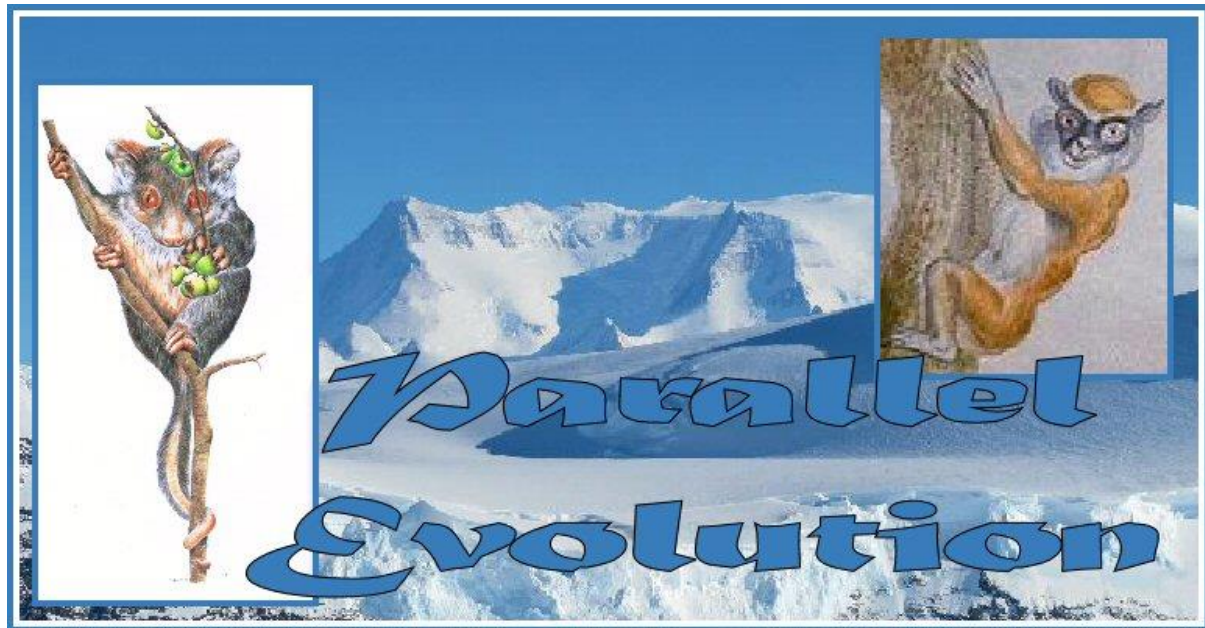




American Dr Daniel Marchbank and Englishwoman Claudine Cabot hated each other from the very start.

As inmates of Camp Marsumonk in Niugini, the "haters" become "lovers", courtesy of the Australian Prime Minister's son.

This is an enthralling investigation of convergent evolution which is bracingly affected by a Category 4 cyclone hitting Darwin.



PROLOGUE

Prologue, Scene i: Foreword Delivered By Daniel In Voice-Over

As Daniel talks, our camera will show Daniel's baby (Virginia) lying on a rug.

(Refer ACT V Scene viii).

Daniel plays with Virginia as he lies on the floor near her. His latest black book is handy. We shall find as the film progresses that Daniel jots down scientific notes in his current black book.

At first, we shall view only Daniel's hands, as he touches his tiny new-born daughter.

Daniel *voice-over*

Recently (just before this little lady was born) I happened to catch (on Pay TV) a **great** documentary on killer tornadoes and cyclones. The show caught me by surprise, because I happened to have been involved in the most savage of cyclones ever recorded in Australia.

The Coroner in Darwin delivered a tear-jerker of a summation about Cyclone Myrtha, which struck Darwin in the Northern Territory two years ago on New Year's Eve.

I discovered much later how very lucky I was to have survived

that one. And seeing it all again on the TV show made my stomach churn.

I could so easily have died there and yet ... And yet that's when my life began.

Daniel (clean shaven) leans forward to kiss his baby's hands. She is way too young to respond.

Daniel's head then retreats out of camera-shot.

Daniel *voice-over* It wasn't the cyclone itself ... I was a very close candidate for being knifed in a wild brawl during which the furious wind howled overhead...

It seems like aeons ago ...

Daniel strokes the baby's upper arms, first one and then the other.

Daniel *voice-over* As a scientist (an anthropologist to tell the truth), the whole area of "luck" – of "happenstance" -- fascinates me.

I found the love of my life by sheer accident, which was based on the revelation of my true progenitor. Which in turn was based on my being in Darwin on that fateful night. And that was due to a scientific inquiry funded by the University of Philly.

What a crazy world, one might say.

Daniel leans forward once more, to blurt gently with his lips on his daughter's stomach. Then he draws back, smiling with real love at his offspring.

Daniel *voice-over* And happenstance plays such a huge part in the development of emerging species which evolve surprisingly quickly given the right conditions.

Convergent evolution.

That was my quest: to find out if it was possible for two entirely discrete species to evolve in parallel, even converge. And without that quest, I'd have been on the other side of the world when Myrtha battered Darwin with such devastating results.

Strange, huh?

Daniel is testing the child's grip, as he carefully lifts the child a little off the floor with one hand.

Daniel *voice-over*

So ... The unbelievable adventures of Dr Daniel Thomas Marchbank of Philadelphia, USA began in December, two years ago, when John Sturt Dahlgetty was elected as Prime Minister of Australia.

And that's when the grandmother of this Princess passed quietly away ...

Replacing the baby in her original position, Daniel grabs for the notebook and scratches away rapidly with a biro. [This scene is picked up again at the very end of the movie.]

END OF FOREWORD

Prologue, Scene ii: The New Australian Prime Minister Celebrates His Victory

Subtitle: Parliament House, Canberra: mid-December.

The new Prime Minister of Australia and his cabinet (along with selected back-benchers) have booked a large function room in Parliament House for their end of year get-together. The sumptuous room is very much decorated with tasteful and expensive decorations (as described in the Special Notes).

John Sturt Dahlgetty (the Prime Minister) has not yet arrived. So this scene opens with the following events:

- *Uniformed Parliament House catering staff place delicious salads, cold meats and finger foods onto the table, having wheeled trolleys laden with food into the function room. And then they leave the room.*
- *The members of the new government mingle about before sitting down. They chat, laugh and generally look very up-beat. There is quite a hum of noise.*

- *A few uniformed waiters mingle with drinks on trays. The men tend to grab a cold beer or wine whereas the women opt for wine or fruit juice.*

The women: Almost a third of the attendees at this Christmas Party are women. They are soignée, middle-aged, overweight and well-dressed. They are serious about their work and tend to frown when the men become boisterous.

The older men: The “old sweats” tend to be weather-beaten and look like they have been in the game for many years. They have congregated together.

The younger men: By far the majority of the noise emanates from the younger men. They are loud, happy, gregarious and ebullient. Most are overweight, but vigorous. It is these younger men who give the party its heart and soul.

One of the PM’s staff has taken over a corner table to show off some framed photographs. A very large one (and we want our camera to capture this) is of John Sturt Dahlgetty in cricket gear as a younger man. All photographs of the PM as a younger man will be posed by the Daniel actor.

The New Prime Minister Enters The Room.
--

With a couple of minders and some other staff in tow, John Sturt Dahlgetty sweeps into the room to tumultuous applause and cheering. He waves in a confident, almost smug manner. The approbation is sustained and genuine. Our camera takes in the glowing, approving faces and the clapping hands. John calls for calm.

John *overjoyed*

Thank you! Thank you!

Now ... Sit down please. I want to say a few words.

As the members take their seats in a noisy, cheery fashion, John looks about at the huge repast on the table. John and others call for order in a friendly, casual way. A schooner of beer is passed to the Prime Minister, who gulps down a couple of mouthfuls quickly.

John *making a speech* On Saturday, December 2nd, the Liberal Party of Australia won 81 of a possible 150 seats in the Federal election. That’s a resounding

victory (in case you hadn't heard).

John is drowned out by a roar of ecstatic approval. Again, John calls for quiet.

John I'm not going to keep you much longer. We have a superb buffet laid out before us and we all want to head off for our Christmas holidays after that.

Just let me say these three things, as your Prime Minister and as your friend.

Firstly, we have been given the consent of the Australian people to govern the country for the next three years. And our mandate was solid.

We pledged to serve the nation and improve the nation and give our all to the nation.

There is a huge round of applause. Many people call out "Hear! Hear!"

John And (pardon me ladies!) we're going to bust our balls doing just that.

Our aim is to achieve the achievable.

More sustained applause and some prim faces from the women.

John Secondly, I have to thank each of you for your tremendous effort in getting our political party to this momentous landmark. Without you, none of it was possible. So, when you congratulate the party on its stupendous win, give yourselves a gigantic pat on the back.

Again, a round of applause bursts forth. This is not polite applause: the members are really chuffed and pumped.

John And thirdly, I want you to extend yourselves to the hilt in enjoying this fabulous repast. We owe it to ourselves to have a bloody good time.

Let's get stuck into it!

More ecstatic applause greets this speech. So the merriment of the feast begins with smiling faces all about.

END OF SCENE

Prologue, Scene iii: The Longest Day Of The Year In Antarctica

Subtitle: Ellsworth Land, Antarctica: December 21st, the longest day

This scene seems to be very long ...

But I desperately need this scene and so have worked at making it as interesting as possible.

We have to get a feel for the delicious badinage which is a feature of the members of the John Lort Stokes Society. Also, we need to be briefed on the previous meetings between Daniel and Claudine: they really hate each other. Later, we shall see them overcome this hatred as the romance blossoms between the pair.

Most importantly, however: we must be aware that the equipment being used here is the echo-finding gear which Fenn Larssen will discuss in ACT I.

Throughout, there is a low throbbing sound, as of machinery operating. This sound is not intrusive: it is simply dull, rackety and ever-present.

In full sunlight, on the pristine carpet of snow which is Antarctica, Sir David Trout stands, gazing about. He laughs heartily, and then bursts into a vile rendition of "I'm Dreaming Of A White Christmas".

This would be a great spot to roll the CREDITS through.

They could be coloured in strong blue, against the superb white of the snow.

A symphony orchestra could pick up Sir David's song and run with it. If that cannot be done due to copyright infringements or whatever, then we will do something similar with another well-known Christmas tune. This will contrast excellently with the Darwin version: see ACT I, scene i.

There are several bottles of champagne lying about in the snow, near to some rough huts. Sir David picks one out and closely studies the label (it is Veuve Clicquot). Grinning widely, Sir David totes the bottle inside one of these temporary, pre-fabricated huts.

Herein, we see an old cloth banner (proclaiming The John Lort Stokes Society), from which dangle utterly daggy Christmas decorations. [Refer to Special Notes for the low-down on the decorations.]

As he rips the cork out of the bottle, Sir David plonks himself down into a chair that is situated near his laptop. Happy, he pours the champagne into a grubby glass, and drinks. This he does as he mouse-clicks through the emails awaiting his attention. Sir David calls out to his stepdaughter Claudine as he reads and/or comments on his emails and continues to pour and drink the champagne.

Sir David My Spanish is just this side of "crap".

I believe that the Argentines seem to be indicating that we **really** have to move on.

We hear some sort of mumbled comment from Claudine, who is as yet unseen.

Sir David When we started our delightful email war, they appeared to be sending polite advice (so far as I can tell) ... Now, there seems to be a certain gravitas ... A bit of an urgent prod in the rear end. "Getta offa our turfa, Englese bastards!" (They just can't forget the Falklands, darling).

Ah! The Australian Navy has a good-sized vessel in the vicinity and they've offered to help us to pack and remove our gear. Bless their little hearts. Yes, we'll take up that kind offer. Thank you very much, beloved Aussies.

[Typing]

"Come immediately and save our sad souls". There!

Sir David types eagerly and continues to call out to his stepdaughter.

Sir David I say, thank God we stayed beyond our welcome. That last object capture was nigh-on perfect: every feature visible. Anton will --

Claudine marches up to Sir David, plonking down a heavy cardboard box.

Claudine *waspish* The himbos at Philadelphia U cannot believe their luck ... You play right into their hands every time. Talk about being a bunny ...

Turning on her heel, Claudine storms out.

Sir David I'll tell you why, my sweet ... Because (it may have passed your notice that) you are well-qualified in the field whilst I am simply a cashed-up dilettante ... An amateur with a somewhat drunken passion for Science ... Oh! And wide, deep pockets.

Claudine pops her head around such that we can see her. From this point, the conversation becomes rapid-fire.

Claudine Ah! You've finally nailed it, Sir David. Anton Whitely can hear the rustle of folding money at 20 paces.

Sir David Whitely did me a signal service once ...

Claudine *nasty* Ho! Ho! Ho!

Sir David And I like to repay him with some timely --

Leon stomps through with another heavy box. He lays this down next to the one that Claudia just carried through. Leon perpetually mumbles to himself.

Claudine *emphatic* Here we are, icing our arse-cheeks in Outer Freezer Aisle, so that dear sweet Professor Anton Whitely may bask in your reflected glory.

Sir David That's how it must be!

Claudine *severe* But it's much worse than that. I know what follows ... He'll naturally be passing on the fruits of **our** work to the Coyote Kid from Dry Gulch.

Sir David *feigning lack of understanding* No ... Sorry ... That allusion loses in its translation.

Claudine *sighs* The one who strides like an Antediluvian Colossus: Chief Thunder

Cloud.

Sir David *feigning lack of understanding* No ... Still lost I'm afraid.

Claudine *annoyed* Don't pretend to be puzzled! That Marchbank character.

Sir David Ah! Dr Daniel Thomas Marchbank.

I know what the problem was there.

Claudine *blunt* Yes, the problem was that he's a swine. QED.

Sir David *oily* My darling stepchild: you were slugged by Dr Marchbank on first acquaintance.

Gordon wanders past carrying all sorts of interesting equipment. He dumps this down next to the other boxes.

Claudine *to Gordon* The last specimen is truly amazing, Gordo!

Gordon simply grumphs and then moves on.

Sir David *on the charge* The one chap on Earth who not only kept up with your cyanide-laced tongue but gave you back measure for measure.

Claudine *vicious* Swine. One word, five letters. Starts with sierra and ends with echo.

Sir David He saw through your rancid relationship with the deadly nightshade macaroni magnate.

Claudine *airily* Did you hear that when Marchbank is sick, he hauls himself off to a veterinary surgeon rather than to a physician?

Sir David *dog after bone* In every verbal contest, he was the clear winner and you were gasping for breath in your corner.

Claudine *working herself up* I also heard that the rozzers are (even as we speak) dragging that major river near the Philadelphia U for his corpse.

Sir David *smug* Not possible. He's in Darwin. Alive and well.

The chopper is heard. Claudine heads out into the bright landscape and is followed by Sir David. Both shield their eyes as they squint and watch the tiny speck approaching.

Sir David In my opinion, you were more than slightly smitten, and you let down your guard. A clever boxer keeps his fists up in a defensive posture.

Claudine blushes.

Claudine *between
clenched teeth* I'd rather give him a swift kick where it hurts.

Sir David *sugar-sweet* And "Macaroni"? Did you dispense of him likewise?

Claudine *matter of fact* Giorgio? He left me for some Sallyanna Polecat. He sent me a tragic email: "Deeply regret" and all that.

Sir David *sighs* Romantic to the core.

[Gestures broadly to the heavens]

Ah! Our rescue party.

[Sly]

And were you prettier than Polecat? I'll just bet that you were.

Claudine *mocking* Oh, but I'd much rather be treasured for my first-class brain.

Sir David *persistent* Prettier? Yes or no.

Claudine *shrugs* Of course.

The helicopter is now close and hovering.

The small helicopter is not from Australia: it is Argentine. It hovers low over the base camp. From the chopper and in Spanish, a woman broadcasts repeated warnings that the British party must immediately dismantle their huts and equipment and prepare to leave the area, as they have long overstayed their permission to encamp there.

Leon and Gordon join Sir David and Claudine.

Gordon *frowning* I can't make that out but it sounds like curtains.

Leon *terrified* Jesus! One of those soldiers is training a serious looking bit of firepower directly at us.

Just as the first of three warning shots is fired, and just as the four British folk make to scurry off for cover, a huge Australian helicopter approaches. Without any apparent effort, the Australian helicopter lands in spite of the Argentine model. Navy personnel leap onto the snow and rush towards the group, as Claudine, Gordon and Leon rush towards them. Sir David (in what comes close to a reverie) watches the Argentine helicopter head back north.

Sir David *smug* Looks like I'll be home for Christmas after all!

Sir David gives a cheeky little wave to the crew of the Argentine helicopter.

END OF SCENE

Prologue, Scene iii: The New Australian Prime Minister Celebrates His Success

Side note: Parliament House, Canberra: December 21st, the longest day

In his private office, John Sturt Dahlgetty shuffles papers and discusses various points with his immediate staff. They are all wearing smart casual and appear totally relaxed. This is a friendly get-together. Basically, they discuss a new car that one of them has recently purchased.

Again, as in scene (i), the decor is very slick and professional. Somebody with an eye for style and glamour has been hired to put up the decorations in the Prime Minister's office.

Mike Munday (another aide to the PM) bursts into the room. His face is effusive. He holds a note in his hand.

Mike Prime Minister! I've just received some great news. This will send you off on your holiday with an even higher public profile.

All the folk in the room look at Mike, expectantly.

John Yes?

Mike Prime Minister, you've just recorded your first successful international venture. You've rescued a party of British scientists and all their equipment from their base camp in Antarctica ... In the Argentine sector, it was. They were about to come under fire, apparently.

John *surprised* What were they doing there?

Mike Fossils.

John *frowns* Why were they in the Argentine sector? What's wrong with finding fossils in the UK territory? Or even our own very large dependency?

Mike Not possible. The fossils they wanted were specific to this one spot ... the ... um ...

[Has to revert to note]

The Ellsworth Land area.

John *puzzled* Fossils of what?

Mike Primitive mammals like monkeys and apes.

John *not believing* Really? That's ... **Really?**

Mike (to everyone's amusement) imitates a gorilla.

Mike But not placental ... These ones were pouched – marsupials.

John *appalled* You're kidding me!

Mike Nup. Scouts' honour.

END OF SCENE

END OF PROLOGUE



ACT I

I, Scene i: The Belhairt Street Campus Of The Darwin Faculty Of Science

Subtitle: Darwin, Northern Territory: December 21st, the longest day.

The purpose of this scene is to quickly put us into the picture on certain new points as well as reinforce ideas already picked up:

- *We will spot a newspaper lying about in Brett's office == it has the triumphant PM smiling and waving on the front cover. He is pictured with his attractive wife Leanne and young adult children (James, Megan and Jayne).*
- *Daniel is a 38-year-old American whose mother has just died in the USA.*
- *Daniel bears a striking resemblance to John Sturt Dahlgetty (at the same age). Obviously, we will use photos of our Daniel actor to represent the young PM.*
- *Daniel is an anthropologist working on a possibility that new fossils discovered on an island north of Darwin (as well as in Niugini) might prove that a marsupial monkey once existed. He has not trained as a palaeontologist as such: an anthropologist, he studies early hominids, apes and monkeys.*

- *Thus, Daniel sits in Brent's office and together they will organize for Daniel to fly back to the States as quickly as possible, then return to Darwin when his mother's affairs are sorted.*

In line with the above overview, we start with a couple of young female laboratory assistants running up the outside metal stairs and up to the 3rd storey of the well-signed building: DARWIN Faculty of Science. At the same time, we can vaguely make-out the beginning few lines of Frank Sinatra's "I'll Be Home For Christmas".

Now we enter the 3rd storey behind the girls such that we can see the plethora of Christmas decorations in the hall (from which many rooms proliferate). Once inside, the sound-level of Frank Sinatra's Christmas song rises.

As the girls pass Brent Forelli's office, they glance in. Daniel is talking on his mobile phone to his sister and happens to look up.

Lab worker #1 *giggles* There he is! Don't you think he looks like the new Prime Minister?

Lab worker #2 *unsure* Mmmmm ... Maybe ... Sort of ...

Lab worker #1 *definite* Oh, he does! He really does ...

The girls have gone. And with Frank Sinatra still crooning overhead, our camera wanders into Brent's office (in which whirrs a large ceiling fan), such that we overhear Daniel's call with his sister (in which he has learnt of his mother's death). As we listen, we must see the 2-week-old newspaper featuring the photograph of Prime Minister John Sturt Dahlgetty and his family on the cover, along with the heading:

CRICKETING PRIME MINISTER

CLAIMS VICTORY

Daniel *on mobile
phone, very quiet*

... and that's what you do, Kath. When somebody passes on, you have to go through their belongings and find any clues like address books, phone lists, letters ... That's right, and you ring those people ... That's right and let them know that ... that ...

That's right, that Ma has ... has passed on ...

Brent bursts into his office, looking somewhat frazzled. Daniel now wishes to quickly end his call.

Daniel *into mobile* Listen, Kath, I gotta go. I'll ring you from the airport once my
phone urgent plane touches down ... Sure, sure ... I'll be careful.

Daniel snaps shut his mobile phone and continues to hold it. Brent flops down in his chair.

Brent *breathless,* Sorry, sorry. Now, what are we doing?
disorganized Daniel, Daniel, Daniel ...

Oh, yeah ... you have to get back to the states to see your --

Suddenly, Brent jumps up.

Brent *concerned* Is that music annoying you? I'm a sucker for old Frankie-boy, and
with Christmas just a stone's throw away, I --

Brent dives out of the room leaving Daniel bemused. We can hear Brent quacking and suddenly, the music stops. Brent charges back.

Brent *really breathless* Not really appropriate with your poor Mother being – Now! You
need to get back to the States to spend some precious time with
her. Right?

Daniel gestures with his mobile phone.

Daniel *careful* Um ... My sister just called to tell me that Ma has passed away.

Daniel heroically fights back tears. Brent is gutted.

Brent *aghast and* Oh, mate! I'm so sorry ...
compassionate

A silence ensues, broken by the rhythm of the overhead fan. Brent grabs his wallet from his back pocket and reefs out a credit card. Then he grabs a business card and scrawls something on the back. He shoves these towards Daniel.

Brent *as the action* This is a faculty credit card and I'll also give you this chit to
above takes place endorse my approval that you are using the card.

Just ... ya know ... Go back to your family and get everything sorted out. And come back only when you're good and ready ... Spend Christmas with your loved ones ... Ya know ...

END OF SCENE

I, Scene ii: Darwin Airport Followed By The Funeral In The USA

Side Note: Darwin, Northern Territory: December 21st, the longest day (late afternoon) and December 20th in the USA (losing 9 hours)

The airport at Darwin is really a very well-organized military establishment. Australian soldiers proliferate, with all their gear. Some well-armed troops seem to be actually on guard duty.

There are busloads of foreign tourists. The layout is big (huge) and Spartan. Daniel sits apart, looking gutted. He must fly to Sydney and from thence to Los Angeles. Then from Los Angeles to the East Coast.

Daniel appears to be mentally exhausted. Idly, he picks up a folded newspaper beside him and stares unseeing at the back page, which features exciting photos of a Test Match (cricket).

Then a young woman approaches Daniel.

Young woman Excuse me ... But you aren't the new Prime Minister, are you? Or his security double?

Daniel looks up, frowning heavily. The young woman laughs with embarrassment.

Young woman Sorry ... You just look so much like him ...

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

*We see Daniel shamble out to the tarmac (shoulders sagging) to board his plane from the ground, along with flocks of other passengers.*

oooooooooooooooooooo **Break** ooooooooooooooooooooo

*At the funeral in the USA (where it is wintertime), the family members shake hands and hug those people who have attended the funeral.*

*We see this from a distance.*

*This is very brief: just to give us the idea that the mother of Daniel and Kath has been laid to rest.*

oooooooooooooooooooo **Break** ooooooooooooooooooooo

*Daniel and his sister Kath amble at a very slow pace across a beautiful, shaded grove at the cemetery, where the sun shines weakly. They stop such that Kath sits on a wooden bench. Daniel lowers himself down beside her. Kath tries to speak but begins to cry into a scrunched-up hankie. Daniel takes her spare hand and holds it, looking outwards, as if trying to master his grief.*

Daniel *low-voiced,*            It's okay. Big brother is here.  
*sympathetic*

*Kath sobs a couple of times and then forces herself to speak through her tears.*

Kath                            Dan, this is really difficult.

*Daniel makes a deep throat noise.*

Kath *trembling*            I've been going through Ma's private stuff, like you told me to do.  
She had boxes and boxes of stuff: newspaper clippings and ... and  
... and ... Oh God! This is so hard ...

*Daniel brightens up, looking relieved, as if a great weight has fallen from his shoulders.*

Daniel *kindly*            Ah! I know what's coming next. You found out something ...

You want to tell me about Pop. But I already knew.

Kath *utterly shaken* Pop?

Daniel *smiling* I know. It's okay ... It's okay ... I've known for years.

Kath *crying anew* What ... You knew ... about Pop?

Daniel When Pop was very sick ... Dying ... I got home from school one afternoon and found Ma crying. I ... I wasn't all that effective at comforting her but ... She kinda just blurted out that Pop wasn't my real father and that she was trying to work up the courage to tell him.

*Kath's mouth works, as if she is about to vocalize several words, but she is unable to do so.*

Daniel She said that any number of folks had probably guessed already. But I don't know how she figured that ...

Kath *appalled* So ... did she tell him?

Daniel I don't know. Probably not. It didn't matter because I considered him to be my father and would always do so, come what may.

Kath Did you find out who your real father was then?

Daniel *abrupt* No.

Kath You didn't?

Daniel No. I didn't even try to find out. Ma and I never spoke about it again.

Kath I came across this. You'd better read it. Somewhat cryptic ...

*Kath dives into her handbag and pulls out a stiff folded paper. She hands this to Daniel. His eyes flick over it and his jaw sets grimly.*

*Daniel hesitates. Then he hands back the paper to Kath. She replaces it in her handbag.*

*This episode will be relived in flashback in ACT II, Scene iii, when the contents of the letter are revealed.*

Daniel                      Pop was a great man. Whether or not he thought of me as his biological son, he treated me as his blood kin. We were as close as father and son could ever be.

And it wasn't a case of Ma cheating on Pop ... She told me that she had a pre-marital fling with some younger guy and I was the unexpected result. I don't blame her at all. Things like that happened back then.

So that's it. We won't discuss this again.

END OF SCENE

### **I, Scene iii: Kath And Her Mother-In-Law Serve Christmas Dinner**

#### **Subtitle: Philadelphia: December 25<sup>th</sup>**

*Kath and her husband Jake and his mother Lyndelle have all tried to get through Christmas as best they could. As previously mentioned, the decorations speak of family warmth and love.*

*Kath and Jake have pushed a variety of tables together, covered them in a huge tablecloth and dredged-up any possible family members to try to make a jolly event. The huge meal and the pudding have been consumed.*

*Thus, whilst the following conversation takes place, Kath and Lyndelle are busy clearing off the remains of the huge repast whilst Jake calmly ensures that everyone has a drink.*

Cousin Tootie *rising*              Oh, let me help you there, Lyn.

Lyndelle *insistent*              No, no ... You stay right where you are. We got this under control.

*Cousin Tootie subsides again into her chair with evident relief.*

Cousin Luke                      I'm so full I'm afraid that I'll burst.

Aunt Irma                      It was lovely, ladies. Thank you so much for all your hard work.

Virginia will be looking down at us from Heaven and --

Cousin Tootie I can't remember when I've eaten so much ...

Uncle Vernon Does anyone object if I light up a ceegar? Or must I drag this sad body out into the cold, cold garden?

Lyndell You go right ahead, Vernon. Whatever gives you pleasure.

*Vernon goes through the business of lighting his cigar whilst the others idly converse in background chit chat.*

Uncle Vernon So, Daniel ... Dish the dirt on Darwin, Australia.

Is it a place of high culture: a hive of sophistication where the glitterati gather?

Daniel *relaxed* Darwin?

You know what? They have storms in Darwin that make our storms look like passing showers.

Uncle Vernon Hmmm ... That might indicate that it is a locale redolent of climactic extremes. But how does the teeming populace amuse itself? Street theatre? Ballet? Exhibitions of portraiture? Grand opera?

Cousin Luke *straight-faced* It's the capital city of the Northern Territory, Dad. Try for rodeos, fishing, shooting wild pigs by moonlight, hot air ballooning, bush bashing in SRVs and wrestling crocodiles.

*[Looks about at the startled faces]*

I read the brochures.

Daniel *highly amused* There are two seasons: Wet and Dry. We are in the Wet right now.

Aunt Irma *ironic* "We"?

Daniel And it's unbelievably hot and steamy. What's that word I'm searching for? "Torrid".

Uncle Vernon                      Ball-park figure.

Daniel *shrugs*                      Oh, anywhere from 33 to 39 degrees, I guess.

Aunt Irma *surprised*              And that's "**hot**"?

Uncle Vernon                      He's talking about degrees centigrade, Poppet.  
*dismissive*

Aunt Irma                          Okay ... what does that translate to?

Cousin Luke                      Around 100 degrees.

Aunt Irma *shocked*                My God! How do you work in that?

Daniel *shrugs*                      Ceiling fans if you're inside and douse yourself with water if you're involved in something external.

Uncle Vernon                      So how do you shape up as a croc wrangler?

Daniel                                Well, I passed on that one.

                                            But they taught me how to play cricket. And (with all due modesty of course) it turns out that I'm not too shabby at that illustrious (not to say "noble") pastime.

Aunt Irma *surprised*              I thought you had to attend several universities and night school to come even close to understanding that crazy game.

Cousin Tootie                      Are you a pitcher or a batter?

Daniel                                I'm what's called a "middle-order batsman" when our side is in.

                                            And when we are fielding, I hold a spot called "third slip".

Aunt Irma *grimacing*              "Third slip"? That sounds incredibly awful.

Daniel                                You know, it made me wonder if my real father (my biological father, that is) might not have been a British guy ... Hence the fact that I like to play cricket so much. I dunno ...

                                            And (apart from that) the guys are trying to teach me to drive on the wrong side of the road. It's too weird.

*The mention of Daniel's unknown father throws a pall on the conversation. There is a very uncomfortable lull in what had been merry and bright conversation. Jake immediately reads the situation and comes quickly to the rescue.*

Jake                      And your field trips. Kath mentioned that when you go back Down Under, that you're headed for a place called "Wet Dog Island".

Daniel                    That's correct. In the Timor Sea. Fenn has already flown out and he's there now.

Uncle Vernon            In search of the elusive Marsumonk, I guess.

Daniel *lost*                I'm sorry ... What?

*A titter of amusement ripples across the table at Daniel's expense.*

Aunt Irma *explaining*    A journalist whose wit is razor-sharp wrote a piece in the Tribune ... It wasn't actually about **your** party from the University of Philly, but rather about a group of English people led by some crazy Lord ...

Daniel *rueful*              That would be the UK's favourite lunatic: Sir David Trout OBE.

Cousin Luke              Well, okay. And this press guy called the fabled marsupial monkey "Marsumonk". There was even a cartoon of a monkey with a pouch.

Jake                        But don't pay it any mind. We all know that your research is quite serious.

Daniel *bewildered*        Is the press making fun of our venture?

Uncle Vernon            Of course they are. The Creationists are up in arms and you are being denounced from every pulpit.

Daniel *appalled*            Why on Earth would anyone --

Aunt Irma                They are up in arms, my dearest nephew, because it's only a hop, skip and a jump from marsupial monkeys to marsupial apes to marsupial humanoids. All these God-fearing souls are basically terrified that you and your fraternity will uncover fossils of early

manlike creatures and prove that they were not strictly mammals.  
Nasty thought ...

*This tableau ends with Daniel looking about at the other guests, conscience-stricken.*

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

Kath, Jake and Daniel have drawn aside. We can see and hear a bustle of activity in the kitchen.

Kath When do you go back to the Northern Territory?

Daniel I'm booked to fly back on the 29th. I got some stuff to do in the lab, and then New Year celebrations.

I'll probably stay in my room ... Get to bed early ... The Territorian boys – they tend to be heavy drinkers ...

And then off to the wilds of Wet Dog Island. As I said, Fenn is already there (along with a few of the local diggers).

Kath And you are serious? There really is a place called "Wet Dog Island"?

Daniel Sure there is.

It's a crap time of the year to go anywhere ... But the guys at the Faculty are concerned about pilfering. We just gotta get the fossils into safekeeping before the sharks move in.

Kath *alarmed* Sharks!!?? Are you crazy? Are you --

Daniel *laughs* No, no! That's Aussie slang for ... You know, like what we'd call a shyster. They have a whole dictionary of strange words out there ...

Kath *somewhat bitter* And Professor Anton Whitely gets to cosy-up in front of his fireplace in downtown Philadelphia while you and Fenn do all the leg work.

Daniel Anton's bulk definitely precludes him rushing about the world on field trips. And he's a genius in the lab. Trust me.

Kath *miffed* Okay. So be brave down there with the 80 dangerous creatures attacking you.

Jake *laughs* Not 80, Honey – it was actually 76.

Kath flounces off. Jake and Daniel shrug their shoulders, chuckle and then shake hands.

Jake *smiling* Have a good time Down Under. And watch out for the "sharks".

Daniel *nods* The local diggers are picking up some great finds at this Timor Sea island I mentioned. And there's another dig going on further north ... I may even drop in on it and have a look-see ...

Jake *smiling* You do that.

What is it that the Aussies say? "Bewdy!"

Daniel *rueful* "Bewdy" ... So long as that confirmed maniac Sir David Trout stays clear of me (separated by several continents, in a parallel arena), then I'll be a very happy man.

END OF SCENE

I, Scene iv: Sir David Trout And Lady Amanda Serve Belated Christmas Dinner

Subtitle: London, December 26th

The London flat of Sir David Trout and his second wife Lady Amanda (mother of Claudine) is a very stylish, solid residence speaking wealth and old-world robustness.

We see from a window that London is enjoying a light fall of snow. Claudine wanders about, looking for Sir David. From the dining room, there is heard a delightful hum of female voices. We glimpse (during Claudine's peregrinations) that Lady Amanda along with several female guests and servants are laying out the repast.

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Finally, Claudine runs Sir David to ground in his study. He is closely reading a large newspaper clipping.

Claudine Ah, here you are.

Mother is adamant that you gather the guests for our belated Christmas dinner. And it's all our fault due to our late arrival from Antarctica ... And so on. If we're not careful, she'll work herself into a migraine and --

Sir David *annoyed* No, look here. Look at what Curzon has dropped on my desk. Sydney newspaper. I ask you!

Claudine takes the clipping in a languid fashion. A bell rings sharply.

Claudine *reading aloud* "One of Australia's highest profile public benefactors (Mr Glenn Tobin) has served defamation papers on UK billionaire, Sir David Trout OBE, over claims Sir David had tried to denigrate the work of the Tobin Association and to smear Mr Tobin's good name."

Claudine looks at Sir David in a measuring way.

Sir David *defensive* I don't remember doing any such thing.

The bell rings again, with more urgency.

Claudine *calls out* Make a start, Mother, we'll be there in two shakes.

[Continues to read aloud]

"Mr Tobin, who is widely regarded as a leading philanthropist and heads several charitable institutions, has released a statement saying the papers had been served through the Crown Solicitor and a writ had been lodged in the Supreme Court."

Claudine looks about on his desk, puzzled.

Claudine Where? Where are said papers?

Sir David makes an off-hand gesture.

Sir David *flippant* Oh ... Cedric must have them.

Claudine *reading* "He is suing Sir David for more than 1.5 million Australian dollars over --

Sir David finds another paper which he brandishes aggressively.

Sir David *shouts* Ha, ha! The *Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores* of Argentina has ordered me to quit the geographic location (to wit, Ellsworth Land) and he includes all the co-ords ... rabbit-on, rabbit-on, oh ... Flummery, flummery, flummery ...

[Screws the official paper into a tight ball]

But do you see my point? The good fellow sends the edict **here** to London. Whilst I was safely disporting myself on the crisp white landscape which is Antarctica. Bloody fool!

[Over-pronouncing]

Not ... very ... bright ...

Sir David sneers as he tosses the paper ball into the nearest waste paper bin.

Claudine *continues* -- over statements made last month, which Mr Tobin says are "totally false and damaging to his integrity".

[Looks at Sir David, puzzled]

It says "last month". But surely we were both ensconced at Ellsworth Land last month as you have so justly pointed out?

Sir David pretends to be busy tidying up his papers and folders.

Sir David *vague, covering up* I may have responded to someone-or-other's email and I may have blathered a bit.

The sharp bell is rung again, with savagery.

Claudine *sighs* Under the influence of *Veuve Clicquot* one imagines.

[Calling out, with head back]

We're coming! We're coming!

[To Sir David, inveigling]

Come on, let's dive into the turkey before we are banned from the dining room for tardiness.

They wander towards the dining room. Suddenly, Sir David becomes animated.

Sir David *positive* I'll escape London for tropical climes. You'll come with me. The dig that I'm financing in Niugini will make an ideal priests hole.

[Brightening markedly]

I'll be in the perfect locale to flit back and forth to Sydney for litigious purposes.

Claudine *sighs heavily* Sir David, your sense of geography, of distance is abysmal. Really it is! You're speaking of a physical area far bigger than Texas.

Sir David is not interested in temporal logistics.

Sir David *gleeful* Fossils of the monkey-marsupial ...

I shall provide Anton Whitely with further specimens to back up the bounce-backs we gathered from Antarctica. He must be frothing at the mouth with unabated thrill.

Claudine merely rolls her eyes and groans.

END OF SCENE

END OF ACT I



ACT II

II, Scene i: Suspicions Arise Amongst The Paparazzi

Subtitle: Darwin, Northern Territory: December 29th

The camera pans Darwin airport. In non-visual background, two Australian paparazzi (Tinny Mafri and Auro Virak) converse in private.

Auro *voice-off* Hey! Over here!

Tinny!

The sounds of two work colleagues greeting each other are briefly heard.

Tinny *voice-off* I dunno what we're doing here: they reckon that a huge cyclone is gonna hit us around New Year's Day. We should've stayed put in Sydney.

Auro *voice-off* Well, listen to this. I got a tip-off from a bloke who sat in a plane from Sydney to Darwin yesterday next to the dead ringer for the new Prime Minister. Younger, but.

Tinny *voice-off* Is that a fact?

Auro *voice-off* Blood oath. My tip-off heard the bloke talking to the flight attendant and said that he sounded like a Yank.

Tinny *voice-off* That's funny ... Before his cricketing years and around the time he was at Uni, John "I-can-do-no-wrong" Sturt Dahlgetty spent some time in the States.

Auro *voice-off* Did he? Well ... So ... Ya reckon it's worth following up?

Tinny *voice-off* Shit yeah!

Auro *voice-off* Good! I mean ... It's not as if his son doesn't **already** keep us well-supplied with front-page fodder.

The two men laugh heartily.

Tinny *voice-off* Blood oath ... The dickhead ... But a bit more goss won't hurt the rumour mill one iota ... Good on ya, mate! Good work!

END OF SHORT SCENE

II, Scene ii: The New Year's Eve Affray In Darwin During Cyclone Myrtha

Subtitle: Darwin, Northern Territory: New Year's Eve.

We will show the large tropical cyclone attacking Darwin on New Year's Eve as an animated weather map (as below, with Darwin represented by the yellow blob in the middle) and some stock wild weather footage. Palm trees being pounded by high winds look impressive.

Female announcer *voice-over* Darwin residents prepare to sandbag and possibly evacuate homes as Cyclone Myrtha begins to dump heavy rain on Darwin and the Top End. The cyclone moved inland at noon but may soon be upgraded to a category four system as the intensity of battering rain and high winds increases this afternoon and overnight.

New Year revellers are warned to stay indoors or under shelter in

specially designated areas rather than undertake the usual beach parties and outdoor celebrations. Police will be monitoring crowd behaviour in these difficult conditions.



oooooooooooooooooooo **Break** ooooooooooooooooooooo

Daniel (dripping wet) is trapped in a huge hall along with a swaying sea of drunks. The noise of the cyclone combined with that of the drunken crowd is deafening. He is shouting at someone and holding up a sodden piece of paper.

Daniel *stressed-out* But I gotta find this guy. He's ferrying me over to Wet Dog Island by tender.

Male *voice-off, shouting* Ya won't be goin' nowhere, mate. Not in this cyclone ya won't.

Daniel continues to be jostled and bumped by the sea of drunken revellers who are squashed into the hall. The noise of the cyclone is terrifying.

~~~~~ **Break** ~~~~~  
~~~~~ **A MEGA BRAWL** ~~~~~

A huge fight is in progress. Women and children have been shepherded out of the way, and there is a seething mass of bodies (mostly male) slugging it out on the floor. Daniel is in the thick of it.

Uniformed police wielding night sticks fly into the affray. Still, the noise of the cyclone obtrudes.

~~~~~ **Break** ~~~~~  
~~~~~ **THE BLACK MARIAH** ~~~~~

Daniel (squashed up alongside many other men) sits bruised and bloodied on a Spartan bench in a police paddy wagon. Someone groans and another man swears. The noise of the heavy rain and the high winds outside continues to be terrifying.

Drunken male *voice-off* Welcome one and all ... Spend yer first night of the New Year in the Black Mariah. Courtesy of the NT constabulary.

There follows much male laughter, coughing, swearing and groaning.

A police officer takes Daniel's jaw in his hand in order to inspect his hurts.

Policeman *gravelly* A bloke's been carted off to Emergency in a critical condition.
Youse might be spending more than just the one night in the lock-up. So shut the fuck up!

[To Daniel]

Do you want anything for that cut, mate?

Daniel *morose* I want to make a phone call to my lawyer.

Daniel's American accent is pronounced. All the men in the van laugh, including the policemen.

Policeman *amused* Ah! So you're a Septic Tank, are you? That "phone call to my lawyer" stuff -- That's only in Tom Cruise movies, mate. You're not

in Arizona now. This is Darwin and martial law holds good during a Category Four cyclone, so I can basically throw you in the clink and chuck away the key without one shred of evidence against you.

Male *voice-off*

Yeah, so don't give him the slightest provocation, Yankie-boy, because he'll do it. I know his form.

Daniel hangs his head, extremely sorry for himself. A gnarled male hand applies some lotion to the wounds on Daniel's head.

~~~~~ **Break** ~~~~~  
~~~~~ **THE DARWIN CENTRAL POLICE STATION** ~~~~~

The location is now the large, busy Darwin Central police station.

A shy young policeman takes Daniel's fingerprints and a swab from inside his mouth.

Daniel I can kind of understand the fingerprints ... But why the swab?

Young policeman *pink with embarrassment* Ah ... Well, Dr Marchbank ... A man was stabbed during the melee. And he's not too good ... He may die ... So everyone in the affray is obliged to give a ... um ...

We apologize, Doctor ... we can't make an exception in your case. Sorry.

Daniel That's okay then.

[Sadly shakes his head.]

You're not going to believe this, but I only went to that particular place to find a guy who was booked to ferry me over to Wet Dog Island ...

Young policeman *brightening* Oh, yes sir! We've contacted ... um ... We've rung that gentleman and he's going to come and ...

He'll drive you home with him.

When it's safe to drive, that is.

Um ... There's coffee and biscuits over there, sir ... um ... I think you call them "cookies". Well, you're welcome to ... um ...

Various shouts of "Happy New Year!" can be heard, but the predominant sound is that of the cyclone. Daniel (looking very down) shambles over to a counter where a bright-faced, plump policewoman assists him with obtaining refreshments.

END OF SCENE

II, Scene iii: James Is Waking Up With The Dahlgetty Cousins

Subtitle: Sydney Harbour: January 4th.

The purpose of this scene is to introduce James Dahlgetty, son of the Prime Minister, and to get across to the audience that James is a knock-about lad in his mid-20s who might damage the new PM's high public approval rating due to the unfavourable coverage of James's exploits by the Press.

Juxtaposed with the horror of tropical Cyclone Myrtha, we now view the bustling vitality of Sydney Harbour, also seen from the air. The sun beams, the water sparkles invitingly and Sydney Harbour looks at its most fabulous.

Our camera gradually repositions into the breath-taking harbour-side home of Max and Gai Dahlgetty. Max is the brother of the Prime Minister and is one of Sydney's most prominent lawyers. The children (Mamie and Piers) are around the same ages as the Prime Minister's children (that is, their cousins).

A very dishevelled James Dahlgetty sleeps untidily on a couch. Mamie shakes him. James opens one eye. Mamie offers a mug of coffee. In the background, at a dining table situated to enable sweeping views of the harbour sits Piers, working on a manuscript.

Mamie You've got to go. Come on! Have this and then a shower and then home.

James obeys, rousing himself enough to sip the hot beverage.

James *thickly* Home ... Where am I?

Piers At your uncle's shack. Time to nick off.

James *sleepy* Why am I here, again?

Mamie *matter of fact* Because you are a drunken arse and didn't have anywhere else to flop down.

Piers *forestalling argument* And before you ask why you have to leave: --
Reason (a) is that you are the only son of the new Prime Minister and reason (b) is that you are becoming a favourite subject of Press scrutiny which impinges unfavourably upon reason (a).

James *thoughtful* If it's any consolation, I happen to think that my father's a good bloke. I get on well with him most of the time.

Piers *grim* So much do you admire your father that you flaunt yourself in a very unbecoming way in public to the detriment of friend and family alike. Not very clever ...

Mamie *sing-song* In this post-election media honeymoon period, if number one and only son puts a foot wrong, then said media honeymoon will be over.

[Hardening of tone]

You have to act more responsibly, James. It isn't fair for Uncle John to have to cover-up your indiscretions as well as run the country.

Piers leaves his seat at the table to walk over to the couch and stand before James.

Piers *stern* My advice is that you should drag yourself back to The Lodge, dry out and clean up. Shave, haircut, massage and work out. Get

yourself into shape. Smarten up your wardrobe and get back to work.

The two young men stare at each other, with Piers stern-faced and James looking dopey.

Mamie stalks out as James gulps down the last of his coffee. James suddenly loses the dopey look and Piers visibly relaxes.

James *low voiced* You should go into theatre. That was bloody convincing.

Piers *pleased, low-voiced* You think so? Good! And you'll send me the photos of the Vixen? Yeah? You have to use the other phone (the u-beaut secret one). I'm pretty sure that Mamie spies on me via the one that Mum gave me.

James nods solemnly.

James *low-voiced* It's funny how sin has a cascading effect. As it happens, I am bound for The Lodge but only such that I can raid the liquor cabinet.

Mamie swings back into the room, giving both young men an inquiring look.

Piers *returning to character* And the First Family is ... ?

James Mr and Mrs PM and their lovely daughters are sunning themselves on Hayman Island or some other hideously expensive Barrier Reef island.

In the middle of the Wet season.

And against my advice, might I add.

I was all for a luxury European holiday (right?), but I was overruled because it might look "off" if the new First Family ventured off Aussie soil so soon after being voted in.

As the Yanks might say: "Go figure!"

Mamie You could fly out and join them.

James We'll see ...

END OF SCENE

II, Scene iv: Sydney Airport Where The Canberra Plane Departs And The Darwin Plane Touches Down

Subtitle: Sydney Airport: Mid Afternoon January 4th.

We see from above the bustle and business of Sydney Airport. Our camera picks out James, now cleaned-up and looking very presentable. He is yawning, as he waits in a queue to board a Canberra-bound plane at Gate 39.

Leaving James to board his plane, our camera moves across to the utter chaos of stranded passengers and innumerate news people clustered tightly at Gate 21.

Note: there probably would not be such an announcement at any airport, but I need it for dramatic effect. A serious male voice would be best here.

Airport announcement The plane now arriving at Gate 21 is flight AP693 from Darwin.
over the tannoy This is the first flight out of Darwin since Cyclone Myrtha hit
 Darwin on New Year's Eve.

The staff of Sydney Airport wish to remind television crews and press photographers that passengers disembarking from flight AP693 must be permitted to freely leave the plane and adjacent areas. Please be mindful that many passengers on flight AP693 are reported to be traumatised and distressed after the fury of the cyclone.

Sydney Airport thanks patrons for their patience.

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

*We leave the chaos of the passenger lounge for the tarmac, where the luggage is being taken off the plane that has arrived from Darwin. A uniformed staff member immediately takes charge of a very large white cube which has “Commonwealth of Australia” emblazoned on it. This cube is placed on a small one-man mobile trolley. The staff member drives off, with our camera focusing on the white cube.*

**Break**

*Now in a depot at Sydney Airport, we see the uniformed staff member (Male #1) handing over the white cube to a uniformed Commonwealth driver (Male #2). But first, Male #1 taps the cube to explain the upper-most tray.*

Male #1 ... and the **top** tray contains the swabs from the 31/12 brawl in Darwin. That has to be done first.

Male #2                      I thought the guy survived?

Male #1                Yeah, but the judicial process wasn't countermanded, so it's all in a kind of half-way house. Because of the cyclone.

Ya know ... If we ***don't*** follow the due procedure, and then something happens to that bloke further down the track ...

Male #2                      Okay, okay, okay ... I hear you. I'll get them over to the lab and send back the results to the heavies in Darwin. Alright?

Male #1                      Alright! Good work!

*The cube is shut down and stowed in the Commonwealth car, which is then driven off.*

END OF SCENE

## II, Scene v: Crossing The Timor Sea In A Tender

### Subtitle: The Timor Sea: Mid Afternoon January 4<sup>th</sup>.

*From above, we see the tender plying its way across the Timor Sea from Darwin to remote Wet Dog Island (actually located just in the Arafura Sea, but who cares?). The sky is heavily overcast, which is in direct contrast to the delicious sunlit scenes on Sydney Harbour.*

Female announcer  
*voice-over*

Residents of Darwin who were evacuated during Category Four Cyclone Myrtha have been permitted to return to their homes and businesses, as the fierce winds and battering rain have abated.

Six people have been reported as dead (including a 15-month-old girl) with scores more injured or missing. At least 250 families have had their houses destroyed.

The victim of a stabbing incident during New Year's Eve celebrations has been removed from the critical list and police report that he is making a slow recovery.

oooooooooooooooooooo **Break** ooooooooooooooooooooo

*In the open-air tender, Daniel looks out over the choppy Timor Sea which is outstandingly bleak and uninviting. We see that Daniel is in a black mood.*

*In his reverie, we will see a flashback of ACT I, Scene ii.*

### FLASHBACK

Kath I came across this. You'd better read it.

*Kath dives into her handbag and pulls out a stiff folded paper. She hands this to Daniel. His eyes flick over it and his jaw sets grimly. As the flashback continues, we can see Daniel staring at the sea, his eyes welling with unshed tears.*

Walter *voice-over* My Dear Virginia,

This is by far the saddest letter I will write, and possibly the very last one that will flow from my pen.

The care of our two children will fall upon you, my darling girl, when I am taken to my Maker.

There will be ample funds in my Life Assurance policy, but money cannot take the place of a father. You will have to be father and mother to our lovely little Kath.

Daniel (who is so much like you in his cleverness and compassion) will become the man of the family. His father should be proud of him. I always knew in my heart the truth about Daniel, and yet will always value and love him as my own.

I can no longer hardly see to write. This business of dying tires a body out.

Yours Devotedly, Walter Edward Marchbank.

*The flashback now returns briefly to ACT I, Scene ii.*

*Daniel hesitates. Then he hands back the paper to Kath. She replaces it in her handbag.*

END OF FLASHBACK

END OF SCENE

## **II, Scene vi:** The Luxurious Swimming Pool, Hayman Island

**Subtitle: Hayman Island Resort: Late Afternoon January 4<sup>th</sup>.**

*There can be no more luxurious setting than that in which we find the Prime Minister, his wife and two daughters. The ladies relax on loungers beside a picture postcard swimming pool. The Prime Minister (wearing board shorts) dives with no grace into the pool.*

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*The females groan and cringe as they are splashed.*

*With a whoosh, John Sturt Dahlgetty surfaces near his family. He laughs as he gasps for air.*

Jayne *pouting*                      That was a belly-whacker. You lose 10 points if my tablet gets even one drop of water on it.

Leanne *reasonable*                Don't bring it poolside, then.

John                                  With an approval rating of 68%, nothing that I do is wrong.

*The Prime Minister hauls his still active body out of the water.*

Jayne                                Well, your son is working arduously to bring you down to earth, Oh Feet Of Clay!

Megan *explaining*                She's received an email from Mamie.

Jayne                                Mamie and Piers had to spirit my brother out of a dive on New Year's Eve due to the fact that several members of the gutter press awaited him at the usual exit points.

John *philosophical*                You see, Jayne, that's what's so sad. James is out being a normal 24 year-old man whilst my niece Mamie acts like she's over 40. And her brother Piers is held up as a paragon; he never dirties his hands nor leaves the comfort of the Dahlgetty hacienda, perched over the Harbour ...

Megan grinning                    Oh, ho! Don't be fooled by Piers, Dad. He pretends to be fey in order to get around his sister (who apparently rules the roost there) but is in fact quite a wag.

John                                Wag or not, I'd take James any time. If the press pack wants to clamber all over your brother, then all I can say is that there is a paucity of genuine headlines out there.

Leanne *reasonable*                But with news hounds recording every one of James's "angry young man" moments, your 68% is in danger.

*John humphs, but is amused nevertheless.*

END OF SCENE

## **II, Scene vii:** Wet Dog Island Where Fenn and Daniel Educate Josh and Wally

### **Side Note: The Timor Sea: Late Afternoon January 4<sup>th</sup>.**

*Finally, Cyclone Myrtha abated, and Daniel arrives on the promised tender at Wild Dog Island. It is a superb tropical island with lush vegetation and sparkling white sand.*

*Daniel's colleague Fenn Larssen from the Philadelphia University runs down the beach to greet Daniel. Wally and Josh saunter along in Fenn's wake.*

*Daniel gathers his possessions and with the help of the tender driver, unloads them onto the beach.*

Fenn                                Oh, man – am I glad to see you! That Cyclone Myrtha was a doozie!

Daniel                              It sure was a helluva show.  
How's it going here?

Fenn                                Most of our buildings survived the storm.  
Is this all the stuff you got? Come on, I'll help you there.

Daniel *to the tender driver*        Thanks, mate. Thanks for the great hospitality. It was bewt. Keep in touch, won't you? And give your missus a great big hug from me. And tell her that I love the way she cooks "spag bol".

*The tender driver and Daniel chuckle and then shake hands in a very hearty gesture, following which the tender driver takes off.*

*Fenn and Daniel carry the luggage and gear up the beach. Wally and Josh do not ask if they can assist: they simply do so.*

*Daniel eyes the two Australians such that Fenn realizes that introductions are in order.*

Fenn                                Wally and Josh here are helping me with the digging, along with some other dudes.

*Wally and Josh giggle at being called "dudes". Daniel nods to the men, murmuring their names.*

Fenn                                      And this is the maestro: Daniel Marchbank. Daniel: Wally and Josh.

*[Directly to Daniel]*

I got an email from Philly (from Anton) saying that you'd been arrested in Darwin and --

Daniel *reassuring*                      It's cool. It's all been sorted out. I happened to have been in the wrong place at the wrong time. And what with the cyclone and all ...

Fenn                                      So I gather. But you sure had us worried.

Daniel                                      **You** were worried?! Jeesh, I was locked up with a whole bunch of drunken trash in an object affectionately called a "Paddy wagon". Wasn't even allowed to call a lawyer or my family or --

Josh                                        They done worse to me. Once, I got --

Fenn *interrupting, to Daniel*                                      Put it behind you. Wet Dog Island and all its delights beckon, as if it was the Garden of Eden itself.

Daniel                                      Well, I sure have been hankering to get here, man.

Wally *proudly*                              We got a tent set up along with some pre-fab huts and all.

Fenn                                        Right on.

I need to brief you on 80 things (or thereabouts) ...

*They now move indoors.*

Daniel                                      Before you start, I'll need a strong coffee and something to eat. I've discovered to my cost that Aussies basically don't understand coffee. They stick to instant, it seems.

*Wally (grinning broadly) hastily pours coffee from a pot for Daniel.*

Fenn                                        Sure! We can do that. We got all the modern conveniences on Wet Dog Island. By the way, it's called that because John Lort

Stokes saw a dingo trying to shelter from the heavy tropical rain.  
So I guess by rights it should be renamed to Wet Dingo Island,  
but anyway --

Josh In our lingo we call it "the place of stinking rotten fish".

Daniel *nodding to Josh* Ah! That is the best cup of Jo I've ever tasted.

Fenn Eat all that bread and the cheese ...

Listen! I've got some stuff to tell you that'll knock your socks off.

Do you remember the beginning of the film "Jurassic Park"?

Daniel Of course. That's why we got into this field of intellectual  
endeavour, isn't it? Because we all fell in love with Jurassic Park.

Fenn You remember the part where the palaeontologist Dr Alan Grant is  
at the dig in Wyoming and the volunteer --

Daniel It was at Snakewater Montana. Get it right!

Fenn Sure! Okay!

So, the volunteer bounces back an image of a velociraptor and  
then Grant gets into an argument with the fat opinionated kid. Do  
you remember that?

Daniel Yes, naturally I do. Echo sounding. It was an apocryphal moment  
for the young impressionable dude that was Daniel T. Marchbank.

Fenn *moving up close* Get ready to pass out on the spot, then.

*and speaking in a very* The guys at Philly are sending through to us (in the next 12 hours)  
*exciting way* a 3-D mock-up skeleton of a find from Antarctica.

Using the same kind of technology that was featured in "Jurassic  
Park" (only way more advanced), they've been working for months  
(even in the dark dead of winter) throbbing the ice cap at  
Ellsworth Land with a sophisticated echo sounder. And finding  
mint condition fossilized skeletons of some pretty fantastic

marsupials.

Daniel *keen*

Who? Who is doing this?

Fenn

A whacko English Lord and his team. Can you believe it? He is the founder and milch-cow for the lunatic fringe group named "The John Lort Stokes Society".

Daniel *disappointed*

I know that guy. I know him well; him and his team. So-named for the captain of The Beagle.

Fenn

Correct. The ship that carried Charles Darwin (our ultimate hero) on his fabulous voyages of discovery.

Daniel

Yeah, and I heard about this ... this "Marsumonk" that he's searching for and ... Wow! This is getting way too incestuous.

Josh

What are you blokes talkin' about? I don't get it.

Wally

Shut up and listen then, Josh. You dumb-shit bastard! Dr Larssen will tell ya.

Josh *wary*

This stuff gives me the creeps, ya know? We got taught somethink different about how these Dreamtime things that came up, long time ago.

Wally *impatient*

What use are ya as a digger if ya don't believe it?

*[To Fenn]*

Show 'im the colourful map, Dr Fenn.

*As Fenn speaks, Wally nods enthusiastically. Josh remains unconvinced.*

Fenn

Yeah, well ...

This coloured map here is a very childish presentation ... But it does show Gondwanaland.

Okay! Here you've got South America --

Josh *doubtful*

Gondwanaland? That sounds made-up to me ...

Fenn                                Sure, but I gotta put this into context. Just ride with it ...

                                         So South America is over here and next door is Africa. Slot that in with Arabia, India and Australasia, and that all hooks up with Antarctica. And you have to keep reminding yourself that there was no polar ice cap as such: Antarctica was warm and lush. And Australia wasn't the big desert that it is now.

*Wally is doubly pleased and smiles broadly.*

Daniel                              I've always loved how all the pieces of Gondwanaland slot in so perfectly; even to the extent of rock formations running across continents now separated by 1000 miles of ocean.

Fenn                                Yeah, well ... Anyway, the prevailing theory is that the marsupials started off (not in Australia) but in South America. At the exit point for South America (which is around Ellsworth Land) these early marsupials travelled south into Antarctica and from thence north to all the other Gondwana lands.

Daniel *warning*                There's absolutely no evidence that pouched mammals formed an enclave in Africa.

Fenn *shrugs*                    Whatever happened or didn't happen in Africa, they made it to Australia **after** New Zealand split off and **before** Australia split off. Thus, the Great South Land became the great marsupial fortress. A floating ark.

                                         It was much, much later that the marsupials used the New Guinea land bridge to head north, within the confines of Wallace's Line.

Daniel                              And having this huge island continent to themselves, they proliferated.

Wally *awestruck*              Shit! Fuck me ...

Fenn *nods*                        That great thick book over there provides the list of all the native species. It's quite impressive. And hey! No matter how much more advanced eutherian mammals might have been, these pouched

mammals did okay. You only have to spot a mob of kangaroos from your car and you can see that they did alright.

Josh *with finality*

Easy to see that you never stood toe-to-toe with a fighting kangaroo then? Can kill ya soon as look at ya, they can.

See ya, Wally. I don't like this brainy stuff much ...

*Josh turns on his heel and leaves the hut. The 3 remaining men watch him and then return to their endeavours.*

Daniel

You said something about 12 hours ... a 3-D skeleton ... ?

Fenn

I need to make sure that you aren't going to faint on me.

Daniel *a little annoyed*

Oh, come on! Do I look like a delicate specimen? For God's sake, tell me what it is that Anton is sending to us!

Fenn *very excited*

The British! The British have been in Ellsworth Land for months.

Sir Trout Fatherpenny (or whatever his title is) ... They are squatting on Argentine territory, for God's sake! Memories of the Falklands War linger on ... They get told that they'll be incarcerated forever if they don't move on ...

"We'll do **one** more ... Just **one** more ... "

And the last one ... **The -- very – last – one!**

*[In ecstasies]*

It's like finding the Holy Grail ...

How surreal is that!

Daniel *dreamlike*

The last one ... I'm guessing ... the prototype for our ... For our impossible dream ...

Fenn *whispers*

Anton ran the 3-D negatives through the resin displacement unit immediately he received them.

*There is a restless energy with both Americans. Wally remains awestruck and looks from one man to the other. Daniel draws closer to Fenn.*

Daniel *mesmerized* And?

Fenn *tantalizing* The resin model was flawless in every detail ... Mint condition ... Nothing missed. The complete skeleton fossilized *in situ* and was absolutely undisturbed.

[Takes a long breath]

Via Skype, Anton hooked up with Sam Craig (the *ne plus ultra* of experts on Australian fauna).

Craig wondered at first if it wasn't a possum: a member of the Ektopodontidae family.

Daniel *deep in thought* "Ektopo" meaning "strange" and "odon" for "tooth" ...

Fenn Exactly!

Sam Craig was thinking along the lines of the *Chunia illuminata*.

He dragged a third party in – some lady who's right up there on possums and suchlike ... They dubbed the model EF206 and gave it the cute nickname of Chuck.

Daniel *in a brown study* Chuck ...

Fenn *very excited* Here's what's so spine-tingling.

Anton rang me on Skype, almost ejaculating in his BVDs.

The Aussie duo decided that Chuck was no possum. Chuck was an archetypal form of a monkey-like creature, complete with forward-orientated eyes, a slightly larger brain cavity, longer forelimbs, a prehensile tail and very adaptable fingers and toes.

Daniel *very quiet* A marsupial monkey ...

Fenn So it would seem.

Now, the specimens that were dug up here and the ones some adventurers found in the Van Der Ross valley of Niugini go a little way to supporting our theory that such a creature *might* have

evolved in parallel with the monkeys of South America and Africa. This Ellsworth Land find (if it turns out be solid) will add unbelievable weight to our corpus of evidence. I mean, the proof from this fossil model (that is Chuck) is gold, even though in reality it's still down somewhere about 1 and a half miles under solid pack ice.

The 3-D model will be air-dropped in less than half-a-day. Anton's rushing it to us. That's the plan anyway.

It's ... Jeez! We're sitting on a goldmine (in archaeological terms).

Daniel *woozy*

Yeah ... I ... I do think that I might faint.

END OF SCENE

## **II, Scene viii:** The "Marsumonk" Base Camp, Van Der Ross Valley

### **Subtitle: The Van Der Ross Valley, Niugini: January 4<sup>th</sup>.**

*Sir David Trout OBE has made good his promise to bolt out of London (with his stepdaughter in tow) for the Van Der Ross Valley base camp (Niugini). [Refer end ACT I.] The camp instantly becomes known as the "Marsumonk" base camp.*

*The dig itself is a shale embankment which has been protected from the weather by the erection of a robust carport structure.*

*The dig is approached from a rough scree track that runs uphill. At the base of this track sits the camp. It is far bigger and grander than the camp at Wet Dog Island.*

*Our camera moves into the large main room. In it, a huge eucalypt branch has been established. This is a "comfort post" for Mavis, a pet cuscus that has been tamed by one of the native diggers and loaned to Claudine. [Back story: Claudine must have expressed delight in Mavis and the man simply handed her over.]*

*Mavis is now curled up asleep in the branches.*

*A giant poster of Marsumonk is a feature of one wall in the main hut, along with the tired “John Lort Society” banner.*

*Claudine stands on a chair, pasting plain paper over the breasts of Marsumonk.*

*Sir David watches her from the doorway, hands on hips and smiling.*

Sir David                      It must be anatomically correct.

Claudine                    It's been annoying the tripe out of me. When the paper dries, I'll fix up the art work.

Sir David                      Only his mother would know him. Or “her” should I say.

                                         Right! Well, I’m heading up to the dig in order to rationalize my investment.

~~~~~ Break ~~~~~

Leon and Gordon are standing about in deep conversation. They spot Sir David and Claudine trudging up the scree bank, and the two workers approach them.

Leon *worried* Sir David, we might be in a thick, sticky wicket here. These men have been jabbering about "Wanspiks". The long and the short of it is that the local lads don't take kindly to internationals coming into Niugini to bleed the country dry.

Gordon *frowning* The Wanspiks are not far removed from bone-through-the-nose head-hunters. They do their talking with huge slashing knives. Violence is everyday to them.

Leon *worried* A couple of horror story characters suddenly appeared out of the jungle this morning and asked the Wanspiks here what we were “mining”. That’s the word they used: “mining”.

Gordon *frowning* Like we were excavating for petroleum or bauxite. It was bloody

scary, Sir David.

Leon *emphatic*

The heavy boys wandered off, but our lads were restless and unhappy afterwards. Upon further inquiry, they told us that it was more than likely that more toughs would visit the camp during the night to smash up anything that they can find.

Claudine *alarmed*

The finds from the dig! We'll have to remove them from the trestle tables ... Lock them in the storage cabinets.

Immediately, Claudine and Gordon swing into action to carefully move the various fossils from the trestle tables. Maintaining all labelling must be paramount.

Sir David *thoughtful*

Mmmm ...

Would you all feel safer if I called in some strong arms? A few chaps with impressive-looking rifles wouldn't go amiss. How would you feel ... ?

Gordon *shrugs as he works*

I don't think that we have any choice, Sir David.

Sir David *confident*

There are some braves not too far away, but we can't have them for a couple of days, I fear. Anton will furnish us with the needful. Once again, Whitely to the rescue!

Leon *careful*

Perhaps not openly toting weapons ... Perhaps just the knowledge that they have **concealed** weapons ...

Claudine and Gordon take off, in the direction of the main hut, carrying short wooden and plastic boxes.

Claudine *to Leon*

You think that the sight of firepower will aggravate the situation?

Leon *calling after her*

It has to be considered.

Leon begins to help Claudine and Gordon. Sir David nods and then watches the dig, with a deeply thoughtful look on his face.

END OF SCENE

END OF ACT II

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ACT III

III, Scene i: Further Suspicions Arise Amongst The Paparazzi

Subtitle: The Coroner's Court, Darwin: January 5th.

His Honour Mal Fischer is presiding at the Coroner's Court in Darwin. The court is extremely crowded and several women weep openly or sob into hankies. When The Coroner strides into the room and sits at his desk, everyone drags themselves to their feet.

Sergeant-at-arms Please be up-standing for the Coroner: His Honour Mal Fischer in this duly convened Court of Her Majesty The Queen in the city of Darwin.

The Coroner *sombre* Thank you everyone. Please be seated.

There is some mumbling and murmuring as the crowd sits.

The Coroner *sombre* This is a very sad day for most of you people ... for the city of Darwin altogether. We may not yet have reached the full tally of deceased souls following the ravages of Cyclone Myrtha. The latest count is 11 but many more people are still known to be

missing.

This is very sad ... tragic ...

Loud sobs are heard. The Coroner looks around and then continues.

The Coroner *clearly* My intention at this time is to establish what was done that should **not** have been done, and what **should** have been done that wasn't. I'm hoping that we can learn what must be a very painful lesson from this tragic natural event.

The rest of The Coroner's words fade out as our camera backs way back into a secluded recess, in which stand our two paparazzi journalists. We see Tinny and Auro from behind, in silhouette such that we cannot identify them. But we can make out their lips moving.

Auro *hoarse whisper* That tip-off I got about that Yankee bloke that looks like JSH turned out to be gold.

Tinny *hoarse whisper* Yeah? Is that so?

Auro can be seen to nod.

Auro *hoarse whisper* He was of interest to the boys in blue in Darwin. The big brawl: he was involved in that.

Tinny *hoarse whisper* Joking!

Auro *hoarse whisper* I've got a mate in the Feds. He gives me A1 feeds. I'll tip him off to keep an eye out for a Yankee with a black eye who is the dead spit of the PM.

Tinny can be seen to purse his lips and nod.

END OF SCENE

III, Scene ii: The Commonwealth Serum Laboratory: Daniel's DNA Swab

Subtitle: The Commonwealth Serum Laboratory Sydney: January 5th.

A very cutting-edge computer with large LDC screen adjacent is in camera shot.

The lavish screen indicates (by means of animated progress meter) that some process is taking place. When the bar reaches 100%, there is a slight pause, and then the name of the person from whom the DNA swab was taken flashes on the screen. The name then moves into a library folder on a smaller screen.

In the case that DNA was being compared to other samples of DNA (presumably collected at the scene of a crime) and a match was found, a RED light would flash. As it is, the samples appear to be collected merely to populate a database as no RED light is appearing.

Again, the process merrily runs through. Our camera closes in on the latest candidate for DNA analysis: Dr Daniel Thomas Marchbank.

The progress meter reaches 100% as our camera closes in. This is dramatic. After the mandatory slight pause, a sharp BLUE light begins to flash, and the computer emits a warning buzz.

A female laboratory worker in a white coat wanders up. She switches down the volume on the computer as she attempts to read the screen. We see the young woman stand back, frowning as the BLUE light continues to flash.

The young woman picks up a phone handpiece and stabs her fingers into a set of keys.

Lab worker Yeah ... Hi! Is Joey there?

Joey Milam.

Is he there? I'm in the lab.

Well ... I'm getting a BLUE light.

No ... It's just sitting there.

According to the laminated sheet, it says that if you get a BLUE light –

[Pause]

Okay.

The young woman waits patiently. We hear a quick, heavy footfall. In his uniform as a sergeant in the Commonwealth Police, Joey Milam quickly approaches.

Joey What's up?

The lab worker points towards the computer.

Lab worker It seemed to be ticking along beautifully and then it got to that name and started to play up.

Joey grabs the laminated instruction sheet and scans it.

Joey Yeah? So ... Does that mean there's a match?

Lab worker No. A RED light is a match. Then you can capture the details and keep going. But a BLUE light ... I've never seen that before. And it won't let me continue. Can't capture, can't bypass, can't proceed ...

Joey stares at the screen. He jots down the name and the ID.

Joey And what's this interception in relation to?

Lab worker The ... The brawl in Darwin on New Year's Eve. A man was stabbed.

Joey *frowns* Bit late, isn't it? Oh ... Oh, of course ... The cyclone ...

Lab worker I'd say so ... It only just came in. And it's put us **way** behind. Can you possibly kick it along? Please?

Joey nods decisively.

Joey Okay. I'll circumvent the alert with my security pass and you can keep going.

Joey presses a few key combinations and then is required to swipe his security card. The process seems to resume with the next DNA donor's name, and Joey marches off.

END OF SCENE

III, Scene iii: EF206 (Chuck) Flies In To Wet Dog Island**Side Note: Wet Dog Island, Timor Sea: January 5th.**

Daniel and Fenn along with locals Ed and Nat look up. A large Australian Army helicopter flies down to the approved altitude, and then the large article (the size of a tea chest) is jettisoned. The red parachute opens immediately, such that the tea chest lands gracefully in the bushes. The helicopter pilot gives Daniel and Fenn a wave and then departs.

*Daniel, Fenn, Ed and Nat struggle to lug the tea chest indoors. Daniel and Fenn will grunt and make random comments as they open the tea chest and extract the contents. After removing several layers of protective foam and air bags, the contents are finally revealed. The 3-D model is a life size representation of the fossil code-named EF206 (aka "Chuck"). It is a glorified fossil of *Chunia illuminata*.*

Daniel and Fenn are speechless. Fenn begins to cry.

END OF SCENE

III, Scene iv: The Commonwealth Serum Laboratory: Joey's Office**Side Note: The Commonwealth Serum Laboratory Sydney: January 5th.**

Joey Milam is in his office, and the equipment he works on is very cutting-edge.

We watch Joey's face as he types and watches the screen.

Joey *typing and* Doctor ... Daniel ... Thomas ... Marchbank ... 3589AD ... and
speaking to himself <Enter>.

Joey stares. He displays utter disbelief along with puzzled non-acceptance.

Joey *snarls* Nah! That can't be right!
Try again.

Joey re-types and clicks the <Enter> button. He stares in confused dismay at the results flashing on his screen.

Joey *aggrieved* What the fuck ... ?!

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

*Our camera takes in the loveliness of the gardens at The Lodge in Canberra. Meanwhile, we will hear the telephone conversation between Joey and James.*

Telephonist *voice-off*            Good afternoon. You have reached the private Canberra residence of the Prime Minister and his family. It's Pamela speaking.

Joey *voice-off*                      Hi Pam. It's Sergeant Joey Milam from the Commonwealth Police. I need to speak rather urgently with Mr James Dahlgetty. Would he be there please?

Telephonist *voice-off*            Just a moment Joey and I'll connect you.

*There follows an attractive purring buzz, and then a click.*

James *voice-off*                    Joey? How the hell are ya, mate?

Joey *voice-off*                      Yeah, mate. I'm sharp, sharp.  
  
Listen, what did you get up to on New Year's Eve? You weren't in Darwin, were you?

James *voice-off*                    Darwin? No mate – Sydney the whole night. I have witnesses, if that helps. Had to be smuggled out of The Y-Front Tavern.

Why – What's happened?

Joey *voice-off*                      And you didn't give a DNA sample? ... You know, you weren't swabbed at any time?

James *voice-off*                    No mate. What's the matter?

Joey *voice-off*                      The matter is that senior members of the Commonwealth Police

will be approaching your father in relation to what could be a very serious security breach. Or else it's just plain bad luck.

James *voice-off*

***What?!***

Joey *voice-off*

I don't feel comfortable talking about it on an open phone line. I'll send you an email.

*There is a decided click of a phone disconnect followed by another click.*

END OF SCENE

### **III, Scene v: Spilling The Beans To The Family In A Tropical Paradise**

**Subtitle: Hayman Island: January 5<sup>th</sup>.**

*This stretch of beach on Hayman Island is utterly picture-postcard. The shallow water is pristine, azure blue with sparkling white sand as a superb complement. The only people here (wading up to their hips) are James Dahlgetty, his mother Leanne and two sisters Megan and Jayne. As already established in ACT II Scene vi, the females are very, very attractive ladies with all the style and presence that could be desired.*

*The ladies chatter. They are very pleased to have James with them, but they still chatter.*

*James waits his chance. It comes, and he seizes the moment.*

James

Ladies! Before Dad joins us, and while we have this superb beach to ourselves, I have something important to tell you.

Megan *thrilled*

You've found a girl!

James

Listen, this is serious.

Dad had some sort of liaison with an older American lady called Virginia when he was a bit younger than I am now.

I'm sorry, Mum, but this has to be put on the table (so to speak).

We don't really have time to be polite and sensitive.

Virginia married a Mr Marchbank but must have been pregnant with Dad's child at that time. This all happened in the USA, by the way.

Anyway, this guy whose name is Dr Daniel Marchbank has been accidentally involved in a violent brawl in Darwin and subsequently had a swab taken. And that's why and how the shit has hit the fan.

This Dr Daniel Marchbank showed up as Dad's son **and** as my sibling on a Commonwealth DNA database.

*All three ladies cover their mouths with their hands and looked shell-shocked.*

*James flips a photo of Daniel from the pocket of his polo shirt. He silently hands this to Leanne.*

Leanne *recoils*                      He's the image of Dad! God! This is dreadful!

James *stern*                        No, it's not dreadful. It's good. That's what I want to impress upon you.

We have a good man (an anthropologist) to add to our family.  
This is a great thing and I don't want Dad or anyone to overreact.

*The photo is passed to Jayne and then to Megan. They are visibly moved by Daniel's likeness to their father.*

Megan *near to tears*              This is a disaster!

James *forceful*                    Please don't be negative. I earnestly believe that we have to stick together as a family and appear to be glad about this.

Leanne *angry*                      That's impossible.

James *patient*                      This is all win-win, Mum. Dad was a very young man – not much more than a boy, and an older woman seduced him. She did not ever tell Dad that she was pregnant. After all, she's on the other side of the world and she got married anyway. Maybe she never

even ***knew*** that this Daniel wasn't her husband's son.

Okay, so Dad has done nothing wrong, other than to have had unprotected sex (which is pretty stupid ... but it's not wrong).

Jayne *fastidious*

This conversation is becoming distasteful. I don't like to discuss Dad's sperm with you or with anyone.

James *ignoring Jayne's finer feelings*

According to the police, it was complete and utter bad luck that put Daniel in the vicinity of that brawl on the night when Cyclone Myrtha battered Darwin. The sample was taken as a "cover-your-arse" exercise and should by rights have been buried, destroyed.

But, as I said, the Feds are onto it and they'll have to interview Dad and possibly yours truly.

Leanne *angry*

I can't have anything to do with this, James.

It's totally outrageous.

James *pleading*

Give this bloke a chance.

Imagine it from his side: what must that be like for an American to be told by the Feds that you're the bastard son of the new Oz PM.

In fact, I plan to forestall them and tell him first. The head bloke at the University of Darwin reckons my new brother is about to head for a fossil valley in Niugini. I'll get there ASAP.

Jayne *horrified*

Niugini!?

Leanne *horrified*

Head hunters! No, James, you'll be killed!

Megan *warning*

Dad's coming.

James *pleading*

I'm begging you ladies to back up my plan, which is that we meet Daniel and welcome him into our family. If the Press think that we're trying to hide anything, it will give the wrong impression.

We have to jump off the front foot here.

*[Brightening, addressing his father]*

Dad! How's it going?

*Camera backs away as a very happy PM jogs up to join his family. We can see the PM reach out to shake hands with his son.*

END OF SCENE

### **III, Scene vi: An Emotional Memorial Service, Darwin**

#### **Subtitle: Darwin (a memorial) and Cape York (a flight to Niugini): January 6<sup>th</sup>**

*If you study the map of Australasia, you will see that Cape York is very close to Daru, but that Darwin is some distance away. I wanted James to fly out from Darwin, but it made no sense. Hopefully, the juxtaposition of the two events will work.*

*This scene will be a cross back and forth affair.*

- *James Dahlgetty is flown by Australian Army Black Hawk helicopter to the Marsumonk base camp from the helipad at Cape York (farthest tip of Queensland). We will have to see a large sign announcing that this is the home of "Cape York Tours".*
- *A beautiful morning memorial service is held in Darwin to remember the dead and missing (regarding the cyclone).*
- *The singer at the memorial service is a young policewoman in uniform. She possesses a strong, sweet coloratura voice and sings the hymn with passion and decorum.*
- *During James's flight, we will hear this haunting hymn for remembrance as we watch the views.*
- *We will cross back to the service to see the singer and the weeping, hugging congregation of mourners and citizens.*
- *A flock of white doves will be released; but by then, James is almost landing in the Van Der Ross Valley.*

*Thus, we will view the glorious scenes of Cape York as seen from the air, followed by the now tranquil, sparkling Timor Sea and then the rich, green jungle of Niugini. This scene will be aesthetically brilliant and must certainly move our audience to tears.*

Helicopter pilot *via*  
*miked earphones*

They're having a big memorial in Darwin.

My brother lives there. He reckons it was a nightmare.

34 dead now, they reckon.

James *via mikéd*  
*earphones*

Snap! My brother was there, too. He managed to get himself arrested.

Jeez! 34, you reckon? That number's shot through the roof, hasn't it?

Helicopter pilot *via*  
*miked earphones*

They found a whole bunch of people had been washed away in a swollen creek.

James *via mikéd*  
*earphones*

Agh! That's terrible.

Helicopter pilot *via*  
*miked earphones*

Yeah ... Not much left ... The crocs got at 'em, they reckon. Pretty gruesome.

James *via mikéd*  
*earphones*

That's ... That's sickening ...

*We watch the chopper take off out of sight.*

END OF SCENE

**III, Scene vii: Beach Cricket On Wet Dog Island****Side Note: Wet Dog Island, Timor Sea: Morning, January 6<sup>th</sup>.**

*On the beach at Wet Dog Island, Daniel and Fenn have a group of six indigenous men around them (Wally, Ed, Zack, Nat, Dom and Josh).*

*They have set up two sets of stumps and bails, 22 yards apart. Daniel wears a very old battered pair of pads, and some towels are tied around his lower arms. His cricket helmet is a bike helmet with some chicken wire stretched around it. He is in bare feet and swimming trunks. The only authentic part of his get-up seems to be the cricket bat.*

Wally                                      I'm gonna bowl at ya. Don't think about hittin' the ball into the drink because it's gotta stay there if it goes in. We got sharks and salties and poisonous water snakes 'ere.

Zack                                        "Salties" means saltwater crocodiles. They eat ya. Just like that.

Daniel *thumbs up*                      I got it.

Wally *pointing to the bush*                                      So you hit it up that way, mate.

Daniel *nodding*                         Okay, I got it.

Nat                                         Bewdy!

Daniel *to Fenn*                              Fenn, you go up there into that bushland and stand there. I'm going to hit the ball in your direction. And don't think about fouls or strikes or any of that, because so long as I hit it, you can catch it.

Fenn *nodding*                             Catch it. I can do that.

Daniel                                        Good.

*Fenn runs up the sand bank towards the bush.*

Fenn *to himself*                            I think I can do that.

*The locals take up their fielding positions. Wally runs in and bowls to Daniel, who easily hoicks the ball over to where Fenn stands. But Fenn is basically incompetent and misses the catch. Daniel runs to the far stump, watching for Fenn to regain the ball, and then lopes back.*

*The men chuckle as Fenn is obviously unable to locate the ball.*

Josh                                Take more runs, mate.

Daniel                              No thanks, two will be enough.

Josh                                Do ya want me to go and help 'im?

Daniel                              Yeah, if you don't mind ... That'd be great ... Thank you.

*Daniel strips off the bike helmet and does some arm-swinging exercises with the bat. Then, suddenly, Daniel is riveted. He spins his arm over and over, feeling his shoulder with the free hand. Then, without a word of explanation, Daniel tears back to the tent.*

oooooooooooooooooooo **Break** ooooooooooooooooooooo

*The six indigenous men and Fenn have joined Daniel, who (still wearing his pads and arm protection – we want the camera to catch that) is sitting indoors at a makeshift desk, talking by Skype to a comrade (Anton Whitely) at Philadelphia University. Daniel stares unblinkingly at the resin model before him. He points and gesticulates as he speaks.*

Daniel                              ... and the arm sockets. Where do you stand on -- Can you surmise or will you be able to surmise if the angle of turn on the arms could ever get to be 360 degrees as in simians? That would have been highly important for a swinging, apelike movement through the jungle. I'm wanting to advance our hypothetical evolution: could EF206 hold the embryonic configuration necessary for a simian-like advanced creature?

*Daniel grabs for the box of local fossil finds. Dom carefully hands it to him. Daniel holds a partial skull in front of the screen.*

Daniel                      Also, I'm interested in comparing *this* specimen dug here on Wet Dog Island with Old World catarrhines: I want to see if we can draw-out any similarities.

                                 But what I'm seeing from this distance is a tendency to platyrrhine structure.

                                 And a full examination of the teeth. I gave them a quick once over, but they are just fantastic. I'll need to study in juxtaposition with some extant phalangeridae.

                                 But the glenohumeral function is uppermost in my mind.

Anton *via Skype*                      Hold it! Hold it! I'm sensing that what you need are a couple of marsupial experts on board. Correct?

                                 Your friend in Darwin (Brett Forelli) has really come through for us and retained the services of Sam Craig from Queensland University and Leonie Carter from South Australia. Now these are two very highly regarded experts on all things marsupial. What they don't know hasn't been studied yet!

Daniel *delighted*                      That's a plan and a half!

Anton *via Skype*                      So here's what I want you to do. I need for you and Fenn to take Chuck, and high tail it to the southern coast of Niugini, to Daru. You're not that far away, actually. The Niugini officials are sending a Government launch to take you to Daru. From there, you guys will be flown to Van Der Ross Valley, where the Loonie-Toons Brits have started setting up camp. You guys will all be joining them.

Daniel *snarling*                      Daaaaaaah!

                                 Just hang five a moment there while I get someone to bring me a sick bag.

Anton *very forceful*                      Without Sir David Fishface and his Team of All-Stars, we don't have Chuck or any of the other superb fossils they bounced-up for

us.

So let's be a bit nice, shall we?

Oh, and they are under a bit of pressure from the natives in the area. Bit of trouble looming. The natives are restless. I suggest that you pack some firepower.

*Daniel slowly grins. He is imaging himself letting loose on the British rather than on the troublesome natives.*

Daniel *smiles nastily*      Oh, yeah ... I'd sure like to be "packing heat".

*Daniel has a really evil look on his face. He is imagining what mischief he could get up to with some serious weaponry.*

## IMAGINARY FLASHBACK

*Claudine is dressed in a kind of "Wilma Flintstone" outfit. Heavily made-up and with hands on hips, she is letting rip at Daniel, who is dressed as a latter-day "Fred Flintstone".*

Claudine *irate*      Pond scum, that's you! A Neanderthal warthog football hooligan foul-mouthed rat. The primates ought to be studying **you** rather than the reverse. You might try looking at yourself under a microscope, you poultice.

Daniel *furious*      The theory of backwards evolution can absolutely be sustained when you step up to the lab bench, Baby. Guided missiles have been named in your honour ... and ... and cyclones!

And you know what else? I think you're fat!

*Claudine begins to scream and physically rip into Daniel. He pushes her away and then calmly shoots her with a space-age rocket launcher. Bits of Claudine rain down upon Daniel, as he laughs demoniacally.*

END OF FLASHBACK

*The phone call ends. Nat smiles broadly and nods eagerly.*

Nat *very keen*                      I can get you the guns that the boss mentioned. There's some good fellas in the Army ... They can get us some good guns.

*Daniel looks from one man to the next. He is now very keen to press on with the planned excursion to Niugini.*

Daniel *very low voiced,*    Bewdy!  
*drawls*

END OF SCENE

### **III, Scene viii:** The PM's Son Visits The PM's Son [Part A]

#### **Side Note: Marsumonk Camp, Niugini: January 6<sup>th</sup>**

*It is a very overcast morning, with a heavy jungle rainfall imminent.*

*In the jungle clearing, near to the Marsumonk base camp, several people gather about, looking skyward. Most of the boffins shelter their eyes with their hands.*

*Our camera is positioned high overhead. The rotating blades of James's Black Hawk helicopter come into vision.*

*The helicopter moves away, and then lands momentarily on the far end of the clearing. A young male passenger in a versatile, serviceable jumpsuit leaps from the helicopter and is then handed a number of luggage items from within the chopper. The passenger gives a brief salute of farewell and scrambles clear of the machine, which lifts upward and veers off.*

*The passenger (James Dahlgetty) slips himself into his big backpack, and then recovers the other bits and pieces strewn about.*

*He walks quickly towards the base camp, smiling and waving. Upon reaching the group, James singles out Sir David.*

James *bonhomous* Sir David Trout? Yes?

Sir David *circumspect* Er ... Yes.

You're not Sam Craig from UQ ...?

*[Gestures]*

I mean, I hardly expected anyone quite so young ...

*James grasps the hand of the surprised Sir David, and the handshake is very firm and sincere.*

James Ah! Sorry for the ... I'm James Dahlgetty. Hope you can put me up ...

Claudine *frowns* Dahlgetty? You're not -- ?

James *remaining ebullient* Yes! Yes! I'm his son.

*Claudine introduces herself. There are more handshakes and exclamations of surprise.*

Sir David *lost* Whose son?

Claudine The new Australian Prime Minister.

James I couldn't be a blot on the escutcheon and beg for a hot cup of tea, could I?

And don't fret: I've brought a gift. Although, of course, we all recall those immortal words: "*Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes*".

Sir David *now utterly lost* Are you Greek?

*[Looks about for any kind of support]*

Is the Australian Prime Minister Greek?

*James recovers the freezer-bag and puts it in a safe place. Claudine is busy making hot tea for James.*

James Not at all. But I haven't come empty-handed.

I thought: "What would a group of Australian and American and British scientists need to lift their spirits".

Sir David *at sea* Well, just British for now. We expect a couple of Aussies to arrive at any time now. As a matter of fact, we thought that your helicopter was --

James There's a brace of strapping Yanks on their way, too.

*[Rubs hands together purposefully]*

Now! I'm here to make myself useful. Do you have any big-boy stuff that you want done?

*Claudine hands a steaming mug of tea to James. He smiles enchantingly. Claudine looks at him measuringly.*

Claudine How are you at fending off rampaging natives: Wanspiks?

James *confident* A doddle! That's my speciality, actually.

END OF SCENE

### **III, Scene ix:** Reconnoitre In The Hot, Wet Jungles Of Central Niugini [Part A]

#### **Side Note: The Marsumonk Base Camp, Niugini: January 6<sup>th</sup>**

*Heavy tropical rain falls. A helicopter has arrived at the Marsumonk camp and left; but we will not see that.*

*As the scene opens, Sir David holds a huge golf umbrella for Leonie Carter as they scamper under cover from the rain. Leonie's gear follows, carried by three of the local diggers. The pair gasps and makes skat comments on the fecundity of the weather.*

*Sam Craig and James share an umbrella. Sam has his backpack and some other luggage with him. They laugh and josh appropriately at the heaviness of the downpour.*

Sir David *bonhomous* Well, let's get you to your quarters.

*Claudine and James are seen to assist the Australian academics. Leonie makes many skat comments about the roominess and comfort of the large room.*

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

James unbuckles the freezer pack to extract a cake box.

James There's a shop in Canberra that does the best Black Forest Cake in the world. You'll have to give me your opinion. It's from Canberra via Cape York.

Ah! Look! They've thoughtfully provided a knife.

With as much care as possible, James opens the cake box and collapses the sides. The dumb-struck onlookers gasp at the overwhelming presentation of the high, wide cake. James immediately divides the cake into 16 wedges with the knife.

James There we go! We'll start off with 16 wedges – I know that some of you will want to guts down a whole segment, whereas others will split and share. Whatever it takes!

James decides that he will split his segment. He does so and then begins to eat the cake directly from his hand. Claudine snaps out of the trance and jumps into action.

Claudine Wait a bit! I'll fetch some paper plates and forks. And save some for the Americans.

Sir David *really puzzled* I'm sorry ... I'm not sure that I quite ...

END OF SCENE

III, Scene x: Reconnoitre In The Hot, Wet Jungles Of Central Niugini [Part B]

Side Note: The Marsumonk Base Camp, Niugini: Late Afternoon January 6th

Just as the Australians settle in, the Fokker Friendship carrying the Philadelphia duo (Daniel and Fenn) lands in the clearing in the late afternoon. Along with the two Americans is Nat (who would not hand over the weaponry unless invited to come along) and of course EF206 (Chuck).

The heavy rain falls unabated. There are neither umbrellas nor proffered help for the Americans. Fenn waves frantically to some men watching from a canvas shelter near the dig. He points dramatically to the tea chest containing Chuck. James is the first to respond.

Fenn *aggrieved* Christ Almighty! We got a treasure here greater than King Solomon ever saw and they just stand there watching us.

[Shouts]

Come down here and lend a hand, will you?

James, Nat and Daniel retrieve everything they are able to, including Fenn's large rifle. They tear over the clearing in record time, dumping the kit under cover, immediately retracing their steps to assist Fenn with Chuck. A couple of the local boys rock up, and together Chuck is safely toted to the base camp.

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

*Sir David is surveying the packs belonging to the Americans and Nat. He is very curious as to the rifles and the cricket gear. We hear and then see the men returning with Chuck. They are gasping for breath and are drenched to the skin.*

*Daniel (still sucking in big breaths) and Sir David eye each other without welcome. Daniel recovers and extends an arm for the obligatory handshake.*

Daniel *without emotion*      Sir David! Thank you for offering your hospitality.

Sir David *without emotion*                      And thank you for arriving at such short notice. I trust that the tea chest contains the beloved Chuck?

Fenn All in one piece (I hope). We took every precaution. Er ... Sir.

*Daniel realizes that some people in the room are unacquainted.*

Daniel I'm sorry, Sir David. This is my associate Fenn Larssen. Sir David Trout. And Nat ... Hey! I don't seem to remember if I ever heard your surname, Nat.

*Handshakes all round. No explanation of James's presence is offered.*

Nat *laughing* My name is "Silly Wet Fella" at the moment ...

Nah, I'm usually just Nat. But I can go for my father's name: Jarrah Jarrah.

*Sir David vaguely gestures in James's direction.*

Sir David Dr Daniel Marchbank ... This is James Dahlgetty who is delivering cake.

*The brothers shake hands. James can hardly take his eyes off Daniel's face; it is a work of great control for James not to break down. James quickly turns away to shake hands with Fenn and Nat.*

Daniel *to James* So tell me! Are you at all acquainted with the game of cricket and can you bowl a cricket ball?

*James nods enthusiastically. Sam clicks his disbelief at such lack of knowledge.*

Sam *snorts* His father played for Australia a few times. 'Course he can bowl!

*Leonie and Sam have wandered in. This brings more "colour" to Sir David and Daniel looks decidedly pleased.*

Sir David Ah! My other guests are the experts on all things marsupial. May I introduce Leonie Carter, who is a Fellow at Flinders University in South Australia.

And this gentleman is the famed Sam Craig, Reader at the University of Queensland. Sam was heavily involved in the Riversleigh finds: quite spectacular ... All the extinct marsupials ...

*More handshakes and "How-do-you-dos".*

Daniel                                We've brought along Chuck, that I know you are crazy to meet.  
He's currently swathed in all kinds of padding, so --

*Sir David has returned to his investigation of the kit.*

Sir David                            And these guns?

Fenn                                 Sir, through Nat's good offices, we got two Austeyr F88SA2  
combat weapons (the favoured firepower of the Australian Army, I  
hear) and – What did you bring, Daniel?

Daniel *calmly*                     I have a Smith & Wesson M&P40 and a Llama MAX-I C/F.

*James whistles, impressed.*

Nat *proud*                         My gun's got more stuff on it than Fenn's, but I don't know what it  
all does.

*Sam looks about, uncertain.*

Sam *concerned*                 Are you gents acquainted with weaponry at all?

Fenn                                 Yes, Sir. Sure! Daniel and me, we spent a couple of years in South  
America. We had to sleep with UZIs under our pillows. Almost we  
did ...

Sir David                         And the cricket gear? That all belongs to Mr Jarrah Jarrah, one  
presumes.

Daniel *smiling*                 No, Sir David. That gear belongs to all of us. Fenn and I have  
embraced the game. We're hoping to grab some practice.  
  
You'll remember that I can't sit around for long in one spot. I have  
to have a diversion so that I can think things through.

Sir David *smiles*                I remember that well ...

Daniel                                Say! Any hope that you might be a half-decent bowler, Sir? I  
mean, you couldn't bowl a coupla balls, could you, in an  
emergency?

Sir David *shakes head*        Sorry, lads. This enervating heat is knocking me about.



my razor of late.

Claudine *purring*

In your case, it's probably a huge bonus (speaking aesthetically) to hide under a covering of whiskers.

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

Daniel is chucking his stuff on his bed and giving his two firearms closer inspection. He is surprised and ill-pleased when he catches sight of Claudine approaching. She reaches out to touch his arm. Throughout her speech, Daniel's jaw is set tight as he distracts himself by looking over the weapon in his hand.

Claudine *sympathetic, a catch in her voice*

Daniel, I'm so sorry about you losing your mother. Anton told me ...

You have my complete sympathy ... **our** sympathy ... the whole team.

My mother is a giddy ornament to London society who married Sir David for all the wrong reasons. (If it weren't for me, I doubt they'd have **anything** in common).

I don't mean to say – Of course I'd miss her if she –

Daniel, your mother was a very wonderful person. And I'm sorry. Truly.

Daniel looks down at her hand still lying on his arm. She does not remove her hand. He attempts to look her in the eye but cannot do so.

Daniel *lost for words*

Uh ... Thanks ...

Claudine gives him a weepy smile and then turns to leave him.

Daniel *trying for humour*

Hey! You've put me off-guard now. I had some pretty tough, acerbic remarks to throw at you. I practised them in the little plane coming up here: overtones of bitterness and sour

disrespect. But after that touching speech, I'm going to have to hold back.

Claudine *laughing*

No, no! I want to hear all the badinage in your armoury. I just love crossing verbal swords with you.

Daniel

Huh!

Okay ...

And did you eventually marry the Italian guy? Mr Macaroni?

Claudine *smiles*

You are no doubt referring to Giorgio Campanole. I was ditched as it happens. That should give you plenty of fodder for your humour mill.

There!

Daniel

Oh yeah! Especially if he dumped you at the altar.

[Imitates the various parties]

"Does anyone have any objections to this match made in Heaven?"

"Yes, yes! I do!"

"But you're the groom, Sir."

"Who better than me to object? Have you tasted her cooking?"

Claudine *makes a face*

I'm a superb cook. Ravioli and lasagne. Mmmmm ...

And it was some 20 yards this side of the altar that he dropped me from a great height. He found a skinny, airhead model who worshipped him. And on reflection, I think myself lucky to have escaped unscathed.

Daniel and Claudine stand glaring at each other.

Then Claudine swiftly turns away and stalks off.

Daniel gives a quirky funny sigh.

Later, Claudine returns to the vacant main room, with Mavis the cuscus around her neck. She pulls up at the table, frowning.

Several letters have been written in chalk beside the letters "Y M M D D M": "L O W T Q M A S T P".

Claudine is both amused and puzzled.

Daniel's head appears in a doorway.

Daniel *smug*

Levin and Kitty.

"Anna Karenina".

To my way of thinking, those lovers were more satisfying than Vronsky and Anna were. I mean ... that's subjective. There was a fiercely masculine quality to Levin that appealed. Vronsky came across as a puling lapdog.

Daniel strolls into the room. He stands beside Claudine, tickling Mavis under the chin.

Claudine *caustic*

Thanks for the speed notes on Tolstoy. I'll remember them for the end of year exam.

[Points to the table]

So, what did I say?

Daniel

"You make me drool, darling man."

Claudine *scornful*

Huh!

And you said?

Daniel

Can't you work it out?

Claudine stares at the table and then shakes her head.

Daniel

Aw, come on. You haven't even tried.

Claudine *frowning*

Um ... Well, the best I can manage is: "Love or war the Queen must answer ..."

Claudine (puzzled) shrugs, defeated. Daniel snorts.

Daniel My tribute states: "Leave off with the quirky messages and stick to Palaeontology".

Claudine *affronted* That was clear! How was I supposed to get that?

Claudine promptly writes a huge "D" on the table.

Daniel "D" for "Damn".

Claudine shakes her head, disturbing Mavis.

Claudine *smug* "D" for "Ditto".

Daniel "D" for "Ditto". Okay.

[Matter of fact]

And just so that you know: if I ever propose to you (little sweet desert blossom), I won't write it down in esoteric chalk letters on a card table. I'll sweep you into my arms and bury my face in your hair. Furthermore, you will **not** be left abandoned at the altar.

Claudine *making a face* Can't wait.

END OF SCENE

END OF ACT III



ACT IV

IV, Scene i: The PM's Son Visits The PM's Son [Part B]

Side Note: Marsumonk base camp, Niugini: January 6th

James has convinced Daniel to give him a private audience in one of the prefab huts. This is filled with all manner of lumber and gear. The door remains open.

Daniel is wary; James is uncertain how to continue. James gives a hesitant laugh.

Daniel *abrupt* I guess I don't recall if you already told me what you want with us. Or are you secretly a member of the famed and feared Australian Press Gallery on the hunt for a resonating story about Marsumonk? Was the cake a sweetener (in more than one sense)?

James I'm an engineer by profession.

 You're on the money, though: Australia's press gallery is legendary: it brings a whole new meaning to the word "evil".

 No, I'm not a journo ... But ...

 Actually ... Um, here's the rub ... Actually, I'm your brother. Your

half-brother.

Daniel's jaw drops. He stares in complete disbelief at James. There is a ghastly silence.

Daniel *disbelieving* Bullshit ...

James shrugs and clears his throat.

James Sorry to be blunt about it. Your father (that is, **our** father) is the Prime Minister of Australia: John Sturt Dahlgetty. He was a moderately successful cricketer in his day ... Quite a while ago now ... He --

Daniel stands and takes a couple of agitated steps about. The atmosphere is highly charged.

Daniel *stern* My father is ... **was** ... My father was Walter Marchbank. And I only have one sister, Kath. My mother Virginia is not long deceased ... So, Kath is about all the family that I have left.

James You now also have a half-brother (myself) and two rather lovely half-sisters (Megan and Jayne).

Daniel *sour* No I don't.

James *diplomatic* Well, that's up to you, Daniel. Your --

Daniel *angry, voice breaking* My real father is dead. The other stuff ... I don't care about who my biological father is. I don't care. I don't wanna know. Okay?

James has to clamber over difficult terrain (in that Daniel is blocking out his arguments).

James *strong* I can appreciate that you're totally kicked in the guts by this discovery. I was more or less shattered when my mate in the Feds told me about it.

What I was going to say is that a swab of your DNA was taken in Darwin and upon analysis it set off several very loud alarms. Apart from being the spitting-image of the enigmatic new PM of Oz, you have his DNA as well. They had me on file as well as Dad ... For security reasons, I guess ... I dunno ...

Bells rang and Commonwealth heavies (the Federal Police in fact) converged on my family, waving your photo in our faces. But we had received a tip-off from my mate Joey, so we were prepared ...

No, the big struggle now will be to stave off the Press. As I said: "evil".

Daniel *aghast* They had a photograph of me ... ?

James nods. Daniel cannot take it in.

Daniel *losing it* Why are you here?

James Firstly, I'd love to get to knock-around with my older brother. That would be awesome. And secondly, as a fully qualified engineer, my services might be valuable to the enterprise. I can help erect hides, tree platforms and so forth.

You wondered if I could bowl a cricket ball. I'm guessing that I'll prove a far more talented bowler than either Nat or Sir David Trout OBE ... So, my being here is win-win-win.

James shrugs. Daniel paces about, utterly distracted.

Daniel rakes his fingers through his hair, unable to take in the news he has received.

Claudine enters the area, bearing the last wedge of cake on a paper bread and butter plate.

Claudine Would either of you gentlemen care to finish off the last portion of Black Forest Cake? Daniel? James?

Daniel stares at Claudine, breathing irregularly. Again, he distractedly drags his fingers through his hair. He even gives a half-sob, and points vaguely in James's direction.

Daniel *to Claudine,* This guy is my half-brother.
stricken

James leaps to his feet and abstracts the plate from Claudia's fingers. She is staring at Daniel in a trance-like state.

Just then, a burst of heavy tropical rain belts down.

James *smug* Thanks, Darl. I'll polish this off for you, if you're keen to get the dishes done ... or ... whatever it is that you have to do ...

With his back to Daniel and Claudine, James stands in the open doorway, watching the torrential downpour as he scoffs the cake. Behind him, we see Claudine and Daniel standing stock still, eyes locked. And then, with a great effort of will, Daniel leans forward to pull Claudine into his arms, burying his face in her hair.

END OF SCENE

IV, Scene ii: The Paparazzi Arrive On Wet Dog Island

Side Note: Wet Dog Island, Timor Sea: January 8th

Auro and Tinny have arrived at Wet Dog Island and stand beside the deserted remains of the temporary structures recently habited by Daniel and Fenn.

Auro and Tinny are overweight, unattractive men wearing daggy T-shirts and shorts, thongs on their feet and daggy sun hats. This is the first time we have actually seen them properly. Auro carries a very meaningful-looking movie camera. Both men face the five remaining native diggers and appear astounded.

Facing Auro and Tinny are Wally, Ed, Zack, Dom and Josh.

Tinny *appalled* Whatd'ya mean "they've gone"?!

Dom They gone to Niugini, mate, and me cousin Nat Jarrah Jarrah gone with 'em, but.

Wally *harsh* And ya can't just rock-up here without a permit, boys.

 This is Native Title land. Ya have to go back to the mainland and get a permit from the Ranger's office.

Josh Costs ya 150 bucks, but.

Zack *grinning broadly* And somebody like a vicar or a schoolteacher or that has to sign-on that you're of good character.

Tinny *annoyed, frustrated* Hang on a minute! If those Yanks were allowed here, we are too!

Wally shakes his head emphatically. As he does so, the other natives join in with the head shaking.

Wally *determined* They had a permit. They were looking at the fossils we dug up. That was all tied up in red tape. They were officially part of the dig, mate.

And they were good blokes, too.

Ed But they gone now. Gone to Niugini. With guns and rifles. My cousin Nat Jarrah Jarrah took with 'im a gun as big as Brazil.

Tinny is confused. He points to Dom in an accusing way.

Tinny *angry* I thought you said this Jarrah Jarrah bloke was **your** cousin.

Ed, Wally, Zack, Dom, Josh together He's all of our cousin! We're all related to Jarrah Jarrah by blood.

Tinny scratches his head. Auro takes command.

Auro *[To Tinny]*

Get yer pen out, Tinny, and take this down.

[To Wally]

Where did they go and how can we get there?

Tinny squats such that he can write on the inside of the lid of a cigarette packet.

Wally You gotta get yerselves to Daru on the Niugini coast and then fly or drive to Van Der Ross Valley.

Auro *to Tinny* Did ya get that?

Tinny nods. He squints at Wally as he points to the launch.

Tinny Can we get to this Daru place in that?

All eyes look at the large launch anchored in the shallows.

Wally *shrugs* Yeah. Why not? S'long as youse have got plenty of juice. And you have to be quick about reboarding. There's sharks and crocs in this water, mate.

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

*We see Tinny and Auro carefully but quickly stepping in the shallow water towards their launch.*

Tinny *worried*                      Auro ... Mate ... Do we need to think about getting some firepower?

Auro *decidedly*                      No, we'll be right.

Tinny                                  Those blokes said --

Auro *very firm*                      Look! There's not a Yankee been born that doesn't over-react. They just love to have guns hanging off their belts or over their shoulders.

*[Gesturing with the movie camera]*

This baby's all we're gonna need.

END OF SCENE

#### **IV, Scene iii:** Reconnoitre In The Hot, Wet Jungles Of Central Niugini [Part D]

#### **Side Note: The Marsumonk Base Camp, Niugini: January 8<sup>th</sup>**

*Daniel, Leonie and Sam are in close conference. Sir David wavers about in the background, a little petulant. He is imbibing a glass of champagne.*

*Daniel has pinned some large glossy posters onto a pinup board. These represent two genesis primates and any photographed fossil evidence (as described).*

Daniel

As previously discussed, this is simply a preliminary overview to see if closer inspection of the exhibits will prove worthwhile.

Okay. So this guy is *Plesiadapis tricuspidens*. An extinct mammal.

Is he a rodent or a protoprimate? The battle rages over that one. He has a muzzle and lacks the convergent orbits associated with primates.

He was scampering around in the treetops during the Palaeocene and exhibits a broad adaptive radiation during the Eocene. But I would say that there's every possibility that he was just starting out during the Cretaceous, darting about to dodge the dinosaurs.

Fossil evidence is very scarce for this boy.

What have been found in plenty are the weird molars designed for chomping fruit. You'll see from this photo here that these are multi-faceted. But otherwise, the teeth were pure rodent. And he was clawed.

The weird teeth belonging to this early primate tallies with the marsupial weird teeth.

Sir David *hugely*  
*impatient*

Throw me a crumb!

*Daniel whips around, looking at Sir David in surprise.*

Sir David

I need to hear you talk about solid evidence, Dr Marchbank.

*The scientists are aghast at this untimely interruption.*

Daniel *faltering*

We're merely summarizing the --

Sir David *blustering*

I urgently require you to make a connection. I need something,

***anything ...***

*[With vicious snarl]*

My Godforsaken opponents ... That tribe of recalcitrants who masquerade as savvy media scribes ... They can't and shan't make game of me a moment longer. (And by "me", of course I am referring to the John Lort Stokes Society).

Daniel *lost*

Sir David, it's well-nigh impossible to --

Leonie

There are umpteen factors involved, some of which we can't possibly be aware of. For instance, the environment in which the animals dwelt. Were there smooth-trunked palms to clamber up? Or did lawyer vines grow in profusion? And add to these factors --

Sir David *flustered*

It's all that I hear from you boffins: excuses!

"Just keep paying the bills, Sir David, and we'll potter along with our august prognostications." That's all hunky-dory.

*Daniel is at sea. He looks about at the others for inspiration. What is Sir David on about, or is he three sheets to the wind? Just as Daniel begins to argue with Sir David, Gordon calls out to the financier, who flounces off in dudgeon.*

Daniel *astounded*

My brief from the University of Philadelphia is to investigate, using soundly based empirical methods. That is how I was trained ...

*Daniel watches Sir David leave at Gordon's call. Daniel scratches his head and then looks pleadingly at Sam and Leonie. They all laugh in an embarrassed way. Daniel takes a big breath and resumes, pointing to the other large poster.*

Daniel

Now, this one is more in line with what we'd expect of a protoprimate. Once again, most abundant fossils were excavated from Eocene rock strata.

This is another Adapidiform: ***Notharctus tenebrosus***.

Okay ... So now the claws have evolved into nails. This gives greater digital flexibility. I don't know if you've ever watched a

woman with false claws trying to undo a knot of string – a woman with short nails can also unravel the knot, but she goes about it in a completely different way.

Anyhow (that's just an aside), the digits are looking more like separate spatulate fingers with opposable thumb. The big toe of the hind foot is showing a tendency to divergence. Again, an adaptation to grasping branches and manipulation: pulling apart fruit, nuts and flowers.

The forward-facing eyes have evolved here in answer to the need for binocular, stereoscopic vision: measuring distance in the treetops. We have no way of surmising if colour vision was present.

Sam                      Here, you are ticking off the basic requirements for primate development.

Daniel                  Yes. The eyes, the fingers and nails. The brain size will increase over time due to the requirement to mentally codify the position of food, when it's available and where to find it, the colours of ripe fruit and general societal demands.

*Sam and Leonie nod wisely.*

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

Claudine collects some mugs in a rough-hewn bark tray. We can hear Sam, Sir David, Fenn, Leonie and Daniel debating fiercely in the background.

Claudine moves into the galley, where Nat awaits her arrival.

Nat *frowning* They've been at it nearly four hours. They need to belt a ball around.

Claudine Don't ask my permission. Just barge in there and stir them up.

END OF SCENE

IV, Scene iv: The Paparazzi Drive Through Central Niugini

Subtitle: The rough road to Marsumonk base camp: January 8th

Tinny and Auro (dirty and bloody) have managed to get to Niugini and have bought a wreck of a 4 wheel drive. The drive through Niugini on winding dirt tracks is ultra uncomfortable. Auro drives whilst Tinny tries to negotiate a GPS receiver which appears to be playing-up and a large unfolded map.

Auro grim anger If we have to stop just **once** more to get this fuckin' heap of shit out of a bog, I'm gonna lose it in no uncertain fashion.

Tinny, struggling with his overload of information, just makes a low throat sound. Auro continues to look cheesed-off as he drives over the difficult terrain.

Tinny excited Woo-hoo! Here we go!

Auro hopeful What? We've won Lotto?

Tinny grinning Our tip-off bloke has texted that James Dahlgetty has left Cape York yesterday morning on an Army Black Hawk chopper bound for this same valley in Niugini that we're headed for.

Auro ugly grin Daddy's sent sonny-boy in to tidy things up. He's gonna run the Yank out of town on Daddy PM's instruction.

Auro (on mulling things over) quickly becomes even angrier.

Auro very sour On a Black Hawk ... At the taxpayers' expense ... While we're negotiating this dunny of a jungle in a fucking World War II relic ...

That right there is newsworthy plus ten: PM's son in mercy dash

to evict unwanted brother.

All of that will be revealed to the Australian public, Tinny my boy.

Never fear ... Never fear ...

END OF SCENE

IV, Scene v: Wanspik Cricket

Side Note: The Marsumonk Base Camp, Niugini: January 8th

In a clearing, the chaps are having a spell with a friendly game of cricket.

We now see a close-up of James rubbing the cricket ball on his groin.

James *voice-off* ... and the beautiful thing is, that you're giving yourself enormous physical pleasure on the teve in front of millions of international cricket fans and it's all done with everyone's implied blessing.

Daniel is seen to be standing in the pose of a resting batsman, leaning on his cricket bat, with the other hand on his hip, and one foot crossed over the other.

Daniel *amused* Bullshit!

Sir David No, it's quite true. He's legally polishing the ball. He may even add sweat or spittle (so long as it's tastefully applied). But no sunscreen or insect repellent or --

Daniel *laughs out loud* I saw one of the guys do that when we were kidding around in Darwin. But I thought it was just his way of bein' funny. You seriously say that the real legend cricketers do that?

Sir David Certainly.

Daniel *in denial* Get outta here! That's utter crap! You're pulling my leg here.

Sam No ... He's fair dinkum. It's a legitimate part of the game for the

bowler to rub-up the ball on his groin. Mad not to!

You must have noticed the red stain on the white trousers?

James bowls and Daniel is on strike, now adopting the batting pose.

Sir David umpires.

Daniel skies the ball. It goes into the nearby scrub.

Just as Nat yells, and heads off to fetch the ball, there is a strange deep noise emanating from the jungle. Nat stops, uncertain.

| |
|--------------------------------|
| The Wanspik Cricketer Appears. |
|--------------------------------|

Deep male *voice-off* Catch! He caught it.

A huge Wanspik emerges from the jungle, holding the ball between finger and thumb. As he comes out into the open, he holds the ball up, such that each man is able to see that he has caught the ball.

The Wanspik is impressive: stripped to the waist, he has a crowning glory made up of many colourful bird of paradise feathers along with coloured paint on his cheeks and neck, and a large bone threaded through his nasal septum. He is very tall and wide, with solid arms and legs. This Wanspik is a very powerful unit.

The men freeze. However, the Wanspik is oblivious to the fear, and strides slowly along, measuring out his run in. He even rubs the ball on his groin. Daniel chuckles as he shakes his head in disbelief.

Wanspik Bowl ... He bowls ...

The Wanspik runs in to Daniel's dismay and bowls a very good ball at medium pace. Daniel misses, both through fear and unpreparedness.

*Like a banshee the Wanspik screams, arms outspread: **HOWZAT!***

Sir David is the only one to keep his cool.

Sir David *shakes head* Not out.

There is a ghastly pause. Daniel has carefully thrown the ball back to the Wanspik, who tosses the ball about in his hands, looking morosely at Sir David. James, Sam and Nat are still frozen.

Daniel rescues the situation.

Daniel *to the Wanspik* Do you ... Do you wanna have a turn with the bat, mate?

Daniel steps quickly forward, offering the bat to the Wanspik.

Daniel Do you need the pads as well, mate? I can take these off in a coupla seconds if you ...

The Wanspik takes the bat and stomps towards the makeshift wicket.

Wanspik *very deeply* No pads. Juss willow. No pads.

The Wanspik takes his guard, looking every inch a cricketer. Sir David, James, Nat, Sam and Daniel look at each other, with circumspection. Without words, the men decide to allow James to bowl. He strides out his run and then turns. The Wanspik smacks the end of the cricket bat into the dirt and roots whilst awaiting the delivery. James runs in and bowls a superb bouncer. With the ball threatening to take the Wanspik out, the Wanspik calmly smacks the ball back towards James. With grace and poise, James takes a very athletic catch. In spite of the extreme delicacy of the situation, James cannot help himself.

James *delighted* Caught and bowled! Our Dad would be proud of me.

Daniel and James share a high high-five, followed by James/Nat and then James/Sam. The Wanspik simply places the cricket bat on the ground and solemnly stomps off back into the jungle without a word.

The men laugh with relief.

Sam *rueful* Well, that was scary plus five. I hope I didn't soil my y-fronts.

Sir David We were all cool in the emergency, weren't we?

And you chaps will mention to Miss Cabot that I maintained my *sang froid* during that rather harrowing episode ... And that I was a model of tact and diplomacy throughout. Okay?

Daniel *amused* You got it.

END OF SCENE

IV, Scene vi: Canberra, Where The PM Makes Plans**Subtitle: The Office Of The Prime Minister: January 8th.**

The Prime Minister is in his office with his female assistant.

Mike Munday pops his head around the door. The PM waves him in.

Mike stands at ease, but very businesslike.

John Yes, Mike?

Mike Prime Minister I have some business to discuss with you.

John looks up and stares at Mike, who wears a determined look.

John takes the hint and nods dismissively to the young woman, who quickly slips out of the room, closing the door behind her.

John Mike ... Sit down, won't you.

Mike does not take up the invitation: he continues to stand.

Mike *strong jaw, hard eyes* Prime Minister, I've had word from the Foreign Affairs department. The people there strongly advise you **not** to attempt to "drop into" Niugini. The risks far outweigh any political impact you might achieve.

John *in command* My two sons are in a tropical jungle valley doing wonderful things. I'm joining them. So are you.

Mike Prime Minister, you will compromise your safety. I cannot express in strong enough terms the danger which --

John If you wish to, I'll gracefully accept your withdrawing from the adventure. No drama.

There's no way that I'm going to take a married man with two kiddies into a trouble-spot against his better judgement.

Mike *aggressive* My well-being is not a consideration, Prime Minister. It's **you** I'm concerned for!

John You want me to distance myself from my son ... The effect of a bastard son (and an American to boot) on the polls ... His involvement in a venture which has been vetoed by His Holiness the Pope and by the President of the United States of America and any number of other eminent personages.

Mike Exactly! So --

John And I want to meet my son who has suddenly appeared in a neighbouring country without malicious intent or security risk or – Mike! A son whom I never knew existed. He's in Niugini. Imagine if he were to be chopped up by savages before I ever got to meet him. It's unthinkable! And James is there, too!

Mike Yes, Prime Minister. I understand that, but --

John *decided* We'll take a couple of heavies with us. Some battle-hardened SAS boys. Armed to the teeth. We'll demand that they are heavily scarred and have testosterone-charged tats on their arms and necks. That'll give us confidence.

Mike *very severe* Prime Minister, this flippancy is quite out of place when --

John *smiling* I have a name, Mike. We are about to become chummy on bivouac, so it's okay to call me "John".

Mike I can't do that, Sir.

John Well, I'd rather you did.

Don't get me wrong: I'm bloody glad to be the Head Honcho of Oz. But it sounds like I've got my head up my arse when I get called by my title 24/7.

Mike presses his lips together hard. His eyes are dark. John points to him in an engaging, funny way.

John *savvy* Heh!

You'd rather call me Richard Cranium, though, wouldn't you and risk getting the sack.

Mike *despairing*

Prime Minister, the President of the US has asked the University of Philadelphia to close down their Marsupial Monkey project. He has stated that he and the Pope and a slew of other world leaders are all in agreement: it is dangerous to tinker with God's great work.

John snorts his contempt for the President's weak response to the Creationist lobby.

John

You know what I think?

I think he's wasting his time. They all are. By that I mean that the ***whole thing*** is a waste of time.

Use your common sense. There are so many monkeys leaping about in the world. Their only threat comes from deforestation. They are biological winners. Monkeys provide a solid example of Life finding a sure thing.

So ... flip-side.

With so many possums running amok, wouldn't it be expected that if they were going to become monkey-like somewhere along the line, then they would have done just that? And how many are there?

Answer: none.

It's a waste of time.

Mike

Are you going to call the Prez and tell him that?

John *grinning*

We're going one better.

You'll take a decent movie cam with you and you'll record my son's response to the President's decree. I'll interview him. It will be the highest rating show on TV as the peeps come off their holidays and return back to their jobs. We'll get the TV blokes to shove it on in Prime Time.

[Waxing lyrical]

Prime Minister John Sturt Dahlgetty alongside his son James will

thrash it out with the son and brother they never knew they had.

Bloody marvellous!

Mike *appalled*

You can't be serious, Prime Minister.

John *laying down the law*

Yes I am bloody serious, Mike Munday.

We'll take an RAAF jet to the closest spot near Cape York we can get and then a chopper from there to this Van Der Ross Valley, just as James did.

With the movie cam and the two SAS toughs.

And while in the chopper and thereafter, you'll address me as "John" or I'll spiflicate you.

Oh, and another thing.

The camera closes in on the PM. He is in deadly earnest.

John *coldly serious*

This great country is great because people questioned **everything**. Advances in science, medicine, agriculture, space travel ... The second that a high-and-mighty head of state decrees that certain lines of enquiry must be shut down for fear of what they'll find, that's the second that the advance and progress of the human species is doomed.

I don't want to **ever** hear **anybody** say shit like that to me again, **whoever** the hell they are.

Mike and John stare at each other. John snaps out of the trance.

John

Go and ring for a car to ferry us to the airport, and the jet, camera, tattooed toughs et cetera et cetera ... And you'll need a kit. So will I, come to that ... I think we'd both look good in camouflage.

Mike *grins and shrugs*

Okay John. You got it.

The Prime Minister, as pleased as Punch, pats Mike on the shoulder.

John *very pleased* Good man! Good man!

END OF SCENE

IV, Scene vii: Daniel Considers The Theory Of Convergent Evolution

Side Note: Marsumonk base camp: January 8th.

At Marsumonk base camp, in the large main room, Daniel stares at the large cartoon of Marsumonk which Claudine had earlier defaced. He drops his usual black book onto the table.

After a little while, Daniel puts his hands on his chest in the manner of a woman trying to cup her breasts with her hands. Daniel stares at his own arms as he does so.

Claudine cannot resist. She strolls over to him, with Mavis on her shoulder.

Claudine *jovial* Afraid that we are developing man boobs, are we? I can give you some ointment for that.

Daniel What happened to Marsumonk?

Claudine I had to remove his breasts ... **Her** breasts.

The cartoonist went to the trouble to give her a pouch. What on Earth did he/she think was inside the pouch? Christmas crackers?

I mean ... Duh!

Claudine shakes her head and makes clucking sounds as she goes off about her business. Daniel (still holding his chest) frowns as he stares at the cartoon.

Claudine returns.

Daniel *equable* I've watched groups of young lactating mothers nursing their infants. They sit around and yack. A new mom receives assistance from the others. Maybe the grandmother helps put the tiny sucking mouth onto the nipple.

Claudine is uncertain as to where this conversation is going.

Claudine Certainly. When nothing better is on offer, the most enjoyable pastime for a vigorous man in his 30's is to watch women breast feeding in a group. And jotting down black bookers.

Daniel is still holding his flat male breasts.

Daniel *thoughtful* You defaced this cartoon because it was anatomically wrong, chestwise. I gotta wonder what **else** is wrong?

Claudine *scornful* The pouch itself is absolute rubbish. Leonie almost threw up when she first saw it.

Daniel *forceful* Apart from the breasts and the hinky pouch, what **else** strikes you as out of place?

Claudine Put your hands in your pockets, for goodness sake.

I can't discuss anatomy with a man who is gripping his pecks.

Daniel *firm* Look at my arms then and answer the damn question.

Claudine studies Daniel, pouting. She draws in a breath.

Claudine *baldly,*
pointing at Marsumonk If you want a straight answer, Dr Marchbank, then I shall give you one.

None of the marsupial remnants found here or on Wet Dog Island or in Antarctica support this kind of beast.

We found **not one** fossil exhibiting primate glenohumeral full rotation.

That would preclude the normal primate --

[Puts hand high above head]

-- hands-held-high posture as well as swinging and acrobatics (as monkeys do).

Further, I saw no disposition towards such a development.

Daniel *nods* You know what? I've posited that very same problem to Anton Whiteley.

Daniel pushes his hands into his pockets. He now turns his attention to Claudine. He looks specifically at her breasts in a thoughtful, non-sexual way.

Claudine *mimicking a medieval peasant* Shall I undress for you, my Lord?

Daniel looks quizzical, and completely unembarrassed.

Daniel *po-faced* Not yet. But I'll need you tomorrow for a modelling job. You could show the Macaroni King just what he missed out on. If he were here, that is.

Idly thinking, Daniel retrieves his black book and strolls in a very leisurely fashion outside. Claudine watches him with her head to the side.

END OF SCENE

END OF ACT IV



ACT V

V, Scene i: Daniel Answers The Question: "Could There Be A Marsupial Monkey?"

Side Note: Marsumonk base camp, Niugini: January 8th, evening.

In the middle of the main hut, Daniel has placed two chairs: one has on it a demented representation of a baby.

Sam, Sir David and Leonie gather around the tea tray (big mugs only). They chat amicably. Fenn is pouring over a topographical map. James is not present.

Daniel marches in with his hand holding Claudine's upper arm, almost as if he has made a public arrest.

Daniel

Okay. Could I have your attention, please?

I've got this whole thing sorted out (I think), but I need Claudine to put this into perspective.

Claudine makes to protest, but Daniel is on a roll.

Daniel

The reason why we are as we are, and apes are apes and monkeys are monkeys, et cetera comes down to this.

Long flexible limbs, binocular eyesight with colour vision, and a disposition towards societal structure. We recognize different individuals in the group. We can use a universal sign language to communicate with lost tribes. Our memory of lessons learnt, of the immediate terrain, of known weather patterns – these are all simian and primate strengths.

(Leonie, I might just as well have asked you to be my beautiful assistant, but ... Claudine has never had children, so ...)

Leonie *smiling*

That's quite alright. I'd rather watch anyway.

Claudine appears to be bewildered.

Daniel

I'm now going to ask Claudine to pretend that that dumb object there is a month-old baby, and it's crying. She is a lactating mother and one of her breasts is heavier with milk than the other.

Now, I'm going to ask Claudine to act naturally and pretend to breast-feed the baby. You don't have to strip off or anything like that: just pretend.

Okay, go!

Claudine looks about. All eyes are on her. Everyone but Daniel appears intrigued.

Claudine

Alright then ... My right breast is aching with milk. And so ... the child is howling and this is what I'll do.

Claudine scoops up the "baby" very carefully, and then sits down. She pretends to put the baby to her right breast. She looks up at Daniel, who rushes forward.

Daniel *excited*

Now! This woman has never performed this activity before; it's all down to instinct and what she's seen other women do. In the monkey world, the females congregate to feed, groom or guard the babies. This new mother follows the others in the group. Societal awareness. Group therapy.

Look carefully at the disposition of the mother's arms. Because of

the fact that her **upper** arm is equidistant with her lower arm, she is able to take up a comfortable position as she sits. Her folded arms form a natural cradle for the child.

[To Claudine]

Do you mind if I point to your breast? You can leave off feeding the infant, if you want.

Everyone laughs and shifts about. Claudine puts the bundle aside.

Claudine *giggling* You may point, Dr Marchbank, but I charge 20 euros for touching.
More laughter.

Daniel *pointing as appropriate* The simian and primate breast is here, adjacent to the armpits. There could be nothing more natural than for the mother to fondle and hold her infant at this height. She could clutch the clinging child (or children) to her ventral plane with one free hand only if her **upper** arm were long enough to permit this.

Daniel stops. He wanders about, deep in thought.

Daniel Claudine. From the top of your mind, give me your thoughts (in a similar vein) on tree-dwelling marsupials.

Claudine Me? Erm ... Well, for a start ... There is no breast feeding. The lactation process takes place very early on in the privacy of the pouch. The animal runs along branches but does not swing from one branch to another. Rather, some marsupials have wing-like membranes. They can float or rather swoop around the forest. No society. They meet and mate. Oh! And the female often carts her brood around on her back. The little ones cling to her back.

Daniel Good! Thanks Claudine. We could spend an hour or five covering the Macropods which have proved stunningly successful. But let's stick to these tree-dwellers.

Sam! Your thoughts, please.

Sam I hear you. And I can see where your proposition is headed (I think).

A fossil was found that proved to be of a long extinct marsupial. It exhibited some simian characteristics which excited the community. However, this will prove to be just another case of convergent evolution. (As in) scientists might liken a big buck kangaroo's head to that of a donkey.

With this in mind (in your opinion) there would have been no evolutionary impetus attached to the possum. No connection.

There is a long pause.

Daniel None whatsoever.

Leonie The marsupial infant being safely tucked away in its pouch and able to suckle on demand without the mother's direct assistance, there was no leaning back to feed in a mothers' group. The marsupial mother would have been solitary, scampering along the branches. The shorter humerus was not an encumbrance.

Sir David *bereft* But ... It's such a good idea, the longer arms.

Claudine Evolution doesn't work that way, Sir David. Hindsight and bucket list don't apply.

Every so often, an aberration occurs, and one of three things happens. The aberration is harmful, and so is bred out of the gene pool very quickly. Or, the aberration is of positive assistance to the species such that breeding strengthens that disposition in the species (perhaps leading to a new species arising). Rather than being an "aberration", the feature becomes a norm, set in the genes. The third fate is either way: the aberration does not benefit nor harm ... it just disappears for now to re-appear much later.

Leonie *to Daniel* From the point of view of the anthropologist (you Daniel) who has noted the steady, timely advance of *Plesiadapis tricuspidens* and

Sir David is flopped in a canvas chair, making love to a bottle of champagne. Sam looks down at him with a sympathetic smile.

Sir David *deflated*

I'm now at a loose end, Craig.

Look here! I've executed the old "stiff upper lip" and taken it on the chin. I've put Marsumonk behind me and that's that!

My next venture will be in relation to Big Foot.

I'll debunk the hoax regarding Sasquatch and the Abominable Snowman ... Yeti or even expose the Bunyip Yowie as a fake.

And the chalicothere ... Some idiot claimed that a horse-like creature was seen in what was once Rhodesia or Kenya (was it?), standing up to nibble leaves from a tree. Then some other bung-brain postulated that this was no horse but a still-extant chalicothere. Well, I can bring that one to earth, as well.

Sam *chuckles*

That sounds like you're very far from being at a loose end, Sir David.

END OF SCENE

V, Scene ii: The Disreputable Journalists

Subtitle: Somewhere in Central Niugini: January 8th evening.

The old 4-wheel-drive hired by the paparazzi Tinny and Auro has become bogged again, crossing a very picturesque tropical jungle stream.

Tinny has unwound the winch and firmly attached it to a stout tree. He has started the winch motor and the vehicle is inching its way slowly up the sloping muddy bank.

Auro stumps along behind the vehicle as it edges up in the direction of Tinny (standing at the height of the bank).

Suddenly, Auro stops and swings around. He looks back, frowning.

Auro *tense* What's that? Who's there?

The car trundles up the bank, with the winch motor working hard. Tinny whistles, pleased with himself. Without looking at Auro, he calls down to him.

Tinny *cocky* See? Nothin' to it! No need to get in a filthy mood, mate. The winch does the job for ya and no complaints.

The vehicle is now safe to drive. Tinny whistles as he uncouples the winch from the bull bar and drives the 4-WD forward. He parks, leaving the brake on and the engine running. From the elevation at the top of the bank, he calls down to Auro, squinting into the gloom.

Tinny *uncertain* Auro? Auro? What are ya doin'?

Tinny slides down the bank and wades into the shallow flowing water, which is now bloody and choked with hacked body parts.

Tinny looks horrified. Suddenly, there is a noise of other feet splashing through the water. Tinny turns 180 degrees and then screams in sheer horror.

END OF SCENE

V, Scene iii: Lip Contact And Sexual Dimorphism

Side Note: Marsumonk base camp, Niugini: January 9th.

Daniel wakes to find Claudine (in night gear) leaning forward beside his bed.

Claudine *whispers* I always believed that you hated me with a consummate passion.
Wouldn't touch me with a barge pole.

Daniel *scratchy voice* Yeah! I am totally revolted by your person. You are fat, smelly and

ugly. (At least, that's what I tell myself over and over such that I won't want you so damn much.)

They stare at each other for a long time and then he cups his hand on the back of her head and pulls her down into a long, long kiss.

Daniel *sleepily* I have the worst case of sleep-bad-mouth ever recorded in the history of the world. I'm glad that I shared it with you.

Claudine Here's something to jot down in your anthropological diary: when you kissed me, I went all trembly and mooshy.

With a long sigh, Daniel turns over to grab his pen and black book. He begins to jot down as he speaks.

Daniel *writing* "Test A: male/female contact bracket lips close bracket.
Female went all trembly and mooshy".
[Stops writing; appears to review earlier pages]
Not expressed in academic-speak, but descriptive, nevertheless.
But now we have to do it again, I'm afraid, since I can't possibly recall my immediate male homo sapiens sapiens reactions to the osculation.

Again, Daniel pulls Claudine to him, and they kiss in a very involved, ardent way.

When Daniel breaks away, he makes out that the exercise was purely a scientific experiment.

Daniel *writing* "Test B: male/female closer contact bracket lips close bracket.
Male's testicles tightened and began to ache and throb. Male's erectile glans penis also exhibited heightened sensation of ... er ... erectile sensation.
Test case (male) believes that his existence will terminate unless he is able to fornicate with test specimen (female)."

Both Daniel and Claudine pretend to treat the passion as something that simply happened. She stands.

Claudine *matter of fact* By the end of the field trip, you'll probably have pages and pages and pages of research notes ... fondling of mammary glands, exploratory clitoral events and copulative exercises, to name just a few.

Daniel *thoughtful* Mmmm ... Yes, I'm keen to cover as much ground as is humanly possible, even if I wear myself out in the process. Such is my devotion to Science.

END OF SCENE

V, Scene iv: The Grim Discovery Of The Paparazzi Bodies

Side Note: Marsumonk base camp, Niugini: January 9th.

Colonel Graham Moaboko arrives at Marsumonk base camp in a summer-style police uniform. He drives himself in a long wheelbase Land Rover, with an impressive array of electronic equipment and plenty of serious looking weaponry.

Several interested inmates in all states of dress gather about in the open air, looking at the Colonel questioningly.

Colonel Moaboko G'Day everyone. I'm Colonel Graham Moaboko from the Wetherby police station. Is everyone here accounted for?

Doubtful, the inmates look at each other.

Colonel Moaboko Are you able to run around and do a quick head count for me? Someone? Anyone?

Claudine drags herself into the open air, pulling a cotton robe over her sleep attire. She quickly takes in the gravity of the Colonel's visit, as well as its intention.

Claudine You think that someone is missing? Just a second, Colonel, and I'll race around and make a list. Tick everyone's name off.

Claudine scampers off. Other inmates arrive, focused on the Colonel.

Colonel Moaboko I'm terribly sorry, folks, to disturb you but a white man has been murdered on the road to this place. He was in a hired 4WD. Hired from Daru.

Does that ring a bell with anyone?

Everyone looks blankly at everyone else, shaking their heads.

Colonel Moaboko *softly* It may have been more than one man ... The remains are pretty hacked ...

There is a collective groan. James (in board shorts) appears very concerned.

James Do we have any sort of name, Colonel Moaboko?

Colonel Moaboko Well, son ... Like I said, he was pretty hacked up.
embarrassed

The Colonel hands over a few blood-strewn papers and bits and pieces to James. Fenn and Daniel (just arrived on the scene) go through them with James.

James *groans under his* Oh, Jesus ...
breath

Daniel *uncertain* This ... This looks like part of a media pass; you know that press guys wear around their necks on those lanyard things ... During the French Grand Prix, for instance ... or Monza ...

Fenn *alert* Yeah, that's exactly what it is, but no name.

Daniel *unravelling the facts* No, Fenn, you're not listening. If this is a press pass, then the murdered guy must be --

Fenn and James
together A journalist!

Nat *brightening* Hey! My cousin Wally spoke to me on the mobile phone and said that two guys come looking for you Yankee bastards on Wet Dog Island.

They might have been TV people he thought on account of their huge camera.

And then they left in their hired launch, headed for Daru and then for here.

Colonel Moaboko *nods* Okay. That's all I need. I can contact Daru and follow through on the identification. It only looked like one bloke, but ... They left the engine runnin' and all.

Claudine returns, breathless, with a clipboard and biro in hand.

Claudine *panting* Everybody is accounted for, Colonel. No-one missing.

The Colonel nods.

Colonel Moaboko *stern* Now listen, all of you.

This murder of the journalist or journalists is not a random killing. This is a warning to you all. From now on, you are to maintain a strict 24-hour guard. If you have weapons, let them be clearly visible. And I'm sorry to sound like a Chauvinist sex pig, but this young lady is not to form part of the guard. For my people, that sends a very wrong message. Therefore, men only, please.

With another nod, the Colonel clambers back into his Land Rover, gives a quick wave and accelerates back down the track.

END OF SCENE

V, Scene v: Advanced Studies In Sexual Dimorphism

Side Note: Marsumonk base camp, Niugini: January 9th.

Claudine and Daniel are at the dig. They are sifting through labelled specimens laid out on long trestle tables. Daniel wears a shoulder holster which houses the Smith and Wesson. A hip holster houses the Llama Max.

Daniel There are so many human activities which are solely human: not shared with the apes. And sometimes not even shared with all the races of humankind.

I'm recording everything in my stout black book with which you are already acquainted.

Claudine In order to write the seminal study on male/female contact studies, I should imagine.

Daniel Correct!

Are you aware that the sight of naked female breasts is not sexually arousing to a large tranche of males residing on the African continent? These boys are now blasé due to millennia of over-stimulus.

I am not one of their number. When I happen upon a nubile bosom (an **uncovered** nubile bosom), my electro pulses snap into action.

For instance, my latest jottings in said black book relate to my seeing **your** uncovered nubile bosom (in fact, your entire naked body) and my physical and emotional reactions to same.

Claudine *shocked* When did you see me naked?

Daniel *dismissive* Oh, I dunno ... You were washing yourself or changing clothes or ...

I had to take recourse to a pair of high-powered binoculars, such was my intense devotion to these important observations (in the

interests of furthering and advancing our knowledge of the species, y'understand).

Claudine is speechless with shock.

Daniel *looking innocent* I ... It ... Like I said, it was an important part of my study!

And I can assure you, Claudine, that I am not in any way jaundiced by over-stimulus. Far from it, in fact. It's all recorded in the book. Page after page after page ...

To discover that you are not fat, not smelly and not ugly.

The word "beautiful" ... Heck, I must have written that word at least eight times ...

Claudine *appalled* One word. Five letters. Begins "Sierra", ends "Echo". Clue: "Porcine beast".

Daniel *quite calm* Do you want to sleep with me tonight?

Claudine But you're on guard duty.

Daniel *shakes head* Uh-uh.

That would be Fenn and Nat tonight.

Do you want to sleep with me?

Claudine *appalled* Do I want to -- ? And when you say "sleep", you actually mean something quite different. I clearly remember tipping that this would result. Mouth kissing always leads to sex. Never fails.

Daniel *quite calm* Do you want to sleep with me tonight?

Claudine *chuckles, shrugs* I don't want to be your casual bit of crumpet ... Your Niugini adventure who is soon forgotten when you return to the corridors of Academia ... A fast lay in the jungle ...

Daniel *eyes bright* Does that mean "yes"? I'm afraid that I can be very persistent.

Claudine gives him a very disapproving look, although there is a lurking humour in her eyes.

Daniel lights up with sexual desire, but acts like a satyr who lures a sweet, beautiful virgin to his lair.

With an impish giggle, he takes Claudine's hands and leads her into the tent. She responds in kind.

Daniel *inveigling* Ah-h-h-h-h-h- ... Beautiful English rose ...

Claudine *enchanted* Sir! What is it that you would have me do?

Daniel *eyes aflame* My lovely, lovely winsome lass; won't you lie down on my nuptial cot and close your eyes and --

Claudine *pretending to be enraptured* Kind sir, I fear that your designs upon my body are not chaste, not pure.

Standing close to Claudine, in the tent, Daniel runs his hands over her upper arms and then begins kissing her.

Daniel *very deep voiced* My designs are absolutely contemptible and --

Fenn barges in and stands stock still, staring at the couple. As casually as possible, Daniel steps back from Claudine.

Fenn *appalled* Fuck-a-duck!

Jeez, I'm sorry. I ... I guess I'm interrupting you ...

Claudine *bursts out laughing* "Fuck-a-duck"!

If you were a British gentleman, Mr Larssen, you would bow, apologize for the intrusion and then withdraw graciously.

Fenn looks all at sea (mouth half-open) however maintains eye contact with Daniel.

Daniel *hard-voiced* What? What's wrong?

Fenn Nothing ... I mean ... Jeez, I'm sorry ...

James has received word from his father – that is, **your** father, too, I guess.

I mean, he's on his way here in a Black Hawk.

There is a long pause. Claudine looks from one man to the other.

Fenn I guess that James wanted to let you know, so that you can ... ah

... compose yourself ... prepare ... to meet your Dad ...

Fenn laughs awkwardly. He nods to Claudine and then leaves the tent.

Daniel's face is set hard. He goes back to his activity of stroking Claudine's upper arms. But he is no longer lover-like. He is musing.

Claudine What is it?

Daniel *far-away look* The Prime Minister of Australia is being flown here to meet me in an RAAF Black Hawk helicopter.

Ball park figure: what does that cost?

Claudine I don't know what it translates to in Aussie or US dollars, but in English pounds! Gosh, any amount!

Daniel *teeth clenched* Something very much stinks about this ... Stinks like stale seafood ...

Daniel steps away, and sits on the bed, watched by Claudine (concerned).

Suddenly, Daniel bangs his forehead a couple of times with his fist.

Daniel *very irate with himself* Shit! Shit! Shit!

Claudine What is it? What's wrong?

Daniel *alert* The Prime Minister of Australia is coming to an internationally recognized trouble spot.

[Long pause; eyes flicking about]

When James arrived before me, what was his excuse?

Claudine, taken off guard, fumbles for words.

Daniel Why had he come to Camp Marsumonk? Did he tell you why?

Claudine *racking her brains* Ah ... He just said that ... He was –
He was keen to be of help doing "big-boy" tasks, I seem to recall.

Daniel snarls in an ugly manner.

Daniel *contemptuous* "Big-boy", huh? Nah, he meant to say "bad-boy".

It's exactly like the famous Machiavelli speech that Prince Hal gives during Henry IV. He makes out that he's a rotten egg, cavorting around with Falstaff and acting like a louche, but the ultimate aim is to look good upon seeming to reform his character. It's all of a cover.

[Close up of face]

He's Daddy's hatchet-man, Mr Fixit.

Claudine *confused* I'm sorry, but who are you --

Daniel *severe* Those jungle guys have had plenty of time and scope for opportunity to mow us down any time. You laughed along with Sir David's anecdote last night, about the Wanspik joining us in our cricket game. What did your stepfather call him? "Droll", that was the word he used. A happy-go-lucky guy who came upon us during his jaunt through the bush.

Those two Oz reporters weren't killed by savages; they were murdered by a white guy.

The truth of what Daniel suggests hits Claudine. She gasps, clapping her hands over her mouth.

Claudine *horrified* Oh my God!

Daniel is on his feet, pacing about.

Daniel *thinking fast* I've lived with primitive tribes for a third of my life. They don't act the way that ... They just don't act this way.

But for a whitie, this is the perfect, perfect place to commit a murder or two or three, because straight away you can simply blame it on the natives.

So tell me: what would be the outcome if the Prime Minister of Australia were to address the Wanspiks and ask them to leave our dig alone? And what if the world media got to hear about that?

Claudine *shakes head* He would never do that, Daniel. It would be a gross breach of diplomatic protocol. It's unthinkable.

Daniel *very low voiced* Well, okay. Unthinkable it might be, but it could also save my bacon.

Daniel pulls Claudine roughly into his arms and kisses her with unbridled passion.

He dashes out of the tent, leaving Claudine bewildered.

END OF SCENE

[The upshot is that Daniel races out to the Wanspik diggers and asks them to immediately gather as many of the Wanspiks available in order to hear an impromptu speech from the head man from the Big South Land.]

V, Scene vi: Unexpectedly, Daniel Calls The Shots

Side Note: Marsumonk base camp, Niugini: January 9th.

Our camera is in the Black Hawk as it makes its approach to the clearing of Van Der Ross Valley, nearby to Camp Marsumonk. We get utterly superb views of the lush green jungle, the brightly coloured Wanspiks in their bird-of-paradise plumage standing about in groups and the inmates of the base camp watching and waving.

We can also see (in silhouette against these stunning views) the SAS boys (Harry and Bruce). We cannot make out what is actually said in the chopper.

Male scattered words ... standing around like that ... kidnapped? ... under threat ... still
on audio want to land, Prime Minister? ... go ahead ... take her down ...

~~~~~ Break ~~~~~

*Nearby to the camp, James watches the Black Hawk landing. However, he is clearly concerned at the proximity of the decorated Wanspiks. James looks about, and then spots Daniel.*

James *frowning*                      What are those native guys doing? Will it be safe for our father to land here?

*Daniel slings his arm around James's shoulders, smiles and looks up at the Black Hawk.*

Daniel *charming*                      Support me, little bro.

I'm about to meet my father for the first time. My heart is beating like a drum.

Put your arm around my shoulders: show Daddy that we really love each other.

*James (uncomfortable) agrees. The two men give every indication to any interested spectator that they are good chums: friends of long standing.*

Daniel *smiling broadly and waving*                      See, my gut feeling is that if I don't toe the line I'll go the same way as Tinny Mafrici and Auro Virak.

James *blankly*                      Who are they?

Daniel *still smiling*                      The pressmen you slashed to death, little brother.

*Finally, the Black Hawk helicopter which ferried James into Camp Marsumonk now lands in the clearing. Quickly disembarking are Harry and Bruce (from the SAS), followed by John and Mike (in jungle camouflage outfits) along with the gear. John is urged to leave the clearing in haste, flanked by the SAS men.*

*James goes to run towards his father but Daniel grips him tightly by the shoulders.*

Daniel *through gritted teeth*                      I didn't used to care whether I lived or died, James, but now that I'm deeply in love with Miss Cabot and I wanna marry her and have issue with her: I want to go back to the city of brotherly love and ...

James                      Be a loving brother.

I get it. You have nothing to fear from me.

Daniel

Sure!

*[Gives James a playful punch in the shoulder]*

I'll do everything in my power to pretend to support the PM. You have my word on that.

Now that I've brought down the curtain on Marsumonk, my published findings will probably win favour with our father, too. So, my prospects are looking rosy.

I just wanna get out of here alive, little brother, with my lovely girl, Claudine at my side.

*As John approaches, with eyes only for Daniel, the brothers embrace him and are embraced by him.*

END OF SCENE

## **V, Scene vii:** The Prime Minister Takes All In His Stride

**Side Note: Marsumonk base camp, Niugini: January 9<sup>th</sup>.**

*The situation now stands as follows: the PM is in a big hug with his two sons.*

*Mike Munday totes a large movie camera and stands nearby.*

*Harry and Bruce (the highly decorated SAS officers) stand about, tense and battle-ready.*

*Fenn, Sir David and Sam, along with Leon and Gordon and other diggers stand about.*

Bruce *to Fenn*

From the bird, we could clearly make out a group of over 200 armed warriors gathering near the jungle clearing.

We need to gather all hands in a central point.

Harry *to Fenn*

Do you have an emergency assembly area?

Fenn

Sure! The main hall. We could collect everyone there.



*It turns out that Bruce is of Niuginian descent and can converse with the Wanspiks.*

*John addresses the Wanspiks and his words are translated and broadcast by Bruce, who uses a small megaphone. Daniel and James flank John, with Mike on the camera.*

John *shouting*

My friends: these two strong brave young men are my sons.

These other strong brave men are my friends. They are all ***your*** friends. They come to honour your land and not to harm you or your possessions.

We come here to answer many questions which the great Lord of us all has put before us. We dig in the dirt and rock – not for your wealth, not for your treasures – but for the bone-stones of animals that lived here many long times ago, before the Dawn.

Please let us continue our work, so that we may understand. No axes, no knives, no killing, no anger.

I thank you my friends for hearing my words.

*The camera moves into the hall and focuses on the women, who can hear the proceedings (which now turn into a Q & A session).*

Leonie

I'll give it to the PM: he can't possibly have known what to expect. When they wheel him up to the mike, he manages to string together a heart-warming rev-up. Remarkable!

Claudine *sadly*

We only just started, and now it's all over.

Leonie

There was no point. There's nothing to investigate.

We'll take Chuck back to Oz and write him up in a scholarly fashion.

And then spend a further four to five years enduring the vituperative backlash from academic opponents. You never know, my dear, the Marsumonk controversy may very well rear its head again in time.

Claudine *sighs*

Quite so. I do love the *sturm und drang* of comparative analysis.

Just so fascinating ...

Leonie

There are many instances of evolution taking a parallel path in Australia such that our marsupials echo European, African and American eutherian mammals.

The macropods reflect rabbits and their kin. The wombat seriously resembles the badger. The thylacine was dog-like, the koala bear-like and there are a great many mouse-like pouched mammals.

Claudine

But not otters, dolphins, seals or whales ...

Leonie

Right. The pilgrimage of the neonate from birth canal to pouch would be a non-starter for most aquatic mammals.

Claudine

And not monkeys. Daniel seems to have put the kybosh on that discussion before it even took off.

Leonie

The research will continue, but no longer with the vitriolic chorus of Creationists and their ilk.

Claudine *deep in thought*

Charles Darwin: monophyly, homology, convergence, continuous creation, and spontaneous generation.

Will we ever reach the final conclusion, Leonie?

Leonie *emotional, whispers*

No, we won't. Darwin bowled us a googly. Impossible to hit it back.

Claudine

Darling old Charles Darwin ... I used to kiss his portrait every night.

*The two ladies smile at each other.*

END OF SCENE

**V, Scene viii:** The Prime Minister Interviews His Son

**Subtitle:** Marsumonk base camp, Niugini: January 9<sup>th</sup>.

*Mike wields the camera.*

John                                      Hello. I'm John Sturt Dahlgetty, Prime Minister of Australia.

On New Year's Eve, Darwin was assaulted by the power and ferocity of Cyclone Myrtha. All Australians have grieved and sorrowed for the many lost souls taken from us forever by the fury of Myrtha.

However, there are some survival stories from the Darwin tragedy which rise above the norm. And this particular story is so extraordinary that many of you won't believe it. But it's 100% true.

I have the honour to present to you Dr Daniel Marchbank from the University of Philadelphia, who happened to be stuck in Darwin on New Year's Eve.

*John reaches out to take Daniel's hand. The two men shake hands for too long.*

John *tearing up*                      Through a set of the most bizarre circumstances, my son James discovered just days ago that Daniel is his half-brother. My son in fact.

*There is an awkward silence. John breaks it.*

John                                      Daniel (a well-respected anthropologist) has been part of a scientific team which has been investigating the possibility of a marsupial monkey being discovered in the fossil record.

I've asked Daniel to respond to wide-spread criticism and expressions of fear: how likely is it, Daniel, that such a creature could ever have existed?

Daniel                                    Thanks, Dad.

I have been joined in the debate by some exceptional scientists from Australia, England and the US. Many newly dug specimens have been closely studied and many hours of intense discussion have been undertaken.

Our initial findings are:--

Marsupial possums were evolving during the palaeontological epoch known as the Eocene. To put that into perspective, we can say that the Eocene began around 10 million years after the dinosaur extinction episode.

From the current fossil record, we find that there were some advances in forward-facing eyes and more utilitarian digits among possums. There was an increase in size observed, along with other structural differences. However, the fossils continued to fall under the umbrella of "possums". And these advanced possums did not survive the Eocene.

John

Okay, that all sounded impressive and learned. From it, I gather (and I'm only a Prime Minister, remember!) that no marsupial monkey was found.

Daniel *firm*

No. No, Sir.

And it is considered unlikely that evolution would have pushed possums in that direction.

The possum mother is self-contained with her babies safely stowed in a pouch wherein they have a steady supply of nourishing milk. Possums never form social groupings in the way that monkeys do.

We considered the lengthening of the humerus observed in monkey fossils and in extant monkeys alongside their ability to reach around 360 degrees (useful when swinging through the jungle). These features are non-existent in marsupials. Other

evolutionary happenstance proved beneficial to the placental monkeys. Current day possums are largely unchanged from the Eocene: they continue to be successful in their arboreal nocturnal lifestyle in their original configuration.

But monkey-like? No sir!

John *smiles*

Thanks, Daniel.

Some of you will be disappointed, whilst others will heave a sigh of relief.

Now on a lighter note: since arriving in the Southern Hemisphere late last year, I believe that you've become a dab hand at cricket.

Daniel *grins*

Following in my old man's footsteps ... Yes, sir.

John

Alright! It is traditional that late in January, the current PM hosts a cricket game in which all the players come from a diverse range of jobs. We have jockeys, boxers, Olympic runners, footballers (all codes) and a vast sweep of TV and music personalities.

This year, as a special bonus, the Prime Minister will be taking part along with both his sons. So Daniel, we'll meet again on the Sydney Cricket Ground for the PM's Fantasy Game. Will you be there and will you field at 3<sup>rd</sup> slip (which I believe is your favourite fielding position)?

Daniel *nodding*

Yes, Prime Minister. I will do that.

*The camera rolls on. Daniel and John stand and they hug, watched fondly by James. Neither man wants to break the hug. Daniel is crying. James signals to Mike to stop filming; but Mike rolls the movie on. Deeply moved, John holds Daniel tightly to him, patting his son's back affectionately.*

James *direct to camera* And that brings to an end the Dahlgetty boys and their adventures in parallel evolution. Now, it's back to the studio.

*James, hogging the screen, makes a cut-throat gesture and then smiles dopily.*

END OF SCENE

**V, Scene ix:** The Coroner Struggles To Overcome Emotion In Bringing Down His Findings

**Subtitle: The Coroner's Court, Darwin: January 9<sup>th</sup>.**

*As the speech is made, in the background, we are able to hear the sounds of a restless crowd, and especially of sounds of weeping.*

The Coroner *low-voiced*

I shall now table the results of my deliberations on the various outcomes resulting from the devastation of Cyclone Myrtha on New Year's Eve, which has in Australia traditionally been a night dedicated to parties and alcohol-related fellowship.

It is my sad duty to report that 89 persons are known to have died in Darwin and outlying areas either during the rampaging cyclone itself, or later as a result of injuries sustained. This figure may yet rise further as more bodies are recovered.

I have found that in almost all of these cases, the deaths were preventable.

*A rolling display of photographs taken on mobile phones will accompany the Coroner's following words.*

*The first group of photos start with the happy party-goers mucking around as they are snapped beside the bus. It is evident that the wind is ripping at their hair and clothes.*

The Coroner *continues (in voice-over, low-voiced)*

Repeated warnings were issued instructing citizens to stay indoors. Most of the people now deceased chose to ignore those warnings.

In one incident, a minibus crowded with partygoers left the road at the height of the deluge and plunged into a ravine through which flash floods were raging. Everyone on board (including the

contracted driver) was killed.

*The second group of photos deal with all sorts of drunks and crazies cavorting about on a beach, with wind-tossed vegetation sweeping through the photos. They also capture attempts at bonfires.*

The Coroner *continues* Police repeatedly moved people from the beach, only to have the same people return later in an effort to party on. Those people taken into custody by police officers survived: a majority of those who dodged the police on the beach were killed (or are missing, believe killed) by treacherous rogue waves which unexpectedly inundated the beach area.

*The third group of photos brings an element of morbidity into play. We see shots of dead bodies along with random snaps of frightened people on the streets of Darwin during the height of the cyclone.*

The Coroner *continues* Scores of people wandered the streets of Darwin in an inebriated state and were struck by flying debris. Many of these people died. On the other hand, those citizens who chose to take shelter as instructed all survived, even a gentleman who was stabbed during a brawl.

*The fourth group of photos is gruesome. People have actually taken photos with their mobile phones of human bodies piled high, blocking a culvert. A gaping crocodile is snapped as it plunges into the surging water, in order to feed on the bodies.*

*The Coroner becomes highly emotional and is almost unable to continue.*

The Coroner *continues* Rumours have abounded that some 20 to 30 souls were trapped in flood waters after attending a bush-bash, and that their remains were partially devoured by ... by ... by wild animals. These reports (unfortunately) proved true.

*The photo show has concluded. Our camera returns to the courtroom. There is a very long pause. The Coroner's voice is almost inaudible at the finish, such is his distress.*

The Coroner It is my belief upon due deliberation that public warnings and the efforts of public and police officials were ignored in those cases

resulting in death. Public announcements prior to and during a natural catastrophe such as Myrtha are not to be treated as a joke. We have lost many, many fellow Darwinians due to ignorance, stupidity and deliberate devilry.

I shall be sending my findings to the Minister for Territories for his action.

Thank you for your attention.

*The Coroner sits staring at his notes, with head bowed. In the background, there are many sobs and sniffs.*

SEGUE INTO NEXT SCENE

## **V, Scene xii:** The Prime Minister's Fantasy Cricket Game

**Subtitle: The Charles Darwin Cricket Ground, Sydney: Late January.**

*The following speech happens along with the described actions.*

Daniel *voice-over*

Homo sapiens sapiens ...

Mankind will never cease to amaze me.

I have reconciled myself to the wicked and cynical people who are now known to be my kin. Playing the game in order to survive is part and parcel of the human species. I'll play along until I can escape to my own country.

There's a new person in my life now: a lovely British girl who had forever been a major thorn in my side, until the "Strange Adventure" began.

Now, the same lovely British girl is destined to become – what did

the tender-driver call her? – “My missus”. That was it!

*We will see some glimpses of the merriment and clowning about which makes this cricket game a TV favourite. Both Daniel and James acquit themselves very well.*

*There is a group photo taken: Megan and Jayne stand side-by-side with their new brother Daniel, their arms around his waist.*

*Then there is a group photo of Daniel between Leanne and John: Daniel makes a comment to the photographer about his new mum and dad.*

*Finally, there is a lovely shot of Claudine and Daniel strolling from the pitch, hand-in-hand.*

END OF SCENE

## **V, Scene xiii:** Virginia Becomes An Anthropological Specimen

### **Subtitle: Philadelphia, Two Years Later**

*This scene reiterates the Foreword at the very beginning of the movie.*

*Daniel (clean-shaven) lies on the floor (on a rug) next to his new-born daughter, Virginia (named after his mother). His latest black book is handy. Daniel is testing the child's grip, as he carefully lifts the child a little off the floor with one hand.*

*Replacing the baby in her original position, he grabs for the notebook and scratches away rapidly with a biro.*

*Claudine reaches down to scoop up the baby.*

Daniel *not looking up*      Is she still doing the wide reach when you pick her up?

*Claudine carries Virginia off.*

Claudine                      Yes. I'm monitoring that one: should fade out at four weeks.

Daniel                         About then ... yeah. That's great: it all fits with the current theory.

And the primate grip is incredible, given the tiny fingers.

*Daniel jumps up from the floor and follows Claudine.*

*It is bath time. On the bare dining room table, everything is laid out. A pink plastic bath is in position.*

*Claudine coos and clucks as she strips off the baby and baths her. Daniel takes a back-to-front position in a chair such that he rests his chin on the back of the chair. He smiles fondly as Claudine bathes his daughter, but still manages to note memoranda in his black book.*

Daniel                      When are we telling Virginia that she is an anthropological experiment?

Claudine                  We won't because she's not. Virginia Marchbank is a prototype.  
We'll do the *real* research with the next one. Or the one after ...

*Daniel grins. He hauls himself out of the chair and prepares to assist Claudine.*

FADE OUT

END OF SCENE

END OF ACT V

END OF FILM