

### **CAST**

HAL THORNSIDE	Hal is an elite Australian cricketer. His strengths are batting at
	number 4 and fielding at 3 <sup>rd</sup> slip.
	Athletic and with an imposing build, Hal feels his own self-worth.
	He takes everything in his stride.
HAUER VAN DER HAHN/	Hauer is built along the same lines as Hal. In fact, the notion of
DJASHNU	the 2 men being of similar stature makes the "war" between the
	2 men so very interesting. Hauer has a nasty edge (unlike Hal).
	The Djashnu character intrudes on Hauer's subconscious.
	Hauer steals Mim from Hal as if it were divinely ordained.
KERRIANNE HARVEY/	Kerrianne works on the Sydney newspaper with Staffy. She is
PRINCESS UNELA	beautiful, bright and bubbly. And she has the hots for Hal.
	In her other iteration, Unela is determined, brave and (likewise)

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	devoted to her hero Hal.
STAFFY SALEDIS	Staffy is without doubt Sydney's most respected sports reporter.
	Except that he is hopelessly untidy and slobbish. Staffy works
	with Hal to resolve all the outstanding issues. They do this via
	phone calls and emails.
LOUISE KEMTALBOT	A physiotherapist for the Australian Test team. She is everyone's
	confessor. The men trust Louise. It is to her that Hal reveals the
	secrets of his third wicket reviews. Her brother is one of Hal's
	teammates.
KIP FERNWELL	Batting at number 3, Kip is usually on the field (batting) with Hal.
MIM PENFOLD/	Mim is a nurse who cares for her near-blind grandfather until his
PRINCESS LABESH	death. Mim's alter ego is Labesh (King Etki's sister). Labesh is
	gentle and womanly.
PROFESSOR PENFOLD	Nearly blind and in poor health, the Professor has been clinging
(elderly and frail)	onto life until the long-awaited Pathfinder should once again
	surface. Like everybody else, the Professor believes Hal to be
	that mystical hero.
PROFESSOR PENFOLD (young	This is a young, sighted version of the Professor who appears to
and fit)	Hal at the Venjit market. He advises Hal on how to win the war
	for Assrishna.
TED THORNSIDE/	Hal's brother (an elite footballer) was swept to his death (in the
SATRAP TANQUES	surf) many years ago in company with their father.
	Tanques knows Hal but is disinclined to "befriend" him. The
	reappearance of Ted shatters Hal. However, Hal quickly gets
	over his despair.
SYL-IBSEL	A powerful courtier and right-hand man to King Etki.
SYL-ARTRON	A wise and competent courtier. He is a rival to Syl-Ibsel.
KING ETKI	A foolish ruler who is over-fond of women.
PALUKE-JOSHUA	Soothsayer and fortune-teller to King Etki. He loves the limelight.
ORINGSHAY	Apprentice and assistant to Paluke-Joshua. He is very keen to
	help his master, especially when it comes to dealing with virgin

	sacrifice.
BAPTISTE	Wordsmith in the employ of Satrap Tanques.

Officials who mind the Australian cricket team: JOSH TIERS, LUKE DUQUESNE, MATT HINES and GAVIN ARVIDE.

The hangers-on and relatives: CHURATH, RAMPE, MEMLASH, NATHI, HORVEX, NICK, HARLIM, MELKI, BAPTISTE.

Other members of the Australian cricket team, members of the South African cricket team and celebrities appearing on the SAFRICKET TV show.

Voice of Hal's mother.



### **PROLOGUE**

The prologue begins with an Australian bush scene (as if in dream sequence).

We introduce a theme which recurs throughout the movie: that is, whisp-shivver. Basically, this plant is native to the ancient middle eastern country of Assrishna. It resembles a very pale version of Australia's wattle.

The people of Assrishna await the arrival of a leader: the Pathfinder. He will be recognized because of his association with whisp-shivver. He will save the Assrishna people from the ever-present threat of invasion from the neighbouring country, Beulan. Whenever Hal Thornside is mysteriously transported to Assrishna he is wearing either the batting or fielding strip of the Australian international cricket team – complete with its insignia of golden wattle. So, the natural conclusion of the locals is that Hal is the long-expected saviour ...

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Staffy Saledis is a keynote sports reporter at the Sydney Post newspaper office. Kerrianne works with him (she is the double for Unela).

We start off with Staffy and Kerrianne. This is a comic interlude to indicate that Staffy is a drunken slob – but basically a great sports reporter.

We understand that the long-dead Ted Thornside (Hal's brother) has been trying to phone Staffy – which is REALLY weird. Then Kerrianne reveals that she has had strange dreams (we will understand later that this concerns Unela). She mentions that in these dreams her love interest is Hal.

### **ACT I**

The ancient land to which Hal is mystically transported is Assrishna. And the year is 1057 BCE. There are two factions of "heavies" in Assrishna: one is centred on Syl-Artron and the other on Syl-Ibsen. These groups work to curry favour with King Etki (an ineffectual ruler). Here we meet the Syl-Artron faction: Rampe, Memlash and Nathi along with slave Horvex. We enjoy a confrontation between Princess Unela and the Syl-Artron group regarding Unela's wish to be allowed to fight for her country in the upcoming war. The brouhaha is interrupted by the soothsayer Paluke-Joshua. The soothsayer expresses his excitement that finally the Pathfinder is about to reach them. Unela triumphantly claims this saviour as her champion.

During the first Australian innings (SuperSport Park, Centurion South Africa) Hal has his first encounter with Assrishna (during a third umpire review on the fall of the 3<sup>rd</sup> wicket).

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Hal has what appears to his fellow batsman (Kip) as some kind of fit. The result of the review is rubbish – quite extraordinary. Hal is deemed OUT. He glowers with anger as he storms off the field to sit in solitary on the Australian balcony.

Following this event, the trainers want to cover-off with Hal what made him go troppo as Kip described it. Under immense pressure, Hal gives way – he will only discuss this matter with team physiotherapist Louise. Hal tries to explain to Louise what happened to him in that briefest flash of time between the review being raised and the "OUT" being signalled.

Hal (complete with his batting gear including his bat) was suddenly in a huge desert with an army of camel-borne warriors converging upon him. One of the camel-riders took Hal's hand to haul Hal up onto the camel's back, behind the guy (who later turns out to have been slave Horvex).

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Now (in Assrishna) we meet the Syl-Ibsel faction: Nick, Harlim and Melki.

As he relaxes, Syl-Ibsel discusses the all-too brief appearance of Hal with Paluke-Joshua. Syl-Ibsel is somewhat annoyed that the mysterious stranger has not stayed with them — that he has now disappeared. Paluke-Joshua is asked to describe Hal. He puts a regal slant on his description of Hal's batting strip. The pads are likened to small picket fences. However, the wooden "sword" (that is bat) comes in for some derision.

Frustrated, Syl-Ibsel decides to await further appearances of the Pathfinder.

Hal briefly visits Assrishna a second time. Hal is fielding and again there is a review on the third wicket.

Later (in private) Hal will cover the quick visit only with Louise.

Hal reports that he can only manage to be understood via drawings and mime. The Assrishnans are confused that Hal is now in his fielding strip (where are his helmet, pads and bat?) They have decided to assign a person called Labesh to speed-teach Hal the language. There is a humorous scene where Hal (imagining Labesh to be male) does a mime of a man taking a slash. The Assrishnans are totally bemused. Hal believes that a small toolkit will come in handy for whenever he whizzes back to the ancient land.

A catch-up conversation with his mother gives Hal an idea. He looks up "Assrishna" on the web search engine and arrives fortuitously at the page dedicated to the Satrapy of Beulan. The word "Persian" is mentioned in the short article, along with the poems of Tanques.

[Admission from the author] I had to use a work-around to get Hal fluent in the language as quickly as possible. Thus, a dream was invented whereby Hal saw drawings of everyday things, and someone gave him the Ancient Persian names for these objects.

Hal makes a quick decision that he will no longer shave (until the end of the movie).

### **ACT II**

St George's Park, Port Elizabeth South Africa.

Hal is batting in magnificent form. But he is soon declared to be OUT on a dodgy decision. Once again, this event causes a review on this, the third wicket. Hal is completely kitted-out for his batting stint.

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Hal is back in Assrishna. Princess Unela holds his hand as she leads him about, talking nonstop. This helps us (the audience) to understand where everyone fits in. Hal does not yet understand the language. On hearing the name of Labesh, and still thinking that Labesh is male, Hal relives the urination mime we have already seen. Everyone is appalled.

Unela leaves Hal with Labesh, and the tuition begins.

In King Etki's throne room, Hal shows off his batting prowess to the delight of all onlookers. And then Hal is spirited back to the St George's Park oval.

Hal is clearly reluctant to accept the review decision.

Things now turn really ugly. Hal and Hauer come together (chest to chest) in a very nasty, angry brouhaha. The crowd abuse Hal during this interlude which only ends with the umpire's intervention. Hal duly storms off the field.

Hal's face-off with Hauer and the subsequent physicality go way beyond what is acceptable in international Test cricket.

The four trainers/coaches (Josh Tiers, Luke Duquesne, Matt Hines and Gavin Arvide) are in the middle of a heavy discussion.

These men are by degrees angry, distressed and rationalizing. We learn that Louise has refused to enlighten them on Hal's state of mind.

In the gym, Hal is sought out in the pool. Then they find Hal sparring in the boxing ring.

When the trainers finally locate Hal, Josh has worked himself up into a murderous state. He yells at Hal who refuses to open up. Gavin finally breaks though. Hal admits that Hauer had previously hit him not long after the team landed in Johannesburg.

Hal wants to escape the inquisition. He leaves it there by telling the trainers that Hauer has contacted him to gloat. Hauer will be special guest on the TV cricket show the next evening and intends to tell the cricket-lovers of the world that he king-hit Hal. The word "War" will also be mentioned.

While working on some spicy, lascivious sports gossip, Staffy is surprised to receive a call from Hal. Staffy is even more surprised to be asked by Hal to find him a teacher in South Africa. One who can instruct him in ancient Persian.

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As promised, Hauer appears on the TV. During his interview, Hauer reiterates several issues which are pivotal to the course of the story. Hauer maintains that he and Hal are at war, and that Hauer king-hit Hal due to some old wounds (of which Hal is completely unaware). In fact, the nature of the "old wounds" will be revealed when Djashnu twigs Hal on his "improper relations" with Mim/Labesh.

While snarling at the TV, Hal receives an email from Staffy. Hal can receive tuition in ancient Persian from a Professor Penfold.

During a speech by a Beulian emissary, Syl-Ibsel and Syl-Artron discuss some possible masculine entertainments for Hal (should he return). These activities would be under the aegis of Captain Moshek with the intention of improving Hal's powers of communication. The men also reveal that King Etki is a weak ladies man.

### **ACT III**

Ready for the next Test at Newlands, Cape Town South Africa, the Australian cricketers arrive. Radio announcers in Cape Town run down the Australian cricket team just as their plane is landing.

Hal has moved into his room at the Cape Town Hotel. Hal receives a call from Kerrianne. In this call, Hal confirms what Staffy has told her: that Hauer king-hit Hal.

Hal starts the dialogue with Professor Penfold in a phone call, via his granddaughter Mim. It is urgent that Hal can understand the basics of Ancient Persian. Mim is concerned that Hal's wanting to meet with her grandfather is highly unlikely. She is very dubious. However, the near-blind Professor (on being told by Mim the nature of Hal's call) is more than interested.

The meeting between Hal and the Professor takes place. Hal has arrived by helicopter from The Cape after batting in the hot sun. Hal scored 118 not out. The Professor lays out the situation behind this meeting. It all makes Hal sound very shifty.

Hal then blurts out the truth: how on the fall of the third wicket in any way, and after a review on that dismissal has been raised, he (Hal) is whisked back to Assrishna. Surprisingly, the Professor accepts this explanation.

To learn the ancient language, Mim will read from the book with the Professor and Hal repeating the words. Then the book will be loaned to Hal.

The Professor takes the opportunity to speak privately to Hal (while Mim is out of the room making tea).

The blind Professor feels Hal's strong hands and arms. However, Professor Penfold warns that it is wits (not strong hands) that will win. Mim returns. The Professor tells Hal of the weaknesses of King Etki. Also, he tells Hal of Tanques who hungers after the green fertile lands of Assrishna. The Professor also references the wattle on the Australian uniform. Hal's time is up: the helicopter awaits him.

Hal (alone with Mim) expresses aloud his doubts about their relationship. Seems like a waste of time to kiss her and yet he does so.

On the way to a double century scored by batsman Hal, this scene begins with an indication of how broadly popular Hal Thornside is across Australia. We watch Hal in action.

Back in Assrishna (awaiting the return of Hal) Paluke-Joshua and his apprentice Oringshay discuss various propitious sacrifices which could be made to hasten his return. Oringshay is thrilled at the prospect of deflowering a brace of virgins.

Hal is batting at Newlands Oval, Cape Town. With Hal on a very enticing 192 runs, there is a third wicket review. Hal is once again in Assrishna, striding along a wide passageway in the Assrishnan palace. In armour, Moshek keeps pace with Hal.

Princess Unela trots along in the wake of the men, whereas Labesh struggles to keep up.

Paluke-Joshua is overjoyed at the return of Hal. Oringshay is less thrilled: he now misses out on his virgin-deflowering duty. Hal confuses a votive candle for underarm deodorant (which he promptly uses).

The idea is that Hal and Moshek will leap onto a chariot and drive to Beulan for peace talks. 100 warriors will accompany them. Hal does a double-take at seeing the warriors: they all wear the batting strip of the Australian cricket team.

Hal delivers a rousing battle-cry. Before the men can leave, Unela angrily demands that Hal must pass the rigorous entrance tests for admission to the Assrishnan armed forces. Hal knocks off the tests with consummate ease and they are ready to leave.

The men tear at speed through the lush countryside. They either ride camels or are driven in chariots. Hal tries to stir up Syl-Ibsel and practises his batting strokes whilst wondering why the review seems to be dragging on so long.

Just as the members of the Assrishnan party approach the oasis (where Tanques relaxes), Hal disappears.

Hal bats on. However, he is back in South Africa. Hal reaches the magic 200 runs. He celebrates joyfully, kissing the medallion hanging around his neck. This medallion is the badge of office which Hal received in Assrishna (on completing the army tests). *Hal actually scored 223 not out before the innings closed.* 

Hal's untimely disappearance has caused Paluke-Joshua to be widely blamed. His reaction is to enlist Oringshay's help in the ritual slaughter of oxen and deflowering of virgins.

Oringshay is (of course) delighted!

Tanques and Baptiste are found to be busy (writing poetry) as Syl-Ibsel and Syl-Artron are admitted into their presence. The discussion turns to Hal. What sort of man is he?

### **ACT IV**

Still at Newlands, there is a rest day for the cricketers. The boys have decided to have a BBQ by the hotel pool. They will go to Venjit market for the food. The locals make a huge fuss of them. Many photos are snapped. Then Hal spots an elusive figure. He chases after him. This elusive figure turns out to be the ghost of Professor Penfold (as a much younger, fitter man). And he is no longer blind.

Professor Penfold expresses his sense of "closure" now that Hal has arrived. He strongly advises that Hal and Miriam must connect with two fables of the Ancients and turn them to their advantage in Assrishna. Androcles and the Lion and the Sword of Damocles deserve their closest attention.

On the next day, Hal has been once again transported back in time. In this iteration, he is one of 8 men rowing along a beauteous river.

Hal is summoned to meet Satrap Tanques, who turns out to be the reincarnation of his brother Ted. Ted was a well-known footballer and his death was covered on TV news programs.

Hal goes through a range of emotions: denial, disbelief, surprised delight, doubt. Tanques reveals to Hal that he is in fact Ted by mentioning a puppy they had shared as boys.

Hal and Mim indulge in some funny love play when Mim retrieves a book that she has been reading. It discusses the causes of War. The theories in the Handbook of War may explain the Assrishnan/Beulan conflict.

So, it's all about Tanques and the Satrapy being drunk on their own power, and looking enviously at their neighbours in Assrishna: land, wealth, people ... the lot!

Mim and Hal have to work out what Professor Penfold advised.

Before the next review on the third wicket, Hal drives the other Australian fielders crazy with his mad capering about. Hal does not appear to make it back to Assrishnan because he is injured during the cricket game.

Staffy and Kerrianne discuss Hal being stretchered off the field.

Hal did in fact revisit Assrishna during the next third wicket review. It was at this time that Hal keeled over, resulting in his hospitalization.

Hal is super keen to see the dungeons – to find Djashnu. They will find their best assistance from Moshek.

In the dark passageway near the dungeon Unela introduces the mad hermit Churath (Memlath's father) to Hal. Turns out that Churath speaks with a plummy English accent.

Djashnu (bound in chains) is found. He is full of warnings of great danger. Hal impresses Djashnu (after freeing him from the chains) with the need for them to use their brains rather than military brawn.

Djashnu and Moshek gather whisp-shivver branches. Hal expresses his doubts about his pivotal part in the events since he comes and goes at the will of some other force (not his own). He is also disturbed by the fact that some characters (Ted and Mim) appear to him as other characters in Assrishna.

## **ACT V**

With Hal absent, the other players and support people gather in a boardroom for an emergency meeting. The hard word is put on Louise to reveal what is happening with Hal on the third wicket review. Louise tells all. After a stunned revision of all that has happened, the guys decide that they can deal with Hal's "problem" (now that they know what it's all about).

Hal has been hospitalized. Hospital staff threatened that his TV (focused on the cricket game) will be removed from his room if he continues to bellow abuse at it – and to throw missiles in its direction.

Hal is amused to find that Kerrianne Harvey has messaged his mobile phone (probably through the good offices of Staffy).

Eventually Hal glances at Kerrianne's selfie. He is shocked to see Uneela's pretty face smiling back at him.

The council of war is in huge bustle owing to the build-up of Beulan forces at the borders. Djashnu has emerged from the desert. He and Hal strongly counsel peace at all costs.

Staffy and Hal speak on the phone. Staffy reveals that there is a rumour doing the rounds by which a group of thugs from Perth have kidnapped Hauer van der Hahn.

Once Hal makes it clear to Staffy that he had nothing to do with this horrific scheme, the two men try to work out a rescue plan.

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Some tourists have spotted the car which was hired by the Perth toughs. It is in the bush. At night, Mim and Hal search in that area for the hire car. They find it. Hal feels a strong sense of déjà vu as he frees Hauer from his chains.

Later (while waiting outside Hauer's hospital room) Hal expresses (to Staffy) his annoyance at the long police questioning in relation to Hauer's kidnapping. Clearly, Hal is chief suspect in Hauer's kidnapping.

Hal is sitting in the corridor of a hospital outside the room into which Hauer has been stretchered. Hal is on his mobile to Staffy.

There is worse to come. Hauer and Hal are grilled at length regarding the kidnapping incident. Rather than bury Hal, Hauer stands up for him. They complete the deal by shaking hands for the cameras under a picture of the Queen.

The Australian Test team are at Kingsmead in Durban South Africa.

Hal's mother phones him, waking Hal from a nightmare. The bad dream was of Hal fighting to the death in Djashnu's dungeon alongside Horvex and Moshek. Hal's mother is distressed by the anniversary of Ted's death. Hal must soothe her.

Hal again falls asleep – and dreams again. This proves to be a rehash of the very first encounter: when Horvex dragged Hal up onto the back of his camel (just as a huge army descends upon them). Again, Hal wakes with a violent start.

### **ACT VI**

Syl-Ibsel is as keen as mustard to become a warrior once more; Syl-Artron less so. Syl-Ibsel opens himself to his counterpart to admit that his seeming dislike is in fact jealousy (of anyone wiser than himself). He also admits that the celebratory wine which they drink was in fact appropriated from King Etki (without his knowledge). Paluke-Joshua foretells that only a call for peace (as advised by Hal) will answer. While Syl-Ibsel reluctantly pretends to go along with this prognostication, Oringshay demonstrate in mime how he accomplished the Herculean task of deflowering 8 virgins on his own.

The meeting between King Etki and Satrap Tanques does not go well. Tanques makes it evident that he holds the Assrishnan king in comtempt (as indeed most people do!)

Author's note: The reference made to the dog ditched in the desert is based on an actual event. Some blokes crossed the Nullarbor Plain. Their kelpie dog appeared to have died. The dog was buried in the desert. Sometime later, the "dead" dog turned up in Perth enthusiastically greeting his astounded masters.

Louise and Hal are splashing about in a luxurious swimming pool in Durban. Hal expresses his frustration, bitterness and despair.

Page 22 The Third Wicket Review CAST & SYNOPSIS

Rain has interrupted play. Further, Hal has lost Mim to Hauer. Still further, Louise advises that Hal must not and should not return to Assrishna. His work there is done. Hal resists this thought.

The Australian team find themselves at Chevrolet Park in Bloemfontein. Things march along in Assrishna – even though Hal is unable to organize a third wicket review.

Satrap Tanques is eulogizing his power from the edge of a cliff. Baptiste begs him to step back but it is too late: a strong gust of wind whisks Tanques off the edge.

However, Tanques has not died. He has fallen into a ravine with his left foot trapped under a heavy rock. Djashnu fortuitously arrives and together the two men free the trapped foot of Tanques.

Satrap Tanques is in agony. Djashnu promises to assist him. Using the tool kit given over to him by Hal, Djashnu is able to tweeze the rock splinters from Tanques' feet, and to light a comforting fire.

Djashnu confesses that he is the Pathfinder (rather than Hal). Djashnu proves this by turning the whisp-shivver to gold.

In order to rescue Tangues, Djashnu calls out to those above to lower ropes.

King Etki (terrified by the sword dangling above is head) decides to give up the throne. Likewise, Syl-Ibsel and Syl-Artron consider concentrating on their vineyards. Tanques has promised to leave Assrishna alone if only Djashnu (with his bride Labesh) takes over the reign.

Hal hits a strong 6 into the crowd. Whilst waiting for play to resume, Hauer strolls over. Although all the commentators are concerned that another fight will ensue, all that Hal and Hauer discuss is the engagement to Mim. Hal congratulates Hauer.

Again, Hal hits a strong 6. Again, he and Hauer converse. Hal wonders aloud what was the historical tiff that caused the king-hit in Johannesburg. Hauer suggests that it is to do with Mim – and that Hal will get the drift in time.

Another third wicket review sends Hal back in time.

Djashnu insists that Hal kneel to him in honour of his kingship. Hal refuses to do so since he (Hal) rescued Djashnu from death. There is a certain awkwardness: Hal has made love to Mim but not to Labesh. Djashnu lays it on the line that if Hal has dealt inappropriately with Labesh, he will be put to death. [This must be the "historical war" which Hauer mentioned but Hal did not comprehend.]

Hal and Djashnu tacitly agree that they hate each other in Assrishna just as Hal and Hauer do in the real world.

Unela is full of wonderful news about the improvement in her life now that Djashnu is King. Djashnu has married Labesh and they are absurdly happy. So now Hal (wistful but determined) decides to throw himself into loving Unela.

# **EPILOGUE**

Our epilogue finds Hal and Kerrianne getting close to each other at the Sydney international airport (where a billboard advises that Hal Thornside has been awarded "Man of the Series" in South Africa).