



"A boat came skimming around the bend of the river and travelled downstream."

Thus begins a breathtaking journey to a lost land, whereby we first meet
the Allendale, Pendlebury and Buxton families.

Our story discusses the "genesis" theories of early humans, juxtaposed with
the Neolithic brothers who originally settled at Segler's Landing.

This is the first in the "M'Coure" series.

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ACT I

Background August 1936, Segler's Landing, Mid-Afternoon

Margaret and Holly's brother Roger Allendale has been taken up by the police for the murder of their father, William Allendale. Their cousin Helene Rylance has immediately flown back from Italy.

Roger Allendale is innocent of these murder charges; there has been some horrible mistake.

Margaret is currently dealing with the Lord Chancellor (Sir Frank Darcy) in an effort to free her brother.

I, Scene i: 1936, Segler's Landing (The House)

The front garden and edifice of Segler's Landing is very attractive, but not gushing wealth. It speaks of modest affluence and a very picturesque, cottage-style setting.

Helene Rylance arrives in her chauffeur-driven estate car. The chauffeur opens the passenger door for this wealthy young woman. She is very beautiful; obviously a very capable young woman, stylishly dressed. But she looks towards the house with trepidation and concern. This is not a visit of pleasure.

There is a bustle of arrival. The chauffeur (Pymble) must follow Helene along the garden path, bearing a heavy basket of goodies consisting of honey, pots of cream and butter, and scones in a tea-towel. Helene walks very briskly, almost running to the front door. The visitor and her driver are admitted by a teary housemaid.

Inside, Helene is followed by the faithful chauffeur, who hands the basket to the housemaid. Helene turns to Pymble as she removes her gloves.

Helene *severe* Come back for me in an hour, will you please Pymble.

The stately Pymble bows solemnly.

Holly, on seeing Helene, bursts into wild sobs. There is much hugging and tears between the cousins.

Holly *weeping but emphatic* Roger is innocent. It's all so beastly. He's been carted off to prison. There are no elegant niceties in prison, you know ... no lace curtains, nor afternoon teas, nor golf ... Oh, Helene; for such a thing to happen to one's brother! It's like a vicious nightmare.

Helene *comforting* Yes, dear I know. I've just spoken to Margaret. She's seeking help from the Lord Chancellor.

Holly *inconsolable* It's Hell!

Helene *somewhat ironic* And to have lost one's father in such a dreadful way ... but p'haps better not dwell on that ...

Holly *firing up at all the injustice* Why have you not come sooner?

Helene I've been in Rome. Jeffrey Munroe's art collection. I came back as soon as Margaret contacted me, to tell me that Uncle was deceased. I've been so worried about you, and of course Margaret and Roger. And I mean obviously, I had no inkling that --

Holly *inconsequential* I think that the last time I saw you would have been at Mother's funeral.

Helene That ... that would be right. You said that --

Holly *becomes more animated* That things would be unutterably worse now that Mother's "steadying influence" was gone. And I was right!

You know what Father was like: an irascible, pig-headed old Tartar. He and Roger argued about anything and everything. Mother was able to control them, at least. But once she'd left us, all Hell broke loose.

Helene Oh, my dear, dear girl.

Holly *takes a hurried breath* The shouting matches between those two! And of course, Roger couldn't ever **hit** Dad because he was so much the bigger man. He would have killed Father if they'd ever come to blows.

Realizing what she has said, Holly claps her hand over her mouth in shock.

Holly *aghast at her own words* I didn't –

Helene *rushes into soothing speech* No, no. I know exactly what you mean. We all know that Roger simply couldn't have done this terrible thing. Not in a million years. ... I'll get you a cup of tea, shall I?

There is tea-pouring and cakes, the Thames flowing gracefully by, Holly weeping into a shred of handkerchief: all while Helene makes cooing sounds. Holly ignores her cup of tea, whereas Helene continues to sip hers throughout the following interchange.

Helene *carefully* Holly, on top of everything else, your sister mentioned that you were suffering from nightmares, or bad dreams or some such thing.

Holly *bitterly* She **would** say that.

Helene Do you think that a tonic from the Chemist might help? Some sort of apothecary's formula to put you to rights?

Holly *firmly* Nothing like that could do any good.

Helene *gently* Margaret and Roger need you to be strong for them. We must all try not to add to your sister's concerns just now.

It may be that you require the help of a professional ... If there's someone you'd like to talk to ... She said that you're hearing voices ...

Holly *in a pet* And thinks I'm cracking up. Yes, well, no doubt she's regaled you with a fine old tale of my supposed mental breakdown. It would never occur to her that all she has to do is to come down here any night and see for herself.

Helene See what?

Holly *determined* The voices are **real**, Helene! The people are real, the boat is real. Margaret absolutely refuses to --

Holly, who has up to now ignored her cup of tea, now jumps to her feet, grabbing the cup and saucer. She gulps down the tea, turning towards the dainty food items, snatching some item which she eats aggressively.

Helene *prompting* Yes?

Holly *thickly, with food in her mouth* All she has to do is to simply stroll down here to the landing and watch out for it. But no! Far easier to condemn her little sister as a lunatic requiring instant despatch to the loony bin.

Helene She's very worried about you.

Holly *gestures broadly* And as I said, the remedy is in her own hands.

Helene looks out over the river, desperately trying to think of a way to resolve the impasse. At last, she offers a solution.

Helene Could not I be of assistance here? Perhaps if I could persuade her about this ... this "whatever it is" ...?

Holly *brightens* Will you? Will you speak to her? Convince her? Oh, that would be better than anything!

Helene Of course. Of course. But I'll need you to tell me more about it first. I'm still completely in the dark, you know.

Holly No. I can't tell. You'd not believe it.

Helene *laughs* That's going to make it jolly hard for me to bring your sister around, then, isn't it? Come on ... try me.

Music: silky and mystical, and sublime.

Holly *reluctant, then resolves to try* Oh ... Very well, then.

You must know that the cross words between Father and Roger were always unbearable. And when they were fighting (which was often), I used to come down here for solace. You know ... "the river became my friend", sort of thing. There was such peace here away from the stormy scenes up at the house.

Anyway, on that last evening there was a truly eerie something in

the air. A boat came skimming around the bend of the river and travelled downstream. As it came alongside me, I could make out seven people, all standing. They didn't overbalance ... quite strange.

Four women and three men, there were. And they wore really weird clothes, as if they were off to a fancy dress party ... or a historical re-enactment or some such thing.

They appeared to be focused determinedly on the way ahead, but then they all turned their heads to look at me. One of the women said something, and then they lost interest in me and looked forward again. Off they went downstream and I lost sight of them around the next bend.

Isn't that strange?

And do you know that later on, I realized that all this boat business must have happened at exactly the same time that Papa was attacked. Too eerie ...

Helene *thoughtful*
drawl

Ra-a-a-ather. What exactly did the woman say to make them lose interest in you?

Holly

Don't know. I didn't understand the lingo. It ... it sounded like German or –

Helene *surprised*

German!

Holly

Yes.

Helene

And that's all, just that boat with the seven balancing people?

Holly

Yes. A little boat decked out with bright lanterns and those seven people. Quite a party affair you'd think. And they were standing, which they shouldn't have been able to do. Surely the boat would topple over! But the point is that later on, I realized that the appearance of this boat for the first time must have **exactly** coincided with Father's death. Time wise, I mean.

Helene Gosh! That's simply amazing.

Holly Isn't it, though?

Helene *very thoughtful* Certainly. Hmmm ... I wish I'd seen it.

Holly *brightening* Oh but you can. It'll come again tonight.

Helene But how can you know that?

Holly Well, it comes every night, at roughly the same time after sunset.

Helene Every night?

Holly Yes! That's what I keep saying, over and over.

It came the first time when ... when Father ... and then every single night afterwards, exactly the same. The same people, the same woman's voice saying the same unintelligible words.

Helene Extraordinary, to say the least.

Holly Exactly. And of course, no-one will believe me.

I've done my best to "Halloo" them ... wanting to wave, and so forth. But for some reason, I just sit and watch them go by. Rooted to the spot, as it were.

Helene Hmmmmm ...

Helene, about to sip the last of her tea, stops the cup inches from her lips, and looks unseeing out over the water. Holly watches her intently.

Holly What do you think it all means?

Helene is suddenly determined and very positive. She plonks the cup back on the saucer and stands, turning to Holly, and grasping Holly's hands.

Helene We shall jolly well find out.

I'm staying here for the night, Margaret or no Margaret. When Pymble comes to fetch me, I shall send him away again. We'll just sit here together, as you've done all those other nights and wait for the boat.

Then I shall tell Margaret that you *aren't* hearing voices at all and that the whole thing is quite real. We'll discover what it is that this old woman says to her boating chums, and then we'll get the finest minds in the country to decipher, analyse and pontificate.

What a lot of long words! Anyway, this puzzle is as good as solved. Then ... Roger will be set free!

END OF SCENE

I, Scene iii: 1936, Segler's Landing, By The River Thames, Night.

Huddled in the dark, sitting on the bench, Holly and Helene wait, this time with blankets about their shoulders. The boat appears exactly as described. There is no music, until, as the boat disappears around the bend, an eerie tune played on a flute is heard as it wafts over the scene.

With eerie solemnity, a boat appears around the bend of the river and travels downstream at a brisk pace.

As it comes alongside the landing (where Holly and Helene sit motionless), seven people (four women and three men) can be seen standing steadily in the small boat. These people wear loose clothing, from the Roman times.

They appear to be focused determinedly on the way ahead but turn their heads to look at the girls. One of the women speaks a few ancient Briton words. This is Sirhana.

The folk in the boat, on the woman's words, lose interest in the girls and look forward again. Off they go downstream and around the next bend.

The strange, haunting flute-tune continues, then brightens slightly, then stops as Holly stops on the rocky steps.

Both young women shiver (as if freed from shackles) as the boat passes into the distance.

Holly turns to Helene, who is still looking at the place where she last saw the boat.

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Holly *slightly worried* It's not **exactly** the same. The woman sounded slightly different this time. But there, you saw it! You heard and saw the whole thing; so now perhaps my dear sister will finally have to believe me.

Helene *dreamily* The words weren't German, unfortunately, or I'd be able to translate.

How odd! She looked straight at us and then dismissed us with her words. A woman who is used to command, one would say. And not nearly as old as I thought she'd be ...

Holly *now eager* Come on! Let's confront Margaret. She'll have to leave off saying that I'm balmy now!

The eerie music brightens a little at this point, then stops as Holly stops. Holly begins to mount the rock steps, then realizes that Helene is still rooted to the spot, deep in reverie.

Holly *frowning* What is it?

Helene *off with the fairies* That voice ... the whole scene ... so like a vision. And we were unable to move ... What's the word for it? Starts with "trans-" ... Translucent? ... Transcendental? ...

Holly stands uncertain, hovering on the steps, her face indicating that she is seriously puzzled by her cousin's behaviour.

Holly What word for what?

Helene appears to be coming to grips with her thoughts.

Helene You first saw this boat at the time Uncle William was ... Then there's every reason to believe that the appearance of this magic boat could in some way be connected with your father's murder ... Somehow, I believe that the people on board that little boat may be able to help us with this Roger business ...

Holly How can that be possible?

Helene It's the voice, and the words which we need to concentrate on. What on earth does that woman say? And which confounded

language is she speaking?

Holly *in consternation* But, how can there possibly be any connection?

Helene *ignoring Holly's question* Professor Wardell is probably our best bet. I shall telephone to him and ask him to meet us here tomorrow night. You must have heard of Benjamin Wardell? Father knows him very well. He'd just jump at a chance for something esoteric like this.

Holly *frowning* But --

Helene Roger needs a witness, or a supporter or some such thing. I'm convinced from what you've said and from what Roger said, that we're dealing with an unknown assailant who coshed your father and brother, and that he is somehow tied-up with this woman on the boat.

Benjamin Wardell might be able to translate her words. Or at least decipher them.

Helene marches up the steps to face her bewildered cousin with real purpose.

Helene *forceful* ***Eminence gris!*** That's what's needed!

END OF SCENE

I, Scene iv: 1936, Segler's Landing, By The River Thames, Next Night

The boat scene already witnessed is reprised here.

With eerie solemnity, a boat appears around the bend of the river and travels downstream at a brisk pace.

As it comes alongside the landing (where Holly and Helene sit motionless), seven people (four women and three men) can be seen standing steadily in the small boat. These people wear loose clothing, from the Roman times.

They appear to be focused determinedly on the way ahead but turn their heads to look at the girls. Sirhana speaks a few ancient Briton words.

The folk in the boat, on the woman's words, lose interest in the girls and look forward again.

Off they go downstream and around the next bend.

Viewed from behind, the camera picks out the silhouettes of Holly, Helene, Lannscombe (the cameraman), Buxton and Wardell as the boat skims past them, and then disappears out of sight. The 1930's camera whirrs away throughout.

Wardell and Buxton mutter something to each other that we cannot quite make out. It is important that there is no music, and that the lapping of the river can be heard occasionally over the whirring of the old camera under Lannscombe's operation.

Helene So what do you think? Can you fathom it?

Buxton Old Cornish, for mine.

Wardell *nodding* Yes, I'd say a very ancient Cornish dialect.

Holly And ... so what does she say? The dominant woman?

Wardell By the sound of it, the boatwoman may be saying: "No, it's not those girls we want. It's the other one." That's a pretty rough translation. But I'd like to hear her speak again. Lannscombe's film will no doubt give us a better understanding. What think you, Buxton?

Buxton Yes, that's what it sounded like. "Neither of these girls, but the other one." And that fits with that certain air of disappointment when they turn away from the landing. A peek at Lannscombe's film will tell us that. And I'm wondering if your sister, Miss Allendale, isn't the other woman they're looking for.

Holly *profoundly shocked* Margaret!?

Wardell Yes, it's possible. This nightly re-appearance of the boat may be a lure to bring her down here. But, as she's not having any of it, **that** might explain their frustrated disappointment.

Buxton *note of caution* The problem is that we don't really know what they want her for, if she's their object. It might not be all plain-sailing.

Holly She'll only come down here if we can persuade her that it will help Roger's case.

Helene Can't we gang-up on her, Holly, and literally drag her to this landing?

Holly Hmph! That'll be what it will take: **dragging!**

The members of this incongruous party chuckle at Holly's words, then begin to troop back towards the house. This involves a steepish climb. At the tail of the group, Malcolm Buxton makes an assiduous effort to assist Helene, murmuring "Miss Rylance" and offering her his hand.

Viewed from the landing by the river, our camera looks up, where Holly and Lannscombe lead the way up the stone steps. We hear Holly calling back.

Holly *warning* Mind your step in the dark!

Buxton is seen to look at Helene, even as he holds her hand, in order to smile at her.

END OF SCENE

I, Scene v: 1936, Segler's Landing, By The River Thames, Another Night

The cameraman (Lannscombe), Wardell, Buxton, Holly and Helene are joined by Margaret, who is encapsulated in a blanket. She is not at all happy.

Margaret *annoyed* There's simply no possible way that this can be helping free Roger from his incarceration.

Helene *firm* Yes, there is.

Margaret
argumentative I still fail to make the connection between this phantom boat and my imprisoned brother. It would certainly be nice if someone would kindly explain to me how this is all going to save him from the hangman.

Buxton My dear Miss Allendale, we're working on the assumption that there *is* a connection, given the timing of the boat's first appearance. That's why we're here, waiting for these people.

The camera pans the river, noting its serenity. It is Lannscombe who suddenly breaks the silence.

Lannscombe Quiet now! Ready to record!

All eyes are turned to the bend of the river. They are riveted. As the boat begins to appear around the bend in the river, the camera starts whirring. All the faces are taut with eager anticipation or (in Margaret's case) consternation. There is no noise other than the whirring of the 1930's camera, and the random slapping of waves on the riverbank.

The boat comes alongside the landing. Sirhana becomes excited, calling out delightedly upon spotting Margaret. For the first time, we realize that the other six passengers are behaving like automatons.

On the landing, all our people stand as if frozen, except for Margaret who acts like a sleepwalker. The blanket falls from her shoulders as she lopes to the edge of the landing, then steps fluidly into the boat. Grand, exultant music bursts forth as Margaret moves towards the boat.

As the boat leaves, we notice that Margaret (just like the other passengers) seems robotic. The 1930's camera is still filming but does not move to follow the boat. The boat moves off, and we follow it around the next bend of the river. Ahead, in the night, as seen from behind trees, willows, bridges, and so on, there are a few great buildings appearing to be henge-like castles, alight with lanterns, flambeaux and lamps. It is beautiful and wonderful. The boat is heading towards that sight.

Our music builds and becomes utterly overpowering as the mystic boat carries Margaret away.

END OF SCENE

I, Scene vi: 1936, In The House, Night

Everyone is frantic, and talking at speed, and rushing about.

Buxton is shouting into the phone to some disembodied policeman, trying to organize the recovery of Margaret.

Buxton -- Confound it! I can't tell you any more than that, Sergeant. It was a non-descript boat, filled with old-fashioned yokels. They abducted a defenceless young woman --

Buxton's phone conversation becomes obscured behind the urgent babble of the others. The camera focuses on Helene, who has divorced herself from the general panic.

Helene *spark of awareness, snaps fingers excitedly* Transfixing! That's the word I couldn't think of. We wanted to communicate with them but ... we just couldn't move!

END OF SCENE

FOURTEEN YEARS ELAPSE

I, Scene vii: 1950, In A Dimly Lit Library Of A Newspaper House

Two journalists (Ralph Cox and Gordon Pendlebury) forage about in a tiny, pokey library, which is ill-lit and mouldy. The library is also smoky, as the two men are both smoking roll-your-owns. They often squint due to the smoke and dinginess.

The shelves are very badly organized and messy, with stacks of old cardboard boxes, wooden crates and tea chests littering the floor. One of the men is knee-deep in old newspapers and books (Gordon Pendlebury), as he sits hunched on a low chair over a small desk.

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The other (Ralph Cox) is up a stepladder, where he is in real danger of having his head battered by tumbling boxes and files. The camera closes-in on Ralph (with half-smoked cigarette gripped between his lips), as he flicks through the contents of a file. Of a sudden, he gasps, eyes goggling.

Ralph *burst of excitement* Yes ... yes ... here it is. I've found it! Yes ... Here it is at last.

Ralph makes his way down the stepladder. Gordon Pendlebury looks up.

Gordon *bleary* You've got it?

Ralph *deeply engrossed and excited* Yes, yes. Here it is, thank God. This is dated ... er ... 17th of August, 1936.

[Reads]

"Roger Allendale, accused of murdering his father William during a heated altercation, has escaped the noose when His Lordship Sir Archibald Blenheim set a dramatic precedent by permitting (for the first time) the use of hypnosis in a court of law. Renowned disciple of Mesmer, Frenchman M. Harle de Nairi, used a gold watch and chain to inspire the accused (in the presence of Judge and jury) to take his mind back to the night on which his father was murdered. Shocked members of the court heard Mr Allendale recall the presence of a third man in the sitting room where his father met his death. It appears that Mr Allendale Senior had recognized the man but did not name him. The unknown assailant allegedly coshed the Accused, and then apparently murdered Mr Allendale Senior before making good his escape."

Gordon *astounded* Good Lord!

Ralph You see, that was Allendale's defence; that he woke up from being stunned by person unknown to find his father dead beside him. But the doctors examined his noggin and found no evidence of any injury nor bashing at all. So naturally, he was assumed to be lying, by the Prosecution.

But listen to this.

[Ralph returns to the newspaper, reading aloud from it]

"It was a strenuous appeal by noted linguist Prof. Benjamin Wardell which convinced Sir Archibald to allow the Accused to undergo hypnosis in this desperate attempt to clear his name. Several factors in this most extraordinary case swayed His Lordship's decision, including a special plea by Lord Chancellor Sir Frank Darcy, and the mysterious disappearance of Mr Allendale's sister, Margaret. At the time of the murder, Miss Allendale appears to have been abducted by members of an exotic sect, who appeared at the Allendale home. She has yet to be reunited with her family."

Gordon *stunned*

Blimey! "An exotic ..." ... And when was that?"

Ralph

Fourteen years ago in August 1936. It's all here.

[Slapping the page in minor triumph]

You can just about quote that lot verbatim in your coverage of the Markinson case.

Gordon Pendlebury takes the newspaper and starts to re-read the story.

Ralph *pontificating*

I mean ... in the first place, the man should have been charged with manslaughter rather than murder. But he completely got off all possible charges because he was able to reconstruct the story under hypnosis. He's a model citizen now, by all accounts, following a heroic role in the War.

Gordon *surprised, still reading*

And the sister?

Ralph *shakes head*

Never seen again.

Gordon *again, surprised*

What? She didn't come back? Even when the brother got off the murder charge?

Ralph

Nope. Never heard of again.

Gordon scratches his head considering and thoughtful.

Gordon *sighs* Well, all of a sudden, I don't know that I care a tinker's damn about the Markinson case. I'd rather have a look-see at this case. Fourteen years on, and still no word from the sister. Where did she go? What happened to her?"

The other man shrugs his shoulders, hands in pockets, fag hanging from corner of his mouth.

END OF SCENE

I, Scene viii: 1950, Segler's Landing, The Garden Leading To The River

A sunny day burst forth. Segler's Landing is somewhat upgraded, and the garden is much grown. Some small children (Toby, Raine and little Laurence) are playing cowboys and Indians, hiding behind the bushes and then jumping out with wild war whoops and screams when discovered. In the background, Margaret is dripping wet as she drags herself up from the river onto the landing. She is spotted by the children.

Toby *alarmed and excited* Mrs Quigley! Mrs Quigley. A wet lady is in our garden! Come and see, Mrs Quigley. Come quick!

Mrs Quigley struggles down the steps, as Margaret surveys the scene, unperturbed. The children tumble up the garden steps towards the surprised matron.

Mrs Quigley *in consternation* Oh dear! You're so very wet ... can I ... are you ...?

Margaret This is still Roger Allendale's property, is it not? And these are his children?

Mrs Quigley *surprised* Why, yes, this is the Allendale residence. May I ...?

Margaret *looking about in a pleased manner* I'm his sister. This was my home, too. Is Roger in? May I see him?

Mrs Quigley *shocked and stunned* Miss Holly? But you're not Miss Holly ...

Margaret *annoyed* No of course not. Obviously, I'm Margaret.

There's a photograph of me on a dresser inside. I saw it last time I came home, about seven years ago. Hopefully, it's not been moved. That will give you proof that I'm not an imposter.

[Turns to the children, kindly]

Come along then. We'll find my photograph and then you can all give your Auntie Margaret a big kiss and hug.

END OF SCENE

I, Scene ix: 1950, A Small Private Study At Cambridge

Professor Buxton works diligently on correcting exam papers. The only sound is that of the scratching of his fountain pen, and the rhythmic ticking of a mantelpiece clock. A gentle tap sounds at the door.

Buxton *without looking* Come.

up

Gordon Pendlebury slides in, after having removed his hat.

Buxton *without looking* Yes?

up

Gently, Gordon closes the door.

Gordon Professor Malcolm Buxton?

Buxton *finally looks up* Yes?

Gordon extends his hand, which the Professor takes, albeit a little uncertainly. Gordon smiles reassuringly, indicating the PRESS ticket stuck into his hatband.

Gordon Gordon Pendlebury, reporter on The Argus. Hope this moment isn't too inconvenient, Sir? Shan't keep you long.

Buxton shakes his head and motions to a chair. Buxton mutters about papers he is marking and pushes some aside. Then, Malcolm Buxton looks an enquiry. Pendlebury sits at ease in the chair.

Gordon It's the Allendale case. Fourteen years have rolled by and no word about the missing sister. That's rather strange, isn't it?

Buxton You mean Margaret Allendale?

Gordon Yep, that's right, that's the lady. Who or what took her away, and why?

Buxton *sudden,* I've no idea.

without thought

We searched for her everywhere. Had that stretch of the river dragged numerous times. I think we moved Heaven and Earth to try to find her.

A calm settles after this outburst. Gordon says nothing. He waits. The clock ticks.

Buxton draws a long breath and seems to be searching for something in the air a way to begin his explanation.

Buxton None of us had the slightest idea of there being anything amiss. That wretched little boat had sailed past Holly Allendale time and again ... every evening from the moment of her father's murder. And nothing untoward happened to her. Nothing at all!

Their cousin Helene (who's now my wife, by the by) saw it too ... and there was nothing sinister nor evil about the whole business from her perspective.

Gordon shifts in his chair. He is eager and rather thrilled by this revelation.

Buxton gets up and goes to the window. After a moment he continues.

Buxton She (that is, Helene) called in Ben Wardell to try to interpret something which one of the women on the boat was saying. I naturally tagged along with my old professor and included a photographer to film the event. Of course, originally we were just humouring Holly and Helene ... thought it was a whole lot of nonsense, really. Naturally, we never dreamed that there'd be

anything in it.

However, Holly was spot-on, as it happens. There came the mystic boat, with its ghost-like payload, and the wonderful words echoed over the waters on cue, whilst we froze immobile under some kind of spell. Spooky, what?

And Margaret Allendale (who had resisted all Holly's pleadings to go down to the landing) was finally persuaded, against her own better judgement. So there we were again on Segler's Landing: three men and two women ... and a girl. The boat appeared, the camera went into action and –

Gordon finishing-off the anecdote And the boat stopped at the landing, the passengers cordially invited Margaret on board, and then off she sailed into the evening light.

Buxton turns to the reporter with mouth agape.

Gordon explains, with unamused laugh I caught up with your cameraman, Peter Lannscombe. He does a lot of work for my editor, as it happens. Last night, I sat through that scene perhaps a dozen times. But there's just no clue at all as to who, what, why, how ...

Buxton eager You saw that film? And so what did you think?

Gordon shrugs It's so bizarre. She --

The phone rings sharply. This is an unwelcome interruption for both men. Buxton excuses himself as he picks up the receiver.

Buxton business-like Hello, Buxton here ... What?

Buxton stands, leaning forward. He seems to be totally unable to understand what he is being told. We see Pendlebury stiffen in response.

Buxton appalled Please repeat that. Oh my God! ... Yes, yes. ... Alright, I'll be there.

Buxton is as white as a sheet. Gordon stands but remains motionless. Both men are staring at each other.

Buxton *amazed* This is absolutely **crazy!**

That was my wife. Roger Allendale has just telephoned her to say that his sister Margaret Allendale has just been dumped dripping wet onto Segler's Landing.

Gordon Alive?

Solemnly, Professor Buxton nods several times.

END OF SCENE

I, Scene x: 1950, Segler's Landing, The Dining Room

Around the formal dining table: Roger and Judith Allendale, Margaret Allendale, Malcolm and Helene Buxton, Gordon Pendlebury and Peter Lannscombe.

A gown has been found for Margaret. She is the centre of attention, not a day older in looks. Her serenity and calm acceptance are fascinating. The others at the table continue to stare at her, trying to work it out.

On her right and at the head of the table is her brother Roger. Opposite her sits his wife Judith. She is giving Margaret kindly, encouraging smiles. Roger clears his throat and addresses his sister.

Roger Holly went to live in Paris, you know, Margaret. We've been able to contact her and give her our good news. Needless to say, she's overjoyed. Squealed into my ear!

Judith *bright* And is coming back to see you again almost immediately.

Margaret *matter of fact* She'd better not dawdle, then. I'm only here for a couple of days.

Roger *put out* Really? You have to go away again, do you? I thought you might stay for a bit to let us catch up with you. Fourteen years is a very long time indeed.

Judith *the supportive* Oh yes. Please stay longer.

wife

Margaret *screws up her eyes* I'm lucky to get even these few days, though, Roger. Besides, I have children ... I seem to remember that there are three children. Two boys ... no two girls and –

Everyone is utterly shocked at hearing this.

Helene My dear! Don't you remember your children? Are you married then?

Margaret *definite,* I'm starting to forget everything about that land.

deliberate and confronting They took me for a ride in the Swan Boat and told me to dive out near enough to this place that I might swim for the landing. As soon as my head hit the water, I could recall oh so much about **this** world, and precious little about that other one. That's the way it works, I believe.

But the hold on one's mind of **children** is quite strong. One never forgets one's children.

However, I'm not at all sure of my husband. It's all a fog. Anyway, he's probably very nice.

The silence is shattering. Everyone else is caught with cutlery mid-air. Margaret alone is able to continue to eat with calm indifference. She is oblivious to the massive effect of her words.

Margaret Now I can tell you with absolute certainty that I came back here seven years ago. They must do things by sevens in that land. I came back, and no-one was here. I'd have left a note, of course, but I went through a very nervous struggle with the pencil. Just couldn't get my unco-operative fingers to write the wretched words!

Anyway, I happily discovered that Roger had been released from prison and had married a lovely girl. Had a dear little son and new baby girl. All was well. Then the Swan Boat collected me and I was off again.

This pronouncement is even more devastating than the earlier admission. Still, Margaret eats, oblivious and uncaring.

Roger *splutters* You came back seven years ago? And then not again until now?

Margaret merely nods as she goes on eating.

Silence. Everyone looks about, uncertain as to what to ask Margaret, what to say to her.

Gordon What land is it that you go to, Miss Allendale? And who are the people there?

Margaret seems desperate to recall the details but is unable to do so. In this, she seems disappointed and lost.

Margaret No, I ... I just can't. I'm sorry, but it's all such a haze.

Buxton *prompting* The people in the boat spoke in a kind of old Cornish tongue.

Gordon Could it be Wales, then? Or Cornwall?

Margaret *as if a bell* Segler. It's something to do with Segler.

has rung in her head *[Nods]*

Yes, something about Segler.

Margaret can recall no more. The other dinner guests appear frustrated and concerned. They glance at each other.

Margaret Delicious meal, Judith. Thank you.

Margaret alone has finished her meal. The others have hardly made a start.

END OF SCENE

I, Scene xi: 1950, Segler's Landing, By The River Thames

Standing about at their ease, the four male diners (Roger Allendale, Malcolm Buxton, Gordon Pendlebury and Peter Lannscombe) relax at the water's edge, on the landing with snifters of brandy

and cigars. It is obvious that they have been discussing in depth the mysterious re-appearance of Margaret.

Peter What astounds me is that there is nothing **unknown** about the Thames. It's been travelled by man since time immemorial. There are no hidden bays or inlets.

Buxton And you're wondering where it is that Margaret disappears to?

Roger Surely someone else has seen the little boat? Maybe even followed it ... ?

Gordon I'm positive that's true. Your sister isn't the first person to go missing in this way, you know.

The other men turn towards Gordon. Realizing that he will be asked to expand on his theme, Gordon nods towards Buxton.

Gordon My colleague (you may have heard of Ralph Cox) --

Buxton *dismissive* Never heard of him. Sorry.

Gordon We were alerted that a 17-year-old boy had gone missing from the banks of the Thames ... was it yesterday? The day before?

The cub reporter who questioned the family came back with a riveting tale which was so strange that Ralph sat bolt upright in his chair when first he heard it. A little boat, some vapourish passengers, bright lanterns ... Ralph was adamant that he'd heard that litany before. It all came back to him. He recalled the business of the 1930's (about the Allendale family). So, together, we raided the press library and ... *Voila!*

That's why I called on you, Professor Buxton. It was utterly arresting, there being these similarities between the two cases.

Buxton And what about seven years ago. Was anyone reported missing in a similar way?

Gordon No. Nothing. That's what makes me scratch my head. There **should** have been, if we are to find a pattern here.

Peter I think you're wrong, Pendlebury.

Roger How so?

Peter There was something which I've been following. But it's not as clear as the case of Miss Allendale, nor of the young lad you mentioned. About seven years ago, an older lady wandered off, and was never seen again. The family aren't sure ... she might have eloped.

Roger *appalled* **Eloped?!** With whom, might I ask. Sounds very scratchy to me.

Peter *apologetic* I'm just saying that there **was** a slightly similar case. Wish I could furnish more information, that's all.

Gordon Look! I'll follow that up, Pete. Sounds fantastic, but you never know ...

Helene arrives at the landing. Buxton smiles fondly at his lovely wife, winding his arm around her shoulders.

Helene *to everyone* Margaret's gone to bed. I really don't think that she has the slightest idea what she'll do now. It's all so vague ... "When will the swan boat return for you, dear?" ... "Oh, in a day or two, I expect". All airy-fairy and very disorganized.

And here we have Holly rushing back from France ...

Does anyone have a clue what action we should take now?

Roger *taking charge* She has children. Or so she says. I'm sure that she wants to race back to them. Only natural.

Helene She's not even sure what kind of children she has! This is a debacle. Truly it is.

Buxton pats his wife's hand fondly.

Roger *in command of the situation* I shall sit down with Margaret tomorrow morning. After breakfast, I should think. There are many issues to sort out with this business. I mean, she can't possibly return to that mysterious, God-forsaken place until she's furnished us with all the relevant

details. We can't go on like this, snatching a moment or two every seven years. That's just not acceptable, I'm afraid.

Gordon *cocking an eyebrow at Roger*

Will you have any choice in the matter? She seems to come and go without let or hindrance, as if she's beyond our ken.

Roger *firmly*

I'll insist that some more congenial arrangements are made as to her future arrivals and departures. This sort of thing simply tears a family's composure and dignity to shreds.

Buxton

I'm afraid I have to agree with Pendlebury. It's all out of our hands, really ...

Roger *tight-lipped*

Well, we shall see.

END OF SCENE

I, Scene xii: 1950, Segler's Landing, By The River Thames

Helene and the men have left the landing. Margaret sneaks out of the house. We watch her descending the garden steps in the dimly lit night. Then she sits on Holly's riverside bench.

Just as Margaret sits waiting for the boat to appear, Holly turns up, very breathless. She was a young teenager when first we met her: now she is a very beautiful young woman.

Holly *trembling voice* Oh, Margaret!

Margaret stands, moving swiftly to Holly and the sisters hug.

Holly *in tears* I've only just arrived. The taxi from the airport, you know.

Margaret *kindly* You very nearly missed me. That would have been a shame.

Holly *eyes streaming* With my teeth gritted, I was fairly **willing** the taxi to go faster. If I'd missed seeing you, I don't know what I'd have done!

Margaret holds Holly's face in her hands, gazing at her. She wipes off Holly's tears with her thumbs.

Margaret How very pretty you are! You were only a young girl when I ...

What were you? 14 or 15, I seem to remember ...

Holly *sniffing but smiling through her tears*

I was only 14. I'm 28 now. All grown up as you see. I work for Malcolm, as a research assistant. Stationed in Paris, would you believe.

Oh, but you haven't aged a jot. You're just exactly the same ...

Suddenly, Margaret stops, questing the air as if she hears something from far away.

Margaret

They are come for me.

Remind the folks that this is all tied-in with ... Oh! With our father, and Segler and his six brothers, of course, and obviously Sirhana's daughter.

Holly *at sea*

What ... What do you mean ... ?

Margaret *utterly calm*

Don't try to follow me. Promise me that you'll stay here, continue to be as merry as a lark, and **not** follow me.

Holly opens her mouth to speak, but no words will come. She cannot and does not move. Margaret glides effortlessly to the edge of the river then steps gracefully into a little boat which has mysteriously pulled up at Segler's Landing. There are no other passengers. The boat speeds off, without any obvious means of locomotion, Margaret standing calmly and majestically without teetering. She looks ahead, not deigning to glance back at her sister.

The haunting flute music is revisited.

Finally, Holly is able to move, just as the boat speeds out of sight. Holly, bereft, gives a bit of a futile wave.

Holly cries as she watches the swan boat disappear around the bend, covering her face with her hands. Rain starts to fall.

END OF SCENE

END OF ACT I



ACT II

II, Scene i: 1950, Segler's Landing, The Dining Room, Breakfast

Unlike aristocratic British families, breakfast at The Landing does not revolve around chafing dishes on the sideboard. The various inmates of Segler's Landing (including the children) sit around the vast dining table and are waited on by Mrs Quigley, who furnishes the requested dishes prepared by the cook.

As the scene opens, Judith is busy admonishing the children (who are too busy eating and watching all that is going on) to chatter more than a little. Roger reads his paper as he eats.

Roger *in head-of-the-family role* Holly was in time to farewell Margaret last night. And I don't wish for a recurrence of the weeping, if it's possible.

Over all, I think it would be best for us to refrain from mulling over Margaret's infrequent comings and goings. For now, at least. Not exactly breakfast conversation, one finds ...

Judith *in devoted wife and mother role* Of course not, dear. Enough was said last night. Well thrashed-out. Let's just smile bravely ...

Following his little speech, Roger remains dedicated to his newspaper, and does not lift his eyes from it, even to speak. Judith remains doggedly pleasant and charming. Gordon strolls in and is bearded by Mrs Quigley at the doorway as to his choice of breakfast.

Mrs Quigley *smiling* And for you, Mr Pendlebury? I've prepared ham, eggs, tomato and toast. Will that suit you?

Gordon *smiles* Oh, yes, please. Super! Thank you, Mrs Quigley.

*Mrs Quigley smiles, nods, then whisks herself off. Judith smiles, and gestures to a chair at the far end of the table, away from the children. Gordon nods, rubbing his hands together as he takes his seat. Roger's conversation is minimal and requires that he **not** lift his eyes nor his attention from the newspaper.*

Roger Pendlebury.

Gordon Yes, good morning, Sir. Everyone. This is all very convivial.

Roger *aside* By that, you mean "bloody".

Roger folds up some spare sections of his newspaper and hands these wordlessly to Gordon.

Gordon *grinning* Ah, thanks. I'll bury myself in the Sports section. You have a charming family, Mrs Allendale.

Judith *pointing out each child* Toby, Raine and Laurence. Children, this is Mr Pendlebury, who is our special guest at this time.

Cup of tea, Mr Pendlebury?

Gordon acknowledges the Allendale progeny with a wink and smile.

Gordon *getting into the newspaper* Yes, thanks. White with two, if you don't mind.

As Gordon reads, Judith pours his tea, then sets it down before him with elegance and charm. Gordon thanks her but continues with his newspaper. Mrs Quigley and Holly can be heard (somewhat heard) out in the passage.

Holly, fresh and exceedingly pretty, swans into the dining room.

Holly *bright and bubbly* Good morning, everyone! What a glorious day looms before us.

Roger *waspish* Hardly "looms".

[Gestures vaguely in Gordon's direction.]

Holly, my sister. This is Gordon Pendlebury. Newspaperman.
Following a lead.

Gordon is trapped. He wants to stand in order to shake Holly's hand. However, Mrs Quigley arrives exactly at that moment with Gordon's hearty breakfast. Holly makes do by leaning almost at full

length over the table, stretching out her hand for Gordon to shake as he thanks Mrs Quigley (who now charges off). (Be advised that this activity requires re-filming for Film #2, ACT III, Scene vi).

Gordon's eyes are riveted on Holly, who is pouring coffee for herself.

Holly *in a natural, uncaring way* Do you rumba, Mr Pendlebury? I was undergoing a new species of torture known as Latin American Dance when my sister-in-law telephoned me.

Gordon *eating* I understood that you are resident in Paris, Miss Allendale. Did you --

Holly *breezy* Yes. I was shipped off by my *patron* (whom you've met: dear Professor Malcolm Buxton of Gladesbrook, who is my cousin-in-law (if there is such a thing)) to the gaiety of Paris because ...
Do you know, I just don't think that he could bear my being bright and sunny first thing in the morning.

Roger *very waspish* He has my undying sympathy.

Holly *as if uninterrupted* He desired a geographic distance. But he does value my work, all the same.

Judith *trying to be gracious* Holly dear, Mr Pendlebury might be interested to hear how the Parisians are coping in this new decade.

Holly *without considered thought* Acoustic guitars are the new wave in Paris. That, and sadness. Utter sadness. I don't think that I fit in at all.

Judith gives Gordon a speaking look. Mrs Quigley places a steaming bowl of porridge and a round of toast in a rack before Holly.

Holly *delighted* Marvellous! Thank you so much, dear Mrs Quigley.

Roger *dour* Good Lord! You'd think you'd never eaten.
Cook's humble offering cannot possibly compare with French cuisine, which I understand is supposed to be extraordinary. This is not so?

Holly Nothing like this for breakfast. Marmalade! Do you know that

France **abhors** marmalade? I'm going to spoon it onto my toast in mounds.

Gordon remains transfixed by Holly. The children fidget and giggle. Judith sighs, then catches Gordon's eye.

Judith *aside to Gordon* This is Holly's way of "dealing" with it.

Gordon *feigning obtuseness* With?

Judith *whispers conspiratorially* I think that she's on the verge of a nervous collapse. 14 years is a very long time ...

It is clear that Gordon does not regard Holly as other than jolly, lively and wonderful.

Gordon I'd like to interview you, Miss Holly. May I? Do you mind?

Holly *eating* Of course I mind. You're not a policeman. A newspaperman. What on Earth led you to becoming a member of the Press corps?

Gordon has finished his breakfast, and now enjoys his cup of tea.

Gordon *unperturbed* It was my inquisitive nature.

Holly *unimpressed* Monkeys are inquisitive. Intelligent, certainly, when compared with dogs and cats. But decidedly disgusting in their habits.

[Leans towards Gordon, as an aid to conversation]

Monsieur Gribaldi has the most enchanting, adorable little capuchin. But such a scamp. She becomes positively w-h-o-r-i-s-h when in the company of a roomful of gentlemen.

Gribaldi is the itinerant fruiterer in my *banlieue*, but would rather be a major poet, you must understand.

Gordon *unabashed* Then please label me as a simian. For I'm disgusting, filthy, poetic, deep, troubled ...

Judith has heard enough. Flying two bright scarlet patches of blush on her already rosy cheeks, Judith ushers the children out of the dining room in good order.

Holly *delighted* How very masculine of you! I've changed my mind ... I should **love** to be interviewed. Let's stroll along the river as we do so.

Gordon Good! You can teach me the steps of the rumba to aid our progression.

Roger *very annoyed* Holly, this is hardly edifying breakfast conversation. Could you not lower the enthusiasm gauge just a trifle?

Holly *snitty* "She turns her withering glance upon her hapless brother. 'No!' she responds, flatly."

Roger resignedly folds his newspaper, and hands it on to Gordon as he rises.

Roger *sighs* So be it. I give up. Pendlebury.

Roger nods to Gordon, then strides out of the room. Holly turns towards Gordon, giving him a very naughty look.

END OF SCENE

II, Scene ii: 1950, Segler's Landing, Walking Along Beside The Thames River

With Segler's Landing clearly in the background, Holly and Gordon stroll along the towpath. Gordon smokes. The pair seem to be enjoying each other's company very much. Then Holly pulls up short, looking appalled.

Enid Finchett, extremely badly dressed, toddles onto the towpath from out of a field, carrying all manner of equipment.

Holly *appalled* Just **look** at her.

One part is kitted-out to take afternoon tea with the King and Queen. Another part shrieks fox hunting, and the rest ...

Enid wanders along, muttering to herself, hardly seeing Holly and Gordon. Then she exits the towpath into another field.

Gordon The local "Keep England Green Society" perhaps?

Holly Rather! Who or what is she? Do you know?

Gordon *thoughtful* Mmmm ... Roger warned me of a desiccated anthropologist (or is it archaeologist?): a fossilized type who's been digging about in this area, as those people tend to do.

 Ah! I have it! Miss Enid Finchett is her mono. There! I've remembered.

Holly *not impressed* Hmmpf! Taking British eccentricity a little too far for my taste. She registers a new low-point on the scale.

Gordon *recalling with delight* Snap! And you lose. That old boiler's not British at all.

Holly *surprised* Good God! What then?

Gordon That ancient lassie is from the Colonies. Try Sydney.

Holly Oh, my sainted aunt! An Orstralian ...

END OF SCENE

II, Scene iii: 1950, Walking Along Beside The Thames River

Further along the river, Holly and Gordon are seen dancing something vaguely like a rumba. Holly provides a vocal interpretation of the music. They both appear to be enjoying themselves.

The camera closes in. Gordon is laughing, drinking in the lovely features of the girl's face and hair. Then he breaks away, a little awkwardly.

Gordon I expected gales of sobbing from you.

Holly Margaret's alive. Thus, there's nothing to cry for.

 Besides, she doesn't seem to age by even a jot. Whereas I'm following Nature's true path.

Mr Pendlebury! Do you realize that I'll become an old woman, whilst she'll just stay the same. How droll!

Gordon So, you'll be content to see your sister every seven years from now on.

Holly I suppose so ...

She was utterly adamant that I wasn't to try to follow her. So ... yes! Every seven years. I'll cope.

Gordon *changing tack* Would there be a gent's bicycle lurking about, do you think?

Holly *wondering* Ah ... there should be. Yes. Roger had one, I know. But I can't promise you that it works at all.

Gordon It's just that I'd better catch up with these Markinsons, who are situated at the charmingly-named village of Pitch, I understand. And with the older lady, if I can. I could cycle over this afternoon to interview all parties, then be back in time for dinner.

Holly Jolly good.

Gordon flicks her cheek with the side of his index finger.

Gordon *lovingly* Besides, if I spend any more time with you in my arms, I might just fall in love with you. Much better for my equilibrium to get some healthy outdoor exercise.

Holly *astounded* But we only met at breakfast. How fast can two people fall in love?

Gordon How long did it take you to reach across the table to grasp my hand? We should have timed that movement with a stop-watch.

Holly *recalling a past thought* Oh! And do remind Peter Lannscombe (if you see him) that he left his voice-recording machine at the Landing last night. He may be wondering where it is.

Gordon *mocking* Were you thinking of another man when I was just about to make a secret tryst with you?

Of a sudden, Holly becomes very alert, her eyes brilliant.

Holly This evening in the conservatory. I'll wear an orchid corsage.
Only there isn't a conservatory. Bother! Will the veggie patch do?
How very romantic!

Gordon Yes. I'll caress you by moonlight next to the Indian Runner beans.

Holly And you'll let Mr Lannscombe know about --

Gordon *smiling* Of course.
You are adorable.

Gordon lifts her chin, then kisses her swiftly on the mouth.

Holly And no assignations in the garden or elsewhere until you've
completed this afternoon's assignment.

Gordon, his hand still supporting the girl's chin, looks a query.

Holly Well, you might very well find that the Markinsons have a
daughter far lovelier than I. Then you'll be damned sorry to have
thrown in your lot with me.

Gordon That's going to be a tough call. However, in the interests of
Science, I'll investigate to the best of my poor ability.

END OF SCENE

II, Scene iv: 1950, Gordon Cycling About In Merry England

It is a lovely English Summer's afternoon.

*With jolly music, the sun beaming, beautiful greenery and lush scenery, we pick up Gordon as
(whistling merrily) he cycles from Segler's Landing to Pitch.*

*From the opposite side of the river, as seen from a leafy glade, the camera picks up Gordon and the
Markinson's, standing on the banks of the river, pointing downstream, in the direction taken by the
little swan boat. The music is now muted, haunting. We hear skat phrases: "... not afraid of anything,*

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Gordon *shouting* Perfect! I'm happy that the police are on their way. I can discuss with them the fact that your "dead" sister Clara is not listed as "dead" in the Public Records Office. And that you've withdrawn every last shilling from her bank account. I'm sure that the rozzers will want to hear that you live daily in the hope that she'll *never* re-appear.

A window on the one side of the front door swings open, and Moira's head appears.

Moira *frowning* Well?

Gordon *accusing* You claimed at the time to the policeman who interviewed you that you believed that there was nothing evil afoot. That Clara had simply "Up and eloped".

Moira Yes, she was walking out with her beau. We're very sure that she went off with him. Eloped, or whatever you like to call it.

Gordon *eagerly* This man: does he have a name, Madam?

Moira *put out* He was just her gentleman caller. I never knew his name.

A window on the other side of the front door swings open, and Clyde's head appears. Gordon is confused and surprised. He flicks his head from one to the other.

Clyde *leaning out of the window* Well, now, he was hardly a gentleman. More of a hobbledehoy, all things considered. A farming type, I'd put it. Dressed in very odd, old-fashioned garb, just like you'd see in one of them old-time paintings. Like a sheep-herder, he was.

Heaven knows what Clara found to love in that one!

Both windows are pulled shut. There is a burst of grand music as Gordon frowns at Leagrave's parting words.

END OF SCENE

II, Scene vi: 1950, The Archaeological Dig Nearby To Segler's Landing

At night, Enid Finchett works in her tent. At odds with her outward appearance of sloppy eccentricity, she is in fact unfailingly neat. And her workbooks, sketches and reports are stored and filed with military precision. Nothing could be more orderly than the neatly piled boxes of hanging files and folders seen along the sides of the tent.

Under the glare of a bare electric globe hanging from the tent's ridge, Enid studies a selection of relics. Often using the large magnifying glass, and making notes in an exercise book, Enid is busy, even though it is night. She is alone, but speaks to the memory of her deceased husband, Trader.

Enid *sighs*

Trader, Trader, Trader ... what to do?

Why am I in Merry England? Thatched rooves ... incredible. What's wrong with corrugated tin, I ask you?

People with antlers on their heads ... makes a nice change from wallaby teeth headbands, I suppose ...

And some nong has tried to position this "Segler" temporally in the 18th century. Load of pigs trotters! He's as old as the hills, that one ... From some far-off time ...

The camera backs away, leaving Enid closely inspecting her Neolithic relics.

From a distance, we hear her repeat "... some far-off time ...".

SEGUE STRAIGHT INTO NEXT SCENE

II, Scene vii: Westania. Night On A Wild Windy Moor

There are two raised tors, facing each other. Standing atop these tors, Elkin faces Amon. The wind whooshes past them.

Elkin *shouts into the wind, pointing angrily*

It should have been the father, not the daughter. We needed William Allendale! The daughter's useless!

at Amon

Amon *stoic* Allendale would not come.

Elkin He should have been made to come.

Amon He chose death.

Elkin Yes, Tancred botched that capture royally, did he not? ... His son then!

Amon Having been supposed to have killed the father, the son was taken from us. He was thrown into a jail, ready for his life to be taken in revenge.

Elkin Sirhana tells me that the son lived. Let us finish with this daughter and have the son.

Amon *eminently patient* He will not come! Having lost his sister to us, he is very sceptical and mistrustful. Besides, a more self-interested man you would never set eyes on. If he came, he would not serve. Yet, I tell you he will not come.

Elkin I'm out of all patience with this! Tancred gave you seven years to mould the daughter. And I pledged you another seven years. With what result? Nothing! She's no good for our purpose, Amon! Send her back to Harshland and leave her there ... and bring me the son. He's exactly what we want.

Amon He won't be moved, I tell you.

Elkin His own son then. William Allendale's grandson. Yes, the last scion. I'll go myself tonight and fetch the boy.

END OF SCENE

II, Scene viii: 1950, Segler's Landing, After Dinner

Dinner is over. The children are running about, quite out of their routine. Mrs Quigley and the servants are busy, so "just this once", Judith has allowed the children to mingle with the guests prior to bedtime. Toby and Raine are wearing "proper" Red Indian headdress. And Toby wears breechcloth and belt over his pyjamas, along with a heavily embroidered Red Indian vest. Toby carries a small toy bow and has a quiver over his shoulder containing some home-made arrows. Poor little Laurence makes do with one of the maid's discarded alicé bands, along with some feathers found in the garden.

Roger turns to Gordon.

Roger *urbane* There are four of us. That's a perfect number for bridge. Fancy a rubber? We've time.

Gordon seems uneasy.

Gordon *edgy* Erm ... Do you know, I'm afraid that I don't ...

 Unfortunately, Sir, I'm strictly a poker player. We stag journalists tend to flock together in untidy holes after dark, where we drink buckets of beer, smoke way too much and play stud poker for ridiculous stakes.

 I know nothing at all of bridge. Sorry.

Roger gazes at Gordon in appalled silence. Gordon makes an apologetic face and shrugs.

Gordon *capping his fall from grace* Besides, I rather promised young Toby that I'd tell him all about the American Indians whom I saw once. In the USA. After the War. Got myself seconded to Admiral Fenshaw's office and ...

Gordon shrugs again.

Roger *coldly* I see. Well, Toby will love to hear about the native Americans. You'll have a friend for life.

~~~~~ **Break** ~~~~~

*Gordon sits in the nursery, before Raine and Toby (still outfitted as before) who are perched on stools. These two children listen in absorbed attention as Gordon winds up his tale of the noble American Indians who wear the feathers of the eagle in order to gain the wondrous qualities of that regal bird for themselves. Laurence has completely flaked-out on a pile of cushions.*

*Gordon telling a story* ... and they vowed to protect all the animals of river and forest, and only to kill those animals which they needed, for food, shelter and clothing. That is why the brave warriors apologized to the poor animals that had been killed.

*Judith and Roger appear in the doorway.*

*Judith over-bright* Time for bed.

*Toby defiant, arms crossed* Chief Sitting Bull does not go to bed. He stays up all night in his tent and smokes the peace-pipe.

*Roger strolls in and picks up Laurence, carrying him fondly out of the room.*

*Roger to Toby, severe* Come along now. You know that you'll have to obey in the end, pipe or no pipe.

*[To the sleeping Laurence, in a much more tender tone]*

And it's way past your bedtime, Dumpling.

*Gordon to Toby* Perhaps, if you are very good and go to bed now, well ... we might have some more stories tomorrow.

*Judith* Yes! What a good idea. Come on, say good night and "thank you" to Mr Pendlebury.

*Little Raine steps forward to hug Gordon around the neck.*

*Gordon surprised and moved* Why, that's lovely Raine. Thank you. And goodnight.

*Toby stand-offish* I'm not going to hug you. Indian chiefs don't hug anybody except for the bears they are fighting.

*Gordon laughing* Let's just shake hands, then, shall we?

*Toby shakes Gordon's hand, then turns to go to his room.*

Gordon                                    Goodnight, Chief Sitting Bull. Sweet dreams.

Toby                                        I'm not going to sleep. Not at all. One has to practise one's bow  
and arrow. Goodnight.

END OF SCENE

## **II, Scene ix: 1950, Segler's Landing, Toby's Bedroom**

*The conversation of the adults (their laughter and badinage) -- at least snatches of it -- is heard as Toby wanders about in his bedroom. In the corner of the room, we can see a small wigwam, and all sorts of American Indian paraphernalia lying about. Toby still wears his feathered headdress and his Indian costume over his pyjamas. He is whittling a piece of wood (a branchlet from a tree) into an arrow. Pleased with his work, and whistling annoyingly through his teeth, he takes his small bow, then shoots the arrow into a big target-board which hangs on the outside of his wardrobe. Toby lets out a muted war whoop, gives a passable rendition of a War dance and then races forward to retrieve the arrow, very proud of his handiwork.*

Judith *calling out voice-* Toby! That's enough playing now. Off to bed with you! Really, it's  
*off*                                            very late.

*Toby deals with this by running to the door, flinging it fully open and shouting.*

Toby *very loud*                        Yes, Mummy?

Judith *merrily*                        Big Chief Sitting Bull had better get some sleep, I think. That's  
enough buffalo-hunting for today, young man.

Toby *grinning*                        Alright, Mummy. Big Chief says goodnight to mother of Sitting  
Bull.

*There is much laughter drifting up from below. The boy turns, grinning, with bow and arrow raised to have one last shot at the target, just in time to see Elkin climbing easily, smoothly through the window. The old man advances determinedly towards the boy, who shakes in absolute terror.*

*Quite by accident, the boy lets the arrow fly, but the bow was unfortunately and unintentionally aimed at the old man, who is shot in the upper arm. Boy and old man stare unbelieving at the blood which wells up from the wound. It is a very minor wound, and yet it has had a major impact on the old man. Ineffectually, the old man tries to remove the arrow; he is becoming very weak, sinking to the floor. He is very slowly dying.*

*Toby gasps in dismay, then screams for his mother. There is a clutter and hubbub as everyone dashes up the stairs, then pours into the room. Gordon immediately drops to his knees, cradling the old man.*

Roger *aghast and aggressive*                      What the Hell are you doing in my son's bedroom? Who are you?  
Come on!

*Elkin speaks on being confronted by Roger. His response to the savage questioning is couched in an old Cornish language, and Malcolm is not there to translate.*

Judith *crying*                      What happened? Oh, my poor wee baby!

*Judith smothers Toby to her chest, sobbing in very great fear. Roger is nonplussed; he drags his fingers through his hair in vexation, alarm and frustration.*

Roger *aghast*                      Who is this man? How did this happen? Has my boy killed this  
stranger?

*Suddenly, amidst the hubbub, Holly remembers that Lannscombe has lent her the recording box. She swings around towards Gordon, who remains with Elkin, trying to comfort him. Gordon has thoughtfully fetched a bottle of brandy into Toby's room, and he is now plying this liquid to Elkin's lips.*

Holly *urgent, shaking*              Peter's machine! I'll get it! Malcolm may ...

Gordon *distracted*                Yes ... Yes ...

*Holly rushes out to get the machine.*

🎵🎵🎵🎵🎵🎵🎵🎵🎵🎵🎵🎵🎵🎵🎵🎵 **Break** 🎵🎵🎵🎵🎵🎵🎵🎵🎵🎵🎵🎵🎵🎵🎵🎵

*Enid thumps loudly at the front door, which is opened to her by a weeping maid.*

Enid *surprised but kind*      Oh, goodness! What is the matter, Darl?

Maid *weeping and sniffing*

It's horrible! The little boy has killed the old man. It was an accident, of course. But I don't think I'll ever get over the shock. They're all in Toby's room ... Oh, but the old man will surely die. What my Ma will say when she finds out. She'll want me to hand in me notice directly!

Enid *looking up towards the upper storey*

Has anybody thought to call the police? Or an ambulance?

*The girl stares with wide eyes at Enid, wiping her tears with the corner of her apron. Enid pats her kindly on the upper arm.*

Enid

Never mind! Where's the ring-a-ding-ding, Darl?

*Over the hubbub drifting down, Toby can be heard to crow triumphantly, as he is dragged away by a distraught Judith.*

Toby *excited, from above*

Mummy! Did I really kill that man? With my little bow and arrow? I'm jolly clever, aren't I?

*Sobbing anew, the girl points towards an open doorway. Enid nods, and stalks off in that direction. She finds the telephone (a solid black telephone with a dominant dial) and begins her call.*

Enid *on the telephone*

Hello? I need you to send a police car and an ambulance to Segler's Landing on the river. Do you know where -- Ah goodo! There's been a shocking accident, and a man's life hangs by a thread. Rightio! See you soon!

*Enid mounts the stairs easily, without any of the ditzy uncertainty she normally shows to the world. On arrival at the scene of the debacle, she sees the following: Elkin lies on his back on the floor, partly cradled in Gordon's arms. Holly holds a large microphone in front of Elkin's face. Judging by the movement of his lips, Elkin is managing to utter something into Lannscombe's infernal machine.*

*To one side, Roger (absolutely distressed) seems to be trying to take some action but cannot. Judith has moved Toby and the servants away from that part of the house.*

Roger *utterly appalled*

My God! We haven't called the police.

*As he rushes from the room, Enid stops him.*



mate.

*Elkin sighs raggedly, rolling away from Enid. Tears well-up in his eyes. After another desperate sigh, Elkin resumes his monotonous monologue in the old Cornish tongue. Enid shoves the microphone forward again, as before. The camera backs away.*

END OF SCENE

## **II, Scene x:** 1950, Segler's Landing, The Police Interviews

*In the background, the ambulance stretcher bears Elkin down the stairs and outside to the waiting ambulance. Holly has persuaded Roger to come downstairs. He has been revived with a stiff drink, and now wanders about aimlessly, awaiting his turn with the policemen.*

*In the foreground, Sergeant Walter Dynon (in uniform) takes notes. Inspector Derek Tyndale (in suit and tie) frowns at Gordon, who has recognized the police officer and extends his hand to him. The two men shake hands, but Derek Tyndale still has not placed Gordon.*

Gordon *grins*                    We meet again, Inspector Tyndale. Gordon Pendlebury, journalist.  
We locked horns not so long ago over the Mar --

Tyndale *light dawns*            Of course! Now I recall. Are you about to tell me that this bow-  
and-arrow business is in any way tied up with that boy's  
disappearance?

Gordon                            Absolutely. I've managed to insinuate myself into this ménage in  
order to delve deeper.

Tyndale *suspicious*            With what result, may I ask?

Holly                                There's no doubt at all that these seemingly random events are all  
linked, Inspector. And it goes much deeper than what's on the  
surface. There's some kind of ethereal quality to this whole  
scenario, don't you find?

Tyndale                            And you are?

Holly I'm Toby's aunt, sister of Roger Allendale.

*Holly looks over to where Roger, brooding and taut, has stopped his meanderings to gaze unseeing out of a large window.*

Tyndale And this is your usual domicile?

Holly Good Heavens, no! I was packed-off to Paris some time back. My employer (Professor Buxton, whom I telephoned, and who should be here at any instant) has assigned me to the study of the intricacies of the Breton Congress of Death.

Gordon *pretending to be affronted* You didn't tell me that! How ghoulish!

Holly *affronted* Well, it's no good becoming squeamish now, is it? After all, you're a reporter on a scandal rag. One would have thought that that vocation would require a cast-iron stomach. Doesn't your editor demand of you a certain level of titillation mixed with gore for your readers?

Gordon *feigning indignation* I take the deepest offence at The Argus being maligned in that manner. When recently asked by the Palace to keep quiet about a tawdry liaison between a certain lord and a well-known showgirl, we printed nary a word, although we could well have brought the Government to its knees.

Holly *defensive* You spent positively days picking over the murder of that gold-smuggling hoodlum in Soho not so long ago.

Tyndale *perplexed* Would you two mind delaying hostilities until I've finished my interviews?

*Gordon and Holly, both trying to stifle giggles, shift about in silence.*

Tyndale Thank you.

Enid All jokes aside, I have to agree with Miss Allendale. There's a very strong force at work which transcends our Earthly world.

Tyndale And you, Madame? Who are you and why are you here?

- Enid Mrs Enid Finchett.
- I stepped outside of my tent for a moment, when I spotted the old man, in his "shepherd's hey" costume. His long flowing hair and beard gave me pause ... but then, he strode with the easy grace of a much younger man. In fact, there was an "other-world" quality about him, which aroused my interest.
- So, this old man was clearing hedges and fences as if he could float. I watched him approach this house and decided to call the alarm.
- That's why I'm here. As quick as I could, I followed him, and made for the front door. But I was too late ... the man had gained entry into the boy's room by then, and the household was in confusion and panic.
- Tyndale *frowning* Where do you come from?
- Enid Not far at all. I live in a comfy tent, out in the fields. I'm an anthropologist-cum-archaeologist. Neolithic studies. Did you know that the original settlers hereabouts were very --
- Tyndale *annoyed* No, no no! I mean, where are you from originally? I can't pick your accent. You're not English.
- Holly She's an Australian, from Sydney, Inspector Tyndale. And we're jolly lucky that she arrived when she did. It was Mrs Finchett who phoned up during the emergency.
- Enid Miss Holly said that it had an "ethereal" feel to it, and she's quite right. That poor old man who's just been carted off by the amboes undoubtedly holds the key. Luckily, Miss Holly managed to record a very long monologue on a u-beaut contraption which saves the vocalizations of the present for posterity. Pretty snazzy!
- Tyndale *officious* We'll need to take that voice-recorder with us, as evidence.
- Holly Yes. That's why I mentioned my *patron*. He's absolutely the one man on Earth able to translate the gobbledegook which the

patient has spouted onto the tape. So, if the machine goes, then Malcolm Buxton must go with it.

Gosh! I'll bet that this all ties in with the magic boat I saw when I was 14, just as Margaret left us for the first time.

*Gordon is alert, keen.*

Gordon Are you trying to tell me, beautiful maiden, that the chap who was inadvertently shot by Toby's arrow was one of your swan boat people?

*Holly nods her head vigorously.*

Holly Of course I am. I thought you realized that. You saw Peter's film. You must have recognized him. Well, not the actual "man", but one very like.

Tyndale *trying to follow* Swan boat? What film? Would anyone care to enlighten me, here?

Gordon Over the past 15-odd years, some people were abducted from the banks of the river by a clan who may well exist over several time-spans. The chap who was just carted away is part of that clan.  
  
This isn't just about the environs of the Thames River. It's as big as the Universe ...

*Tyndale, open-mouthed, looks around at Sergeant Dynon, who shrugs uninterestedly.*

Tyndale *careful* Are you now offering me spacemen? Martians? Captain Marvel?

*Gordon lets out a loud crack of laughter.*

Gordon *waving his finger* Oh, now that's much funnier than anything ***I've*** uttered so far.

Holly No, I don't believe that he's actually attempting humour, Gordon.

Enid Perhaps I can explain.

As an example, the natives of New Guinea were cut off from our civilization for centuries due to the almost impenetrable barrier of the rain forest. Other cultures were not physically protected in this

way.

My guess is that the sub-world to which this old man belongs is a throw-back to another time. Unable to bear contact with the modern world, these late Stone Age people have drifted off into their own ethos. It's a nether region of sacred sites retained, a network of kinship, faith and duty, and a belief-structure based solely on ancestor worship and totemism.

Holly *nodding*

In the 1920's, Marcus Wilde termed it "Genesis Sacroretigraphy".

Tyndale *now utterly confused*

What in the name of all that's wonderful is ***that?***

Holly

Well, let me see how to put this.

It's the explanation of physical entities and events through Creation myth and spirituality. Does that sound confusing? It's the oral history of a people, stretching back over perhaps thousands of years. Either the apical ancestor ***created*** the mountain range (say), or more likely, he ***became*** that range.

Enid *nods*

In my own country, the name generally given to this phenomenon is "The Hallowpast".

*Malcolm and Helene have arrived. They have been standing for some time at a distance. Now the camera brings Enid into the foreground, with the Buxtons slightly behind.*

Malcolm

What you call the "Hallowpast", dear lady, the ancient Cornish people called "M'Coure".

Enid *rooted to the spot* ... M'Coure ...

*As Enid speaks, dramatic music sweeps over the scene. Enid is in foreground still.*

END OF SCENE

END OF ACT II



## ACT III

### III, Scene i: 1950, Segler's Landing, Toby's Bedroom, Next Morning

*A very pretty policewoman has accompanied Sergeant Dynon to Segler's Landing. They look about them in wonderment. This pair, along with Judith and Toby are all congregated in Toby's bedroom. Sergeant Dynon will constantly make notes in, or refer to, his incident book.*

*Dynon impressed*            I say! This is a corker of a bedroom! You're a very lucky boy indeed.

*Toby smiles broadly. He is holding Judith's hand.*

*Dynon jocular*                I could almost imagine that a herd of bison will wander through the doorway at any moment.

*Judith smiling fondly*        Cowboys and Indians. The children are always playing at it.

*Dynon looking about in awe*        Rather! So, Toby, you keep a supply of arrows, do you? And you practise shooting them at that target there?

*Toby*                                That's right. I'm pretty good at it really.

*Dynon warning*                Splendid! And you know that you must exercise the utmost care? Never, ever point your arrows at your brother or sister, will you?

*Toby firmly*                      Oh no, Sir! I never, ever would.

*Judith supportive*             Toby is usually so good with his --

*Dynon taking charge*        Mrs Allendale, Constable Martin will take you to the sitting room for a cup of tea and a quiet chat. Sorry to be blunt, but I must interview this young man without your popping in a word here or there. Toby must tell me in his very own words what took place

here last evening. No offence intended, of course.

Now, you won't mind staying with me while Mummy and Constable Martin wander off for a natter, will you? We'll talk boy-stuff without the ladies being present.

*Doubtful, Toby shakes his head. Judith is more doubtful. She looks back longingly as the policewoman shepherds her from the room.*

Dynon *smiling*  
*reassuringly*

Good! Now it's just us two chaps. Much easier ...

So, starting from when you came upstairs to bed, take me through exactly what happened, Toby. And remember, you must be Honest Injun with me, for I'll be writing all this down.

*As Toby tries to rewind his memory, so that he can relive the horrible events which took place on the previous night, he wafts about the room, touching this, fingering that, and pointing to various objects as the little narrative progresses.*

Toby

W-e-l-l ...

I remember whittling a little branch from a tree. That's what I do when I'm supposed to be in bed. If you get a nice, straight piece of wood, all you have to do is knife the end of it into a sharp point. Oh, don't worry! It isn't really a knife that I use. Mummy won't let me have one.

*[Whispers, conspiratorial]*

Mrs Enid has a tent out in the fields, and I run over there sometimes to help her dig for fossils and junk. And she gave me a sort of razor made of flint. It's wizard!

*[Normal voice]*

I don't have fletching on my arrows or anything like that ... Daddy said that I wouldn't need fletching because I always stand so close to the bulls-eye.

At any rate, I was calling out, I suppose, because Mummy told me again for the umpteenth time to go to bed. But the visitors were



because she's Daddy's other sister.

Dynon Quite! Anything strange or mysterious happened over the last few days that seemed odd to you? Think carefully, now.

Toby *thinking deeply* I can't think of anything. Just Auntie Margaret turning up dripping wet on the landing. And Daddy crying. That's the only thing.

Dynon *confused* But you'd be used to seeing your Aunt about the place, wouldn't you? I mean --

Toby *excited* That **was** odd, Sir.

It was all very thrilling. We were playing in the garden when we saw her. She'd been dumped in the river and swam up to our landing. Then she walked about talking to us. But she was dripping wet. Mrs Quigley got into quite a fluff.

Now here's something else strange that you might like me to tell you about. Daddy never, ever cries. But when he saw Auntie Margaret, he quite broke down. That's what Mummy said to Aunt Holly: "Roger quite broke down". So, that made me think that things were pretty grim. I was a bit worried about it all, because men aren't supposed to cry, are they?

Dynon *thoughtful* Well, if the situation calls for it. I cry when a dog has to be put to sleep ... There are moments ...

*[Dynon sits on the bed, the better to talk straight with Toby]*

Look here, Toby! Are you saying that you'd never met your Auntie until that time?

Toby That's right.

Dynon Where had she been?

Toby I don't really know ... I think that she was kidnapped by pirates, on the river ...

Dynon I see. Pirates.

And when did she swim up to the landing? Was that recent?

Toby I'm not sure when it was. Not yesterday. Perhaps the day before, or the day before that.

She was jolly nice, and very friendly. Not like a grown-up at all. But then she had to go away again. It was bad luck, really.

*Dynon frowns deeply. Then he forces a smile, and pats Toby on the shoulder.*

Dynon Thank you, young man. That was very straight-forward.

Now, it may come about that you'll need to tell that story again to another man ... a serious man called "a magistrate". If that comes about, I'll try and be there to stand beside you. But you must just tell the magistrate just what you've told to me. That was a fine piece of evidence, Toby and you'll be a top-notch witness when the time comes. If it comes ...

*Dynon and Toby shake hands solemnly. Then Dynon ruffles Toby's hair and leaves the room.*

END OF SCENE

### **III, Scene ii: 1950, Segler's Landing, The Garden, That Afternoon**

*Judith and Mrs Quigley stand on a raised ledge in the garden, looking out towards the river, in some anxiety. They each hold the hand of Raine and Laurence.*

Judith *calling anxiously* Toby! Toby! You were told to stay within my eyesight. Where are you?

Toby *voice-off calling* I'm at the river's edge, Mummy. I've found that man's little boat. The man I shot, I mean.

END OF SCENE

**III, Scene iii: 1950, Segler's Landing, Roger Allendale's Study**

*Roger works in his study. The phone rings, and he picks up the receiver.*

Roger *on the phone* Hello?

Tyndale *voice-off* Good afternoon, Mr Allendale. Inspector Tyndale here.

Roger Ah! Inspector ...

Tyndale *voice-off* Just a quick call to let you know that the elderly chap who broke into your son's bedroom last evening is out of danger. I've contacted the people at the hospital, and he seems to be over the worst of his little injury.

Roger *relieved* Ah! That's good news, indeed.

Tyndale *voice-off* And about your son ... In any event, there was absolutely no case for your Toby to answer. It was an accident (pure and simple) caused by the shock of seeing a malefactor in his room attempting to abduct him.

In our view, the boy's completely innocent. No charges at all will be laid. The case (such as it was) is officially closed.

*Roger closes his eyes in sheer relief.*

Roger *thankful* Splendid! I mean, I knew that there could be no other finding, but still ...

Tyndale *voice-off* Of course. This incident may have nothing at all to do with the Markinson business. But you never know. Therefore, just at this moment, I can't promise that we shan't be back for more questioning. Sorry ... bit of a bore for you, I realize that. Must see that the job is performed thoroughly. You'll understand that.

Roger *frowning* Certainly. Ah ... before you ring off ... you said "the Markinson business" ... what exactly is that all about?

Tyndale *voice-off* Miss Holly and Mr Pendlebury will have it that all these many loose threads are part of one and the same tapestry ... Maybe they're right ... Your sister Margaret's disappearance, the little boat, the

old man in your son's room, the unexplained departure of young Markinson ... All seems to tie in, according to --

Roger *trembling* Just hold on a minute, will you? Did you interview the family? The Markinsons?

Tyndale *voice-off* Why, yes.

*Roger seems to be suddenly appalled by some thought which has crossed his mind. He is clearly devastated by his imaginings, looking about in a lost, searching way.*

Tyndale *voice-off* Hello? I say, are you still there, Allendale?

Roger *far-off voice* Is there any chance that the boy was adopted? Not their natural son?

Tyndale *voice-off, surprised* Yes. As it happens, you're spot on.

*Roger is now utterly and thoroughly appalled. The colour drains from his face.*

Roger *whispers* Oh my God!

*[Aloud]*

And ... do you include in this list of connected events my wrongful arrest for the murder of my father?

Tyndale *voice-off, hedging* Well, yes ... if you must ... there may be a vague connection there as well. But I can fully sympathize with you if you'd rather not drag that up --

Roger *insistent* You'd better rush over here, Inspector. I've something very dire to relay to you.

Tyndale *voice-off, surprised* That's not possible, I'm afraid. I'll send Dynon to you immediately. He's a very reliable, responsible chap.

*Without another word, Roger, who has become quite pale and exhausted, hangs up the receiver.*

END OF SCENE

### III, Scene iv: 1950, Segler's Landing, The Library

*Enid and Malcolm Buxton have been ensconced in the library, trying to translate Elkin's supposed dying words from Peter Lannscombe's tape recorder. Elkin's voice, in one-tone monologue drones on, as the two scribes write furiously. His words are completely unintelligible to us.*

*Extremely tired, Buxton stops, listening intently to Elkin's voice, then shakes his head in an annoyed fashion. He makes a disgusted sound as he chucks his pen onto the table.*

Buxton                      Heard enough?

Enid                            I think so.

*With a gusty sigh, Buxton leans over to switch off the droning voice.*

Buxton                      That old chap was a trifle repetitive. By my reckoning, we heard three different summations of the same tale.

*Enid nods, making some margin notes. Then she begins to read her notes.*

Buxton                      Anyway ... he's explained a great deal. It's starting to make sense

...

Enid                            He made the place (what was it called, now?) "Westania" sound bewt.

Buxton                      "Bewt" indeed. We'd better get the others in.

*Buxton stands, stretches, then moves to the door.*

END OF SCENE

#### Who is who, where are they and what is about to happen?

Camera here will take a short break to quickly sum-up the various positions of the major players.

- Judith and Mrs Quigley are watching all three children (all wearing the usual Red Indian gear) investigating Elkin's little swan boat which is hidden among reeds along the river shore, where the towpath veers off into a field.
- Malcolm Buxton and Enid Finchett are ensconced in the library with Buxton about to leave



### III, Scene vi: 1950, Segler's Landing, The Library

*Sergeant Walter Dynon is already standing in the library, and Enid is still seated as we left her.*

*Meanwhile, Roger is busy ushering the necessary players into the library. He is obviously tense, upset and distraught. The other players, as Roger ushers them in, look puzzled. They all look from one to the other with the expected "What is this all about? Do you know?" kind of looks and questions.*

Those now present as Roger closes the door (in deliberate fashion) are:--

- Roger Allendale
- Walter Dynon
- Enid Finchett
- Malcolm Buxton
- Helene Buxton
- Holly Allendale
- Gordon Pendlebury

*Helene and Holly both sit, whilst all the men stand about (as stated, Enid is already seated).*

Roger                                I know what's happened. I know what this is all about.

*There is a disquieting murmur amongst Roger's audience.*

Roger                                Up until Inspector Tyndale's phone call just now, I had no idea that the boy who was abducted some days ago is Neil Markinson, of Pitch. And when the Inspector off-handily mentioned it ... The pieces literally fell into place in my brain.

*Roger is unable to continue. He leans on the table, shaking. The members of his audience are dumbfounded, except for the policeman.*

Dynon                                May I fetch you a drink, Sir? Whiskey? Rum?

*Roger stirs, trying to recover his poise.*

Roger                                Yes, yes ... please ...

Helene *very quietly*            I'll take care of it, Sergeant.

*Helene dashes from the room. Holly turns in her seat. She has a commanding view of the garden. A maid carries out a tray of cakes and lemonade towards a shaded table, where Judith and Mrs Quigley*

*organize the children. Toby has obviously decreed that he and his siblings must sit cross-legged on the seats. This is an easy effort for Toby and Raine, but dear little Laurence struggles somewhat. Holly smiles in sympathy with her sweet nephew.*

*Otherwise, there is a restlessness, as the camera pans around the concerned faces, until Helene returns with the drink. Meanwhile, Roger continues, with his drink before him, and Helene resumes her seat.*

Roger                      This is going to sound ridiculous ...

During my murder trial, Frank Darcy organized for a hypnotist (Harle de Nairi, his name was) to put me under in order that I could relive that ghastly night when Father was murdered. He used a gold watch and chain.

*[Here, Roger mimes the movement of a pendulum]*

Of course, that's what got me off. Thank Heavens!

Once I had been freed, I headed to France and found this de Nairi fellow to beg him to put me under again. Beforehand, I had given him a list of questions to ask me, during the hypnosis. This he did.

*Roger downs the whiskey, then wipes his lips with his neatly-folded handkerchief.*

Roger                      Father and I had been fighting over his lascivious, evil seduction of a beautiful girl. He believed that as a widower, he was free to play the field. But this ravishment must have happened when Mother was still very much alive.

The girl had died in the following year, after giving birth to a son. That little boy was adopted by the Markinsons, and **he's** the lad who's just gone missing. My half-brother, as it were. Your's too, Holly.

*Roger's announcement causes a resounding reaction from all the others in the library. The following will be accompanied by a flashback, to break up the library scene a tad (as it is rather long).*

Roger                      Back to the night of the murder, as Monsieur de Nairi interpreted it. I'd been bellowing at Father in the light of the girl's death. I

had accused him of fathering that baby. I told him that now he was responsible for the child and must atone for his wrong doing.

Father was shouting that it was none of my business, that he must do nothing, that he was master of his destiny and that I should shut my trap. Words to that effect.

Then a man appeared. Where he came from, I know not. He looked just like that old boy whom Toby very nearly killed. Same sort of ghastly rig-out.

It was as if Father knew him. They stared at each other. Then the man picked up a marble paperweight and proceeded to strike Father repeatedly on the head. I jumped in to save Father, and that's when I, too, was struck. Without Monsieur de Nairi, I'd never have recalled any of that. Somehow, I'd blotted it out.

This bit I remember, oh! so well! ...

On my revival, I was confronted by the police. I'd been fighting with Father. Our shouting had been heard by everybody, I should think. The doctor whom the police brought with them gave me the once-over and declared that I'd not been coshed on the head. "Neither bump nor scratch," he announced. I thought that I'd perhaps become unhinged, and murdered Father in a fit of white anger. My fingerprints were on the paperweight, after all. What was I to think ...

*At this point, Roger flops into a chair, holding his face in his hands. He cannot continue.*

Buxton

I may be able to put things into perspective for you, Allendale. As the old boy in Toby's room lay dying, he ranted on and on in that ancient Cornish tongue. As you know, we managed to get his rabbitings recorded onto Lannscombe's machine. Mrs Finchett and I have been busy today transcribing and abridging same.

As dying speeches go, it's a dilly!

Dynon *apologetic*

Excuse me, Sir. But the elderly gentleman actually lived. We had

notification from the hospital this morning.

Buxton *ironic*

Quite! I suppose it's good news, depending on your point of view.

Either way, the old boy talked about the "old times".

*[Buxton reads from his notes]*

There were seven brothers, all from Cornwall. They were Morden, Segler, Keddring, Tancred, Elkin, Amon and Ebridge.

*Roger becomes alert, snapping his fingers.*

Roger

Tancred! That was the name of the chap who did for Father.

Buxton *nods*

And Elkin the name of Toby's target. Correct.

Orphaned since the birth of Ebridge, these lads were harried out of Cornwall by the Celts.

Helene

Are you sure that's what he said?

Enid *nods quickly*

"Kelta". That's what he said ... Dinky-di.

Gordon *keen*

And I 'd like to lay a tenner on the possibility that Miss Clara Leagrave's swain was one or other of these brothers, too. He was described to me as a hobbledehoy in old-fashioned garb.

Helene

Gosh! That could very well be! ... Sorry, dear, do go on.

Buxton

It seems that they fled Cornwall, these likely lads, and moved North-East up to the Thames. They constructed a raft of sorts, then pushed on down the river to this place. To Segler's Landing.

Gordon *shakes head in disbelief*

I understood that the "Segler" of Segler's Landing fame was some 17th or 18th century figure. Apparently not.

Dynon *frowning*

But that must mean that they trooped from Cornwall to Devon to Somerset then through Wiltshire, then on to Oxfordshire. Is that possible? Seven little boys?

Buxton

They made their home in this area. It had for them the three most important features: its altitude provided a good look-out, there was plenty of water, and the ground was well-drained. They lived

here, the seven boys, with all that they possessed in the world. This accumulated wealth had been carted about in rough leather or jute bags.

Helene *wondering* Wealth? Do you mean gold ... or jewels ... ?

Enid Their goods consisted of the bones of their ancestors. To them, these were the most precious objects on the face of the Earth.

Roger *astounded* Bones?

Buxton Elkin in his spoken memoirs could not have been more imperative about the essential importance of correct burial and reburial of the ancestral remains. Ceremony upon ceremony surrounded these wretched bones. It was a daily and constant care.

*Buxton stops reading, to look at Helene.*

Buxton *very tired* My love, do you think that we might have a drink and some nibbly things?

~~~~~ **Break** ~~~~~

The table is now littered with glasses in various states of emptiness, and plates or bowls of nuts, dried fruits, cheese and biscuits. All the players are sitting about at their ease now. Even Roger is more convivial. Gordon is reading Buxton's notes, and passing them over (page by page) to Dynon. Enid is reviewing her notes.

Gordon I'm trying to think of – Methuselah! Lived for hundreds of years. Well, these river men put him to shame, don't they? How old must they be?

Nobody has an answer for Gordon. There are shrugs. It is all too hard to take in.

Dynon *puzzled* I still don't see how these old people fit in at all with the weird goings-on on the river.

Helene and Holly instantly agree. Without looking up from her pages, Enid responds.

Enid I can explain it. If you have a couple of minnies.

Helene *carefully* "Minnies?" I'm not sure --

Enid Sorry. Minutes.

Enid gropes about on the floor for her bag, grunts as she hauls it up, then fossicks about for an old ivory-coloured velum envelope, muttering as she does so. Enid tosses the envelope across the table to Walter Dynon. As the surprised sergeant pulls out an aged photograph of a cricketer from the 1930's (he is also a native Australian), Enid briefly explains. Others have the photograph passed to them as the narrative unfolds.

The Australian cricketer stands proudly in his cricket strip, wearing leg padding, a baggy green cap and with his cricket bat tucked under his arm.

Enid Albert Pitch. He was the only fella in the 1932 Australian cricket eleven which visited your fair land to vie for The Ashes. His surname was given to him as a remembrance of his boss's birthplace, just down the river.

So, this cricketer made a visit to Pitch, as a kind of misguided pilgrimage. He became drunk at the local hostelry -- wound up in a punch-up with some local thugs. The latter took from the comatose Albert some bits and pieces of memorabilia, knowing that they were important to Albert, but they later chucked these away in the vicinity of Segler's Landing. I'm pretty sure that's what happened anyway.

Roger rises and walks to the window. Buxton joins him.

Buxton *staring out* Relics, I suppose, that were presumed to hold mystical properties.

Enid Yes. One of the pieces was a sacred relic, part of an opalized skull. It should not have ever been moved from its sacred site in the Australian bush, let alone dragged all the way to England. Without going into too much detail, it became a key which would allow the people of Westania to escape their impenetrable barrier that separated them from our world.

Except for Buxton, there is complete consternation in the room.

Dynon *at sea* What?

Buxton You'll remember, Holly, the woman who drove the swan boat, and who spoke of you with disdain.

Holly *also at sea* Yes, of course.

Buxton It was her daughter who picked up the sacred relic at some later date. This allowed her to wander out of the fog (becoming the very first of the Westanians to do so) and onto Segler's Landing. And she was seduced, ravished by your father, Holly: by William Allendale. Their little son (your half-brother) was adopted by the Markinsons, then given the name of Neil. In simple terms, Westania was Segler's ancient world which did not evolve, as our's did. As Enid says: the cricketer's stolen relic opened the unopenable door.

Holly bursts into tears. This causes a great deal of discomfit, especially amongst the gentlemen. Gordon makes an attempt of sorts to comfort Holly.

Helene *firmly* I think we'd better go. It's getting late. We're all a little overwrought. A good night's sleep and ...

END OF SCENE

III, Scene vii: 1950, Segler's Landing, The Garden, Near The River, Evening

The sun is still shining in the long twilight of Summer. Enid has already made her farewells, returning to her tent.

Helene and Judith kiss each other goodbye next to Buxton's car. Buxton and Gordon shake hands. Holly leaves the house, clutching a dainty handkerchief, and smiling bravely. Gordon slings his arm around Holly's shoulders, holding her to his side. Dynon wanders about, shaking hands with

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everyone. We hear skat words, indicating that they will all have a sleep on it and make their plans in the morning. Roger stands on the steps which lead down to the drive, smiling fondly, his hands deeply pushed into his trouser pockets.

On the lawn, Raine and Laurence scamper about, while Mrs Quigley watches them. Then, Mrs Quigley turns to where she last saw Toby. He is playing once again near the boat, as if it is a magnet, drawing him to it.

Mrs Quigley *to herself* Oh, drat! That tiresome boy wanted to show the boat to that policeman.

Mrs Quigley turns to watch the folks getting into their cars. Then she turns back towards the little boat. There is Toby's warrior headdress and other clothes, all lying randomly on the ground near the boat. But Toby seems to have disappeared. She bustles down to the riverside.

Mrs Quigley *deeply alarmed* Toby? Toby? Stop playing games now! Toby?

Back to the departing guests. They hear a blood-curdling scream from Mrs Quigley.

END OF SCENE

III, Scene viii: 1950, Enid's Tent At The Dig Nearby To Segler's Landing

Enid is found in her tent, forcing herself to overcome her flustered state. In a very orderly way (speaking to Trader, or then Sarah all the time) she gathers her bits and pieces. These include a host of artefacts from Australia. She picks this and that from her collection, opening drawers and boxes in a very methodical fashion, at complete odds with her seeming ramshackle approach to life. The camera focuses on a pottery jar filled with many small, sharp arrows, of the kind which Toby had used to such effect against Elkin. We can see Enid gathering her artefacts behind these arrows. The very last thing she will do (when leaving the tent with Sarah) is to reach towards the camera, grasping these arrows and taking them.

All this paraphernalia is stuffed into her capacious jute shoulder bag.

So, as all this goes forward, Enid chatters to the spirit of her late husband, Trader. In the background, we vaguely hear the terrified shouts, commands and questions of the others (in relation to Toby's disappearance).

Enid Who have we got, Trader, assuming that we'll have to push off for Westania? It'll have to be seven. They deal in sevens in Westania. Myself, one.

That newspaperman will be champing at the bit. That's two.

And the pretty Allendale girl who loves him: three.

The Professor and his stylish wife. He's a dark one, but very knowledgeable. Must have them. Five.

[Sighs long and hard]

Who else, Trader? Oh, the copper, the Sergeant. He'll be a definite starter. But that's only six. Bugger!

Roger? No. His head's up his bum. His wife is impossible. What about the Quigley woman? No, she'll be required to care for the mother. Listen to that wailing! Reminds me of fruit bats ticking each other off.

Bugger, Trader! I need a seventh person ... Oh well ...

Enid starts. A young flat-chested teenage girl, with a sweet face and long dark plaits, stands hesitantly at the tent flap. She is Sarah Markinson, the birth-daughter of the Markinsons.

Sarah I'm sorry if I gave you a fright. Mrs Finchett, is it? I'm Sarah Markinson.

Enid stares at the girl for a moment, then rushes forward, taking her hand.

Enid Hello, Darl. It's your brother who's been whisked-off from the banks of the river?

Sarah That's right. I'm desperate to find him. People are saying that you and the police are onto something.

Enid I think I've got everything. We'd better join the others. Another

boy is now missing, from what I can gather. Screams and lamentations ...

Sarah *nearly crying* This is all getting so horrible ...

Enid takes Sarah's hand again, leading her out of the tent. Outside, Enid turns back, to touch and stroke the tent-flap.

Enid *thoughtful* You know that feeling when you've packed and checked your belongings as you leave a hotel, and you take one last look just in case. And that thought whiffles through your mind that you'll never see this room again ...

Sarah I always take a sketch of any room I stay in. That way, I've always retained a clear memory of it.

Mrs Finchett, what I wanted to ask you was --

Enid drags the girl along, at the run. The camera backs right away and up, to take in the entire area. The atmosphere now is one of nervous activity. The last light of twilight is being sucked away, but there is just enough light left for us to make out the hubbub surrounding Elkin's boat. Remember that the camera is looking down on the scene from on high. Everyone talks at once, in high alt. There is a jumble of words.

- *Roger is attempting to stand up in Elkin's boat, but only manages to nearly tip it over. He is urged by the others to disembark immediately.*
- *Judith is hysterical, and is led away by Mrs Quigley, who needs to keep the other two children under her eye, whilst at the same time comforting the overcome mother.*
- *Holly and Helene are talking non-stop about how dreadful it is that Toby has been abducted, and without a stitch of clothing (judging by the garments left on the riverbank).*
- *Roger shouts out in total despair for his son.*
- *Gordon and Dynon are trying to work-out how they can get the boat to behave in the "accepted" way.*
- *Buxton tries to make himself heard. He is adamant that they cannot be travelling down the Thames without being able to deviate (how he does not know) towards this mystical Westania.*

short to place the object around Dynon's neck, so Buxton helps her. The only one not wearing Australian jewellery (apart from Elkin) is Sarah. The others look at the girl in a puzzled way.

Elkin begins to yatter away to Enid, who answers him randomly in the strange lingo of Westania.

Enid *when she can put-off Elkin's attentions* This is Sarah Markinson. She will be able to identify Neil in Westania, since none of us has ever seen him. We'll leave her "under" for just a minute or two.

Now, listen. These bits of Australiana you're wearing are your link to the Hallowpast, and therefore (hopefully) to M'Coure.

Otherwise, we'll all just wander about in Westania, forgetting our real world, and never able to come home. We're going there for Toby, and Neil. Getting the others back may prove more difficult.

Helene *anxious* We have two lovely little girls at home.

Dynon *conscience-stricken* My Sylvia's expecting her first. I should really not be going on this jaunt.

Enid pats his hand but says nothing in regard to the wisdom of the trip.

Enid Ladies and Gentlemen, we'll need to collate a list of our skills and talents. I'm especially thinking of any special tricks you gents might have acquired during the War. Mr Pendlebury?

Gordon Ropes and boats, for me, Mrs Finchett. Lighthouses, buoys, rocky seashores and all things maritime.

I joined the Royal Navy at the start of hostilities. I was just a kid of 20. Midshipman. But I'd attained the rank of Sub-Lieutenant by the time it was all over.

Dynon That sounds interesting. Saw a bit of the world, did you?

Gordon Rather! But you know what they say ... I saw much more of the sea than of anything else.

Dynon Which theatres?

Gordon *shrugs* Oh ... the North Atlantic, of course. A great deal of time in the

Mediterranean. And ... what's the name of that other ocean ...?

Dynon *worried*

Do you know ... I can't for the life of me remember.

Enid *somewhat
annoyed*

No imagination. A copper and a journo ... I'll have to give them a top-up.

Enid fossicks about in her bag, then silently hands out to Gordon and Dynon a hand-axe each. This solves the problem of fading memory.

Gordon

Ah, yes! The Pacific Ocean. Hell of a big spread is the Pacific. But the islands and so on are quite lovely, whenever we made landfall.

And you?

Dynon *reminiscing*

North Africa. Army Corporal. Hot, sandy and bloody. Sorry for the language. Excuse me, ladies.

To be brutally frank, I thought it was vile, rank. Didn't enjoy myself at all.

Buxton *sour*

Just as well. You weren't there to raise the amusement quota.

Gordon

And what about yourself, Professor Buxton? I mean, during the War years?

Malcolm's jaw tightens. He does not answer immediately.

Buxton *tightly*

For one reason or another, I wound up in the Air Force. I was a Squadron Leader.

Look, I desperately wanted to fly bombers over Germany at the height of our deadliest attacks. However, the wiser heads of our Defence Department at the time dictated that chaps like me (academics and so forth) might not serve overseas in active duty. Thus, I was chained to English soil, without once risking my life. Had to watch crew after crew of brave men taking off, never to return. Had to see eager young lads take up the cudgels to replace them, only to go the same way.

But I was a distinguished man of letters, and so might not follow

them.

Gordon Well, that makes sense. You must hang on to the intelligentsia when the proverbial manure hits the proverbial fan.

Buxton *quite cross* Poppycock! I can see a genuine need for doctors, engineers and men of that ilk. But a confounded Professor of Ancient Language! What earthly good was I to the War effort? What a disgrace!

Buxton subsides into gloom. Helene leans her head on his chest, trying to comfort him.

Buxton *shamefaced* I'm sorry to have been so filthy just now. I really have so much to be grateful for.

I was stationed in the Hedley Valley, at the Air Force base there. I had previously been introduced to a very beautiful, witty young lady called Helene Rylance. You'll remember that, Holly. And here she was again, this lovely English lady, serving as an Airforce woman on my very base. We paired-off straight away and became engaged. That meant ... well, I can't deny that I was still as keen as mustard to fly, even despite having pledged my troth to this lovely girl.

Dynon *to himself* Well, your "amusement quota" didn't give you any sleepless nights. That's a relief, that is!

Enid Trader died on the Kokoda Trail. I miss him. Great archaeologist ...

The camera moves back to take in the impressive first sight of Westania.

| |
|----------------------------------|
| Now we resurrect ACT I, Scene v. |
|----------------------------------|

The boat rounds a bend in the river. We hear gasps of amazement from six of our seven passengers (Sarah is still in a trance) as we see from behind trees, willows, bridges, and so on, a few great buildings, like castle/henges, alight with lanterns, flambeaux and lamps. It is beautiful and wonderful. The boat is heading towards that sight. Repeat that grand exultant music of the end of

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ACT I, Scene v. That music builds and becomes utterly overpowering as the mystic boat carries our friends and Elkin into the protection of Westania.

END OF SCENE

END OF ACT III

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ACT IV

IV, Scene i: Alighting From The Swan Boat, Westania, Day #1

Attire:

Apart from Enid, the passengers scurried aboard the swan boat dressed as they were that afternoon. So Gordon and Malcolm wear comfortable suit and tie, whilst Walter is in his normal police uniform (that of a sergeant). Holly is a vision in a bright floral frock, with full skirt and tulle stiffened petticoat. Helene is elegant and soignée in a Dior fitted suit (beige) which is very stylish. Both of the ladies wear pretty hats and are shod in silk stockings and high-heel shoes.

Sarah had visited Enid wearing a dirndl skirt and peasant blouse with cardigan and school shoes. Enid herself had changed from one ridiculous, nondescript outfit into another, just as bad. However, it later proves that these garments (with their hidden pockets, fobs and so on) contained a wealth of useful appurtenances.

The passengers on the swan boat are in awe. Enid registers a startled nervous twitch (she has remembered something) and quickly attaches a bangle (formed from fossilized emu egg) around Sarah's wrist. Like the others, Sarah is evidently mightily impressed by the vision of splendour before her.

As they approach what passes for a dock, it can be observed that a great attempt has been made to keep this entrance to Westania attractive and free from litter, or any kind of impediment.

Suddenly, Elkin leaps over the side, swimming and pushing the swan boat into its berth. He scrambles ashore, tying the swan boat to a thick tree root using stout jute rope. It seems that, within the environs of Westania, Elkin can make himself understood. Dripping wet, Elkin addresses the startled passengers as if they were old friends.

Elkin The henge is made to look so splendid by the judicious use of mirrors which reflect the sunlight, and by flames at night. We used only to work in stone. Wiser times revealed that timber gave us more scope for height and drama.

I know that your buildings in Harshland are very grand. But we do our poor best ...

Come along! I want to feed you and give you rest. You have a very long trek to Aigh Island, where my brother holds sway. It's all of five or even six days to reach it. Tancred took the boy there, so that Segler could confront him.

Helene *panic-stricken* Surely he will not harm the boy!

Elkin *matter-of-fact* Yes, if that is what is required. But not yet ... Morden (the eldest) and we six brothers of Morden will judge him. I'm escorting you there, along with a host of other folk. Two of my brothers (Ebridge and Amon) will join us along the way. You will become very fond of them, I trust. And the beautiful sister who wastes our time. We'd be glad to be rid of her, if only she'd leave. Her family will come along, though. The boys are great fun, you'll find. Sporty! However, there is also the young man, the son of the daughter of Sirhana and Segler. He shows such great promise.

The passengers, still standing about in the boat, are deeply shocked at hearing this, and all speak at once:-

| Gordon | Helene | Holly | Buxton | Walter |
|---|---|--|--|---|
| Blimey! Segler's daughter, was she? But that's preposterous! | You can't harm Toby. He's only a child! | Neil? Do you mean Neil? That would make him Segler's grandson, surely? | For God's sake! Markinson is Segler's grandson? | I'd have to make note of any undue cruelty to a child. Take a mighty dim view of that sort of |

| | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|-----------|
| | | | | carry-on. |
|--|--|--|--|-----------|

In alarm, Elkin signals to the English people that they must not exhibit this loud expostulation.

Elkin alarmed Please, my dear folk! You will be outrageous enough here with your strange clothes ... Do not add to the grief by shouting!

You men will notice, too, that you are all very much taller than most of our men of Westania. That sets you apart. You will be shown much respect.

Dynon mutters wryly It's about ruddy time ...

Bright music played on wooden flutes greets them as they disembark. This is achieved by Elkin assisting Enid onto the dock by the simple expedient of lifting her bodily out of the boat and depositing her on the rough wooden planking. The gentlemen manage to scramble with some effort onto the dock, whilst first Enid, and then the men assist the ladies. A small crowd of men gather, but they do not speak to each other.

Malcolm Buxton looks about him, in the manner of a tourist who has happily arrived at his destination.

Buxton as if expecting a negation And I take it that we're in no danger here?

Elkin utterly calm Oh yes! There is great danger on all sides. That is why my brothers and I must accompany you all to Aigh Island.

Buxton does a double-take.

Buxton flummoxed Will ... Will you warn us when it approaches, or must we stand on our guard at all times?

Elkin, somewhat confused, has been shepherding his party of seven towards the glorious palace (which is, as he pointed out, merely a well-presented henge). Elkin spreads his arms to signify that he does not understand.

Elkin trying to reassure You are safe in Westania! We are a peaceful, lovely folk here. Be assured. You will sleep without fear.

But, the road to the island is ...

Come! I want you to sample the bounty of my country. All the foods that you will eat were grown right here in the henge. And cooked here, too.

The ground floor of the henge is set out like a spacious, sun-drenched plaza (as would be found at Noosa), where people see and are seen. The members of the party from Harshland stroll along, looking about them with delighted interest. The locals (all adults, and 95% of whom are men) gather to stare at our party. They all have the appearance of spaced-out zombies, but there is absolutely no malice or threat in their regard.

The group from Harshland arrives at food stalls. No money changes hands. The food is given out to those in need by willing helpers. They each receive a gourd bowl into which several unidentified substances are dished. Walter, hungry, dives in, watched in some trepidation by the others. He almost gobbles the food, such is his hunger. Then, when he can, he nods, giving the thumbs up sign. The others are more modified and polite in their eating habits.

As they eat, the lovely twilight gives way to night, which shows the henge in all its magnificence. Walter smokes on completion of his meal.

Dynon *to whomever* I'd better ration these. No idea where or if I'd get another pack ...
seems to be listening

Walter (smoking) spots Malcolm standing apart from the others, empty gourd in hand, looking about him with puzzled expression.

Dynon Prof, what's got your goat, then?

Buxton Two things have my "goat".

Firstly, there is a preponderance of males here. I've noted very few women amongst our resident onlookers.

Dynon Or they are in hiding.

Buxton Yes. They may well be in hiding, as you say.

Dynon And secondly?

Buxton The lanterns are anachronous.

Walter, open-mouthed, looks up and about. Many superbly crafted wood and steel lanterns hang about everywhere, at odds with the more rustic, home-made appearance of everything else in Westania.

Buxton *thoughtful* I had begun to think that we had come to visit a new and improved sect of Druids.

Dynon *surprised* Blimey! Druids? But didn't they hold unseemly ceremonies under the moon and dance about starkers?

Buxton *smirks* Not quite ...
We can see signs of just such a primitive existence all about us. But these lanterns remind me strongly of 18th century carriage lamps, or some such thing. Quite wrong for a Druidical establishment.

Malcolm Buxton begins to stroll off, with Walter in step beside him. Walter makes a long "Ahhhh" sound. He is in awe of the professor but is inquisitive and needs to find out what's going on.

Dynon About the women ... perhaps they are "comfort" slaves, Sir, like them Japs had during the War.

Buxton I certainly hope not, Dynon. This boy won't be taking any comfort from them.

Dynon No! Not bally likely ... And another thing ... no children.

Buxton Yes ... Yes, I'd thought that, too. Very odd ...
You'd expect a gang of lads to have been on hand to gawk at us upon our arrival.

🔊🔊🔊🔊🔊🔊🔊🔊🔊🔊🔊🔊🔊🔊🔊🔊 **Break** 🔊🔊🔊🔊🔊🔊🔊🔊🔊🔊🔊🔊🔊🔊🔊🔊

Gordon and Helene wander off on their own and see an obvious altar with pictorial suggestions that naked young women are sacrificed there. Suddenly, Helene is alarmed.

Helene *disquieted* Gosh! We aren't going to be sacrificed to a wrathful god, I trust.

likely to cats, I believe.

Holly is astounded.

Holly *unbelieving* Cats? But one doesn't shear cats!

Elkin smiles shyly. Then he retreats, calling back "Goodnight to you all" as he disappears.

END OF SCENE

IV, Scene ii: 20,000 BC The Australian Outback

The following scene depicts in glorious colours the richness and depth of the Australian bush.

We are led to believe that this "travelogue" is real. But in fact, it is part of Holly's "walkabout". The girl (named Lecky, which is as close as I can get to "Ilex") is never seen, except for her hands and her shadow. We do not see the initiation ceremony (thank goodness!) nor the wedding night (again, phew!). The camera only shows us Lecky wandering about the bush, with the companion wagtail always in view. The scenery is stunningly spectacular. The announcer is one of those BBC 1950-style female announcers, who might well be educating a room filled with children, such are her well-modulated tones.

Female Presenter Lecky had been cut on her chest and upper arms with a smooth, sharp rock. Before her wounds had bled, the elder women placed hot cinders on the cuts, to enhance the healing process. All the while, as this scarification process was undertaken, Lecky remained quiet. Some days later, she was laid in bed with Wirgeng. He was much older than Lecky, and already had three wives and many children. His body was heavily marked with the ritual scars of manhood, and he chewed soft bark as he grunted into Lecky's ear.

On the next day, Lecky wandered about in the bush, searching for her unborn child's spirit, just in case she had become an expectant mother overnight. When she found it, she would hold it secret in

IV, Scene iv: Leaving Inner Westania For The Bathing Pool, Day #2

Bright, breezy music, as if from a 1950's "Country Hour" type radio program. We see many delightful, evocative views of the Westanian scenery. The gardens, parks and woodlands are utterly superb.

Lovely, lovely, lovely!

In one of the parks stands a sumptuous, natural pool (which is crystal-clear) and is strategically and aesthetically placed amidst the gardens. Some droopy men in long gowns wander up, silently handing out square bars of soap and rough towels to our friends. Elkin gestures to the pond.

Elkin Good friends, you will need to refresh your bodies. This may be the last chance to do so until we reach the cold ocean waves. And then, we will march off, along the long path to the sea.

Helene Gentlemen, you may have first dibs in the pond. We'll clear out of the area.

Gordon *smiling* Goodoh! Thank you, ladies.

Enid *groping in her bag* Do you blokes want to have a Dad-and-Dave?

Buxton *squinting* What's that she said?

Dynon *laughs* A shave! I think she's offering you a sharpened flint from 25,000 BC.

[Sotto voce]

I'd plump for growing a beard, myself. Might be safest ...

Buxton *sucking in his breath* Yes ... I rather agree with you there ...

Gordon makes a gallant effort to hide his laughter. He calls to Enid, waving dismissively.

Gordon Thanks, Enid, but we'll let you know. Thanks all the same.

~~~~~ **Break** ~~~~~

*The ladies wander about in the garden.*

Enid *fossicking in her bag* I've brought along some arrows *à la* Toby. And I had earlier constructed bows from good old reliable yew, with sheep-gut strings. They work a treat. But these little beauties are my favourites: willow-wood slingshots. They'll fling pebbles if matters come to a head out there in Lalaland.

What else? I've got hold of some really sharp heads for spears, some small boomerangs and a bull-roarer.

Holly *impressed* A veritable arsenal!

Sarah *worried* Aren't they heavy to lug about, Mrs Finchett?

Enid No, I'm fine. Look, girls ... I think that if we make a show of trying to learn how to use these weapons, then the men will follow, and hopefully take over. You see, my problem is that if I (a mere woman, and an Aussie to boot) were to suggest to the gents how we might take up the cudgels against the unknown enemy, then --

Holly *nodding* I understand perfectly! What a good idea, Enid. I'm glad you've come on this trip so well prepared.

Helene *slyly* Particularly when we were pitched into the adventure at a moment's notice ...

Enid *delighted to be caught out* Toby's arrow precipitated so many decisions, Mrs Buxton. I pretty well guessed that we'd up against some serious stuff. The Hallowpast is chockers with many gruesome confrontations. And M'Coure'll be just the same. Same bloke, different haircut ...

Let's just say that I wanted to be very well ahead of any kind of kerfuffle that we were thrown into.

Sarah *awe-struck* And you'll really show me how to throw a boomerang?

Enid Of course.

🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀 **Break** 🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀

*Watched by Helene, Holly takes a naked swim in the river, using a bar of soap to wash herself. She hums happily and looks more than enchanting.*

*Helene, on the other hand, appears to have something on her mind. Not knowing how to broach the vexed topic with Holly, she looks about, picking at the grass with her fingertips. Finally, she glances about as a precaution, then launches into speech.*

Helene *false smile*            Holly, Malcolm and I were discussing a bit of a problem last night, with Gordon and the policeman. I'm forced to put a rather delicate question to you.

Holly *off-hand*                What's that?

Helene *taking big breath*                You're such a pretty girl. And at 28 ... One would assume ...  
You've been back and forward to Paris, and you have so many friends.

Well ... we were wondering ...

Holly *confused*                Dearest cousin, is this interview going anywhere at all?

Helene *deciding to go for broke*                The thing is ... these people are quite strange and may very well be aficionados of human sacrifice. And the most likely human sacrifice that we can think of is the ever-reliable virgin. Now, to our way of thinking (Malcolm, Gordon, Walter and myself), virgins are rather thin on the ground in these ungodly parts. So ... if you were ... if you happened still to be a ...

Holly *appalled*                It's not possible that you are asking me about the condition of my hymen, is it? You want to find out if I'm still a "virgo intacta", is that it?

Helene *apologetic*                Well, yes, actually ... yes ... Obviously, if not then there's nothing to concern us. But if you **are** untouched by man then --

Holly *confronting*                And if I am, what do you all suggest that I do about it?

Helene                                Ah! Mr Pendlebury thinks that since you both seem to be getting on so very well together ... Such very good friends ...

The thing is, Holly, that Mr Pendlebury has gallantly offered to ...

to ...

Holly *appalled* To deflower me?

Helene *rushing her speech* It's all being done for the general good. Nothing sinister nor loathsome about it, my dear. We're all worried that your innocence might well be your undoing.

*Angrily, mostly out of the camera's view, Holly surges out of the water to rescue a large, thick, woollen blanket, which she wraps around herself. In a fine temper, Holly strides up the riverbank with Helene trotting nervously along behind her. It is Malcolm and not Gordon who meets her. Gordon stands back, acutely embarrassed.*

Holly Is this serious, or are you all having a jape at my expense? Gosh! I've been propositioned by many, many men, I'll have you know. But not one of those heroic gentlemen came even close to this for crassness.

Buxton *calming* Now, Holly. This is probably for your own good.

*Holly stares at Malcolm, then closes her eyes. When she opens them, she spies Gordon looking uncomfortable, so she rounds on him.*

Holly *scathing* **My own good** ... Fine! Mr Pendlebury and I will now withdraw -- No! Malcolm! **We'll do it now.** I'm all clean and fresh. Mr Pendlebury here seems to be steeled and ready for the ordeal before him.

I shall depart with him to some private place, strip off this rough blanket, and let him revel in my nakedness.

Helene *somewhat shocked* Holly!

*Without demur, Holly marches purposefully up to the hapless Gordon, grabs his hand, and stalks off. They make for a thick copse of elders. Of a sudden, Gordon takes command, pulling away from the girl.*

Gordon *admonishing* Look here! I'm not a satyr. You don't need to do this if you're not happy with it.

Holly *waspish* It's to save my life, I understand.

Gordon Yes, actually. I think it will be.

Holly And what of Sarah? She's a virgin, too, I should imagine. Are you offering the same friendly service to her?

Gordon *snarls* Don't be foul! Sarah is a child. Enid thinks that she can protect her. But ...

This isn't easy for me either, you know, having to act like a stallion on call.

The thing is ... Enid overheard something with regard to you. It may have been to do with your marital status. I'm going to give them every indication that you're my intended wife. And if things get really sticky, then we'll have to get spliced out of hand. I'm not taking any chances with your safety.

Holly *waspish* And I'm supposed to be heartfully thankful for your manly graces.

Gordon *unhappy* Come on, Holly. Try to be kind to me. I love you, and I don't want to lose you.

*With her back to the camera, and head held high, Holly drops the blanket. Gordon is obviously immensely impressed by what he sees but is anxious not to appear too eager. After some hesitation, they go into a clinch, then lower themselves onto the blanket. There, the camera leaves them.*

~~~~~ **Break** ~~~~~

Later, Dynon comes across Gordon by the pool. Gordon is leaning against a tree, long legs stretched out, smoking in reflective ease.

Dynon clears his throat, to alert Gordon to his proximity. Gordon half looks around, giving an off-hand wave.

Dynon *carefully* I take it, then, that the lady is now out of danger?

Gordon *smiling, looking* Quite! Yes, I'd say that she now stands in no danger at all. The

out over the water "find-a-pure-one-to-sacrifice" squad will have to look elsewhere, I should imagine.

Dynon *grinning broadly* Jolly good!

Footnote: Having chosen not to shave, our three Englishmen will sport a heavy 5-o'clock shadow for the rest of Day #2.

END OF SCENE

IV, Scene v: 1950, The Argus, Ralph Cox's Desk

Ralph Cox's desk is a mess of over-flowing ashtrays, assorted discarded newspapers, dirty cups and mugs, empty bottles and so on. He is just now devouring a portion of fish and chips (presented in its customary newspaper wrapping, doused in vinegar and dredged with too much salt) as he types on an old Remington type-writer from the 1920's. As he shoves a large piece of fish into his gob, the solid black telephone (the old type that had a dialling device) rings shrilly. Negligently, Cox reaches over to pick up the receiver.

Ralph *thickly, off-hand* Hello. Cox.

Ralph Cox continues eating as he listens for a few seconds.

Ralph He's hot on the trail of young Markinson. Yes, that's right. I've had a telephone conversation with -- I'm eating lunch or breakfast, depending on the time, Sir. That late? Okay then, have it your own way. Supper, then.

Of course it's worth the effort. Listen, Sir. I've had that police inspector Tyndale jawing in my ear for the better part of 20 minutes. This story is **huge**. And I mean **huge**.

Look here! The missing people, snatched from the banks of The Thames now include the nephew of the Allendale woman who turned up wringing-wet t'other day. A 10-year-old lad, he is. The

kid had only just narrowly escaped a charge of attempted manslaughter on the old codger who'd tried to kidnap him. Even worse, someone else *has* managed to abduct the boy! How's that for starters ...

And the story gets even more thrilling, Sir. Our very own G. T. Pendlebury and a host of hangers-on (including Markinson's 14-year-old sister) have thrown dull caution to the wind and have gone off after the abductees, in a flimsy river craft, if you please.

And now *they're* all missing in action, too.

As he listens intently, Cox shovels more food into his mouth, and washes it down with a swig of beer.

Ralph

Of course, Sir. Yes, of course ...

And if we don't win the King George Trophy for Journalistic Excellence from this little lot, then my uncle is a two-headed whachama-thingy ...

END OF SCENE

IV, Scene v: The Cave, Night #2 in Outer Westania

[There is a cave directly adjacent to the roadway, such that our party is not obliged to break Elkin's strictures about staying on the road.]

This cave in which the party shelter is well-lit by a large fire and many flambeaux. It is evident that the party have eaten well and drunk to their fill. A large contingent of the dopey men servants who seem to infest Westania troop out laden with empty bowls, dishes, glass bottles and goblets.

Enid, Sarah and Holly will sleep at the far end of the cave. Walter has insisted on sleeping at the mouth of the cave alongside Elkin. Helene and Buxton are somewhat in the centre of the cave.

Gordon has been allotted a sleeping area over to the far side of the cave. He now lies on his side, propped up on his elbow, smoking in lazy fashion. Walter has come over to Gordon, to cadge a match

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for his own roll-your-own. Our three Englishmen have a good growth of 2-day stubble on their faces now.

Buxton You'll have to ration your smokes, Old Boy. Once they're gone ...

Dynon *lighting up* Unlikely to find a pretty waitress with a tray of cigarettes in Westania, I'd imagine.

Gordon I'll manage. Smoke weeds if I have to.

Buxton Dammit, they probably do dole out some kind of narcotic to these troops. I need to explain to myself why these Westanian chaps appear so drugged-out as they shamble through life.

Dynon They remind me somewhat of jazz musicians. I'm always being called into arrest same, on charges of possessing drugs of addiction.

There are chuckles all around. Walter Dynon wanders back to his bed, smoking as he goes. A few "Goodnights" waft by, and then there is quiet.

Softly, Gordon whistles the tune of a lovely, lonely torch song. Holly, sitting up and watching him, hums along with him. After a few bars of musical unison, Gordon and Holly stop, to stare at each other. Holly, still wearing her entire glamour outfit, rises, and tiptoes over to Gordon. She lies down with him, such that he can stroke and kiss her.

The camera moves graciously away.

END OF SCENE

IV, Scene vi: The Long Road From Westania To Aigh Island, Day #3

The party walk along, seemingly in total admiration of the glorious scenery. The dirt road on which our party march can be seen to wend through dale and valley, and over hills into the long distance.

But first, they come to a huge, magnificent stone archway, under which they must pass.

Elkin *voice-over*

The Gate of Forlorn. Once we have passed under it, our nerves and sinews must quicken. But please do not give way to despair: there is no need. And you must always stay on the path to the sea. If you were to drift away from it, I could not answer for the consequences ...

🎵🎵🎵🎵🎵🎵🎵🎵🎵🎵🎵 **Break** 🎵🎵🎵🎵🎵🎵🎵🎵🎵🎵🎵

The sounds of Gilbert and Sullivan erupt from over a small hill, as the party appear (trooping over it). Malcolm has a marvellous, rich baritone voice, and simply adores singing G & S. Gordon is an indifferent bass-baritone, whereas Walter's voice is rubbish, but he sings with enormous gusto. The ladies all join in, providing the instrumental highlights during and especially at the end of the song. Gordon picks up some sticks with which he pounds out the drum-roll at the end.

| |
|--|
| <p>To sit in solemn silence in a dull, dark dock, In a pestilential prison, with a life-long lock, Awaiting the sensation of a short, sharp shock, From a cheap and chippy chopper on a big black block!</p> <p>To sit in solemn silence in a dull, dark dock, In a pestilential prison, with a life-long lock, Awaiting the sensation of a short, sharp shock, From a cheap and chippy chopper on a big black block!</p> <p>A dull, dark dock, a life-long lock, A short, sharp shock, a big black block!</p> <p>To sit in solemn silence in a pestilential prison, And awaiting the sensation From a cheap and chippy chopper on a big black block!</p> |
|--|

Everyone is elated as they stride along the dirt track, enthusiastic and utterly carefree. Elkin is very delighted with the prevailing mood. He skips about with evident glee.

Enid *grins* Oh, yes. You'll have them flocking about like randy rams.

Helene *haughty* I don't know that that is a thoroughly refreshing thought.

Buxton Would this be a thoroughly appropriate discussion for Sarah's maiden ears, do you think?

Enid smiles kindly on Sarah, patting her on the upper arm. She then takes the sharp Australian spear points, instructing Sarah in how to attach them to the spear shafts gathered by the men, then they all have a mock throw of these spears.

~~~~~ **Break** ~~~~~

*The camera returns to focus on the lovely tree, in which the rufus birds roost. One by one, the birds stand up high, spreading their wings, chirruping sweetly as they do so. Then, from this tree, and from all the others around about, rufus birds rise slowly into the air, beating their wings with graceful ease.*

~~~~~ **Break** ~~~~~

The party have gathered-up the finished spears. These have been shared up between the group. Then Elkin points dramatically into the sky. As if a flotilla of ships, a huge flock of rufus birds sweep across the sky, some approaching the road to the sea. Walter Dynon's jaw drops.

Dynon *whispers* Sweet Mary, Mother of God!

~~~~~ **Break** ~~~~~

*Using the slingshots that Enid made from natural organic matter using Australian native stone tools, the English folk and Enid fire small pebbles at the troublesome rufus birds as they flutter over them. The pebble attack must continue during the following speeches and action. There are shouts of*

*delight or disappointment, according to the success or failure in connection with potting the birds.*

*Even Sarah enjoys the sport. There is laughter and merriment.*

*Except for Gordon. He is not happy at all. His thick wavy hair has proved a definite attraction to these ghastly birds. For him, the birds are not a diversion, but a real menace.*

Elkin *worried* I am not sure that you should all be jolly at this time.

Holly But dear Old Thing, you told us in no uncertain terms that we were not to give way to despair. I distinctly remember it.

Elkin *warning* I was attempting to buoy you up. There are many pitfalls along our path.

Buxton Let's start with these pesky birds, then. Are they diurnal? Might we not make our trek after dark?

*Elkin shakes his head in alarm.*

Elkin After the sun disappears behind the horizon, huge black bats scour the countryside for signs of life. That is why the prioles congregate in small caves at sunset.

They are big enough and strong enough to carry off a child or small woman, the bats. Perhaps a pair of bats might lift the weight of one of you men off the ground ... perhaps ...

We must adhere to our original plan and walk only during daylight hours. Best to feel safe ...

*The members of the party become alarmed.*

Walter And what about our sleeping arrangements? Must one or two of us stand guard against these bats?

Elkin *nodding* Oh, yes. That seems to be the best notion.

*The friends look from one to the other with great unease.*

Gordon *confronting* And what other delights are in store for us, Elkin, old boy?

*Elkin*

Elkin *mentally* Apart from the rufus birds, and the bats, there are jacklites, of

*constructing a list* course.

Buxton Jacklites?

Elkin To the eye, they are what you in Harshland would call "horses". And they graze about in the manner of horses, so that you would be inclined to relax your wariness as you pass them by.

Buxton *warily* But ... ?

Elkin *wistful* Lovely animals. From a distance. They merely pretend at vegetarian tendencies, though. The jaw, in fact, can crush the heaviest of bones. Murderous creatures ... one must be very ware ...

*Gordon, Buxton and Walter appear to brace themselves, looking from one to the other. The ladies show great alarm.*

Gordon *aggressive* Will our spears and arrows be sufficient to deal with the jacklites, then?

Elkin *nods restfully* Oh, yes! You would kill one of the offenders, and then that would keep the others busy, as they fed on their fallen comrade.

Helene *gasps, appalled* This is the most gruesome place I've ever encountered.

Elkin *trying to comfort* My dear lady ... These beasties are nothing as compared to the terror awaiting us as we approach the sea. You will imagine that our happy stroll along this roadway is more pleasant than not.

*Gordon and Buxton have heard enough. As if choreographed to do so, they stride up to Elkin to stand directly before him, towering over him.*

Buxton *very grim* What else awaits us out there, Elkin, apart from prioles, jacklites, carnivorous rufus birds and man-eating bats?

Elkin *stammers* The ... The prioles are sweet and gentle. They will not --

Gordon *distinct* ***What else, Elkin?***

Elkin *small voice* The men of the Dead Land. But they won't appear until we approach the coast.

*The men are appalled They move about restlessly.*

Walter *outburst* Christ Jesus, and Mary Mother of God!

*The members of the party have let their guard drop somewhat and Gordon's is attacked by one of the disgusting birds. He yowls in pain and fright, whilst the bird takes off with clumps of his hair grasped in its monkey-like feet, cawing in a kind of wild triumph. Angrily, Gordon scrabbles for a rock, which he then shies at the bird, grazing its hard tail.*

Gordon *extremely irate* This simply can't go on, you know.

*Holly assumes that Gordon is addressing her.*

Holly What can't go on?

*Enid strikes another rufus bird, which squawks and bleats as it flaps off in disorder. Enid grins wickedly. Gordon kicks at a large stone.*

Gordon *angry* This business ... Trailing along this bloody road and not being told what's up ahead of us. It's like some sort of sick game and I don't hold with that. What *else* is the old geezer holding back?

Helene Perhaps just ask Elkin politely for further explanation.

Gordon *roundly* Don't you think that I've already damn-well done that?

*Buxton, bringing down one of the rufus birds so that it lies dead at his feet, turns slowly towards his wife, frowning deeply.*

*Helene is offended, and Holly takes up the cudgels on her behalf.*

Holly *flushed* No need to become cross.

Gordon *yelling in frustration* I've every right to be cross! Damned angry, in fact.

We've not come here to this outlandish outpost for any other reason than to rescue Toby and Neil. That's it! That's our purview. Our agenda has been plainly laid out for all to see. Yet we have ghastly creatures from some Edgar Allan Poe adventure swooping down on us, with any number of other assorted terrors thrown in for good measure.

Holly Try to stay calm. We're all in this together and --

Gordon *furious* I want to **know** what I'm fighting; what I'm up against! I just can't stand these random surprise attacks from who-knows-what ...

Buxton *too suave* Sometimes in life one doesn't get to choose ...

*Gordon's face takes on a nasty, aggressive sneer as he rounds on Buxton.*

Gordon *sarcastic* That's good coming from you, Professor Buxton. How's your sheltered little life in Academia been? Such a doddle, it is, giving out sage advice to the real workers of the world.

*Buxton's jaw tightens.*

Buxton *offended* There's no call for that tone, I'll thank you, my good man.

*Gordon chests Buxton, grabbing his lapels.*

Gordon *teeth gritted* I'll use whatever mucking tone I like, Old Toot!

*Gordon shakes Buxton violently, then shoves him away such that Buxton nearly crashes backwards.*

*Buxton (along with everyone else) is shocked. Gordon strips off his jacket to stand braced, as if spoiling for a fight. Buxton likewise drags off his jacket and springs forward, crashing his fist into Gordon's neck (as Gordon rides the punch). The two men now begin to tussle, both with teeth clenched in anger. Now Walter and Elkin react by trying to separate the men, only to get dragged into the melee. All four men are in a tangle of bodies: a writhing mass. The grunts and growled words of the brawling men can be heard over the next few speeches.*

Walter *shouts as he scuffles with the others* Hi, there! No fighting, now! Come on, lads! Steady on!

*The ladies have grouped together, watching the on-going fracas. Enid and Holly are interested spectators, Sarah is worried and Helene is immensely put-out.*

Helene *disappointed* We started out all merry and hearty. And now it's daggers drawn.

Enid *musings* Just boys letting off steam ... A "stoush", we call it Down Under ...  
Rough and tumble ... They'll be better mates for it ...  
Rather amazing how testosterone works. Apparently, this Canadian bloke did a study. He came up with some surprising

statistics. Now --

Helene *regal*

Do you know, I don't really wish to discuss that subject, if you don't mind.

Holly *utterly thrilled, eyes alight*

But it's all so **fascinating**, cuz. Why, I'd never **dream** of laying a hand on another person in anger (well, no, except for a naughty child, of course). And here they are actually **shoving** each other about. This must be where the term "manhandling" comes into the lexicon. Oh, look! They're going to wrestle on the ground.

*The camera shows a full-blown brawl between the four men.*

Enid *calm*

I reckon it's all that manly sport undertaken at school age which is appearing here. We observers might call it "wrestling", but it's really just another form of "football tackling", don't you find?

Sarah *sighs*

Neil is always fighting. Doesn't seem to matter with whom.

Helene *blushing and fearful*

Well, Malcolm is simply not accustomed to rough sports.

Enid *thoughtful*

He might have boxed in the Air Force as part of the training.

Helene *with finality*

No, it's just not his style.

Holly *thrilled and enthusiastic*

Oh, but he's doing so very well, Helene. He has Gordon's measure, I think. You must be frightfully proud of your husband.

No! Wait! Gordon has a trick or two up his sleeve and is making a valiant recover. In with the fist he goes. Yes, nice uppercut there.

Helene *stiff and thoroughly annoyed*

We can quite well do without the running commentary, thank you.

Holly *laughing*

My beautiful cousin! Are we about to come to blows, as well?

*All this time, the ladies have been using their slingshots against the rufus birds.*

Enid *to Sarah*

Let's dance in time to their grunting, shall we? Lighten the dour mood.

*Sarah giggles as Enid leads her into a courtly dance from the time of the Sun King. As the two females perform a set of formal steps, Enid provides a scratchy tune based on the noise emanating from the brawl that is still going on in the background.*

*Holly rocks with laughter, and Helene (in spite of herself) chuckles. What makes the dance even more amusing is that the ladies still have to ping pebbles at the annoying birds. Enid incorporates this defensive action into her self-made music.*

*Eventually, with the ladies whooping with laughter, the men (tired, dusty and bruised) desist, separating to nurse their various hurts (and bruised egos). The rufus birds disperse gradually.*

*Holly approaches Gordon, mopping her streaming eyes. Gordon has rescued his jacket and is fiddling about with his ripped shirt and skew-whiff tie.*

Holly                                We'd better publish the banns immediately.

Gordon *distracted*                Mmm?

Holly *lightly*                        I've just accepted your very gracious proposal of marriage.

Gordon *grins*                        Which I haven't actually made yet.

Holly                                It was all those "monkey" qualities coming to the fore. I found them appealing, charming and irresistible.

Gordon                                Look! I'm sorry for our fisticuffs just now. Not cricket, in front of ladies ...

Holly                                But surely you ought to be apologizing to Malcolm and Walter, not to me.

Gordon *genuine surprise*                        Why?

Holly                                Well, you looked as if murder and mayhem were uppermost in your mind.

Gordon *off-hand, shrugs*                        I got as good as I gave. We're all square.

Holly *doubtful*                        Then ... you're not going to say "Sorry"?

Gordon                                Not at all. It's all forgotten now.



Pony-riding and so forth ... And ... And I'm thinking of poor Toby and Neil, too. What dreadful tribulations are they undergoing?

Holly Do you think that we're wasting time? Not getting to Toby and Neil quickly enough?

Helene *near to tears* How long do we have, Holly? Do you know? For I certainly don't.

Holly *tremulous* Dear little Toby ...

*Holly's face crumples and she begins to cry. Likewise, Helene weeps. Ignoring the stitching, they put their arms about each others' shoulders and cry outright. The men become aware of this. They are stunned.*

END OF SCENE

END OF ACT IV



## ACT V

### V, Scene i: The Henge At Aigh Island, Night #3

*A huge stone marble rolls relentlessly towards the camera. We hear the sound of a huge stone coming slowly into contact with another huge stone. We also hear a boy's shout of triumph.*

*Toby shouts voice-off*      Haha, Keddring! I win again! You owe me five more cates, as I calculate.

*Segler voice-off*              You'll be sick if you eat any more of that rubbish. That's sissy food, and you're certainly not a siss.

*The camera moves back, taking in the scene. This is another such plaza, as was seen in ACT IV, Scene i. The henge on Aigh Island is built along the same lines as the magnificent henge in the kernel of Westania. However, the views here, beyond the many potted plants, are of the violent sea.*

*Morden, a very old man, sleeps in a cane chair. Segler sits on a large wooden porter's couch.*

*Keddring, looking harassed, stands amidst a 3-dimensional floor game comprised of alleys, huge marbles and gates.*

*Toby jumps about, such that we only see his upper torso. He is a ball of energy.*

*Toby excited, shrieking*      Alright then, Keddring. One last chance! Then I'll have to eat **something**, as I'm fairly starving.

*Keddring is beyond exhaustion. He slumps onto a low wall which is a feature of the game.*

*Keddring*                        You win, you win, little Raki. I can go no farther. You've found me out.

*Toby becomes even more exuberant as he dances and leaps about. It can now be seen that he has received a black loincloth to wear. Sirhana appears, holding out her hand to Toby. She wears a motherly smile.*

Sirhana                                   Come, dear. I'll feed you the loveliest cates in the world.

Segler *annoyed to be countermanded*           I want the boy to be in tip-top order for the ceremony.

Sirhana *placating*                   Of course, My Lord Segler. The child will be well-groomed and ready, with not a blemish to be seen. When the time comes.  
  
                                                  Come along, good boy.

*Sirhana and Toby exit, hand in hand, leaving Segler pacing about, in high anxiety.*

END OF SCENE

## **V, Scene ii:** Dawn On The Outlands Of Westania, Day #4

*At Dawn, Elkin (foreground) strides with his customary ease and grace away from the sleeping group, over which he has kept guard for half the night with Walter Dynon. Naturally, Elkin sticks to the roadway, on which the sleepers are bedded down in the open air.*

*It seems as if Elkin is aware of the approach of something or someone. In the background, Dynon stiffens, frowning, as he watches Elkin.*

*Elkin's face becomes alive with joy. He calls out in the old language, waving delightedly.*

*Three men stride along a pathway which wends across a lovely meadow towards the group. They are Amon, Ebridge, and the younger man Rahmon (who was Neil). Pleased, they wave and call back to Elkin.*

*The members of our party awaken, sitting up, then standing. We see that Dynon has obviously attempted to undergo a primitive shave, and not done too well. This means that his ill-shaven face is spotted with the odd knick; and on the other hand, Buxton and Pendlebury (put off by Dynon's experience) have a good covering of whiskers on their faces.*

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*Dynon walks up to Elkin, as they watch the newcomers.*

Dynon                                    Are these your brothers, Elkin?

Elkin                                    Yes! They are come to assist us on the remainder of our journey. I have warned you that there will be pitfalls. They will help us.

Dynon                                    Let's hope so.

*Sarah becomes excited. She runs towards the group of approaching men, across the meadow, towards the pathway (thereby leaving the road).*

Sarah *shouting*                        Neil! Neil!

Helene, Holly and Enid    Sarah! No, no! Sarah, don't leave the road!  
*urgently*

*Sarah can be seen to make a great fuss of her adopted brother, touching and stroking his forearm. He, on the other hand, looks at Sarah without any recognition. He unkindly pulls away from the girl, holding her at arm's length. When he admonishes her, it is in the old language. Neil has refused to recognize her such that Sarah breaks down in a fit of pathetic sobs, covering her face with her hands.*

*Helene, Holly and Enid dash to the distraught Sarah (strictly keeping to path and roadway), pulling and pushing her back to the road, from which they were forbidden to tread.*

*Immediately, a prowl of jacklites stalks into the meadow, feigning interest in tufts of grass. Gordon, without a moment's hesitation, launches a spear which brings down the largest beast. Gordon stands stiffly, breathing fast, with his eyes looking wild.*

*For a couple of seconds, there is absolute silence, except for the odd peeping of a little bird and Sarah's sniffing. The remaining jacklites gather around the beast which Gordon has killed. They sniff and lick, then begin to devour the dead animal without any pecking-order display. The beasts eat calmly. Helene and Holly watch the feast in horror.*

Gordon *pithy*                            Come on, everyone. Let's make good our escape whilst we can.

*Music: serious, intense. Buxton snaps out of his reverie then assists Gordon in stirring the companions to move camp.*

Buxton                                    Nice throw, Pendlebury.

*Gordon thanks Malcolm shortly, then proceeds to drive everyone forward. The three brothers and Rahmon are amazed and respectful. They quickly join the others as they scamper along the road. Enid has her arm around Sarah's shoulders, since the latter is too overcome to do more than stumble forward, sobbing uncontrollably.*

*Buxton as they jog along*                    Any of those bats on your watch, Dynon? Pendlebury and I witnessed two of the blighters. We simply held up flaming torches, and they cleared off. You?

*Dynon puffing*                    Yes, the same. They're huge animals, alright, but apparently terrified of fire.

~~~~~ **Break** ~~~~~

Later, a huge flock of rufus birds attack. There is shouting, screaming and general disarray. The three brothers and Rahmon assist with the defence (slingshots and pebbles). The party now has four attendant prioles keeping close to the humans for safety.

~~~~~ **Break** ~~~~~

*Music: build up. The prowl of jacklites appears from behind bushes and straddle the road ahead. The company use arrows, the boomerangs, the bull-roarer, the spears and the slingshots. This time, the jacklites are aggressive. There are now nine prioles in attendance. Buxton and Gordon shout directions, ensuring that lone jacklites have not slipped around behind the tight-knit phalanx of friends. The prioles sing and bleat, cowering together, forming buffer zones for our troops.*

~~~~~ **Break** ~~~~~

The road becomes more difficult to travel, as the little party of seven males and four females, and several prioles climb through rocky areas, and over streams where there are no bridges. There are now no rufus birds. The music has become low, malevolent and dour.

Holly *voice-over* I'd simply **kill** for a cup of tea ...

Dynon *pinning, voice-over* A long frothy ale would set me right up, I'm sure!

END OF SCENE

V, Scene iii: 20,000 BC The Australian Outback

The following scene depicts in glorious colours the richness and depth of the Australian bush, and is similar in structure to ACT IV, Scene ii.

We are led to believe that this "travelogue" is real. But in fact, it is part of Helene's "walkabout". All characters in this scene are only vaguely discernible.

The scenery is stunningly spectacular. The announcer is one of those BBC 1950-style female announcers, who might well be educating a room filled with children, such are her well-modulated tones.

The shots will be in synch with the spoken words, starting with a man-made fire, whereby the grass-burning to collect animals is practised.

Female Presenter Wirgeng told to all the members of his tribe the stories of the Hallowpast. He spoke of Yurilak: a huge sea-serpent who slithered from the sea on rising flood-waters, and commanded all the creatures on Earth to obey him. Yurilak wound his sinuous body up the tall trees then slithered across the sky, where he held sway over the stars and ordered the sun to lend him light. This light Yurilak spat back onto Earth with his sharp forked tongue.

Yurilak made the lakes and pools, the swampy lands and marshes,

the rivers, creeks and waterfalls. When Wirgeng drew pictures of Yurilak on the rock walls near Lecky's favourite pool, he was always careful to use only the very best red ochre and to depict Yurilak as big and strong, as he had been in life.

Wirgeng also drew Tinagoo: a fire-eyed red kangaroo. When Yurilak sent his blinding streams of light down to Earth, Tinagoo made fire eat the bush. Fire was a good friend to Wirgeng's tribe. But it was also a bad enemy.

On the night that Lecky's baby was born, Yurilak sent a loud storm to torment the girl in her labour. Those loud, roaring bangs were caused by a fight between the wombats who lived among the stars.

Rain teemed down during the Wet season, and Yurilak made much lightning. The noise of the wombat thunder muffled Lecky's screams of pain, as her little son was born.

🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀 **Break** 🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀

There is a hazy long shot of Westania. From far away, we hear Enid calling to Helene. This will then make us (the audience) aware that it was Helene who went "walkabout" just as Holly had done earlier.

*Enid from far away,
voice-off*

Helene! Mrs Buxton! Please come back to me ... You must never abuse the trust ... the fellas do not permit you to intrude on their Hallowpast in this way ...

END OF SCENE

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V, Scene iv: The Pressure Builds On The Road To The Sea, Day #4

Heading north-east towards the sea, the travellers stick religiously to the road, as instructed. The 11 folk walk in a bedraggled fashion, with attendant prioles (about 11 or 12 now).

Gordon and the three brothers are in the lead. Everyone else, and the prioles follow, with Malcolm as lookout and "hurrier-onner" in the rear.

Holly is pouring out her soul to Walter Dynon, who appears long-suffering.

Holly I want to know the answers to everything, Walter.

Why, having killed my father, William Allendale, would Tancred and his ilk then decide to take Margaret. Why not *me*? I was there. Why Margaret and not me? And then seven years later ... Miss Leagrave. What *possible* use was she? And then Neil? And now Toby? But that not seven years after Neil's disappearance. Why?

And even more bizarre, how did we humans in 1950 arrive at our present state of luxury, scientific achievement and cultural refinement if we were once a people like this who knapped flint objects just to survive? Then, from that, why did these Westanians not develop as we did?

Dynon Apparently, there is no suicide in Westania. No depression. These easy-going folk are at one with their surroundings. There is no feeling of uselessness, nor of culture shock.

Holly At least, there was none, until Albert Pitch lost his sacred talisman to the spite of some nameless hoodlums.

Dynon Until Segler and Sirhana's lovely daughter found it, touched it, and breached the hermetically sealed boundaries of Westania, only to be ravished by the upstanding, God-fearing William Allendale.

Holly My father was a horrible, horrible man. But by what you're saying, he was the cause (indirectly) of almost bringing down an entire civilization. Can one man do that? Is that possible?

Dynon I'm not qualified to say ... But we might as well be roaming over the highlands of Scotland. Don't you feel that? We've come (supposedly) to some woebegotten land which to my way of thinking doesn't really exist. Yet it feels like home.

[Poetically]

The morning light strikes the face here just as it does in Little Grabbling. I can't tell the difference. Flowers smell the same.

Holly *impatient with Dynon for side-tracking* Never mind about Scotland ... This is all too much for me. For here we all are, setting out on a 5-day trek (possibly 6-days), subjected to the most appalling terrors, with more horrendous perils promised for the next day.

Dynon But we've come through it all with true British courage. We've done splendidly!

Holly has stopped, seething. The folk ahead stop, looking back. Malcolm approaches, intent on hurrying Holly and Dynon forward. But Holly is very mutinous.

Holly *very worked-up* I want to know what's going on. What is this all about? Elkin! Come here this second and tell me exactly what's going on.

And what am I wearing? This thing? What is it made of? Wombat's teeth. To keep my sanity in this strange land, I've to wear an ancient artefact made of the teeth of a badger-like marsupial. What can this possibly all mean?

Dynon *trying to calm her* Let's focus on rescuing Toby and your sister --

Holly is almost stamping her feet with rage. She is almost in tears in her fury.

Holly *screaming in rage* The full moon will occur tomorrow night. And according to my intimate studies of primitive mankind under the topic: "The Breton Council of Death", the full moon betokens rituals, ceremonies, blood-letting, rites of passage, acts of vengeance, and assorted animal or human sacrifice or purifying burning. ***We - are - in - danger!*** The closer we get to Segler (and thus to the full moon)

you in any way ...

Gordon God, no! Rather the opposite, I'd say. Your conversation is stunningly uplifting, to say the least. Besides, all this manly exercise and weight-lifting is getting the tired old boy into shape, you see. Actually, I'm feeling very fit and dangerous. Make you an offer at any minute.

Holly *smiling in spite of her mood* I'm relieved, I can assure you. Would you prefer me in satin or velvet?

Gordon What's wrong with your birthday suit? That worked quite well the other day ...

Holly Oh, silly! ... No, I mean, for our wedding.

Gordon Neither. I prefer lace. But I suppose, with the austerity measures in place ...

Holly I might have to make do with hessian, do you think?

Gordon I won't care. Just holding your hand as my bride will be more than compensation, Holly.

Holly Insufferable romantic. I'll ask Helene about the lace. She never throws anything away. Bound to have some frock that we can re-work.

~~~~~ **Break** ~~~~~

*It is the afternoon of day #4. The group of travellers have found a very attractive brook, at the foot of higher ground. A waterfall crashes onto rocks which form part of the road. This would give the travellers an opportunity to wash, should they so choose.*

*At some distance from the waterfall, but still on the road, the party are camped. They sit about, eating and drinking.*

Helene *pulling a face* I hate to sound ungrateful, but don't you find that the cuisine has

tapered off just a tad?

Dynon I'd say so. This stuff is extremely "far reaches of Empire" nosh.

Helene Very unappetizing.

Buxton *shrugs* I suppose that ... run out of slaves, perhaps ...

*Gordon crunches on a very hard oblong of what might pass for stiff pastry. He frowns deeply. Then, the penny drops.*

Gordon I know what this is ... It's hardtack, also called by some "sea biscuit". That's what it is. That old staple, hardtack, once popular as a means of sustenance for sailors and so forth. It'll last for ever. Take it on expeditions.

And I know what it is because they gave it to us once, when I served as a pimply-faced midshipman. It would have been on the 29th September, in honour of Nelson's birth date. They gave us the filthy stuff to remind us of the privations of sailors in the past ...

But ... where would they have got this? And why dish it up to us?

Dynon *joking* It's not the 29th of September by any chance?

*Enid stares purposefully at her piece of hardtack. She sidles up to Malcolm.*

Enid *squinting at the hardtack* Do I detect an imprint on this one? Look, Professor. Are my old eyes playing tricks, or is that "HMV Arundel", or something like? Etched into the surface of the biscuit prior to baking it?

*Malcolm frowns at the hardtack, turning it over and over.*

🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀 **Break** 🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀

*The camera shoots upwards towards the top of the waterfall. In the background, we hear men yowling and shivering with cold.*

*Malcolm, Gordon and Walter stand hip-deep in cold water, treating the waterfall as a shower. They scrub up with Enid's soap: their hair, bodies, arms. And all the while they gasp at the coldness of the water.*

*Malcolm looks about, then (with a quick indicative nod of his head) he leads the other men behind the screen of water into the more private pool behind the fall of water. Birds nest in this grotto, and the ingress of the three men causes them to twitter in panic, then escape.*

*Buxton urgently* I'm no longer happy with these old men who are travelling with us. Elkin claims that their role is to assist us; but I find that hard to believe. With what purpose do they assist us? Holly's words have been ringing in my ears: the full moon rises tomorrow evening.

Look! Some mischief is afoot. I can hear them speaking to each other in their oblique natter-natter. Many of the words are unfortunately foreign to me. But enough has filtered through for me to be afraid.

Here's the thing! Enid and I are **convinced** that these people hie from a race of ancient Druids, or even forerunners to them. There are so many clues: the focus on the bones, and in the orientation of the bones with relation to sun and stars, the heavy stress on ancestor-worship ... Druids!

*Dynon scratching his head* I don't know all that much about those lads.

*Buxton and Dynon turn to Gordon.*

*Gordon shrugs* Secret trysts in moonlit groves, holding hands and dancing about with not much on ... flowers, fruits, Stonehenge --

*Buxton quickly interrupts in low voice* And human sacrifice.

*Dynon surprised* I thought that we'd quashed that!

*Buxton urgent* Listen! We need to have a watchword ... a phrase or some such

thing. A shibboleth!

Dynon

Eh?

Buxton

When we feel that we are under threat, or need to communicate an unspecified danger to one another, we must have a war cry which won't sound suspicious to the brothers.

Gordon *answering the challenge speedily*

Do you know ... One of my favourite books as a young boy was "The Adventures of Gideon".

*[Here, the other two men register instant recognition]*

His *cri de coeur* was --

Dynon *snaps fingers*

"Ware the wanderer's ways" it was. That's right! What a corker that book was! And in "The Further Adventures of Gideon" he --

Buxton *peering through the waterfall*

Look out! The brothers are looking for us.

Gordon *also peering out*

Pretend to be enjoying a skylark.

*The three travellers leap out from behind the screen of water, laughing immoderately and wrestling, ducking each other and generally having a hoot. [Nothing grizzly can be seen; this is not a remake of A Room With A View.]*

END OF SCENE

## **V, Scene v:** Margaret And Her Children Arrive, Morning of Day #5

*Buxton and Dynon took the watch after Gordon and Holly had watched over the sleepers during the first part of the night (following Day #4). Gordon and Holly are now locked in each other's embrace, fast asleep.*

*Two young lads about 11 or 12 years old and dressed in scrappy faded pyjamas, run across a beautiful meadow (that evokes faraway thoughts) towards the party of travellers. It is obvious that*

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Buxton I've just thought of something which is somewhat a propos ... almost piquant ... These boys of Margaret's have sparked a funny sort of memory.

Enid *surprised* Really?

Buxton Yes.

You see, my old mentor, Professor Ben Wardell (who's unfortunately gone to his Maker now) was one of a team of enthusiasts who were trying to correlate the playground patois of British children into regions, districts and so on. This study took place in the early '30's, I seem to remember. Luckily they did, I suppose, since the proliferation of the radio will by now have clouded and polluted the singularity of those dialects ...

At all events, these boffins trooped about the United Kingdom, equipped with early-model voice recorders, notebooks and what have you to collect the nursery rhymes, stories and especially the schoolyard catch-phrases of every species of child. Then they plotted a map by which they geographically grouped these dialects of childhood.

The finished map looked rather marvellous: a thing of bright coloured splodges.

Enid I can well imagine.

Buxton *nods* They were terribly proud of it. Then, blow me down if a young scholar named Malcolm Buxton didn't edge his way into the room, see said map and blurt out unthinkingly: "Why look! Those are exactly the kingdoms of the ancient Britons."

Enid *astounded* Good heavens!

Malcolm *smug* Yes. We matched the boffin's map with one depicting the Celtic kingdoms and they were almost spot-on. Talk about amazing!

So, whenever I hear children (my own sweet daughters, in fact) playing, I listen-out for the ageless words and phrases which must

have filtered down to us from far-off Celtic times.

Enid As in: "You're he!" and "Barley!" and "Tig-a-lock" ...

Malcolm *reflective* Yes ... that's why I pricked up my ears when Tiz called out "Branna!" It seemed to be familiar ... I'm sure that that was one of the catch-cries included in Wardell's undertaking. I could almost swear to it.

Enid *frowning* But ... where would he have picked up that word? If I understand you correctly, the concept behind Professor Wardell's study was that each generation of children passes down to the next in succession the very same words used in play. Where, then ... ?

Buxton *also frowning* I can't say ... It just seemed interesting to me ...

*Helene has fallen back to join her husband and Enid.*

Helene *curious* Those children don't look anything like Margaret, or indeed like anyone in our family. I'll need to see the father before giving my final verdict. Why is he not with my cousin, do you think?

Buxton I ... No idea ... I've no idea ...

END OF SCENE

## **V, Scene vi:** The Road To The Sea, A Stop On Day #5

*Enid is kneeling to one side of the road, busy with the overwhelming contents of her bag. Walter Dynon approaches her quickly, and squats before her.*

Dynon *half-whisper* Finchie! What do you surmise has happened to that Legrave woman whom we may or may not be rescuing, along with everyone else?

Enid *carefully* Well ... She may turn up as Margaret Allendale's companion. There's always that chance.



Enid *also smiling*                    Trader came at me with all the speed and determination of a St Kilda Road tram as soon as the door was closed on our Honeymoon Hotel suite. In like Flynn! **That** set the tone for our married life, it certainly did. He treated the marital bed like a workbench. I very quickly learned which way was up!

*Walter Dynon coughs dramatically and stands quickly, moving away, leaving Enid to continue to fossick through the contents of her bag.*

END OF SCENE

## **V, Scene vii:** An Old Storage Room Near Lorngate-On-Thames, 1950

*An old-fashioned electric light (which is activated by pulling a long cord) snaps on. It is glaringly bright as it swings from side to side.*

*Mrs Doris Threlkeld, an elderly woman, doddles in the doorway of a very crowded old storage room. She is followed by Ralph Cox.*

*The woman puffs, as if this moderate exercise is too much for her. But she seems pleased to have reached the room.*

Doris                                    I suppose someone thought it might be a good idea to put the old medical records in the bowels of the Earth. At any rate, we'll get to the bottom of this conundrum.

Ralph                                   I certainly hope so. Look, I'm jolly sorry to be putting you to all this trouble.

*The elderly nurse plonks down on a handy box, and tries to regain her composure.*

Ralph *hiding his impatience*                    Do you mind awfully if I try to find the folder? What should I be looking for?

*The lady sighs gustily. She seems to be rolling over thoughts in her mind, whilst Ralph stands poised for action.*



Doris *sucking in her breath* Ah! I was still in London then ... I only met Clara really just as she was taking off with the old buzzard.

Ralph And the unknown girl's babe was born in 1933, it says.  
A boy. A little son. Which she did not want to keep. Amazing!

*Ralph lights a cigarette. The still-swirling dust and the cigarette smoke trail interestingly up towards the naked light globe.*

Ralph *skim-reading* Da ... da ... da ...  
The unknown young mother went into a series of seizures during and following the birth and did not ever fully recover.  
Hang about! Clara decided to give the boy up for adoption, since the girl would have nothing to do with him. Strange ... A couple in Pitch were keen to take on the boy. The Markinsons!  
The dying girl stayed with Clara at her cottage until the girl died the following year. That would be in 1934. Oh! This is perfect! It puts everyone in the right spot at the right time.  
So ... that's the connection between Neil Markinson and Clara Leagrave. All solved!

Doris *reflective* Clara was the kindest soul, and a damned fine nurse. She would have given that poor wretched girl the best care in the land.

Ralph And instead of feeling the gratitude of the world, she is cast aside, only to be abducted by her so-called "beau" to be carted off to who knows where.

*[Rubbing his hands together]*

This is wonderful! Gordon, Gordon, come back on speedy wings. I need you to help me write this award-winning journalistic triumph, my main man.

END OF SCENE

**V, Scene viii:** The Henge At Aigh Island, Day #5

*Segler stands, owlshly watching Toby eating hungrily. Sirhana sits at the table, watching him fondly.*

- Toby *thickly*                    So ... what did you say that this was all about, then?
- Segler                                That is not the way to speak to me, Raki.
- Toby *raised eyebrows*        Should I call you "Guvner", then, like they do on the radio shows?
- Sirhana *shocked*                Where are your manners, boy? You must address Lord Segler in the appropriate style. You must accord him his due deference.
- Toby *mulish*                        No! I'm a great Injun chief. I'll smoke the peace-pipe with him (maybe!) but that's all.
- Segler *bemused*                    Come, come, boy! This is a tremendous honour ... You can hardly know how triumphant.
- Toby *pointing with his knife*                                Did you not say that I'd be decked out with flowers?
- Segler                                Of course!
- Toby *shaking his head*        Well, I rather draw the line at flowers. Bones and feathers, maybe, but I won't be trussed-up and dollied-up like a girl.
- Segler                                This is unbelievable!
- Young Raki! I'm not at all accustomed to having my wishes countermanded. I am the head boy here.
- Toby *stands, aggressive*        And I overheard my father say that it was your brother Tancred who knocked off my Grandpa. And I don't take too kindly to that. And your Elkin tried to snatch me, and then Tancred **did** snatch me. And I don't like that, either.
- Segler *blustering*                This is ... This is ...
- Toby *out of the blue*              Aunt Holly would advise us to meet half-way.

*Segler stares at the boy, completely lost.*

*Toby negotiating*

Tancred took my Red Indian costume. I love that outfit. I even sleep in it. I made a solemn vow to honour the braves. I did! Mr Pendlebury told me how to go about it. And then Tancred went and took my costume off me.

So, I'll go to this sacred ritual thingummy of yours if you give me back my wampum and my bow and the arrows that I made myself.

Fair trade.

*Segler smiling*

Alright, Raki. That sounds very fair to me. And when your time comes to mount the platform of honour, one of my brothers will hold them for you.

END OF SCENE

END OF ACT V



## ACT VI

### VI, Scene i: The Dead Land, Afternoon Of Day #5

*The "Dead Land" is a misnomer. The road from the Westanian kernel (by the River) to the sea passes through its final phase through a land which is almost monsoonal. The grass is reed-like: tall and strong. Pandanus palms and screw palms grow in proliferation, and there is an enervating soupiness to the balmy air. This scene is reminiscent of the Northern Territory.*

*The party, including Margaret, her three children and the attendant prioles wander along, feeling the heat. The birdlife is exotic and (in some cases) frightening. Some unidentified animals dart across the road before our party, disappearing amongst the reeds.*

Gordon                                Everyone! Please be on the alert now. This is the Dead Land ...  
Elkin has warned us of what to expect.

*Sarah begins to drop back, unspotted by the others, as she slides into a Hallowpast memory.*

END OF SCENE

### VI, Scene ii: 20,000 BC The Australian Outback

*The following scene depicts in glorious colours the richness and depth of the Australian bush, and is similar in structure to ACT IV, Scene ii (also ACT V, Scene iii; and ACT VI, Scene vii).*

*We are led to believe that this "travelogue" is real. But in fact, it is part of Sarah's "walkabout". All characters in this scene are only vaguely discernible.*

*The scenery is stunningly spectacular. The announcer is one of those BBC 1950-style female announcers, who might well be educating a room filled with children, such are her well-modulated tones.*

*The shots will be in synch with the spoken words. Throughout, we hear the mournful sound of men chanting, the didgeridoo, along with the clacking of wooden sticks.*

Female Presenter           As Wirgeng's body lay on its burial platform, Lecky cut off her hair with a sharp knapped stone, then spread ashes over her shaven head and shoulders.

As she performed this ceremony, she rocked her body and wailed in a low voice. Her children gathered about her, watching her. Or perhaps they were watching for Wirgeng to jump up and play with them once more. Wirgeng's other wives stood about, rocking and moaning.

One of the old men clapped sticks together to help Wirgeng's spirit return to the waterhole from which he had sprung when his own mother had become pregnant. Wirgeng would journey back, with the ancestors, to sit with the dead kinfolk, and listen to the old stories around a distant campfire.

*The body of Wirgeng is covered with a few fronds of bush flora by the wailing wives.*

END OF SCENE

## **VI, Scene iii: The Dead Land, Afternoon Of Day #5**

*Sarah is walking along as if an automaton (in the manner of Margaret). Suddenly, she snaps out of her Hallowpast experience as a group of natives who live in Westania's Dead Land snatch her bodily, carrying her off.*

### **ACTION:**

*Everything now happens with terrifying rapidity. The pace of the following scenes is electrifying.*

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*To the accompaniment of dour, hard-slogging music, our group scramble over very rocky ground, with the sea clearly in view. Looking really over the whole thing, and exhausted to the maximum, our friends struggle on, assisting each other to cross over the forbidding terrain of rocks and uneven ground.*

*Holly, Sarah and Helene are all in tears. The men are seen to encourage the females. They are so close now ...*

~~~~~ **Break** ~~~~~

Malcolm is lying on a rocky beach, seemingly comatose. Tancred and Ebridge attach heavy chains to Malcolm using manacles. Then they strain to haul the larger man to his feet. Ebridge dashes to the sea, filling an ice-bucket (which washed up on the beach) with water, then chucking the contents over Malcolm's face. The professor splutters, as he comes to.

END OF SCENE

VI, Scene iv: Malcolm Buxton Realizes The Truth Evening Of Day #5

It is evening, almost dark, but still enough light to see. The full moon is rising.

In the near background, Aigh Island can be seen to be a stark, rocky outcrop, topped by a very impressive henge. It is lit by hundreds of different kinds of lanterns, lamps, flares and flambeaux.

Malcolm Buxton is perplexed. He stares out over the raging sea, with the wild wind lashing him.

Below him, the wrecks of ships and other vessels are constantly pounded by the waves. Some of the stout boats, rafts, sea-going craft, punts and other assorted vessels are undamaged. They seem to be ageless, timeless. These seaworthy craft are moored in a more sheltered position. Strangely (for many of the vessels would have preceded the Roman invasion), the timber has not rotted away.

Buxton stares out over this scene, frowning deeply.

The music is now very moody, edgy and spikey. Malcolm is breathing hard, as if a momentous realization has descended onto his brain. Malcolm turns, to see Ebridge, Elkin and Amon approaching Tancred. Malcolm is shaking, not with rage, but with incredible distress. He is barely able to suppress the trembling of his lips, as he tries not to cry.

Elkin, seeing his distress, comes quickly to him, stretching out his hands.

Elkin *apologetic* I am so sorry for the chains, Professor. Tancred alone might be a match for your strength, but we dared not risk your mental power. The ladies of the party will only be fettered in ropes, be assured. It is not my intention to harm them.

Buxton *sarcastic* I'd like to have seen you try to chain Pendlebury, then.

Elkin Oh, that were too much to try for. So we knocked him out first. That is the ultimate cause for our delay, else we would already have been on our way to Aigh. I had hoped to do so before dark ...

Malcolm nods. Elkin's holds his head to one side.

Elkin *trying at cheerfulness* You will be happier when we reach the island, Sir. I may even be able to get my hands on ... what is it? A cup of tea. Yes?

Buxton is utterly distraught. He stares out to sea. His lips try to frame words, but he is almost unable to speak.

Elkin What is it? Why do you mope?

Malcolm turns to look at Elkin, as if seeing him for the first time.

Buxton *panting, voice low* The sea biscuits you gave us to eat came from these various ships. The lanterns ... and the sailors.

You lured the vessels here and then stripped from them what you needed. Those men ... they were mariners who survived the wrack to become your slaves. And this has gone on for century over century. From brigantine to leather curragh ... From Neolithic times, in fact.

Elkin's eyes well with tears. He hangs his head in shame. Amon and Ebridge simply stare at Buxton without comprehending.

Buxton

The bright lights on the henge: Segler's henge on Aigh Island. They worked like a false lighthouse, cajoling lost vessels into the wrong port, whereas the ultimate destination should have been the mouth of the Thames.

[The depth of the tragedy now dawns on Buxton]

These are the vessels which throughout the history of the world were lost at sea: never heard of again. Oh my God! "The vessel went down with the loss of all hands" because they had come **here**.

Very sensible, really ... For if one snatches folk from riverside or village, a tremendous hue and cry is raised. But, after all, no-one bothers to investigate God's work in giving up His souls to the sea ...

[There is a slight pause. Buxton draws in a ragged breath. He turns, mouth open, aghast, as if he has been struck by a train]

Margaret Allendale's children are none of hers at all. They are children from aboard one or other of these boats. Indeed, they are centuries older than their supposed mother. Cabin boys, perhaps ...

Is that it? Were those wretched lads (whom you are passing off as Margaret's issue) a couple of boy crew members rescued from the waist of a foundering barque? And the daughter ... a little girl adrift with her dead parents in a yawl, perhaps? Or she might well have been the only survivor of a family fishing expedition undertaken long before ever a Roman had set foot on English soil.

Tears now stream down Elkin's face. He sobs in utter devastation. Ebridge and Amon speak consoling words in the old lingo. When Elkin finally answers them, again in the old lingo, the two brothers also hang their heads, and wring their hands. Malcolm is so close to tears himself, that his lips tremble.

Buxton *breaking voice* How could you be so cruel, as to tell a barren woman that she has brought forth babies into this world? There are no births here ever, except for Segler's daughter ... you can so easily supply your workforce from the sea. Why bother with the waste of reproduction?

Elkin *sobbing* Segler. He wanted revenge for the indecent way by which we were evicted from our beloved land, Cornwall. Our tribe had been in Cornwall from the dawn of time. Our whole culture, such as it was, centred on that countryside. That was M'Coure. It started there. I can still remember. I was all of four years old. I cannot forget. Thousands of your Harshland years have passed, and I have grown to an old man over so long a time. But I cannot forget.

They harried us on, the Celts did. And they did so from the sea.

Amon clears his throat, wiping his own tears away. He then speaks for the first time.

Amon Segler's back carried me. I had only seen one Harshland year and might not walk. Ebridge was newborn. Keddring bore him in the arms of him.

Elkin And Morden carried all the bones of all the ancestors. He had seen 13 Harshland summers, whereas Segler's winters numbered 11. Keddring was 8, and Tancred 7. I was 4. We were little boys, taxed with the burden of escaping the murderers invading our lovely home. From the sea they came. From the West.

Ebridge *small voice* We saved M'Coure.

Amon Else were it lost forever.

Edgridge *softly* Just seven boys left.

All the men are angst-ridden, except for Tancred, who stands apart as if a bouncer at a nightclub.

Buxton And you seven lads walked all the way from what is now Cornwall to the River Thames, say in Oxfordshire?

Elkin *nods sadly* Morden should have been the leader, being as he was the eldest. We were hunted by man and beast. It was difficult to find milk for Ebridge. And food for all of us. Shelter, too.

Buxton Yet you managed it.

Elkin Aye. But it was Segler who managed it. He stole the milk and food. He fashioned the raft on his own. He hid us away from the Celts who would take our lives. He spoke to the ancestors as none of us could. And he brought us to the bank of the river, where the bones were later buried. He did that. It was all his own work.

Segler locked us away from the world. We owned our own part of the cosmos, with barriers that none could breach. Then, from the East, came mariners, lost in their voyaging of the mighty seas. Segler forced them to remain with us, oblivious to their earlier lives. They served us well.

This was his revenge. For the mariners were of the Celtic race.

Buxton *sighing* That then became your full-scale endeavour, the abduction of slaves from the East.

I see ...

Amon There was a child. Mermena was the only baby born here. Born to the lady Sirhana, sired by my brother Segler. Our only baby. No more.

Ebridge *whispers* Only seven brothers. No more. And then a child. No more. Lost to the seed of William Allendale. Avenge her we must ...

Buxton *looking about* I see ... I see ...

You've worked hard to keep us all alive so that we can be murdered on Aigh Island in Segler's presence. No doubt with much ceremony ...

Elkin You will not be killed, I promise you that. Our revenge is on William Allendale alone. Since we cannot have him, it must be his

It is now night time, with the huge full moon dominating the sky. With great difficulty, the travellers have been brought onto a larger version of the swan boats. Now the females (not including Margaret) are roped together and Malcolm is chained up to the other two men.

In the background, the henge on Aigh Island looks extremely inviting with its lights festooned about, bright and merry.

The music builds grandly, as the boat nears Aigh Island.

Dynon *loudly, voice-off* 'Ware the wanderer's ways! 'Ware the wanderer's ways!

END OF SCENE

VI, Scene v: The Human Sacrifice In Honour Of The Ancestors

There is no roof covering to the henge on Aigh Island. On this evening, the full moon is positioned directly overhead, and its light streams down directly onto the huge flat marble altar.

They are all chained (with what looks like anchor chain) and roped in a ring around the Druidic altar, which is strewn with flowers, dead animals and greenery. There is a ring of kindling and wood

Walter is chained to Malcolm who is in turn chained to Gordon. Rahmon stands next to Walter, lightly holding Walter's upper arm. Walter's chains are tied in such a way that his arms have been forced downwards and cannot be raised.

It appears that Dynon has secretly communicated with his companions that they must pretend to go along with this ghastly ceremony, for no-one struggles, nor attempts to escape.

Walter *sniffing to Rahmon* I say, Neil or whatever your name is, would you be so kind as to rescue my handkerchief from my pocket? I'm afraid I have to blow my nose. Rather unfortunate but ... The emotion of the moment ...

Rahmon stares at Walter, who is making faces as he wipes his nose as best he can on his uniform.

Walter *more forceful* Not good form, young man, is it? If you would be so kind? Hanky

...

Elkin looks around, frowning in admonitory fashion, as the ceremony drones on.

Walter *calling to Elkin* Please, Elkin. My handkerchief. Would you mind asking Romeo here to reef it out of my pocket.

Elkin *cross* You interrupt the ceremony!

Walter *anxious* My nose is running! I can't give to the ritual my proper attention with a leaky bugle, for Heaven's sake! All I want is my ruddy hanky. Pardon me ladies but --

Elkin *annoyed* Alright! Alright! Give him whatever he needs, Rahmon. Only let us all hold our tongues. Please!

The music becomes interesting: something is about to happen. Rahmon shrugs, then puts his hand gingerly into Walter's pocket. The music builds. Rahmon is doubtful. He frowns as he pulls forth a small opal carving. It is of a small canoe, such as would have been used by Australian natives. Walter, keen and on edge, peers into Rahmon's face. Rahmon stares in dismay at the opal canoe lying in his palm.

Walter *whispers* Neil! Neil! Can you hear me? Don't scream out or shout, Neil. This is life and death. I want you to walk over to the young lad who is standing on the altar, and without any fuss, hand him the bow and arrow in your hand. Don't let go of the canoe but give the boy the bow and arrow.

The ceremony drones on. There is no sign that any of the brothers is aware of what is going on. Amon, Keddring and Ebridge step solemnly forward, and with their flaming torches, they ignite the combustible material which surrounds Toby. The boy is extremely brave, standing calmly with his arms still crossed. Neil looks around, in dazed, stunned amazement.

Walter *loudly* Neil! Give the bow and arrow to the boy! He will know what to do.

Neil *himself once more, aghast* What's happening? Are you trying to burn that child? Who are you? What is all this?

Walter *urgent* Give the bow and arrow to the boy!

The brothers are now aware of the confusion and move towards Neil to disable him. All of the captives join Walter in shouting advice to Neil. Quickly, dodging Amon's attempt to grab him, Neil side-steps, with the music now very racy and exciting, and reaches out the bow and arrow to Toby. The boy calmly takes the bow, fits in the arrow, and aims at Segler.

Toby arrogant Thank you, Rahmon. You know, I'm really quite sick of this silly game. I find that I'd rather not buzz off to visit the ancestors at all. I'd much rather play at cowboys and injuns. And you, Paleface, will be my first kill of the day.

To the absolute horror of the brothers, and the elation and delight of the captives, Toby pings the arrow into Segler's abdomen. The old man (no longer delivering the sacrificial rites) gogs and gasps as he stares down at the small wooden arrow which sticks out of his tummy.

Toby jumps athletically down from the altar and runs up to Walter.

Toby unperturbed Hello, Sergeant Dynon! I'm ever so glad to meet you again. Would you mind awfully if I beg you to take me home, please? I do miss my family. And I'll just bet that they've given Laurie my genuine Red Indian feather bonnet.

ACTION

All hell now breaks loose. Everything now happens at break-neck speed. The following quick grabs are part of one huge action-packed tableau.

- The music builds up to super-dramatic and scary.
- The fire on the altar flares up in all manner of colours, and ghostly creatures emanate from the colourful flames.
- Red-hot cinders spit about like fireworks, with whizzing, whistling sounds.
- The henge begins to tremble and shake.
- The five brothers rush to the dying Segler, crying and trying to save him. Morden has already slipped away to near-death in his chair during the ceremony.
- One by one, the remaining five brothers begin to die also, but they are in great agony as they do so.
- More and more ghosts rush about, over under and through our captives.
- While all this is going on, there is a great deal of yelling from our captives.

- Under urgent instruction from Gordon, the females are able to free themselves from the ropes, and they are able to flee the disintegrating building, taking the drugged-out Margaret and Toby with them. Holly (aghast) reaches back towards Elkin as she is scuttled along. With Gordon's words ringing in their ears, they are able to scramble down the skinny stone steps, down to the tiny rough wooden pier.
- The henge is falling apart. The females scream in terror as the rocks in the supporting wall, and thus the steps, rain down into the sea.
- A male voice shouts to the women to board the nearest boat. This turns out to be an old windjammer. Unsure if they are doing the right thing, the females begin to board. Margaret seems to be acting in a trance. She is following all directions unthinkingly.
- Back at the fast-collapsing henge, the men struggle along, still heavily chained to each other. Ghosts, haints and horrible apparitions impede their already halting progress. Neil does what he can to assist them.
- There are now no steps for the men to descend, and if they fall into the sea (which is more than likely given the quaking ground), the huge weight of the chains will drag them irresistibly to the sea floor.
- But without choice, the three chained men are catapulted forward. There are horrified screams from the females. However, the chains catch on rocks.
- All three men manage to keep their heads above water whilst waves continue to batter the rocks on which they cling. It looks as if the waves will wash the chains over the rocks and into the water.
- This is all very scary and dramatic. Enid and Neil use ropes to pull the windjammer over such that it is closer to the rocks. In a feat of unbelievable strength and endurance, Walter manages to leave go of the rock, and (even though weighted by the chains) to haul himself up the side of the ship.
- Meanwhile, Malcolm and Gordon are nearly drowning as they cling to the rock. Suddenly, Gordon disappears from view.
- In a supreme effort the women (as if in a tug-of-war team) strain every muscle to assist Neil and now also Walter to drag the chains, and then Malcolm up and over, onto the deck. Now it is only Gordon who is lost. Everyone heaves with extreme effort. Suddenly, spluttering and coughing, Gordon surges out of the sea, clawing up the side of the windjammer.

Enid disappears into the orlop deck. She looks about her in great interest. Then she is seen to stare straight ahead.

END OF SCENE

VI, Scene vii: 20,000 BC The Australian Outback

The following scene depicts in glorious colours the richness and depth of the Australian bush, and is similar in structure to ACT IV, Scene ii (and ACT V, Scene iii, and ACT VI, Scene ii).

We are led to believe that this "travelogue" is real. But in fact, it is part of Enid's "walkabout". Lecky is now an older woman. She is vaguely seen (indeed, all the natives in this scene are only nebulous figures), but our main inspiration must be the landscape.

The scenery is stunningly spectacular. The announcer is one of those BBC 1950-style female announcers, who might well be educating a room filled with children, such are her well-modulated tones. The actions on the screen will correlate with the spoken word. The male natives will be covered in war-paint, especially the white chalk on the faces.

Female presenter Wirgeng's sons were warriors. These men were Lecky's children, as well as those of Wirgeng's older wives.

From the north and west, other tribes moved-in on Wirgeng's region, forcing the warriors to fight with spears. Many of them died, such was the skill of the new tribesmen.

Lecky (with what was left of her family) was chased further and further away from what had long been their traditional hunting territory. Lecky sat on cold rocks, wailing, as she remembered how she had loved her land.

Now, it was gone. Wirgeng and her sons were dead. Her daughters had been ravished by the new tribesmen and carried off.

Lecky was now friendless.

She neared a waterhole, for they were scarce in the bush. Just as she stooped to drink, she was abducted by a laughing crowd of warriors. She was too old to mate with. Instead, they gave her to their women for use as a kind of slave. Lecky was bullied and chivvied into serving these women whom she could barely understand.

When, on one hot day during the Wet season, as the women crossed a watercourse, Lecky felt the snapping bite of a crocodile on her calves, she screamed for her new tribeswomen to save her. But they ignored her screeching and went on their way. The crocodile drowned Lecky, and then chomped her down.

Ironically, that was the way Lecky's own mother had met her death.

Somehow, the younger children of Wirgeng's tribe escaped. But how they lived in the harsh Australian bush, no-one knows.

END OF SCENE

VI, Scene viii: The HMSV Argyle

Enid snaps out of it, with a harrowed look on her face, and tears rushing down her cheeks.

Enid appears back on deck as she steps up a ladder from the orlop. She waves a small pottery object at the other ladies.

Enid *laughing* Boil the billy! I've found a tea-caddy.

Helene *surprised* No!

Sarah *doubtful* But it'll be off, won't it?

Enid Does tea go off? Nah ...

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~~~~~ **Break** ~~~~~

*The camera looks down on the little dinghy from Toby's lookout in the crowsnest. The boy sighs, shaking his head.*

Toby *disgusted*                      There you are! Auntie Margaret's dripping wet again!

END OF SCENE

## FOURTEEN YEARS ELAPSE

### **VI, Scene ix: 1964, A Glorious Sunday Afternoon, Segler's Landing**

*There is a great deal of family noise in the background whilst this following proceeds.*

*Toby Allendale is a tall, slim young man who is 24 years old. He has a crewcut, wears a T-shirt (with a packet of cigarettes folded into the sleeve, which was a very popular "look" at the time) and wears well-worn blue denim jeans. Facing him is Neil Markinson, who is an older version of the 17-year-old we met in Westania. Very tweedy, he is now 31 years old, and sports the same 1950's-style haircut, with heavy bangs. Sarah, at 30 is a rather countrified woman. Her long plaits are wound about her head. She is attractive, but in no way stylish. Her arm is entwined in Neil's.*

*Sarah and Neil are engaged to be married.*

*Toby, grinning, hands over to Neil a heavy present, which is wrapped up in brown paper and string.*

Toby *laughing*                      Happy wedding! You can see that I went to a great deal of trouble with the presentation.

*Neil looks surprised as he turns the present over and over. He offers it to Sarah to open, but she shakes her head, smiling happily. Thus, Neil begins to open the gift. It is a weighty tome: "The Archaeology of Terra Australis".*

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Neil *unsure how to react* Well ... that's ... that's a lovely wedding present. Thank you. Thank you, old man.

Toby *grins* There you are, Markinson. Just what you'll need. It's the *sine qua non* of Archaeological studies from the great south land.

Sarah *jolly* That's wonderful, Toby. And it could very well double as a doorstep.

*The two young men shake hands, and Toby gives Sarah a peck on the cheek.*

Toby And while you two are taking your lengthy honeymoon-cum-sabbatical in the Land Down Under, we at Oxford will be expecting to receive detailed reports on any exciting developments as they ... er ... develop.

Neil Certainly.

Toby And you're welcome to all of Enid's folios, too. Wonderful collection. She willed them to me, as you know, but I'm sure she'd love them to be shared out among the needy.

Sarah *sighs* Dear old Mrs Finchett. She'll be happy now to have been re-united with her Trader. What a kind and clever old bird she was.

Neil *wryly* With the fashion sense of a gnat.

*Neil and Sarah laugh, looking at each other. Suddenly, and unexpectedly, Neil kisses Sarah on the lips, as if he can no longer resist. Then he is embarrassed to have shown such affection in front of Toby. The latter raises an eyebrow.*

Toby Why the hell have you and Sarah waited **so** long to get hitched?

*Sarah blushes. Neil can find no words, and merely moves his lips.*

Toby Come on, out with it!

Sarah *shyly* It was a bit Biblical, if you can follow that reasoning. Here we were, raised as brother and sister. We'd been such good friends. But to marry ... That was unthinkable. Yes, I know that we had no biological link and could therefore marry with impunity. But ... socially, it's very difficult.



Buxton Well, I would have been less than useless in that department.  
About as useless as old Roger.

Gordon Oh, I wouldn't say that ... Don't hide your light under a bushel.

Laurence *grinning* The thought of the august Professor dancing around the ring in shorts and singlet, dripping with sweat is more than the imagination might compound.

Buxton I can still give you a very handy clip over the ears, though, Laurence Allendale.

*The Pendlebury boys set-to, with Laurie and Gordon ensuring fair play.*

*Holly smiles a little sadly, but sighs, too.*

Helene *worried* Where's Roger?

Holly Oh ... down by the river with Margaret, I should think. She's having one of her bad days.

Helene But you do realize what date it is tomorrow, don't you? It's **the** anniversary of you-know-what. In fact, it's exactly 28 years ago tomorrow that your father was murdered by Tancred.

Holly *appalled* Good Lord! Of course it is!

Helene We'd better take a pot of tea to them, mmm? And some sustenance.

*They organize a tray, whilst the girls continue to chirrup about their headwear. Now they are experimenting with elegant hairpieces and tiaras to achieve a formal look.*

*Helene leads the way down the steps. She stops, looking up at Holly.*

Helene *worried* Has Toby ever confided in you that he had remembered anything?

Holly No. For him, it was just a dim fog, lasting just a couple of seconds. He said that he could see himself playing at Red Indians beside a little boat. He knew that it belonged to the man he'd injured with the small arrow. And then, within a blink or two, he was sitting in the crow's nest of an old sailing boat, moving in

stately manner up the River Thames with scores of surprised Londoners pointing and staring. Then all the way upstream to the landing here, where his family were deliriously overjoyed to have him returned safe to them. That's all he's ever said.

Helene *shrugs* I suppose it's for the best.

And ... Margaret?

Holly *sighs* No better ... "Where are my children? When shall I see them?"

Helene *sorrowful* Grief! You explained it all to her again, did you? ... and so on ... ?

Holly As best we could. We'll have to go over it all once more tomorrow, I should think.

She's awaiting the boat, of course, as we speak.

Helene *aghast* Oh, Lord no!

~~~~~ **Break** ~~~~~

At the riverside, on the landing, Roger (quite out of character) is being kind to Margaret. Both brother and sister look older, with Margaret now looking every bit as old as her mid-50s.

Margaret stares out over the river, especially towards the bend.

Roger *feigning brightness* Ah! Look, my dear. Here are Helene and Holly bringing us some refreshment. It's your favourite: walnut loaf liberally spread with golden fresh butter.

Margaret does not respond.

Roger looks around at Helene and Holly. The three kinsmen all make faces at each other, as Roger takes tea and scones.

Roger *deeply* Come on, Margaret. Your whole family is here to see you.

Margaret *quickly* No they're not. My family isn't here.

There is an awkwardness. No-one is sure how to break it.

END OF SCENE

VI, Scene x: 1964, The Evening of February 17th, Segler's Landing

It is evening, during the long twilight with the light gradually fading. Margaret sits again on the bench, looking sadly out over the river. Judith creeps up to her, putting a shawl around her shoulders.

Judith *kindly* Come on, Old Girl. Time for dinner. Mustn't keep poor Agnes waiting.

Margaret *squinting* What's that? Can you see? There's something on the river ...

Margaret stands, peering downstream.

Around the bend of the river comes a bark canoe as would have been fabricated by the Australian natives many thousands of years previously. A young, fit Albert Pitch stands in the back of the canoe, holding a long, stout stick, such as would be used as a pole attached to a punt or barge. We can see his tribal scarification marks, as he wears only a black loincloth.

Margaret *standing,* I knew it! I'm going to be taken back to that other place to see my
excited children. Finally! What a relief!

Judith looks out over the river. She can see nothing. She shrugs indifferently.

Judith *bored* Not at all. Nothing there. Absolutely nothing.

 Come along, my dear.

Margaret stretches out her hand (such that we can see the primitive wristband given to her by Helene on Gordon's sailing ship) towards Albert Pitch, as he rhythmically works with the punt towards her. Albert sees her, and smiles broadly, showing a row of brilliantly white teeth.

Judith moves up the stone steps, impatiently gesturing for Margaret to follow her.

END OF SCENE

END OF ACT VI

END OF FILM

In the next screenplay in the series, we speed forth a mere 5 years to 1969.
The inimitable Jack Bradley will lead a party of Pendleburys and Allendales on a
wondrous adventure on the Old Silk Road.

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