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Everyman's Rules For Scientific Living

by
Siobhan Jackson

Based on, *Everyman's Rules For
Scientific Living* by Carrie Tiffany

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NOTE TO READER: THIS IS A 'SILENT' SCREENPLAY WRITTEN FOR A 'SILENT' FILM. IF CHARACTERS TALK ASSUME YOU CANNOT HEAR WHAT THEY ARE SAYING, BUT, THAT YOU CAN SEE THAT THEY ARE SPEAKING. IF ACTIONS SUGGEST ACCOMPANYING SOUNDS ASSUME THEY WILL NOT BE HEARD SYNCHRONOUSLY, BUT THEY MAY FORM SOME ELEMENT OF THE FILMS POST SOUND DESIGN. THERE ARE TWO SCENES THAT BREAK THE 'SILENT' RULE AND INCLUDE ELEMENTS OF SYNCHRONOUS SOUND. THE INCLUSION OF SYNCHRONOUS SOUND IN THESE SCENES IS INDICATED IN THE BIG PRINT AND IS INTENTIONAL. EXCEPTING THE TWO SCENES MENTIONED THE FILM WILL PRESENT AS A 'SILENT' FILMS IN THE OLD FASHIONED SENSE OF THE TERM.

1 INT/EXT STEAM TRAIN DAY 1

Through the window of a steam train pale yellow wheat fields can be seen stretching in all directions.

A bright sewing needle pushes through the fine weave of taught linen, deftly guided by a young woman's hand.

The train rattles through endless, flat, dry landscape. Sharp horizon lines dividing land from sky in all directions.

The sun burns.

2 INT COUNTRY SCHOOL ROOM DAY 2

A large map of Australia hangs on the classroom wall. A wooden pointer strikes the centre of the map with gusto and traces an invisible rectangle in it centre.

Jean (6yrs, grubby) sits at a desk surrounded by older girls. The older girls wrap baby dolls in swaddling cloth.

A small circle of boys surround a man in military greens. He addresses the boys enthusiastically. Two boys fold brown paper into aeroplanes and fly them through the air like bomber planes, one crashes onto the girls table. There is commotion and giggling.

CUT TO:

Jean concentrates. She threads a needle in and out of a piece of white cloth making the letters "J-e-a". She pricks her finger with the needle and a small drop of blood stains the white cloth. She looks up to see who might have noticed and sees her father, Frank, talking to the teacher at the door.

Frank has taken off his hat in an apologetic gesture. The teacher motions for Jean to join them.

3 EXT COUNTRY SCHOOL DAY 3

Frank hoists Jean onto his back as they walk across the dusty schoolyard. Through a window, the teacher watches them go.

4 INT FARMHOUSE KITCHEN AFTERNOON 4

Frank lopes into the kitchen with Jean hanging from his back like a monkey.

Abe, the farm cat, lies still in an apple box on the kitchen table, his fur sticking up all wrong-headed. Frank swings Jean off his back. She strokes at Abe's fur but it won't sit flat. The cat's mouth hangs open a little, the gape showing his pale pink tongue, stiff.

Frank parts the fur on Abe's white sock - two puncture wounds an inch apart.

5 EXT ORANGE GROVE DAY 5

The metal edge of a shovel rips into the dry ground. A grave opens in the earth.

Jean throws some dandelion heads into the waiting grave and turns to take a last look at Abe, lying in his apple crate coffin.

Jean's eyes widen. She tugs at her father's trouser leg. Frank throws his shovel to one side and looks into the box.

Abe blinks.

Abe blinks again, slow but certain.

6 EXT COUNTRY SCHOOL YARD DAY 6

Sun glares down on the schoolyard. Teachers fan themselves furiously with hat brims, hankies, folded paper, etc. One teacher takes the hat off the head of the child and fans his red face before reluctantly putting the hat back on the child's head. Flies gather on sweaty backs.

Jean's mouth is wide open, singing. A portrait of King George V is propped up on a chair before the small school population. A teacher conducts mechanically. Jean enjoys the singing so much some of the other children giggle at her zeal.

A child faints. Jean, unaware of the misfortune, keeps singing. The straight line of children behind her turns to chaos. The conductor knocks the King off his chair as she rushes forward. Jean keeps singing.

7 EXT FARMHOUSE FRONT YARD AFTERNOON 7

Abe lies in a warm patch of dirt. Frank breathes into his fetid little mouth. His chest cavity rises and falls gently. Frank feels around his tummy, squeezing until pee trickles out into the dust. Frank stands, assessing the rank little animal.

Jean appears, carrying her school satchel. She couches over the motionless little lump of dusty fur. Jean moves Abe's limbs backwards and forwards as though he were walking.

8 EXT COUNTRY SCHOOL YARD DAY 8

A teacher simultaneously extends opposite leg and arm, instructing the children through a make-shift newspaper rolled loud-hailer.

A young girl (10yrs) mimics the teacher's stance. She wobbles but does not fall. The teacher throws down the newspaper loud hailer and begins pulling at the child's legs and arms.

Jean sits nearby concentrating on her embroidery square. The letters "J-e-a-n--F-i-n-n-e" are spelt across the grubby embroidery square. A roughly stitched man and cat sit below the letters.

The stretching girl falls. The teacher takes up her loud-hailer again.

9 INT FARMHOUSE KITCHEN EARLY MORNING. 9

Frank finishes pre-peeling Jean's lunch orange. He winds the perfect spiral of thick orange skin back around the flesh of the fruit. He opens her lunch tin and finds there are three live frogs inside.

10 EXT. ORANGE GROVE AFTERNOON 10

Jean walks through an orange grove on the way home from school swinging her lunch tin.

As she makes her way between the fruit trees she sees Abe sitting on a fence post licking his foot as if he had never been sick.

(CONTINUED)

10 CONTINUED:

Frank appears from the between the boughs of the grove wearing a green wool army uniform, a little too short in the sleeve. He is almost invisible in the greenery.

Jean sweeps Abe off the fence rail and stares at her father, scanning the unfamiliar outfit. Frank pulls Jean into a cuddle. Abe hisses from the centre of the embrace.

11 INT FARM HOUSE KITCHEN NIGHT 11

Frank and Jean sit quietly eating their evening meal. Frank's uniform shirt hanging on the back of his chair. He eats in a white singlet.

Jean eats quietly, one hand dangling beside her. Abe licks butter off Jean's fingers as her father reads the newspaper. He puts the paper down.

Frank picks up an orange from the fruit bowl. There are only oranges in the bowl. He rolls the fruit between his hands. Fidgety.

He misjudges a roll and the orange knocks over Jean's milk. Jean leaps up to escape the liquid, knocking down her chair. Abe leaps away. For a moment everything is still. Then suddenly Frank smiles and starts rolling oranges across the table.

Milk and fruit are everywhere. Jean erupts in delight. Fruit soccer on a milky turf ensues. Abe licks milk puddles off the floor.

12 EXT/INT FARMHOUSE/ORCHARD DAY 12

The farmhouse is empty bar a few scattered fruit crates and boxes.

Abe sits, nailed in an orange crate. Sun streams through gaps in the crate.

13 EXT CITY TRAIN PLATFORM DAY 13

Frank writes on a post card. He uses another soldiers back as a table.

13 CONTINUED:

13

The pencil jerks away. The back/table moves. Frank puts the card against his own knee and quickly finishes writing. Men in uniforms stretch as far as the eye can see.

14 EXT COUNTRY TRAIN PLATFORM DAY

14

Jean sits on one of many suitcases piled onto a luggage trolley. She holds a postcard of three soldiers posing with fat white chickens under their arms. She turns it over in her hand.

The platform is quiet. A woman in a big coat is fossicking through her bag. She wipes Jean's face with a beautifully embroidered hankie.

15 EXT TRAIN DAY

15

A bright orange steam train rattles through a flat dry landscape. The words '*Better Farming Train*' are painted across the orange engines nose.

Pale yellow wheat fields stretch in all directions from track to horizon.

The sun burns.

16 INT TRAIN WOMAN'S CAR DAY

16

A young woman (26 yrs, sturdy) sits alone in a train carriage sewing. It is Jean. Out the windows, a flat, dry landscape passes, and passes.

The carriage is filled with of white wooden benches set out in rows. A blackboard, covered with simple chalk clothing diagrams and sewing dummies half dressed fill one end of the carriage.

Jean fossicks through a small cardboard sewing basket made from old post cards. There are pictures of landscapes and ponies and ladies on swings. Soldiers holding large white chickens decorate lid. Amongst the threads and scraps of fabric there is a child's stitch sampler. It is the sampler we saw Jean stitching as a child. Jean's name and a roughly stitched man and cat decorate the sampler. Dates have been added under the man by a steadier and more mature hand: **1887-1915. R.I.P.**

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED:

The train pushes on through the flat, yellow landscape.

Jean wraps a tiny piece of white fabric around the tip of her finger. Blood seeps through.

17 INT HORSE CARRIAGE DAY 17

A gleaming colt stands in a sharp lean, pissing hard against the carriage floor.

The train pushes on through the landscape.

18 INT DOMESTIC CARRIAGE DAY 18

Jean looks up from her makeshift first aid efforts.

Mary, a bright but plain young woman in her early twenties, is framed by a window in the door at the end of the carriage.

She presses her face against the glass and contorts it like a medieval gargoyle.

Jean smiles and packs up her sewing basket.

19 INT CATTLE/SHEEP CARRIAGE 19

Women's feet hop about, avoiding animal droppings, as they move through the train carriage. The carriage is brimming with shiny big cows, all standing in individual corrals with their rumps facing the travelling women. Tails flick and cow droppings fall.

Sister Crock (45yrs, old maid), travels between Mary and Jean. Her red midi cape swinging around her ample shoulders. The two younger woman guide her journey. They close the door on the cattle carriage and head through the sheep carriage.

A large Border Leicester ram shits a clod of pellets in front of the women.

20 INT VARIOUS CARRIAGES MONTAGE 20

The women continue through various agriculture display carriages. Living dioramas.

20 CONTINUED:

20

Each carriage labelled with black enamel script - "**Cattle**", "**Honey**", "**Wheat**", "**Domestic**". Bees crawl about between hives, miniature wheat fields sway in the breeze, horse hooves dig at the carriage floor boards.

21 EXT TRAIN DAY

21

Train wheels turn relentlessly along gleaming steel tracks.

22 INT AGRICULTURE CARRIAGE

22

A beautiful man with curly hair, Kit Collins, (28yrs, green eyes), sits on a chair by a large display of shiny, perfectly formed fruits and veg.

He smokes and dozes as the train moves through the landscape. The train cat (black, huge, no ears) pushes against his legs.

23 INT. TOBACCO CARRIAGE TRAIN DAY.

23

Sister Crock hurries the other two women along. They file through "**Plant Identification**" and "**Tobacco**" with relative ease.

As they exit Mary opens the door to the "**Agriculture**" carriage. She stops abruptly, causing Sister Crock and Jean to pile into the back of her.

Mary is grinning at Mr Kit Collins who has placed a number of fruits on his lap in a suggestive arrangement. He swiftly removes the fruit.

Sister Crock can't see what's happening and is clearly annoyed by the hold up. Her fussing gets Mary moving again.

As Sister Crock passes, the young man smiles, his cigarette dangling from his lips.

Mary giggles.

Kit hands Jean an orange. The ear-less train cat pushes against Jean's stockinged legs. She scratches its head before moving on. It follows her.

24 INT POULTRY CAR DAY

24

The next door is labelled "**Poultry**". Under the familiar black script are two small, carefully added Japanese characters, in shiny, red enamel.

Mary swings the carriage door open.

The interior is dim, lit by orange incubator lights swinging above a litter of cages.

A Japanese man, Mr. Ohno (30, tidy, complete), sits on his haunches in the corner working a piece of leather.

Seeing the women, he leaps to his feet and folds into a deep bow. The women can not pass. Ohno's bow favours Jean. The attention makes her self conscious. The train cat weaves casually between Jean's legs before disappearing into a corner of the dimly lit carriage.

Ohno wears immaculate pin striped trousers, a long swallow tail jacket and a crimson silk tie at his neck. His brilliantined hair is parted through the dead centre of his head. Perfect. He smiles. His hair moves obediently in step with the widening of his smile.

Jean stares at Mr Ohno's feet. He wears white toe socks and heavy wooden clogs. Mary giggles. Jean begins a smile.

Mr Ohno takes a chick from under the incubator light and guides Jean's finger over a pale pink rim between the chickens legs.

Mary giggles again and Sister Crock clears her throat.

Mr Ohno nods at Sister Crock and bends into another deep bow in front of Jean.

Mr Ohno cocks an eye at Jean. Jean is confused and nervous. Mary gives Jean a little shove towards Ohno. Jean blushes.

The train cat emerges from the shadows. Jean spots him and sweeps him up before following Mary and Sister Crock out of the carriage.

Mr Ohno straightens and returns the chick to its cage.

Mary whispers to Jean as they leave the car.

Mr Ohno stands alone looking towards the closing carriage door.

(CONTINUED)

24 CONTINUED:

24

On one of the cages sits the orange Jean was carrying. Mr Ohno picks it up. The skins falls away from the flesh in a perfect spiral. He admires the lovely sight.

He eats the orange.

25 INT SITTING CAR DAY

25

The sitting car is full of smoke and men.

Siting and standing around model farms yards, charts of animal intestines and mini milking machines the men talk and argue and gesticulate.

Sister Crock, Mary and Jean arrive. Crock scans for places to sit.

Mr. Talbot (40's, graying, wing-nut) works closely on glass slides, illustrating sheep innards with a beautiful set of coloured pencils.

A pencil rolls off his desk onto the carriage floor. Mr Baker, (40's, scar across his face, messy orange whiskers) bends to pick up the pencil as he passes. He knocks the table. All the pencils fall. Both men get on hands and to chase the rolling pencils.

The train pushes through the flat landscape.

Sister Crock plants herself heavily by Mr. Plattfuss (40's, glass eye, fancy mustache). Mary and Jean shuffle past escaping Sister Crock's continued company.

Mr. Plattfuss smiles and addresses Sister Crock. Sister Crock inhales deeply and launches into talk. Mr Plattfuss listens quietly.

Mary squeezes herself into the tight ring of young men surrounding a piece of shiny dairy equipment. All the dairy demonstrators wear white coats.

Jean sits on the bankette and drills stitches. She is kept company by the train cat, curled by her side.

Mr. Baker, passes a large plaster pigs head to a young assistant standing opposite him and joins Jean on the bankette.

(CONTINUED)

Jean holds the lace netting up to the bright light of the window, illuminating areas that need further attention. The needlework is extremely fine, throwing an exquisite pattern across Jean's face. Mr. Baker admires the pattern cast.

The other occupants of the sitting carriage continue to talk enthusiastically around their model farms, moving animals and machines parts to suit their arguments.

Mr Baker picks up the ear-less train cat and settles him on his lap.

Jean stops mid stitch and smiles broadly at Mr Baker. He is treating the train cat to a vigorous scratch. The cat becomes playful and pats at Jean's stitching. Jean and Mr Baker enjoy playing with the cat together.

The train rattles on.

A puffy foot juts out from behind a drawn sleeping compartment curtain. It belongs to Sister Crock's.

Mary and Jean share bunks. In the top bunk, Mary reads from a rural magazine full of cow milking pictures.

Jean stares at the underside of Mary's bunk, round and heavy. She holds her hand flat across her chest bone, pressing firmly against her skin.

Mary turns suddenly in her sheets and hangs her head over the edge of the bunk. Jean is startled, as though 'caught out'.

Mary slips to the floor and pushes her bed socks between her toes, and bows to Jean.

Jean ignores her, with a smile. Sister Crock rolls over, heavily. Mary and Jean look nervously towards her compartment. Mary, carefully pulls at her bed clothes. Jean cranes her neck, unable to see what she's doing.

Mary steps into clear view wearing a bedsheet veil, her feet still sporting the pretend toe socks. For a moment everything is still and solemn and almost beautiful. But Mary can't hold in her glee. She laughs hard. Jean too. Sister Crock moves again. Mary returns quickly to her bunk. The women settle down.

26 CONTINUED:

26

Jean stares across the now dark carriage, sleepless. A gentle orange glow, emanating from a far corner, reveals a figure sleeping on a thin mat - it is Mr. Ohno. He is beautiful, perfect. An exquisite apparition.

The train rattles on through the warm night.

27 INT WOMEN'S SLEEPING CARRIAGE NIGHT

27

Jean wakes with a jolt. The train has stopped.

She opens the carriage window and looks down the length of the train. Mr Talbot, Kit Collins, Mr Plattfuss, Ohno and others, are gathered by the track, in varying degrees of dress.

Gas lanterns bob along through the dark, gathering at the engine carriage.

28 EXT TRAIN TRACKS NIGHT

28

Blood drips from the front grill of the train. A man wearing a smart dressing gown, the trains Superintendent, stands with a small group of men smeared with coal dust, investigating the carnage.

Cows graze unwittingly either side of the track. Some wander across the tracks.

The Superintendent shoos them off the tracks in a mothering fashion. Some cows move, some don't. He re-ties his dressing gown and heads back towards bed.

Jean has made her way down to the scene. The Superintendent bumps past her as he leaves. He apologises and walks on. Everyone is heading back to their carriages.

Jean turns to follow but is stopped by the proximity of Robert (serious, 30's, red hair). He stares straight at her. She is disarmed by his intensity. Stuck on his face, he twitches an eye brow, indicating a stain on her gown. She looks down to see a blood stain from her brush with the Superintendent. The red smear is bright against her cream gown. She takes a hankie from her pocket and dabs at the blood. She looks up to see Robert walking away.

29 EXT/INT TRAIN DAY

29

Billowing steam fills the air.

The train pulls slowly up to a small town siding. There are many more people gathered than the size of the siding suggests possible.

The train is surrounded by makeshift refreshment tents and tables. People are dressed in Sunday best. Women pat their faces with handkerchiefs and men tug at the rims of their hats in anticipation. Children sit two to a pony, play marbles in the dust and chase each other around and between the adults. Everyone waiting, anticipating.

Young men don white coats and climb out gaps in the train's holding pens. The gathered crowd tightens around the carriages.

Like a circus ring master, Mr. Plattfuss entertains the crowd with a 'roll-up, roll-up' type welcome - a loud-hailer in one hand and flourishing the other hand theatrically.

Interrupting Plattfuss' theatrics (just a little off cue), the cattle ramps are dropped simultaneously onto the dry ground. Clouds of dust engulf Plattfuss and the surrounding crowd.

The dust clears to reveal a massive bull standing proud on the ramp. It's shiny coat twitches and gleams.

The crowd pushes forward. Plattfuss touches his mustache with pride, before putting the loud-hailer back to his lips.

30 INT SOIL AND CROPPING CARRIAGE DAY.

30

Robert carefully fills a fountain pen with ink. A little stains his fingers. He writes:

Everyman's Rules for Scientific Living. By Robert L. Pettergree, Department of Agriculture.

Robert's handwriting is very distinctive and strikingly beautiful.

He continues:

Rule No. 1.

31 EXT/INT TRAIN DAY 31

Animals stream out of the carriages led by the young men in white coats.

Like the opening of Noah's Ark - goats, horses, sheep - but it is the cows that create the most excitement. They shine in their loveliness, a multitude of colours and shapes.

The largest, shiniest cow imaginable stands before the crowd. Chatter moves through the assembled masses in waves of appreciation.

Mr Plattfuss adjusts his tight white coat before giving this magnificent beast a hearty slap of appreciation.

The young white-coated-handler stands proudly by his charge.

32 INT SOIL AND CROPPING CARRIAGE DAY. 32

Robert continues listing. Rules 1 to 7 written in his distinctive hand.

33 EXT/INT TRAIN DAY 33

The 'perfect' bovine is led away, after which, Mr Plattfuss pauses dramatically, with fabulous Ring Master focus. All the farmers turn to him in anticipation. Mr Plattfuss playing to the crowds excitement.

Out of the darkness stumbles an obviously ordinary cow - half the size of the last. Plattfuss scoffs at the small cow and encourages the crowd to do the same. It blinks against the light like a nervous child on a brightly lit stage.

As if on cue the unimpressive cow loses her footing on the ramp and slips over the last rung. A chuckle ripples through the crowd. The young stock hand, embarrassed by his charge, leads her away quickly. People laugh and prod as she passes.

34 INT TRAIN WOMAN'S CAR AFTERNOON 34

Mary and Jean watch from a train window. Mary shakes her head, and watches, sympathetically, as the 'ordinary' cow is led under their window. She leans out the fully open carriage window, eager to pet the cow as she passes.

(CONTINUED)

34 CONTINUED:

Jean holds the waist of her skirt, securing her dignity. The cow cocks its head in her direction. Mary runs her finger along her neck.

Mary recovers herself and returns to the baking bench. She plunges her hands into a large mixing bowl, rubbing pastry ingredients together.

35 INT SOIL AND CROPPING CARRIAGE. DAY 35

Robert blots his finished pages and folds them into an addressed envelope.

36 EXT/INT TRAIN DAY 36

Jean continues watching the men milling around the stock. She watches the men argue and posture.

Her gaze floats beyond the stock cars. She sees Robert, step off the train. Around his belt are tied small calico bags. He wears a ruck sack with a small pick strapped to it. Robert glances up the length of the train. He doesn't see Jean watching.

Mary, holding a pastry shell ready to fill, stands close behind Jean. Jean is startled as Mary whispers in her ear.

Mary nudges Jean as she watches Robert thread himself through the fence wire enclosing a paddock that runs along side the train track. His pants get caught on the wire. He frees himself with inelegant ease. Robert walks out across the dry grass, his calico bags bouncing against his trousers as he goes.

Two dusty kids charge under the window, grabbing Jean's attention. They pull a Welsh mountain pony on a length of clothesline.

37 EXT TRAIN DAY 37

Following close behind the kids is Mr Ohno. He calls to the boys, trying to get their attention. His hands sit firmly in his pin-striped trouser pockets, he is immaculately presented. He looks like nothing else around him.

The boys laugh at Mr Ohno's strangeness. The pony trots this way and that.

Mr Ohno sees Jean watching and winks at her before looking back to the boys.

Mr. Ohno offers them a few coins, which they readily except, and he motions towards the pony.

Mr. Ohno hoists himself onto the pony. His swallow tail jacket the perfect riding coat. Incongruous, but somehow stylish.

One of the boys slaps the pony's rump and it lurches into action. Mr Ohno grabs at a tuft of mane and throws a hand out for balance. As he lurches, delighted, backwards and forwards, he looks over to Jean. It is clear he rides the pony for her. Jean smiles broadly.

Mr Ohno turns back to the boys and they all trundle off down the side of the carriages. Ohno's leg's bang against of the ponies round sides.

A 44 gallon drum stands beside the farming trains bright orange engine, flames licking out. A handful of men stand around sharing a beer. More men slowly gather. As the men arrive they hand over a pound note to one of the train's stock hands. Neville Frogely (50, weathered, ill fitting false teeth) joins the crowd holding a small newspaper parcel.

The stock hand put out a palm for Neville's pound note. Neville offers up some coins. The stock hand ignores him, turning his attention to another punter. Neville is pissed-off.

Neville hits up a mate up for the difference.

Neville's mate is clearly not surprised by Neville's touch up and declines to help.

39 INT WOMEN'S CAR NIGHT

39

Jean sews by dim lamp light. Mary reads aloud from "Sex Today In Wedded Life". Mary sits cross legged on her bunk enjoying the articles content.

Jean is still dressed, a shawl draped around her shoulders.

Sister Crock, lowering her well thumbed copy of ERRORS OF MATERNITY, interrupts Mary and hands Jean her empty tea cup.

Jean rolls her eyes as she drops her sewing and stands to leave.

Mary winks at Sister Crock.

40 EXT TRAIN/FIRE NIGHT

40

Neville's 'mate' begrudgingly pulls some coins from his pocket and hands them to Neville. Neville takes them with zero grace.

The stock hand runs the betting like an SP bookie - confident, never missing a beat. The small crowd shoving and craning to get the best view.

41 INT TRAIN NIGHT

41

Jean pushes through carriage doors, balancing a fully laden tea tray. Tea lapping into saucers. Turning to push open a door with her backside she sees a fire burning through the train window opposite. She puts the tray down and stares out at the scene.

She pulls back from the window slightly as she sees Robert approaching the fire.

42 EXT TRAIN WINDOW NIGHT

42

Jean's face reappears, cautiously, at the window. Watching.

43 EXT TRAIN/FIRE NIGHT

43

Robert emerges from the darkness, approaching the betting circle, illuminated by the fire.

The gathered men stop their pushing and shoving. They watch with some reverence as Robert approaches. Someone offers a beer. Robert ignores the offer, walking straight to the centre of the gathering. A grubby white handkerchief, tied to resemble a dirty little Christmas pudding, is passed to the stock hand in charge. It is untied and its contents presented to Robert. It is a soil sample.

Robert takes a little of the sample and places it on the palm of his hand. One of the stock hands stands by with a bowl of warm water. Robert moistens the soil and rolls it as if shaping a cigarette.

Some of the gathered men whisper to one another. The beer bottles continue to be passed from man to man. Robert acknowledges no-one, concentrating on the task at hand.

It appears the gathered crowd is awaiting a miracle.

44 EXT TRAIN WINDOW NIGHT

44

Jean is transfixed by the curious goings on.

She watches as Robert raises the sliver of moisten soil to his mouth.

The soil has barely touched Roberts tongue before he confidently points to a spot on a map held by another stock hands.

The owner of the sample cusses and takes the beer from the man beside him. The man takes a deep swig - defeated. More money changes hands.

CUT TO

Another sample is passed up. The process begins again.

Again, Robert passes comment and indicates a spot on the map. Another punter curses.

MONTAGE:

(CONTINUED)

Hands's slap backs, beer is guzzled, more money changes hands, fire sparks float in the night air.

The men are getting more physical/clumsy - punters try to withdraw their money from the betting. In the midst of the good humoured disappointment, Neville Frogely slips his newspaper parcel into Robert's hand.

Robert unwraps it, tastes it and declares the origin.

Neville smiles, showing his dreadful false teeth. He steps forward, ribbing his mate triumphantly as he passes.

Neville gestures to the stock hand to pay up. The stock hand is reluctant, not believing Robert has failed or that Neville is being honest.

The crowd turn on Neville. Perhaps jealous, perhaps distrustful. The men laugh and mock, clearly suggesting Neville to be a liar.

Annoyed, Neville whines at the stock hand to pay up, giving him a robust shove. The crowd continue to jeer.

Neville's face reddens and his temper replaces any previous smugness.

Neville throws down the bundle of paper that had wrapped his soil sample. The evening is over. Neville and his mate skulk off bickering.

The stock hand divvies up the winnings with Robert and then heads off to continue the night with the remaining hangers on. Robert is gone. Disappearing into the darkness, just as he appeared.

Jean sees Robert returning the way he came. She pulls herself from the window turning back to the tea tray.

Both Mary and Sister Crock are sleeping. Jean sits and drinks from all three tea cups. She looks at her reflection in the train window. She eats all the biscuits.

47

INT ROBERT'S SLEEPING CARRIAGE NIGHT

47

Robert stands, shirtless, in his sleeping compartment. He has a pigeon chest which rises in a distinct peak below his breast plate.

His compartment is festooned with sheets and sheets of paper covered in beautifully annotated and dissected wheat samples. His distinct and beautiful hand writing on display.

With very deliberate movements Robert removes his pants and under things and folds them neatly way. Naked, he sits on the bed edge beside a small bundle of pound notes. On the bedside table is a cup of tea. Robert drinks it.

He picks up the pound notes and counts them. He seems satisfied, adding them to an already substantial wad stashed in a rectangular leather pouch. Robert looks to the window and sees the reflection of a young boy staring back at him. He is not startled, he watches calmly as the boy turns to look at something.

A women, with flaming red hair, lies in bed cradling a bundle of swaddling cloth. She beckons for the boy to come closer. He advances cautiously. On closer inspection the swaddling cloth is grubby and blood stained. The woman pushes the cloth aside to reveal a withered little baby, grubby with dried blood.

Young Robert shies away from the bloody baby. The violent scene is too much for the little boy.

The woman holds the bundle up to Young Robert, encouraging him to hold the child.

Robert's adult reflection subsumes the little boy holding the baby. Robert sees himself, an adult, holding the deformed little bundle.

48

OHNO'S CARRIAGE NIGHT

48

Ohno sits cross legged, sewing a tiny human figure in calico. The details of the body are stitched in tiny fine black running stitch. There are breasts and pubic hair and a belly button. A small Japanese character in red silk lies over the heart. The face is blank.

49 INT WOMEN'S CARRIAGE DAY

49

The carriage is full of women holding babies. A smattering of young children are fidgeting and pushing in and out from between the forest of stockinged legs.

Sister Crock commands the attention of the crowd - they begin unwrapping their babies in response.

Jean crouches by a little girl that looks remarkably like herself at the same age (6yrs, grubby) showing her the scratching feel of the train cat's tongue. Jean is wiping butter from a small plate onto the little girls finger tip. The little girl is not much bigger than the enormous cat. The cat licks vigorously.

Naked babies are passed from sweaty hand to sweaty hand. Sister Crock's scales bob up and down continuously as the babies move through. She rules lines with an ink pen and neatly writes numbers in columns. It is a military operation.

Jean re-wraps the babies after weighing. She is good at it - deftly returning babies to their mothers.

As Jean wraps the last baby she sees her little doppelganger leaving and motions for her to wait. Jean nods to her apron pocket as she wraps a big red faced baby. The little girl reaches into the pocket and pulls out a little cardboard sewing book with a steam train decorating the cover. Jean winks at her. The little girl runs out of the carriage to find her mother.

Jean unties her apron and opens the carriage door. She looks to Sister Crock for the okay to leave.

Sister Crock nods approval as she slumps exhausted into a chair.

50 INT/EXT MARQUEE WARRACKNABEAL DAY

50

A group of five or six farm dogs lie in the dust by a marquee's large canvas doors, sleepy guard dogs. One dog snaps at invisible flies.

Jean sees her doppelganger, again, in the distance stamping her feet in the dust while her mother talks to a group of women. The dust floats up around her feet. Her mother scolds her.

(CONTINUED)

Jean waves, but the girl doesn't see her.

Jean slips past the guard dogs and finds a seat at the back of the marquee. There is a printed flyer, dusty, on the ground at her feet. She picks it up - it depicts a farmer standing triumphant, before a paddock of rippling wheat as tall as a man. Sun streams across the scene - the rays made up of yellow words declaring - **"SUPER Phosphate - Grow two blades where one grew before - Hungry soil? Feed it SUPER phosphate!"**

Rows and rows of men in dusty hats sit on the wooden benches that fill the hastily erected marquee.

Robert stands at the front, raised apart from the crowd on a makeshift stage that has been cobbled together from apple crates. Behind him hangs a large white sheet. A projected image of a wooded field covers the sheet.

Robert leans into the lectern, light from the slide projector splashing across his face in such a way as to make his face seem split in two. Scanning the farmer's faces, he slaps a long stick into the middle of the projected image and begins to talk with vehement energy. He shakes his head and drags his stick across the image without favour.

The farmers are a little taken aback by the Robert's strident start to proceedings. They shuffle in their seats and look to one another for reassurance.

Jean has to crane her neck to see past the sea of men's hats to Robert's lectern. She holds a bundle of fine crochet in her hands.

The slide changes and shows the same piece of land deforested. Not a tree in sight. The soil is turned over, fresh and dark. Robert strikes the sheet again, approvingly.

The farmer's in the hall nod, some clap. Robert quickly resumes delivering his manifesto, taking confidence from the approval of the crowd.

Robert steps out from behind the lectern and, as if about to pray, kneels beside it. His white laboratory coat is bunched up around the bend in his thigh. Now he is in plain view Jean notices Robert's pigeon chest jutting out noticeably from his coat.

Robert's face is flush with purpose as he leans over a small tray of soil beside him.

Robert digs in the tray with a pen knife and takes a small soil sample in his palm. He rolls it between his palms, stands, holding the finger of soil up like a sacred offering. He stares out into the crowd.

The men are now standing also, craning to see what Robert is doing, heavy with anticipation.

Robert stares straight out at the men, he brings the soil to his mouth and licks. A man in the crowd titters uncomfortably. Undeterred by the signs of disbelief, Robert offers the soil to a man in the front row for tasting.

Jean watches the men turn to one another, looking to confirm what they have just seen. Jean stands to see what Robert will do next.

A few men from the front come forward. They make a short line as though they are about to receive Holy Communion. The first participant spits with distaste.

But before the other tasters have time to loose their nerve Robert is pulling a large sack out from behind the lectern. Full of almost religious zeal Robert plunges his hands into the sack.

Some men take off their hats as if to get a better view, others lean heavily on the shoulders of those in front of them to gain a little height. Robert holds his hands aloft, allowing their pale chalky content to spill through his fingers.

He is lit bright and magnificent by the slide projector lantern screaming the image from the leaflet - **"SUPER Phosphate - Grow two blades where one grew before - Hungry soil? Feed it SUPER phosphate!"**

A smattering of applause follows. The sermon is over. The men begin to disperse.

The tent begins to empty. The dogs outside yap and sniff at boots as the farmers file past.

Jean sees snatches of Robert as the farmers file past. Robert is packing up his lecture material.

Once the benches are clear Jean walks to the front of the marquee and introduces herself to Robert with an outstretched hand. Robert, unaware of Jean's attendance, is a little surprised. He slowly extends his hand. Unwittingly Jean stares at Roberts mouth.

50 CONTINUED: (3)

There are little gains of soil clinging to his lips and chin. Self-consciously Robert withdraws his hand and brushes away the soil. Jean smiles nervously and diverts her glance.

Robert indicates he should be packing up.

Jean smiles. She still holds a ball of crochet silk which rolls from her hand. Robert's hand shoots out, in a reflex action, and catches the silk before it hits the dirt. He passes it back to Jean.

Robert gives a tiny nod and turns to the front of the hall, striding briskly, a little sweat gathering on his forehead, he smiles gently with out looking back.

Jean pockets the silk and follows Robert. She helps pack down the stage. Robert glances at her approvingly, but says nothing. They work silently together.

51 INT/EXT CATTLE CARRIAGE TRAIN DUSK

51

Mary, extends her free hand to Jean, helping her into the cattle carriage. Mary holds a treacle pie, simultaneously cooing to Folly (the 'ordinary cow' from earlier) and chatting idly to Jean. The train cat is sniffing and rubbing against the women's legs. Folly shifts and snuffles in her stall, anticipating the pie.

Mary watches Folly lick and scoop up the sticky black content of the treacle pie.

As Mary continues, Jean scans the dark paddocks surrounding the train. She sees Robert by the train, talking to a stock hand. Jean's attention drifts from Mary and Folly to Robert. Mary doesn't notice.

Slowly Robert begins to glow - emanating a soft green light.

Robert looks up and sees Jean in the far carriage door. His green glow is gone. He acknowledges Jean with a tiny nod. Jean returns the nod.

Mary is rubbing Folly vigorously. Folly loves it. Her front hoof pads at the ground with pleasure.

Jean watches as Robert walks away from the train, engulfed by the darkness of the surrounding paddocks.

(CONTINUED)

51 CONTINUED:

51

Jean turns back to see Mary and Folly standing together, like a couple in a wedding photo. Good, honest, doers.

52 INT SITTING CAR DAY

52

Sandwiches are laid out on a table. Water in glass jugs dances about to the rhythm of the moving train. Glasses sit close, bumping one another. Wheat fields fly by in the background.

Mr Plattfuss holds the door for Sister Crock. He pushes at his glass eye to right its position in the socket as the other train occupants file into the sitting carriage.

The party gathers around the sandwiches. As Jean places various ribbons of bread and filling on her plate she notices that Robert is standing close behind her. She shyly negotiates her way past him. The swaying of the moving train making the maneuver inelegant at best, she inadvertently presses against Robert as she passes.

Jean sits on the leather bank seating that runs down both sides of the sitting carriage. Her sandwich plate on her knees.

Robert sits close beside her. Their thighs touch intermittently as the carriage moves. They eat.

Mr Baker sits a few body widths away from Robert. Mr Baker eats the centre out of his sandwiches and places the crusts back on his plate. He notices Jean glancing across at his plate.

Mr Baker brushes the crumbs out of his wily orange whiskers and winks at Jean. Jean smiles a response.

Mr Baker cocks an eye at Robert who doesn't respond.

Mr Baker holds the newspaper he is reading aloft for Jean to see. A large photo showing rows of women holding babies is accompanied by a banner headline reading: **Sister Crock Declares Our Babies Thin.**

Mr Baker raises his plate in a 'bon appetite' gesture. Jean smiles and flicks an eye to Robert who is staring, unmoved straight ahead. Mr Baker smiles at her sympathetically.

Robert suddenly jumps to his feet, lurching towards Jean's empty sandwich plate.

(CONTINUED)

The awkward movements and Robert's embarrassment make Jean smile. Robert retrieves more sandwiches.

Mr Baker smiles to Jean, across the gap now vacated by Robert. He raises his eye brows playfully and holds one of his abandoned sandwich crusts up to his mouth like a smile.

Jean smiles and flicks an eye to Robert as he fumbles around with napkins and sandwich selection.

Ohno sits with some of the other train residence. Instead of eating his sandwiches he has rearranged their contents into something completely new. Triangles of bread, slices of ham, semi-circles of cut tomato laid out in a floral mandala of some considerable beauty. The small head of the calico doll peeks above the edge of his breast pocket. It now has a delicately stitched face and the beginnings of golden cotton hair strands. A needle is woven through his breast pocket waiting to be used.

Rows of woman sit on white wooden bench seating, watching Jean draw shapes on the chalk board.

Jean turns to face the women. The chalkboard is covered in detailed tiny chalk drawings of sewing techniques.

The women continue to listen attentively. Jean demonstrates a stitching technique on a piece of rough work cloth.

Jean pulls at the seam to demonstrate its strength.

She looks up from the sewing to see if there are any questions.

The women look about furtively waiting for someone to break the silence. No-one speaks up.

Jean moves to the next lesson, fossicking for the relevant sample amongst the folded pile of example garments.

A woman in the crowd whispers tentatively to the woman next to her as if looking for approval to speak. She looks amongst the other women seated on the benches, a number give her the 'go ahead' gestures. She hesitantly pulls out a woman magazine from her bag. The magazine is passed to the front and given to Jean. The open page has a beautiful picture of a woman wearing an exotic Chinese inspired frock.

53 CONTINUED:

The heading splashed across the top says, "Chinese collars - an exotic alternative."

The other women make approving nods and start to come alive on the hard wooden benches. Some have bought fabric and others clippings that they begin to share amongst one another.

Jean watches the women talk excitedly amongst themselves about totally non practical garments.

Jean looks over her shoulder. She knows no-one is there but needs the strength of certainly, before she turns and shares in the gathered women's enthusiasm.

Jean turns to the blackboard and wipes it clean of practical work garment instructions. The women are all concentration.

54 EXT TRAIN/PADDOCK DAY

54

Robert watches the circles of women in the women's carriage from a paddock beside the train. He has filled a small calico bag with dirt and now neatly ties the tops with string.

He sucks the dirt off the end of his fingers, savouring it. He watches the women talk and sew. Jean moves amongst them talking, demonstrating, laughing.

55 EXT TRAIN LATE AFTERNOON

55

The train chugs through the flat landscape. The sky is huge. The sun relentless.

56 EXT TRAIN DIMBOOLA AFTERNOON

56

The train pulls to a stop.

The animals are released into paddocks by the track.

The Dimboola train station stands near by.

57 EXT CAR DIMBOOLA LATE AFTERNOON

57

Many of the train's men are playing an ad hock cricket match in the dust beside the tracks. The sound of cicadas is everywhere. As the men move, clouds of dust rise and obliterate any definition, giving the whole game a hazy, monochromatic look.

Kit Collins bowls to one of the stock hands. He has switched the ball for an orange. The bat splats the fruit and juice and pulp fly through the air. But it's too hot for cricket. The men decide to go to the pub. They walk off down the tracks in a flock, like dusty birds in a heat haze.

Mr Ohno sits on his haunches in a carriage doorway tossing an orange from one hand to the other. He is dressed in his swallow tail jacket and pin striped trousers, scarlet silk at his neck.

Kit Collins turns from the flock of men and looks back to the train. He waves and calls to Ohno.

Mr Ohno hops up from his haunches and follows the men down the track. He sees Jean walking by a paddock further down the line. He waves enthusiastically, she waves back with a big smile.

58 EXT TRAIN LATE AFTERNOON

58

Jean leans over a fence running beside the tracks, talking to Folly. Folly pushes against the wire encouraging Jean's affection. Jean watches the men disappear down the track as she converses with Folly.

Robert pops his head out the window of the one of the train carriages and calls down to Jean.

59 EXT/INT HONEY CARRIAGE LATE AFTERNOON

59

Robert helps Jean into the carriage, grabbing the plump of her arm to hoist her up. The carriage is hot and dark inside. The shutters are drawn. Robert's face is glowing with sweat.

A small fire crackles away in the carriage, heating a kettle of water. A large bone handled knife rests in the hot water.

(CONTINUED)

59 CONTINUED:

Robert puts the knife in Jean's hand. The handle is uncomfortably hot to hold. Her fingers loosen and tighten around the handle to regulate the temperature.

The fire from the stove crackles and steam drifts from the kettle on top.

Robert hands Jean a wooden frame strung with fine gauge wire mesh and motions across the face of it.

Jean sluices the wire with the hot knife. The wax melts and honey drips through the mesh into the tub of the extractor. Jean puts the knife into the kettle of boiling water to clean it. Robert hands her another frame.

Robert and Jean tag team through a dozen frames. Robert comes and goes, opening hive boxes and removing frames, handing them to Jean for sluicing. Each frame brings with it a couple of sad, sleepy bees. They progressively find their way up Jean's arms and into her hair.

There are smears of honey on Jean's checks, her dress is sticky and honey drips on her shoes.

Robert delivers the last frame and stands and watches Jean.

Robert talks idly as he watches Jean.

Jean nods sleepily. Her arms weary from the weight of the frames and the heat. Sweat rolls down her brow and arms.

Robert pulls his shirt off not undoing his buttons. For a short while he is hidden inside the white cotton. He takes a glass of water and splashes it across his pigeon chest and over his head. Jean continues sluicing. Robert fills the glass again and is suddenly behind Jean sprinkling water across her shoulders and down her back. Jean leans back into Robert's chest.

Robert reaches around Jean, helping her hold the weight of the last frame by supporting her arms.

Jean drags the knife across the wire, Robert traces water up her arms, pushing his fingers up under the sleeve of her dress searching for the joint between her arm and body.

The knife and frame fall away and Jean lifts her dress over her head and lets it fall to the ground.

(CONTINUED)

59 CONTINUED: (2)

Jean's dress settles on the ground and for a moment Jean and Robert are completely still. Robert stares at Jean; any awkwardness expelled by the heat induced drowsiness.

Jean breaks the stillness and busies herself with undressing - shoes, stockings, slip. Robert's clothes mingle with Jean's on the carriage floor.

He touches her skin, moving across her body, from fingers to shoulders, up and down her legs, across her breasts. His tongue tracing down the fine hair that snakes down her belly then through her pubic hair.

Steam drifts from the kettle boiling away in the background.

The two are lying on top of their discarded clothes and Robert is moving and grabbing more urgently at Jean's body. Pulling at her nipples with his teeth and grabbing at her flesh with his hands. He begins grinding his penis into the soft flesh of her belly. His toe nails scraping at her calves. It hurts Jean. Robert is keening and straining, then he shudders and is still.

Robert's chest falls heavily against Jean's. It feels sharp and hard. Jean pushes his shoulder and he moves to the side. Skin un-sticks.

60 INT PUB LATE AFTERNOON/EVENING

60

The pub is full. Men are chatting and drinking. The only women to be seen are serving behind the bar. A man plays an upright piano.

Mr Baker stands abruptly and launches into song (we can hear this in sync). The men and the piano stop still. They listen and drink. What Mr. Baker lacks in voice he makes up for in sincerity. It is mesmerizing.

MR BAKER

Roses are shining in Picardy, In
the hush of the silver dew, Roses
are flowering in Picardy, But
there's never a rose like you! And
the roses will die with the
summertime, And our roads may be
far apart, But there's one rose
that dies not in Picardy, 'Tis the
rose that I keep in my heart.

(CONTINUED)

60 CONTINUED:

The pianist begins a simple accompaniment.

Mr Ohno sits a little outside the main group of drinkers. He peels an orange while he listens. The skin separates from the orange shaped as various farm animals - a cow, a horse, a pig. The citrus skin animals are perfect.

The drinkers are happy to listen. Talbot's voice continues across the next two scene.

61 INT HONEY CAR EVENING 61

Jean and Robert lie quietly on the floor of the honey car.

62 EXT TRAIN EVENING 62

The train sits quietly on the tracks. Only a few lamps burn yellow in the carriages.

Sister Crock and Mr Plattfuss eat sandwiches quietly together in the sitting car. Sister Crock fans herself with a women's husbandry journal.

63 INT HONEY CAR EVENING 63

Jean indicates with a tiny flick of her eyes that Robert is lying on her clothes. He lifts his shoulders and she slips the garments out from under him.

They exchange awkward apologies for being in one another's way.

Robert clears his throat, as he casts about for his underwear.

The two dress quietly. Passing one another various items that are out of the others reach. Robert holds up a sticky flesh coloured stocking. Jean takes it with a little embarrassment and slips it into her dress pocket.

Jean cautiously addresses Robert, indicating that he has misbuttoned his shirt.

Robert smiles and re-does his buttons. There is nothing more to do. They each wait, awkward, for the other to say something. Robert breaks the silence.

(CONTINUED)

63 CONTINUED:

Robert holds out a hand and speaks rapidly.

Jean interrupts Robert's nervous chatter by putting her hand gently on Robert's reassuring him.

Robert is relieved, he slips his hands into his trouser pocket and pulls out a handkerchief. He gently rubs a little honey off her cheek.

64 INT WOMAN'S SLEEPING CAR AFTERNOON

64

Mary types recipes with two fingers. Her tongue sticking out between her lips in concentration. Jean has neatly stitched the outline of wheat head and is finishing off the letters **R.P** into the corner of the handkerchief Robert wiped her face with.

Mary rips the paper out of the typewriter and screws it up.

On the shallow window ledge beside Jean's bunk rests three little dried orange skin animals. A cow, a horse and a pig. The sun streams past and through them. They glow.

Mary, sick of her typing, puts a record on a little wind up gramophone.

Mary puts her hand out to Jean. Jean raises her eye brows in refusal. Mary waves her hand in Jean's face pleadingly.

Jean reluctantly takes Mary's hand. Mary pulls Jean in close, she laughs and the two move about the carriage dancing and laughing.

65 INT SOIL AND CROPPING CARRIAGE. AFTERNOON

65

Local farmers are crowded into the carriage. Open louver windows and a glass roof flood the carriage with light and breeze. On one side of the carriage grows tall, luxuriant wheat in tubs. It moves gently against the breeze flowing through the open louvers. On the other side of the carriage stands tubs of stubbly, mangy looking wheat. It stands awkward and stiff.

The farmers file past, cooing at the thick 'super' wheat. They each hold bouquets of wheat for Robert to examine. At a small bench Robert carefully cuts into one of the wheat heads.

(CONTINUED)

65 CONTINUED:

65

Above the men's heads, where the luggage racks should be, there are huge signs that read,

'The soil is hungry for phosphate - use SUPER phosphate'

'Grow two blades where one grew before'

The stream of curious farmers mutter as they look about the carriage and wait for their samples to be tested.

One man throws his arms into a strong man pose. The other men laugh.

Robert looks up, not in response to the joking, but to motion to a stock hand that is standing near by. He whispers in his ear. The stock hand nods and leaves.

66 INT/EXT WOMAN'S CAR AFTERNOON

66

The same stock hand stands by the door of the women's sitting car. He knocks and enters.

Jean stops dancing abruptly, a little embarrassed. Mary continues bobbing about as the stock hand slips Jean a small note. She nods to the stock hand as she takes the initialled hankie from her apron pocket and gives it to the stock hand in return. He leaves as quickly as he came, much more embarrassed than Jean to have interrupted the private dancing.

Mary stops dancing wanting to know what note says. Jean ignores her.

Mary smiles knowingly and takes Jean's hand again to dance. She knows Jean is hiding something. Jean dances, but is clearly thinking of something else.

67 OHNO'S CARRIAGE NIGHT

67

Ohno tends his chickens. Gently slipping fluffy yellow chicks from one cage to another. The incubator light swing gently throwing Ohno's face in and out of shadow.

68 INT ROBERT'S SLEEPING CAR NIGHT

68

Robert lies on his bunk with the initialled handkerchief draped across his face. The light cotton fabric is sucked in and out against his mouth as he breaths.

69 EXT PADDOCK NIGHT

69

Robert holds fencing wire apart for Jean to climb through.

Jean and Robert walk silently through the paddock. They walk past nothing more alive than a few dried up old thistles. In the middle they stop.

The train glows in the distance behind them.

Robert takes a slim parcel from his inside coat pocket and hands it to Jean. It is an Agriculture Journal.

Robert takes Jean's hand and guides it to the page he wants her to see.

Everyman's Rules for Scientific Living. By Robert L. Pettergree, Department of Agriculture.

Jean looks at the neat little type, flicking from one page to the next, glancing over the list of 'rules' set out in Robert's article.

Robert pulls a tiny velvet covered box from his trouser pocket.

Jean sees the box and assumes. Her eye widens in nervous excitement.

He fumbles with the box before reaching for Jean's hand.

Jean lifts her hand to reveal a small silver thimble covering the tip of her ring finger. The silver surface is etched with tiny wheat heads and notched on the top to push off the needles.

Jean stares at the thimble. Confused but trying to look grateful. Robert chats away not noticing Jean's reaction, he becomes the preacher man from the lecture hall pointing at the rules on his list with zeal.

Jean's confusion about the thimble falls away in the face of Robert's enthusiasm and she smiles and begins to look at the journal pages properly, listening to Robert intently.

(CONTINUED)

69 CONTINUED:

When Robert pauses for breath Jean closes the journal and hands it to Robert. Robert stops Jean in mid motion and indicates for her to keep it. She thanks him.

70 INT WOMENS SLEEPING CAR

70

Mary is fast asleep. Sister Crock is hidden behind the curtain that divides their sleeping compartment.

Jean flicks through the journal Robert has given her. Tucked between some of the pages are a small collection of papers - mortgage papers and a beautiful hand drawn map of a farm - part birds eye part front elevation. A work of art.

Jean looks intently at the map, neatly drawn out with paddocks marked and labeled like a word/picture dictionary. A head of wheat in one paddock annotated with Robert's script - '**Wheat**'. A Horse in another - '**Livestock**', an upright little house in another and water ripples accompanied by the word '**Dam**'. Beside the '**House**' is a figure in a dress. Under the figure is written '**Jean**'.

Jean plays with the silver thimble on her finger, rolling it thoughtfully under the figure by the house.

71 INT SITTING CAR MORNING

71

Jean twists her silver thimble on the tip of her finger.

Mary and Sister Crock are looking through the pages of the Agriculture Journal. There is no sign of the Mortgage papers or the hand drawn map. Jean looks from Mary to Sister Crock, anticipating a response. She moves the thimble from one finger tip to another.

Mr Baker, Mr Plattfuss and Ohno are also in the sitting car - Baker eating a bacon sandwich, Plattfuss polishing his loud haler and Ohno sitting apart from the others folding the pages of a magazine into elaborate shapes. He looks to Jean often.

The open journal shows Robert's article - more of a list than an article. Sister Crock holds the journal as if instructing a class of children, running her finger under the relevant text as she reads from Robert's article.

Rule 1. The only true foundation is a fact.

(CONTINUED)

Rule 2. Avoid mawkish consideration of history and religion.

Rule 3. Cultivate the company of wiser men.

Rule 4. Bring Science into the home.

Mr Baker scoffs as he eats his bacon sandwich.

Mr Plattfuss rolls his eyes as he polishes. His reflection is evident on the shiny surface. Mary's reflection appears besides Plattfuss. She looks at her own reflection, playfully, in the hailer.

Mr Talbot is snoozing in the corner of the carriage - until now, unnoticed. His head falls forward, snorting. Mary is sitting right next to him, holding the hailer up to his ear. She speaks gently into his ear. He jerks to attention, disorientated, and looks about the room. Everyone laughs.

Talbot makes positive gestures without having any idea what's going on. Everyone is laughing.

The sitting car is filled to capacity. All the velvet banquettes are filled - Jean is wedged between Robert and Sister Crock.

The train superintendant is addressing the gathered train workers. No-one is at all interested. It is a staff meeting. Procedural and dull.

The Superintendant nods towards Mr Plattfuss, indicating that it is time to move on.

Mr Plattfuss stands, launching into an overly bright diversionary speech.

Mr Plattfuss nods to a stock hand, who knocks gently on the carriage door. Everyone turns to see what's going on.

Mary comes bursting through the door with a pineapple upside down cake, ablaze with candles, singing Happy Birthday.

Kit Collins pushes Mr Ohno forward. Clearly it is his day. The rest of the carriage joins Mary in song.

As everyone follows up with 'hip, hip, hoorays', Mr Ohno is being encouraged to make a wish. Mary hands him a knife. The room goes quiet again and waits for Ohno to cut into the sticky looking fruit, but instead he sings his own version of 'Happy Birthday', his face, sad and beautiful. Once he's finished, Mr Ohno stands quite still, holding the knife and overwhelmed by emotion.

Jean steps forward and takes his hand, helping him cut the cake.

Ohno smiles. Everyone relaxes.

Robert stares at Jean as she helps Mr Ohno slice the cake. A piece of cake on a plate is passed from hand to hand until it arrives in front of Robert. Robert stares at Jean and Ohno till his shoulder is jostled and he absentmindedly takes a hold of the plate.

Everyone stands about, holding cake plates. Mr Ohno laughs and holds his own plate up in a mimicking gesture. Robert watches him, curious. Robert finishes his cake and quietly leaves.

The Train Cat uses one of the miniature wheat field as a litter tray.

Jean stands eating her cake. Mary is chatting away. Jean, half listening.

Yellow wheat can be seen as far as the eye can see out the train windows. Sun burns in the sky.

As Jean scoops up the last skerrick of cake, a tiny paper crane floats down and lands on her plate. Jean takes hold of the origami bird, looking beyond Mary to find the deliverer.

Mary, still chatting, is oblivious to the winged messenger. Jean excuses herself.

Jean enters the poultry car. The incubator lights bathe the carriage in a warm orange glow. Jean can see Mr Ohno crouched behind a patterned curtain roping off his bunk. She coughs to alert him of her presence.

He stands and holds back the curtain in a welcome gesture. Jean approaches. Ohno drops into a low bow.

There are two cushions laid out on the floor by the bunk. Between them is a tiny green porcelain tea pot sitting on a wire grill with a candle flickering underneath it. Ohno motions to a cushion while deftly lowering himself to the floor. Ohno politely looks away as Jean wraps her skirt to one side and makes an ungainly descent to her cushion.

Jean opens her mouth to speak. Mr Ohno looks up sharply and raises his finger in front of his mouth - abrupt but not impolite. Jean watches Mr Ohno prepare tea with great precision, despite the rocking of the train.

Jean copies his use of both hands to lift her bowl to drink.

They drink tea, silently.

Jean's skirt is pulled tight across her folded thighs. She drains her bowl as the train rounds a bend. They both lean sideways to maintain their balance.

Mr Ohno's clothes hang above them like apparitions.

He holds a small package wrapped in crimson silk.

He hands the vibrantly wrapped gift to Jean and bows with a polite melancholy.

Jean begins unwrapping. Mr Ohno puts his hand firmly over hers. She stops still. It is clearly meant for another time.

They sit, opposite one another, finishing their tea. Mr Ohno's hanging clothes swing gently with the movement of the train. The moment is perfect.

77 INT WOMEN SLEEPING CARRIAGE MORNING

77

The blinds beside Jean's bunk lift methodically with every jolt of the train, allowing bright morning light to snap in and out of the sleeping compartment. Mary sleeps, her mouth hanging open a little, in the bunk above Jean.

On the back of the compartment door hangs a dove gray suit. It is very beautiful. Jean stares at it. She is surrounded by gifts and wrapping paper.

Mary, now awake, climbs down from her bunk, her eyes swimming.

Jean is sitting on the edge of her bunk. Mary braids her hair into two scrolls above each ear and pins them securely. It hurts a little, Jean winces.

Mary is pleased with the result.

The two women sit shoulder to shoulder on the bunk. There is something to say but no one is saying it.

The women busy themselves with packing up presents and laughing at them, Mary more enthusiastically than Jean.

Jean slips, unnoticed, a small bundle of wrapped crimson silk into one of her bags.

The wheat fields roll by. Flat and hot.

78 EXT WHEAT FIELD DAY

78

Wheat stretches for miles. In the centre of a seemingly endless field a small patch of wheat thrashes about while all around it is calm.

Two huge wheat silos grow out of the flat landscape like robots.

79 EXT/INT TRAIN DAY

79

Mary's head is hanging out of the train window. She is shouting back into the train to Jean, motioning for her to look.

(CONTINUED)

79 CONTINUED:

The train station looms. There are rose bushes in full bloom, striking in bright contrast against the white washed station buildings. The platform is deserted and the train does not slow as expected. It hurtles past the tidy white station building at full speed. The station sign declares their arrival in "Wycheproof".

67 The train rounds a bend to reveal the town. The tracks running plum down the middle of the main street. 67

Mary is thrilled by the unusual sight. Jean is distracted and not looking out the window. The train rolls in front of the Post Office, which is topped with a large old fashioned clock.

Jean stands in the middle of the carriage, wearing the dove gray suit. The train jerks to a halt. Jean steadies herself. She looks over dressed. The sun streams through the window. Packed bags litter the carriage floor.

Mary pulls her head back into the carriage and grabs Jean's arm, encouraging her to follow Mary out of the carriage. Jean hesitates, looking at all her bags and possessions on the floor. Mary waves a relaxed hand at the bags suggesting Jean leave them.

80 EXT TRAIN/WYCHEPROOF MAIN STREET DAY

80

Mary pulls Jean along the side of the train. They are running through a cloud of steam.

Jean can't make anything out. She is engulfed in whiteness, guided only by Mary's enthusiasm.

Suddenly Mary stops and bangs the slats on the side of the cattle carriage. The train towers above them with no platform beside it. A ramp crashes down and before the dust settles the young stock hand leads out a cow. It's Folly, the 'ordinary' cow. She shifts her weight from foot to foot and blinks against the bright sun.

Mary takes the plaited halter from the stock hand and gives it to Jean.

Jean impulsively leans in to Mary and wraps her arms tightly around her. She starts speaking quickly to help hold back her tears.

(CONTINUED)

80 CONTINUED:

Mary listens for a moment then gently untangles her self from Jean's embrace. The women stand staring at one another.

Mary gives Jean a plaintive smile.

The train lets out a massive belch of steam and the cattle ramp is pulled up. Jean's last moments with Mary are lost in the steam and mechanics of train business.

A tear rolls down Jean's cheek.

Mary runs back to their carriage, blowing kisses over her shoulder as she runs.

All the men lean out the windows waving. Mr Plattfuss smiles as he wags a mocking finger at Folly. Mr Baker whistles through his mad orange whiskers. Mr Ohno's crimson silk flaps wildly. He waves to Jean with a comic finality. The train begins to pull away, then a jolt, and they all stumble.

Sister Crock stands by Mary, stable, framed by the window of the final carriage to pass.

As the train clears, the other side of the street is revealed. Robert stands in a navy blue suit, surrounded by suitcases.

81 EXT MAIN STREET WYCHEPROOF DAY

81

Fly-wire doors slam shut as the town goes back about its business. Flurries of dust swirl up and down the main street.

Jean waves her hand around Folly's face to scatter the gathered flies, then at Robert.

Robert strides across the tracks.

Robert's face is red. Both Jean and Robert are over dressed.

Robert and Jean stand in the middle of the street, their belongings scattered behind them. They are stranded in the mid-day heat.

82 EXT CHURCH WYCHEPROOF DAY

82

Folly is tied to a railing outside a church. Her tail twitches intermittently.

83 INT CHURCH WYCHEPROOF DAY

83

Jean and Robert stand before the alter. The priest tugs at his collar and shifts his bible from one hand to the other. Sweaty marks appear like paws on its green cardboard cover.

Muriel (40's, stick thin, glasses) plays the organ, her nose almost touching the sheet music.

The priest moves his hands through air in a sign of the cross as Robert takes Jean's hand for the ring.

Jean's heat swollen fingers refuse the gold band. The priest waves a hand at Robert who puts the ring back in his pocket. It will have to wait.

A camera flash blinds Jean and she puts her hand up over her face.

84 EXT CHURCH WYCHEPROOF DAY

84

A photographer, Stan Hercules (wiry, 45, thin hair combed over) stands with his large Polaroid camera. Jean and Robert stand awkwardly by the church doors. Stan frames and shoots.

In sight of the church doors is Ern McKettering (scruffy, bright blue eyes, sun burnt, 40s) trying to load Folly onto the back of a small truck. Folly is not interested.

Muriel is talking in Jean's ear, hovering just shy of Stan's frame. Jean politely flicks her gaze between Robert, Stan, Muriel, Folly and Ern. The scene is ridiculous - marvelous.

85 INT CAR COUNTRY ROAD DA

85

Jean sits in the truck cabin by the passenger window. Robert sits beside her with Ern behind the wheel. Folly is tied to the tray.

Robert has not taken off his suit jacket. His neck bulges, red, from above the collar. Ern talks continuously. Robert listens with a still politeness.

As Ern wipes his forehead Jean notices a hard tide line dividing the white skin that would normally be hidden under Ern's hat and the coarser, darker skin that lives in the elements.

(CONTINUED)

As they leave the town, wheat fields surround the car.

Ern leans forward to address Jean, the car wanders a little as he does so. Folly wobbles, but rights her self. Jean, nervously watches the cars trajectory, casting glances out to Folly, finding it hard to concentrate on what Ern is saying.

Ern, oblivious to any concern, chats on with friendly enthusiasm.

Ern's truck comes up a long driveway leading to a small gray farmhouse. Ern is still talking. As the truck approaches the house, Robert doesn't turn to look at Jean, but reaches across and touches her arm in a kind of apologetic gesture. Jean takes his hand.

The truck pulls up abruptly under a large peppercorn tree beside the house.

Ern opens the door for Jean, his chatter has turned to a broad grin, he raises his arm in a welcoming gesture. Jean and Robert are clearly a little underwhelmed.

Jean swings herself half out the door; enjoying a some relief from the heat of the cabin.

The weatherboards, once white, are now an oily grey. The building is framed by a broom brush veranda, dipping low around all four sides of the house. A scattering of dusty Mulga trees follow dirt paths that complete the garden.

Ern leans against the car flicking his gaze between Jean and Robert. Robert has already crossed the veranda. He opens the door, without ceremony, and disappears inside.

Ern takes a box from the back of the truck and follows Robert in. He chats all the while.

A fat orange cat is indulging in a dirt bath in a bright patch of sun in front of the house. Jean watches as the cat strolls to the verandah and casually wanders into the house.

Jean heads down a dirt path running past the side of the house. She pushes through a small gate into a scrappy little wheat field. The stubbly, broken wheat stalks, scratch and nip at her stockings. She swats at them as though they were flies.

86 CONTINUED:

86

Her clothes are hopelessly incongruous with her surroundings. She twists her skirt around her hips - everything is wrong. Her face shines with sweat. The sun is brutal.

The horizon moves violently. Jean is lying on the ground.

Ern is running across the field. He fills her hazy view, horizontally.

87 INT FARMHOUSE DAY

87

Ern carries Jean through the front door.

Robert looks up from the far end of the corridor to witness the scene.

Robert motions toward the bedroom.

88 INT FARMHOUSE BEDROOM DAY

88

An old horsehair mattress sits in a roll on the bed springs. Robert knocks it with his elbow and the mattress unfurls. As it hits the springs dust floats out of the ticking.

Ern lies Jean on the old mattress. The two men stand awkwardly by the bedside. Ern leaves the room, returning with a glass of water. He gives it to Robert. Robert sits gently beside Jean and offers her the water.

89 INT/EXT FARMHOUSE NIGHT

89

Jean lies in bed next to Robert. She is unable to sleep. She stares at their wedding suits, hanging from the empty curtains rail, by the open window. A breeze turns them gently, and they might almost be ghosts, dancing.

Crates sit half unpacked throughout the house.

Folly stands at a strange angle - sleeping on her feet.

The wheat fields eddy as the breeze moves through.

Robert rolls over and puts his arm across Jean's body. Jean wriggles gently to fit into the shape of Robert's curled body.

(CONTINUED)

Robert kisses Jean's neck and moves his hand down the length of her nightie, pulling it up from the hem. Jean pulls at Roberts night shirt, and traces her hand across his strangely shaped chest. She delicately maps out his pigeon chest with her fingers. He tries to push her hand away in a futile attempt to deny the mutation. She insists. He concedes.

The orange cat is on the end of the bed moving about as the sheets pull against it.

Robert collects wheat samples from a field by the house. Jean sews in the shade of the brush veranda.

Jean and Robert both look up, surprised by the sight of an approaching horse. Led by Doris (ample woman, 40), the old Clydesdale stops outside the house. On the back of the horse sit four boys. They increase in size and age evenly between the withers and the rump. In Doris' spare hand she holds a cake tin with a dozen eggs resting on top.

The boys slide off the horse and charge off around the house.

Doris waves to Robert, who cautiously raises his hand in reply. Jean smiles uncertainly.

Jean makes tea. Doris' offerings are laid on the table next to a display of wheat heads, ready for dissection. Doris looks suspiciously at the wheat.

She pushes at 'grubby' specimens on the table as she addresses Jean.

Not waiting for a reply she picks up some sewing from the basket Jean has left on the table and smiles. Doris notices a babies bonnet and some tiny smocked shirts amongst the items in the basket. Doris smiles broadly at Jean. Jean looks confused. Doris winks generously at Jean as she turns towards the window. Jean, realizing what Doris is suggesting, blushes and shakes her head in denial.

It makes no impression on Doris who is now watching the boys engaging in play warfare outside.

91 CONTINUED:

91

She can see two of them fighting each other under the Mulga branches, and Robert working in the field beyond. Doris sighs.

Jean hands her a cup of tea. Doris takes it gratefully and turns away from the window, looking Jean square in the face, exhaling heavily.

92 EXT FARMHOUSE FRONT YARD LATE MORNING

92

Jean and Robert watch as Doris leads her boys away. The boys push and shove. One slides off the horse. Doris ignores the goings on.

93 EXT FARMHOUSE KITCHEN LATE MORNING

93

Jean is washing her hair in the sink. She hears a tiny noise and turns to see Robert standing in the door way watching.

She half looks up to him, careful not to let her dripping hair wet the floor.

He watches her as she rubs the soap through her long locks.

Jean reaches for the tap blindly. Her hand flails about. Robert's hand reaches the tap for her and guides the water through Jean's hair.

With out a word shared between Robert washes Jean hair with exquisite detail and delicacy.

Wheat samples are attached to sheets of paper all around the kitchen walls. Detailed ink scrawls annotating each head. Like beautiful botanical drawings, they rest dumb, as witness to the erotic act.

94 INT FARMHOUSE KITCHEN DUSK

94

Evening light bathes the kitchen. Robert and Jean rest together on the kitchen floor. Jean's head rests in Robert's lap. Her wet hair making a wet mark across Robert's trousers.

The orange cat sits on the kitchen window sill silhouetted against the darkening sky. He jumps down and licks at the little puddles created by Jean's dripping hair.

95 INT CAR FARM DRIVEWAY DAY

95

Doris drives very slowly down the long driveway. Jean sits beside her politely ignoring the absurd speed at which they are traveling.

Robert is pushing a cultivator in a paddock alongside the drive. He smiles at Jean and shrugs his shoulders in an 'inquiring' gesture. Jean makes a sideways 'can't explain' smile in response. Robert pushes the hoe through the earth in pace with the car. Even as a walking pace it is slow. Doris is concentrating so hard she does not notice Robert's tom foolery. Jean is delighted by it. The moment between the two is abruptly interrupted by an eager black and white boarder collie dog running towards Robert, barking. Ern can be seen striding across the paddock. Ern makes a gesture to the dog with one hand and waves Doris and Jean off with the other. The dog drops to the ground in front of Robert.

Robert scratches the dog between the ears.

Ern makes an additional gesture and the dog spins on the spot then re-settles at Robert's feet.

96 EXT/INT ERN MCKETTERING'S TRUCK/FARM DAY

96

The dog sits in the truck's back tray as it bounces across the wheat field. The truck stops at a closed gate. Ern McKettering leaps out to open it. He is talking with enthusiasm. Leaping in and out of the truck has no impact on his conversational enthusiasm.

Back in the truck Robert sits quietly surveying the surrounding fields. He turns a calico soil collecting bag, attached at his waist, over in his hand.

The truck continues to bump along the make shift paddock track. Ern continues chatting.

MONTAGE:

The truck continues stopping periodically. Robert gets out and collects soil samples.

Dirt is wrapped in calico.

Soil is dug.

Samples are tasted.

(CONTINUED)

96 CONTINUED:

96

Labels are written. A name and coordinate.

The truck tray fills with little calico bags of soil. Each labelled with a small card covered in Robert's distinctive hand writing.

97 EXT PADDOCK DUSK

97

Ern pulls the truck to a stop at the edge of a dam and hops out. Robert follows slightly reluctantly.

They are both covered in dust and clearly exhausted.

Robert strolls into the paddock and scratches at the soil. He puts a little on his tongue.

He picks up a stone and hurls it into the dam. It plops solidly in the center.

Robert begins to unbutton his shirt.

98 INT BUTCHER WHYCHEPROOF AFTERNOON

98

Three lambs hearts are slapped onto butcher paper.

Jean and Doris stand in a line waiting to be served. The butcher (big man, curly mustache, 50s) works behind a green fly wire screen and hands packages through a little flap cut into the wire.

In front of them, a thin middle aged women, Mrs Bowd, is counting out coins in exchange for her small parcel of lambs hearts. By her side is Olive, a tall athletic teenager, who stares glumly at her dirty old tennis shoes.

The butcher smiles at her mother as they make their way out of the shop. Jean watches Olive leave. They make fleeting eye contact.

Doris bustles right up close to the screen to place her order.

The butcher tosses his tongs in the air, snapping them together as he catches them, calling to someone out the back.

Doris basks in the attention. She smooths her dress around her hips and opens her dusty purse.

(CONTINUED)

Jean pretends to read the chalk board which lists prices and the butcher's slogan:

Hommelfhof Brothers' Family Butchers - Where Honest Dealing Creates Good Feeling.

Jean looks up only to be surprised by the vision of two identical butchers grinning behind the screen. Twins. Both men sport matching white shirts, curly moustaches and leather aprons.

The water is only thigh deep. Robert sits on the bottom of the damn dislodging mud samples.

Ern edges into the water side ways, cupping his genitals gently with his hands, more for comfort than disguise. The water is clearly freezing.

Robert tosses a mud sample to Ern, who stumbles, uncupping his genitals to catch it. Ern puts it on the bank. Robert calls to Ern as he tosses another.

Ern turns to catch the sample but is too late and the mud hits him on the upper shoulder and slides down his chest. Ern scrapes the mud off his chest and throws it back at Robert.

Clay is being flung from man to man. Ern beats his chest like a monkey and paints his face. Robert follows suit making patterns across his pigeon chest with his fingers. The two men chase each other like children, raising their knees high above the water level.

Cut to:

Tired, they float on their backs, then clamber out and lie on the bank to dry.

An ibis lands on the far side of the dam and pokes its beak into the soil cracks.

Ern watches it with great satisfaction.

Ern watches the ibis fish out something from between the mud cracks.

100 EXT MAIN STREET AFTERNOON 100

Doris and Jean cross the street in front of the Mechanics Hall. Doris sees a group of women gathered outside the Newsagent.

Doris clasps Jean's hand and nods towards the gathered women, Jean has things to do in the other direction. Jean is relieved to watch Doris bustle off towards the group of woman.

101 INT MECHANICS INSTITUTE/FREE LIBRARY AFTERNOON 101

The library occupies a few shelves, in a curtained off corner, behind the pool table.

The librarian, Miss Iris Pfundt, wears a name tag and a powder blue skirt suit. She looks a bit dried up.

She stares, without shame, as Jean casts an eye over the limited category of books in front of her. The selves are marked out with hand written cardboard labels: **Detective, Light, Love, Wild West, Children** and **Heavy**.

Cut to:

Jean fills in a membership form and hands it to Miss Pfundt. Iris scans the form and hands it back to Jean. Iris points to the 'Husband's Signature' line, which is blank.

Jean forces a smile and takes the form, thanking Miss Pfundt for her assistance. Jean rustles in her handbag for a small folded note she has prepared for the public notice board. Iris smiles broadly and gives Jean a small box of thumb tacks.

102 EXT DAMN ERN MC KETTERING'S FARM DUSK 102

As the two men dress - Ern struggles to pull his sock over damp skin.

The ibis flies off with its dinner. The two men watch it fly.

Both men gather up the last of their things and head to the car.

Robert smiles broadly, Ern gives Robert an enthusiastic tap on the back.

103 INT MECHANICS INSTITUTE/FREE LIBRARY AFTERNOON 103

Iris Pfundt squints her eyes to reads Jean's notice, leaning in so close her nose nearly touches the paper. The tidy handwriting is handsomely framed by a decorative boarder of carefully drawn wheat stalks and heads.

"All sewing and tailoring needs met. Mending and construction. No job too small or large. Quality work ensured. Contact Mrs. Pettergree..."

104 INT FARMHOUSE LIVING ROOM EVENING 104

Jean is hunched over some sewing. She deftly pulls the needle in and out of the garment. She hears Ern dropping off Robert outside. Car doors slam and voices can be heard.

Robert enters with enthusiastic purpose. He drops a bundle of cloth on the table next to Jean.

Jean begins unwrapping the bundle and sorting the clothes inside for mending.

Robert is distracted and excited. He starts rifling through papers in the draws and selves about the room. He speaks as he rifles.

Robert has found what he is looking for - a copy of **The Agricultural Journal**. He leafs through it until he finds the page headed, "*Everyman's Rules For Scientific Living*". He waves it aloft.

Robert, full of enthusiasm, lays the article open on the table, pushing his finger at, **Rule one: "Contribute to society for the achievements of mutual benefits"**

Robert sits at the kitchen table and begins drawing up an advertisement for the Wycheproof Ensign. It reads: **FREE LECTURE - 'All the money in the bank comes from the soil'. Farmers of the Southern Mallee - do you desire to GROW MORE WHEAT? Teddywaddy Memorial Hall, 6PM Saturday June 18th.**

Robert shows the notice to Jean and pats her head, but is clearly distracted.

The fat orange cat catches a mouse in the corner of the room. The sleepy dog lifts its head for a moment.

104 CONTINUED:

104

Jean wrestles the dead mouse away from the cat with a broom handle, and drops it in the bin.

105 INT FARMHOUSE KITCHEN/BEDROOM NIGHT

105

Jean sleeps. Roberts works, hunched over papers and maps spread across the kitchen table. Soil samples in their calico bags are scattered all over the kitchen floor. He notes map details, scrawls numbers, tastes samples and notes names on sample tags. A tall stack of paper mounts. Robert is possessed by the task at hand. Each new piece of paper added to the stack shows a hand drawn map, an address, a name, and an equation. Page after page after page pile up.

106 INT FARMHOUSE KITCHEN/BEDROOM DAY

106

The evidence of Roberts late night activity is still scattered about the kitchen table and floor.

Robert is pushing the knot of his tie snugly to his shirt collar. He can see Jean reflected in the hall mirror, the sun catching her yellow cotton frock; glowing. She secures her sun hat with a pin.

Jean throws her head back and quickly swigs the last dregs of her tea. As she does so she sways violently. Her head spins. She throws out her hands to steady herself against the kitchen table. The cup smashes to the floor and tea dregs slop across Jean's frock.

Robert drops what he is doing and rushes down the corridor, hopping carefully over the kitchen chaos.

Jean has gathered herself and is reaching for a tea towel to tidy the front of her dress.

Robert is on all fours sweeping the cup fragments into a dust pan. He looks up to Jean for reassurance.

She leaves the room.

107 EXT HEC BOWD'S FARM/DRIVEWAY DAY

107

Ern drives, Robert rides shotgun. Jean sits behind them in a green frock. She holds a small handbag on her lap.

(CONTINUED)

107 CONTINUED:

107

She watches the near empty paddocks pass as the car moves quickly up a long rutted driveway, towards a distant farmhouse. The dog sits beside her.

Jean and Ern listen to Robert talk, but he talks like a man who doesn't need an audience.

Ern nods vigorously.

Ern abruptly stops the car under a peppercorn tree beside a large farmhouse. There's is not the only car.

108 EXT HEC BOWD'S FARM DAY

108

Ern and Robert are out of the car like a flash, heading to a near paddock where a group of men look on as Hec Bowd (middle aged, strong, farmer) gives a demonstration of his Clectrac crawler (tractor).

Jean watches Robert and Ern pick their way through fence wire. Ern's shirt gets caught. Robert gently unhooks it before they join a small group of men. A ripple of shoulder slapping flicks through the group as Ern arrives. Ern introduces Robert to some of the men.

Jean stares, from a distance, at the tractor's strange appearance. It runs on tracks and has a tall air inlet that gives it a military appearance, something like a tank. The men are all enthralled by it. A thin man in a faded black suit is paying particular attention to the machine. He looks over to Jean, as if drawn by her gaze.

Jean's attention is pulled from the Clectrac by a friendly wave from Mrs Bowd.

Mrs Bowd and her daughter Ollie (the mother and daughter from the butchers) have set up a tea table on the veranda. There is a small gathering of local women milling about. Some hold tea cups, others eat small sandwiches. Mrs Bowd and Ollie are in their best dresses and offer Jean sandwiches and tea. The tea cups are clearly special, covered in a delicate floral pattern with matching plates for the sandwiches.

Jean takes a cup of tea and admires the china. Jean makes a specially effort to introduce her self to Ollie.

Ollie is very shy, but manages a gentle smile in response.

(CONTINUED)

Doris is amongst the women on the verandah. She sees Jean and bustles over to introduce her new friend to the circle of country ladies.

Iris Pfundt (the librarian) is amongst them, and pushes a plate of neatly cut lemon slice in front of Jean.

Iris smiles broadly as she speaks. Her pronounced false teeth are clogged up with cake crumbs. Jean politely takes a finger of slice.

Elsie, a handsome women in her 30s, is telling a boisterous joke which Jean has missed the bulk of. All the women laugh and look to Jean to join in.

Jean clears smiles shyly and looks about for Ollie.

The woman all sip from their tea cups at once in an attempt to hide there pursed looks. The atmosphere is pinched.

Mrs Bowd gives Ollie a little nudge on the elbow. Ollie gets up and starts for the house.

Jean, suddenly a little embarrassed, makes her way past the ladies and follows Ollie inside.

No one says a word until Jean is out of sight. Upon her disappearing through the door, shoulders drop and breath is expelled.

The sitting room is dim, with all the curtains drawn to keep out the heat of the day. The mantle is covered in photos of the Bowd family - Ollie standing proudly in tennis whites with a trophy cup and beside it clippings from the paper chronicling her success.

A sewing machine sits proudly in the centre of a round table in the middle of the room. It has a large auctioneers tag tied to it. Jean runs her hand across the shiny black metal of its body.

Ollie finds Jean a sewing basket. The basket is made from old Christmas cards covered in cellophane and stitched together. Just like Jean's.

Ollie watches Jean trace the thread through the machines guides and loops.

109 CONTINUED:

Ollie leaves Jean to test the machine.

Jean looks back at the sewing basket noticing a white kitten with the words - 'to our darling ten year old girl...'

110 EXT HEC BOWD'S FARM DAY

110

Jean makes her way towards the gathered men.

Hec Bowd stands at the front near the auctioneer nodding and smiling so as to reassure the bidders. Most of the men in the crowd are embarrassed to meet his gaze.

The auction for the tractor is in full swing. Hands are being raised and hat brims tipped.

As Jean reaches Robert's side the auctioneers hammer is being slammed down.

Robert cusses under his breath. The thin man in a faded black suit smiles broadly as he shakes the auctioneers hand.

The sewing machine is put on the table in front of the auctioneer. The crowd is chatting and scuffing their boots.

Jean grips Robert's elbow through his coat sleeve, encouraging his arm up. He is reticent.

A few people in the small crowd seem interested. A ripple of whispers moves through the crowd as the auctioneer calls for bids. The man who won the tractor looks interested in bidding. He clocks Robert's lack of enthusiasm.

Jean urges Robert's elbow with more vigor. Robert flicks a look at his rival.

The auctioneer's hammer comes down.

111 EXT/INT CAR LATE AFTERNOON

111

Ollie helps Robert and Ern manoeuvre the sewing machine into the backseat of Ern's car.

Ollie stands and waves as the party motor off down the long driveway back to the road. Jean turns and waves. The dog puts its feet against the back of the seat and her black and white head can be seen yapping through the back window. Ollie is soon engulfed in dust.

(CONTINUED)

111 CONTINUED:

111

The sewing machine sits between Jean and the dog. Jean rests a hand across its elaborately decorated enamel finish - intricate flowers and swirls framing Jean's fingers.

112 EXT ROADSIDE LATE AFTERNOON

112

The car stops abruptly by the side of the road. Jean throws open her door and vomits onto the dusty ground. The dog squeezes past Jean and sniffs at the vomit puddle. Flies settle.

Robert gets out of the front seat and awkwardly steps over the vomit to put a hand on Jean's shoulder. Ern, now also out of the car, is standing high on the car strut, speaking to Jean and Robert across the roof of the car. He smiles at Jean and winks at Robert.

Robert seems a little confused. Jean confirms Ern's assertion with a wistful smile. Robert eye's widen.

He plunges his hand into his trouser pocket and produces a clean folded hankie. He hands it to Jean as if it is a remedy of some sort. Jean takes the offering gratefully and turns to sit back in the car. Robert shoos the dog into the front seat and gets into the back with Jean. Ern thrusts his hand into Robert's, offering him a hearty congratulations.

They drive again, slower now. Robert and Jean sit side by side, the sewing machine between them.

The hankie in Jean's hand reveals the initials **RP** and the embroidered wheat head she stitched on it for Robert when they first met.

113 EXT/INT FARM HOUSE EVENING

113

Jean wipes the dust off her new machine with the hem of her dress. The light is fading in the sky. She runs a piece of fabric through it.

The needle blurred by speed. Up and down, up and down.

Robert plays fetch with the dog.

Folly nibbles at sad looking plants.

A hand written sign, curling at the edges is pinned to the wall: ***Sent to our boys at the Front from the Teddywally Women's Auxiliary. 236 pairs of socks, 142 pillow cases, 59 handkerchiefs, 40 ambulance cushions, 2 pairs of mittens and 6 cholera belts.***

The hall is adorned at one end with a mural commemorating the The Great War and an elaborately decorated list of Teddywaddy's dead.

Robert sits still on the stage, waiting for the crowd to settle. Framed by a crudely painted, theatrical backdrop of Henry VIII in neck frill and knicker-bockers holding an axe in a grove of gum trees. Robert has strung up a white bed sheet on a makeshift frame. A scrappy looking paddock showing a little covering of wheat is projected onto the sheet. The same slide we saw at Robert's Farming Train lecture.

The hall is full. All the farm men have taken off their hats and sit waiting. Their brows split evenly between pink and grubby red. The sunburn tide en masse is striking.

Jean watches from the back of the hall. She looks from man to man. She smiles at Hec Bowd (the farmer auctioning his farming goods earlier) who is just a few seats away. He casts his eyes to the floor directly in front of him.

Robert leans toward the crowd, as though about to share a secret. Unexpectedly, Robert slaps the middle of the sheet with a long wooden pointer and starts talking at the crowd, possessed by what he has to share.

The men are a little taken a back by Robert's zeal but listen intently. Robert's proselytizing continues.

Men whisper to one another. A ripple of movement and interest in the . Robert responds to the momentum by stepping out from behind his lectern, waving a handful of papers in front of the crowd. They are familiar, the maps and equations Robert wrote at the kitchen table.

Robert looks at the top paper and scans the crowd. He stops, pointing out one of the farmers. Mr. Les Noy. Heads all turn in the direction of Les.

CUT TO:

(CONTINUED)

Les, a plain looking man, stands at the front of the hall. He holds his hat tightly with both hands, almost by way of protection.

Jean strains to see him across the crowd. He appears diminutive from her vantage point - partly masked by the other onlookers.

Robert acknowledges the farmer and continues. He is waving Les' piece of paper in the air. Les Noy, an unassuming man, shifts on the spot, gently humiliated by the attention.

Robert changes the slide projected on the sheet. It now shows a paddock teeming with healthy, tall wheat. Les frowns to cover his uncertain state of mind and asks a quiet question.

Again a ripple of opinion rolls across the hall. Robert picks up the query as though the answer was self evident and encourages Les to step up onto the stage.

Jean sees a mouse run out from under Henry VIII feet and scurry between Robert and the men. Nobody but herself notices.

Les stands in front of the sheet with the rippling wheat field projected across his face and body. Robert looks to Les and we see the projected image change. The words "**Super Phosphosphate - grow two blades where one grow before**" are running across Les and the white sheet. Les raises his hand to shields his eyes from the light of the projector. He is blinded. The other farmers have formed a line running the length of the hall, to collect their 'equation' paper too. Robert looks like a priest handing out communion.

A wave of nausea hits Jean. She puts her hand over mouth and rushes from the hall.

115 EXT TEDDYWADDY MEMORIAL HALL EARLY EVENING

115

Jean leans against the side of the hall. Vomit slaps onto the dry ground. Flies immediately settle on it.

116 INT TEDDYWADDY MEMORIAL HALL EARLY EVENING

116

Robert is encouraging farmers to line up to place orders with Ern McKettering, who has large order book in front of him.

(CONTINUED)

Ern helps men write their names and dollar figures in columns.

A thin man in a faded black suit stands with his hands in his pockets - the same man that out bid Robert at Hec Bowd's auction - has attracted some attention from the crowd. He appears suspicious and looks from his 'equation' to Robert and to the assembled farmers. He tears his equation in half, holding a piece in each hand.

Every man in the hall stops to look.

Jean has re-entered the hall and is looking to the dissident farmer.

Jean looks nervously to Robert, anticipating his response.

Robert stands stiffly on the stage. Jean closes her eyes.

A lone claps at the front of the hall. It is Ern McKettering. Other men quickly join in - a buzz of excitement in the air. A few of the younger men whistle.

Robert motions for quiet. The crowd has returned its attention to Robert.

Ern smiles so broadly, standing next to Robert - the proud apprentice - that his face is bizarrely contorted. Jean has made her way down to the front of the hall. She smiles proudly at Robert. Ern winks at Jean.

The dissident farmer drops his paper to the floor and leaves the hall, scoffing.

Early morning wind sucks the curtains to the bedroom window.

Flies skitter about the bedspread as though chasing one another.

Jean's whole body curls around a large pudding basin. The basin has vomit in it. She lies still - recovering.

Jean's focus shifts from the flies meandering across the bed spread to the sounds of Robert moving about in another part of the house.

Robert enters the bedroom carrying a clipboard. He flips through the attached papers.

117 CONTINUED:

Jean hurls vomit into the basin. Robert steps back in response to the vomiting.

Robert puts a cup of beef tea on the bed side table. Jean doesn't respond. Robert continues buzzing about the room with excitement, he needs no response.

118 EXT MAIN STREET WYCHEPROOF DAY

118

The whole district is on the main street. Men are standing around in small groups, kicking the dirt and talking and smoking. Women stand outside shops talking and watching children. Boys play marbles in the sun. The glass balls scatter all over the foot path. Jean and Robert stand on the train platform, waiting. Jean's pregnant belly is just visible. Robert strides up the platform in anticipation.

Stan Hurcules waits by his camera, set high on a wooden tripod.

Galahs clean up the wheat around the silos by the tracks. The flocks blanket the ground. A child runs at them. The flock lifts a little but quickly resettles to their meal.

A dark shape shimmers through the haze. As it gets closer it solidifies into a train engine.

119 EXT MAIN STREET/STATION PLATFORM WYCHEPROOF DAY

119

Jean watches Robert from a distance. As the train pulls along side him he is totally enveloped in steam, totally disappearing in the wet whiteness.

The train pulls to a halt. Women in the shade of the shop verandahs cover their ears.

Robert, re-emerging from the steam cloud, stands with clipboard in hand ready to check the order. He frees a tie-rope from a tarpaulin and throws it high across the top of the load. It flicks back at him aggressively, catching him sharply across the face. He flinches.

Many of the farmers and Jean have now joined him. They peer up at the truck. Something moves on top of the tarpaulin. A filthy bedroll tied up with a pair of ladies stockings is thrown onto the platform.

(CONTINUED)

119 CONTINUED:

A man jumps down from the truck and brushes off the worst of the green-grey dust from his greasy suit. He smiles, sheepishly, picks up his bed roll, hoists it onto his back and saunters off.

Down the platform more men can be seen jumping from the carriages. They are clearly not farming men. They have matted hair and ill-fitting clothes. One man has no shoes, rather newspaper tied to his feet with bailing twine. The men have dirt deeply etched into their faces.

Wycheproof watches suspiciously as the men move down the platform, into the town.

One man carries a kitten.

Stan Hurcules turns his camera to the kitten man. The man stands silently as Stan takes his portrait.

120 WYCHEPROOF ENSIGN NEWSPAPER

120

The front page of the ENSIGN shows a photograph of the Hobo holding the kitten. The banner headline reads "The Day the Depression Came to Wycheproof".

121 EXT WHTCHEPROOF MAIN STREET EARLY MORNING

121

Robert throws his newspaper at the dusty ground. Jean sits in the car, watching through the windscreen.

Doris puts her head in the car window to say hello. Jean is concentrating so intently on Robert's disappointment that Doris' appearance makes her start. She smiles wanly at Doris, who follows Jean's gaze to the furious Robert. Then Jean's face changes, a kick! Jean grabs Doris' hand and pops it on her belly. The women share the excitement.

122 EXT ERN & DORIS' FARM DAY

122

Jean, Robert and Doris stand staring at a huge water tank resting on a truck tray. Ern is up next to the tank cuddling it. Doris shoos him fondly trying to get him to be serious.

Jean smiles at Doris, in support.

(CONTINUED)

122 CONTINUED:

Doris looks up at the sky. The sun blinds her. She shades her eyes with her plump little hands, looking between Ern and the tank. She forces an encouraging smile.

123 INT ERN & DORIS' FARM HOUSE KITCHEN DAY

123

From the kitchen window Jean and Doris can see the men manoeuvring the tank with a block and tackle arrangement. Robert instructs, Ern follows gladly.

Doris is in flesh coloured underwear and has a half finished dress with pins everywhere hanging off her. Jean is tacking under the sleeves as Doris gossips and sips tea.

Doris turns to examine her backside grabbing at a piece of fleshy hip. Doris smiles at Jean like a teenager sharing secrets. They gossip and share a good time.

The men continue their tank maneuvers through the window.

Sun bounces off the tanks corrugated metal like lasers.

Ern's hat blows off. Robert chases it. Each time he gets close it blows further. Ern enjoys watching the physical comedy play out. Robert concentrates on the task.

124 EXT PADDOCK EARLY MORNING

124

Wind blows violently. Dust is thick in the air. The landscape is reduced to general shapes of light and dark. Sheep crouch low to the ground, huddled in groups against the dust.

Tree roots are being exposed with the lifting of the dirt. The landscape looks savage.

Dust builds up against the side of water tanks.

125 INT/EXT FARMHOUSE DAY

125

Jean tips dust out of a two tea cup.

Robert is digging out the car which is up to its running boards in dust. The dog is inside the car, yapping at the wind.

(CONTINUED)

125 CONTINUED:

125

Folly stands between the house and the car, leaning into the wind.

Jean arrives with tea as Robert frees the car. He throws a gunny sack on the back seat, which the dog promptly sniffs at. Robert drinks his tea as he gets into the car, he empties the dregs out the window.

The wind makes conversation impossible. Jean takes the empty cup.

Robert pulls away from the farm house. Jean watches Folly as she is lost in the dust.

126 EXT PADDOCK DAY

126

Ern and Robert try to spread a sack of super phosphate across a freshly tilled field. The pale, chalky dust blows all over them. None stays on the soil. They persevere with a focused determination, but eventually see the futile nature of what they are doing. They fold the sack openings closed and sit against the folds to secure the remaining contents. Ern tries to light a cigarette. It is futile too, he throws it to the wind.

127 EXT FARMHOUSE YARD DAY

127

Jean chases a bed sheet across the back yard.

The wind-catch on the chimney is swirling like a Dervish.

128 EXT FARM HOUSE DRIVEWAY AFTERNOON

128

Les Noy rides a bicycle towards Jean and Robert's farmhouse. His face is red with sunburn. The bike is small and has a cumbersome make-shift trailer attached. The trailer carries a small load of scrappy looking wheat tied in small bundles with bailing twine.

129 EXT FARMHOUSE MORNING

129

The wind has subsided. The trees in the farmhouse yard stand still.

(CONTINUED)

Jean struggles to give Folly an Insectibane bucket wash. Folly hops and skips about like she's on fire. Jean cusses as her toes are caught victim.

Jean, quite clearly pregnant now, looks up to see Les approaching. She lifts her hand to wave in greeting.

Les does not return the friendly gesture. He throws on the bikes breaks and makes an ungainly stop.

Les turns to the makeshift trailer and unhooks it from the bike.

Les shouts angrily at the small wheat pile. He takes a piece of paper out of his pocket, screwing it up and throwing it on the pile of wheat.

Les turns and leaves on his bike. The sight is pathetic, the bike's front wheel wobbles from side to side till Les gains momentum. Jean has nothing to say. She just watches Les go, his knees moving up and down in an ungainly gait.

She leans in, watching the bike diminish, and picks up the crumpled paper, unravelling it as she stands.

By now Robert has appeared from around the back of the farmhouse to see what's going on.

Jean hands him the crumpled paper. It is Les Noy's equation. Robert looks at the wheat pile and slunks into the house.

Jean enters a store, looking through her handbag, checking for her purse. An unidentified child watches Jean from a small opening in the sliding screen that divides the groceries from the hair cutting. The little girl stares as Jean looks around for assistance.

After a long moment Jean shakes the "ring for service" bell. Still she waits. Jean waves at the little girl. The little girl disappears.

A middle aged woman, stoney faced, slides the divider to one side and stands, scissors in hand.

She stares at Jean, saying nothing.

130 CONTINUED:

The scene beyond the curtain can be seen. A row of young ladies having their hair cut off. The floor is covered in a tangle of discarded locks.

Jean looks curiously on the scene. A number of older women (cutting the hair) glance briefly at Jean.

The woman walks towards Jean, dropping the scissors roughly onto the counter that now divides them.

Jean asks for what she has come to buy. The woman climbs a ladder to access stock boxes out of arms reach and calls down to Jean from above.

Jean nods.

The Woman drops a narrow paper bag on the counter from half way up the ladder - **"Keeping Farmers Feet Cool For 40 Years. Asbestos Inner Soles"**. The Woman lumbers down the last few ladder rungs. Jean looks a little harried by the situation. She scrabbles through her purse.

The woman picks the innersoles back up off the counter and holds them possessively.

Jean offers up the coins for the inner soles and thanks the woman, putting her hand forward to take the package. The Woman holds the package just a little too long. A movement from the other side of the shop takes Jean's attention from the counter. One of the young women is sobbing gently as her hair falls to the floor.

Jean touches at the loose hair falling out of the bun she has roughly secured at her neck.

Jean takes the inner soles and turns to leave. She mumbles another thank you as the fly wire door snaps closed behind her.

131 INT KITCHEN EVENING

131

Jean and Robert sit having dinner in silence. Jean's hair is very short and bluntly cut around her ears. Robert makes no comment. He doesn't notice. His thoughts thoroughly elsewhere.

Robert clears away the plates.

132 INT FARMHOUSE BEDROOM EVENING

132

Jean pulls out her sewing basket decorated with the soldiers holding big white chickens post card. She opens the lid and pushes various sewing samples and cotton aside. She finds her stitch sampler with the roughly stitched man and cat and the date **1887- 1915. R.I.P.** She pauses over the sampler before revealing under it a little stitched calico figure of a woman in a simple white dress. Jean pulls the dress off the doll to reveal breasts, belly button and pubic hair drawn in black running stitch and a red Japanese character stitched over the heart. The doll has long yellow hair running down its back. It is the same doll that was previously seen in Mr ohno's breast pocket.

The basket also contains a small bundle wrapped in crimson silk. Jean unfolds the silk and looks at the contents before rewrapping it and covering it with sewing paraphernalia.

Jean re-dresses the doll and buries her in the basket.

133 EXT WHEAT FIELD EVENING

133

Jean walks out of the house and into a scrappy looking wheat field. Robert watches her through the kitchen window, standing in the middle of the field, still. Jean feels at the length of her hair around her ears.

Folly stands not far away - watching. She bellows.

Jean begins walking across the field into the distance. Robert follows at a slight distance. The dog at his heels.

Jean picks up a stick off the ground as she walks and throws it, hard and strong.

The dog streaks past Jean after the stick, disappearing down an embankment.

Robert whistles for the dog to return. Nothing.

Jean has made her way to the edge of the embankment. She can see the dog, knee deep in sticky mud at the bottom of the damn. He is stuck.

She calls to Robert and the pair drag the dog from the sticky brown muck that was once a watering hole.

(CONTINUED)

133 CONTINUED:

Once the dog is free Robert falls to his muddy knees and howls at the night sky. The dog joins him. Jean uses her muddy fingers to wipe a tear of frustration from her face. She looks like she is wearing war paint.

134 EXT MT WYCHEPROOF PICNIC DAY

134

The whole town is out. Children swarm on the small 'mountains' lower slope. People sit on funny shaped boulders. A bike race is in the offing.

Two elderly sisters sit on wicker chairs playing matching Banjo Mandolins. Musicians are wearing dinner suits at midday. Women sit on tartan rugs.

Robert is talking to Ern McKettering. Other farm men are standing in groups talking and casting aggressive glances towards Robert. Ern chats on unaware.

Jean sees Doris in the distance and makes her way through the busy crowd. Doris sits with group of women (many of the same women we met on the verandah at the Hec Bowd farm auction). Jean stands at the edge of the rug, assessing whether there is room for her to join the ladies. All, but Doris, glance at Jean from under the brims of their hats, but there is no cordial communication or greeting.

Doris looks at Jean sympathetically. She is torn between protecting Jean and being part of the 'old' group.

One of the 'groups' hats blows off her head straight into Jean, who catches it. Dust and leaves blow all about. Jean politely hands the hat to it's owner, who sheepishly accepts the gesture, but Jean is distracted by the sight of a farmer approaching Robert.

A small child, wandering alone through the picnic rugs and foldout chairs, stares blankly at its hand as a drop of rain lands on its palm. Unsure of what is happening, it cries.

The farmer stops right up close to Robert, too close, and whispers something in his ear. Robert is taken aback but shrugs the comment off by turning away from the farmer.

The farmer takes offence and puffs out his chest and challenges Robert physically. Ern steps between the men to diffuse the situation. A scuffle ensues.

(CONTINUED)

134 CONTINUED:

134

The banjo playing sisters glance up to the sky as they continue to play. A drop of rain splats right in one of their eyes. People have started noticing the rain drops. Wives are gathering their children and calling for their husbands.

The farmer challenging Robert feels a rain drop against his face and completely loses interest in Robert. Robert looks at the rain drop rolling down the farmer's face and smiles triumphantly.

Robert grabs Jean's elbow and urges her to come.

Suddenly everyone is rushing for their cars and buggies. Ern and Doris wave to Jean and Robert as they leave.

135 INT CAR COUNTRY ROAD DAY

135

Robert drives with exuberant speed. The window washers smear a rusty coloured mud across the windscreen. Robert looks full of hope. Jean is happy for him, smiling and cradling her belly.

136 INT/EXT FARMHOUSE AFTERNOON

136

Jean and Robert are running in and out of the house with every pot and pan they can find. The fly wire door is banging open and shut, over and over.

Drops of water hit the dry ground making a spotty pattern in the dust. The sky goes dark and thunder breaks across the sky. And then it stops.

Robert stands in front of the farm house holding out a pot. Nothing. He keeps standing, waiting. He remains in the yard waiting.

137 EXT FARM HOUSE LATE AFTERNOON

137

Ern McKettering sits on the edge of his water tank stand. His clothes are wet. His tank is dry.

138 INT FARMHOUSE KITCHEN NIGHT 138

The kitchen lies quiet. Evidence of Jean's sewing and Robert's wheat samples cover the benches and walls. Note books lie as mute evidence of scientific activity.

139 EXT FARMHOUSE NIGHT 139

Pots and pans lie about in front of the farmhouse.

140 INT FARMHOUSE BEDROOM NIGHT 140

Jean rolls over to see a mouse run across Robert's forehead. Jean's body rocks with surprise but her reaction is subdued by drowsiness. Robert twitches but doesn't wake. Jean pulls the covers over her self and reaches to touch Robert face. Robert wakes and looks at Jean. His face full of sadness and questioning.

Jean takes Robert's hand and squeezes it tight. Robert looks on the brink of tears.

Robert turns his face into the pillow, ashamed.

141 EXT/INT FARMHOUSE EARLY MORNING 141

Robert leaves through the front door. The fly wire bangs hard against the door frame. He strides across the yard to the motor car. The dog follows. Robert slams the door before the dog can get in. He drives away. The dog stares after him, barking at the dust.

142 INT/EXT FARMHOUSE DAY 142

Jean is sweeping dirt out of the house and wiping dust off window ledges. The dog stirs, rushing to the front door. Jean sees Folly bellow and follows the dog to the porch to see if Robert is coming in early. A figure walks across the paddock leading up to the house. It is not Robert. She watches nervously as the stranger approaches. The dog barks.

(CONTINUED)

142 CONTINUED:

An older looking man, (50, weathered, ill fitting false teeth) in filthy clothes, climbs through the last fence before the house. The dog barks, running up and down the porch steps.

The stranger addresses Jean as he approaches the house. It is Neville Frogley (dishonest man from the soil tasting/betting scene).

Shaking a fly covered hand in Jean's direction, Neville looks around as if checking to see if Jean is alone.

Jean sees that Neville's hand is in bad shape. It looks rotten. Again he shakes his hand and flies buzz around it. Neville flicks a look across Jean's body.

He takes off his hat and smiles. His hair is unnaturally dark and his false teeth look like those of a pretty young girl. Too small and even. Jean invites Frogley into the house. He holds the fly door open, leaving his arm out side for one last shake, before letting it snap shut behind him.

143 INT FARMHOUSE KITCHEN DAY

143

Frogley sits at the kitchen table looking around at the stacks of labelled tins and lists posted all around the walls. His eyes trail across Robert's note books and samples and microscope that are stacked and arranged across the long bench under the window. There are jam jars full of soil and seeds and fertilizers. Neville rests his hand across the kitchen table.

Jean enters the room with a white enamel basin full of hot water. She throws in a handful of salt and rests it in front of Frogley.

Jean, very gently, presses Frogley's hand flat against the table. Part of the base of the palm had been worn away and a deep channel eaten away through the centre. She splashed it with the salty water and pats it dry with a tea towel.

He watches her as she fetches an old sheet and tears it in strips with her teeth.

Jean picks a white cotton thread from her mouth.

Jean soaks the bandages in the brine and squeezes out the excess water.

(CONTINUED)

Frogley traces his eyes about the room motioning to all the paraphernalia in the kitchen. It appears somehow familiar to him. He suddenly winces - salt water entering his open wound.

Jean doesn't look up, she is concentrating on Mr Frogley's wound. She folds the bandages and packs them into the wound. Frogely winces again.

Jean sews the bandages carefully together, skillfully minding not to sew them to Frogely's hand. Frogely stares past Jean at one of Stan Hercules wedding photos hanging on the far wall.

Frogely interrupts Jean's thought by slapping his good hand on the table in aggressive good humour. He points at the wedding photo of Jean and Robert.

Jean looks up nervously but continues her stitching. A fly bangs angrily against the kitchen window. Frogley stares at Jean too intensely. She doesn't move her gaze from the small stitches she is working. The dog barks on the porch. Folly turns this way and that.

There is a glass of milk on the table left from earlier. It has a rusty film of dust on its surface. Frogley sticks his finger in it and paints the liquid across Jean's cheek. She recoils.

Jean calmly wipes the milk off her cheek with the selvedge from the sheet and ties off the thread she is using on Frogley's bandage. Frogley looks a little nervous in the face of Jean's steady calm. But it doesn't last, his face hardens again and breaks into an ugly grin as he gathers himself to leave.

Jean sees him to the door and closes the fly wire after him. He turns and snarls through the screen at her - animal like.

The actual animals appear erratic and crazed, barking, mooing, scratching, shuffling.

Frogely turns and blows out just like he blew in, disappearing in a cloud of dust.

Jean lies on top of the bedclothes. Staring into the dark. Tears on her checks. The dog lies in the floor beside her. The dog stirs. Jean's body stiffens.

144 CONTINUED:

Someone moves through the house. Robert's face appears in the bedroom doorway, questioning. Jean is relieved. Robert can not see her tears. The dog leaps up and follows Robert out of the room.

Jean lies in thought. Robert returns with a cup of tea, steaming. He sits on the edge of the bed. Jean sits up. They sit and share the tea in silence. The simplicity of it is startling. Robert holds Jean's hand. The moment is neither happy nor sad. It just is. Plain.

145 INT DORIS & ERN'S FARM HOUSE KITCHEN DAY

145

Jean sits in a semi recumbent position on a kitchen chair in Doris' kitchen. Her belly distinctly resplendent. Doris is fiddling with a cotton reel, biting a length of thread between her teeth.

146 EXT DORIS & ERN'S FARM HOUSE

146

A man in a beautifully tailored suit is shaking Ern's hand. Ern's farm get-up hangs from his body in crumpled contrast.

The Merchant's shiny Hispanno Suiza is parked beside them, in the shadow of Ern's huge empty tank.

Ern holds a fountain pen that is much too fancy for his working hands. The merchant, sensing hesitation, guides Ern's hand and the pen to the bottom of the contract. Ern's hand hovers, anxious.

Through the window of the round, shiny, car a small golden haired Pomeranian can be seen sitting behind the steering wheel. Ern likes the look of him and is happy for to be distracted from the contract in front of him. Ern reaches out to touch the small dog but it snaps and yaps at Ern's approach. Ern jumps back in surprise. He signs the contract in a rush to cover his embarrassment.

The men shake hands again. The Merchant drives away.

147 INT ERN & DORIS' FARM HOUSE KITCHEN DAY

147

Ern appears at the kitchen door.

(CONTINUED)

147 CONTINUED:

147

Doris waves her hand at Ern in good humoured impatience. Ern hands over his wedding ring without question. Doris threads the length of cotton through it and hangs it over Jean's belly.

Ern looks around the kitchen. He is not sure where to put himself. He is clearly pre-occupied. He looks out the kitchen window after the Merchant, but the shiny Hispanno Suiza is long gone.

He turns from the window to be consumed by the scene of his wife holding the ring-on-a-string and the marvellous pregnant belly, Ern snaps out of his worried state and turns his mind to the machinations of baby divining.

Ern puts his arms around Doris' ample waist. They look happy. The ring turns slowly in a circular motion.

148 EXT WHEAT FIELD DAY

148

Jean makes her way across the wheat field with a cake tin in hand. She passes Folly and gives her a vigorous rub on the neck. The farm house is not too far ahead.

149 INT FARMHOUSE DAY

149

Jean enters the house, calling to Robert as she lets the fly-wire door clap shut behind her. She sees Robert's back in the bedroom beyond. She is in high spirits.

150 INT FARMHOUSE BEDROOM DAY

150

Robert stands in the gloom of the unlit bedroom, still.

Jean tosses her hat to one side as she enters the bedroom.

Robert holds up a fan of sexy post cards. A piece of crimson satin wrap spills through his fingers.

Jean covers her face in horror. Attempting to avoid the situation.

Robert, now facing Jean, holds the cards up higher for Jean to see.

(CONTINUED)

150 CONTINUED:

Robert waits for a response from Jean. She remains hiding behind her hands, silent.

Robert pushes Jean's hands away from her face.

He throws the cards onto the bed, violently. He jabs at them with his finger, spreading them out across the bedspread. The images are of naked woman, draped in and across motor cars, touching one another.

He picks out one of the cards and holds it up to Jean's face. So close it almost touches her nose.

Robert lets the post card drop to the floor.

Jean doesn't move.

Robert shouts at Jean, very close to her face.

Jean crouches to pick up the postcard. She appears to be cowering like a scolded animal. A frightening calm settles over Robert.

Robert snorts and puts his hands in his pocket in a mock jolly gesture.

Jean slowly uncurls and moves towards the bed to collect the display of pornographic cards.

Robert presses his hands against his temples as though he has to hold in the contents of brain.

Jean stares at the post card. Two women stare back. Ordinary faces - lipstick, permanents. They wear no clothes, but, a decoration of necklaces, earrings and watch bands give them a dressed look. They are not young women. They have round thighs and bellies and rest their hands across each other suggestively. One woman's fingers splay around the others nipple.

Robert grabs at the postcards in front of Jean and crushes them in his hands. He sobs, pathetically. Tears catching in the grooves around his mouth. He reaches for Jean. His arms tense with need. Jean gathers him in. They lie together, surrounded by the post cards.

151 INT FARMHOUSE BEDROOM EVENING

151

Robert is asleep on the bed. Fully dressed.

(CONTINUED)

Jean sits on the bed beside him, she gently rests her hand on his arm. Robert opens his eyes and stares at Jean's hand.

Robert's focus shifts to the reflection in a full length mirror beyond. The scene reflected back to him is that of a young Robert sitting on a bed. His mother sits beside him, her hand resting on his arm. An older mans hand reaches down and pulls Robert's mother up to dance. Her flaming red hair swirls around her as she spins and laughs. There are a number of men in the room. She dances from one to another to another.

A bundle of swaddling cloth lies on the bed beside Robert. He pulls the cloth aside to reveal a withered little baby, grubby with dried blood (as seen in earlier train scene). Robert put his finger in the babies hand. The tiny, bloody, little fingers closes tightly around it.

Robert watches his mother's abandon with a confused distance until he can't watch anymore and closes his eyes against the scene.

Jean stares into her now empty tea cup. She sucks the dregs out. Her hand still rests on Robert's arm. The cat has curled up next to Robert on the bed.

Robert rolls over and lays his hand on Jean's belly.

Jean sits at the kitchen table with her hands covering her eyes. She is waiting.

Balanced on a plate is a single orange with a birthday candle stuck in it.

Robert is singing *Happy Birthday* as he carries the plate into the kitchen.

Jean takes the single orange and blows out the candle.

Robert leans in and gives Jean a kiss on the check. Jean presents the orange back to Robert, and as if by magic, she takes hold of the peel at the top of the fruit and unfurls it to reveal she has made a perfect spiral out of the skin.

Robert smiles broadly. He looks happier than he has for a long time.

152 CONTINUED:

152

He pulls two theatre tickets from his breast pocket and slips them in the peel spiral. Jean lets the spiral close around the tickets.

153 INT KITCHEN DAY

153

Sun streams through the kitchen window. A row of dried orange peel pieces, shaped into animals, lines the sill. The perfect citrus origami from Mr Ohno. They glow as the sun streams through them. They are old and dry but still beautiful.

154 INT TEDDYWADDY HALL NIGHT

154

A crowd of people in Sunday best file into seats.

A dusty makeshift curtain made from a British and German flag is slowly opened by a little girl and a little boy pulling strings on either side of the stage. The little boy drops his string and half the curtain falls closed. An adult from the audience jumps up to help. The little boy cries. A kerfuffle ensues.

All eyes are fixed on the stage goings on. Then, seemingly from no where, a indescribably pure chorus begins (which we can hear). The audience are in wide eyed awe. Some turn their heads to see if the sounds could be coming from elsewhere.

The curtains finally clear and on stage are 20 small boys wearing white pompadour wigs and red lipstick, mouths wide open in song. Behind the choir is the familiar sight of the painted back drop of Henry the VIII holding his ax in a grove of gum trees.

Half the boys are dressed in ice-blue crinolines, the other half are in little Mozart suits - long jackets, knickerbockers and tights. The boys looks incongruous in the setting but the music is sublime.

Sunburnt farmers lean forward in their seats. Women close their eyes and make tiny movements with their fingers.

Jean rests one hand on her belly and the other she slides down beside Robert's leg. She touches his thigh ever so gently. His hand is close. She beckons it with her touch. He moves his hand to touch her finger.

(CONTINUED)

154 CONTINUED:

154

The boys complete a phrase of the music and pause (Mozart's love opera Bastien and Bastienne).

The conductor, Herr Georg Glebber (50, mutton-chop whiskers, thin), raises his arms and holds them still in the air. All the boys draw breath (silent) and wait. Herr Gerber's arms glide down and the boys begin again. But this time the mood is different - exquisite but strange - the boys begin a bizarre rendition of Waltzing Matilda, full of 'zwagmen', 'villabongs' and 'yumbucks'.

As the final phrase of "you'll come a Valtzing Matilda vizz me" fall from the children's mouths the audience bursts into rapturous applause (silent). The choir boys are already bleeding off, one has found a soccer ball and is dribbling it into the wings.

155 INT TEDDYWADDY HALL AUXILARY ROOM NIGHT

155

Jean wanders through the crowded room. People are talking and eating and watching each other.

The choir boys run between people, roughly, like any boys, excepting they wear blue crinoline.

Robert has found Herr Glebber, the conductor, in the crowd. They talk intently.

The rest of the crowd, made of the usual locals and a mix of unknowns, watch the two talk. Suspicious.

Stan Hercules urges the pair to pose for a photo. They do. They stand stiffly beside one another and staring seriously into the lens.

156 EXT FARM FIELD NIGHT

156

Robert and Ern work in the fields surrounding Jean and Robert's farm. They are burning back the old wheat stubble. They light the fires with kero tins fitted with bent pipes and a burning rag. As each man's rag is exhausted he holds the rag head to the other man's to transfer the flame.

The fires form in rows, following the path of the harvester. Low in some places, high in others. The flames light up the house and surrounding landscape, all orange and smoky.

157 INT KITCHEN NIGHT

157

Ern enters the kitchen to fetch a glass of water. Jean is preparing sandwiches. Ern's face is smeared with dirt and soot. Sweat lines run down his forehead.

The local newspaper is on the kitchen table. Ern picks it up to see the photo of Robert and Herr Glebber featured on the front page. It is captioned, "No rain but Venetian choir makes Mallee women cry".

He sinks a glass of water, leaving grimy finger marks around the glass and wet prints on the paper.

Ern and Jean watch Robert work in the far field. Heat haze and fire surrounds his distant figure.

158 FARM FIELD NIGHT

158

Jean makes her way across the burning fields with a water jug and glass.

She skips over fire lines, leaping small smoldering patches and knee high lines of flame. She is quite enjoying the little dance between herself and the flames. She continues - one fire line, two, three. As she make her way over the third line the jug spills some of its content against her thigh, her dress sticks. She can see Robert in the near distance, just beyond the next line of fire.

A pain suddenly grips Jean. She drops the jug and glass. The dry ground swallows the liquid. She collapses and blood seeps from between her legs.

She bleeds onto the dry ground. She lies with her legs twitching about, trying to escape the pain. Jean sees Robert intermittently through gaps in the fire wall. The horizon/fire wall is vertical and Robert stands off the earth sideways.

Ern comes running into Jean's view. As he looms close, Robert's body sharply takes flight and runs towards Jean also.

Ern attempts to lift Jean off the ground, but struggles with the weight. Robert arrives a moment later, in a state of possessed panic, scooping Jean off the ground.

(CONTINUED)

158 CONTINUED:

158

One of Jean's legs drags in the flames as Robert carries her out off the burning paddock. Her sandal smolders.

The flames continue burning against the night sky.

159 INT DISTRICT HOSPITAL CORRIDOR NIGHT

159

Robert sits on a hard wooden bench in the corridor of the hospital. The night shift nurses are scarce and the corridors eerie.

A nurse walks past Robert carrying a bundle of linen. He looks to her for re-assurance, but she passes him as though he were a ghost.

Robert waits alone. Staring. Waiting.

160 INT DISTRICT HOSPITAL WASTE ROOM NIGHT

160

A tiny wrapped corpse is thrown in a waste trolley.

161 INT CAR COUNTRY ROAD DAY

161

Robert and Jean drive in silence. The day is sweltering. Wheat fields pass.

Robert puts his hand on Jean thigh.

Jean doesn't acknowledge the touch. The wheat fields keep rolling past.

162 EXT/INT FARM HOUSE DAY

162

Robert walks with Jean into the house. Doris is cooking in the kitchen. Robert stops as they pass through the kitchen and Doris smoothly steps into his place, following Jean through to the bedroom. Robert looks at the food bubbling away on the stove. He stands awkwardly in the kitchen unsure of what to do. He stirs the food in the pot with a large wooden spoon. He stirs it again.

163 EXT. PADDOCK AFTERNOON. 163

Robert stands by Folly in a field close to the house. He bends awkwardly, dry retcheing. Folly looks sideways at him. Robert curls up on the ground like a little baby. He doesn't move for a long time. The day turns to dusk. Robert remain curled up in the dirt. Folly grazes casually around him, looking for tender morsels of grass. It is slim pickings.

164 INT FARMHOUSE BEDROOM EVENING 164

Jean sleeps and wakes and sleeps and wakes.

165 EXT PADDOCK MORNING 165

The sun peeps over the horizon. Dry wheat paddocks stretch in all directions.

Folly wakes Robert with a nudge. He is still lying in the field. Robert rolls over and stares across the unyielding earth stretching out around him.

166 EXT TRAIN TRACKS DAY 166

The huge orange engine that once powered the 'Better Farming Train' rolls straight down the main street of Wycheproof. It looks a little the worse for wear - rust and dulling paint. There are now only three carriages. But it is clearly the same train.

The old sign across the engines nose declaring the 'Better Farming Train' has been painted over but is still a faint shadow under the new words, 'One-In, All-In, Recruitment Train'.

Jean and Robert sit in their car watching the train pull to a stop. They are dressed in their best. Robert in his wedding suit and Jean in a cotton frock and hat.

Robert rushes towards the train before it has stopped completely. Stopping a few feet from it, taking in the familiar sight. He is all enthusiasm. Jean is standing back a little, watching Robert. She looks weary.

(CONTINUED)

A carriage door opens and Mr Plattfuss lowers himself down. His moustache is a little duller and his belly a little larger. He still wears the white dust jacket.

He reaches into the carriage and pulls out a number of rolls of canvas and hoists them onto his shoulder.

Robert glances to Jean, like a nervous child, before approaching Plattfuss.

Jean watches Mr Plattfuss turn as Robert calls his name. A smile of surprise and recognition spreads across Plattfuss face. Robert immediately begins helping him string banners along the side of the train. Robert is immediately excited and happy to have something to do.

The banners read:

"False teeth or defective feet and no bar to enlisting in the AIF. The Army will look after your teeth."

"By the way, how's our chest measurement? If it is 32 inches or more, put an AIF tunic around it. You are wanted urgently."

"Army recruits invariably put on weight. Join the AIF and carry more weight for your country."

The Station Master's dog lies in a patch of sun by the train. Jean bends down and rubs the dog's matted fur. The dog loves the attention.

A carriage door opens behind her and steps are lowered onto the dusty ground.

Jean turns to see Sister Crock, round and bright, dressed in a starched white dress, tight across her hips. She sports her red midi cap across her ample shoulders.

Sister Crock squints out into the bright day. As she raises her hand to shade her eye's she recognises Jean standing on the platform.

Jean smiles, clearly pleased to see Sister Crock, and enthusiastically follows her onto the train.

167 INT NEW WOMENS CARRIAGE DAY

167

Sister Crock bustles Jean onto one of the front pews while she makes tea at the old baby-weighting table. Everything in the carriage is slightly changed. Jean's old sewing dummies are now dressed in AIF winter greens - a slouch hat covering the blunt necks.

There are placards mounted around the carriage covered in slogans:

"Encourage him to join up today and get the finest job a man can have."

"Be proud of him in this!"

"My Boy's with the AIF"

Jean watches Sister Crock prepare the tea - she taps a large spoon on the edge of the aluminium teapot to help settle the leaves. Crock collects two cups and turns to Jean.

Jean's eyes swell with tears. She holds them back with some effort. Sister Crock rests her hand lightly on Jean's knee.

Sister Crock smiles gently at Jean and drinks quietly from her tea.

Jean and Crock sit with their own thoughts. Jean idly looks at a pamphlet promoting patriotism in the home.

Sister Crock gets up and starts rummaging through a draw of files and paperwork. She pulls out a bundle of papers.

Sister Crock hands the paper bundle to Jean. They are letters. Jean looks at the first in the stack, it has 'not at this address' scrawled across the front of them in Robert's distinctive hand. Under Robert's writing the letters are addressed in tidy small characters, both English and Japanese. Red and black ink combined decoratively and clearly across the face of the folded paper. They are from Ohno.

Jean turns the letters over in her hand. A number have been opened. Sister Crock looks away, a little ashamed, pouring Jean another cup of tea. Jean holds the little bundle of letters tightly.

168 INT FARM HOUSE KITCHEN NIGHT

168

Mr. Plattfuss sits at Jean and Robert's kitchen table.

Robert fusses about showing Plattfuss his sample books and charts, displaying a childlike enthusiasm.

Jean feels in her pocket where Ohno's letters are hiding.

Jean tentatively puts a plate of crackers and jam on the table in front of Plattfuss. She mumbles an apology.

He slaps his firm round belly in a gesture of 'that's plenty for me'.

Plattfuss looks to Robert, placing recruitment pamphlet on the table in front of him. Robert nods eagerly, like a child with a new toy. He looks 10 years younger - an eager puppy.

Robert rushes out the door like a man with purpose.

Plattfuss collects his coat and bag. He turns to leave. He stops still for a moment before turning on his heels and pulling Jean into a tight hug, curling his arm strongly around her shoulders.

Plattfuss is quite emotional. He steadies himself and leaves. Jean waves, wistfully after Plattfuss as he climbs into Robert's car.

Jean takes the letters from her pocket and examines them. Perfect little folded specimens. She goes to open one. She hesitates. Nervous, excited. She tucks them back in her pocket and slips on a light coat. She gathers herself to leave the house.

169 EXT/INT CAR NIGHT

169

Robert drives.

Plattfuss does funny jaw exercises as they drive through the night.

170 EXT WHEAT FIELDS NIGHT

170

Jean makes her way across the wheat fields heading towards the glow of a distant farm. She carries a tin.

(CONTINUED)

170 CONTINUED:

She thinks she hears something. She stops and turns her head. Looking around she sees a group of sleepy donkeys huddled together behind a close fence.

171 EXT COMMERCIAL HOTEL NIGHT

171

Robert parks the car in front of the Commercial hotel. The building is all lit up and inviting. Recruitment notices can be seen decorating the facade. Mr Plattfuss gets out and straightens his jacket. Robert follows him inside. Other men are filtering in.

172 EXT DORIS AND ERN'S FARM NIGHT

172

Jean knocks on Ern and Doris' front door. Ern's smiling face appears from around the side of the house. He waves for Jean to head inside before disappearing again as quickly as he appeared.

Jean pops her head around the corner to watch after Ern. The car is full of suitcases. There are packing boxes strapped to the roof. Ern is head down in the engine trying to fix something. Ern puts his hands across his face. He is distressed, upset. Jean steps back and quietly moves away.

Ern wipes his face down with a hankie and turns back to the car. He closes the bonnet.

173 INT ERN & DORIS' FARM HOUSE KITCHEN NIGHT

173

Doris is at the stove boiling water in an old saucepan. A tiny array of crockery is assembled on the small table in the centre of the room. A few tin mugs, a toast plate and a couple of dessert bowls.

There is almost no furniture in the room. The house is all packed around them. It looks uncannily like Jean's childhood home, all packed and empty.

Doris turns from the stove as Jean announces her arrival and offers Doris the cake tin.

Doris looks to Jean and bursts into tears. Jean puts the tin down and goes straight to Doris to comfort her. Ern pops his head in through the door. Doris sees him over Jean's shoulder and tries to pull herself together.

(CONTINUED)

173 CONTINUED:

Ern throws her a loving grin and takes her hand, slipping his hankie into it. Doris dabs at her eyes with Ern's hankie as she speaks. Doris pulls herself together with a deliberate and stoic grace.

CUT TO:

Doris, Jean and Ern sit on the floor and laugh, drinking tea from the motley assortment of tin mugs and bowls. Ern is snorting tea through his nose as he does a funny walk, clearly imitating someone insufferable.

Ern gives Doris a sad/loving smile. He gathers himself enthusiastically and goes on.

The threesome sit quietly for a moment, together.

174 INT COMMERCIAL HOTEL NIGHT

174

Lola Sprake wipes and tidies behind the bar that runs the length of the Commercial's long back wall.

The bar is filling with a mixture of punters - a smattering of farm locals in dusty work gear, some younger locals and some older men - veterans - wearing their Sunday suits with old medals on display. The men pull tables together in different corners of the room, smoking, drinking and talking amongst themselves.

Stan Hercules props himself up at the bar with his camera and note book laid out in front of him. He talks with Lola. Plattfuss nods at Robert, who flicks on the slide projector that sits on the bar. A wedge of light splashes against the wall.

Stan Hercules taps his glass with a pencil, calling the pub to order.

Lola makes Robert a rum and cloves and pours Plattfuss a Ballarat Bitter.

175 INT/EXT CAR NIGHT

175

Ern is at the wheel. The car sits stationary beside the house. Ern tries to push the car into first gear. It won't go. He tries again and again. Doris makes suggestions. Ern ignores them, politely. Nothing works.

(CONTINUED)

175 CONTINUED:

175

He swears, then apologies. Ern twists his body, resigned to the cars mechanical insistence, and looks straight out the back window. He drive backwards away from the house. Nobody comments. Ern continues to drive backwards longer than is necessary. Doris sits beside him, watching the farmhouse recede and disappear in the moonlight.

176 EXT COUNTRY ROAD NIGHT

176

Jean sits in the back seat, looking out the back windows guiding Ern's progress.

The car continues driving backwards, past umpteen wheat fields and long fences.

The car stops at a large open farm gate. Doris and Jean get out. They embrace. The world is still and quiet. The women stand holding hands, reluctant to part.

Jean leans into the car and farewells Ern.

The car reverses away. Jean is illuminated by the headlights. She turns and walks through the open gate.

177 INT COMMERCIAL HOTEL NIGHT

177

Plattfuss takes a swig of his beer and clears his throat. Lola put another rum and cloves in front of Robert.

Standing by a huge projected picture of a beautiful young man in army uniform with a rifle slung over his shoulder and the sun rising behind him, Plattfuss begins his presentation. He looks just like the Plattfuss of old, presenting his prized cattle.

The assembled crowd shout and approve everything Plattfuss utters. Men stamp their feet and whistle.

Robert changes slides and drinks more rum and cloves. A man sitting next to Robert gives him a beer. Robert is getting tipsy and thanks the man and drinks up. The stranger keeps Robert's glass topped up.

178 INT FARMHOUSE BEDROOM NIGHT

178

Jean sits on the edge of the bed looking at the tiny bundle of folded letters tied up in string. She unties the string spreads the letters carefully across the bed. Looking at the post mark on each envelope, she orders them accordingly. "Not at this address" can be seen scrawled across the front of each envelope.

Despite this aggressive addition, the letters are beautiful - each different from the next - folded from single sheets of miss-matched paper. She picks up one of the tiny squares and pulls the content from its perfect housing.

Jean sits on the bed and weeps as she reads.

179 INT COMMERCIAL HOTEL NIGHT

179

Robert flicks back and forth between one recruitment slide another - he is making a hash of it. He empties his glass.

Plattfuss drinks his beer in a theatrical gesture, returning it perfectly to his beer mat. He is on a roll and lapping up the crowds eager attention.

Robert interjects here and there with slurred enthusiasm.

Robert's glass has been refilled again. He raises it with an enthusiastic "cheers" to underline his enthusiasm. Much of its contents slops down his arm.

The men in the pub look at him momentarily and then back to Plattfuss.

180 INT FARMHOUSE BEDROOM NIGHT

180

A tiny origami crane falls onto Jean's lap as she pulls another letter from its envelopes.

Jean is transfixed - enamored by the delicacy of the miniature bird. She lifts it gently and places it on her upturned palm. She blows on the bird. It floats in the moonlit room, as if by magic. Jean lies down amongst the scattered letters and watches the crane float.

181 INT COMMERCIAL HOTEL NIGHT 181

Plattfuss is on fire, picking up his beer and downing the remains. Men stamp their feet and raise their glasses.

Robert is all smiles. He takes another drink.

182 INT FARMHOUSE LATE NIGHT 182

Jean wakes in her bedroom. She lies, in her clothes, on top of the covers, surrounded by Ohno's letters.

Robert is no-where to be seen.

Something in the darkness catches her attention. She sits up and calls out. Robert?

She walks through the house, calling.

No reply.

She sees a shadow move in the garden. A person? She cranes her neck to get a better view through the kitchen window.

183 INT COMMERCIAL HOTEL LATE NIGHT 183

The men have loosened or removed their ties and sit slouched about the place. The men scull pots and back slap and laugh.

Robert is drinking with the rest of them and is now drunk. A familiar face, Les Noy, fills his beer glass. Robert looks at him, face cocked to one side.

Roberts treats him like a long lost friend. Les shrugs Robert's friendly back slapping off. Robert get friendlier and friendlier with every rejection.

Robert giggles like a little girl. Les is suddenly very agitated and spits at Robert.

Robert, oblivious to the aggression, squints his eyes at Les and smiles.

Les' face has gone completely red with rage, he stands and gestures for Robert to follow him outside.

184 EXT WHEAT FIELDS PRE-DAWN

184

Jean walks across the wheat fields as the dawn approaches.

She looks in all directions scrunching up her eyes trying to make out shapes in the murky light of the middle distance.

Ohno's pin striped pants and swallow tail jacket flick momentarily in and out of view. Jean scrunches her eyes tighter and calls after the apparition.

Nothing. It is gone. She runs towards murky grey shapes cast by the dawn light.

185 EXT BEHIND COMMERCIAL HOTEL PRE-DAWN

185

Robert stumbles towards a group of men standing around a 44 gallon drum. A fire flickers away. The men drink beer from bottles in brown paper bags. There are empty beer bottles, crates and rubbish bins scattered everywhere.

Les gives Robert a shove.

Les advances on Robert and gives him a poke in the chest. Robert brushes Les' hand away, not angrily, but in a gentle 'please-don't-touch-me' motion.

Les is circling around Robert who struggles to keep his balance. Robert screws up his face in an attempt to focus.

Les swings a punch at Robert. Robert's drunken swaying miraculously saving Robert from Les' fist connecting.

Les grabs at Robert's limp arms attempting to make them into fists for a fair fight.

Robert's drunken limbs do not oblige. Les gets angry at Robert pathetic showing.

Robert crosses his arms over his chest and stumbles sideways into a pile of rubbish.

Robert's face is a wash with tears. He begins to sing.

Les Noy slaps his hands against his sides in frustration. He kicks at the dirt and bouncing around waiting for Robert to get up.

Robert doesn't move, he just weeps. Les tries to pull him up by his shirt collar but Robert is a dead weight.

(CONTINUED)

185 CONTINUED:

185

A man appears out of the shadows, it is Neville Frogely. His hair too dark and false teeth too small. He whispers in Les' ear.

186 INT FARMHOUSE PRE-DAWN

186

Jean is running through the landscape, calling into the darkness. Ohno is there, riding a small horse, in his perfect swallow tail jacket, crimson silk at his neck. He appears and disappears in the shadows of the night. No matter how fast Jean runs he is always ahead of her, moving further away.

The land is eerie, shadows dancing across the derelict wheat fields. Everything is cast in a ghostly dawn light, every shadow a possibility. Jean runs and turns at every change of the light.

187 EXT BEHIND COMMERCIAL HOTEL DAWN

187

(this scene intercuts with following scene)

Frogely calls for bets from the ring of men surrounding Robert. Robert can barely hold his head up.

Neville forces dirt into Robert's mouth. Despite Robert's pathetic demeanor his tasting accuracy does not seem affected. Neville is raking in the winnings. Men curse and Neville grins, his grotesque false teeth on show for all to see. The ring of men swirl around Robert like grotesque ballroom dancers.

188 EXT WHEAT FIELDS PRE-DAWN

188

(this scene intercuts with preceding scene)

Jean spins and turns. Dizzy, she drops to the ground, pulling her knees up against her chest. She holds the tiny letters in her hand. She hides her face, disappointed, confused.

Music and coloured lights spill across the field. Jean looks up to the sight of people dancing. She is struck motionless by the sight. It is the Better Farming train dance. Colourful paper lanterns hang like magic in the air. People dance. Mostly men with men. Some of the men are dressed roughly as women. Mary is dancing with a stock hand. Sister Crock is leading Mr Plattfuss across the field.

(CONTINUED)

188 CONTINUED:

188

Mr Ohno appears beside Jean. He offers his hand, she takes it. Mr Ohno bows and leads Jean into the paddock to dance.

Jean whispers into Ohno's ear. He nods.

Robert is nowhere to be seen.

189 EXT BEHIND COMMERCIAL HOTEL DAWN

189

As the dawn breaks Neville counts his winnings and gives half to Les. Neville and the other punters disappear into the grey morning light.

190 INT FARMHOUSE BEDROOM DAWN

190

Jean wakes with a start. She is lying in a the middle of a wheat field, clutching Ohno's letters.

She sits up, disorientated, her mouth dry eyes bleary. Pulling up the hem of her dress she wipes her fetid mouth.

Jean turns the little pile of letters over and over in her hands. She stares mutely across the endless dry landscape.

191 EXT BEHIND COMMERCIAL HOTEL DAWN

191

Les waves his winnings in Robert's face.

Robert vomits on Les' shoes.

192 EXT RECRUITMENT TRAIN WYCHEPROOF EARLY MORNING

192

Jean stands on the edge of Wycheproof's main street. The town lies still in front of her. The Recruitment train sits silent, slicing through the centre of town.

A bird sweeps past Jean and flies about the huge orange train engine. Jean follows its flight path. The bird's beauty is out of place/uncanny - exotic like a origami crane.

Jean sees Robert's car parked in the shadows of the train siding. The door is open, Robert sits half in and half out of the car. His suit, crumpled and filthy.

193 INT/EXT ROBERT'S CAR EARLY MORNING

193

Robert tries to run a piece of bailing twine around his chest. He fine motor skills are shot. He's still drunk. The bailing twine is caught and twisted in the creases of his suit jacket.

Jean walks to the car and stares at Robert through the open door.

Robert peels off his coat and shirt and hands them absently to Jean. They hang from her hand, the shirt has turned a rosy pink from the red dust.

Robert's deformed chest is sharply silhouetted in the dawn glow.

Jean watches him struggle to wrap the twine around his chest. She can't bare to watch his struggle.

Jean takes the twine and encircles his chest, slips the string across his nipples. She smells his body. Vomit, beer, sweat. She reels slightly.

Robert turns his body away from Jean, as though physically protecting himself.

Jean holds up the length of twine. He lurches out of the car, grabbing at the string, throwing it to the ground. Ashamed.

Robert and Jean both stand silently. Jean pulls Ohno's letter's from her dress pocket and holds them in front of Robert's face. Robert smirks. He takes the letters from her hand and kisses them gently, before tossing them casually at her feet. He takes back his shirt, slips it on and begins doing up the buttons.

Jean stares in disbelief, then suddenly flies at Robert, pushing her palms into his chest. She shouts and pummels and lashes.

Robert stumbles backwards, clipping the car door.

Robert's body has drooped. His arms hang limp beside him. He loses his balance and falls back into the car, his shirt misbuttoned, the recruitment train looming, a huge dumb witness, behind them.

The light shifts in the sky and the strength of it hitting Robert makes him shade his eyes with his hand.

(CONTINUED)

193 CONTINUED:

193

Jean takes a step away from Robert.

The two stand/sit apart. Robert stares at nothing. Jean stares at the pathetic crumple of a man curled into the front seat. She hands back his blue wedding jacket and walks away.

194 EXT RECRUITMENT TRAIN WYCHEPROOF MAIN STREET/SIDING DAY 194

The old farming train sits proudly in the centre of town. It is decorated with colourful bunting and advertisements for war. Mr Plattfuss busies himself shaking hands and guiding young men to the enlistment carriage and young ladies to a refreshments table being manned by the ever pinch faced Iris Pfundt.

Robert sits in his parked car holding the steering wheel tight. He stares at the train parked not 100 meters away. He watches Plattfuss fuss and guide and proselytize.

Les Noy stands in the shade of a small shop awning, watching Robert's car. Robert does not see him. He is smoking a bent cigarette.

Les, leaving the cigarette hanging from his moist bottom lip, strolls lazily into the sun that is bathing the main street. He wanders by Robert's parked car, he stops and stares at Robert, exhales a huge cloud of smoke, acknowledging something that has passed between them. Robert hands a bundle of papers through the window. Les takes them wordlessly and heads towards the recruitment train.

Les is wearing the same clothes he was at the dawn soil tasting earlier that day. His shoe laces are undone.

Robert watches Les stop at Ms Pfundt refreshment table and have a glass of lime water. Iris offers a small sandwich, Les refuses.

195 INT RECRUITMENT TRAIN WYCHEPROOF MAIN STREET/SIDING 195

Sister Crock stands stoutly by a large measuring stick at the far end of the Recruitment carriage. Farmer's naked bodies are measured and prodded and probed. Sister Crock notes down the size and shape of every dip and muscle that stands before her. A line of waiting, willing bodies, snakes out of the carriage.

(CONTINUED)

195 CONTINUED:

Sister Crock draws a line under a row of stats and calls for the next recruit.

Les Noy steps forward, a little wobbly. Sister Crock motions with her head towards a white hospital screen, without looking up.

She picks up the clip board Les has left on the table in front of her. There is a picture of Robert staring back at her. Les has filled the form in with Robert's details.

Name: Robert L. Pettergree, etc.

Sister Crock immediately looks up from her papers at the silhouette of a man undressing behind the white cloth of the screen.

Les Noy steps out from behind the screen. He stands before her in his underwear. Scrawny but tough.

Sister Crock stands staring at Les.

The waiting queue of recruits are restless.

Sister Crock steadies, picks up Robert/Les' clip board and collects her measuring implements.

Les lifts his arms as Sister Crock wraps the tape about his naked chest.

196 EXT RECRUITMENT TRAIN WYCHEPROOF MAIN STREET/SIDING DAY 196

Robert remains sitting in his car looking through the front windscreen. Les approaches, holding a large brown paper bag under his arm. As he passes Robert's car he pauses momentarily passing the paper package through the open side window.

Robert reverses the car away and disappears.

197 EXT/INT RECRUITMENT TRAIN DAY

197

Plattfuss stands proudly on the steps of the recruitment train holding his old loud hailer. He looks up and down the main street waiting for punters to entice. The street is pretty much empty, bar Iris Pfundt refreshments table. Plattfuss examines the sandwiches. Iris offers him a cup of tea. He accepts.

198 INT RECRUITMENT TRAIN BATHROOM DAY 198

Robert stands in front of a small bathroom mirror in which not much more than his face can be seen in reflection. He fastens his shirt's top button and straightens his collar. His movements are very deliberate.

199 INT TRAIN CORRIDOR DAY 199

Robert closes the bathroom door. He wears a full army uniform. The pants are a little big. And the jacket sleeves are a little long.

Robert does the final straightening of his uniform before moving into the main carriage of the train.

200 INT TRAIN CARRIAGE DAY 200

Robert opens the carriage door and enters, casting an eye across the filling carriage. There are young men in fresh army uniforms and people in civilian clothes.

Ern and Doris are seated half way down the carriage. They are eating cut sandwiches and fussing over the placement of their abundant amount of luggage.

Robert sees them. Startled, he turns immediately back towards the door.

As he turns, Doris stands and looks about the space to see where she can stash their excess bags. She sees the back of the soldier in his ill fitting uniform. She smiles as she addresses Ern.

Robert walks slowly out of the carriage. He closes the door behind him.

201 EXT WYCHEPROOF MAIN STREET DAY 201

Les Noy watches the recruitment train preparing to leave. He casts his eye along its length. He sees Jean watching also.

He acknowledges her with a tug of his hat. He wears Robert's wedding suit. She stares at him with a frightening strength of purpose. She makes no move to return his greeting.

(CONTINUED)

201 CONTINUED:

201

The train begins to move slowly down the center of the main street. It's leaving is perfunctory. Steam fills the air. The train clears the station. Les is gone. The street is empty. It is hot. Fly wire doors shut. Jean remains, standing in the heat, alone in the middle of the main street.

202 INT TRAIN MACHINE ROOM DAY

202

Robert sits alone in the bowels of the train. Hiding. A small window reveals the landscape passing.

203 INT TRAIN CARRIAGE DAY

203

Mr Plattfuss and Sister Crock sit quietly together as the train sprints through the landscape.

Ern's head rests on Doris' ample shoulder. He sleeps. Doris watches the wheat fields slip by.

204 INT FARMHOUSE BEDROOM/KITCHEN DAY

204

Jean again pulls out her sewing basket decorated with the soldiers holding big white chickens.

She pulls out her childhood stitch sampler. Her name, the man, the cat and the dates: **1887- 1915. R.I.P.**

She slides her needle and thread through the fabric, over and over again. She folds and cuts and tucks. The light shifts from day to night as Jean works.

Folly stands close to the house. Jean can see her through the open front door.

Jean secures the final cotton thread and bites the excess off with her teeth.

She takes the calico doll from the sewing basket and removes its white dress. She re-dresses the figure and lays it on the bed. She takes Ohno's letter bundle from her pocket and lies it next to the doll. The dress is covered in tiny, exquisite pictures drawn in cotton thread. An orange steam train travels along the hem. A man rides a small horse through the clouds of billowing smoke. A cow stares out from the cloth, a chicken sitting on it back. A woman stands holding a man's hand in a church. A wrapped baby has crosses for eyes.

(CONTINUED)

204 CONTINUED:

A head of wheat towers over a man in an army uniform. And of course the letters J-E-A-N-F-I-N-N-I-G-A-N, the roughly stitched man, the cat and the dates: **1887- 1915. R.I.P.**

Jean wraps the small calico doll, wearing its new picture dress, in the crimson silk then in layers of brown paper. She ties it all with string and carefully addresses the front.

Mr. Ohno.

Camp 3

Rushworth Internment camp

TATURA

Victoria

205 EXT TRAIN DAY

205

An orange steam train rattles through the endless, flat, dry landscape.

Cut to black.

The End.