opens, Joe enters, wearing a robe.

JOE

They know how to live these Danes.
Could have stayed in that...

ANNA

Sauna.

JOE

Sauna. Could have stayed there all night.

He caresses her belly. They both feel the baby kick.

JOE

It kicks hard.

ANNA (chuckling)

It's not an it.

JOE

It's not an it?

ANNA

I mean it's a baby boy or girl.

JOE
Which do you think?

ANNA
Girl.

JOE
A girl? A girl.

ANNA
It's possible you know.

JOE
What'll we call it if he's a girl?

ANNA
I thought...Melanie would be nice.

He stiffens, sad, then grateful.

JOE
Thanks.

They kiss tenderly.

BACK TO:

Joe lies in the rain.

BACK TO:

Joe gets off the bed. He begins to change from the robe into his street clothes. Anna draws the newspaper across the bed.

ANNA
Joe.

He looks at her.

ANNA
That man last night. He may die.

SUBLIM : Joe lands a final blow to Gunther Schilt.

[As seen Sc page]

Joe is bemused. She shows him the newspaper. The headline reads: "GUNTHER SCHILT - KRITISK!". He frowns.

ANNA

It means 'critical'.

JOE

He'll survive.

Disregarding he gives back the paper and continues dressing.

ANNA

Joe.

He continues dressing, ignoring her. She crosses to him.

ANNA

Joe. It's no life. What's wrong?
I watched you. You could have
beaten him easily.

He looks away, not wanting to discuss it.

ANNA

Is it to prove you're so much
better? Joe?

JOE

I can be world champion. We can go to
America. I can beat John L. Sullivan.
I know it. Proved it last night.

ANNA

And what if that man dies?

JOE

(indicating their room)

Look at this. This can be ours all the
time. The Americans, they pay big money
for their fighters. Do you no see? You'll
never be poor. Clothes, you can have clothes
as good as anyone. The child could be
educated, good schools, good tutors...

She rushes to him and embraces him.

ANNA (Weeping)

You're a good man. You're a good man.

He is uneasy and pushes her gently away.

JOE

No...I want it for me too. Anna,
I can be someone.

ANNA

You are. Don't you see? If you were
the greatest pugilist of all you could
be no more loved than you are now.
This...is an illusion.

JOE

I don't know anything else.

ANNA

Of course you do. You're a horse trainer,
a good one. We're still young. We have
enough money. We can go somewhere, buy
a small place, start a good life.

He shakes his head, torn. She places his hand on her belly.

ANNA

You'll have children round you. You'll have
love. You will be the greatest champion a
man can be, and it will go on until your
last breath. Do this for us. I will never
leave your side...never, never leave you.

183. EXT. JACOB'S FORK -- NIGHT

Joe is very still. The rain has stopped. The moon is out. His shallow breath steams the air. Old Cockatoo sits on the branch of a tree above him. Behind Old Cockatoo is the moon, and a clear sky. Joe breathes his last breath. Aside from the lack of vapor from his mouth, there is no change to his expression.

SLOW MOTION: Old Cockatoo flies down, blocking out vision.

FX: Joe reaches up and hugs a giant, soft, white feathered body. The wings beat, and he is drawn upward into the sky.

FADE OUT:

184. INT. McCALLISTER HOMESTEAD -- NIGHT

FADE IN. The living room. The clock ticks.

MASTER BEDROOM.

Anna is awake in the double bed.

SECOND BEDROOM

Melleney is also awake.

185. EXT. BY A BILLABONG -- NIGHT

David lies on the bank of a still and silent billabong.

186. THE HORIZON -- FIRST LIGHT

The Sun is just below the horizon.

187. McCALLISTER HOMESTEAD - FIRST LIGHT

The back door is ajar.

188. EXT. McCALLISTER HOMESTEAD -- FIRST LIGHT

Melleney opens the sidegate. He leads his horse through and quietly shuts the gate. He has a carpet bag strapped behind his saddle. He glances up at the house, ensuring he is unobserved.

189. EXT. McCALLISTER HOMESTEAD, ROADWAY -- DAWN

Melleney rides slowly along the road, the homestead in the background. He senses he is being watched. He halts his horse and turns in the saddle. Anna stands by the sleepout window, watching him. Melleney holds up his hand in a gesture of apology and farewell. For a moment Anna does not respond, but then holds up her hand, forgiving him. Melleney continues on.

190. EXT. McCALLISTER HOMESTEAD EARLY MORNING

Anna comes through the back door, dressed well. She carries a piece of paper. She puts her hand on the door handle and begins to pull it to, but hesitates, her eyes sad.

191. INT. McCALLISTER HOMESTEAD EARLY MORNING

QUICK CUTS TO: Master bedroom, Second bedroom, The kitchen, Living room, The clock on the shelf - It has not been wound. It ticks, but suddenly stops. On Anna: The door swings shut before her.

Back to.

Anna's hand pins the piece of paper to the door. As the sounds of her leaving by wagon are heard, camera holds on the message.

ANNA (V.O.)

Davey, You've broken us my love. Not always, but just now. The house, land and stock are yours to keep and work. You're to give your brother £50 when he wishes it and if you can, or allow him to work half the property and receive such profit. You've been given a good start, better than most, only a fool or cripple would not have the strength. You know where I'll be. Don't be a stranger.

192. EXT. McCALLISTER HOMESTEAD -- DAY

David takes down the note, panic welling inside him.

DAVID

No.

He opens the door, and enters.

193. INT. McCALLISTER HOMESTEAD -- DAY

David looks desperately round, his anxiety growing. The house is still and dark. He rushes down the hall, and checks the bedrooms. He re-enters the living room.

DAVID

No...No!!

He tears his father's championship belt from the wall. Using it like a club, he begins wrecking the house, smashing furniture, overturning chairs, etc.

DAVID

No!! No!! No!! No!!

Reminiscent of his father's fury as in Sc p .

194. EXT. MRS. PARKER'S HOUSE -- MORNING

Sgt. Haynes walks briskly by. He pauses and looks thoughtfully toward the house. He comes to a decision and enters the yard.

195. EXT. HAWTHORNE HOMESTEAD -- MORNING

Anna's wagon approaches. She halts the horse, and looks into the distance. John's homestead is some way off. Anna's expression is one of joyful anticipation. She hits up the horse.

196. INT. NICKY'S ROOM/MRS. PARKER'S HOUSE -- DAY

Her breath trembling with emotion, Nicky quickly throws belongings into a small bag. She closes it, picks up a shoulder bag and rushes out the door.

197. INT. HALL/LIVING ROOM/MRS. PARKER'S HOUSE -- DAY

Nicky comes down the hall, carrying the suitcase and shoulder bag. She stops opposite the living room. Mrs. Parker, in her wheelchair, looks round. Nicky is torn.

MRS. PARKER

Go...Hurry.

Nicky sobs, rushes to Mrs. Parker, embraces her, and rushes out.

198. EXT. WELLINGTON TRAIN STATION -- MORNING

Melleney sits on a bench, the carpet bag beside him. To his annoyance he sees Sgt. Haynes approaching.

HAYNES

Frosty said you just sold him your horse.

Melleney nods, unfriendly.

HAYNES

Well...just came to say goodbye.

Haynes offers his hand. Reluctantly, Melleney takes it.

HAYNES

Where you headed?

MELLENEY

Sydney.

HAYNES

Sydney?! What will you do there?!

MELLENEY

Appreciate you coming by, Bill.

The forced smile fades from Haynes' lips. He strolls to the platform edge.

HAYNES

Some bloke...some Duke or other in Europe...got himself knocked off. Now there's talk of war. Newspaper's full of it. Talk of England having a go too. Funny world, hey? People killing each other. Thousands more'll die now, just 'cause that one joker was killed.

Haynes pauses, watching Melleney. Melleney looks back, curious.

HAYNES

That's not right. What's done is done. More pain won't fix it.

He pauses, questions in his eyes.

HAYNES

People should just go on. Life's hard enough.

MELLENEY

You're a good man, Bill...But that's just not the way people are.

Haynes grins weakly, conceding. He walks away.

199. EXT. OUTSKIRTS WELLINGTON TOWNSHIP -- MORNING

Nicky runs down a dirt road, her expression one of anguish.

SFX: a train approaching.

Nicky hurries, desperate. In her haste, she trips. She sobs, having badly skinned her knee, but forces herself on.

200. EXT. HAWTHORNE HOMESTEAD -- MORNING

John halts Anna's horse. He helps her down from the wagon.

SFX: The call of the Cockatoo.

Old Cockatoo is perched in a nearby tree.

Anna and John look toward Old Cockatoo.

SFX: A distant train whistle.

Anna looks across the valley toward the sound, as John encircles her with his arms. She rests her head back against him.

SFX: The call of the cockatoo.

Old Cockatoo flies into their line of vision, and down the valley.

ANNA

Fly little angel.

JOHN

You can see Heaven in anything if you try. Doesn't mean it's there.

Eventually...

ANNA

I know.

201. EXT. McCALLISTER HOMESTEAD -- MORNING

David sits on the back stairs, looking out on the plains.

SFX: The call of the cockatoo.

David looks up.

Old Cockatoo flies by.

202. ECU: The beat of Old Cockatoo's wings.

203. The beat of the train wheels.

204. Nicky's legs running, the sound of her panting. All sounds merging. As she runs she drops her suitcase, then her bag.

205. EXT. WELLINGTON TRAIN STATION -- DAY

Train whistle screams. It is closing fast. Melleney gets to his feet, picks up his bag, and moves to the platform edge. Something catches his eye on the far side of the lines. He looks down. Nicky runs through long grass and stops, watching him. Melleney looks down at her, the sound of the approaching train builds. His lips part with a surge of emotion.

Intercutting builds - Melleney, Nicky, the beat of Old Cockatoo's wings, the beat of the train wheels, the train closing. Intercuts reach a climax. Train whistle screams.

EXT. JOHN HAWTHORNE'S HOUSE, PORCH -- DAY

John opens his front door and steps aside. Anna, passing him, pauses and grins at him. She enters the house. Content, John follows her in and closes the door.

FADE OUT.

ROLL CREDITS.