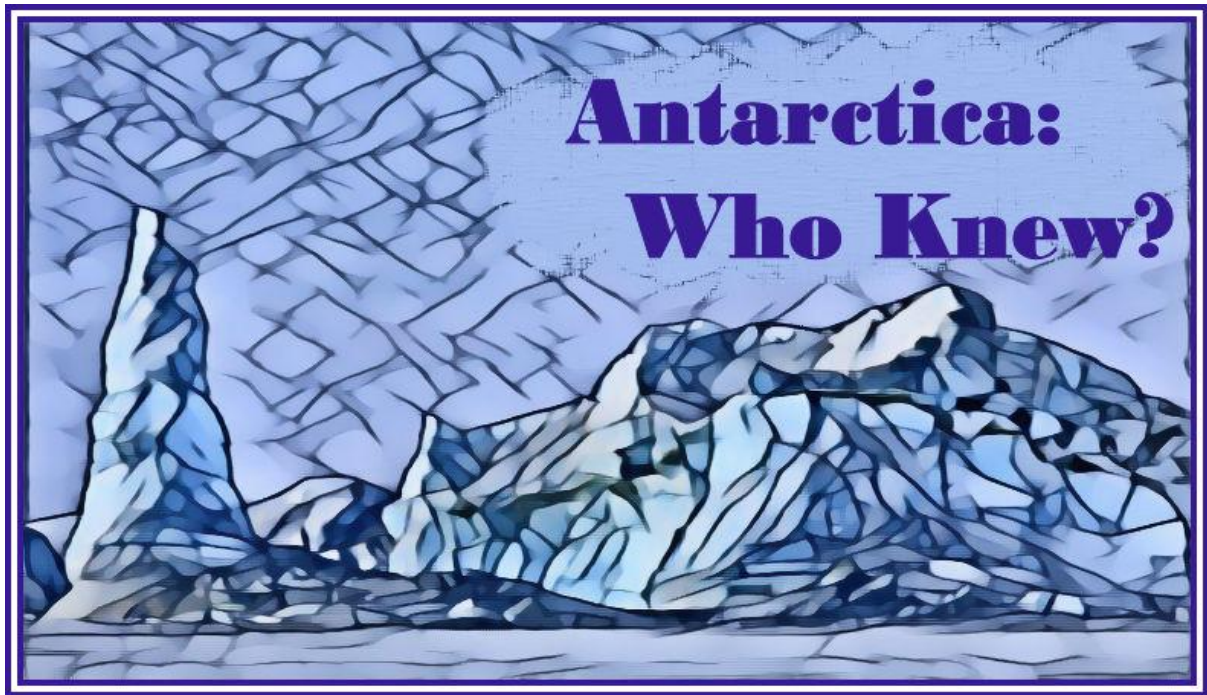




This movie is entitled

ANTARCTICA: WHO KNEW?

It follows "The Romans Did Sidders" and precedes "Riding My Chainsaw With You". All these movies are standalone but will refer to each other where necessary.

Pages 1 - 5

PROLOGUE: SOUTH-WESTERN TASMANIA

A flotilla of native canoes, around 500 AD.

Scene: Exterior.

South-western Tasmania

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Time: Around 500 AD, daylight

A montage of 6 film clips portray (without narration) the departure of 24 bark canoes from a beach into the Southern Ocean.

Superbly filmed action: rich, glorious, breath-taking.

The Aurora Australis will be displayed wherever possible.

Music: didgeridoo and rhythm sticks.

ESSENTIAL BACKGROUND:

To begin the movie a montage of 6 film clips portray (without narration) the ancient tale which Dan Cockatoo will later narrate.

[This montage is presented again late in the movie to the accompaniment of Dan's voice-over.]

This tale is of 55 Tasmanian aboriginals (men, women and boys) journeying in 24 bark canoes to Antarctica.

After making ground on Antarctica (near the current Cape Lloyd Station) only 5 men survive the trip back from Antarctica to their original departure point in south-western Tasmania.

Two things are key to this tale: the existence of a wooden tally board whereon the journey's details have been etched, and the pivotal effect of an immense flock of birds (being short-tailed shearwaters).

The 5 male survivors of the perilous voyage of around 500 AD undertook to solemnly tell the story to their sons. Each son was under oath to faithfully relate the tale to each of his sons, and so on.

In 2026 there exist only 2 men who know the tale, having been told by their respective fathers: Dan Cockatoo and Percy Lock. Neither has so far divulged the saga to anyone as neither has sons. Thus, when Dan and Percy die, the tale will die

with them, to be forever gone.

Percy will claim that this group of aboriginal travellers discovered ANTARCTICA well before the legendary discoveries made by the Polynesian Ui-te-Rangiora.

FILM CLIP #1

PREPARATIONS FOR THE DEPARTURE OF THE 24 BARK CANOES (around 500 AD)

A group of 100 indigenous Australians work in the deep, dark, forbidding bush of south-western Tasmania.

They are carrying sturdy bark canoes to a sandy beach.

During this work, they look up. It is evening.

The sky changes as the Aurora Australis kicks in. The colours are magnificent.

As well, a flock of short-tailed shearwaters (thousands strong) flies low overhead, flying over the land and towards the ocean. The people look at each other – smiling and nodding.

FILM CLIP #2

THE ORIGINAL DEPARTURE OF THE 24 BARK CANOES (around 500 AD)

On a long sandy beach the last items are packed into the craft: food, water, possum coats, spears and short paddles.

People step into the canoes as they push away from the beach.

There are 24 bark canoes. 20 of these craft hold 2 men. 3 of the craft hold a man, a woman and 2 boys. The other craft holds 2 men and a boy.

Thus, 55 people leave the south-western coast of Tasmania travelling southwards.

The total of 55 people is made up of 45 men, 3 women and 7 boys.

Their passage is smooth. The ocean is unbelievably calm, yet the current pushes them southwards with no requirement to paddle.

We can see that they are happy: singing and smiling.

FILM CLIP #3

THE PERILOUS VOYAGE SOUTH OF THE 24 BARK CANOES (around 500 AD)

Some people are missing but we (the audience) won't be made aware of that. The men spear fish directly from the bark canoes as the fish approach them. The fish are eaten raw.

FILM CLIP #4

THE LANDING OF 15 BARK CANOES (around 500 AD)

42 people have survived. They are now travelling in only 15 bark canoes.

They are standing on the rocks (it is summertime in Antarctica) near what would become Cape Lloyd.

They marvel at the ice sculptures.

Several fires are lit. Aurora Australis is commanding (almost overbearing) as the flames of the fires lick the cold air. The sun sits on the horizon.

By the warmth of one fire, one man (larger than the rest) uses a sharp piece of chert to inscribe a tally board.

FILM CLIP #5

THE RETURN OF 5 BARK CANOES (around 500 AD)

Back in south-western Tasmania 2 of the bark canoes drift into shore. Each one contains a dead body.

3 more canoes approach, but they are being powered by oarsmen.

When the 5 remaining men reach the shore, they jump out and run to the beach where they rub sand over themselves. They call "cooee" loudly. Sundry people rush down to the beach, smiling in welcome.

FILM CLIP #6

THE LOSS OF THE TALLY BOARD TO THE OCEAN (around 500 AD)

The didgeridoo now plays its most mournful song. As well, we hear seascape sounds.

We watch the tally board being washed up on the rocky beach of Cape Lloyd along with other flotsam.

The music dies away completely. However, we continue to hear the wavelets plashing the rocks. The birds fly overhead.



The backdrop for the TITLES will be a medley of black-and-white photographs of Antarctica, focusing on Cape Lloyd in its early days. We will note a tall, stocky man wearing a Viking helmet and with plaited beard: Pehr Verdun. He is captured smiling with complete abandon.

There will be no music for the titles roll-through. The only sound we shall hear is

that of a very old-fashioned ratchet projector (for still photographs). This will “clunk, clunk” as each photo appears.

Pages 7 - 11

SOUTH-WESTERN TASMANIA
The old legend stirs Percy's soul.

Scene: Exterior.

South-western Tasmania

Time: Current day, daylight

The beach and the bush seen in the Prologue will re-appear here. Not much change in over 1,500 years.

Percy Lock (holding a stick) walks along a bush track. He stops, looking into the bush. We see (as Percy also sees) a pair of eyes warily watching him. Percy grins as he mutters something to the animal.



Scene: Interior

The "Braw Lads Gathering" Hotel in Balmoral Beach Tasmania.

Percy Lock does not have access (at this time) to a mobile phone. He resorts to using the ancient public phone on the wall in the Main Bar.

Percy will speak by phone to Adrian Lannsing, who was a major player in movie #1. Our camera will not record the men as they converse by phone; the voices are only

in voice-over.

During the following phone call our camera idles over several maps of the Southern Ocean. These are featured on the wall of the Main Bar, near the phone. All the maps are depicted to include the southern areas of Australia.

Percy *voice-over* Is that Adrian Lannsing?

Adrian *voice-over* Yeah. Speaking.

Percy *voice-over* I got somethin' for you to investigate, eh. It's about –

Adrian *voice-over* Sorry mate, I'm a bit tied-up right now. Can you email the deets to me? My address is –

Percy *voice-over* Hang on! Hang on! I'm calling you on a pay phone. It's costing me a zack or two. And I don't do any of that email stuff.

Adrian *voice-over* Okay. You got a phone? I'll text you the –

Percy *voice-over* No mate. I told ya: I had to use a pay phone. I got nothin' mate. I live way the other side of the Black Stump in Tazzie. I'm not connected to nothin'. Don't even get the postie or electricity or nothin'.

I had to walk miles to this pub so as I could ring you up and I'm using their phone on the wall.

Adrian *voice-over* Ah ... Well ... Not much I can do right now, I'm afraid.

Percy *voice-over* Hang on! I'll get someone to call you for me, eh. I'm Percy Lock. The bloke who'll call you – he's called Uncle Dapto.

Adrian *voice-over* Aw! I know him! Yeah, terrific bloke!

Percy *voice-over* He's me cousin.

Adrian *voice-over* Great! I'll look forward to him calling me. Thanks Percy.

Scene: Interior/Exterior.

Percy's anguish.

A covered porch that belongs to a very run-down timber shack in the deep, dark bushland of south-western Tasmania.

There is a large table made of wood. It is covered in very old debris. We see the hand of an indigenous male (this is Percy) passing over the stuff, touching this and stroking that. We glance on the wall various photographs and sketches of what looks like dog but are in fact thylacines.



Our camera scans the thick bush from this porch. Percy is heard but not seen. He is using Uncle Dapto's phone.

Percy *voice-off* I can't prove nothin', mate.

I'm a tribal elder. This is all part of the rich heritage that
got passed down to me, eh. Father to son.

I know it's true.

Scene: Interior.

Adrian's desk at Wannabee Connections, Sydney.

On the desk stands a humorous wooden sign: it states that Adrian Lannsing is IN, OUT or "NOT SURE". This will alert the audience that this man is Adrian (if they did not see the first movie). Also, there is a delightful framed wedding photo of Anne and Adrian on the desk. Adrian wears a gold wedding band on his ring finger. This is a seamless switch from the rugged, confronting Tasmanian bush to Adrian's desk (where Adrian sits yacking to Percy via Uncle Dapto's mobile phone).

Adrian *sighs*

Usually we work with real-life objects, Percy. It's hard to get the money people excited over word-of-mouth.

[Pause, listening]

But Percy – tell me, mate – how can this make sense? A mob of indigenous people set off in bark canoes to cross – what? – over two and a half thousand kilometres of unforgiving ocean in the freezing cold. They land in Antarctica, then turn around and head back.

Is that your premise?

Percy *voice-off*

I never said nothin' about them comin' back, mate.

Adrian rolls his eyes.

Adrian *firmly*

You didn't have to say nothing ... Anything ...

Listen! If they got there they couldn't let the peeps back in Tazzie know of their success (no phones, no emails, no letters in a bottle) **unless** they came back home and told everyone what they did, what they saw ... Do you get my drift?

Percy *voice-off* In my culture we never make up stuff like this. It gets handed down from father to son without any embroidery ... You know, it's not Chinese whispers or that ...

Adrian *decisive* Well, I need to follow this up with you.
Is Uncle Dapto there? Can you put him on?

Uncle Dapto *voice-off* G'day mate!

Adrian *smiles broadly* Hey! How are ya? Long time no see.
You don't have any trouble getting a signal then?

Uncle Dapto *voice-off* Fuck yeah! Fuckin' hopeless. I had to rig up me own aerial. This is the place you come if you don't want **anyone** to ever find you, eh.

Adrian *chuckles* I'll have to come to you in Tazzie, then. Useless to try a Zoom call, I guess.

Percy *voice-off, background* You come 'ere.

Adrian Right! Tazzie it is. I'll fly out tomorrow morning. And then I'll chopper into the west coast.
Oakely-doakely. I'll see you guys then.
[Afterthought]
Oh, and by the way ... Why is Percy bringing up this Antarctica saga right now after all this time? Why now?

Uncle Dapto *voice-off* He says he can't possibly explain it to a white man, eh. It's just somethin' stirring inside of him. That's all we can tell ya
...

Pages 12 -19

CASTLE RONDEL, BESTRASIA
What is Prince Powl playing at?

SIGN ON SCREEN: The Kingdom of BESTRASIA, EUROPE present day.

Scene: Interior.

The elegant library at Castle Rondel, Bestrasia.

It is night. The only sound is provided by a grand old clock which ticks on the mantelpiece.

Powl is slouching. His elbow is on a table with his cheek resting on his hand. This badly distorts his face. He is bored and he looks bored. On the table is a cheap, nasty mobile phone. It rings. The noise of the phone seems to energize Powl. He snatches it up, answering quickly, nervously.

Powl *using phone* Yes? Hello? Adrian?

The caller (Adrian) cannot be heard. We (the audience) can only be aware of muffled sounds.

Powl Yes, old man. It's one of those pre-paid jobs. Untraceable.
 Throw-away.

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More muffled sounds.

Powl

Alright then – a burner phone. Call it what you like.

Listen! What I need from you is the ability to hook up to the installation at Castle Bailgravia in Megandaal. That's an immediate requirement. I'll text you the co-ords.

I'll be in Antarctica so –

More muffled sounds.

Powl

Yes I said **"Antarctica"**. Cape Lloyd Station. You probably know most of the crew there anyway.

[Slight pause]

But I'm home at this time. In Bestrasia. Yes, at my uncle's castle. Apparently (tomorrow) I'm getting engaged to a girl who's actually totally in love with my best friend (which puts a sizeable damper on things). Then flying out to Tasmania and from there to –

More muffled sounds.

Powl *grins*

A "dodgy engagement", did you say? Well, that's what being royal does for you, old mate.

And no, you don't need to meet me at Launceston airport when I land. I can drag my sad carcass to the RAAF plane

that will be on stand-by without your help. But thanks ever so for the offer.

Just follow through with the IP stuff as I asked and I'll be your friend for life. Cheers!

Powl ends the call, pockets the phone then speeds off.

Scene: Exterior.

Castle Rondel where the eastern castle wall meets garden.

Same night as in the previous interior scene. A little later.

So Powl has chatted to Adrian, then raced off. [We learn all about why/what/where later.]

Powl has returned. It is all subterfuge and mystery at this point. Unseen, Powl must scale the castle wall in order to be found in the library where it was believed he was installed all this time.

Music: mysterious, and something-is-going-to-happen.

It is very late evening. Some guards wander about around Castle Rondel. They chat, laugh and cough as they make their rounds. Thankfully they are not accompanied by the dogs.

Prince Powl hides in the shadows. When all fear of observation has passed, Powl looks directly upwards. Taking a big breath, he climbs vines and parapets (athletic and sure-footed) until he reaches the third level. Deftly, Powl enters the library through a half-opened window. Once in the library, Powl swings the window shut.

Powl works fast to recover a steady breath, dusts himself off, pushes old-fashioned reading glasses onto his face, then drops into a capacious armchair. Quickly, Powl

gives to any onlooker the idea that he has been busy reading for some time – totally absorbed.

There is a knock at the library door. Powl's manservant Clement enters the library with a short bow. There is no evidence that Powl is aware of his presence. Thus, Clement gives a discreet cough. Powl pretends surprise and looks up.

Clement *apologetic* Eure Königliche Hoheit. It is time for –

Powl feigns loss of memory. He stands abruptly, allowing the reading material to fall to the carpet.

Powl *appalled* Oh Lord! My appointment with Seine Durchlaucht Count Onslow! I'd forgotten!

As Powl scoots out of the library (headed for his private apartments) Clement stoops to tidy up the discarded papers. Clement grimaces with distaste: the subject matter of the papers appears to be scientific, boring stuff. We quickly see a map of Antarctica amongst the rubble.

Clement (holding the papers) rushes after Powl. Their conversation continues as they hurry through the castle. This includes mounting two flights of marble stairs. Powl marches along with big strides.

Powl What are he and I discussing again? Oh yes! My betrothal to Lady Felicity which looms large above me. Count Onslow will want to cover that off on my Uncle's behalf prior to my

flying South.

Clement *pleased*

Exactly! And an opportunity for you to propose marriage to the lucky young woman must be slipped into your busy schedule. The so-good Count will no doubt see to that!

Powl

It will all come to nothing of course. Lady Felicity won't become my affianced – not by a long chalk (as they say).

Clement *stops, surprised*

Not? But surely the thing is in train Sire and –

Powl

It **was** in train but now it is not.

The fact is that she is somewhat taken with my very good pal Baron Marcus Schruff.

Clement recommences his walk, trotting to keep up with Powl.

Clement *appalled*

Lady Felicity cannot **think** to marry so far beneath her when you (a Prince of the Blood) would offer your hand!

Powl *blithely*

No! You are not taking into account the strength and purity of True Love (which I believe conquers all).

I can't and I won't ruin their romantic adventures, be sure of that, Clement. Something else must be thought of.

Clement *shocked*

But it is expected! The Royal Court is waiting (holding their collective breath) for your –

Powl

You know, it has just occurred to me ... Marcus may have come up with a brilliant idea. Pure genius! Her younger sister Jessica could be pushed forward as Lady Felicity's

replacement. What do you think? Count Onslow might go for that. It might work.

They have reached the private apartments. Powl has a hand on the door knob.

Clement But ... I have heard that the younger sister is simply a girl. That is to say – she is a quiet, shy little dab of a thing. Your future wife might better be a more vivacious female who –

Powl *nods, smiles* I won't mind so long as Marcus and Felicity can safely wed (which they'll probably do in Rome or Florence) without His Majesty Uncle Dimitri or Count Onslow having a fit.

Do you know – the more I consider this outrageous scheme the more it appeals to me.

Scene: Interior.

Powl's bedroom at Castle Rondel, Bestrasia.

Powl (whistling indifferently) has stripped to the waist. With Clement's assistance, Powl applies male scent to his chest and deoderant to his armpits.

The meaningless whistling continues. Clement dresses Powl in a clean shirt. Once Powl is wearing the shirt (and as he ties his tie) Clement frowns. Clement smooths the contours of the shirt which Powl wears with his hands.

Clement *worried* You seem to have put on some weight, Sire.

Powl laughs as he pats his flat stomach.

Clement *quizzing* No ... I mean that you seem stronger in the upper body than you were. Your shoulders are broader and your upper arms – Have you been visiting a gymnasium by any chance?

Powl throws this suggestion away.

Powl *chuckles* I? Take exercise? I hardly think so.

Clement *severe* You might fob off anyone else, Eure Königliche Hoheit (and I include even your own mother in that!) but your valet – no! There is no hiding anything so personal from me, Sire. I've known you man and boy for longer than either of us care to remember.

There is no getting around it: your reed-slim physique has changed of late; you are becoming a worthy specimen – strong and manly. And it suits you.

Powl laughs, shrugging. Then he becomes serious. Powl's voice drops. He places his hands on Clement's shoulders.

Powl *very low* It is imperative, my friend that the so-dear Count should continue to think of me as a weak, lily-livered poltroon. If he should question you, you must reassure him that I am still the scaredy-cat cowardly-custard that I have always

been.

I'm depending on you for that, Clement.

Clement *wondering* Of course, Sire. Of course!

Pages 19 - 33

BESTRASIA: GILPIN VERDUN

ADDRESSES STURGISS

Prince Powl no longer a blancmange.

Background:

We need to discuss the Sturgiss character. Yes – he begins as a priggish, nasty man who (as henchman to Count Onslow) is a tool.

But Sturgiss has smarts. The real situation becomes clear to him and he acts according to his strong conscience. A native of Megandaal, he is loyal to King Dimitri above all else.

Also, he is alerted to the current behaviour of Prince Powl through the observation of the secretary Gilpin Verdun.

Scene: Interior.

Sturgiss has long been assigned an old-fashioned sitting room at Castle Rondel to be his office. Although he does not directly assist King Dimitri, he is regarded as a very valuable member of the royal entourage.

A fire roars in the fireplace as Sturgiss stands about drinking sherry with the

secretary Gilpin Verdun. Sturgiss is evidently worried about some matter. Sturgiss's riding gloves are on the desk. Sturgiss picks them up and slaps them on the table in evident annoyance.

Sturgiss *angry* I pray constantly that the King will survive and prosper long into eternity – if for no other reason than that it will keep his foolish nephew from the throne of Bestrasia. What a hopeless case!

Sturgiss begins to pace about in frustration. He is watched by Gilpin.

Gilpin *evenly* We all pray for King Dimitri's good health.

Sturgiss I realize that I was born into Megandaal culture – Megandaal continues to exist only through the wisdom and good governance of King Dimitri. Without him we all fall into an abyss: both countries – Bestrasia and Megandaal alike.

Gilpin The King must continue to thrive with you on his team. I don't say that to be a sycophant. Truly, I have admired your skilful management of the Realm since I first arrived at the Castle.

Sturgiss permits himself to smile slightly. He bows to acknowledge the compliment.

Sturgiss Thank you! Since I am the right-hand man of Count Roger Onslow my loyalty to Bestrasia cannot be questioned.

Gilpin *drawls* Seine Durchlaucht Count Onslow ... he is certainly busy at this time with the affairs of Bestrasia ... and those of Megandaal ... And then there is Prince Powl ... We shall see ...

Sturgiss *frowns* What's that?

Gilpin *direct* Are you aware that Count Onslow will be meeting with his German intermediaries almost as soon as Prince Powl flies off to the great white land of the South?

Sturgiss Of course. He is ever keen to maintain the Bestmark in line with the Deutsche Mark.

Gilpin finishes his sherry.

Gilpin *smiles* Then goodnight, Sir. Thank you for the sherry. An excellent drop!

Sturgiss Yes ... Goodnight, Verdun.

As Gilpin reaches the door, Sturgiss stops him.

Sturgiss *recalling* Wait! Stay a moment ... You spoke of the Prince ...

Gilpin You must understand, Mr Sturgiss, that I am an impartial observer. It seems very, very odd to me that the heir to the throne of Bestrasia should be play acting in this way.

Extraordinary!

Sturgiss *surprised,*
really taken aback

Play acting?

Gilpin

Yes. Pretending to be a poltroon when he is anything but.

Sturgiss *deep frown*

Go on! You had best explain yourself.



Match the dialogue below with actions. Moody music rises gradually during the flashback actions.

Gilpin *voice-over*

My cousin and I were hunting the wild boar not so long since in the forest. We had hardly begun when Prince Powl galloped past us in the company of that Brayden fellow who is some kind of horse whisperer. The Prince's gelding was a sturdy beast that could twist and turn with ease. Not his usual mount (that being a dulcet mare which any tot could ride).

From our vantage point we watched the Prince leap from his saddle, plunge a dagger into the wild boar and (with Brayden at his side) truss it up.

His eyes! My God – the Prince's eyes! They blazed. I shall never forget those fiery eyes nor the sound of Prince Powl's

joyous laughter ringing through the thick, dark woods.

I'm sure that neither man realized that they were being observed at their sport.

It was more than interesting, I'll give you that.



Sturgiss turns to face Gilpin. Sturgiss is eager to hear more.

Sturgiss *eager* Yes? And?

Gilpin purses his lips. He shrugs a little, spreading his arms.

Gilpin And this from a trembling Prince who (when on display here at the Castle) fears to ride at the trot and insists on having a babysitter (some hapless groom perhaps) holding his docile mare's bridle "just in case".

Sturgiss *astounded* A deception, you think? What can it mean?

Gilpin leaves the door and walks further into the room. Again, actions will accompany Gilpin's words.

Gilpin Sir, I was outside in the garden smoking a cigarillo. A little earlier tonight it was. I kept myself out of the way as the castle guards were keeping watch (as is their custom). If they are not permitted to smoke whilst on duty then neither should I be.

As I said ... I kept myself hidden (so to speak).

And ...

Sturgiss *keen* And you saw Prince Powl ... ?

Gilpin nods as he swigs down the last of his sherry.

Gilpin *impressed* I've never seen a gentleman scale a wall with such dexterity ... such athleticism ... At one instant he was feet-on-the-ground and the next he was hauling himself easily up a sheer wall covered in vines. One false step and –

Sturgiss *amazed* Our Prince climbed without difficulty to the third level where his private chamber is located. Is that what you tell me? Well, well ...

Sturgiss finishes his own sherry and then refills the crystal glasses of both himself and Gilpin. The men salute each other with their glasses.

Gilpin Prince Powl scaling a wall that would make most men shudder ... Three storeys up he went!

Prince Powl lungeing with his dagger towards a huge boar that was merely stunned and might easily have gored him with its tusks at any moment ...

I began to ponder the imponderables ... What if this princely pusillanimous front is just that: a front. I have no earthly idea *why* he should do it ... But nevertheless – he does (apparently).

Sturgiss is arrested by this novel thought. Sturgiss moves his lips as if about to speak but cannot get the words out.

Gilpin Probably the best course of action (I'm sure you'll agree Mr Sturgiss) is to go on as before and to fall in with the scheme (whatever is the underlying cause for same).

Just a thought ...

Goodnight Sir!

Gilpin bows and quits the room. Sturgiss is really lost within this conundrum.

Scene: Interior.

The State Room at Castle Rondel, Bestrasia.

The aforementioned meeting with Count Onslow.

Attendees: Powl, Count Onslow, the secretary Gilpin Verdun, and Onslow's right-hand-man Sturgiss.

Powl (fidgety and stumbling over his words) feigns cowardice, fright, and self-loathing whereas Count Onslow tries for urbanity and charm. Sturgiss is as he always is: very masculine and very proud of his masculinity.

Three of the men stand about sipping sherry whereas the secretary attempts to remain discreetly in the background.

Suddenly, Count Onslow recalls a warning he must give to the King's nephew.

Count Onslow

Occupation! King Dimitri is **most** concerned that you fill your vacant hours with –

[Turns towards Gilpin Verdun]

Was he not referring to your Megandaal forebear, Mr Verdun? An admonition as to what might happen to a man in those far-flung ice realms (if he is not careful)?

Gilpin is not at all embarrassed nor incommoded by this reference to his ancestor. Gilpin bows, then addresses Powl.

Gilpin

My great, great-grandfather from Megandaal (Pehr Verdun) journeyed by ship to Cape Lloyd in 1897, Sir. We do not

discuss him in family circles these days as he was considered utterly insane.

However, Seine Majestät (being aware that Pehr Verdun shot himself some 4 years after landing at Cape Lloyd) cautions Eure Königliche Hoheit to constantly keep up your spirits and to not allow "cabin fever" to beset you. Sir.

Powl is very surprised by these revelations and warnings. He blinks rapidly. Gilpin bows.

Count Onslow *nods* King Dimitri is concerned that you occupy your time at Cape Lloyd ... Keep yourself focused on the work and do not veer off at a tangent. Evidently, he has been thinking of this crank from Megandaal.

[Turns to Sturgiss]

Didn't he imagine himself a Viking – wearing a horned helmet and growing a flowing beard which he plaited?

Sturgiss *laughs* That's right! And romped naked in the ice during high Summer! He is a warning to us all, Count.

Count Onslow *to Powl* There you are! You'll be able to dig-out this eccentric's memoirs and so on. That will give you a pleasant pastime ... You so enjoy your books and what have you.

But ...

Antarctica! Can it be possible that a crowned prince of Bestrasia will venture so far South?



We need to feel that Reckondotstate P/L are keen that Powl travel to Antarctica in relation to his work. We need to know that it is not just his royal connections which have inspired them to send him so far south.

Powl sits at a desk in the Reckondotstate P/L building, directly facing our camera.

Male *voice-off*

Dominic Lynier is down there now. Birds evolving before our very eyes (so to speak). You'll work famously with him: he has a title, too. Related to one of the Lore Ancient Squad on the teve. I can't think of a person that I'd rather have on the ground in 'Tartctica than yourself.



Powl *hesitant, stammering*

The wildlife there, Count Onslow. The British company that has taken me on as an intern, sir ... Well, sir ...

Count Onslow Yes, yes ... Reckondotstate Pty Ltd ... The so-impressive CEO (George Reckon) and I were up at Oxford together and he has nothing but the highest praise for you. That is something indeed!

Powl (pretending to be overcome with shyness) whispers a hardly-audible "thank you".

Count Onslow But to ship you off to Antarctica – I was stunned when Reckon asked for my thoughts.

Of course, King Dimitri has rubber-stamped you to go. Naturally. Does our poor country's credibility no end of good. So long as you don't freeze to death (on top of not going potty!)

Sturgiss At least the time of year is in your favour, Prince. When the good folk of Terra Incognito are bathing in the midnight sun (as now) we in Bestrasia are steeped in the dark of Winter. And vice versa.

Count Onslow But summer or not it will still be perishing cold.

[Chuckles]

And no naked romping, what?

[To Powl]

I've ordered all manner of thermal outfits for your royal person to take on this voyage. When do you leave?

Powl *faltering* I think ... I think ... Um ... Tomorrow evening I fly out from

Heathrow to Launceston. I think ...

Sturgiss As "Powl Bestern" my lord. Had to find Seine Königliche Hoheit a suitable surname for this venture. Apparently, they know him at Reckondotstate by that name. So that's what appears on his ticket.

Powl (wide-eyed) nods in agreement with Sturgiss.

Powl *pretending to flounder* And from Launceston to Cape Lloyd where ... where ...

Sturgiss At Cape Lloyd Seine Königliche Hoheit will be met by a contingent of UK and Australian scientists stationed there. All very well planned and organized. Credit to all parties involved.

Count Onslow *with decision* Yes, but that doesn't leave much time.

Count Onslow draws in a big breath. He has a grand announcement to make.

Count Onslow About this engagement of yours to the Lady Felicity.

All off, I'm afraid.

Powl (in his assumed character) gasps audibly. His eyes widen.

Sturgiss *silky smooth* You must understand that although Lady Felicity's name might have been bandied about as a prospective bride for Eure Königliche Hoheit, this plan has come to nothing. Instead, her esteemed father permits you to offer for his second daughter (the Lady Jessica) instead. We all trust that the change in personnel will not inconvenience you.

Powl *pretending shock* Off? But I –

Sturgiss pretends to be offensive. He strides forward to take up a position facing Powl. This is done with a pretence of great insult and self-importance. Powl merely blinks in response.

Sturgiss The Duke of Stevenage and I have been close friends since our youth. Thus, Seine Durchlaucht has confided in me. The Duke has emailed Seine Majestät the King to cry off. There is apparently a hitch. Something or other ... A previous betrothal perhaps. Something of that nature. However, in order to alleviate your disappointment, the Lady Felicity's sister Jessica is willing to take on the rôle. You will hardly notice the speed hump. Seamless!

Count Onslow *with decision* You haven't yet proposed to Lady Felicity – but this must be compassed before you go. I mean (of course) to her sister. We shall rush it through tomorrow just after luncheon then.

Powl *feigning obedience* Thank you, my dear Count for ... For ...
And Mr Sturgiss ... You have been solicitous as always.

Sturgiss gives a short bow, but does not smile.

Count Onslow
dismissive

That's alright. One girl proves just as good as another.
There can be no obstacle to this match.

Anyway, you'll pledge your troth tomorrow and the thing is done. So, while you muddle about at the South Pole, my staff and I will organize your nuptials on your return.



BACKGROUND:

The country to the East of Bestrasia is Megandaal.

On a secret mission, Powl will visit a derelict old castle in Megandaal (Castle Bailgravia). To ensure that he is undetected, Powl dons a disguise. He becomes Meganthon, riding a superb horse (Nedward) that is stabled by noted horseman Brayden.

We (the audience) become aware of Meganthon for the first time during the following speeches. Be warned that no-one has as yet associated Prince Powl with Meganthon. This explains Powl's obsession for portraying himself as a useless boy.

Powl and the secretary Gilpin have exited the room. Sturgiss maintains his apparent contempt for Powl.

Sturgiss *feigning disgust* Pshaw! That boy is a nincumpoop. George Reckon ought to be invested with Bestrasia's Cross of the Holy Sword for having to put up with that poultice on his staff. More of a gelding than a stallion, one would think.

Count Onslow Well George has nothing but high praise for the lad ...
But enough of him.
Now to more pressing matters.

Sturgiss Do you mean the buzzing fly that I am to swat?

Count Onslow More like a wasp. This "Meganthon" ... what is the story there?

Sturgiss *scornful* He is nothing. When my men discover him they will summarily remove him from our sphere. It is as good as donek, my dear Count!

Count Onslow *nods* Good! I simply can't abide this kind of hysterical nuisance.

Pages 34 -39

ADRIAN IN TASMANIA

Scene: Interior.

Aeroplane from Sydney to Hobart.

Adrian sits next to the window in the half-empty aeroplane which is flying from Sydney to Hobart. Adrian is mulling over the assertions of Percy Lock and the support that Percy is receiving from Uncle Dapto.

Adrian is making his way to Balmoral Beach.

[Note: Powl flies to Launceston in order to take the RAAF plane to Cape Lloyd, Antarctica. But for Adrian, the best route is to get to Hobart.]

IF IT IS DAYTIME IN AUSTRALIA, IT IS NIGHT IN BESTRASIA.

So it is daytime as Adrian flies southwards.

[Note the twin elements: the thick woodland of south-western Tasmania and the "medieval" forest of Bestrasia.]



Start of FLASHBACK

Scene: Interior/Exterior : REVISIT**Percy's anguish.**

A covered porch that belongs to a very run-down timber shack in the deep, dark bushland of south-western Tasmania.

There is a large table made of wood. It is covered in very old debris. We see the hand of an indigenous male (this is Percy) passing over the stuff, touching this and stroking that. We glance on the wall various photographs and sketchings of what looks like dogs.

Uncle Dapto *forceful*
voice-over

But you gotta remember: this old bro lives in the most isolated, darkest, gloomiest hole in all the world. It'd be like what they had in medieval Europe, eh ... Them scary forests where the sun never got through and all full of wolves and witches and that.

He doesn't have neighbours so he doesn't hear much news, he doesn't own a laptop or a television ... so outside stuff doesn't reach him. And there he sits (this old tribal elder) touching all the old stuff that he has collected over the years in the way that my people would collect bits and pieces ... and there he is ... thinking, thinking, thinking.

Bottom line: if he knows that this thing happened, then it happened, eh.

That's all I'm trying to say.



Adrian stares out of the window in the aeroplane. Then he reaches for the in-flight magazine in the back pocket of the seat in front of him. Adrian opens the magazine at the page where the map of Australia is illustrated. Some of the coast of Antarctica is also shown.

Music: weird, interesting. A mixture of orchestral with indigenous (sticks and didgeridoo).

Adrian pointing to map, speaking to himself in his mind

I'm running my finger across Australia from Adelaide to Perth, yeah?

That's 3 and a half hours flying. On the way to 2700 kilometres.

Now, if you imagined that they crossed sea instead of land to achieve that, then that's how far they travelled to go down South.

[Shakes head]

Can't be done. It's not feasible. Not possible.



Scene: Interior.

Adrian sits next to the pilot in the helicopter which is flying from Hobart to Balmoral Beach.

Adrian continues to mull over the assertions of Percy Lock and the support that Percy is receiving from Uncle Dapto.

Below the helicopter we see the thick woodland of south-western Tasmania.



Scene: Interior.

Arrival at Hobart airport prior to boarding the helicopter.

Adrian scurries across the tarmac in the company of an airport official. He is busy yacking on his mobile phone with Uncle Dapto.

Uncle Dapto *voice-over*

If the weather was just right and the wind was just right
and –

Adrian *scornful*

In canoes made out of bark? Come on!

Uncle Dapto *voice-over* Listen, Adrian old mate – some of the greatest achievements of the human race just blow your mind away.

Adrian I'm just about to jump onto the chopper. I'll be with you soon, mate and we can chew the fat.



Our camera in the helicopter focuses on Adrian looking very thoughtful. And then the camera focuses on the thick forest of Tasmania. This will segue beautifully into the following scene based in the dark forests of Europe.

IMPORTANT PLOT NOTE:

On page 13 Powl told Adrian (via mobile phone): Listen! What I need from you is the ability to hook up to the installation at Castle Bailgravia in Megandaal. That's an immediate requirement. I'll text you the co-ords.

Prior to leaving Bestrasia for his sojourn in Antarctica, Powl has some essential work to do -- specifically as relates to Castle Bailgravia, in Megandaal. This will be directly related to his "immediate requirement".

The activity to expedite this now follows.

Pages 40 - 43

BESTRASIA: THE POWER OF MEGANTHON

Jessica transforms into Arkie.

PLOT PROGRESSION:

Firstly, Jessica transforms herself into Arkie in the company of Brayden. Then she heads off. She is off to try and do some good (social conscience).

Secondly, Powl arrives and he transforms himself into Meganthon in the company of Brayden. Then he heads off with Brayden not far behind. We know where they are going: to the dungeon in Megandaal to set-up the trap for Count Onslow.

Thirdly, Jessica/Arkie will hear the horse (that Powl/Meganthon rides) and is instantly suspicious. Even more so when she spots Brayden on the quadbike. She follows the sound.

Fourthly, Jessica/Arkie will accidentally meet Powl/Meganthon and it goes from there

...

[FYI: Brayden will tidy the barn to remove all trace of this horse and to hide Powl's mountain bike and the quadbike. Later on, Brayden will be interviewed by Sturgiss's troops. He will be very friendly with them and they will leave none the wiser. However, we may not need this scene.]

BACKGROUND to Arkie:

Prince Powl is not the only character given to disguising himself.

Lady Jessica is so appalled at the ill-treatment meted-out to many of the citizens of Bestrasia that she is running a one-woman crisis team. She takes on the persona of

Arkie (a boy) such that she can right wrongs whenever possible without arousing suspicion.

Whereas Powl pretends to be an unassuming milksop, Jessica is (in appearance) a very shy young girl who will not go anywhere without a governess.

Scene: Interior.

Brayden's secret barn deep in the forest.

There is a tiny old rickety wooden barn deep in the woods.

In the dwindling twilight, Lady Jessica visits Brayden such that she can don her Arkie outfit. Inside the barn, it is very dark – almost impossible to make anything out.

Jessica looks at herself in a small mirror using all the light she can find – a single shaft of moonlight. As she speaks to Brayden, she twists and turns in order to see herself.

Brayden I'm fearful sorry that your sister has left you in the lurch,
My Lady.

Jessica We wept in each other's arms. Our tears blended together
on our cheeks. It's a bitter blow for me (of course) but her
happiness is assured and so I shall silence my complaints.

Brayden nods then looks about for inspiration. Jessica reaches out towards him.

Jessica *authoritative* My pistol, please. Cleaned and loaded I trust.

Brayden hands to Jessica a small silver pistol. She secures this to her costume.

Brayden Ma'am.

And now it's up to ***you*** to mend the fences by marritting His Royal Prince Powl.

Jessica *waspish* Who sounds like a poop. I like a man to be masculine, not a pusillanimous blob who whimpers at the merest misfortune. From what I hear, I'm more likely to become a nursemaid to him rather than his blushing bride.

Brayden clamps his mouth very hard shut.

Jessica *airily* Call me old-fashioned if you choose, Brayden. Call me a silly little miss. But I want my husband to lift me in his arms and kiss me as if the world were about to end.

[Sighs heavily.]

And I'm not likely to get that with the milksop Prince Powl.

Ah me ...

Brayden clamps his mouth shut even harder. Meanwhile, Jessica has failed in her efforts to make Arkie boyish.

Jessica *mutters* Blast this infernal bloody bosom of mine! Anybody could see at a glance that I am female. Oh! Why couldn't I have been somewhat more flat-chested like Felicity!

There's nothing else for it. I'll have to bind them up again.

Brayden – turn your back.

Brayden *whispers* But I can't see anything, Ladyship.

Jessica *firmly* Never-the-less!



We see Jessica/Arkie steal off (on foot) into the thick woods.

Brayden watches her leave. He shakes his head, muttering to himself.

Pages 44 - 52

BESTRASIA: THE POWER OF MEGANTHON

Powl transforms into Meganthon.

BACKGROUND to Meganthon:

Prince Powl disguises himself as Meganthon.

His intention is to break into a specific dungeon located at Castle Bailgravia unrecognized as Powl. There he will set-up for the later event: "Onslow Onslaught".

Powl/Meganthon rides a magnificent gelding (thus giving to Meganthon an action-hero feel).

Brayden follows on a quadbike in order to carry the equipment.

Here follow 5 action scenes with scat vocals and appropriate background music.

Scene: Exterior/Interior.

The dark woods near Castle Rondel.

Then into the Brayden's barn.

Powl rides a ubewt mountain bike to get to Brayden's barn. There is racy music here reminiscent of the MEGANTHON THEME.

The music dies off as Powl enters the barn to stow the bike. From an old oak chest he digs out his Meganthon disguise, assisted by Brayden.



A sturdy horse stands ready (this horse is named Nedward) – saddled in what appears to be a futuristic way. Brayden and Powl/Meganthon share a few brief words (which are inaudible to us, the audience). Brayden assists Powl/Meganthon to mount the horse, which fidgets about, snorting and reeving.

Powl/Meganthon rides off.

Brayden pulls a lever to reveal a fake wall. Behind the wall is a small all-terrain quadbike. This vehicle is almost silent. Brayden swings himself onto the quad bike, closes the fake wall and follows Powl/Meganthon as best he can.

Scene: Exterior.

Deep in the forest.

Jessica/Arkie hears the sound of the horse. She sees Brayden on the quadbike.

Open-mouthed she completely changes direction to follow Brayden in order to understand what is going on. We see the glint of her pistol in a shaft of moonlight.

Scene: Exterior.

Onslow's dungeon.

Music: the Meganthon theme.

We watch the gelding that Powl/Meganthon rides rear up – snorting and kicking out.

This terrifies 4 guards (Army) whom Count Onslow has detailed to guard the dungeon. They run away without looking back.

Scene: Interior.

Onslow's dungeon.

Music: upbeat.

We watch Powl/Meganthon and Brayden rushing about in Onslow's dungeon.

They attach small objects (transported to the dungeon with the quadbike) up high or down low.

They have a lot of work to do with wires and connections.

The two men might converse but it is all sotto voce and not heard by us (the audience).

Scene: Interior.

Onslow's dungeon.

Jessica/Arkie watches what is going on in the dungeon. She is unfazed at the presence of Brayden. However, she is obviously blown away at seeing Meganthon.

Jessica/Arkie tries to get a better view of the activity and in so doing she disturbs some stones and rocks. This noise alerts Powl/Meganthon and Brayden.

As Powl/Meganthon rushes to check the intruder, Jessica/Arkie runs away. She is set upon escaping Powl/Meganthon, even despite her pistol.

There follows a very exciting chase scene in the gloom of night. Powl/Meganthon rides Nedward through the forest whilst Jessica/Arkie scampers about on foot.

Jessica/Arkie *anxious* Oh no! No, no, no, no! He mustn't catch me!

We briefly return to Brayden, still in the dungeon. His warning to Powl/Meganthon is not heard as Powl/Meganthon has already torn off in pursuit of her.

Brayden Don't be worrit about her, Young Master. That there is Missy Jessy – your future wife, God willing.

 She's got some dashed bee in her bonnet there, Eure Hoheit, sir.

Scene: Exterior.

The thick forest surrounding Castle Bailgravia.

Our camera returns to the chase.

Music: the Meganthon theme.

Jessica/Arkie runs this way and that, scampering along in the vain hope of outrunning man-and-horse. Recall that she is not aware that this Meganthon person is in fact Prince Powl.

Powl/Meganthon exhibits his excellent equestrian skills taking Nedward along any path that Jessica/Arkie takes.

Now he has her!

Powl/Meganthon scoops Jessica/Arkie up using only one arm and (with Jessica/Arkie pinned to his side) Powl/Meganthon still rides hell for leather.

Then Nedward is instructed to whoa. Jessica/Arkie struggles to no avail.

Deftly, Powl/Meganthon leaps from the saddle with Jessica/Arkie in his firm grasp.

Nedward (well-behaved) is permitted to graze unleashed.

Powl/Meganthon pushes Jessica/Arkie up against a tree in a shaft of moonlight.

Powl/Meganthon What were you doing, you ass? Were you attempting to rob
threatening me?

Her pistol falls to the ground. Powl/Meganthon kicks it away.

Jessica/Arkie tries for a deeper voice when she pretends to be male.

Jessica/Arkie Sir! Let go of me! My business is no concern of yours.
struggling

Powl/Meganthon You've the sweetheart face of a pretty girl. You're going to
have to work very hard to prove yourself, man.

What is your name?

Jessica/Arkie *defiant* And what is ***your*** name? You! Who dare to meddle with me
and my doings!

Powl/Meganthon is very menacing.

Powl/Meganthon I am Meganthon. A man not to be underestimated. A man
not to trust.

It immediately becomes evident that Jessica/Arkie knows of Meganthon by

reputation. She looks taken aback, nervous. Her mouth makes a little "Oh".

Powl/Meganthon *nods* Oh yes! My fame goes before me.

wisely

No! Your eyes give you away.

You will tell me your name, my good fellow, or I shall slap you about with the full force of my hand. Come on! Be quick! Meganthon is not famous for his patience.

Jessica now drops any pretence to be Arkie. She is about to crumple into tears.

This Meganthon has pressed his lips tight together and means business.

Powl/Meganthon places his hand on the girl's chest.

Powl/Meganthon *with* You are so puny, man! No muscle at all.

derision

Powl/Meganthon raises his hand purposefully as if about to deal a crushing blow.

Jessica *weeping*

I'm called Arkie. That is my name.

[Suddenly terrified.]

Don't strike me, please! I'll get into so much trouble at home if I come back bruised and beaten.

It will cause the most appalling scandal.

Powl is shocked, stunned and appalled on realizing that "Arkie" is in fact a girl. He steps back from the weeping girl.

Then Powl sighs and relaxes. His tone changes. He is no longer Meganthon. Powl removes the mask.

Sorry for the distress he has caused, Powl gently takes the girl in his arms to comfort her. Unable to resist, Powl carefully kisses Jessica's neck.

When she is quiet, Powl lets her go.

Powl My dear, what is your real name – your female name?

Jessica *reluctant* I am the Lady Jessica, Sir. I am the second daughter of the 9th Duke of Stevennage. And I'm to meet my future fiancé tomorrow. A betrothal to the Prince – a pledge of love! And this to a man I do not know and cannot love. It's quite Gothic!

Powl *surprised but pleased* The beautiful Lady Jessica indeed! Well, well ...
So popular report is for once correct: you are to be the future Princess of Bestrasia.

Jessica Oh yes! I pushed myself forward for the rôle when my sister fell in love with someone else. As far as I was concerned, being a princess would serve my purpose more than admirably. I veritably jumped at the chance.

Powl How so?

Jessica Count Onslow – do you know of him? He and his minions are wreaking havoc with the middling businesses of Bestrasia. They leave the poor people alone (the

impoverished, that is) because they are poor and therefore beneath their notice. However, using corrupt tactics, Onslow finds honest businessmen and cruels everything for them until they pay out exorbitant funds to him. Protection money: is that what it's called?

Well, it's a nice little earner for the Count. Or would be if I wasn't in the picture trying to keep him as honest as possible.

Powl *thoughtful* And as a princess ... ?

Jessica Who knows what I could achieve!

Powl Still playing the part of this "Arkie" fellow?

Jessica *nods* Naturally! I'll be able to continue with the deception with even more success.

Powl And the Prince you will marry? Might he not become suspicious?

Jessica That's the thing. I'm told he is a very timid, lacklustre sort of bloke, too scared to ride out on his dulcet mare without having a groom in attendance. Nothing like you. Nothing like your heroic style.

Powl *blushes* Ah. Thank you.

Jessica *enthusiastic* Snatching me up to your side in full flight. He'd never do that. My heart is all a-flutter, I can tell you.

Besides ... As Lady Jessica I'm known to be very shy and unassuming. No, the drippy Prince will be none the wiser about me.

Powl wanders about, thinking hard. Jessica watches him.

Then Powl walks up to Jessica, taking her hands.

Powl I'll make a deal with you. I'll help you all I can. But in return you are to promise me that –

Powl is unsure how to proceed.

Jessica That what ... ?

Powl *hesitant* For my benefit you will school your features such that when you see me tomorrow you will pretend not to recognize me. That you will –

Jessica looks up at him in wonderment. Powl pulls her into his arms to kiss her. Then he pulls away.

Jessica Am I to see you tomorrow? I don't understand.

[Joyful thought]

Oh! You will ride into the midst of the throng and haul me up into your arms and ride off with me, leaving the drippy prince in tears?

Powl *smiling* I'll certainly haul you into my arms, but not mounted on a horse. Er ... You see ... um ... Well, ***I'm*** the drippy prince!

Pages 53 – 57

BESTRASIA: THE POWER OF MEGANTHON

Sturgiss hunts for Meganthon.

Scene: Interior.

The bedroom of Prince Powl at Castle Rondel.

The result of Meganthon frightening the guards is that Sturgiss has been tasked with discovering the malefactor's current whereabouts.

Sturgiss bursts into Powl's darkened bedroom at the Castle. Sturgiss carries a sturdy storm lamp. He waves this about in an attempt to see in the darkness.

Powl pretends to awaken and reacts to the intrusion with screaming, weeping and terror.

Sturgiss sneers.

Sturgiss *charming*

I apologize profusely, Eure Königliche Hoheit. It appeared that a malefactor had escaped His Majesty's guards and might well have clambered up the castle wall and into this room.

Powl *appalled,
terrified, weeping*

No! No! Don't let him escape! Oh my dear Sturgiss – I am utterly depending on you to clap this villain into irons. Do not let him murder me!

Powl buries himself under the bedclothes, shaking uncontrollably. Sturgiss studies the quivering lump in the bed as if it were a *rara avis*. What Sturgiss does not realize is that during all this hubbub (and whilst concealed under the bedclothes) Powl is able to change into his pyjamas.

Sturgiss Sire! There is no call for this show of fear. Trust me: I shall not allow the rascal to harm your royal person. Besides I might well have been mistaken.

It appears that Powl cannot be calmed. His head and shoulders and one arm appear out of the bed. By now, Clement has roused himself and presents himself in Powl's bedroom.

Powl *shrieks and points* You must search my room! He could be taking shelter here. Hiding amongst my things – Oh God!

 The wardrobe! Under the bed! Stalking me from behind the curtains, perhaps! Oh God! Save me!

Again, Powl dives under the bedclothes with attendant shrieking and terror.

Clement What is going on? Has His Royal Highness taken ill?

Sturgiss *with contempt* The prince is being tiresome. All I need is to have my men search this room ...

Powl *muffled* And I want that too! Search, search and then drag the

miscreant out into the courtyard. Flog him to within an inch of his life.

Sturgiss cannot hide his contempt. He sneers then bows, quickly leaving the bedroom.

Sturgiss *at the doorway* Your wish is my command, your Highness.

Sturgiss ushers 4 soldiers into the bedroom. They sweep about in the gloom with their torches.

Soldier All clear, Mr Sturgiss.

Sturgiss nods. Sturgiss gives the lump in the bed which is Powl another contemptuous look. Then Sturgiss nods towards Clement.

Sturgiss Get the young prince a brandy to settle his nerves. You'd better sleep in this room tonight to reassure him.

Clement bows.

Clement I shall do just that, Mr Sturgiss, sir.

**Scene: Exterior**

Sturgiss wanders along in the cold dark night. He is within the confines of the Castle Rondel gardens. In fact, he approaches the spot where we first saw Powl hiding from the Castle guard. He looks up. In the background, guards rush from place to place, calling to each other as they do so. It is evident that they still seek the unknown interloper.

Then Sturgiss bends, fishing something out of the bushes. There is enough light for Sturgiss to see that this is a costume mask.

Sturgiss frowns. He looks up again. Now his grim frown becomes an unwilling smile.

Sturgiss to himself

Well, well ...

Young Master Verdun was 100% correct (as usual). Not such a lily-liver after all ...

And you won't need your Meganthon kit in the Southern Ocean so I'll just hang onto this ...

Sturgiss pockets the mask and marches off in a determined fashion.

Pages 57 - 61

EXTINCTION IS WHAT YOU MAKE OF IT
South Western Tasmania
Percy, Uncle Dapto & Adrian.

Scene: Interior/Exterior.

Percy's anguish.

Percy's covered porch that belongs to his very run-down timber shack in the deep, dark bushland of south-western Tasmania.

Adrian, Uncle Dapto and Percy stand about at the large table made of wood which is covered in very old debris.

Uncle Dapto spots the various photographs and sketches of what looks like dogs on the wall.



Uncle Dapto Ah lagunta! Who drew these?

Percy I done them.

Uncle Dapto Well, they're bloody good, bro.

Adrian sidles up, interested.

Uncle Dapto *being* See how the tail is rigid? They hold it out straight like that
instructive when they trot. It's part of the body (the tail I mean) you
know – just like a roo, eh. Can't wag their tail. That's a fact.

Adrian *puzzled* What? What are they?

Uncle Dapto *to Percy* You get a few around here, do ya?

Percy *unimpressed* Yep. Couple of breeding jills that I know of. Take youse

blokes out and show you where they lurk. Can't promise ya nothin' ... Very shy they are ... But worth a try ...

Uncle Dapto notices how confused Adrian is.

Uncle Dapto *to Adrian* "Jill" means the female. The doe. Solitary. You don't get breeding pairs like you would with dogs.

Adrian *urgent* What are you and Percy talking about? They're not Tasmanian Devils are they?

Uncle Dapto *laughs* No mate! Right state, wrong species.

Percy *smirk* You city blokes call 'em "tigers".

Adrian is enthralled by the photographs and the sketches.

Adrian *astounded* Jesus! Thylacines! But they look like dogs – except for the tail.

Uncle Dapto Yeah and they're marsupial, eh. Mum lagunta has a pouch with a joey in it just like kangaroos and wallabies. So she never gets bitchy.

Uncle Dapto giggles at his own joke. Percy smiles.

Adrian *whips round* But they're extinct! Everyone knows that.

Percy *shrugs* Well, the white man says they're extinct so that must be so.

Right? But the blackfella when he sees the lagunta trotting through the bush ... He knows better.

Uncle Dapto Why don't we flex off and have a look? Might be fun. I mean since the Antarctica thingo has died in the arse, hasn't it?

Adrian But it hasn't died. I just want to toss it around amongst some guys who know this stuff.

Percy *wags finger* Make sure that my people get a guernsey in them discussions, won't ya mate.

Adrian Sure! Sure! Absolutely.

Scene: Exterior.

Dark, thick bushland in south-western Tasmania.

The 3 men wander about in the thick Tasmanian bush. It is very heavy going: difficult and unforgiving.

Percy holds up his hand. As the 3 men watch, a Thylacine trots through the bush not 2 metres from where they stand. Unafraid, it drinks water from a puddle that has formed there, then trots off.

Uncle Dapto Did ya hear the birds, eh?

Adrian No ...

Uncle Dapto *nods* Every single bird in this wild, thick bush knows that the lagunta is out and about, eh. They call to each other telling themselves to be careful.

Percy Hey, Sydney ... I'm serious about the Antarctica thing. You

won't forget, eh?

Uncle Dapto 'Course 'e won't forget!

Adrian Can I ask you a question, Percy?

Percy *nods* Yeah. Go on.

Adrian Uncle Dapto told me that your Dad told you about the 24 bark canoes when you were just a little tacker. And now you're in your 70's.

My question is: why all of a sudden is it so important for you to get the legend, the myth confirmed?

Percy My spirit inside me – it won't let me rest. Over the past few days I been achin' in me belly 'bout it.

See ... there's a bloke from up North goin' South and he's gonna sort it all out. That's what my spirit keeps tellin' me.

I gotta help this bloke (whoever 'e is) find the – what'dya call it?

Uncle Dapto Province.

Adrian Provenance. Right.

And – "up North" – does that mean Queensland?

Long pause while Percy mulls it over in his mind.

Percy *shrugs* Dunno. But you're on the right tram ... Somethin' to do with royalty, I reckon, eh.

Pages 62 – 65

BESTRASIA: STURGISS – HIS POWER BASE

Scene: Interior.

The Grand Assembly Room at Castle Rondel.

The character of Sturgiss needs to be drawn out, now that he has been alerted to Prince Powl's play-acting.

Lady Jessica is mooted to become engaged to Prince Powl at this soiree. Lady Jessica is the daughter of the Duke and Duchess of Stevenage. The Duke is Terry Bruckette. It is wife (Jessica's mother) who now takes centre stage.

Sturgiss and the Duke were in the military together and have remained close friends. They both came originally from Megandaal.

Sturgiss wanders up to stand beside the Duchess. She (and others) gaze at stuffed wildlife (mainly birds) displayed in elegant glass mountings.

Sturgiss <i>careful</i>	Your Ladyship ... May I speak with you?
Duchess <i>welcoming</i>	Ernst! Of course. you and I may discuss anything you choose.
Sturgiss	You know that I am a bare-bones sort of man. I do not ladle sticky sugar syrup on top of any delicate subject.
Duchess <i>taken aback</i>	Goodness! What has happened?
Sturgiss	How well do any of us know this young Prince who is (in all

probability) to wed your daughter? I am beginning to fear that I may have misjudged him.

Duchess *thinking* I have always found him a gentle, sweet-tempered boy. Do you not find him so?

Sturgiss Your Grace ... It may be that I am ... Let me be clear! You are quite correct in your reading of his character. A very fine, correct yet shy young gentleman is Prince Powl.

However, just lately I have noticed a tendency in him to almost "ham".

Duchess *shocked* What? What do you mean?

Sturgiss In brief, I believe that he is putting on this persona of being a hopeless ninny whereas in fact he may be everything that is noble and warrior-like ... His chest, shoulders and arms have thickened. He has developed power (judging by the play of his sinews). I noticed it last evening as he acted the coward in his bed.

Duchess *confused* But what would be the point of his concealing his bravery (if that is what he does)?

Sturgiss *grimly* He suspects someone (someone who serves King Dimitri) of working against the best interests of the Realm. Having shut me out of the secret proceedings, this "someone" has likewise piqued my own doubts.

But excuse me!

Sturgiss bows and absents himself as King Dimitri approaches the Duchess.

King Dimitri *to the Duchess* Please allow me to join you. I am faultless to a T when tact and diplomacy are bandied about, but Dame Ernestina is fast finding my limits.

Duchess Dame Ernestina whitters on and on – her elder son – he and his cronies hunt snipe in Megandaal. She never shuts up about it.

[Very tart.]

And she should rather find a decent dietician.

King *chuckles* Oooooo! Catty!

Gestures to the bird displays.

Duchess We need a bird expert –

King *looks about* And that would be my nephew, the Prince.

He is up on all this avian business. Where might he be?

Duchess *smiles* About to become engaged to my daughter, Your Majesty.

Pages 65 – 68

BESTRASIA: A BETROTHAL

Prince Powl offers his hand to Lady Jessica.

In the master sitting room (Castle Rondel) we find Jessica and her mother seated on a superb couch. The Duke (Jessica's father) stands about.

They are all dressed in their regalia. Many medals and awards glitter on the Duke's

chest. His Duchess sparkles with diamonds.

Jessica is dressed prettily but tastefully. Her jewellery is of the highest order, but restrained. Her breasts are disported as modestly as possible.

The door opens. 2 footmen stand to attention as King Dimitri saunters into the room, wreathed in smiles. The King is followed by Prince Powl and then Count Onslow. The 2 ladies stand in order to curtsy. The Duke bows. The King, Prince and Count are all resplendent in their regalia.

The ladies sit again. Jessica does not look at Powl for fear of saying or doing something inappropriate (remembering that this man is Meganthon). Powl keeps his gaze fixed on the Duke who nods to Powl.

Without further prompting, Powl stands before Jessica. He goes down on one knee, holding out a stunning emerald engagement ring in his fingers. Still maintaining his cowardly-custard persona, Powl nevertheless wishes to get through this ordeal as smoothly as possible.

Powl Lady Jessica. I offer myself to you in all humility. It would truly be my greatest honour, my dearest wish to become your affianced husband. I mean to love you and care for you for all my days.

Will you marry me?

Jessica Eure Königliche Hoheit, I am touched by your words and find that my affection for you grows. It would make me very happy and proud to accept your kind proposal of marriage.

Powl May I place this ring of engagement on your finger?

Jessica Yes. That would be lovely. Thank you!

Powl leans forward, taking Jessica's hand. The ring slips onto her finger easily. He squeezes her hand then stands. Powl reaches down to take one of Jessica's hands.

Powl May I kiss your cheek, my dear Jessica?

Jessica *nods* Of course.

As Powl bends down to give Jessica a chaste kiss on her cheek, he whispers "You look stunning!" and then he stands. Jessica looks at the floor, her cheeks suffused in blushes.

The Duchess dabs at her eyes with a handkerchief before hugging Jessica. The Duke gives his daughter a small hug. Handshakes and congratulations for Powl abound.

Then more footmen appear with flutes of champagne. The King proposes the toast to the happy couple and the business of the engagement is at an end.



Later the engaged couple stroll through the garden.

Hidden by a curtain, the Duke and Duchess look pleased to see Powl kiss

Jessica in a very meaningful fashion.

Duchess *wreathed in smiles* Oh, Terry – my dear! I am full of joy. They will be so happy!

Duke Quite.

When Ernst was chatting to you in there, did he mention to you anything of interest?

Duchess *nods* Yes. He did.

Duke Regarding the immediate coterie pertaining to His Majesty?

Duchess *nods* Mmmmmm ... Correct again (if I understood him right).

Duke Brayden and I were chatting t'other day. One of my mounts is developing a hoof abscess. Off fore. And Brayden is treating it.

Duchess *patient* Yes? And?

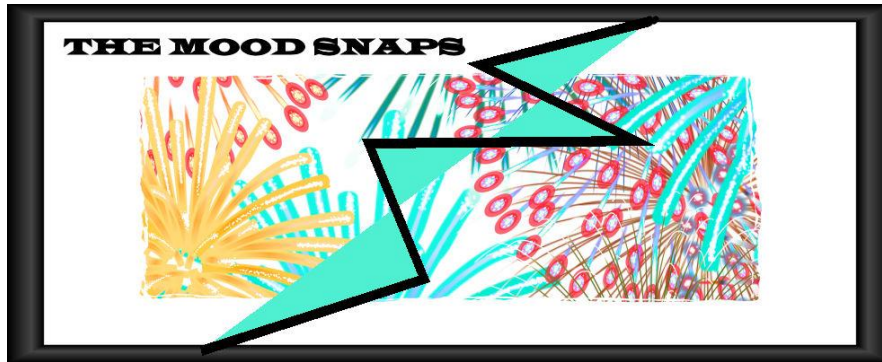
Duke Brayden believes that there is something amiss with Onslow. Not something that he can treat with his lotions, mind.

No, the so-dear Count is not behaving as he should.

Did Ernst tip you off on that score?

Duchess Well ... I think that perhaps he did ... Although (as is his custom) he went about it in a very side-along way.

The Duke nods.



PLOT PROGRESSION:

We are leaving the sophistication of the Bestrasian court to hurl ourselves (head first) into the unbelievable naked glory of Antarctica.

I want the contrast to be shattering and exhilarating.

Pages 68 - 78

EVERYTHING IS WHITE IN ANTARCTICA

Cape Lloyd Station

The coast of Antarctica, directly south of Australia.

SCENE: Exterior.

The "Antarctica: Who Knew?" theme music belts out here. I want it to crash into the movie – unexpected and charged with glory.

I want this to be thrilling, stunning, bold and marvellous.

This scene will work as if it is a tribute to the raw beauty of Antarctica.



It is summertime. It is daylight. The sunshine is blinding. And all this with the spellbinding "Antarctica: Who Knew?" theme music urging us along.

We must have gigantic icebergs. We hear the groaning.

We must see whales breaching. We hear the splashing.

We must have penguins skudding down an icy slope then plunging into the sea. Hopefully the music will be composed in such a way that this penguin section will appear to be choreographed.

We must have birds which visit Antarctica in summer much in evidence; along with their noise.

I want to glimpse a sea lion colony (lots of sound here!) with attendant schools of fish.



Recall that it is stated above that Reckondotstate P/L is sending Powl to Antarctica to study the biota there.

SCENE: Interior.

Location: the laboratory which has been assigned to Powl.

Leone is getting this room ready. Professor Leone Dolmey-Heron is the ex-wife of Viv Dolmey whom we met in movie #1; Viv is at the helm of Lore Ancient Squad.

BE ADVISED that we shall later learn that Leone and Viv have a son (now 26 years old): Degas Dolmey. He lives with Viv's sister Elaine in Shinty, Victoria, Australia.



Note that there are all sorts of unrelated bits of paper stuck to various parts of the room. However there are 2 prominent objects: a coloured map of Gondwana and a

large Reckondotstate P/L sign.



I'm guessing that space will be an issue. So it is a very small unit. Powl will kip on a rough camp bed situated in a corner of this laboratory. He will live out of his luggage bags.

Evidently, Cape Lloyd station puts out the welcome mat for Powl.

Leone is sorting out a workstation for Powl (without any PC or laptop in sight).

Our A.W.K. theme music fades out as Leone speaks to some man who is out of sight.

Leone *sour*

This new spud won't expect us to roll out the red carpet, will he?

Male *voice-off*

The "spud" is a prince of some forgettable European country.

Leone

Yes, and if he thinks I'm curtsying to him, he can go and do the other thing.

[Looks about]

Do you happen to know if he's bringing his own computing apparatus?

Male *voice-off*

Yep. Reckondotstate fixed that up for him. His own land of Gothic castles, snowy peaks and dark, forbidding forests is probably still muddling along with mainframes and dot matrix printers.

Leone *not happy*

I hope that the Reckondotstate peeps have trained this prune – I won't have time to look over his shoulder and explain how and when to press the "Enter" key!

Male *voice-off,*
laughing

Hey! Leone! Be sure to check if his royal castle back home has its own dungeon or two ...

Scene: Interior.

Launceston Airport.

This is all bustle and noise, as is usual in an airport. We see Powl walk into the airport building with other passengers. We see him look about. Then he heads purposefully to a desk marked "International Arrivals". From a distance we see Powl chatting over the desk to an official. Another uniformed official (smiling and welcoming) walks up, shakes Powl's hand, then leads him off in another direction.



Scene: Interior/Exterior.**Percy's anguish.**

Once again, our camera is on the covered porch that belongs to Percy's very run-down timber shack in the deep, dark bushland of south-western Tasmania.

There is a large table made of wood. It is covered in very old debris. We see Percy's hand passing over the stuff, touching this and stroking that.

Percy moans as he rubs his hands over his face. He is upset. His spirit seems to sense that the stranger from the North has arrived in Tasmania.

The emotion is getting stronger for Percy.

He sees a short flashback from our bark canoe journey of 500 AD.

**FLASHBACK OF FILM CLIP #3****THE PERILOUS VOYAGE SOUTH OF THE 24 BARK CANOES (around 500 AD)**

The men spear fish directly from the bark canoes as the fish approach them. The fish are eaten raw.



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Scene: Interior.

The seating area of an RAAF Airbus A319-115LR.

Powl is the sole passenger. He wears the full RAAF safety outfit, as do the other 2 men (flying crew).

Captain Good morning, Mr Bestern. I'm your flight captain Matt Tenterfield welcoming you aboard. My companion is flight lieutenant Roger Arnott.

[Here Roger gives a friendly wave.]

We're flying to Cape Lloyd Station in what we affectionately call "Snow Queen" – our Australian Air Force (RAAF) Airbus A319-115LR. I'm often asked why we need such a huge ship to transport so few passengers – and the only possible answer is fuel requirements.

Captain moves about checking this and that in the manner of staff on an aircraft.

Powl Tell me ... Will I see icebergs and so on – if I look out of my window?

Captain *still checking* My word yes! Some of the bergs are stunning. And bigger than New York City, I understand.

Powl *impressed* Whew! So, at a rough guess, my company is paying an arm and a leg for this flight.

Captain I'd say so.

[More professional.]

You're wearing all your safety gear ... that's good ... You were taken through the safety demo and safety film back in Launceston, yeah?

Powl *smiles*

Yes, I'm all drilled-up. Ask me anything!

Captain

Okay. We could be in the air for 4 to 5 hours. Then we'll make a very safe, soft landing on Cape Lloyd's blue ice runway. Smooth as silk.

We don't run to an air crew of stewards and such – you'll have to serve yourself food and drinks from that little fridge there in the corner. It's all complementary (no limit) so live it up!

Please feel free to get up and walk about once I've removed the safety-belt sign. If we strike any turbulence, you'll hear a moderate alarm sound and the seat-belt sign will flash. Then you are required to belt up.

The washroom facilities are at the rear of the craft.

And once again, it's a huge honour to have you on board, Sir. See you in Cape Lloyd.

Powl gives a cute little one-finger salute.

Scene: Exterior.

The RAAF Airbus is landing in the brilliant, dazzling sunshine of Antarctica.

**Scene: Interior/Exterior.****Percy's anguish.**

Once again, our camera is on the covered porch that belongs to Percy's very run-down timber shack in the deep, dark bushland of south-western Tasmania.

There is a large table made of wood. It is covered in very old debris. We see Percy's hand passing over the stuff, touching this and stroking that.

Percy groans as he holds his stomach. He is extremely upset. His spirit seems to sense that the stranger from the North has landed at Cape Lloyd.

The emotion is getting even stronger for Percy.

He sees another short flashback from our bark canoe journey of 500 AD.

**FLASHBACK OF FILM CLIP #4**

THE LANDING OF 15 BARK CANOES (around 500 AD)

Some aboriginals stand on the rocks (it is summertime in Antarctica) near what would become Cape Lloyd.

They marvel at the ice sculptures.

Several fires are lit. Aurora Australis is commanding (almost overbearing) as the flames of the fires lick the cold air. The sun sits on the horizon.

By the warmth of one fire, one man (larger than the rest) uses a sharp piece of chert to inscribe a tally board.



Percy sprints as fast as he can off the porch, finds some nearby vegetation and vomits loudly. When he looks up (wiping his mouth with his hand) a thylacine stands very close, watching him warily.

Percy stares at the marsupial, which turns and promptly trots back into the bush.



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Pages 79 - 100

EVERYTHING IS WHITE IN ANTARCTICA
Cape Lloyd Station
The RAAF Airbus has touched down.

SCENE: Interior.

A large, solid Stratco shed at Cape Lloyd Station.

The fact that Powl arrives and is introduced to everyone and is shown around happens without our camera getting involved. Take that as read.

I'd rather spend that time sending our camera on a quick tour.

In the large, solid Stratco shed there is an indoor swimming pool containing a few injured or sick sea lions.

We start our tour as Dominic chucks some fish from a bucket into the sea lion pool. Then he marches off.

Dominic is studying birds which frequent Antarctica in the summer. Our camera follows him through to the galley. On the way, we will see the clutter which has grown over the years at the Station. All kinds of driftwood and non-human skeletons have been squeezed into the tiniest of spaces. The passageways require the inmates to shuffle along sideways.

BE ADVISED: later Powl will be sent by Leone to the storeroom. This is in fact a backroom of the Stratco shed which contains the pool.

Background:

"Evolution on the March: Camouflage in Birds – Ventral Plumage."

Many years previously, Dominic had noted an evolutionary trend: that is, more and more birds (waterfowl and such like) were developing pale (even white) feathers on their stomachs. It had long been held among ornithologists that a dark upper side along with a white under side gave a sea-going fisher a flat, almost invisible profile (as seen by the fish on the look-out for attack which would come from above as they swim below the water surface).

Dominic's critics pointed out that there were birds beyond number which fished whilst resplendent in dark colours. There was some other reason for the ventral white plane: thermal insulation or sexual display.

This raging argument is played out more fully in movie #3.

Further, Dominic's arch-enemy Eric Conway talks often of his time in Australia. Renowned bird-watcher Huck Trevalyan took Eric to Coal and Candle Creek in NSW to witness a phenomenon. A large flock of small cormorants paddled about at close-range in a circular motion. Without warning all the birds ducked under the water in a synchronized movement. They were herding the fish by working as a team. This indicated to Eric that the evolutionary aspect of this order (Anseriformes) was not that they were developing white coloration but that they were getting smarter at hunting.

Huck went on to describe three butcherbirds in a naked tree. They synchronized a song-and-wing-dance such that they appeared to have been choreographed. But how each of these 3 birds knew when to start or stop is a mystery as no sounds were emitted other than the song.

Black swans: white wing feathers for signalling during flight.

Scene: Interior.

Dominic, Leone and Powl are eating in the very small galley.

Dominic Did I hear you correctly? Your fiancée is the Lady Jessica Bruckette?

Powl *smiles* That's right. Consider myself the luckiest man in the world.

They shake hands.

Dominic That's incredible! I mean, her father (Terry Bruckette, 9th Duke of Stevenage) taught my brother Felix and I to play cricket.

Well ... As we already played cricket it's better to say that he honed our skills. I would have been about 13 and Felix 15. Wonderful bloke! Tremendous bowler: he bowled spin and leg-break.

How amazing that he'll become your father-in-law.

Leone *to Powl* Have you ever caught up with a TV show "Lore Ancient Squad"?

Powl *nods* Yes. We get that in Bestrasia. Quite a favourite.

Leone Well, here's something for your *the-world-is-getting-smaller* file. Felix Lynier (Dom's brother) is the Felix on that show. And my ex-husband Viv is the head man on same: Viv Dolmey. I say that we're divorced but still best of friends.

Powl *amazed* That's – Wow!

I understand that they trooped out to Australia for what turned out to be a ghastly clash with the authorities.

Dominic *snorts* Ancient Romans in Sydney! As if!

The 3 inmates of the Station continue to eat and drink tea from tin mugs.

Dominic *thoughtful* And now (Adrian tells me) we have a Tasmanian chap claiming that his ancestors discovered Antarctica long before the Polynesian explorer Ui-te-Rangiora.

My God! People will never cease to amaze me.

Leone *scornful* A few bark canoes braving the Great Southern Ocean. And the arrival point was apparently not far from where we are at Cape Lloyd. Not bloody likely!

Dominic *emphatic* You've seen the violence of the ocean in these parts. You've noticed the extremely difficult and treacherous terrain ... And we're supposed to fall for the yarn that these native explorers landed here. Oh, for God's sake!

Dominic leaves the table in a huge huff. Powl and Leone watch him stalk off.

Powl Mr Lynier seems to have trouble with his temper. Am I right?

Leone nods vigorously.

Leone *confidential* Dom is in the middle of the most visceral public brawl with

another bird fancier (Eric Conway). They disagree on just about every point regarding the evolution of birds. Hate each other's guts. Eric's not up to Dom's weight so he'll be thrilled to learn that Dom is nestled away at Cape Lloyd Station (out of harm's way so to speak).

As Leone wanders off, Powl (head to the side) watches Dominic (who stands under shelter but still able to look up at the sky. Powl stands beside Dominic.

Dominic Sorry for my outburst.

Powl Of course, you've realized that Reckondotstate did not send me here on a whim.

If you tell me yours, I'll tell you mine.

Dominic seems to understand Powl's cryptic words.

Dominic You go first.

Powl My intention is to bring down the person who thinks that he runs my country. The King is "Auctoritas" whereas the enemy is "Potestatis".

Dominic looks a question.

Powl My uncle is king. It is his right-hand man (with the Army at

his hip) that I have in my sights. I shall be here in Antarctica pressing keys on a laptop. All being well, strategic events will unfold. Thereby, I shall destroy him.

[Very nasty tone.]

He will be a witless wreck when I'm done with him ...

Dominic appears impressed. He shifts about.

Dominic Well good luck with that.

Powl Thank you.

Your turn.

Dominic When you hear: "Survival of the fittest", think: "Survival of the **alive** and fittest".

Animals die of old age. I'm not concerned about that. But animals that die in the prime of life – they starved to death, or were taken by predators or caught some disease ...

Slight pause to observe the birds.

Dominic Building resistance to disease and being able to outrun predators (or hide from them) ... that's an evolutionary given.

However, evolution provides a means to find food. Better eyesight, better olfactory mechanisms ... but even more

important, being able to approach your prey with stealth.

Slight pause to observe the birds.

Dominic Australian sea creatures look skyward from under the water and are unable to see the huge form of the white-bellied sea-eagle hovering above due to countershading. Conversely (from overhead) the nest-bound hatchlings are dark. Nest predators cannot make out what (if anything) is in the sea-eagle's nest. Yet from below, the adult sea-eagle is all but invisible due to the blinding light that is probably (to them) only the sun shining.

Slight pause to observe the birds.

Dominic It's over 10 years now ... My research assistants continue to study a population of *Haliaeetus leucogaster* in New South Wales. Over 200 sunny days per year. Our data positively shrieks "survival of the fittest". And it's all down to the colouration of the ventral plumage – that is, being white.

Slight pause to observe the birds.

Dominic Pelicans, penguins, herons – in fact, all the usual coastal birds (gulls, albatross and so on), some cormorants, many songbirds, the hoatzin is trending that way, some members

of the genus tauraco ...

Leone wanders up. She and Dominic watch the birds.

Something causes Powl to start. All of a sudden Powl remembers the task that he was required to perform whilst in Antarctica. He has started perceptibly.

Powl Oh! I've been very remiss.
I'm supposed to have rifled through the keepsakes of one of the early inmates here: Pehr Verdun. He shot himself at this base in early December 1901.

Dominic *frowns* I do beg your pardon, Prince – you allow the words “shot himself” to roll off your tongue as if they were yesterday’s sunshine.

Leone and Powl stare at Dominic.

Powl *diplomatic to the core* I apologise profusely, Dominic. I really am devastated to have been so maladroit. Please forgive my coldness.

Dominic *shrugs* Death is human. No – it’s for all animals – not just us humans.
Death. Part of life is death.
White doves, friends and relations weeping, wreathes, black clothing, ...

Leone *careful* I believe that Powl was just trying to --

Dominic *angry*

But *felo de se* ... It appals me! Not here! Not Antarctica!

[Quite worked up.]

We come to the most superb, clean, shining, beautiful continent. The scale and magnitude of Antarctica is totally overwhelming.

Yet most of us answer this call to arms by contemplating the uselessness of life ... feeling isolation in a land that has nothing but ice.

They all need to be hit over the head with an iron bar.

Dominic kicks at a snow drift with some violence.

With a brief word of apology, Dominic strides off.

Powl takes a step towards him then puts the brakes on. He takes a deep breath, collecting himself. Nevertheless, Powl watches Dominic's retreating form.

Powl *annoyed with himself*

I cannot believe that I spoke in such a thoughtless way. He's really stirred up by my words ...

Leone *dismissive*

Don't worry about it. He's gut-wrenched because of the legal tussle that's taken over his life.

[Becomes crisp.]

Now – Pehr Verdun. I missed why he came up in the conversation.

Powl

Leone, I did require the bibs and bobs which belonged to the late Pehr Verdun. That when I leave here, I'd be taking

them with me.

But I'm not sure it's appropriate. Perhaps leave them alone for now ...

Leone

Nonsense! I had a request a few months back from some descendant of his back in your own country. This gent wanted to have Verdun's belongings shipped north. I packed them up ready.

Powl

That would have been my uncle's secretary Gilpin Verdun. He's a great-great-great ... But they've decided that (instead) I should inspect them prior to bringing them back at the end of my month's internship.

Leone

Gilpin! Yes, that was his name. But I remember that it all came to nothing.

So why the interest?

Powl

Word has it that (following the death) his body was immediately shipped back to Europe for Christian burial. But none of his belongings accompanied his remains. For obvious reasons it was all very hush-hush.

My uncle (His Royal Majesty) wonders if they are not still here at Cape Lloyd. His bits and pieces I mean ...

[Boyish grin.]

That it would me amusing for me to make an inventory of the personal effects.

Leone

Sure.

Let's finish our lunch and then we'll go on a foray.

I know just where we'll find them (having already dragged them out of storage for your Gilpin).

Scene: Interior/Exterior.

Percy's anguish.

Once again, our camera is on the covered porch that belongs to Percy's very run-down timber shack in the deep, dark bushland of south-western Tasmania.

Percy holds some sprays of juvenile eucalypt leaves. He sits on the steps to his porch, rocking from side to side and moaning.

SCENE: Interior.

The large, solid Stratco shed at Cape Lloyd Station.

Leone and Powl (carrying portable lights which are switched off) walk through the shed past the sea lions in their pool. They enter the storage room. This is so dark that when they enter, Leone and Powl must switch on their portable lights.

Leone walks straight to a nearby shelf. Annoyed, Leone bangs on the shelf in frustration.

Leone *annoyed*

Bloody typical! I put them here – ***right here!*** – ready to send off with the next delivery to Tazzie. And some joker who was trying to tidy up has moved same.

Leone makes a "humph" noise then looks about.

Powl

Do I have permission to root around in here?

Leone *laughs* Sure. But don't use the word "root" if you can help it.

Powl looks a question.

Powl grins You're laughing at me ... Have I made another oopsie?

Leone The Australians have epithets for every activity known to Man. And to "root" means to have sex (if you were to be Australian). So ... when you ask me for permission to root around ... Do you see where I'm going with this?

Both Leone and Powl chuckle.

Powl *grins* Okay ... Point taken. I'll be more careful in future.

Leone I have clearly labelled all the Pehr Verdun boxes et cetera. All we need now is to find its new location since some wanker or other moved it.

Now, although it doesn't look like it, there's a bit of a system here. Look for your man in the section applicable to the advent of this base ... turn of the century (that is 1890 to 1900) and the next couple of decades after that. Prior to World War One. That should do it!



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PLOT PROGRESSION:

The relics and keepsakes of Pehr Verdun, dated Monday December 9th 1901.

He kept a journal in which he jotted random thoughts written in a variant of Old Norse. There was his Viking helmet. There were all sorts of objects (flotsam and jetsam) which had been preserved forever in the ice (once they had landed at Cape Lloyd).

And one of the relics is a tally board made of a Tasmanian hardwood – found nowhere else in the world. Tasmanian Oak.

POWL SIFTS THROUGH THE STORAGE BOX OF PEHR VERDUN.

Music: something-is-about-to-happen.

Powl has discovered the box filled with Pehr Verdun's belongings. Using black ink Leone has clearly labelled this box: Pehr VERDUN, Megandaal Monday 9th Dec 1901. To be shipped to Mr Gilpin VERDUN, Castle Rondel, BESTRASIA, Western Europe.

And here also is the Viking horned helmet, unboxed. It is covered in dust.

The music builds.

Powl goes through the box and the casquet contained therein. We can see Powl's hands as he pulls items from the box, laying them aside reverently.

Then, he discovers the tally board. Now the music is at its fullest.

Powl's eyes widen. He is stunned. He turns the tally board over and over in his hands.

Powl *whispers to* And what might you be?
himself



Scene: Interior

Percy's anguish.

Inside Percy's bush house in Tasmania.

Percy is very miserable. The feelings inside him are savage.

Uncle Dapto (concerned, solicitous) stands before Percy, looking worried.

Uncle Dapto Do ya want to have another yarn with Adrian? I can set this laptop up for a Zoom call if that will make ya feel better.

Percy *not interested* Sydney? Nah. He's as useless as tits on a bull.

Uncle Dapto Alright then. What about this.

There's a bloke in Antarctica that Adrian reckons is a prince from a country in northern Europe. I'm wondering if he's your man.

Percy A prince? What's he doin' in Antarctica?

Uncle Dapto *shrugs* Dunno. Prince-stuff, I guess.

Listen! You gotta give this a try, mate. Better than sittin'

around on yer arse feelin' sorry for yerself, eh.

I'll rouse Adrian and get the contact deets from him.

Give it a try!

POWL RETURNS TO HIS DESK

Powl wears the dusty Viking helmet and carries the box containing the belongings of Pehr Verdun.

As he rushes from the storage shed back to his desk, we follow him all the way.

Music: vibrant, racy, exciting.

When Powl reaches his desk, he is almost frantic.

From the box, Powl extracts the journal and riffs the pages in an excited fashion.

Leone watches him from the doorway.

Leone So I gather the "rooting around" was successful?

Powl holds up the journal in triumph.

Powl *very excited* This! This is written in a language akin to Old Norse which used to be the staple of both my country and neighbouring Megandaal. And guess what? I can read and understand it all. "Fluent" is the word we're looking for.

Leone Well, you're the first person to be able to do so, I should imagine.

Powl's laptop makes a familiar buzzing sound.

Powl assumes that he will be chatting with someone from Reckondotstate on a Zoom call. Full of cheerfulness, Powl swings into position at the laptop.

He frowns. He is speaking with Uncle Dapto and Percy.

And Powl is still wearing Pehr Verdun's Viking helmet.

Percy *disgusted* Is this the prince bloke? With the fuckin' cow horns on 'is head?

Powl (embarrassed) whips the Viking helmet from his head. Powl tries to relax.

Uncle Dapto Yeah. Hi your Royal Highness. This bloke is Percy Lock and I'm Uncle Dapto. We need to have a word with you.

Powl Er ... Yes, of course. How can I help you?

Percy *pleading* I been sick, mate. Sick to me stomach. You gotta help me here.

Powl *all at sea* Um ... Well ...

Percy I gotta tell ya that --

Uncle Dapto *to Percy* Listen, mate. Why don't ya go and make a cuppa, eh – I'll give the gen to the Royal Highness bloke and I'll try to sort it out for ya – on your behalf.

Go on, mate!

Powl remains bewildered as Percy leaves the Zoom call under Uncle Dapto's direction. Uncle Dapto sighs and relaxes.

Uncle Dapto Sorry, about that. It goes like this ...

 Percy was told something when he was a little tacker by his father, eh. Everyone who hears the story laughs at it. What Percy needs is a Province.

Powl A provenance. Yes, of course. And --

Uncle Dapto You gotta think like someone making a long journey over the sea from Tazzie to where you are at Cape Lloyd in bark canoes, eh.

Powl I've heard of this story.

Uncle Dapto Yeah. "Can't be done." That's what they are all saying. Look the Province will be part of a bark canoe, or a paddle or somethink made of wood that you'd take with you on a trip for food or that.

Percy *in the background* Me Dad said that there was a tally board to mark down what they did. 'Cause they couldn't write or that. Old blackfella signs and drawings. That's what ya gotta find, mate.

Powl *regretful* Sorry, guys. There is nothing like what you --

Powl looks at the pile of goods he has dragged over from the shed.
--

Powl Just wait a bit ...

Powl and Leone rummage through the box. Leone pulls the tally board out of the box, turning it over and over in her hands. She nods to Powl who jumps back into the seat facing the laptop. He pushes the tally board into close-up. He turns it over slowly to enable Uncle Dapto to make a judgement.

Powl Is this any good?

Percy almost pushes Uncle Dapto out of the way, such is his excitement.

Percy *wild with thrill* That's it! That's the fuckin' tally board!

[Slaps Uncle Dapto hard across the back.]

The fuckin' Prince found the fuckin' tally board. That's the Province!

Percy races outside to whoop and scream. Uncle Dapto then ends off the call with Powl.

Uncle Dapto Sorry 'bout that. We'd better let you go.

Leone *joins the Zoom call* Hang on, will you? There's a chap here at Cape Lloyd who can test the wood and give it an age.

Listen! I think that your friend might go for this idea. If a reputable expert can decipher the etched marks on this wood, and if the wood can be sourced to Tasmania, and if

the dendrochronologist here can give us a decent date – then that proves the legend. Right?

Uncle Dapto Sounds good. Thanks, Darl. Keep in touch. 'Bye Prince.

As Powl ends the Zoom call, Leone raises her brow.

Powl *thrilled* Didn't our good mate Adrian have some mystery to solve?
This must be it.
I need to see Max immediately. He's the genius I need right now.

Powl grabs the tally board. He is about to rush past Leone but stops next to her.

Powl Max might not be able to shed light on the type of wood this object was made from. But hopefully he can give me a vague idea of the date.

Leone looks keenly at the tally board. She squints at it.

Leone Do you know what I think that might be? Tasmanian Oak. Incredibly hard wood. It's not an oak really (as in the *Quercus* genus). The early settlers from the UK found it was as hard as oak ... and water-resistant. You could ask Max if he concurs.

Powl rushes off, then does a double-take to return to Leone's side. The surprised Leone receives a gigantic hug from Powl (who still holds the tally stick).

Then Powl rushes off for real.

Scene: Interior.

Percy's anguish.

Inside Percy's bush house.

Percy is uncertain that anything will come of all this activity. He is not convinced.

The feelings inside him grind him.

Uncle Dapto is playing a complicated solitaire on his laptop.

Percy All this frettin' is makin' me feel sick, eh.

Uncle Dapto What? What fretting?

Percy I gotta know if anythink good is gonna come from it all.

Uncle Dapto is distracted. He merely grunts in reply.

Percy This Prince bloke ...

He told Adrian who told you who told me that there's a bloke testin' the bit of wood. Down South he is. This bloke who's testin' the wood. He's Down South.

Uncle Dapto Yeah. The tally board. Yeah. The nice lady told ya that.

Percy *nods* The tally board.

Do ya know 'im?

Uncle Dapto Who? The Prince?

Percy Nuh. The scientist bloke who's testin' the wood.

Uncle Dapto is still distracted.

Uncle Dapto Yeah – Nuh.

Percy *groans* My guts are really aching, mate.

Percy gets up and walks about, ignored by Uncle Dapto.

Percy Do you trust this bloke? The wood science bloke? Do ya trust 'im?

Uncle Dapto's head snaps up.

Uncle Dapto Trust him? 'Course I do. Blood oath.

Percy But he's a white fella, eh. From England. What does that tell ya? He won't know nothin' about our old wood from Tazzie ...

Uncle Dapto Aw he's a good bloke. Do you remember when I took you out for some tucker and we went to the pub and you had the curried snags with mashed spuds? You remember? And you saw a TV show you liked about the people digging up

the lady's garden because they were looking for old time things? That show I was on?

Percy (thoughtful) nods slowly.

Uncle Dapto Yeah, well the bloke who is testing the tally board (his name is Max, by the way) – he's been on that dig-em-up show tons of times. Because they always want old bits of wood tested and that.

Percy *unsure* You're talkin' about them drongoes that reckoned that the Ancient Romans were in Sidders. Them?

Uncle Dapto *caught off guard* Yeah ... Nuh ... That was a rort. A scam. A rip-off. That wasn't Max's fault.



Pages 101 - 111

HEADING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

Scene Interior.

The Grand Assembly room at Castle Rondel.

King Dimitri and his immediate family (including Jessica and excluding Powl) are enjoying a convivial evening at Court: what might be called a formal royal levee. Other dignitaries have been invited.

It is all crystal glasses held in beautifully manicured hands. Diamonds sparkle

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everywhere, especially in the tiaras which bedeck the various ladies.

Some display cases have been set about. They show off the Bestrasia jewel collections. Nearby these display cases stand uniformed castle guards. Among them is Sturgiss who gives a note of authority and order to the proceedings.

A 5-piece string quartet plays attractively. There is no dancing: the order of the night is polite conversation and card games. Correctly-attired footmen wander about with trays of drinks. There is a hum of conversation, interspersed with laughter. King Dimitri and a couple of the other gentlemen are noted to be tapping their patent leather shoes in time with the music supplied by the string quartet.

Count Onslow has snaffled a glass of sherry. He is seated at a card table in an enclave. He plays at Bezique with an extremely large lady of Germanic appearance who has overdone her makeup. This latter is Dame Ernestina von Wempel. She is dressed in a style which immediately says "money". And she is busy flirting with the Count (with her eyes and her lips).

The Count might be a bachelor but he will not allow himself to be seduced by any female. He remains unaffected, yet charming and urbane.

The card game proceeds. Dame Ernestina makes a play then looks at the Count flirtatiously.

Dame Ernestina *cooing* Yes. They were hunting the snipe near Kunstz, you know. And then out of nowhere came a flock of birds. Black-coloured birds suddenly appeared in a –

My elder son described this phenomenon as if it were a veil, blocking out the sun.

Quite extraordinary, he said.

Count Onslow *feigns interest* Really? I've not heard of that previously. Almost Biblical, what?

Dame Ernestina *nods* The snipe-hunters were unable to make themselves heard, such was the racket inspired by these birds. And not high in the sky neither: if the men had had their wits about them they could have reached up and grabbed any number of these wretched birds in their own hands.

What do you think of that, my dearest Roger?

Count Onslow I'm in awe, Dame Ernestina. In awe.

Did they manage to identify what kind of bird?

Dame Ernestina *laughs* Heavens no! They like to kill birds purely for the sport – they are hardly bird-watchers, jotting down their finds in notebooks and taking copious photographs. How amusing that would be!

You must understand that a bird seen through the scope of a gun is more amusing than that seen through field glasses.

PLOT PROGRESSION:

Suddenly, Count Onslow realizes (from something Dame Ernestina has said) that he has underestimated Prince Powl.

Something that Dame Ernestina has said startles the Count. All of a sudden, he seems arrested.

Count Onslow stands. He turns about, signalling imperatively to a young

courtier that he must take the Count's place at the card table. The young man hurries up, bowing and oozing charm. Dame Ernestina is momentarily put out, then accepts the alteration with vigour.

Count Onslow *to the young courtier* Please finish my game of Bezique with Dame Ernestina.
Something has come up ...

Count Onslow turns and bows to Dame Ernestina.

Count Onslow *to Dame Ernestina* Madame! Forgive me! I have just now recalled a most urgent ... Excuse me!

Count Onslow rushes from the assembly room.

Our camera follows Count Onslow.

We also note that (in the near distance) Jessica watches the Count's sudden departure.

Count Onslow pulls up at the foot of a grand staircase. He appears very worried; his face works as he frowns deeply.



Count Onslow comes across Powl dressed as if he is a whacky tourist from the 1920s. Powl wears a tartan shirt, a knitted beanie, lederhosen and thick knitted socks. Powl looks absurd. From Powl's neck hang a serviceable pair of binoculars. The vista is breathtaking. Both men are standing in the high lands of Megandaal with the derelict Castle Bailgravia in the near distance.

Powl salutes Count Onslow with his binoculars.

Powl *shy* I have escaped the stuffiness of Castle Rondel as you see, my dear Count. Have you come to haul me back to my duties? Because of course I will return there if ... If ...

Count Onslow *urbane* No! Please stay and enjoy your pastime. King Dimitri is always keen to hear that you are not glooming away in your laboratory, dissecting this creature or that creature.

Powl *laughs* Thank you, Count. You have always been so kind to me.

[Looking skywards through the binoculars]

Birds now! On this occasion I choose to watch their habits rather than chop them up.

Count Onslow Farewell and salut – I shall leave you to your avian meanderings.

As Count Onslow wanders off (smiling) he turns back.

Our camera focuses on the binoculars in Powl's hand. And then further afield to the proximity of the derelict castle in Megandaal.

**PLOT PROGRESSION:**

This flashback has given Count Onslow a forceful reason to become suspicious of Powl. But his enemy cannot be Powl: he is way removed by geographic distance. What can this mean?

Count Onslow is unable to confide his beliefs: no-one else is involved in his scam.

Deep in thought (trying to nut it out) Count Onslow slowly ascends the stairs.



We return to the assembly room.

Lady Jessica admires her engagement ring as she sits with her mother and others. They chat amongst themselves whereas Jessica looks about: seemingly happy, contented.

She notices her father in conversation with Sturgiss as they stand about near to the jewel display cases.

A slight frown descends on Jessica's face.



Duke (smiling) has moved away from the display cases towards the table where his wife and daughter sit. The Duke has a glass of sherry and seems to be enjoying himself.

Jessica Father, you appear to be very pleased with yourself.

Duke *chuckles* Just so. I've got rid of my two pesky daughters to men who should know better. Well done and good riddance!

Jessica I notice that just now you were deep in conversation with Mr Sturgiss.

Duke *sighs* Yes. It's seldom enough that I can catch up with old Ernst. We were the very best of friends at the college. Best of friends!

Jessica I have had more to do with him since my engagement. He is a very stern, cheerless man, I think.

Duke *surprised* Ernst Sturgiss? He might give that impression due to the solemnity of his duties. He takes them very seriously.

 But there's no-one I'd rather have on my side in a fight.

Jessica Really? His duties being his adherence to the machinations of Count Onslow, I suppose.

Duke shakes his head.

Duke *firmly* Sturgiss has one overriding strength: his loyalty.

Jessica *waspish* To Onslow.

Duke To the King.



Scene: Interior.

We are in Antarctica. This is Powl's laboratory-cum-workstation at Cape Lloyd.

His laptop is open and the embryonic version of the "Onslow Onslaught" video game is chugging along unattended.

Leone wanders in to place some folders on Powl's desk. She spots the video game and frowns deeply.

When Powl enters the laboratory, he sees Leone dabbing at her eyes as she sits near his laptop. Powl is very concerned.

Powl *caring* Leone? What is wrong?

Leone points to the laptop.

Leone I thought that you (***of all people***) were above this asinine nonsense.

Powl *unsure what to say* Well, it's –

Leone *distressed* I'm not crying ***for*** you, Powl. I'm crying ***because*** of this ...
What it means ...

Powl sits beside Leone, chafing her hand. Powl is totally out of his depth.

Powl *floundering* Did you want a cup of tea? Or something?

Leone takes a breath. She will pour out her heart to Powl.

It is **vital** that we hear what Leone has to say:

- her son Degas will take part in "Onslow Onslaught" as a player
- Degas has a middling rôle in movie #3 (in which he finds redemption) and it will assist us to know more about him at this point.

Leone It's my son. Viv and I have a son ... We named him Rodney but he's gone ahead and rebranded himself: Degas (as in the painter). 26 years old and no more sense of responsibility than a newborn.

Powl *nods* I always get those artists mixed up: Goya, Lautrec and Degas.

Leone Yes. So do I. He lives in Australia with Viv's sister Elaine ...
In a sleepy little bush town in Victoria: Shinty.

Powl That sounds –

Leone Yes. Sounds like "Shitty". I know.

At least they have WIFI. All he does all day (or should I say all night!) is to play video games. Those shoot-to-kill horrors. Hooked up to his pals in the UK and the USA.

Powl *trying to sympathize* That's um ...

Leone Wearing those infernal headphones. All night. Then sleeps all day. Never, ever had a job. Never went for his driver's licence. Whenever the government heavies insist that he at least **look** for work, he slaps his medical certificate on the desk and walks out a free man. Bipolar. Some days good, some days shit. He takes tablets for it and Viv thinks he may be improving ...

Powl *nods* Ah ...

Leone Look, Viv and I did our very best. But the bottom line is that our marriage crumbled under the stress of dealing with that kind of hostage selfishness. That's what I call it. The Mum and Dad become hostages of the child's egoism.

Powl I can't think –

Leone While he was in Oz, Vin managed to slip away and see him. Vin tells me that he met our son on a good day. They had a lovely chat, Vin says.

I thought I'd catch Rodney in a good mood and rang him.

But it was a shit day (apparently). Better luck next time ...

Powl *standing*

'Xcuse me, Leone. Just remembered that I –

Powl dashes off.

Pages 112 - 115

MAX WORKS HIS MAGIC ON THE TALLY BOARD

Scene: Interior.

Looking into Max's lab.

Powl is not doing very well on the sympathy front.

All of a sudden, he remembers that he needs to check in with Max.

Max works in his own lab. There is a protective screen and he has taken all precautions such that he will not taint the experiment, which will be radiocarbon dating of a small sample of the tally board.

To make sure that we (the audience) know what is going on, Dominic will watch Max and then fill Powl in on what he knows.

Dominic I've worked with Max before. But never with wood.

Powl *concerned* Is it all going okay?

Dominic Oh sure! Dozens of photographs were taken and these have been forwarded to a guy in Australia: Dan Cockatoo. I've actually met him (strangely enough) through some University work we were both involved in. That guy is as silent as the grave. He won't speak until something momentous occurs to him. But his brain is first class.

Powl What does he think?

Dominic Dan investigated the photos that Max and I emailed to him. Came back hours later (thorough to the last is our Dan!) and "yes" the inscriptions on the tally board exactly – I guess you'd say "tallied" – agreed with his personal understanding of the bark canoe saga. All numbers of voyagers correct.

Powl And the wood?

Dominic Leone ticked that one off. She concurred with the idea that the wood was a hardwood only found in Tasmania: Tasmanian Oak. Recognized it immediately.

Powl And so now Max is testing the age of the wood. If that comes in at around 500 AD, then we definitely have our provenance.

Dominic *nods* The tally board arrived in Antarctica as part of the voyage then became icebound. That straight away is a very happy coincidence: preserved for centuries.

Powl Until Pehr Verdun took it from the ice.

Dominic Yeah, but he stored it away in an airtight casquet with all of his other treasures.

 Max thinks that the tally board is in the best possible condition. So he's taken a very small sample of the wood and that's what he'll radiocarbon date.

Powl With chemicals, I must suppose.

Dominic That's it. I can let you know when Max has an answer.

Powl Okay. That'd be great.



Powl returns to Leone who wipes away tears. Then she quizzes Powl on what he's doing.

Leone *changeing tack* Anyway ...

If this here is not a game, then what is it? Aren't we giving you enough work to do?

Powl *points to laptop* This? This is related to some traps and bogies that I set up back home just before I came here.

Basically, we're going to have some fun with what I call "Onslow Onslaught". There's a villain – an enemy of the State. He has the full confidence of the Bestrasia's Army. It's simply impossible to take him by force. Not to be considered.

I'm planning to bring him down another way: scare him out of his wits. And when he blubbers his botched plans to the Nation, my uncle (the King) can regain his due authority and power.

Leone *shocked, stunned* But you can't run an attack in the Northern Hemisphere from distant Antarctica!

Powl *confident*

Yeah. I can.

So tell me again: your son is right up on video games then?

Like: really top level?

Am I able to get in touch with him?

Pages 116 – 118

STURGISS MANS UP FOR THE BIG FIGHT

Scene: Interior.

Castle Rondel, the Grand Assembly Room.

Jessica has approached the display cases and pretends interest. She grabs a drink as a footman wafts by. Jessica seems deep in thought as she sips her cocktail.

PLOT PROGRESSION:

Jessica decides at this time to take Sturgiss into her confidence. To her it seems obvious that if she can separate Sturgiss from Count Onslow there might be a chance to thwart Onslow in pursuing his nefarious career.

Jessica has observed the quick egress of Count Onslow. She has guessed that he is now savvy.

Licking her lips, Jessica makes the commitment to trust Sturgiss. All deception is over. She moves as close as possible to Sturgiss while still managing to pretend interest in the display cases.

Jessica *admiring the jewels*

My fiancé will become King one day and I his Queen. We all hope and pray that that day is far removed.

Sturgiss *slight bow*

Of course, Lady Jessica.

Jessica *eyes down*

In the interim, Prince Powl makes out that he is a shy

weakling. It is a total pretence. The purpose of this deception is so that he may go about the Kingdom (and Megandaal) without arousing Count Onslow's suspicions.

However (in reality) the Prince is incredibly strong and athletic. I have reason to know this. I was amazed at his power ... His prowess on horseback when he gives to the world the belief that he is a scaredy-cat. I was more than impressed.

Jessica moves along a little (eyes cast down) but still within easy distance of Sturgiss (who is amazed and impressed by Jessica's last words). Jessica runs her gloved fingers along the glass of the display case before her.

Sturgiss Please continue, Lady Jessica. You have piqued my interest.

Jessica *eyes down* In the baldest terms, the Russians have their own osmium mines. However, they realize that mined minerals soon peter out. They know of the mines in Megandaal. So (in brief, Mr Sturgiss) our so dear Count Onslow has secured the ticket (all for himself) on the Megandaal osmium mines such that he may become a billionaire at the expense of the Russians.

Sturgiss gives an audible gasp.

Jessica *eyes down* Osmium: a metal known to be ultra hard and durable. It is used as an alloy with platinum and iridium and so on.

Electrical contacts (among other things) are best fabricated from osmium alloys.

Jessica *eyes down*

Both you and my father are sons of Megandaal. And it is your country of birth that should benefit from the sale of this very precious metal – not the so dear Count.

The Count has demanded your loyalty to him but in return has told you nothing about his dastardly scheme.

[Looks directly up at Sturgiss]

Before it is too late, Onslow must be stopped.

Sturgiss *astounded and shocked*

This sounds impossible! How did you come by this information, my Lady?

Jessica

Prince Powl has an alter ego. By employing this disguise, he has been able to spy on the Count.

Sturgiss

You're not going to tell me that the Prince (your fiancé) is this Meganthon? Now that just **cannot** be true!

Jessica *proudly*

Well, he is and it is true. I told you: my fiance is strong, brave and fearless. Even now he is beavering away in Antarctica watching everything via a computer link that he set up on the eve of his departure.

The case is that Onslow has commandeered a mouldy dungeon in Castle Bailgravia. That converted dungeon is his headquarters. Were we to close down his computer installation – for good! – and arrest this wicked man, all would be well.

Sturgiss

Arrest ... My God! I see ... I see ...

So ... You want me to throw in my lot with you – and with

the Prince then?

Jessica

Just so. You are the perfect man to take him on (knowing his wiles as you do).

My idea is that you will become Meganthon.

Sturgiss *appalled*

What?!

Jessica *proudly*

You may as well know that I masquerade as Arkie.

Stugiss *shrugs, at sea*

I don't know what you're talking about ...

Jessica *waspish*

Oh! You've heard all about Meganthon but have never heard of Arkie?

Typical!

Pages 119 - 122

THE ONSLOW ONSLAUGHT

Two old school friends join forces

Scene: Interior.

Wherever they are.

Whatever they are doing. Duke (Terry Bruckette) laughs at the Meganthon outfit that Sturgiss is wearing.

Duke *laughing* Is that you, Sturgiss? What in Heavens are you wearing?

Sturgiss *stiffly* I have taken on the guise of Meganthon, Your Grace. It is the warrior character devised by your future son-in-law. We thought it might be useful if –

Duke *laughing* Those *Strumpfhose* were evidently made for a man of much less *avoir du pois* than your good self, Ernst.

Because he is with an old school chum, Sturgiss drops his rigidity for a moment.

Sturgiss *pointing* A sword? You're wearing a sword! Terry – you aren't serious? What is the good of a sword when –

Duke *proudly* It's the Holy Sword of Bestrasia as in "Cross of the Holy Sword". And yes – I'm bloody-well serious.

Sturgiss *shocked* You've **dared** to filch the Holy Sword from its ensconcement at the castle and bring it to this ... this ...

Duke *with finality* Whatever "this" is, I'm here to take my proper part in it – appropriately kitted-out in my uniform (which still fits me as a glove) and **with** the Holy Sword at my side (in the hope that I might bring a jot of *Herrlichkeit* to the proceedings) – whereas **you** (my dearest Ernst) appear to be headed for a costume ball.

Or else you're the gazetted main player at a Fright Night.

Sturgiss is appalled at this insult. The Duke turns towards Jessica/Arkie.

Duke *uncertain* And what is this?

Jessica Father! It is your dear Jessica come to help wrest control of the osmium mines from the evil Count.

Duke *roundly* Oh no you're not! In fact, I give my express refusal for your joining the venture at all. Men only!

Jessica *put out* Father! That's quite as Gothic as marrying me off to a prince of the blood.

Duke *wags finger* And you wouldn't be marrying that man if it weren't for your sister eloping with ... What is his name again? Fellow who snaffled my elder daughter?

Sturgiss The Baron Marcus Schruff.
[Whispers under his breath]
You addled old fool!

Duke Yes him!

But he's an irrelevant diversion. I still forbid you to join the cause.

What does your affianced chap say about all this?

Jessica *proudly* He is fully in favour of it.

Duke *angry* Like hell he is! I'm off to telephone him right now to find out if this is true. Damn it, I'm not giving him permission to marry a beloved daughter if this is how he means to carry on. He should be protecting you! He ought to be preventing you!

Where is he? I'll telephone him immediately.

Army Officer Prince Powl is to be found at Cape Lloyd Station, Your

Grace. Antarctica.

Duke *confused but
determined*

Right! The thing is as good as done!



Duke

Where is she?

Army Officer

The Lady Jessica has trooped off with the others, Your Grace.

Duke *roundly*

And on her lips a lie!

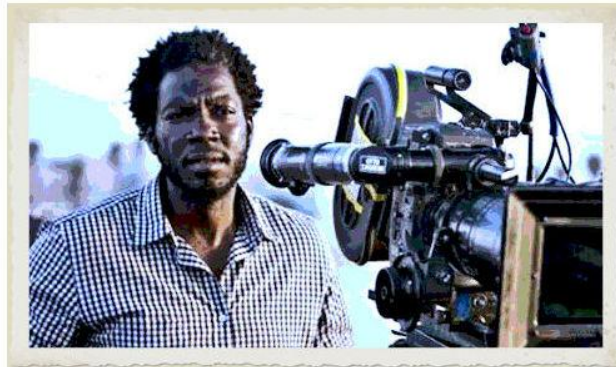
He never gave her one ounce of consent to this mad plan – not one ounce! Prince Powl forbids his promised wife (my daughter Jessica) to go within an inch of Castle Bailgravia. Too dangerous for a female (he says). Man after my own heart!

And now for the much-awaited highlight of the movie ...

Pages 123 - 128

THE ONSLOW ONSLAUGHT

Scaring the pants off Roger Onslow



DIRECTOR'S DISCRETION:

REAL ACTORS: What I want here is this:

- fast, zippy action
- armed troops rushing about in disorder
- Count Onslow running away in fright
- as much humour as can be milked out of this action sequence
- Sturgiss (as Meganthon) manfully fighting off soldiers
- Duke – derring-do with the Holy Sword
- Sturgiss and Duke giving each other a congratulatory handshakes and/or man-hug
- Jessica as Arkie directs her attacks on Count Onslow and manages

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to become a real nuisance to him in the manner of a malevolent pixie.

Mixed-up with the REAL ACTION I want:

DIRECTOR'S DISCRETION:

AN HOMAGE TO 1980'S VIDEO GAME: What I want here is this:

- video characters striding fast through labyrinth of dungeons just as the old 1980's Wolfenstein provided (this applies to both heroes and villains) – along with crazy stunts and confrontations
- loads of on-screen instructions (including inventory, itinerary and such like as would be the case while playing Wolfenstein way back then)
- extremely frightening holograms
- bursts of flames, fireworks, ordnance
- armed troop video characters rushing about in disorder
- as much humour as can be milked out of this action sequence
- music: very upbeat and racy.



I want the key characters in the movie to **ALSO** play a part in the hijinx.

DIRECTOR'S DISCRETION:

Given all the previous action, we maybe suppose that it will be Powl (stationed in Antarctica) who will run the computer program which will bring to us all the above mayhem.

NOT SO FAST ...

In fact, we are setting up a multi-user dungeon scenario.

My desire here is that each player (and his support people) will get off "bombs" along the way.

Then – when we see the success of each "bomb" – our player and support people cheer with yelling, high-fives, hugs and so on.

Remember that Powl preset a whole raft of "traps and bogies" with which to attack Count Onslow in his dungeon IT room.

The very last step will be to see Count Onslow dragged off (he will be blubbering in an insane manner) while smoke billows out of his computer equipment.

So I want this:—



Player: Powl in his lab in Antarctica.

Support: Dominic and Leone.

When Degas is successful, Leone will be seen barracking as well as wiping away tears.



Player: Degas in Shinty, Victoria, Australia.

Support: His Aunt Elaine.

Degas has an action hero as his player. There are some great stunts here. We see how pleased Degas is with the outcomes.

Note: in the 3rd movie Degas will play a much bigger rôle. He will maintain (in that movie) that his life changed when he was finally given something meaningful to do in the "Onslow Onslaught".

As stated above, when Degas is successful, Leone will be seen

barracking as well as wiping away tears.



Player: Adrian at his desk at Wannabee Connections P/L in Sydney.

Support: Adrian's co-workers including Ben, Marcia and Gina.



Player: Viv Dolmey in a London apartment.

Support: Felix Lynier.

Viv appears terribly proud when Degas is successful.

It is vital to remember that Felix is Dominic's brother and is well-acquainted with Adrian. Felix must be shown as thrilled when they are successful.



Player: King Dimitri in the Throne Room of Castle Rondel, Bestrasia.

Support: Duchess, Clement and Brayden.

The King stands facing a footman who is holding a laptop such that the King is able to type on the keyboard. All is dignity and regal bearing. The jubilation is muted for this group (polite applause), but nevertheless they seem very pleased. Another footman (nose in the air – haughty and above all this) stands nearby. He is instructed to come forward to high-five the King. King Dimitri is jubilant; the footman remains utterly

composed and straight-faced.



Note that Uncle Dapto and Percy do not take part in this exercise.

Pages 129 - 131

THE LEGEND OF 24 BARK CANOES

Background discussions.

The zoom session: Powl, Uncle Dapto with Percy, and Adrian.

We can see Powl in "real life". On his large screen, we see a split screen. Uncle Dapto appears face-on with Percy beside him.

Adrian appears face-on.

Powl is displaying the tally board under a strong spotlight.

Powl Max (my colleague here at Cape Lloyd) is a master at wood evaluation. In earlier years he did a couple of stints with Lore Ancient Squad on television in his special field. So I trust his prognosis implicitly.

And what he came up with fits neatly in with your claims, Percy.

Adrian *impatient* What have we got?

Powl This tally board is etched and scratched and marked. Max puts its age at approximately around 500 AD. That's after the Anglo-Saxons first appeared in Britain (in case anyone is interested). And it beats the Polynesian explorer Ui-te-Rangiora by a couple of centuries.

It is made of Tasmanian Oak – a hardwood eucalypt found only in Tasmania.

Percy begins to cry.

Uncle Dapto I been staying here in Tazzie with Percy because – well, as you can see, he's a bit upset, eh.

Adrian Can we link this tally board up with Percy's story of the aboriginal exploration?

Powl Maybe we can.

This spot is right in the path of several strong on-shore currents. Anything and everything that floats in the ocean winds up getting dumped right here.

Now – A resident of Cape Lloyd in the early days of the station went about in the manner of a beachcomber. He had a daily habit of collecting whatever he could find. This tally board was one of dozens of pieces that he found entombed in solid ice. He took a strong pick with him on these daily jaunts such that he could extract his trophies from the ice.

Uncle Dapto How do you know this, mate?

Powl *proudly* He kept a journal which no-one could decipher until I came along.

Percy *tearful* And that right there answers that question you put to me, Adrian. Why did I all of a sudden come up with my story

when I had heard about it since I was a little boy.

Adrian Whaddya mean?

Percy Somehow – don't ask me how it works! – But somehow my spirit was waiting for this prince bloke from Europe to arrive at the station in Antarctica and then he could nut things out.

Adrian Well let me get my 10 cents' worth in.

Percy you were adamant that I included indigenous consultants in my recent think-tank. I did just that.

Since its inception in 1890, Cape Lloyd has only had one single inmate who happened to be an indigenous Australian. And I got in touch with him: Dan Cockatoo. He's a University-trained scholar.

Uncle Dapto *surprised* I heard of him.

Adrian Right. He didn't want to talk about his time in Antarctica. Didn't want to consult. He shut up like a clam. Total no-go zone.

I had to mention you blokes and how your blood and his blood were the same. You would have been proud of me! I argued and pleaded and begged until I was blue in the face.

Anyhoot, finally he opened up and he had this to say ...

Pages 132 - 135

THE LEGEND OF 24 BARK CANOES

The Tale of the Great Journey.



The following is excerpts from the 6 film clips seen at the start of the movie.

That same superbly filmed action accompanies these

Dan Cockatoo voice-overs.

The Aurora Australis will be displayed wherever possible.

THE ORIGINAL DEPARTURE OF THE 24 BARK CANOES (around 500 AD)

Male voice (Dan Cockatoo) in voice-over.

In those far-away times, my people did not count in the manner of the white man. They used tally sticks or tally boards to do the work for them.

24 sturdy bark canoes were fabricated in the region of Balmoral Bay that could make the long journey to the white land of the south. The flight of the birds had told the people for many, many days that such a trip was possible.

And in this manner they made that trip: 45 men, 3 women and 7 boys.

They took food and water.

They took spears.

They took warm wraps made out of possum skins.

They hardly needed to paddle as the strong current of the ocean drew them on.

THE PERILOUS VOYAGE SOUTH OF THE 24 BARK CANOES (around 500 AD)

Male voice (Dan Cockatoo) in voice-over.

Many times the sun rose over their long journey.

Many times the men speared fish which came too close to the canoes. And these fish were eaten uncooked.

The birds flew overhead. The ocean was calm for the travellers.

THE LANDING OF 15 BARK CANOES (around 500 AD)

Male voice (Dan Cockatoo) in voice-over.

When they reached the white land the 42 people who had survived marvelled at the ice there. They came from southern Tasmania: so they knew ice and cold. But this scene before them was unexpected and very grand.

They knew the Southern Lights. But here the lights were much more spectacular.

Only 15 bark canoes had remained intact. The people stayed only 5 days and then the flight of the birds told them to go back to Tasmania.

THE RETURN OF 5 BARK CANOES (around 500 AD)

Male voice (Dan Cockatoo) in voice-over.

All this was recorded on a precious tally board which was unfortunately lost. It may have been in one of the bark canoes which failed to arrive back in Tasmania. Only 5 bark canoes did return. Only 5 of the original voyagers returned home. All of them were male.

Each of the 5 survivors told the story without embellishment to his sons.

And they likewise told it to their sons.

And so through the years the story went.

No-one else tried to emulate the feat. The flight of the birds was never propitious again.

There are only 2 men left who carry this oral tradition passed from father to son.

One (of course) is myself: Dan Cockatoo. The other is Percy Lock whose tribal name is Jarrah Predisandool.

But without the tally board, none of this can be proven.



Return to the zoom session: Powl, Uncle Dapto with Percy, and Adrian.

We can see Powl in "real life". On his large screen, we see a split screen. Uncle Dapto appears face-on with Percy beside him. Uncle Dapto and

Percy are openly weeping.

Adrian appears face-on.

Powl is displaying the tally board under a strong spotlight. He turns it over.

Adrian If we can match what Dan Cockatoo relates to the details on this tally board, then that's your provenance, Percy.

Powl Perhaps I can box everything up and make a flying visit to Tazzie. We can all meet up at your house Percy – if that's alright with you.

Percy nods. He is gutted with emotion.

Percy *weeping* Sure. Sure.



Pages 136 - 139

EVERYTHING IS WHITE IN ANTARCTICA

Cape Lloyd Station

Powl, Dominic & Birds

Scene: Exterior.

Cape Lloyd Station near the water's edge.

Powl and Dominic are rugged-up (even though it is the height of Summer).

They stand about on a beautiful, crisp day: bird-watching.

A few south polar skuas fly overhead. Both men train their binoculars on the birds.

Dominic is thrilled. Powl is simply pleased.

Dominic *entranced*

These bigger birds are south polar skuas. Note how they ride the currents of air. And they're pirates. They would rather steal the catches of other seabirds on the wing. You won't see the skua going out of his way to catch the fish himself!

Dominic lowers his binoculars.

Dominic Am I being a total lunatic – boring you shitless with my raving and ranting?

Powl (smiling) also lowers his binoculars.

Powl Not at all. I'm an ardent bird-watcher at home.

Dominic You're getting homesick, aren't you? Everyone out here does.

Powl *shrugs* The absolute truth is that I want to be with my new fiancée. I've quite fallen under the spell of that dear little thing. She is a treasure. Nothing else seems to matter now that the "Onslow Onslaught" has been brought to a happy conclusion. And I've one month to go.

Dominic So what's the current state of play in Bestrasia? What will you return to?

Powl Another holdfast dungeon has been found to house the Count for all his days. Deep in the deepest, darkest depths of Megandaal. We shan't hear another peep from him!

The Army leaders have pledged full support for their new leader (Sturgiss) and he in turn is (and always was) full-square behind the King ... and then me (in my turn) I suppose.

My earnest recommendation to King Dimitri will be that

Sturgiss receive an aristocratic title and a parcel of land as reward for his loyalty.

[Laughs heartily]

And for putting up with me!

Dominic

And the osmium mines?

Powl

Ownership documents have been produced which return the mines to the people of Megandaal. Their Prime Minister must sort out who will own what. But he is known to be a fair, just leader. As for the Russians: they will still have access to the rare mineral for which they crave.

So all satisfactory! All parties happy!

There is a pause. Dominic returns the binoculars to his eyes.

Dominic *wistful*

I only hope that you'll see the flocks of short-tailed shearwaters before you return to Europe. They fly south from Australia (from southern Victoria and the island of Tasmania more specifically) during the summer. As you can imagine, I'm a close student of communication amongst birds in flight.

Powl *thoughtful*

Talking of communication, I lied when I told you that I'm panting to get back to Bestrasia. It has just occurred to me that wedding preparations will be in full swing. All the females a-gush with champagne flutes, tulle, cakes, flowers, lace ... And beleaguered footmen being sent on errands hither and yon ...

Perhaps I'll see out my month at Cape Lloyd after all.

Dominic *laughs*

Yes! Stay here ... you can add your mite to the wedding plans remotely and thus dodge the bullets.

The bridegroom may be consulted, but the ultimate microcontrol of the nuptials must remain with the bride.

[Aside]

Not that I've ever been married!

Powl *chuckles*

Antarctica as a safe-haven ... Who knew?

END OF FILM

