

# **LIVES OF THE SAINTS**

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the  
degree

**Master of Creative Arts - Research**

from

**UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG**

by

Sylvia Huntington, Bachelor of Arts (Hons.)

**Faculty of Creative Arts**

**2005**

## **CERTIFICATION**

I, Sylvia Huntington, declare that this thesis, submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Master of Creative Arts\_Research, in the Faculty of Creative Arts, University of Wollongong, is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. The document has not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institution.

Sylvia Huntington

31 March 2005

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	4
Acknowledgements	5
Academic commentary on <i>Lives of the Saints</i>	6
Synopsis	27
Outline	29
<i>Lives of the Saints</i> : The screenplay	38

## ABSTRACT

*Lives of the Saints* is a feature-length, multi-story film screenplay, which explores the obstacles and ethical dilemmas of three protagonists, George, Kristine and Marianne, in their struggle for self actualisation. The screenplay is an example of the siege genre. It is largely structured as a sequential narration but also utilises non-linear narration. The work explores the premise that a saint is one who remains true both to the self and to their responsibilities.

The protagonists' journeys begin with the death of a young girl, Rosetta, who has a connection to them all. Each protagonist responds to this event in his/her own way and embarks upon a search for a more satisfying way of life, and for freedom of self-expression. Middle-aged George explores emerging gender and sexuality issues. Adolescent Kristine finds her faith in God, and in her mother, waning but has nothing to replace them with. Marianne, the driver of the car that killed Rosetta, is initially determined to avoid responsibility for the death, but ultimately finds her own liberation in doing so.

George and Kristine's path to self actualisation also puts them in conflict with their families. Marianne too, in trying to escape responsibility, is at odds with those around her. Ultimately however each protagonist is able to resolve their situations and allow room for consideration of the needs of others. Striking a new balance between the self and others allows the protagonists to attain 'sainthood' as defined by the work.

An academic commentary outlines the influences and writing process for *Lives of the Saints*. An exploration of ethical philosophy, specifically Christian, Ancient Greek and Hindu, was an important step in the development of the screenplay's premise and in the creation of the ethical worlds of particular characters. An understanding of sainthood, across religions and as a secular concept, was also important. The choice of narrative structure is discussed; the various stages and challenges in the writing process itself; and an understanding of the work in terms of film genre are also given. The commentary also details with the use of image in the work and places the screenplay in the context of a post World War Two film culture.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Thanks to Dr. David Blackall and Associate Professor John Scott for their assistance in completing this thesis. Thanks also to Dr. Merlinda Bobis for suggestions.

I would also like to thank Stephen McLaren for his support, patience and advice. Finally, thanks to Bud Huntington-McLaren for his patience, inspiration and love.

*Lives of the Saints*

**ACADEMIC COMMENTARY**

## Introduction

*Lives of the Saints* is a multi-story feature film screenplay with three protagonists. In this paper I will explore how *Lives of the Saints* was written and what ideas, theory and other discourse informed its development. This essay is intended to be read before the screenplay, the accompanying synopsis and outline, and provides a context for the work.

*Lives of the Saints* tells the story of how George, Kristine and Marianne overcome obstacles to their self-fulfilment. An encounter with death precipitates this conflict and delivers the protagonists into a siege scenario in conflict with family, social conventions and their own fears. However, in realising themselves, the protagonists will not disregard the effect of their actions upon others. *Lives of the Saints* argues that a new type of saint remains both true to the self and to their responsibilities, using discretion to find a balance between the needs of the self and others.

## Project origins

*Lives of the Saints* grew from the idea to redefine the Roman Catholic definition of 'saint' and with thinking about what sort of people might qualify for a new, secular 'sainthood'. From the outset a multi-story approach was attractive as a way to explore differing perspectives and to undermine any prescription-driven orthodoxy about 'how to live'. For in this work saints are not rule followers so much as discoverers.

The characters Kristine and George were developed as protagonists almost immediately. Teenage Kristine is in fact a new version of the character of *Shane* from my 1999 script (and 7 minute film) *Metamorphosis*, and relates to the central character in my first film, *Black Sheep* (1997). These characters are alienated individualists struggling for self-differentiation. Kristine's story is a narrative about her path to sainthood and to a new relationship to others. This process precipitates a crisis as Kristine sheds inherited beliefs and comes into conflict with her mother, Lucy.

The first inspiration for middle-aged George came from viewing a fragment of a documentary about a man whose marriage survived his assuming a female persona. George is also the outcome of my many years of friendship with people of diverse sexual and gender orientation. His story explores what it takes to be true to the self when that means becoming, or rather presenting himself as, another sex. George, a heterosexual cross dresser, is an 'artist of the self' and among the social constraints he faces is a stifling of men's aesthetic presentation in a society where 'men are drones, women are queen bees' (Paglia, *Vamps* 42). In a curious coincidence, a few months into the project a married neighbour of mine progressively began to don a female persona in public. Observing from a distance this man's evolving self-presentation as female, with his wife's support, was also a source of inspiration.

For a third protagonist I wanted a darker, more morally tainted character. Marianne is an inadvertent killer and the story follows her reaction to having killed. Marianne

searches for a way to flee responsibility for the crime and, not finding one, increasingly disintegrates. However, when she does encounter a 'partner in crime,' she is set on the path to sainthood by accepting responsibility, against his advice. In the balancing act between social and individual welfare Marianne's story leans more toward the social, but in the context of her situation, her own liberation is also found in that direction. Her story is an example of the limits of individual freedom of action.

To set these protagonists in motion I wanted a disturbance related to death, the idea being to awaken them from their conscious ignorance of the fact that life does end, that time is limited. Agnes Varda in *Cleo from 5 to 7* also used death in this way, with the result that 'death . . . turns Cleo toward real life, incites her to live out her destiny, throw away her masks and her roles' (Biro and Portuges 6).

The disturbance in all the protagonists' lives is when Rosetta, a friend of Kristine's, is hit by Marianne's car, outside George's business. Several personal experiences fed into this decision, including the death of a teenage girl of my acquaintance and my involvement in the grieving process of some of her friends. I also drew on the personal experience of being in a bus crash in which two teenagers died.

Part of the challenge of using death as a disturbance is that characters are placed in a situation that cannot not be overcome or beaten. Without religious beliefs there is also no consoling afterlife. So how can one act when defeat by death is certain?

### **Film contexts**

Robert McKee claims that a general questioning of values since the post-war period has made the ability to tell a story increasingly difficult (17). A distinctive feature of modernist and post-modernist cinema in fact has been an undermining of the narrative element, so that resolutions and closure, for example, are abandoned (Armes, *Film* 198). Deleuze claims the cause is a disconnection between perception and action, first evident in neorealist cinema:

We no longer have much faith in being able to act upon situations or react to situations, but it doesn't make us at all passive, it allows us to catch or reveal something intolerable, unbearable, even in the most everyday things . . . [in this situation] forms of 'wandering' . . . take the place of action. (*Negotiations* 51)

These observations suggest a contemporary context of uncertainty about what we see, what causes it, what it means and what to do about it. In a world that has lost faith in absolutes, and in the value of human intervention, what responses are possible or even desirable?

*Lives of the Saints* in part responds to these perspectives. The protagonists too see death as 'intolerable' and initially do not know what action to take, knowing only that their feelings require some answer. However, in one way or another they all undertake a form of contemplation 'so great is their need to 'see' properly what there is in the situation' (Deleuze, *Time-Image* 128). Eventually the characters in *Lives of the Saints* go further than mere contemplation, finding the ability to act once more. So, while



this screenplay is not plot-driven nonetheless it is a narration, for 'if it shows a character reacting to a situation then you get a story' (Deleuze, *Negotiations* 59).

For example, arriving home from Rosetta's funeral George and Nadia do not know what to say, let alone how to act. However, while George wants to contemplate the event, Nadia cannot bear to do so:

Nadia backs into the driveway with George in the passenger seat. She turns off the engine but they remain seated in silence, each in their own world.

GEORGE  
Sixteen years old . . . !

Nadia runs her finger nervously along the door handle.

NADIA  
What was she doing in the middle  
of the road?

George shakes his head.

GEORGE  
A life. Finished. Just like . .  
.

NADIA  
(Cutting in)  
George, please don't.

The couple fall silent again. George looks around: the pizzeria, the street, the club across the road. He sighs.

GEORGE  
Let's go over for a drink?

Nadia wants to keep death at bay. George however, wants to air the issue of death and respond emotionally. With his suggestion of 'going for a drink' (which then leads him to further 'wander' and search for an answer to his growing dissatisfaction) George wants to go out into the world, see more of it, not less like Nadia. In this screenplay each of the saints, after a period of 'wandering' do find a way to act even though death is 'beyond any possible action' (Deleuze, *Negotiations* 51). Through contemplations that lead to new actions they find a new way of living, of acting in the world.

So, *Lives of the Saints* tells the story of how the protagonists discover new realities. However this is no battle between good and evil with a gratifying, the 'world has been set right again' Hollywood ending. Rather, like Nachmanovitch's idea of an *Imaginary Liberation Front*, the aim is to show 'an explosion of creativity into life where it has been largely excluded' (Nachmanovitch 182). This creativity is to be applied beyond

the realm of formal art into all areas of life, and the protagonists embody this principle and demonstrate some of its possible forms.

As such, the screenplay is conceived, just like the medium of film itself is, as, 'the stuff of dreams . . . a world dominated by pure possibility' (Casetti 44). However, it is individual rather than social reality that is explored. Because this is a work about individual possibility it does not attempt to represent all cross dressers, all irresponsible people or all teenagers. This is not a story about the power of social forces, but rather about the ability of certain individuals to negotiate a way around them. So the protagonists do not have to die like the 'rule breakers' in other films such as Pierce's *Boys Don't Cry*, or Mendes' *American Beauty*. The narration instead explores the theme that there is a way out, although this too has a price.

In telling such stories the screenplay also aims to 'not only describe, but also create a state of mind in a people' (Baecker 561). Is this an audacious aim? Perhaps so; yet film is constantly claimed to have social influence. French New Wave Cinema was accused of undermining traditional ethical considerations in both art and society (Chin 3) and Anouilh went so far as to say 'fiction gives life its form' (qtd. in McKee 12). For although film is merely a representation, a hypothetical reality, one might still expect an effect upon the imagination of the viewer, perhaps an expansion of self-awareness or emotional understanding (Izod 1 and 16). In this way screen fiction can make the unknown known, presenting a logic that is different from the 'norm' (Casetti 45). It is this 'norm' - the assumptions and roles each protagonist deals with - that *Lives of the Saints* aims to challenge, and to show ways characters might reach beyond, or in Marianne's case reconcile with.

### **The idea of sainthood**

In writing a work entitled *Lives of the Saints*, and in dealing with the theme of sainthood generally, it was important to appreciate these concepts in both a religious and secular context. Christian biographies called *Lives of the Saints* were written from the 4th Century A.D. (Farmer 'xx'). They aimed to 'instill in the audience the desire to emulate the holy men, or at least be morally uplifting' (Rapp 433). Rapp suggests this hagiographical diegesis was an extension of consulting Christian desert fathers for guidance on how to live (434).

In a sense, this contemporary 'Lives of the Saints' follows in this tradition, albeit in a fictional and secular context. However, these saints are not intended to be emulated, so much as to provide sources of inspiration. The screenplay is intended to demonstrate a premise that asks the question, what is a saint? In redefining sainthood it was important to start with traditional notions.

The word saint is from the Latin meaning holy or 'reserved for God' (Ghezzi 'xvi'). A papal investigation decides whether a Catholic is a saint, one 'who lived lives of great charity and heroic virtues' and performed at least one miracle (What is a Saint?). A

Hindu saint (*avatar* or *sant*) must show intense devotion to God and possess extraordinary powers, but is also considered an 'incarnation of God' (White 865). Muslim saints (*puri* or *sufi*) are teachers who perform 'actions appearing to be contrary to the laws of nature' (White 866). However although saints are followers of God, they are not necessarily rule-followers. They might reinforce the status quo or they might challenge it (Vincentnathan 163) and must have a 'mind unswayed by the voices of the crowds' (Adams 393).

Adams finds that the central feature of sainthood, across cultures, is a relationship to God (398). However saints invariably also demonstrate 'the right way to live'. Notions of unselfishness - an orientation towards serving society - are emphasised in most definitions, including the following secular one from Wolf: 'A necessary condition of moral sainthood would be that one's life be dominated by a commitment to improving the welfare of others or of society as a whole' (420).

However, Wolf adds that ideas about the best way to live are 'not concerned with what kind of life it is in a person's interest to lead' (436). Happiness, self fulfilment and the general well being of the individual does not factor. Self-sacrifice is the key ideal in moral action. She argues, therefore, that there is a limit to how much moral or value systems can direct individual action, so intuition must be used also (Wolf 439). Nietzsche's idea that morality can be used as cultural force and 'obstacle to human flourishing' (Leiter 252) is another relevant perspective. Clearly then, a saint must resolve tensions between the self and others, unless what the self desires happens to coincide with social or religious interests.

### **The ethics of sainthood**

It is the conflict between individual and social welfare that protagonists in *Lives of the Saints* must address. The screenplay's premise is that a saint is one who remains true both to themselves and to their responsibilities. What remaining true to the self means, and what responsibilities each character should assume, must be discovered by the protagonists using, as Wolf suggests above, intuition or discretion. This will involve the assessment of experience, feelings and responsibility. The path to sainthood in each case, therefore, may be radically different.

Even in today's climate of individualism the principle of pursuing personal rather than greater good sounds suspect. An impartial attitude about the fate of the self still seems to function as an ideal, even in Western society, if only in theory. As psychoanalyst Alice Miller points out: 'We live in a culture that encourages us not to take our own suffering seriously . . . What is more this attitude is regarded as a virtue, and many people . . . are proud of their own lack of sensitivity toward their own fate' ('xii'). To explore and re-evaluate this tension between individual and social welfare I was influenced by three ethical traditions: Ancient Greek virtue ethics, Hindu and Christian ethics.

In Modern Western morality concern for others and the notion of duty tend to dominate in ethics (Annas, *Prudence* 343). The welfare of the self is not privileged over the welfare of others. This emphasis is also found in Christianity, which equates goodness with unselfishness and claims that without God's redemption humans are 'quickly corrupted by selfishness' ('Christianity' 107). Catholicism recommends submission to the will of God and conformity to the church's rules as the way to live ethically (Murphy 83). For example, Berthrong found that Christian ethics have consistently taken a stand against sex and pleasure with a simple 'don't' but 'if you do be sure not to enjoy it' (3). Some Catholic saints have challenged this rule-based ethics, for example Thomas Aquinas, but rule-based ethics remain, which stems in part from a negative view of the human capacity for ethical judgment (Murphy 84).

In Ancient Greek virtue ethics the focus was not on rules but on the ability of a person to make decisions that do 'justice to all features of a particular situation' (Annas, *Ancient* 130). It was argued this form of reasoning developed virtue as a skill: 'a complex intellectual kind of understanding, one that requires continued reflection and practice' (Annas, *Prudence* 248). So the Ancient Greek virtue ethics philosophers recommended study, rather than reliance upon existing knowledge (such as rules), but they assumed that study led to knowledge, which would then inform action.

Most philosophical schools of Ancient Greece taught an ethics primarily concerned with care of the self and on how to achieve happiness (Annas, *Ancient* 129-130). Self-interest, pursuing pleasure, developing virtue (such as justice and temperance) and caring for others were all part of their concept of happiness (Kraut 922; Annas, *Ancient* 125 and 131). They 'believed it was every human being's moral obligation to pursue his or her own happiness, first and foremost, but to do so ethically' (Tierno 76). In this world the relationship between the desires of self and responsibility to others is discovered by complex consideration of all factors rather than by submission to rules.

Hindu ethical guidelines are also complex, not least of all because codes of conduct are dependent upon the situation and the psychology, spiritual insight and wisdom of a person (Dhand 353). In identifying the right course of action one must use moral judgment to decide which duty is most pressing, and consider one's place in a matrix of relationships. The opposition between ethics (dharma) and 'the passions' (such as sensuality or material needs) is also absent in Hindu virtue theory (van den Bossche 55). In Hinduism there are 'many ways to God' (Sen 26).

Accordingly, it could be argued that Christian ethics disempower the ethical nature of the subject, while Ancient Greek and Hindu ethics empower the subject. These perspectives have informed the development not only of the premise of the film, but also of the mental world of the characters and how they relate to situations and each other. For example Lucy (Kristine's mother) is a strict Roman Catholic who emphasises living by the letter of 'the law' but uses this 'law' to dominate others.

Kristine tries to combat this assumed authority by exploring other religions. Bean, a young local misfit, advocates the Hindu Carvakas School, which argues for 'the free expression of our passions' (Hanumantha Rao 25). However he uses this form of Hinduism as an excuse for his actions (and later Marianne's), thus pursuing self-fulfilment, without virtue. Like Lucy, he uses systems of thought in a self-serving fashion.

However, the saints of this screenplay: George, Kristine and Marianne, pursue happiness, or self-interest, in a way that balances the interests of others. Each protagonist works through this opposition to find an outcome that they judge as 'fair'. This is why they are saints.

For example, after Kristine's suicide attempt she spends time in an institution. There she makes new friends and has a chance to be separate from her mother Lucy. However, when the pregnant Lucy is abandoned by her husband Mark, and asks Kristine to return home, Kristine judges her mother's need as greater and agrees to return, even though she'd prefer not to. Marianne turns in the direction of sainthood when she admits her guilt and commits to the legal process for determining her responsibility for Rosetta's death. George finds the balance between the self and others when he secures legal access to his sons and establishes an honest, open relationship with them. This he achieves by using discretion, particularly in respect of whether or not George's gender exploration has the potential to damage his sons.

### **What sort of (potential) film are we in?**

*Lives of the Saints* is an example of the siege genre, for the protagonists are trapped in social roles or belief systems and 'the siege is the normality with which they are trying to cope, or from which they are trying to escape' (Aronson 231). Death sets the characters moving into a siege with normality - their social roles and expectations. However, the siege also exists in respect of death, a condition from which no escape is possible. So the siege situation is created through characters searching for a different way to live but also by the face of death.

There are a number of relevant films and screenplays within this genre. The work of Agnes Varda is particularly relevant, especially *Happiness* and *Kung Fu Master*. Both these films explore characters following their desire (remaining true to themselves) while trying to juggle the needs of others, including those they are responsible for. In both cases they are also struggling against conventional morality.

In *Happiness* the protagonist loves both his wife and mistress but when he tells his wife about his mistress she suicides. Varda however 'denied neither the emptiness nor the disorder caused by grief, but refuses instead the sanctifying and demonizing gestures toward death that are the stuff of funerary eulogies' (Biro and Portuges 7). After a period of grief the protagonist makes a life with his mistress - one that

includes caring for the children of his previous marriage. There is no suggestion of guilt in the work. Life continues in the moment for the characters.

In *Kung Fu Master* the protagonist pursues a teenage boy against her daughter's objections. After the relationship has run its course, no one is worse for wear: the teenage boy is proud of his first romantic encounter and the daughter forgives her mother. The protagonist is in fact the only one to suffer for, through the judgment of others, she loses custody of her daughter.

These stories explore the conflict between individual and social welfare and ask: who is responsible for damage caused by transgressing the moral code? In both cases, Varda suggests that this responsibility lies more with the protectors of the status quo than with the transgressors.

*Casablanca* (Epstein, Epstein and Koch 1942) is another siege film - the situation of World War Two and the 'prison' of the city of *Casablanca* drawing the battle lines. However, the real site of conflict in this screenplay is within the character of Rick: a loner and cynic who recognises no hierarchy and plays by his own rules. The conflict is caused by a love triangle: should Rick break up Ilsa's marriage to Laszlo or give Ilsa up himself? This is a high jeopardy situation for if Rick chooses his own happiness, Laszlo's role as resistance leader will suffer, and with it the fate of millions - so we are told.

*Casablanca* tells the story of an exception that proves the rule of conventional morality. As the theme song goes 'A kiss is just a kiss. A sigh is just a sigh. The fundamental things apply as time goes by' (Epstein, Epstein and Koch 45). The film ends when Rick returns to the fray of conventional morality by sacrificing Ilsa for the greater good.

More recently, films like Tarantino's *Jackie Brown* and Pollack's *The Firm* have also explored morality within the siege genre. In these cases too the protagonists tread a moral tightrope in their bid to escape.

The protagonists in *Lives of the Saints* have a goal to escape from a social prison of normality. The hurdles the protagonists must jump include challenges from characters who maintain the status quo (Nadia, Lucy and Bean), social roles such as parent, spouse and child, emotions and internal life (for Marianne this includes self image and fear, for Kristine her need for certainty) and cultural morals and values (such as doing the 'right thing', putting others first, following the rules).

While George and Kristine are under siege from the status quo and will reject much of normality (in George's case the 'normal' idea of male, in Kristine's case the rules of Catholicism), Marianne ultimately affirms more of the status quo than she rejects. This contrast supports the film's premise that saints are true both to themselves and their responsibilities and that the outcome depends on many factors, including the desires, actions and situations of those involved.

The stories also demonstrate the dangers of following one's desire or impulses, at the same time as affirming the importance of doing so. All the protagonists follow the path of their desire, but because they are saints they also critically reflect on their actions. This reflection leads Marianne to realise that what she wants - escape from responsibility - is not in fact desirable either for others, or ultimately for her self. In George's and Kristine's cases they hold firm to the ethical validity of their desires but also recognise the implications for others.

### **The writing process**

*Lives of the Saints* is my first feature length screenplay. I started with the aim of creating a drama, driven by character, which 'impinges on the story, dimensionalises the story, and moves the story in new directions.' (Segar 149). Accordingly, the first writing tasks were to develop and understand exactly who the characters were. The second was to apply characters to the fictional situation. However, both these tasks involved many stages.

### **Creating characters**

Initially, I produced personality profiles and back-stories for *Lives of the Saints*, and this also involved researching relevant areas such as gender, sexuality, first generation experiences, religion and criminology. However, later, as I began to encounter limitations in my understanding of characters and in the development of story lines, I revisited character development again and again, each time trying a different approach.

Using psychological theory was an important step in this process. Object Relations Theory (a branch of post-Freudian psychology evolving from the work of Kohut (Elliott 57)) in particular the work of James Masterson (1990), was useful in understanding the protagonists' internal lives and barriers to self actualisation. Masterson distinguishes between a 'real self', based on images from the 'real world' and pursuing actions in the 'real world', and a 'false self' built on infantile fantasies - such as being taken care of - which avoids pain and the 'real world' (23). A 'false self' approaches life passively, a 'real self' actively. Finding the 'real' self may directly liberate creativity in the subject. Finding the 'real self' in this screenplay is a stage in becoming a saint.

All the protagonists begin in the grip of a false self and must overcome inherited notions to adopt a creative approach to life. For example, Kristine loses her Christian faith (a system she has passively accepted) but to find her real self she must create a new belief system or simply do without one. This means overcoming the false self's need for monolithic systems and tolerating the messiness of the real world which does not conform to 'systems'.

The work of Schnarch (1997) on intimate relations was also influential in exploring not only George and Nadia's relationship but all the 'pairs', including Lucy and Kristine and Marianne and Bean. Schnarch theorises that sustaining intimacy in committed relationships rests on self-differentiation: 'your ability to maintain your sense of self when you are emotionally and/or physically close to others' (56). Well-

differentiated people can disagree with those they love and stand up for their beliefs regardless of opposition. Undifferentiated people fight when they disagree, or hide the parts they think are unacceptable.

All the protagonists must become differentiated enough to show their real faces to those they love. In George's case this means exploring a female persona, in Kristine's case staying true to her intellectual/spiritual development and for Marianne, risking not being liked by assuming responsibility for her actions.

An additional range of theoretical texts also informed the characters. Marianne, for example, could easily be seen as suffering from *Dependent Personality Disorder*. This is characterised by a belief that one is frail and powerless, an inability to act independently or to assume responsibility for actions and by poor self-image and lack of confidence ('Dependent Personality Disorder'). The work of Gitta Sereny (1974 and 1998) and of sociologist Lonnie Athens (Rhodes 1999) were also important for Marianne. Both explore violence and criminality, including the reactions of their subjects to responsibility for crime.

George's sexual identity evolved in reference to a range of material, including Kate Bornstein's *Gender Outlaw*. According to her analysis, George's confusion about sexuality might stem from the cultural assumption that if he imagines himself in bed with a man it's because he desires men, when what he may really want is to be desired like a woman - to be 'an object' (33). Rachael Wallbank, a post-operative transsexual, helped me understand how gender issues go beyond appearance. For her it was important to be able to relate to people as a female, including to her own children (*Marriage Matters*). Grayson Perry, the 2004 Turner Art Prize winner, was also an inspiration. A heterosexual husband and father, and a transvestite, he is perhaps the closest real-life match to George (Magnusson 100).

### The drafting process

The drafting process of *Lives of the Saints* was demanding, and at times felt like navigating a labyrinth. I produced twelve drafts in all. The initial drafts were based upon planning exercises as suggested by Aronson (2002), Drouyn (1984), Blacker (1986), Segar (1994), King (1988) and others. These included developing a synopsis, action lines, relationship lines, plot steps, three-act charts, turning points, scene breakdowns and character arcs. All assisted in my development of the story lines beyond the 'crude ideas' stage and provided a foundation for initial drafts.

However, supervisors' comments in 2003 alerted me to the fact that producing these exercises does not automatically translate to clarity within the script itself. By early 2004, a year into candidature, I was still finding it very difficult to produce a coherent, dramatically realised draft and the only way forward seemed to be to extend my understanding of screen writing itself, especially in terms of development and realisation of narrative. I also realised that my previous screenplays had been written intuitively, but that this was not working for *Lives of the Saints*. The scope of the work, the fact of three protagonists and the interior nature of much of the stories, were all factors that compounded the degree of difficulty involved. At this stage it seemed



to me that whatever screen writing abilities I had previously demonstrated, they had now disappeared.

Robert McKee's *Story* (1997) provided some important insights in understanding where the work was lacking. From McKee I began to appreciate, consciously, how a script builds a story and by what methods, and the need for a strong line of causation. His claim that '75% or more of a writer's labour goes into designing story' (19) - which includes the task of understanding characters - rang true for me.

In subsequent drafts I was very conscious of creating a causal chain of events. Understanding conflict in the three stories was essential for this task but in many cases the nature of the conflict needed to be continually refined. For example, in early drafts Kristine had ambitions to be a musician. However this component disrupted her search for intellectual/spiritual meaning - the causal chain in her story. So music went into the background and her crisis with faith and meaning became the organising principle. However, music found its way back into the story in other ways, for example as an expression of her creative flowering. Kristine ultimately becomes someone who can choose and combine ideas, developing creativity in the intellectual/spiritual realm. The following passage demonstrates her arrival at this point:

Kristine puts down the guitar and picks up a notebook from the bed stand. While the conversation, and then the reading, continues she idly flicks through the pages of the notebook and in this way we get the chance to see inside it.

On the first page of the book is the mended photo of the *Rosette Nebula* that was once on Kristine's wall at home. Elsewhere are also photos from magazines, drawings, poems, quotes, and general diary-type entries. Some of these are:

'If you bring forth what is within you, what you bring forth will save you. If you do not bring forth what is within you, what you do not bring forth will destroy you.'

Despite my having expanded my understanding of the medium, and diligent attempts to lift my screen writing skill, it wasn't until mid 2004 - 18 months into my two-year candidature - that I finally produced a draft that began to make sense to a reader.

In addition to a steady diet of 'how to' books, my writing process was influenced by other ideas. Armes's suggestion that a screenplay can be considered not only as a potential film but also as a literary work in itself (*Action* 35) made me conscious of writing style and the creation of an experience for a reader. This perspective (and supervisor's comments) also encouraged me to give up control of the future of the screenplay in terms of how much descriptive detail and directive comments to

include. For as Bennett points out 'the performance generates meanings that belong to the work but are not there for the reader . . .' (qtd. in Armes, *Action* 37).

The idea of the open work was an important influence in bringing the story lines to a conclusion and in avoiding didacticism (Eco 'x'). While the protagonists do find a way out of their dilemmas the social, family and cultural issues remain intact, so neither a happy nor a complete ending has been reached. A sense of openness has also been sought by following the 'saints' along only part of their journey: George's evolution will presumably continue; Kristine has not resolved the conflict with Lucy; and Marianne is only just starting along the path to self knowledge and sainthood. We never find out if Marianne is charged with manslaughter because her story is about her evolving self, not about the outcome of the police investigation. In this sense the screenplay might more accurately be called *Extracts from Lives of the Saints*.

The challenges of closure and meaning in the film still continued to evolve up to the final weeks before submission. Although I had wanted to develop Rosetta's story to a deeper and more sophisticated level - possibly to the point where a evident mystery about the cause of her death could be realised - as time went on this seemed beyond my reach and I scaled back such expectations to a more low key realisation. Attempting to generate a satisfying ending, and an obvious causal chain leading to it, were more than enough to handle.

## Structure

The Russian Formalists distinguish between fabula (story) and plot in the following way, 'The fabula is the basic story stuff, the logic of actions or the syntax of characters, the time-orientated course of events. The plot is the story as actually told, along with its deviations, digressions, flash-backs, and the whole of the verbal devices' (Eco 27). According to this definition plot is in effect structure, and structure 'is the business of creating the best vehicle to carry and display the idea' (Aronson 39).

Structure in a multi-story film is especially important because it must make one film out of separate stories, in addition to building suspense, interest and a climax. There are two basic structural possibilities: tandem narration (all stories told simultaneously, in tandem with each other) or sequential narration (each story told separately from beginning to end). While I did not base the screenplay's structure on any particular film, Tarantino's *Pulp Fiction*, Van Sant's *Elephant* and Lawrence's *Lantana* all influenced the plot/structure design of *Lives of the Saints*. The Mexican films, Fons' *Miracle Alley* and Inarritu's *Amores Perros*, with their combinations of sequential and tandem narratives, were perhaps the principal reference points.

*Lives of the Saints* was initially written in tandem structure but I eventually decided on sequential narration for the protagonists up to the second turning point, then tandem narration to build to a climax. The exception to this pattern is Marianne, whose story is told almost completely in sequential narration. The third turning point of Marianne's story, where she admits responsibility for Rosetta's death, is intercut with the second turning point of Kristine's story, and part of George's story too. This choice means that the climax of Marianne's story feeds directly into the third acts of

George and Kristine's stories - producing a counterpoint before building to the climax of the screenplay itself. This structure balances many considerations, including: the need for overall pace and to build suspense within and between stories (for example, the identity of the 'dead girl' in George's story is hidden so that suspense might carry over into Kristine's story; the development of counterpoints; and attempting to weaving the stories to create an overall sense of meaning - related to the premise itself.

The screenplay also embodies non-linear structural elements, jumping back and forth in time as we return to Rosetta's death for the disturbance of each protagonist and the start of their story. These non-linear scenes would hopefully engage the potential film audience in an active way, making the work, in McLuhan's terminology, cooler, and therefore requiring more 'to be filled in or completed by the audience' (33). Although *Lives of the Saints* does not employ non-linear structure to the point of Inarritu's *21 Grams* or Gondry's *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*, my aim was to provide opportunity for audience participation in the form of wondering where the non-linear elements might fit in the sequence of events.

Audience experience must be central to structural design as structure also delivers theme and premise. Vince Colossimo comments that in the tandem multi-story narrative *Lantana* no character, or relationship is more important than another (Chambers and Brady). However, I would argue that in *Lantana* structure makes Leon most important: he is the sole character connected to every other character, the screenplay begins with his extra marital affair and ends with him reconciling with his wife. More importantly, Leon's search for truth in his marriage and in the death of Valerie is the screenplay's climax, delivering the final installment on a central theme of trust.

In *Lives of the Saints* the premise, a definition of sainthood, is at the climax of the screenplay. This is the point where the protagonists can be themselves and juggle their responsibilities at the same time. At this point George is responsible to his sons while being true to himself and Kristine puts her mother's comfort over her own self-differentiation, because Lucy so obviously needs a moment of respite. Here too Marianne accepts responsibility for her actions, and the outcome of the justice system and finds the self-love she has sought throughout the screenplay. So at the climaxes the protagonists become saints: people who seek self actualisation but at the same time act considerably of others.

With this climax the two themes of 'how to live as a saint' and 'how to live with death' are fused. Living as a saint - juggling self-fulfilment and responsibility - is the answer to 'how to live with death' the question thrown up by Rosetta's untimely death. Knowing that one is going to die is balanced by living the life of a saint, a life that is both satisfying and ethical. The screenplay also provides an answer therefore, as does the non fiction, religious based, 'Lives of the Saints', to the question of 'how to live ethically'. Living the life of a saint changes society of course, which is the reason for the 'dream' ending of the screenplay (discussed below).

## Imagining images

Ideally a screenplay conveys a story with image more often than with words. The primary images in *Lives of the Saints*, of town, house and home, mountains, wilderness, and especially the sea, remained fairly constant throughout the writing process. I became increasingly aware, however, of how image contributes to the development of story and theme, and provides insight into the work that even the writer (or maybe especially the writer) isn't necessarily aware of.

Helen Garner demonstrates the importance of image when discussing her screenplay *The Last Days of Chez Nous*. In this work she used cypress trees to evoke a 'connection to the origins of our [European] culture . . . [and] a reminder of darkness, of stillness, of death \_ and thus of the question of God, and the soul' (Garner, *True Stories* 118). However during filming the cypress trees were replaced with a church spire, but as Garner says, 'a spire . . . is literal. It represents a known religion . . . All the mystery of the image is lost' (*True Stories* 118). Images in film, and film writing, obviously carry a lot of weight and must be employed advisedly.

In discussing the use of image in *Lives of the Saints* it may be useful to utilise Barthes' terminology of the informational levels (straightforward communication) and symbolic levels (signifying wider and deeper associations, for example historical or cultural) (52). On the informational level image in *Lives of the Saints* communicate a range of specific information about particular characters, families and society itself. For example, George's changing self-image shows the evolution of his self-representation, from 'straight' male attire and a hidden world of frilly dresses (stereotypes) to arriving at a toned down androgyny that refers to his acceptance of both male and female qualities within himself. His changing self-image expresses the fluid nature of George's sense of self and in effect, stages of his journey. An extract from Almadovar's *All about My Mother* was likewise used to convey information, to both George and the reader, that his gender desires are an 'authentic' part of himself and the source of his 'wandering'.

A wall collage in Kristine's bedroom was used as a sort of map of her mind, displaying her values and interests. When she no longer believes in this world she destroys the collage, trying to erase her intellectual/spiritual past. Later, when she begins to 'build' a world again, she uses a notebook, demonstrating her retreat into a private, or 'invitation only' world. She has gone from being visible in the public domain, as it were, into a state of isolation.

The emptiness, darkness and lack of aesthetic display in Marianne's home unit is in direct relationship to her lack of self-development and lack of commitment to making a life for herself. The follow extract demonstrates this intention:

The flat is small and barren: couch, television, a few books and CDs. It could have all been purchased in an hour. The windows are completely covered,

blocking out the world outside. In one corner are some half unpacked boxes.

On a wall is a multiple photo frame: Marianne and her family; Marianne as a bridesmaid; Marianne and David (her ex); then empty frames.

Marianne, however, does take pains with her appearance. In her case, makeup and grooming are used to cover or hide, in contrast to George who uses make up to reveal. In one scene Marianne and her father, Gerald, watch *Casablanca*. The intention here was to convey a sense of Marianne's attraction to traditional male and female roles and a world where individualism must be sacrificed for the 'greater good'. However, because of Marianne's lack of maturity, the fact of being 'stuck' in her own childhood, she herself is not able to put the needs of others first.

On the symbolic level in *Lives of the Saints* I have sought to develop a theme of human existence within nature. The theme of death is also present here, in that nature defines and limits our lives. Many films influenced the screenplay's use of nature, including: Malick's *The Thin Red Line*, Campion's *The Piano*, and Lawrence's *Lantana*.

Although *Lives of the Saints* is primarily concerned with individual self actualisation, the backdrop of nature (Ocean Grove is a town visually marooned in nature) points to a condition beyond the individual or society that must also be addressed. On a broad level the vast, uncontrollable sea demonstrates our dominance by nature, human life as a part of nature (all life comes from the sea) and the power of our internal, unconscious, perhaps 'natural' impulses that cannot be ignored. A passage from Paglia expands on this theme:

'Civilised man conceals from himself the extent of his subordination to nature. The grandeur of culture, the consolation of religion absorb his attention and win his faith. But let nature shrug, and all is in ruin . . . Disaster falls on the good and bad' (*Sexual Persona* 1).

The protagonists' responses to the sea also offer other dimensions on the theme of nature. George looks to the sea as a source of possibility or yearning and later as something to be partially managed, by learning to jump waves. Kristine uses the sea to seek her own death, but to her surprise it does not destroy her on this occasion. Nothing is guaranteed. It is also the sea that turns Marianne back toward life rather than a death within 'four walls'.

The use of nature is also intended to suggest a spiritual dimension to the work, unspecified yet looming large. The mystery of life and death is hopefully present in these images. Nature, and with it death, is always lurking no matter how much we hide. These are 'facts' that need to be dealt with. This was behind the decision to have Rosetta trip on a branch blown into the gutter by the wind. Her death is over

determined, inevitable, inescapable - but not meant so much for her as for anyone, and everyone.

However, through use of symbolic imagery \_ for example in the final scene linking Rosetta's death with a 'dream' or 'fantasy' transformation of the town's people \_ I had hoped also to convey a response to these 'facts' of nature and death and to the siege situation the characters are in with death. Part of the scene is as follows:

We move back along Grove Street. Now the people in the town are somehow different, more alive, energetic, more interested in their surroundings. Even their clothes are different: some dress with care and adventure, others wear the first thing that came to hand.

Young and old are in dialogue. The park has become a place where all ages gather, families, single people, different colours and cultures. Some of them are playing catch over the war memorial, others are picnicking, or just mingling.

All along the street different styles of music are being performed by musicians or broadcast from radios. All these musical styles should create a cacophony, yet they seem to blend.

An old man is dancing in the middle of the road; on lookers applaud him. Some get out of their cars to watch.

With these final images the idea of the possibility of a more liberating life and richer relationship with others was intended, not only for the saints, but potentially for everyone.

### **In conclusion**

*Lives of the Saints* was a challenging project, especially for a first time feature writer. Creating and understanding three protagonists, and realising three story lines, was a task undertaken without my fully appreciating just what this entailed.

In retrospect, beginning the project with a premise \_ that a saint is a person who remains both true to themselves and to their responsibilities - is an approach that I would not repeat. Character driven drama must be hampered if a premise is the ultimate defining principal. However, this project began with the premise, which may have made the writing process more difficult, time-consuming and convoluted than it otherwise might have been. Yet it has also made for a very rich experience, in terms of learning about screen writing and my own leanings toward particular themes.

Undertaking such an ambitious work was certainly starting at the deep end and aspects of the work suffered as a consequence. The last year of candidature was a race against time. Once I realised I did not know enough about how to write

screenplays, and that my previous work had been purely intuitive, experimentation and taking advice seemed the only way forward. While all this practical guidance was helpful and extended my understanding of the medium, ultimately screen writing is an art form and therefore the writer must discover his or her own ways to work. *Lives of the Saints* has been a beginning for me, in this process of discovering how to become a writer of screenplays.

## List of Works Cited

- Adams, Robert Merrihew. 'Saints.' *The Journal of Philosophy*, 81.7 (1984): 392-401.
- Annas, Julia. 'Ancient Ethics and Modern Morality.' *Philosophical Perspectives*, 6 Ethics (1992): 119-136.
- - -, 'Prudence and Morality in Ancient and Modern Ethics.' *Ethics* 105.2 (1995): 241-257.
- Armes, Roy. *Action and Image: Dramatic Structure in Cinema*. Manchester: Manchester Unity Press, 1994.
- - -. *Film and Reality: An Historical Survey*. GB: Penguin, 1974.
- Aronson, Linda. *Scriptwriting Updated: New and Conventional Ways to Writing for the Screen*. Australia: Allen and Unwin, 2000.
- Baecker, Dirk. 'The Reality of Motion Pictures.' *MLN* 111.3 (1996): 560-577.
- Barthes, Roland. *Image-Music-Text*. Trans. Stephen Heath. Great Britain: Fontana, 1977.
- Berthrong, John. 'Love, Lust and Sex: A Christian Perspective.' *Buddhist-Christian Studies* 24 (2004): 3-22.
- Biro, Yvette and Catherine Portuges. 'Caryatides of Time: Temporality in the Cinema of Agnes Varda.' *Performing Arts Journal* 19.3 (1997): 1-10.
- Blacker, Irwin R. *The Elements of Screenwriting: A Guide for Film and Television Writing*. New York: Collier Books, 1986.
- Bornstein, Kate. *Gender Outlaw: On Men, Women and the Rest of Us*. New York: Vintage Books, 1994.
- Campion, Jane, dir. and writ. *The Piano*. Perf. Holly Hunter, Harvey Keitel, Sam Neill. Miramax Films, 1994.
- Chambers, David and Tait Brady, prod. *The Nature of Lantana*. Jan Chapman Films, 2002.
- Casetti, Francesco. *Theories of Cinema: 1945 -1995*. USA: University of Texas Press, 1999.
- Chin, Daryl. 'The Film That We Wanted to Live: Re-releasing Modernist Movies.' *PAJ: A Journal of Performance and Art* 23.3 (2001): 1-12
- 'Christianity.' *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Vol 1. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc. and The Free Press, 1967.
- Deleuze, Gilles. *Negotiations, 1972-1990*. Trans. Joughin. New York: Columbia UP, 1995.
- - -, *Cinema 2: On the Time-Image*. Trans. Tomlinson and Galeta. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1989.
- 'Dependent Personality Disorder'. *Medical Glossary.Org*. Updated 2004. Accessed 27/3/05.  
<[www.medicalglossary.org/personality\\_disorders\\_dependent\\_personality\\_disorder\\_definitions.html](http://www.medicalglossary.org/personality_disorders_dependent_personality_disorder_definitions.html)>
- Dhand, Arti. 'The Dharma of Ethics, The Ethics of Dharma: Quizzing the Ideals of Hinduism.' *Journal of Religious Ethics* 30.3, (2002): 347 \_ 372.
- Drouyn, Coral. *Big Screen, Small Screen: a Practical Guide to Writing for Film and TV in Australia*. Australia: Allen and Unwin, 1984.
- Eco, Umberto. *The Role of the Reader: Explorations in the Semiotics of Texts*. USA: Indiana University P, 1979.



- Epstein, Julius J., Philip G., Epstein and Howard Koch, writ. *Casablanca*. Dir. Michael Curtiz. Perf. Humphrey Bogart, Ingrid Bergman. Dist. Warner Bros, 1942.
- Elliott, Anthony. 'The Affirmation of Primary Repression Rethought: Reflections on the State of the Self in its Unconscious Relational World.' *American Imago* 52.1 (1995): 55-79.
- Farmer, David. *The Oxford Dictionary of Saints*. GB: Oxford UP: 1992.
- Fons, Jorge, dir. *Miracle Alley*. Writ. Vincente Lenero. Perf. Salma Hayek, Ernesto Gomez Cruz. Northern Arts Entertainment USA, 1995.
- Garner, Helen. *True Stories: Selected Non-Fiction*. Australia: The Text Publishing Company, 1996.
- - -, writ. *The Last Days of Chez Nous*. Dir. Gillian Armstrong. Perf. Lisa Harrow, Bruno Ganz, Kerry Fox. Ronin Films Aus., 1992.
- Ghezzi, Bert. *The Times Book of Saints*. GB: HarperCollins Publishers, 2000.
- Gondry, Michael, dir. *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*. Writ. Charlie Kaufman. Perf. Jim Carrey, Kate Winslet. Focus Features, 2004.
- Hanumantha Rao, G. 'The Basis of Hindu Ethics.' *International Journal of Ethics*, 37.1 (1926): 19-35.
- Inarritu, Alejandro Gonzalez, dir. *21 Grams*. Writ. Guillermo Arriaga. Perf. Sean Penn, Naomie Watts, Benicio Del Toro. Focus Features USA, 2003.
- - -, dir. *Amores Perros*. Writ. Guillermo Arriaga. Perf. Gael Garcia Bernal, Goya Toledo. Lions Gate Films USA, 2001.
- Izod, John. *Myth, Mind and the Screen: Understanding the Heroes of Our Time*. UK: Cambridge UP, 2001.
- King, Viki. *How to Write a Movie in 21 Days: The Inner Movie Method*. New York: Harper/Perennial, 1988.
- Kraut, Richard. 'The Morality of Happiness by Julia Annas.' *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 55.4 (1995): 921-927.
- Lawrence, Ray dir. *Lantana*. Writ. Andrew Bovell. Perf. Anthony LaPaglia, Rachel Blake, Kerry Armstrong. Palace Films, 2001.
- Leiter, Brian. 'Nietzsche and the Morality Critics.' *Ethics* 107:2 (1997): 250-285.
- Magnusson, Tony. 'Pots of Gold', *PolOxygen: Design and Architecture* 9 (2004): 100-109.
- Malick, Terance, dir. and writ. *The Thin Red Line*. Perf. Ben Chaplin, James Caviezel. 20th Century Fox, 1998.
- 'Marriage Matters.' *Australian Story*. Australian Broadcasting Commission, 31/3/03. Transcript [www.abc.net.au/Austory](http://www.abc.net.au/Austory). 28.2.05.
- Masterson, James F. *Search for the Real Self: Unmasking the Personality Disorders of Our Age*. USA: The Free Press, 1990.
- McKee, Robert. *Story*. USA: Methuen Film, 1997.
- McLuhan, Marshall. *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*. London: Sphere Books, 1964.
- Mendes, Sam, dir. *American Beauty*. Writ. Allan Ball. Perf. Kevin Spacey, Annette Bening. Dreamworks Distribution LLC, 1999.
- Miller, Alice. *The Drama of Being a Child*. GB: Vantage Point, 1990.

- Murphy, William F. 'Toward a Narrative of Truth and Freedom.' *Logos: A Journal of Catholic Thought and Culture* 5.3 (2002): 77-110.
- Nachmanovitch, S. *Free Play: The Power of Improvisation in Life and the Arts*. New York: GP Putnam's Sons, 1990.
- Paglia, Camille, *New Essays: Vamps and Tramps*. UK: Viking, 1994.
- - -, *Sexual Personae*. UK: Penguin Books, 1990.
- Pierce, Kimberly, dir. *Boys Don't Cry*. Writ. Kimberly Pierce and Andy Bienen. Perf. Hilary Swank, Chloe Sevigny. 20th Century Fox, 1999.
- Pollack, Sydney, dir. *The Firm*. Writ. David Rabe. Perf. Tom Cruise, Jeanne Tripplehorn. Paramount Pictures, 1993.
- Rapp, Claudia. 'Storytelling as Spiritual Communication in Early Greek Hagiography: The Use of Diegesis.' *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 6:3 (1998): 431-488.
- Rhodes, Richard. *Why They Kill: Discoveries of a Maverick Criminologist*. USA: Vintage Books, 1999.
- Schnarch, David. *Passionate Marriage*. Australia: Scribe Publications, 1997.
- Segar, Linda. *Making a Good Script Great*. Hollywood: Samuel French, 1994.
- Sen, KM. *Hinduism*. UK: Penguin, 1961.
- Sereny, Gitta. *Into that Darkness: From Mercy Killing to Mass Murder*. London: Pimlico, 1974.
- - -, *Cries Unheard: The Story of Mary Bell*. GB: Macmillan, 1998.
- Tarantino, Quinton, dir. writer. *Pulp Fiction*. Writ. Quinton Tarantino and Roger Avary. Perf. Samuel L. Jackson, John Travolta and Uma Thurman. Miramax Films, 1994.
- - -, dir. and writ. *Jackie Brown*. Perf. Pam Grier, Samuel L. Jackson. Miramax Films, 1997.
- Tierno, Michael. *Aristotle's Poetics for Screenwriters*. New York: Hyperion, 2002.
- van den Bossche, Frank and Freddy Mortier. 'The Vajjalaggam: A Study in Indian Virtue Theory.' *Asian Philosophy* 7.1 2 (1997): 85-109.
- Van Sant, Gus. Dir and writ. *Elephant*. Perf. John Robinson, Alex Frost. HBO Films, 2003.
- Varda, Agnes, dir. and writ. *Cleo from 5 to 7*. Perf. Corinne Marchand. Zenith International Films, 1961.
- - -, dir. and writ. *Happiness* [La Bohneur]. Perf. Jean-Claude Drouot, Clair Drouot. Clover Films Inc., 1965.
- - -, dir. and writ. *Kung Fu Master*. Perf. Jane Birkin. Expanded Entertainment USA, 1987.
- Vincentnathan, Lynn. 'Nandanar: Untouchable Saint and Caste Hindu Anomaly.' *Ethos* 21.2 (1993): 154-179.
- 'What is a Saint.' *Catholic-pages.com*. Accessed 27/2/05. <[www.catholic-pages.com/saints](http://www.catholic-pages.com/saints)>
- White, Charles S.J. 'The Sai Baba Movement: Approaches to the Study of India Saints.' *The Journal of Asian Studies* 31.4 (1972): 863-878.
- Wolf, Susan. 'Moral Saints.' *The Journal of Philosophy* 79.8 (1982): 419-439.

*Lives of the Saints*

## **SYNOPSIS**

**One line synopsis**

When teenage Rosetta dies, Kristine questions her beliefs, Marianne goes to any length to avoid responsibility and George realises his life must change.

**One page synopsis**

Ocean Grove is a small outer urban centre flanked by mountains and sea. The residents are typical middle Australians: family centred, multi-cultural and afraid of anything unfamiliar. When teenage Rosetta is killed on the streets of Ocean Grove, her untimely death comes as an unwelcome reality check to everyone.

Rosetta dies in front of George, a local pizza owner. As a consequence, his wife Nadia becomes frightened of life, while George worries whether he is living life to the fullest. As he parties the night away he encounters a world he wants to bring back home.

Meanwhile Rosetta's friend Kristine, a cerebral, religious teenager sees through everything that she had been taught to have faith with. She is plunged into a crisis with God, and her family, as she searches for something else worth believing in.

Marianne, the driver of the car that killed Rosetta, can't bear to see herself as responsible. Initially, rather than face her guilt, or the emptiness of her life, she moves in with her father. But when this sanctuary is taken away, she is desperate to find a way out of her own self-loathing.

*Lives of the Saints* asks if it is possible to be true to yourself and at the same time responsible and fair to others.

*Lives of the Saints*

**OUTLINE**

Ocean Grove is an outer suburban town flanked by mountains and sea. The residents are typical middle Australians, family centred, multi-cultural and afraid of anything unfamiliar. The shopping centre on Grove Street ends at a T intersection with Ocean Avenue, which hugs the oceanfront. On one side of the T intersection is an RSL club, on the other *Monte Bianco Pizzeria*, a modest neighbourhood business. On this corner a group of buskers regularly perform for change.

TITLE CARD: George.

Living on the first floor above the pizzeria are proprietors George (40s) and Nadia (late 30s) and their two sons Christopher (8) and Blair (4). George and Nadia are a warm, affectionate couple, but juggling a business and family is a challenge. When we first meet George, he's getting ready for work. But there's something about his clothes, and his reflection in the mirror, that bother him. In the wardrobe hang some garment bags that are zipped up tight.

That night it's busy at *Monte Bianco*, although Nadia notices her husband still has time to ogle the female customers. In retaliation she flirts with a regular, Murray, and this doesn't impress George. Two teenage girls, Kristine and Rosetta, pick up an order and head out again. Moments later there is a loud crash outside. A car has hit one of the teenage girls but we don't see which one. George is the first on the scene but she dies before help can arrive.

A few days later George and Nadia attend the funeral. Afterwards George wants to have a drink at the local club but Nadia wants to stay home. She's hurt when George goes over anyway, leaving her behind. Yet once there, George finds the atmosphere dispiriting and heads off in search of something more to his liking. This becomes the pattern in the days that follow: George is restless to explore new horizons, Nadia anxious to keep her family close and safe from harm. Needless to say this doesn't do much for their relationship.

One night George goes to a bar called *Nuevo Mondo* with his employee Shamus. There George is fascinated by the diverse clientele and finds the performance of a transsexual called Annie very moving. Over the next few days George finds himself thinking more and more about *Nuevo Mondo* when one night seeing an Almadovar film gives him a clue as to why this might be. George sneaks out to *Nuevo Mondo* in the middle of the night. This time he finds Annie working behind the bar.

George arrives home to find Nadia waiting up for him. He's evasive about where he's been and she jumps to the conclusion that he's seeing other women. George eventually admits he wants to live 'as a woman does'. Nadia cracks open the garment bags in the wardrobe: inside are man-sized women's clothing. 'I don't stop you getting

dressed up', says Nadia. George tells her it isn't about sex anymore, but wanting to 'live as a woman all the time. Everywhere.' Nadia is tremendously shocked. She also wonders what he means: is it a sex change he's after? Or is it sex with other men he wants? George can't say either way, only that he doesn't want to lose his family.

But Nadia isn't about to play 'fag hag' to George's 'Boy George' and begins to make a few demands of her own. George, however, has come too far to be put off. Nadia gives him an ultimatum: your family or your needs. Faced with this choice George leaves.

TITLE CARD: Kristine.

15-year-old Kristine lives with mother Lucy and stepfather Mark in a large modern house. She arrives home with school friend Rosetta, who is staying the weekend. In many ways the girls are opposite: Kristine is bookish, Rosetta doesn't have a head for school; Kristine is into science, Rosetta is interested in the occult. That night Rosetta reveals she has had sex for the first time. Kristine, a believing Catholic, is shocked. Rosetta tells her that no one follows 'the Catholic rules', such as a prohibition on contraception, but Kristine insists her mother does and so will she, intending to remain a virgin until she marries. Rosetta says she doesn't believe in religion and Kristine doesn't understand how one can go through life without guidance for action.

The next night Rosetta and Kristine wait for a pizza order and get talking to Bean, one of the buskers on the street. Kristine finds Bean attractive but he flirts with Rosetta. After picking up their food Kristine and Rosetta get into a fight and Kristine runs off across the road to the beach. When Rosetta tries to follow she is hit, and killed, by a car.

Late that night a distressed Kristine asks her mother if God punishes people who have sinned? Lucy takes the official Catholic line. But Kristine is so upset that Lucy gives her a sleeping pill. Afterward Lucy pleads with Mark to consider having a child with her but he isn't keen.

At Rosetta's wake a group of teenage mourners, including Kristine, enter Rosetta's bedroom and put on one of her CDs. However a priest soon stops their homage and berates them for 'violating the dead'. Afterwards Paula, Rosetta's sister, tells Kristine that at her church rock music is part of worship and this sparks Kristine's curiosity.

Driving home, Lucy and Kristine get into a disagreement over the incident at the wake. Lucy loses patience with what she thinks is adolescent wilfulness. Kristine defends her actions and reveals that Rosetta didn't even believe in God. Lucy is so

shocked Kristine feigns uncertainty about Rosetta's faith. From here on Kristine increasingly learns to deceive her mother.

Later Kristine attends a Pentecostal mass with Paula. While she enjoys the sense of community, and the singing, she is unimpressed by the heavy handedness of the preacher. Afterward, talking to Paula's friend Alex, she realises she now doubts the existence of God herself.

Over the next few days Kristine feels her world crumbling. She finds it hard to concentrate on schoolwork and battles with anxiety. One morning, tired and worn out, Kristine asks if she can miss a morning of school. Lucy, feeling pressured by Mark, agrees. Later, alone in the house, Kristine comes across her mother's birth control pills, a discovery which reveals her mother as a hypocrite. She also finds some sleeping pills, which she also pockets.

Now, rather than going to school, Kristine visits Bean on a pretext of asking for guitar lessons. Instead of learning the guitar however they get talking. Bean explains his eastern beliefs, in particular that nothing should be considered wrong. Kristine is attracted to the idea. They end up in bed. When Kristine wakes up she finds that Bean is gone and so is her money.

Kristine returns home to find a frantic mother and stepfather. It doesn't take Lucy long to figure out that Kristine has been with a boy, which Kristine denies. Lucy informs her they have an appointment with her form master in the morning but Kristine says she's going to leave school altogether. In the ensuing argument Kristine tells her mother 'Nothing is right and wrong it's all just experience'. Lucy asks if that means the driver that killed her friend did nothing wrong and this stops Kristine in her tracks. Kristine confronts her mother with her own hypocrisy in being on the pill. Lucy, not used to being confronted, locks her daughter inside her room. Kristine, venting her frustration and anger, destroys her collage wall - all that she had believed in.

Early the next morning Kristine climbs out her bedroom window and escapes through the bush.

Later she arrives at Bean's house and when no one answers looks in the window to his bedroom. There she sees him in bed with someone else. Kristine seems to have lost everything: her beliefs, an understanding of the universe, Rosetta, a good relationship with her mother, and her virginity.



A distressed Kristine struggles through thick bush to a cliff overlooking the sea. She undresses, and an empty foil of sleeping pills falls out of her pocket. She climbs down the cliff face to the sea and wades into ocean.

TITLE CARD: Marianne.

Marianne, a pretty blonde in her late 20s, works as a receptionist in a busy company. Her boss Jim offers her the chance to act in a more demanding role but Marianne isn't keen. After work Marianne and co-workers Suzie and Frances enjoy 'happy hour' in a pub by the ocean. Suzie wants to pick up some young men at the pub but Marianne prefers to wait for them to make the first move. When Suzie invites the men to their table, Marianne leaves altogether.

In the car park Marianne smokes a joint before driving home. She is accelerating through Ocean Grove when Rosetta is suddenly on the road in front of her. She tries to stop the car but has virtually no chance. At impact Marianne blacks out and Bean comes to her assistance. When the police arrive Marianne is found to be over the legal limit for alcohol. Bean, who witnessed the accident, is also interviewed and the officer notices he has cannabis in his pocket.

At the station two police officers interview Marianne, confronting her with the causal chain that lead to the car accident: alcohol, marihuana, speed, slow reflexes. Much of the time Marianne is confused, like the person they are talking about cannot be her. The police inform her she may be charged with manslaughter. Later she waits in a cell with a woman withdrawing from heroin. The woman claims heroin takes the pain of the world away.

In the small hours of the morning Marianne's father Gerald, picks her up. By now Marianne has begun justifying her behaviour - 'I told Suzie I didn't want any more drinks' etc. She's also worried she'll go to jail. Gerald reassures Marianne that they'll see a lawyer in the morning.

The next day, while waiting at the Legal Aid Office with Gerald, Marianne watches TV. On the screen a daytime talk show host discusses self-esteem with a psychologist who recommends looking into the mirror and saying 'I love you'. Several people in the waiting room burst out laughing. When Marianne sees her lawyer she insists on pleading not guilty.

Meanwhile the police raid Bean's house. They turn the place upside down but do not find many drugs.

Meanwhile Marianne is staying at her father's house and avoiding her own life. Marianne and Gerald are having lunch one day when Howard, Marianne's brother, drops in. He is surprised to find Marianne still there and reminds her that Gerald is too old to be looking after her. Marianne feels persecuted and leaves.

Returning home Marianne finds a police calling card and ignores it. There are mobile phone messages waiting also but she hides the phone in a drawer. Alone in her bleak unit it doesn't take long for loneliness and depression to set in: Marianne has nothing to do and no one to be with. Looking in a mirror Marianne tries to say, 'I love you' but can barely endure her own reflection. She abandons the attempt and applies make up instead.

Later, Marianne drops in on her ex-boyfriend David, who is having a quiet night at home with his new girlfriend. They sit on his porch. Marianne tells him about the accident and he's sympathetic. But when she talks about them getting back together, David winds up the conversation. They get into a scuffle and Marianne reverts to hitting him and tries to incite him to hit her back. Eventually he manages to get away and Marianne stumbles out into the night and winds up on a train.

That night, Marianne dreams that David is hitting her and that she herself is killed in the car crash. The next morning she wakes up in a cheap hotel on a major road. Soon however she's on the run again, this time hitchhiking on the highway. She unhesitatingly takes a ride from the first car that pulls up; the driver is a stereotypical dangerous-looking male.

Meanwhile back in Ocean Grove Bean's flat mates are moving out, leaving him alone and in a difficult financial situation.

Later that day Marianne waits outside Rosetta's family home. When Paulo and Patricia arrive she asks them to hear her side of the story. Instead Patricia confronts Marianne with her responsibility for Rosetta's death. Marianne asks for their forgiveness but, unnerved by their pitiful state, she cannot press them. As if the wind has left her sails. Marianne stumbles off, full of guilt and self-disgust.

Back in Ocean Grove Bean tries to earn money by playing his guitar. However 'No Loitering' signs have been erected all along the shopping strip. It seems his busking days are over.

Marianne goes back to her flat, runs a bath and attempts to cut her wrists. When this doesn't work she visits a local drug dealer to purchase a large amount of heroin. Bean is also at the dealer's and after she scores, he follows her out.

Out on the street Marianne tries to get rid of Bean, but then realises she doesn't even know how to take the heroin and needs him. But first he shows her a wonderful view of the ocean and Marianne initiates a sexual relationship with him.

Back at Bean's house the next day he prepares two hits of heroin, making a small one for Marianne. When she objects Bean says he can tell she is a novice. Marianne wonders why he cares: after all he's got a free score? Bean doesn't deny he wanted a fix but insists he's also attracted to her. Marianne reminds him he doesn't even know her. Then Bean admits he saw her on the night of the accident. Marianne is deeply moved by his acceptance of her, especially as he knows everything. She has what she's been after: a way out of her loneliness and self-disgust.

Marianne finds she can now admit her responsibility for Rosetta's death. But rather than wait for the police to decide her fate Bean suggests they leave town and escape justice \_ which has no moral jurisdiction as far as he's concerned. But Marianne feels that for everyone concerned \_ Rosetta's family, her family and her self, she must 'be judged'. Having made her decision Bean's attraction for her evaporates. He had thought she was someone different. Marianne leaves Bean to his heroin fix.

Meanwhile Kristine is still floating in the sea. The sleeping pills are now taking effect and she's finding it hard to keep her head above water. She hallucinates a conversation between herself and Rosetta. Kristine asks her what happens after death and Rosetta tell her it doesn't matter. What matters is to keep going and see what comes. Kristine slips under the water. However, she finds to her surprise that she can stand up. She drags herself out of the water and falls to sleep between some rocks.

Back at home Marianne is about to retrieve her messages when she sees herself reflected in the chrome of the phone. She looks herself in the eyes and manages to mouth, 'I love you' then presses the command to retrieve messages.

Several weeks have now passed since George left Nadia. When we catch up with him he is walking down an inner city street, in drag, looking relaxed and confident. He stops to pat a dog and a man hits on him.

Back at *Nuevo Mondo*, where George now lives, he has sex with the man, but the earth doesn't move for him. Later George puts a call in to Nadia but, as usual, gets her answering machine.

That night George tells Shamus (an employee from the Pizzeria) how much he misses his family. But Shamus doesn't hold out much hope in George getting back with Nadia. Annie, the transsexual performer who provided George with his 'Damascus

experience' and her boyfriend Saul, confess that they'd like to have children. George wonders though how fair this will be on the children. 'After all', he says, 'people outside of here think we're freaks'. Annie vigorously defends her character against such a notion and George once again finds her inspirational.

Meanwhile the police are looking for Kristine and find her passed out among some rocks. She is taken away in an ambulance.

In the dead of night, we find George tiptoeing into the room he used to share with Nadia. Much to his surprise Murray, a customer from the pizzeria, is in bed with his wife. After surprises all round are sorted, George and Nadia speak frankly. George tells her he is not gay and still loves her. But Nadia insists that George has destroyed their family and that they have no future together. George counters this by suggesting that it is bigotry, not his persona that stops them from living as a family again. But Nadia cannot imagine a life with him as he is now. He leaves warning that he has the right to access to his children.

When next we see Mark and Lucy they are fighting. Lucy has just produced a positive pregnancy test and Mark feels he has been violated. He storms out of the house.

Meanwhile Kristine is living in an institution. On the day in question she is hanging out in the ward with some of her new girlfriends. A pile of books beside her bed shows that Kristine is still a reader but now samples a wider variety of subjects than before. One of her friends is reading from a book on astrology and she seems willing to take this as seriously as anything else. It turns out one of the girls wants Kristine to move in with her family and they have agreed. Kristine has merely to inform her mother.

The next time Lucy visits Kristine she reveals that she has split up with Mark. Kristine tries to convince her mother that she should try to make up with him but Lucy will not hear of it. Lucy says the doctors are pleased with Kristine's progress and that she can go home whenever she's ready. Lucy explains her plans for a new life with the baby, and how she'll need help. Kristine doesn't say anything and Lucy starts to cry. Lucy admits she's been hard to get on with but hopes they can have a closer relationship now. Kristine still resists the idea of going home but Lucy is obviously so needy and forlorn that Kristine eventually agrees, placing her mother's needs first.

Time has moved on for George too and the day has finally arrived for him to have access to his sons. He is no longer living in *Nuevo Mondo* so takes them home to his new flat in the inner city. While Blair hardly mentions his father's new 'look' Christopher is not at all happy about it. He eventually confronts his father and asks why he's 'dressed like a girl'. George answers each of his children's questions honestly

and they manage to move past the issue. Later George takes his sons swimming at a city beach and teaches them to jump over waves.

The last time we see Lucy and Kristine they are attending a Catholic mass. While Lucy participates in with the service, Kristine sits in her own silent contemplation.

Finally we return to the scene of Rosetta's death in the form of a fantasy or dream image. This time we see Rosetta fall on the road and die. Then we move back along the streets of Ocean Grove, now filled with people that are more alive, more in the moment, less conforming, more individual in presentation, behaviour and action. Young and old are in dialogue. The park and the oceanfront has become a gathering place for all ages, families as well single people, people from different backgrounds and cultures. Now different styles of music are playing on the streets, creating almost a cacophony. Yet they seem to blend. An old man is dancing in the middle of the road; people leave their cars to watch and applaud.

Suddenly a window closes over the scene, on the inside of the window is a mirror. FADE OUT. Credits roll.

*Lives of the Saints*

**THE SCREENPLAY**

INT./EXT. TRAIN/RAILWAY STATION - DAY

A BLACK SCREEN. We are in a train: the sound of wheels, the engines, the brakes. Suddenly we come out of a tunnel, out into the daylight, and now we hear other people in the train carriage, in particular children.

We see through a pane of glass in the train door: houses, trees, sky and glimpses of mountain whiz by.

The train slows and the buildings of a town come into focus. We come to a jerky stop. The door slides back: school children, raucous and joyful, pour onto the already crowded platform and head for the stairs. The station clock shows ten to four.

CREDITS BEGIN.

EXT. MONTAGE, OCEAN GROVE TOWN CENTRE - CONTINUOUS

EXT. GROVE STREET - CONTINUOUS

It's a spring weekday in the outer suburb of Ocean Grove and the after-school rush hour is in full swing. The town is itself is cradled by steep mountains which seem to dominate every perspective. Today Grove Street, the town's shopping strip, is lively with children, teenagers, parents, pensioners and local business types. Although they are evidently from various backgrounds there is a sameness, a blandness, about the local town's folk. They dart in and out of shops, join queues and lug supplies. The adults look stressed-out with the daily grind, the push and shove. There's no time to stop, to enjoy, to dream. Life is something to be endured.

Only the children and teenagers, although invariably in school uniform, are excited, as they wander the street, or gather in groups to talk or play. Yet their disorderly exuberance merely adds to the sense of burden felt by adults.

A skateboarder zips out across the road and through the slow moving traffic. A car lurches forward, nearly hitting him, but he darts out of harm's way just in time.

EXT. MEMORIAL PARK - CONTINUOUS

The small park which houses the local war memorial is the only empty spot in town. Birds are resting on the marble surround.

EXT. INTERSECTION OF GROVE ST. & OCEAN AVE. - CONTINUOUS  
Grove Street ends at a T intersection with Ocean Avenue, which runs parallel to the ocean. On this primarily residential street older houses are giving way to blocks of units. We move past the corner and to the ocean front itself.

It's windy on the beach with only a handful of people about. Rocky headlands rise at either end of the beach. In the sea is a lone surfer.

Surfer's POV: Ocean Grove is a sliver of 'civilisation', compressed between soaring mountains and the sea. On one of the mountains a coal mine is puffing smoke into the sky, which at first could be mistaken for clouds.

The sound of the sea is all-pervasive, building as a wave gathers strength. The surfer gets ready to catch it.

TITLE, superimposed over surfer riding wave: 'Lives of the Saints'.

EXT. INTERSECTION OF GROVE ST. & OCEAN AVE. - CONTINUOUS

On one corner of the T intersection is an RSL club, on the opposite corner a modest neighbourhood pizzeria. A snow capped mountain is emblazoned on one of the windows, with the name of the establishment, 'Monte Bianco Pizzeria', encircling the mountain. Right now the 'eat in or take away' business is closed.

However sitting outside the pizzeria on the pavement, is guitarist BEAN, (early 20s) and bongo players BLAKE (20s) and DARIA (20s). They look like stereotypical 'ferals'. The group play an improvised style of 'world music'. In front of them is a upturned cap for contributions, but there are few coins so far. People passing by tend to ignore them or disapprove of their presence.

At one point Blake changes rhythm and Daria responds with a variation of her own. Bean however sticks to his original rhythm, so to stay in sync the drummers have to fall back in with Bean. Daria gives Blake a look.

We move over their heads to the first storey of the building.

TITLE CARD: 'George'.

INT. MARATEA HOME, BATHROOM - DAY



GEORGE MARATEA (40s) is getting out of a shower. He's of Mediterranean descent, with longish, thinning hair and a beard. He wipes down the mirror and looks flatly at his reflection. George doesn't like what he sees. He applies shaving cream around his beard and picks up the razor. The mirror has fogged up again.

INT. MARATEA HOME, LOUNGEROOM/KITCHEN - DAY

In the kitchen George's wife, NADIA (40), elegant, youthful and also of Mediterranean background, is making a large dish of tiramisu.

George enters in a terry-towelling robe. His eyes run the length of Nadia's slim curves. He sidles up to her and tries to swipe some of the tiramisu. Laughing, she hits him with the spatula, which deposits cream on his hand. He darts away to avoid another hit.

Something lingers in the air.

NADIA  
Hey, what's the aftershave?

GEORGE  
Like it?

NADIA  
(whispering)  
Other people have noses too  
George.

On the stove a coffee pot is percolating.

The kitchen adjoins a lounge room, where their sons, CHRISTOPHER (8) in school uniform, and BLAIR (4) are hard at work on a playstation. Blair crashes his fight jet, throws down his joy stick and stands up, blocking the TV.

BLAIR  
I wanna play the animals game.

CHRISTOPHER  
That's for faggots. Get outa the  
way!

Chris pushes Blair. George enters with his coffee.

GEORGE  
Christopher!

Blair starts crying. George taps Christopher with his toe and then comforts Blair.

GEORGE

Shh, shh. It's alright darling.

Blair wanders out to his mother in the kitchen. George seizes Christopher in a bear hug. The boy struggles.

CHRISTOPHER

Dad! Lemme go! You're wrecking the game!

GEORGE

Be gentle, OK?

George plants a big kiss on his cheek and exits to the bedroom.

CHRISTOPHER

Poo, you stink!

Christopher shoots down some 'civilians' and his score climbs.

INT. MARATEA HOME, MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

The bedroom has windows and a balcony overlooking Ocean Street and the ocean itself.

George flicks through the wardrobe for something to wear: dreary business shirts, trousers, jeans. Nothing interesting. On the other side of the wardrobe the colours and textures of Nadia's clothes draw his eye.

Between the 'his' and 'hers' sections in the wardrobe hang some plastic garment bags. These are zipped up tight. George hesitates over them, but then grabs a pair of jeans and a shirt, sighs, and shuts the wardrobe with a bang.

He throws the clothes on the bed and gazes out the window to the waves heaving upon the beach. Something is troubling him.

EXT. INTERSECTION OF GROVE ST. & OCEAN AVE. - NIGHT

It's a beautiful, warm Saturday night and Ocean Grove is alive with people.

On the pavement outside 'Monte Bianco', Bean, Blake and Daria are busking once again.

INT. MONTE BIANCO PIZZERIA - CONTINUOUS

'Monte Bianco' is also busy: the eat-in tables are full and takeaway customers are spilling out onto the street. The phone rings hot. George and employee, SHAMUS (mid 20s), prepare food, wait tables, take orders etc. Tonight it's a big job for two people.

Laughter, conversation, music and a television add to the atmosphere. A large clock is on the wall over the menu board. At this moment George is dishing out tiramisu into plastic containers.

CUSTOMER

What's in it?

GEORGE

Cream and sweet cheese. Bit of liqueur. Guarantee, you'll be back for more!

CUSTOMER

I won't tell my doctor if you don't!

GEORGE

(Conspiratorially)

You know, I reckon we're hurt more by missing the good things in life! True!

The customer laughs and settles up. Through the window George notices the buskers are obstructing the pavement outside.

EXT. INTERSECTION OF GROVE ST. & OCEAN AVE. - CONTINUOUS

George is on the pavement talking to the buskers.

GEORGE

Come on. Move down a bit, eh.

He indicates a few doors further on where businesses are closed.

BEAN

Why, who're we hurting?

George gives him a dark look.

GEORGE

Look. Either move or I call the police, OK?

BLAKE

Calm down! We're going.

George goes back inside and the musicians move a few doors down, setting up again in front of a bank. Two dark haired teenage girls have been watching nearby: KRISTINE (15, Filipino background), and ROSETTA (16, Spanish/Irish background).

INT. MONTE BIANCO PIZZERIA - CONTINUOUS

George rushes to get the telephone.

GEORGE

Monte Bianco! . . . Of course we are! What would you like? . . .  
(SCRIBBLING) . . . OK. . . .  
OK. . . . Sure, be about an hour though! . . . Alright. No problem.

George screws up the order then goes over to an intercom system, mounted in a side hall leading to the back door and stairs for the first floor.

GEORGE

(Into intercom)

Nadia, if they're settled can you come down?

A sexy, 30ish woman is waiting to order. George's eyes move from her waist to her breasts, lips, then eyebrows.

GEORGE

And how are you tonight?

The woman, having noticed his ogling, gives him a dirty look. George, embarrassed, grabs the order pad and keeps his eyes on it.

WOMAN

I'll have two large 'Oceanas'.

GEORGE

Anchovies?

WOMAN

Ah, no. But a big spring water.  
And four garlic breads.

George tallies the bill.

GEORGE

45.50.

George stares at her hands as she gets the money from her wallet: long fingers, soft skin, French manicure. And as she walks away George continues to check her out.

Behind him Nadia enters, putting on an apron. From the pointed look she gives George we can assume she's seen him eyeballing the customer.

Meanwhile Shamus unloads pizzas from the oven. George assembles the orders, reading off the invoices.

GEORGE

Fitzgerald. Phong. Murray. Ruiz!

FITZGERALD and PHONG grab their orders and exit. MURRAY stops to speak to Nadia.

MURRAY

This new chicken one's great!

Nadia gives the man a big smile and leans ever so slightly across the counter toward him. Their eyes meet momentarily.

NADIA

Thank you! Glad you like it.

George catches on to her flirtation.

MURRAY

Um, it's a traditional Italian recipe is it?

NADIA

Oh no. In Italy they don't do fancy. . .

GEORGE

(Cutting in)

No, that's one of my creations, mate! Good, eh?

Murray, intimidated, mumbles good night. Nadia raises an eyebrow at her husband who flicks her on the back-side

with a tea towel. Nadia grabs hold of the tea towel and wrests it from him: she's not forgiving him that easily.

A single pizza remains uncollected on the counter.

GEORGE

Ruiz! Your order's ready!

A moment later Kristine, the girl we saw on the pavement enters, looking upset.

KRISTINE

That's me.

The other girl, Rosetta, rushes in behind her.

ROSETTA

(To Kristine)

Hey. Why'd you run off?

Without a word, Kristine takes the pizza, and heads out again. An annoyed Rosetta follows.

George watches the girls walk out of sight, then gets to work assembling new pizzas. Nadia clears a table. Shamus is organising the home delivery boy.

The clock on the wall ticks: one, two, three, four.

O.S. a screech of tyres, then a thud. Gasps and screams follow. George runs outside.

EXT. INTERSECTION OF GROVE ST. & OCEAN AVE. - CONTINUOUS

George arrives at the corner. A girl is on the road: it could be either Rosetta or Kristine.

GEORGE

(To himself)

Fuck. No. No. Fuck. Oh, shit!

George, on the verge of panic, tries to find the girl's pulse, without luck.

GEORGE

Shit. Fuck. (CALLING) HELP!  
HELP!

George holds her hand, trying, somehow, to reach her. Every ounce of his energy is on the girl.

GEORGE

It's OK, sweetheart. (CALLING)  
AMBULANCE! SOMEONE AN AMBULANCE!  
HURRY! Fuck. Help is coming  
bella. Hang in there.

Then the girl dies: her head lolling to the side.

GEORGE  
(Calling)  
FUCK! SOMEONE HELP US! Please.

George realises the urgency is over: he stares, stunned  
and shocked.

A crowd of people have now gathered around him. Behind  
them the restaurant patrons are pressed up against the  
glass windows of the pizzeria. Each face registers shock  
and horror. Somewhere, a child begins to cry.

More and more people arrive at the scene; one woman  
pushes through.

NURSE  
Let me through! I'm a nurse.

George moves out of her way. Now Nadia pushes through to  
him, sees the body and becomes very distressed. They hang  
onto each other tightly.

NADIA  
Oh my God.

FADE OUT.

INT. MARATEA HOME, KITCHEN - DAY

George and Nadia are having breakfast with Christopher  
and Blair. The boys are chirpy and well rested; Nadia and  
George look like they've had a sleepless night. Blair  
plays the toy from the cereal box.

GEORGE  
Come on, put that down Blair.

CHRISTOPHER  
I need money for swimming.

NADIA  
Swimming?

CHRISTOPHER  
At school.

A beat.

NADIA

I don't want you swimming today.  
I'll write a note.

CHRISTOPHER

But why?

George holds Nadia's hand.

GEORGE

The teachers take good care of  
them, love.

NADIA

How do you know? Have you been  
there?

CHRISTOPHER

Why? Why can't I go? I wanna go!

Nadia, upset, gets to her feet.

NADIA

Not today! Not after . . .

CHRISTOPHER

Just 'cause some girl died!

GEORGE/NADIA

Hey! You be quiet!

BLAIR

What's 'died' mean?

NADIA

It was an accident! An accident.

EXT. CEMETARY - DAY

A funeral is in progress in the Roman Catholic section of a huge cemetery. In attendance are a great many school children, nuns, teachers, parents, and at the graveside, the black clad figures of the deceased's family. In front of them a coffin hovers over a deep hole. A priest, FATHER BENICE, conducts the service.

FATHER BENICE

Our lives are brief. We know not  
the day, nor the hour of our  
death. This young girl, saved in



Our Lord Jesus Christ, answered  
his call. And so we celebrate  
her return to Christ . . .

SOUND FADE OUT.

We note the sorrowful, shocked faces of the crowd. All of the men, and most of the boys, are dry eyed, while some the women and girls cry. George and Nadia stand at the back of the crowd.

George looks over the vast, grey and silent necropolis. Yet it is a perfect day: birds soar in the sky, a gentle breeze animates the trees, lizards sun on the tombs.

INT./EXT. MARATEA CAR, MONTE BIANCO DRIVEWAY - DAY

Nadia backs into the driveway with George in the passenger seat. She turns off the engine but they remain seated in silence, each in their own world.

GEORGE  
Sixteen years old . . . !

Nadia runs her finger nervously along the door handle.

NADIA  
What was she doing in the middle  
of the road?

George shakes his head.

GEORGE  
A life. Finished. Just like . .  
.

NADIA  
(Cutting in)  
George, please don't.

The couple fall silent again. George looks around: the pizzeria, the street, the club across the road. He sighs.

GEORGE  
Let's go over for a drink?

NADIA  
We have to change and pick up  
Blair from child care.

GEORGE  
Why? He's booked 'till 5.

Nadia gathers up her bag and keys and gets out. George follows.

NADIA  
Why leave him 'till then?

GEORGE  
He's perfectly safe.

Nadia doesn't respond.

GEORGE  
Oh, come on. Just an hour! Can't we relax?

NADIA  
Yes. And I want to be with my family, OK?

She locks the car and walks toward the back door of the building. Feeling guilty George reluctantly follows. Nadia waits for him at the door.

NADIA (CONT'D)  
I gave Chris my key.

George unlocks the door. Nadia enters, but George steps away from the doorway. His guilt has given way to anger.

GEORGE  
Not me.

NADIA  
Not you?

GEORGE  
I'm going to the club. Come if you like.

Nadia, hurt, watches him walk back toward the street.

NADIA  
Georgio! Stay? Please?

GEORGE  
We live but once, bella!

George stretches out his hand to her, imploring her to come with him. But instead she steps back inside, shuts the door and deadlocks it.

INT. LOCAL CLUB - DAY

George, half way through a schooner, feeds dollar coins into a poker machine. The wheels turn rapidly, throwing up similar-looking, losing combinations.

George is in a long row of predominantly grey-haired players. Each gambles as if nothing else existed.

Tiring of it, George sculls his beer and wanders around, jingling the coins in his hand. The windowless club is irritatingly noisy: Keno numbers boom over a crackling PA; poker machines blurt bubbly jingles; a TV is loud.

George passes the cashier's window. A old man hands over a fifty dollar note.

CASHIER

How are you today?

MAN

Only want winning coins today  
love!

The cashier manages a laugh. She's heard it a million times before.

George rubs his arms, suddenly chilly in the air-conditioned environment. In front of him is a poker machine called 'Round the World'. The graphics show the Eiffel Tower, the Statue of Liberty, a pyramid etc. The woman playing it doesn't look like she's going anywhere.

Suddenly George makes for the exit. But the club manager, REX, flags him down at the reception desk.

REX

Hello George. How you going?

GEORGE

OK Rex. You?

REX

Great! Great! Glad I saw you. A  
few of us from the Chamber are  
organising a petition to get  
those kids off the street.

George looks blank.

REX

You know, the one's camping out  
the front of your place. Jack  
reckons they're behind all the  
graffiti too.

GEORGE  
Oh, yeah. Of course.

REX  
Got a minute?

George nods.

REX  
They're a safety hazard. Taking  
up the street like they do.

Rex takes a clip board from under the desk and puts it in front of George. George reads, pen poised:

'We, the undersigned, ask Council to ban loitering from Grove Street, Ocean Grove, in the interests of unobstructed, safe pedestrian access and general community well-being.'

REX (CONT'D)  
Bloody racket they make. Not  
like in our day, eh? Our lot had  
talent! And they had a bath  
first.

George puts the pen down without signing.

GEORGE  
Look, I gotta go Rex. Get back  
to you later mate.

George hurries out. Rex looks after him, puzzled.

EXT. INTERSECTION OF GROVE ST. & OCEAN AVE. - CONTINUOUS

Heart beating fast, George exits onto Ocean Street (at the T intersection), directly across from where the accident happened. Flower tributes now mark the spot.

George tears his eyes away, crosses the road and hurries down onto the beach. There he takes off his shoes and wades into ankle deep water. The sea has a calming effect upon him. We pull away from the shore, a little way out to sea. Here we see the coast stretching towards a city.

INT. MARATEA HOUSE, MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

Christopher and Blair enter the dark bedroom. Blair pulls open the drapes and daylight floods into the room. George opens his eyes; he's hung over. Christopher puts a black

coffee on the bedside table. The clock shows it is after 10. George tries to shake himself awake.

CHRISTOPHER

Mum said to tell you we're going  
for a walk.

George takes a gulp of the coffee.

GEORGE

Ow, hot!

BLAIR

Let it cool down Daddy!

George cuddles Blair. But Blair struggles out of his embrace, surprising George.

NADIA (O.S.)

Come on boys!

The boys exit. O.S. sounds of their departure are heard.

George looks out the window at the ocean. A few seconds later his family comes into view on the street below. Christopher is carrying a soccer ball. Nadia directs the boys away from the accident spot, waits until the road is empty, then sprints across holding their hands.

Christopher is impatient with his mother's fussing and on the other side of the street breaks away, kicks the soccer ball and runs after it. Blair follows.

NADIA

Christopher! Not too far away!  
Blair, come back here!

George turns away and sits on the end of the bed. Here he sees his reflection in the wardrobe mirror. His eyes are drawn to what he thinks are his most unattractive features: hairy skin, receding hairline, bags under the eyes.

He breaks away from the mirror and gets to his feet.

EXT. MONTE BIANCO PIZZERIA - NIGHT

At 10 p.m. George flicks the sign on the front door to 'CLOSED.'

INT. MONTE BIANCO PIZZERIA - CONTINUOUS

George organises the night's takings, putting the notes and coins into standard units. Meanwhile, Shamus is cleaning up.

SHAMUS

Pretty slow tonight, huh?

GEORGE

The whole town's quiet. What can you do?

Shamus turns on a small radio under the counter and tunes in some pop music. This puts a bounce into his cleaning and George enjoys it too.

GEORGE

Had a few drinks last night at the big hotel, you know, down by the wharves?

SHAMUS

Never been inside.

GEORGE

God, what a depressing place! No one talking! Perry Como or Sintra or some bull shit playing.

SHAMUS

Ugg.

A beat.

GEORGE

You know, years ago we used to go to Oxford street if we wanted a night out.

SHAMUS

Really!

GEORGE

Yeah. When we were your age. (A BEAT) Do young people still go up there?

SHAMUS

Not much. But around Mardi Gras, sure.

A beat.

GEORGE  
You going somewhere tonight?

INT. MARATEA HOME, MASTER BEDROOM - MINUTES LATER

Nadia is in bed, reading a book on the mid-life crisis.

George enters, undressing already, and opens the wardrobe.

GEORGE  
Love, Shamus and I are going for  
a drink.

He snatches his most colourful shirt off a wire hanger. The hanger swings wildly then falls. Before putting it on he splashes something under his arms. It looks like perfume but we can't be sure. Nadia puts down her book.

NADIA  
What, now?

GEORGE  
Won't be late.

NADIA  
George . . .!

GEORGE  
Shoot me, I'm not ready for bed!

George rushes over to kiss her goodbye. She turns her face away.

INT. NUEVO MONDO - NIGHT

Dance music blares and vibrates in the darkness as George and Shamus descend a stairwell to a pub basement. They pass a punk couple on the stairs. A hand-made sign hangs over the entrance: 'Nuevo Mondo'.

Inside George puts his hands over his ears. Shamus indicates he's going for drinks and George moves against a wall.

At first George can barely see anything in the dimly lit, crowded room except a mass of dancers, and a small empty stage. Then his eyes begin to adjust.

The crowd seems to contain every variety of human imaginable, with a leaning towards the 'alternative'.

Some are dressed in very little, others in elaborate garb (for example a woman in female drag, leather men and 'goths'). It's not always clear who is male and female. But there are also what George would think of as 'normal' people.

Eventually George ventures through the crowd, half fascinated, half appalled. His eyes are invariably drawn to men and women who combine both male and female 'cues' in their presentation.

George's POV: women with heavy boots, hairy legs; smooth male limbs decorated with jewelry and tatoos.

Suddenly the music stops and all eyes are on the stage. ANNIE, a beautiful transsexual, begins a performance, singing Elton John's 'Sweet Painted Lady' in a slow, melancholy style. Some of the words however have changed.

ANNIE

(Singing)

Oh! Sweet painted lady  
Seems it's always been the same  
Getting blamed, 'cause you're  
not tame  
Oh, that's the cost of being  
game.

Annie's performance is powerful through use of gesture, expression, lighting and costume. She is glamorous and supremely confident, yet also touching and tragic, holding her space on the stage like a great star.

George is rapt. Shamus returns with their drinks but George doesn't notice.

INT/EXT. MONTE BIANCO PIZZERIA - NIGHT

On the shelves and counters of the pizzeria are rows of tomato tins, stakes of cloth-covered dough balls, and piles of uncooked pizza bases. The radio plays disco.

George closes the lid on a pizza box. He seems happy and energetic. A lone customer is watching the TV, swinging her leg to the disco beat. George takes the order to her, presenting it with a flourish.

GEORGE

Your dinner, madame!

FEMALE CUSTOMER

Well, thank you sir!



George opens the door, bowing low as she passes. She giggles. His eye is caught by her dangling ear rings and then he watches her walk away, the fabric of her dress catching the street light.

Meanwhile Nadia has come downstairs and sees George, once again, ogling a female. She drops some paperwork on the counter and races up the stairs again.

GEORGE  
(Calling after her)  
What Nadia? What's wrong?

But Nadia just keeps on going.

GEORGE  
Shit!

George picks up a rubber band and flicks it. It bounces off the clock above the counter.

On the TV is the latest disaster zone. Over George's head the clock ticks. He seizes a broom.

EXT. PAVEMENT OUTSIDE MONTE BIANCO PIZZERIA - CONTINUOUS

Outside there are very few people about. George sweeps the pavement dreamily and whistles 'Sweet Painted Lady'.

Bean is sitting all alone on the corner, picking his guitar. George heads towards him, still carrying the broom. Bean gets to his feet, ready to defend himself.

GEORGE  
Hi, how ya' doing?

Bean nods and eyes him suspiciously.

GEORGE  
I'm wondering, do you know that song, the Elton John song, 'Sweet Painted Lady'?

BEAN  
Elton John? Don't know it.

George shrugs. Then he looks up to the first storey: the bedroom lights are still on.

GEORGE  
Play something you like. Anything.

George hands him a 10 dollar note. Bean is astounded. He thinks for a moment then begins PJ Harvey's 'Angeline'.

George leans on his broom and listens. Music continues over the next scenes.

INT. MARATEA HOME, MASTER BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Nadia is huddled in a chair in the bedroom. She has been crying.

INT. MARATEA HOME, BOYS' BEDROOM

Blair is peacefully asleep, a night light glowing beside him. Christopher is restless in his sleep.

EXT. INTERSECTION OF GROVE ST. & OCEAN AVE. - CONTINUOUS

Bean is still playing. George sweeps his way back down toward the pizzeria entrance and notices that the video store is open.

INT. MARATEA HOME, LOUNGEROOM - NIGHT

It's after 1 am and George is watching Almadovar's 'All About My Mother' on DVD. The sound is low; George reads the subtitles. On the screen, Agrado is telling her life story to the theatre audience. George seems to be getting something of personal significance from the scene.

AGRADO

(On Television)

'because you are more authentic,  
the more you resemble what  
you've dreamed you are'.

George is having some sort of revelation. He stares, eyes riveted on the screen, heart racing. Then tears begin to fall down his face.

INT. MARATEA HOME, BOYS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

George tiptoes into the room and looks over his sleeping sons, drinking them in. He listens to their breathing: in, out, in, out.

George notices Blair's drawings on the wall above his bed: a cat and dog playing, the beach, a bunch of flowers.

Above Christopher's bed are posters of Spiderman, The Hulk and Lara Croft.

George seems hardly able to drag himself away from their bedsides, but then does, closing the door softly behind him.

INT. MARATEA HOME, HALL/BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

In the hall George leans against the wall, looking sad and lost. Then he enters the bathroom. In the mirror he looks himself in the eye. He strikes a sexy and confident pose for the mirror then picks up a razor.

Disco music begins.

INT. NUEVO MONDO - NIGHT

A nervous George descends the stairs to 'Nuevo Mondo' once again. He's now clean shaved and his hair is done differently.

George enters the club. Tonight it isn't so crowded, yet it's still pumping. The stage however is dark.

George looks around for someone, but they're not on the dance floor, nor at the bar.

INT. MARATEA HOUSE, HALL - THAT MOMENT

Nadia, in her night clothes, exits from the bedroom and turns on the light in the hall. She pokes her head into the boys' room: all is well. She checks the bathroom. Empty.

With panicked energy she hurries through to the kitchen, again turning on the light. No one there either.

She runs into the lounge room. Empty. She picks up the DVD cover George left on the floor, drops it and hurries down the stairs to the ground floor.

She checks the back door lock and finds the deadlock undone. She pokes her head outside, sees no one and shuts the door again. She deadlocks the door.

INT. NUEVO MONDO - NIGHT

George sits at a table watching the dancers, especially the females. Then suddenly he downs his drink and enters the fray.

At first he makes small, self-conscious movements but eventually starts to let go.

A man gravitates towards him. George moves away, yet a look of excitement crosses his face. The man keeps hovering. George throws a few movements his way, but doesn't actually commit to dancing with him.

Then George spies Annie behind the bar and the rest of the world disappears. He pushes through toward her.

George'S POV: his eyes rove from her hands, to her bust, to her eyes. Annie feels his gaze and makes eye contact with him/us.

EXT. INTERSECTION OF GROVE ST. & OCEAN AVE. - DAWN

George, now wearing makeup but in the same clothes, stands in the middle of the road. He seems exhilarated and self possessed, proud even, standing in full view of the empty town.

Above him the stars are disappearing with the approaching dawn. The sound of the ocean is loud. George half hums, half sings his own version of 'Sweet Painted Lady'.

GEORGE  
(Very softly)  
Forget us we'll have gone very  
soon, la da da, hmm mm mm hmm,  
mm, mmm mm. And we'll leave the  
sound of the sea in your head .  
. .

INT. MARATEA HOUSE, MASTER BEDROOM - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Nadia is sitting in bed smoking, the red tip of her cigarette glowing. She hears noise from another part of the house.

INT. MARATEA HOUSE, LOUNGEROOM - CONTINUOUS

George is sitting on the couch, taking off his shoes. Then he tests one of the cushions for a pillow. His back is to the grey dawn light entering in from the windows.

Nadia appears in the doorway but George doesn't notice.

NADIA  
(sarcastic)  
Well, look who's finally come home!

George is surprised and for a moment they stare at each other. They keep their voices down so as not to wake the children.

GEORGE  
I'm . . . I didn't want to wake you.

NADIA  
How considerate.

George opens his mouth to speak but Nadia gets in first.

NADIA  
Who is she? Huh? Someone who likes clean shaved obviously.

George touches his face and smiles.

GEORGE  
No. No, darling. I'm not . . . it's nothing like that!

NADIA  
What's going on then?

George hesitates, searching for an answer. Nadia gets tired of waiting and exits.

INT. MARATEA HOUSE, MASTER BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

George enters the room. Nadia is back in bed. The curtains are keeping the dawn light out. George sits next to Nadia on the bed.

GEORGE  
Nadia, remember when we were students and we used to party all night?

Nadia doesn't move.

NADIA  
You used to gawk at anything in  
a skirt then too.

GEORGE  
Bella moglie! The only one I  
gawk at now is you.

George tries to take her into his arms but she resists,  
instead sitting up in a huff and lighting another  
cigarette. George takes one himself.

NADIA  
Fuck! Are you kidding? You perv  
at every girl! Everyone see it!  
(A BEAT) Am I so horrible  
George?

GEORGE  
Nadia . . .!

NADIA  
(Cutting in)  
Be honest! You're just not  
interested in us. Not for a long  
time.

Nadia starts to cry. Looking guilty, George pulls her  
into his arms.

NADIA  
I know there's something. Tell  
me.

GEORGE  
I promise. I promise. There's no  
one else.

She buries herself in his chest, letting the tears flow  
and eventually subside.

Then, at George's initiation, they begin to kiss. Their  
tension and frustration channelling into a mutual state  
of arousal. George manoeuvres them so that he lies under  
Nadia. He closes his eyes as she unbuckles his belt.

Then, through a join in the curtains a shaft of morning  
light streams into the room and hits his face. Now Nadia  
sees he's wearing make up. She freezes and gets off him.

NADIA  
You went out like that? With  
that on your face?

George covers his face.

NADIA  
I hope it wasn't somewhere  
local.

Then George drops his hands and sits up. His shame gives way to anger.

GEORGE  
No, it wasn't bloody local! (A  
BEAT) I went back into the city.

He looks at her pointedly.

GEORGE  
Remember the city? When we all  
looked like Boy George? Yeah? No  
one thought anything of it then.

Nadia crawls back under the bed covers.

NADIA  
Sorry I asked. Just go to sleep,  
OK?

But now George jumps to his feet.

GEORGE  
You know, I'm not the only  
bloody one that does this!

He indicates his made up face.

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
You want honesty? Me too. (A  
BEAT) I'm tired of hiding.

NADIA  
What do you mean?

George sits down, putting his face in his hands again.

GEORGE  
Can't you guess? Hasn't it  
occurred to you there might be  
more to it? Why I don't get off  
any more?

Nadia marches over to the wardrobe, takes out the garment bags, unzips them and throws them onto the bed. Man-sized frilly dresses and sexy underwear spill out.

NADIA

Who stops you? You stopped! And so did the sex.

GEORGE

It isn't about sex anymore!(A BEAT) I want to wear women's things all the time. Not just for you. For everyone.

NADIA

What?

George isn't so sure he wants to continue, but finally does.

GEORGE

I want to live like a woman does. Be like a woman. Everywhere. All the time! I've wanted it for so, so long. And I can't keep being miserable!

Slowly it dawns on Nadia what he's saying.

NADIA

You're serious?

George sits down on the bed.

GEORGE

I wish I wasn't.

NADIA

You want to dress up outside? In the street? In front of everyone!

George nods.

NADIA

George! You can't.

GEORGE

Why?

Nadia puts her hand over her mouth.

NADIA

(Panicking)

You want to be a woman! How? You want your dick cut off? Oh my god, is that it?



GEORGE  
No. No! Not that! No!

NADIA  
What then? (A BEAT) You want to  
sleep with men?

GEORGE  
(Cutting in)  
No. I don't. . . . I don't know.  
(A BEAT) I don't think so.

NADIA  
You don't know if you're gay! Oh  
God! (A BEAT) What are we? A big  
mistake?

George seizes a family photo on the dresser, pointing at  
himself.

GEORGE  
All I know - this is a man  
dressed up as a man. I'm in  
drag. You're in drag. So, what  
does it matter?

She pushes the photo out of his hand and it smashes on  
the floor.

NADIA  
You gonna serve pizza in a  
dress? Wake up George! You're a  
father. A husband! Male, George,  
male! Not a freak. (A BEAT) You  
can't mean it . . .

GEORGE  
(Cutting in)  
Yes I do! I have to. I can't  
pretend anymore. I just can't.

Nadia is close to tears again.

NADIA  
But . . . this is . . . Are you  
that selfish? (A BEAT) What  
about the boys? Our families,  
our life?

GEORGE  
Let's calm down. Think! (A BEAT)  
It doesn't have to happen all at  
once. A bit at a time, try

something, experiment. Learn  
how. Like you did.

Nadia's shoulders slump and she sits down. A few beats go  
by in silence. Her resolve builds.

NADIA  
I won't go through that.

GEORGE  
Let's not decide now.

NADIA  
I mean it too George. (A BEAT)  
Either drop it. Or go. But  
whatever happens they can't see  
you. Ever!

Nadia indicates the children's room.

NADIA  
I don't need to think about it.  
If this is what you want, you  
have to leave. It's that simple.

George doesn't know what else to say. He tries to make  
eye contact with Nadia but she turns her back and lights  
another cigarette.

He pulls the curtains back from the door and exits onto  
the balcony, watching the sun climb over the sea. Then he  
enters the bedroom again, leaving the doors open.

Nadia does not turn. George waits, hoping she will. The  
clock on the bedside table ticks: one, two, three, four.

George picks up the photo from the floor and exits.

O.S. His footsteps descend the stairs. Nadia throws  
herself onto the bed among George's dresses. The breeze  
from the open doors send the frills fluttering all around  
her.

TITLE CARD: 'Kristine'.

INT. CLASS ROOM - DAY

A maths exam is in progress. Kristine is making rapid  
calculations and filling in the exam sheet with neat hand  
writing.

EXT. KRISTINE'S HOME - DUSK

The modern, architect-designed house is high up on the escarpment behind Ocean Grove. It is surrounded by bush.

INT. KRISTINE'S HOME, HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Rooms branch off from each side of the hallway before we arrive at the main living rooms. These are expensively fitted out, carefully arranged and perfectly maintained.

On a sideboard is a photo of a six-year old Kristine and her mother Lucy, and another of Lucy and Mark on their wedding day with Kristine as flower girl. Above the sideboard is a window with a spectacular view of the ocean, escarpment and forest.

At that moment an imported car pulls into the driveway and disappears into the garage.

INT. KRISTINE'S HOME, KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

The kitchen is spotless and well appointed. The windows look out onto a lap pool.

A staircase joins the kitchen with the garage underneath. At this moment we can hear the sounds of car doors opening and closing, and the voices of two girls.

Kristine and Rosetta, race up the stairs and into the kitchen. Kristine (15), is a thoughtful, boyish Filipina who has lived in Australia since infancy. Rosetta (16), is an extroverted first generation Australian, with long, dark, red-streaked hair. They both wear gold crosses.

Kristine carries two small award plaques which she dumps unceremoniously on one of the kitchen benches. Rosetta has an overnight bag with her. She goes straight to the window.

ROSETTA

Oh wow, you've got pool.

Kristine gets a bottle of soft drink from the fridge.

KRISTINE

Yeah, but it's no fun. You can only swim up and down in it.

LUCY (mid 30s), Kristine's Filipina mother enters. She also wears a gold cross. Lucy learnt English as a child

and speaks it almost perfectly. Rosetta is still looking out the window, this time at the landscaped garden.

ROSETTA

And your garden's so nice. Lush.  
We've just got these old spiky  
roses and bushes. (To Kristine)  
You're so lucky.

LUCY

I keep reminding her.

Kristine passes Rosetta a drink.

KRISTINE

(To Lucy)  
Yeah, I know.

MARK (late 30s), Lucy's Anglo-Australian husband, walks through the kitchen carrying a briefcase and some large cardboard tubes.

MARK

Excuse me!

KRISTINE

Rosetta, come look in here!

Kristine and Rosetta go through to the lounge, Lucy looks after them. The lounge is dominated by glass walls.

ROSETTA

Wow, you can see the ocean!

KRISTINE

Yeah but I love the trees. It's  
like they're growing inside the  
house, almost.

ROSETTA

Oh . . . yeah.

For a moment the girls simply enjoy the view, and the feeling they get from the view.

KRISTINE

Mark designed this house! Come  
see at my room . . .

Their voices fade as they proceed further into the house.

INT. KRISTINE'S HOME, KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Lucy screws the cap back on the bottle the girls have left out, wipes down the bench and opens the fridge to put it away. But before she can, Mark enters and takes the bottle from her. Lucy removes a home-made pie from the defrosting shelf instead.

MARK  
(Offering her a drink)  
Want one?

Lucy shakes her head.

MARK  
What's for dinner?

INT. KRISTINE'S HOME, HER BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Kristine presses play on her CD player (the 'walkman' type, plugged into speakers) and 'Indie' pop begins. She adjusts the volume to a moderate level. Rosetta turns it further up.

INT. KRISTINE'S HOME, KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

O.S. music from Kristine's room and teenage laughter carries through to the kitchen. Lucy lights the oven.

MARK  
It never occurred to me. Should have put in sound insulation.

LUCY  
Tell her to turn it down.

MARK  
No. No. She's usually so quiet. Let them go.

Mark exits. Lucy, deep in thought, rinses some salad, puts the drink bottle away Mark left out and wipes the bench once again. Then, she picks up the award plaques. Kristine's name is engraved upon them for 'Highest Achieving Student 2005' and 'Science Award 2005'.

INT. KRISTINE'S HOUSE, DINING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

In front of a display cabinet which holds her daughter's many other prizes Lucy thoroughly polishes each plaque then carefully arranges them beside the others. O.S.

music and laughter from Kristine's bedroom continues.  
Lucy steps into the hall.

LUCY  
(Calling)  
Kristine! Turn it down please!

KRISTINE (O.S.)  
OK!

FADE OUT.

INT. KRISTINE'S HOME, HER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Late at night, Kristine and Rosetta are still awake.

The room is a middle-class teenager's room, albeit a bookish one. On one wall is a large collage, crowded with music, film and science images. In between these images Kristine has also put some quotes. Two of these are:

'The highest wisdom has but one science - the science of the whole - the science explaining the whole creation and man's place in it'

'Error of opinion may be tolerated when reason is left free to combat it'.

At this moment Kristine is sitting on the bed. Rosetta stands with an unlit cigarette in her mouth, looking at the collage wall.

ROSETTA  
I've got this excellent Gwen Stefani poster you can have. I'm not allowed to put it up.

KRISTINE  
Oh wow! Thanks.

Rosetta indicates the photos of the galaxy on the wall.

ROSETTA  
Why do you have all these stars?  
They all look the same.

Kristine points to a photo of the Rosette Nebula.

KRISTINE  
See that? It's a nebula.

ROSETTA

Huh?

KRISTINE

It's where stars are created.  
Nebulas make stars.

ROSETTA

Really? Make them? I thought  
they were there already. Like  
forever, from the first day or  
whatever.

KRISTINE

Know what this one's called?

ROSETTA

Na.

KRISTINE

Rosetta. The Rosetta Nebula.

ROSETTA

Oh, too cool!

KRISTINE

And. . .

Kristine opens a drawer and takes out a copy of the same  
photo pasted onto a piece of cardboard. She gives this to  
Rosetta.

KRISTINE

Here's one for you!

ROSETTA

Oh my god! Thank you! It's  
great.

Rosetta looks at the photo, then hugs her friend. Then  
she puts the photo on the desk and looks at it again.

ROSETTA

(Camping it up)  
I always knew I'd be a star!

KRISTINE

Better, star maker!

ROSETTA

More like star fucker! Hah, I  
wish!

Rosetta looks like she's going to say something else but then scans Kristine's bookshelf instead: a bible, textbooks on physics, biology, chemistry and popular science publications.

ROSETTA

I can never get into science.

KRISTINE

It's just formulas and rules.

ROSETTA

Hey, have you got anything on astrology?

KRISTINE

No. That's bogus.

Rosetta twirls away from the books then blows pretend smoke from her cigarette into Kristine's face.

ROSETTA

If we open the window she won't smell it.

KRISTINE

She will!

Rosetta goes over to the window.

ROSETTA

OK. I'll climb out.

KRISTINE

It's too steep. You won't be able to get back in.

Rosetta looks out and sees this is true. Then she notices a key in the door lock.

ROSETTA

Just lock the door.

KRISTINE

Won't stop the smell.

Rosetta sighs, opens the window wide and lights up anyway. Kristine opens her mouth to object.

ROSETTA

Just one.



Kristine gets up and puts her ear to the door; she doesn't hear anything. Rosetta offers her a drag. Kristine takes one, leaning out the window to exhale.

ROSETTA  
Your mum seems cool. She's like,  
really young.

KRISTINE  
Yeah. But I never get away with  
anything. Not like you.

ROSETTA  
Can't you say you're going to,  
like, youth meetings, or  
whatever.

KRISTINE  
Remember, that time she rang  
your mum before I could come  
over?

A few beats go by. Rosetta smokes, Kristine is tense. Finally Rosetta puts the cigarette out and Kristine relaxes again, taking a seat back on the bed.

ROSETTA  
Hey. You know Aaron . . . ?

KRISTINE  
Um, not personally.

ROSETTA  
We skipped school together on  
Monday.

KRISTINE  
Where'd you go?

Rosetta looks at her teasingly, then kneels on the bed.

ROSETTA  
He's an Aries! A ram with a  
great big horn!

KRISTINE  
How do yo know?

ROSETTA  
We went to his place . . .

KRISTINE  
And?

ROSETTA

And what?

Kristine looks at her.

ROSETTA

And it was just us there. No one else.

KRISTINE

What happened?

Rosetta smiles broadly. It dawns on Kristine.

KRISTINE

You're kidding? Oh, my God!

ROSETTA

But don't tell anyone, OK? My parents would kill me.

KRISTINE

Did you really?

Rosetta is gleeful. Kristine however, is a little thrown by the revelation.

KRISTINE

Oh my god. (A BEAT) What was it like?

Rosetta lays down on the bed.

ROSETTA

I dunno. (A BEAT) I mean he's a really good kisser. But it was sort of weird.

KRISTINE

Why?

ROSETTA

When we, you know, did it . . . it didn't feel like anything, really. It was good in a way.

KRISTINE

What way?

ROSETTA

I dunno. Intense I guess.

A beat.

KRISTINE

So, he's your boyfriend now?

ROSETTA

Maybe. He's got a girl friend at his school.

KRISTINE

Rosetta!

ROSETTA

(Shrugging)

I only wanted to get laid anyway.

Kristine goes quiet and looks at her hands.

ROSETTA (CONT'D)

You think I'm, like, bad don't you?

KRISTINE

No. No: what would you're parents say?

ROSETTA

(Mimicking)

Blah, blah, blah 'Girl's must wait 'till they get married.' So dumb. No one does.

KRISTINE

I'm going to. My mum did too.

ROSETTA

Your mum's remarried!

KRISTINE

But it wasn't her fault. Dad left us.

ROSETTA

Whatever! Religion is total crap.

Kristine plays with her hair.

KRISTINE

I don't think it is.

ROSETTA

I know. But I do.

KRISTINE  
Don't you ever worry?

ROSETTA  
About what?

KRISTINE  
In case it's true.

Rosetta shakes her head.

KRISTINE  
How do you decide . . . what the  
right thing to do is?

Rosetta shrugs, then laughs looking at Kristine's worried face.

ROSETTA  
I don't worry.

They look at each other and laugh.

EXT. INTERSECTION OF GROVE ST. & OCEAN AVE. - 6 PM

It's the warm summer night from SCENE 10 - the night of the accident. Bean, Blake and Daria are setting up again after being moved along by George.

Nearby are Rosetta and Kristine. Kristine looks over at Bean from time to time and Rosetta twigs that she is interested.

ROSETTA  
He's cute, hey?

Kristine shrugs.

ROSETTA  
Let's go talk to them.

Rosetta grabs Kristine's hand and pulls her toward the musicians. As they approach Bean gives Rosetta the once over.

BEAN  
Hey, girls. What's up?

ROSETTA  
Um, we were just wondering. Do  
you . . . give guitar lessons?

BEAN  
(To Rosetta)  
You want lessons?

ROSETTA  
No. Krisi wants to learn!

Rosetta pushes an embarrassed Kristine in front of her.

BEAN  
Well, yeah, I probably could.  
Have you played before?

KRISTINE  
(mumbling)  
I don't even have a guitar.

BEAN  
(To Blake)  
What do people charge for  
lessons, man, 40 bucks?

BLAKE  
More like 20.

BEAN  
(To Krisi)  
That's not much, hey? I'll do it  
for 30.

KRISTINE  
Um, I'll have to ask my mum.

BEAN  
Sure. (LOOKING AT BOTH GIRLS)  
Come by my house when you're  
ready to go. 11 Drysdale, OK?  
I'm usually there until the  
afternoon.

KRISTINE  
OK. 11 Drysdale.

Bean takes a joint out of his pocket and holds it in  
front of Rosetta.

BEAN  
Smoke?

Rosetta smiles. He lights up then passes it to her.

BEAN  
(flirting with Rosetta)

So what about you? You  
interested in some lessons too?

Rosetta laughs. Bean chuckles self-consciously.

ROSETTA  
Um, maybe. Who knows?

Rosetta takes another drag then holds it out for  
Kristine.

GEORGE (O.S.)  
RUIZ!

Kristine takes off without a word.

EXT. MONTE BIANCO PIZZERIA - A MINUTE LATER

Kristine and Rosetta exit from the Pizzeria. Bean waves  
to them but they walk in the other direction. Kristine  
marches ahead carrying the pizza. Rosetta catches up with  
her.

ROSETTA  
(Grabbing her shoulder)  
What's wrong?

Kristine shrugs her off.

KRISTINE  
Leave me alone!

ROSETTA  
Wait! Listen, I don't want him.

Kristine shushes her, painfully aware that Bean might be  
able to hear.

KRISTINE  
Like that makes me feel better.

ROSETTA  
Let's go back. Share the pizza.

KRISTINE  
He obviously isn't interested.  
In me.

Kristine takes off again down the street toward the T  
intersection. Again Rosetta catches up.

ROSETTA

Krisi! Stop.

They are now on the corner, standing next to a parked car. Kristine turns on her heel to face Rosetta, almost over balancing and falling into the gutter. She drops the pizza.

KRISTINE

Please just shut up! You can go back. But leave me alone!

Kristine runs behind the car, looks for traffic, then runs across the road and keeps on toward the beach. Rosetta stares after her.

ROSETTA

(Calling)

Krisi. Sorry. Wait!

Rosetta steps onto the road without looking. One of her feet lands on a small branch which is lying in the road. She trips, loses her balance and lands fully out into the road. Car tires screech. A thud.

CUT TO BLACK. A scream.

CUT BACK TO SCENE, a moment earlier. Kristine turns around.

INT. KRISTINE'S HOME, HER BEDROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

It's after 3 a.m. Lucy, worn and emotional herself, is trying to comfort Kristine, whose face is swollen from many hours of tears.

KRISTINE

Why? Why her? She followed me across. Oh, God. Why?

LUCY

It's no one's fault. God's will.  
Not our will. God's will.

But this doesn't comfort Kristine.

KRISTINE

(through sobs)

She can't be dead. How? She can't! No. No. No. She was just here. Where is she now? Where is she now?

LUCY  
Shh, shh. Calm down. Calm down.  
Calm down.

But Kristine still sobs.

LUCY  
Mark! Bring the tablets from my  
drawer.

Kristine sits up, a burning question breaking through her emotions.

KRISTINE  
If you commit a bad sin, will  
you go to hell? Just because of  
that one thing?

Lucy is worried by the question and when Kristine sees this, she reigns in her emotions.

LUCY  
(gently)  
We know what God wants from us.

Kristine lays back down again.

KRISTINE  
I want to go to mass in the  
morning. Can we?

This too has Lucy thinking but at the same time it's reassuring.

LUCY  
Of course. Of course.

Mark arrives with the sleeping tablets. He looks sympathetically but helplessly at Kristine then wanders out again. Lucy gives the tablets to her daughter.

Kristine lies down again and turns away from Lucy.

LUCY (CONT'D)  
It's alright, my darling.  
Tomorrow we wake up and go on  
together.

Lucy kisses her then picks up the sleeping tablets, turns out the light and exits. Kristine stares into the darkness.



INT. KRISTINE'S HOUSE, MARK'S STUDY - CONTINUOUS

Mark, worn and grey, sits at his computer but isn't doing any work. A detail of an architectural plan is on the monitor.

Lucy enters and throws herself into his arms, squeezing in between the desk and his lap.

LUCY

God! Why did we let the girls go out by themselves?

MARK

Don't. Don't think like that.

LUCY

(Whispering)

Her poor parents! Oh my God.

Mark hugs her tightly. A long beat.

LUCY (CONT'D)

Mark. Mark, I. I know this isn't the right time but . . . I can't stop thinking.

Mark looks like he knows what's coming.

LUCY (CONT'D)

I still want another child. Our child.

MARK

Lucy! Don't.

LUCY

Please, I need this . . . You won't have to change anything. I promise.

MARK

Not after today.

Lucy gets to her feet.

LUCY

I'll let you go back to work.

Lucy exits, putting some tranquilizers in her mouth. Mark looks forlorn.

INT. ARMENDARIZ HOME, HALL/LOUNGE ROOM - DAY

The house where Rosetta lived is a large, old, chaotic family home, in a leafy Sydney suburb. Today the rooms are crowded with friends, relatives (some speaking Spanish), teachers, nuns and priests. Women pass sandwiches and tea among the mourners. Men stand awkwardly with their beers and whiskies.

All the guests gravitate towards the immediate family: mother PATRICIA (early 50s, Irish background), father, PAULO (mid 50s, Spanish background), and four children: two young adult men and PAULA (late teens) and PATRICK (14). At this moment the younger children are being introduced to a guest.

WOMAN

And this is her sister, Paula.  
And Patrick, the youngest.

A group of nuns surround the dignified but tranquilized Patricia. Paulo, already unsteady on his feet, is listening to Father Benice.

Kristine, Lucy and Mark arrive, acknowledged by some of the guests as they walk through the hall and into the lounge room.

Patricia holds out her arms for Kristine, who allows herself to be embraced.

Kristine'S POV: Father Benice, large whisky in one hand, gesticulating with the other, talks emphatically to Mark and Paulo. Paulo, also with a whisky, hangs on every word. Mark seems to shrink, distractedly looking around the room.

PATRICIA

Was she happy? Happy in her last hours?

Kristine, finding the question excruciating, searches for an answer.

KRISTINE

I . . . Her last hours? (A BEAT)  
I . . . I . . . We went swimming. In the ocean. We had lots of fun.

Patricia looks intensely at Kristine, wanting more.

KRISTINE (CONT'D)

I gave her this the night  
before.

Kristine takes the photo of the Rosette Nebula out of her  
pocket and gives it to Patricia.

KRISTINE (CONT'D)  
It's called after her. She  
really liked it. (A BEAT)  
Rosetta always seemed happy.

Patricia doesn't quite know what to make of the photo.  
She lets Kristine go and withdraws into her grief once  
more.

EXT. AMENDARIZ HOME, BACKYARD - A LITTLE WHILE LATER

Kristine has joined some school friends: SEANA, MARTHA  
and LEE, as well as Paula and Patrick, Rosetta's  
siblings. They hide behind a shed, sharing cigarettes and  
memories.

Kristine is talking with Martha a little apart from the  
others. Martha is trying to comfort her.

KRISTINE  
I didn't know what else to say!  
I feel really bad.

MARTHA  
It probably helped her.

KRISTINE  
I didn't say Rosetta was upset.  
Upset at me.

MARTHA  
It's not going to help her to  
know that.

KRISTINE  
So you think I did the right  
thing?

MARTHA  
Yeah, fully!

But Kristine is not convinced.

KRISTINE  
Did Rosetta tell you about what  
happened last week?

MARTHA

What?

KRISTINE

She, she'd gone to bed with this guy. You know the guy she liked? Aaron?

MARTHA

Really? I know she wanted to. (A BEAT) It's good. She did want she wanted. She had that.

Kristine looks at her.

KRISTINE

But don't you get it? It's a sin. She died in sin.

MARTHA

(Upset)

I don't believe that! (A BEAT) God, Krisi you sound like one of the teachers.

Martha joins the rest of the group. Kristine is shaken and remains standing on her own.

SEANA

One day we were trying on all this stuff. In the mall. The salesgirl was getting the shits so bad. But Rosetta didn't care. She didn't care what anyone thought.

LEA

Sometimes we'd just ride around on trains. We went all the way out to, like, Gosford once. Took the whole day off school.

PAULA

How'd she get away with it?

Everyone silently wonders.

KRISTINE

'Cause everyone loved her.

Martha and Kristine exchange a forgiving look. Seana starts to cry and Lea gives her a hug. Kristine joins the group, taking a drag of a cigarette.

SEANA  
(To Paula)  
Why's it so quiet? She was so  
into music.

INT. ARMENDARIZ HOME, ROSETTA'S BEDROOM - MINUTES LATER

Kristine, Seana, Martha, Lea, Paula and Patrick wander around Rosetta's room, looking at and touching her belongings with reverence. The Gwen Stefani poster Rosetta was going to give Kristine is on the inside of a wardrobe door.

Kristine looks out the window and sees a garden bed filled with thorny roses. They are not in bloom. Under the window she sees a cigarette butt in the grass.

Patrick selects one of Rosetta's CDs and puts it on.

PATRICK  
She played this heaps.

The up tempo beat contrasts with the sadness of the group. At first they simply listen intently, as if trying to make contact with Rosetta through the song. Then Paula closes the door and turns up the volume. Now they all hold hands and move to the music.

INT. AMENDARIZ HOME, LOUNGEROOM - CONTINUOUS

The pop music is loudly invading the lounge room. Patricia and Paulo exchange a look.

INT. AMENDARIZ HOME, ROSETTA'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

The teenagers hold hands and sway to the music. Their eyes are closed: they are in another world.

Suddenly the door opens and the Father Benice rushes in and turns off the music. The teenagers are jolted from their reverie. Paulo also appears, holding onto the door frame for support.

PAULO  
What the hell are you doing in  
here?

The teenagers are dumbfounded.

PRIEST

Such disrespect! On such an occasion!

Paula and Patrick look at one another.

PAULA  
It's not disrespectful.

SEANA  
This is for Rosetta.

PRIEST  
(To Seana)  
Quiet missy!

Seana storms out and the rest of the group sullenly exits.

Kristine lingers a moment, taking a last look at Rosetta's room and the Gwen Stefani poster.

Father Benice exits leaving Paulo alone in the empty room. He sits heavily on the bed, still reacting.

EXT. AMENDARIZ HOME, FRONT YARD - CONTINUOUS

The teenagers spill out of the house and onto the street. Paula is by the gate when Kristine catches up with her.

KRISTINE  
They wouldn't listen!

PAULA  
Same as usual. (A BEAT) Anyway, where I go pop music is part of the worship.

Kristine looks at Paula, with her long dark hair so like Rosetta's.

KRISTINE  
Where do you go?

PAULA  
Mount Canaan. (A BEAT) Come with me one Sunday? It's really cool.

KRISTINE  
OK.

PAULA

I'll give you my number. Just a  
sec. Oh, I don't have any paper  
. . . .

Kristine holds out her arm and Paula writes her phone  
number on it.

Just then Lucy and Mark exit from the house and bundle  
Kristine up without a word, leading her toward the car.  
Kristine looks over her shoulder at Paula.

INT. MARK'S CAR, FOREST HIGHWAY - LATER

Kristine rides in the backseat, Lucy is in the front with  
Mark driving. The atmosphere is tense. On either side of  
the road are thick forests of plantation pines.

LUCY  
As if we didn't feel bad enough.

KRISTINE  
You don't understand. Why is it  
wrong to play what she liked?

LUCY  
Because her parents didn't want  
it. That's why Kristine.

MARK  
See, Kristine, sometimes you toe  
the line whether you agree or  
not. That's what keeps society  
going.

Lucy looks at Mark.

KRISTINE  
Why is it wrong to remember our  
friend?

LUCY  
How many times do we go over  
this!

Lucy turns in her seat. She's surprised by her daughter's  
defiance.

LUCY (CONT'D)  
What if one of us died and  
people trampled through our  
house having a party?

KRISTINE

I'd want my friends in my room.  
And it wasn't a party!

LUCY

We were there to support the  
family. Not indulge ourselves.  
You have no idea what they're  
going through!

Kristine becomes sullen. She glares at the St.  
Christopher medal on the dashboard.

KRISTINE

They don't even want to know who  
she was! Rosetta didn't believe  
in God! Everything they said was  
a lie.

LUCY

She had no faith? (A BEAT) Are  
you sure?

Lucy clutches the cross around her neck, genuinely  
alarmed. Kristine looks out the window into the forest.

EXT. MARK'S CAR, FOREST HIGHWAY - CONTINUOUS

Kristine looks out the window, the forests are reflected  
on the window, over her face.

INT. KRISTINE'S HOME, LOUNGE ROOM - DAY

Kristine sits alone, motionless on the couch. She looks  
out the windows and into the trees. She is far, far away,  
unconsciously clutching onto the crucifix around her  
neck.

INT. KRISTINE'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - NIGHT

Lucy is rinsing the dishes and Kristine is stacking the  
dish washer.

LUCY

Don't you have homework?

KRISTINE

No. Um, actually a little bit.  
I'll do it now. (A BEAT) Mum,  
some girls from school are



getting together on Sunday for,  
a sort of thing, for Rosetta.

LUCY  
A 'sort of thing'?

KRISTINE  
You know. To talk about her and  
stuff. So, can I go?

LUCY  
Before or after mass?

KRISTINE  
We might go to mass as well, as  
a group.

Lucy eyes her daughter suspiciously. Kristine avoids eye  
contact and tries to play it cool.

LUCY  
Well, as long as you do go to  
mass.

Kristine smiles.

INT. EVANGELIST CHURCH - DAY

The large circular building is packed, predominantly with  
people under 30. In unison they sing a Christian rock  
song:

CONGREGATION  
Thank you Lord for giving me  
Everything.  
Thank you Lord for making me  
Sing. Thank you Lord for giving  
me Everything.  
Oh, thank you, thank you, thank  
you, thank you Lord . . .

Rows of fresh, open faces sing their hearts out. Among  
them are Paula and Kristine swept up in the song also.

On the stage/altar a group of young men, guitarists and a  
drummer, accompany the singers with a professional sound  
set up. The singing continues over into the next scene.

EXT. EVANGELIST CHURCH - A SHORT WHILE LATER

The church has a very tall spire and is surrounded on all sides by a cramped suburban landscape. Beside the church is a retail outlet with displays for Christian recording artists in the windows.

Now the main entrance doors swing open and the congregation pours out. Some mingle, others rush to the huge parking lot.

Paula and Kristine emerge with ALEX (20s) and JOHN (20s) both earnest, clean cut young men.

ALEX

So, Kristine where are you from originally?

KRISTINE

My parent were from The Philippines.

ALEX

Oh really? I was thinking of doing some missionary work there.

PAULA

(To Kristine)

What did you think of the service? It's different to Our Lady's, hey?

Paula, Alex and John look to Kristine expectantly. Kristine notices the young minister nearby.

KRISTINE

(Lowering her voice)

Stuff about people being rewarded in this life. I never heard that before.

ALEX

(Warming up)

Sure. You see, if you follow God's word there will be rewards! We see that all the time here.

John and Paula nod in agreement. Kristine tries to keep her opinions to herself but it gnaws at her.

KRISTINE

Nothing bad ever happens here?

ALEX

Sure. But then you have to tell  
yourself to do better. To  
surrender completely to God's  
will.

Kristine looks at Paula but Paula is looking at Alex  
admiringly. A young couple passes holding hands. Groups  
of middle aged women talk together.

PAULA

Of course God's rules aren't  
easy to follow . . .

ALEX

(Cutting in)

It takes courage to be a  
Christian.

Kristine looks at Alex. His sincerity is completely  
guileless. She can't repress a smile.

KRISTINE

If God punishes those who  
disobey maybe that takes courage  
too.

An awkward moment. Paula is embarrassed, as is Kristine,  
who's surprised herself with the outburst.

JOHN

Guys, I gotta get my sister a  
birthday present.

PAULA

Wait, I need something too.

John and Paula head toward the crowded retail outlet.  
Kristine looks sadly after Paula.

ALEX

See, if you think about it, a  
life of living only for yourself  
is only going to work short  
term. But Jesus protects the  
righteous for eternity. He's  
made a promise to save those who  
follow the true word of Christ.  
But in return we have to . . .

Kristine nervously plays with her crucifix.

KRISTINE

(Cutting in)  
But how do you really know? How  
does the minister really know?

ALEX  
The Bible of course!

KRISTINE  
But someone wrote it didn't  
they?

ALEX  
Whoa! You don't believe in the  
Bible?

KRISTINE  
(Almost to herself)  
I don't know. What do we know  
for sure?

FADE OUT.

INT. KRISTINE'S HOME, HALL - DAY

Kristine, in her school uniform, walks along the book-lined hall of her home, through the lounge room and into the casual eating area. She looks sad and tired.

Lucy is eating breakfast. Kristine gets some cereal and juice for herself.

Outside Mark is doing laps in the pool, swimming up and down, up and down. Kristine watches him instead of eating.

INT. CLASS ROOM - DAY

A religion class is in session at a Catholic girls school. Kristine is in her usual seat at the front.

SOUND DROPS OUT.

The teacher has written on a white board:

'Aquinas - C13th - conforming Christians are perfect -  
may exercise freedom and reach happiness.

William of Ockham - C14th - Humans cannot understand  
reality - must follow God's rules.'

A discussion is in progress but Kristine is not taking part. From time to time the teacher looks toward Kristine, evidently surprised by her silence.

The book open in front of Kristine is filled with her neat writing. However, today, instead of taking notes, Kristine is doodling spirals all over the page.

INT. KRISTINE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

It is the middle of the night and Kristine is still wide awake, her mind racing, her heart beating loud and fast. Suddenly she sits up and puts on the light, unable to endure whatever is troubling her. She notices the bible on her desk and looks up at her wall instead.

The images of the universe on her collage wall stare down at her. Kristine has a sensation of falling. The more she looks, the more intensely does she feel herself sucked into the vastness and darkness of the universe. She begins to sweat.

Finally she manages to look elsewhere; out the window. But all she sees here is more darkness. Inevitably her eyes are drawn back to the collage wall, now falling on one of the quotes:

'Error of opinion may be tolerated when reason is left free to combat it'.

Kristine reaches up and snatches the quote off the wall. But this only seems to increase her anxiety. Finally she kneels beside the bed in prayer.

EXT. INTERSECTION OF GROVE ST. & OCEAN AVE. (FANTASY) - NIGHT

Kristine and Rosetta are standing on the corner, holding hands.

KRISTINE  
Rosetta, where are you now?

Rosetta doesn't answer.

KRISTINE (CONT'D)  
Please, talk to me. Tell me.

But Rosetta just smiles.

INT. KRISTINE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Kristine opens her eyes. She's in a lather of sweat: her anxiety is escalating. Shaking, she gets back into bed, trying to get a grip. She seizes her portable CD player and puts the ear phones in. As the music begins she lies down again, closing her eyes but leaving the light on.

INT. KRISTINE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Lucy shakes Kristine awake.

LUCY

Kristine! Hurry up. You're late.

INT. CASUAL EATING AREA - A SHORT WHILE LATER

Mark and Lucy are eating breakfast. Kristine, in a dressing gown, enters.

LUCY

Why aren't you dressed?

KRISTINE

I'm . . . can I take the train?

LUCY

(Looking at her watch)

It won't get you there on time.

KRISTINE

Miss Basternak's away. So we don't have a proper class till the afternoon.

Lucy puts her hand on Kristine's forehead.

LUCY

I think it's better to keep busy.

MARK

Oh, let her take the morning off! The year's nearly finished.

Lucy looks at Mark. He doesn't look up from his paper.

LUCY

(To Kristine)

You'll get time off in the holidays.

Kristine heads back to her room, dragging her feet. Lucy looks at Mark again. He's shaking his head in disapproval. She has a moment of self-doubt.

LUCY

Kristine!

Kristine turns.

LUCY (CONT'D)

I'll ring in for you. But make  
sure you're there after lunch.  
OK?

INT. KRISTINE'S HOUSE, MASTER BEDROOM - AN HOUR LATER

Kristine, now in her school uniform, emerges from the ensuite brushing her hair with a brush. On her way through the master bedroom she takes a peek in the drawer of Lucy's bedside table. Here she finds two packets of tablets. The first pack are sleeping tablets. She removes some of these.

She opens the other packet: a series of small pills in a foil sheet, in the shape of a square. She isn't sure what they are, so opens the instruction sheet inside and reads it.

As Kristine reads the instructions she gets a shock. She looks over the packet carefully: they are labelled for 'Lucy Alderton'.

Kristine feels hot, her heart beats fast. She pulls at the collar around her neck. In doing so she breaks the chain holding her crucifix. It falls on the ground.

INT. BEAN'S HOUSE - DAY

Bean lives in a small, almost derelict weatherboard house. The lounge room looks like a bomb has hit it: the furniture, all of it originating from council chuck outs, is upturned and stuff is scattered everywhere.

Someone knocks on the front door. No one answers. Another knock, this time louder. A barely awake, shirt-less Bean walks into the room and looks out a window to check who it is. He doesn't recognise them but opens the door anyway.

Kristine stands nervously on the verandah, now wearing a flattering, definitely sexy outfit. Bean doesn't recognise her.

KRISTINE

Hi. Um, I'm Kristine. You said to come round if I wanted guitar lessons?

Bean scratches his head.

BEAN

Huh? Oh yeah. Yeah.

INT. BEAN'S HOUSE, BEAN'S BEDROOM - A SHORT WHILE LATER

Bean's room is messy but not cyclone-hit like the lounge room. There is a mattress on the floor, posters, makeshift curtains, etc. The radio is playing.

Bean and Kristine sit on the floor, drinking tea from chipped mugs. Kristine is awkward and nervous. Bean offers her the bong.

KRISTINE

No thanks.

Bean pulls the cone. Kristine looks around the room. One poster is simply a list of mantras - one of which is 'Everything is as it should be'. Now Bean picks up his guitar and starts to play, looking over every so often to Kristine which makes her more nervous.

KRISTINE

(Pointing to a poster)  
What's that?

He turns to see.

BEAN

Kali. God of death!

KRISTINE

Oh.

BEAN

Actually more like the cycle of life and death.

KRISTINE

Is it Buddhist?



BEAN  
Na, Hindu.

KRISTINE  
What's the difference?

Bean stops playing.

BEAN  
Hmm, heaps. Like Buddhism's  
about doing the (SIGNALS  
INVERTED COMMAS) right thing. In  
Hinduism you find your own way  
of doing things.

KRISTINE  
How?

BEAN  
From experience. Learning from  
life.

KRISTINE  
There's no rules?

BEAN  
Only the ones you discover for  
yourself.

Kristine is about to say something but Bean turns her  
attention to the guitar.

BEAN (CONT'D)  
Now watch this.

Bean executes a series of chords.

KRISTINE  
I can't do that.

Bean hands her the guitar, coming around beside her to  
help her put her fingers in the right place.

BEAN  
Yeah you can. One finger here.  
Another there. And there. Good,  
just like that. Now strum. Like  
this.

He moves her hand across the strings.

BEAN  
That's a 'D' chord. See?

In such proximity to Bean Kristine's nervousness increases. She takes her fingers down from the neck of the guitar. They look at each other, then he kisses her and she responds. A moment later he moves the guitar out of their way and puts her hand on his crotch. She flinches.

BEAN  
What's wrong?

KRISTINE  
Nothing.

Bean smiles. Kristine closes her eyes.

INT. BEAN'S HOUSE, BEAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Kristine wakes up alone in Bean's bed. Outside it's getting dark. She goes to the bedroom door.

KRISTINE  
Bean?

No answer. Kristine sees her wallet on top of her bag: her money is gone.

Instead there is a note: 'Sorry. I needed the money for your guitar lesson. Come over whenever you like. Bean.'

Kristine gets dressed.

INT. KRISTINE'S HOUSE, ENTRANCE FOYER - NIGHT

Kristine enters. Lucy and Mark rush into the foyer from elsewhere in the house. Lucy half embraces, half shakes Kristine.

LUCY  
Oh thank God. Thank God!

Lucy almost suffocates Kristine.

LUCY  
What happened? Why weren't you at school?

KRISTINE  
Nothing. I . . . I took the day off, that's all. I thought . . .

Kristine looks at Mark, who shakes his head and walks away.

LUCY  
Who said you could? My God! We  
looked everywhere! THE POLICE  
HAVE YOUR DESCRIPTION!

KRISTINE  
I'm sorry.

LUCY  
The school! All the shopkeepers!  
(A BEAT) So? Where were you?

Kristine searches for an appropriate response.

KRISTINE  
At Oakton Westfield.

LUCY  
The shops have been closed for  
hours.

Now Lucy notices that Kristine is dressed in a different way, a sexier way.

LUCY  
Who were you with?

KRISTINE  
No one.

LUCY  
Yes you were. You have a  
boyfriend! Don't you?

KRISTINE  
I don't. I don't.

Kristine blushes and races from the room.

INT. KRISTINE'S HOME, HER BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Kristine enters with Lucy hard on her heels.

LUCY  
Don't lie Kristine. Kristine! We  
don't lie in this house!

Kristine doesn't answer.

LUCY

No matter. I'm taking you to school tomorrow. We'll see what they think about this. I'll ask to see Father Benice too. You need to talk to him about . . .

KRISTINE

(Cutting in)

You talk to them! I'm not going!

LUCY

Yes you are!

KRISTINE

I don't have to.

LUCY

Where does this attitude come from? Your boyfriend?

KRISTINE

Stop saying that! Stop it!

Lucy is taken aback by her daughter's anger.

KRISTINE

I'm old enough to leave school. I can even get a job if I want.

LUCY

As what?

KRISTINE

You can't make me do anything!

Lucy gives a short laugh, hiding her pain.

LUCY

What job can you get, huh? A check-out chick?

KRISTINE

So? What if I do?

LUCY

With your brains, you should be ashamed to even think it.

KRISTINE

I'm going to try everything. Anything I want. There are no wrongs. None.

Lucy is shocked by her daughter's words. She takes a few moments to recover.

LUCY

Nothing is wrong? (A BEAT) The woman who ran over your friend? There was nothing wrong in what she did?

Kristine is thrown, and horrified by the idea. But recovering, she points the finger at her mother.

KRISTINE

YOU! You're the liar! You're on the pill! You act like you're perfect! Like you think only of God! But you do whatever suits you! You sin whenever you want! You're the only God in this house!

Lucy raises her hand high above her daughter. But Kristine holds eye contact with her mother, refusing to back down. Unable to sustain her daughter's look Lucy lowers her hand. Then she walks to the door and removes the key.

LUCY

When you're talking sense again, you can come out.

Lucy exits, locking the door from outside.

Now bitter tears spill down Kristine's face.

KRISTINE

(Yelling)

I fucking hate you. Do you hear?  
I hate you!

Kristine stands in front of her collage wall. The images and words seem to lash out at her: a dark, vast universe; a rock star who looks like Bean; words - 'truth', 'God', 'love', 'goodness'.

Venting all her frustration and anger Kristine pulls down first one and then another piece of the collage. Soon she is tearing and clawing at whatever she can reach and doesn't stop until the wall is destroyed completely.

The rage over, the floor covered in shards of paper, Kristine sees a fragment of the 'Rosette Nebula' on the ground and picks it up.

INT. KRISTINE'S HOME, KRISTINE'S BEDROOM - DAWN

Kristine looks out her bedroom window at the breaking dawn. In the elevated house her view is of the tree tops. She watches the wind moving through the eucalyptus leaves. She sees birds flying from branch to branch, hears their early morning call. Beyond, clouds hover around the ridge of the escarpment.

EXT. KRISTINE'S HOME, KRISTINE'S ROOM - DAWN

Kristine climbs out the bedroom window and lowers herself down to the steep slope below.

On the ground, she slips, slowly sliding down the slope, until she lands softly against a tree. Her hands are grazed from trying to save her fall. Yet she hasn't made a sound.

Dusting herself off she hurries on through the bush.

EXT. INTERSECTION OF GROVE ST. & OCEAN AVE. - DAY

Council workers are putting up new signs on Grove Street. They read: 'No Loitering Allowed'.

INT. KRISTINE'S HOME, KRISTINE'S BEDROOM - DAY

From outside, Kristine's bedroom door is unlocked and Lucy enters, finding the room empty. She looks out the window, noting the slide marks on the ground beneath it.

LUCY

Mark!

Mark arrives promptly, munching on toast.

LUCY

She's gone again!

Mark checks the room, verifying the absence of Kristine.

MARK

I can't go through this every day. I can't.

EXT. BEAN'S HOUSE - DAY

Kristine knocks on Bean's front door. When there is no answer she goes around the side of the house and looks in through his bedroom window.

There she sees Bean sound asleep with a blond woman in his arms. She recognises the woman, which upsets her even more.

EXT. CATHOLIC CHURCH - DAY

Kristine walks onto the grounds of a Catholic Church and tries to open the door into the church. It's locked. She hurries on, turning in the direction of the ocean.

EXT. INTERSECTION OF GROVE ST. & OCEAN AVE. - NIGHT

Kristine and Rosetta are running toward the T intersection, Rosetta is in front, Kristine is trying to catch her.

EXT. CLIFF OVERLOOKING THE SEA - DAY

Kristine struggles through thick bush, pushing aside branches and stumbling through the undergrowth. Her arms and face are heavily scratched. She arrives at the edge of the headland, at a cliff which overlooks the ocean. Today the sea is calm and majestic.

EXT. INTERSECTION OF GROVE ST. & OCEAN AVE. - NIGHT

Kristine and Rosetta are running toward the T intersection, Rosetta in front, Kristine trying to catch up.

KRISTINE

Rosetta stop! Wait for me!

EXT. CLIFF OVERLOOKING THE SEA - DAY

Kristine takes off her outer garments. The empty foil from the sleeping pills she took from Lucy's drawer falls out of a pocket.

EXT. INTERSECTION OF GROVE ST. & OCEAN AVE. - NIGHT

Rosetta runs onto the road. The sound of the sea is loud.

TITLE CARD: 'Marianne'.

INT. COMPANY RECEPTION AREA - DAY

The rotating doors into a busy foyer spin as people run to and fro. On the reception desk is MARIANNE (late 20s), a sweet and sexy blonde, with an air of vulnerability.

In large letters on the wall behind her: Clark and Campbell Enterprises.

Marianne greets and seats people, answers phones and emails.

MARIANNE

Clark and Campbell. This is  
Marianne . . . Hold on, I'll see  
if she's in.

A male coworker passes the desk munching on a sandwich. Marianne looks longingly at it.

MALE CO-WORKER

You still haven't eaten?

He holds the unbitten end of the sandwich out for her. Marianne, still waiting to transfer the call, takes a bite. The co-worker disappears through a door behind the desk.

MARIANNE

(Swallowing quickly)  
Connie, it's Tariq. Sounds like  
it hasn't arrived yet. . . .  
Sure.

Marianne hangs up, finds a file on her computer and Emails it. Just then her boss JIM (50s) approaches.

JIM

How's it going Marianne?

Marianne wipes her mouth quickly to remove any crumbs, then smiles. She's a little uptight.

MARIANNE

Really well Jim!

Jim taps the counter.

JIM



You know Basia is on leave next year?

MARIANNE  
She's so excited about the baby. Lucky thing.

JIM  
Why don't you apply to fill in for her?

Marianne is taken aback.

MARIANNE  
Doing the orders?

JIM  
You do a lot of it already.

MARIANNE  
Yeah but, I only help her.

JIM  
How long have you been here now?

MARIANNE  
Six years.

JIM  
You could do it with your eyes closed!

EXT. INTERSECTION GROVE ST. AND OCEAN AVE. - DAY

Across the road from Monte Bianco Pizzeria, and in front of the beach, stands a row of large eucalyptus trees.

Today the wind is blowing hard. A small branch blows off from one of the trees. It floats across the road, misses a passing car, bounces off a parked car and lands in the gutter, on the corner outside the pizzeria.

INT. COASTAL PUB - DUSK

Marianne and co-workers SUZIE, (early 20s) and FRANCES (30s) are drinking in a crowded pub which overlooks the ocean. Suzie has just returned with drinks.

At a nearby table three young men (early 20s) are checking out the women.

FRANCES  
It's a good opportunity for you.

MARIANNE  
I dunno. That job carries a lot  
of pressure. Cheers.

The women clink glasses.

SUZIE  
You'll be fine. Or else!

Frances and Suzie smile.

FRANCES  
Aren't you bored with reception?

MARIANNE  
Only when it's slow.

The young men are looking over again and egging each other on. One of them smiles at Suzie and she smiles back.

SUZIE  
Shall we ask 'em over?

Marianne and Frances check out the men.

FRANCES  
They're a bit young!

MARIANNE  
And I'm taken anyway.

SUZIE  
You're back with David? Since  
when?

MARIANNE  
You know. We're working on it.

FRANCES  
There's no way I'm going back to  
my ex. In with the new!

Frances raises her glass to Suzie. Suzie gets to her feet.

SUZIE  
Make some space girls.

MARIANNE

She should wait 'til they make  
the first move.

FRANCES

Oh, come on. It'll be a laugh.

Suzie walks past the men and puts some money down on the  
pool table.

On the return journey, easy-as-pie, she gets talking to  
them.

Suzie looks over at her drinking companions but Marianne  
has disappeared. Frances shrugs: 'Who knows?'

EXT. INTERSECTION OF GROVE ST. & OCEAN AVE. - THAT MOMENT

Mark drops Kristine and Rosetta off on the corner and  
then drives on. The girls head toward Monte Bianco  
Pizzeria, walking around the musicians to get in the  
front door.

INT. MARATEA HOME, BOYS' BEDROOM - THAT MOMENT

Nadia has just finished reading a bedtime story to her  
sons. She gives them both a hug and kiss.

EXT. COASTAL PUB, CAR PARK - THAT MOMENT

In the pub car park Marianne smokes a joint in her  
vintage orange Monaro.

In a car nearby a couple are kissing. Marianne finishes  
the joint and starts the engine. The car sound system  
kicks in, and she pulls out onto the road.

INT. MONTE BIANCO PIZZERIA - THAT MOMENT

George is behind the counter in the Pizzeria. He watches  
a female customer walk away, admiring her long, smooth  
legs. Shamus smiles and rolls his eyes.

EXT. INTERSECTION OF GROVE ST. & OCEAN AVE. - NIGHT

Kristine and Rosetta exit from Monte Bianco with their  
pizza and head towards the corner.

INT. MARIANNE'S CAR, OCEAN GROVE STREETS - THAT MOMENT

Marianne is driving, music blaring. She stops at a corner, then swings into Ocean Ave.

Some distance ahead Kristine runs across the road. After she is safely across Marianne accelerates toward the T intersection.

Rosetta is standing on the pavement but hidden from view behind a car. She steps out onto the road, trips on the small eucalyptus branch that is lying in the gutter, then lurches out in front of the car.

EXT. GROVE STREET - A MOMENT EARLIER

Bean, Daria and Blake are playing on the pavement a couple of doors down from Monte Bianco.

O.S. a screech of brakes, a bang, a thud, a scream.

The musicians turn toward the noise.

DARIA

Fuck!

EXT. INTERSECTION OF GROVE ST. & OCEAN AVE. - NIGHT

Marianne opens her eyes.

Marianne's POV: panicked voices, people running, someone crying. Her car door is opened and someone bends down to her.

Marianne struggles to get out of the car but is held tight by the seat belt. The person releases the belt and she lurches forward. Then she simply huddles into herself.

EXT. INTERSECTION OF GROVE ST. & OCEAN AVE. - NIGHT

An ambulance is parked beside the orange Monaro and ambulance officers are loading Rosetta's covered body into it.

Kristine and Lucy talk to a police officer. They both look like wrecks.

Police officers are examining the scene, photographing the Monaro, measuring the skidmarks etc.

Marianne sits in a police car with a blanket around her shoulders.

MARIANNE

I didn't see her. She came from  
nowhere.

A police officer passes his notebook to another officer,  
pointing to the breathalyser test result: '.07'.

Nearby Bean, Blake and Daria are finishing up an  
interview with a police officer.

POLICE OFFICER

And we'll need your contact  
details.

The police officer then notices two fat joints are poking  
out of Bean's shirt pocket.

EXT. INTERSECTION OF GROVE ST. & OCEAN AVE. - NIGHT

Bean, Blake and Daria walk away from the scene of the  
accident. Daria is crying and Blake has his arm around  
her.

DARIA

That poor girl.

BLAKE

Can't believe it.

Daria and Blake hug tighter. Bean walks along with his  
hands in his pockets. They pass a smashed eucalyptus  
branch. It has been blown down the middle of the road  
from the accident site. No body notices it.

BEAN

I'm going over to Rob's.

DARIA

See you later.

BLAKE

Take care Bean.

Bean winds off into a side street.

INT. POLICE STATION, EXAMINATION ROOM - NIGHT

Marianne is lying on her stomach in a backless medical-type gown. A police woman, wearing gloves, proceeds to give her an internal examination.

INT. POLICE STATION, INTERVIEW ROOM - NIGHT

In a bare, internal room a policeman and a policewoman are interviewing Marianne. Like everyone, the police respond to her 'little girl' quality. Marianne sits quietly crying, feeling intensely shamed and vulnerable, barely able to respond to questions.

POLICEMAN

Where were you going Marianne?

MARIANNE

To my boyfriend's.

POLICEWOMAN

And where does he live?

MARIANNE

Just a few blocks down from . .  
. where it happened.

POLICEWOMAN

You'd consumed a large quantity  
of alcohol. You've admitted  
using cannabis also. Why did you  
think it was OK to drive?

POLICEMAN

Let alone speed.

MARIANNE

I . . . I don't know. Don't  
know.

POLICEWOMAN

Alright. In addition to the  
charges we've mentioned, I need  
to inform you that you may also  
be charged manslaughter.

Marianne cannot believe what's happening.

MARIANNE

Manslaughter? (A BEAT) But she  
ran out! How could I see her?

INT. POLICE STATION, HOLDING CELL - NIGHT

Marianne is huddled on a bench in a holding cell, rubbing at her fingers to remove the vestiges of ink from fingerprinting.

In the cell with her is a clean and tidy woman (40s), evidently withdrawing from heroin. She throws herself around the cell, crouching on the floor one minute, rattling the bars the next.

WOMAN

Hey! Hey! Can you hear me?

POLICE OFFICER (O.S.)

Mother Mary can bloody hear you!

WOMAN

(Hitting the wall)

Listen! I mean it! Can't wait  
any fucking longer. Hurry up!  
Come on!

POLICE OFFICER (O.S.)

Think of it as a free withdrawal  
service sweetheart.

Laughter O.S. The woman slumps against the wall, groaning.

WOMAN

Jesus Christ! I don't care about  
anything else.

Marianne draws further into herself.

EXT./INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

GERALD (60s), Marianne's father, walks Marianne from the police station to his car. They hold hands tightly.

Gerald, who looks like he's taking it harder than Marianne, helps her into the car then gets behind the wheel.

MARIANNE

Oh Dad, I told Suzie I didn't  
want anymore. She kept buying  
them.

GERALD

Terrible.

MARIANNE

I could go to jail.

Gerald takes her hand.

GERALD  
We'll look after you.

MARIANNE  
I couldn't stop. I don't why  
they blame me.

GERALD  
Let's get you home, eh?

MARIANNE  
Your place?

INT. LEGAL AID OFFICE - DAY

Marianne, Gerald and a dozen other people are waiting in a shabby Legal Aid Office reception room. Most are watching a daytime American talk show on TV. The host is discussing self-esteem with a psychologist.

PSYCHOLOGIST  
(On television)  
Laura, lack of self regard  
probably causes more problems  
than your average egotism.

HOST  
That's a surprise. Right folks?

The TV audience obliges with some 'Yeahs.'

HOST  
But how do you stop those  
feelings of inferiority Doc?

MARY  
One of the best ways is to  
simply affirm yourself.

HOST  
And how do we do that?

MARY  
(Looking into the  
camera)  
Simply look into a mirror and  
say 'I love you'. It's amazing  
how challenging this can be.



Several people in the waiting room burst out laughing.

GERALD  
(To Marianne)  
God, imagine doing that!

Marianne laughs too. Then a young woman enters the room from a hallway.

YOUNG WOMAN  
Marianne Vercroost.

Gerald pats Marianne's back to encourage her onward.

CUT TO BLACK. Suddenly, a loud knocking sound.

INT. BEAN'S HOUSE, BEAN'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Bean opens his eyes. O.S. knocking continues, then sounds of people aggressively entering the house, turning over furniture, barking orders etc.

Bean jumps out of bed, rapidly locates his pouch of marihuana, opens a window and throws it over a neighbour's fence.

Then he moves away from the window, pulls on some jeans and the door flies open and two police officers burst in.

POLICE OFFICER #1  
OK mate. Don't get in the way  
and you won't get hurt.

Very quickly the police turn the room upside down, finding little except a bong and a bowl with remnant marihuana at the bottom.

POLICE OFFICER #2  
Tsk, Tsk, Tsk. Don't you know  
cannabis is an illegal  
substance, crusty?

Then one of them holds up a couple of brand new syringes.

BEAN  
So? My mother's diabetic.

INT./EXT. GERALD'S HOME, LOUNGE ROOM - DAY

Gerald's house is a humble, post-war bungalow on a quarter acre block.

Marianne is doing a newspaper crossword in front of the TV. When it fails to hold her attention she turns to the personal ads: 'Men Seeking Women'. But her eyes are drawn to another column: 'Obituaries'. Unable to stop herself she scans the column and finds the obituary for Rosetta. For a second she looks ill but then puts the paper aside and her emotions with it. She concentrates on the TV: A DVD of Casablanca is playing.

Gerald enters with a lunch tray of sandwiches.

GERALD

Ah, these old movies are the best.

MARIANNE

Yeah, for sure.

They eat in silence, watching the DVD. Then the front door opens and HOWARD (30s), Marianne's brother, enters. He wears overalls with a logo on the pocket. Marianne pauses the DVD.

GERALD

Howard. Come in!

HOWARD

Hi guys.

GERALD

I'll get you a cup.

HOWARD

No, stay there I'll get it.

Howard exits into the kitchen and Marianne resumes the movie. When Howard returns Gerald fills his mug.

GERALD

How's work?

HOWARD

Good. We're doing some upgrading in town.

GERALD

(Passing him some food)  
Sandwich?

HOWARD

No thanks. Enjoying the DVD player?

GERALD

Oh, it's great. Can't thank you enough.

HOWARD

No worries. (To Marianne) Wanna smoke?

MARIANNE

(Not overly thrilled)  
Yeah, OK.

Marianne once again pauses the DVD and exits with Howard to the adjoining back verandah, which over looks a large, well-tended garden. The siblings light up.

MARIANNE

(Indicating a row of bushes)  
We pruned the hydrangeas this morning.

Howard surveys the bushes. Near the back fence is an old, rusty swing set.

HOWARD

So, what's happening with the cops?

MARIANNE

Dunno yet. Trying not to think about it.

HOWARD

You going back to work?

MARIANNE

When I'm ready.

HOWARD

How long can you take?

MARIANNE

I've got a certificate.

A beat.

HOWARD

You staying with Dad the whole time?

MARIANNE

It's better than being at home  
on my own.

HOWARD  
Yeah but, you know how things  
upset him.

MARIANNE  
It was OK for you and Jenny to  
live here for years.

Howard doesn't answer. Marianne stubs out her cigarette  
and makes a move to go back inside.

HOWARD  
(Keeping his voice low)  
Can't you see it's affecting  
him? It'll give him another  
attack! For God's sake, you're  
nearly 30!

Marianne storms back into the loungeroom and starts  
throwing her things together.

GERALD  
What's going on?

INT. MARIANNE'S UNIT - DAY

Marianne returns to her small one bedroom unit to find a  
calling card from the police under her door. Without  
looking at it she stuffs it into a back pocket, throws  
her bag into the bedroom and enters the kitchen/living  
room. Here she puts the kettle on.

The flat is small and barren: couch, television, a few  
CDs. It could all have been purchased in an hour. The  
windows are completely covered, blocking out the world  
outside. In one corner are some half unpacked boxes.

On a wall is a multiple photo frame: Marianne and her  
family; Marianne as a bridesmaid; Marianne and David (her  
ex); then empty frames.

Waiting for the kettle Marianne checks her mobile phone:  
there is a message but instead of retrieving it she puts  
the phone into a kitchen drawer.

INT. MARIANNE'S UNIT - NIGHT

Marianne watches TV. She looks enormously lonely and empty.

She goes into the bedroom. Another dark, empty room. She searches through her bag: clothes, toiletries, running shoes, a bag of passionfruit. She's annoyed at not finding whatever it is she's looking for.

She enters the adjoining bath room and checks the cabinet: vitamins, skin supplements, pain killers, condoms. What she's after isn't here either.

Banging the door shut she comes face to face with her own reflection. She looks herself in the eye. She thinks of something, her mouth opens as if to say something . . .

Then she's distracted by her appearance, turns her head from side to side, checks her skin and fixes her hair. Finally she applies lipstick and smiles into the mirror, as if she were smiling at someone else.

INT. DAVID'S TOWN HOUSE, KITCHEN - NIGHT

DAVID (30s), Marianne's ex-boyfriend, a first generation Australian, is cooking dinner with his new girlfriend, MAGGIE (30s). Maggie is reading from a cook book while David fries onions.

MAGGIE

(Laughing)

Hey, you're supposed to add the cumin first!

DAVID

Do I look Indian?

David tips the onions onto a chopping board then adds cumin with a flourish, spilling too much in the process. Maggie laughs.

MAGGIE

You idiot, now we'll have to make double!

O.S. the door bell rings and a dog barks.

EXT. DAVID'S TOWN HOUSE, ENTRANCE PORCH - CONTINUOUS

David freezes as he opens the door to Marianne.

DAVID

Marianne!

Marianne gives him her sweetest and bravest smile.

MARIANNE

Hi David. How you goin'?

DAVID

I'm OK. I'm good! Just having a  
quiet night.

Marianne hears sound from the kitchen and glimpses Maggie through the door. Her cheery demeanour crumbles. David closes the door and joins her on the porch. He's feeling guilty.

DAVID

Ah, let's go sit in your car for  
a sec.

At the mention of 'her car' Marianne starts to cry and cuddles up to David with almost animal need. He embraces her awkwardly.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Hey, what's wrong? What is it?

They sit on the porch step. Marianne dries her eyes. The dog barks again.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Shut up Critter!

Critter shuts up.

MARIANNE

I . . I was in an accident.

DAVID

Shit! You OK?

MARIANNE

No. Something terrible happened.  
A girl died.

DAVID

Oh Jesus.

INT. DAVID'S TOWN HOUSE, KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Maggie has turned off the stove and sits waiting.

EXT. DAVID'S TOWN HOUSE, ENTRANCE PORCH - CONTINUOUS

David and Marianne sit as before.

MARIANNE  
They might charge me.

DAVID  
D.U.I.?

MARIANNE  
No worse.

DAVID  
What?

MARIANNE  
Manslaughter.

DAVID  
Oh, fuck.

David puts his arm around her. The dog barks again.

DAVID  
Critter!

Critter shuts up.

MARIANNE  
Why didn't you tell me you were  
seeing someone else?

DAVID  
It's only just happened.

Marianne looks at him.

MARIANNE  
I thought we still had a chance.

David looks uneasy. Marianne puts her head on her knees  
and sheds some more tears. David pets her head briefly.

DAVID  
You'll be OK Marianne. The cops  
are only scaring you.

Marianne sits forlornly on the step. David gets to his  
feet.

DAVID

Sorry, we're cooking. (AN  
AWKWARD BEAT) Gotta go. I'll  
call, OK?

David moves towards the door and Marianne stands up.

MARIANNE  
I just came to see if you had  
some pot.

DAVID  
No. Trying to quit.

Marianne continues to wait.

DAVID (CONT'D)  
(At a loss)  
Well, take care. Don't worry,  
OK?

He reaches for the door but Marianne grabs his arm.

MARIANNE  
Don't go. Please David.

David tries to take his arm back.

DAVID  
Marianne!

INT. DAVID'S TOWN HOUSE, KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

O.S. Maggie hears scuffles and the dog going berserk.

EXT. DAVID'S TOWN HOUSE, ENTRANCE PORCH - CONTINUOUS

Marianne hangs onto David as he tries to push her off.

DAVID  
Let me go! Get off!

When he succeeds in breaking free she hits him hard with  
her fists.

MARIANNE  
Go on! Be a fucking man then.  
Come on! Show me!

DAVID  
Fucking get off me!



Maggie opens the door and David falls inside. They shut the door quickly. Marianne tries to open the door and kicks it hard when it won't give.

MARIANNE

Arse hole! USER! He'll fuck  
around on you too! Don't believe  
anything he says. Liar! Fucking  
liar!

Marianne sits on the step and sobs. The light on the porch goes out, then the lights inside as well, leaving her in darkness.

Not far away a siren sounds. Marianne gets up and stumbles away into the dark, empty suburban streets, not sure which way to go. The railway station is ahead.

INT. TRAIN CARRIAGE - NIGHT

Marianne, full of nervous energy, walks through an almost empty train. The harsh fluorescent lighting reflects her dishevelled and broken image back in the windows. In her hand she clutches a crumpled piece of newspaper.

FADE OUT.

EXT. MARIANNE'S DREAM, VARIOUS LOCATIONS - NIGHT  
FADE IN.

INT. DARK ROOM - NIGHT

We see David's angry face at close quarters. He's bashing someone but we don't see who.

FADE OUT. FADE IN.

EXT. ROADWAY - NIGHT

A roadway leads into the darkness.

FADE OUT. FADE IN.

A blond figure is lying on the road. The orange Monaro emerges from the darkness. Marianne is driving.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - DAY

Marianne opens her eyes. She's in a 'Formula One' style motel room. Her window is metres away from the heavy

traffic of a highway. She finds a cigarette and lights up, fingers shaking.

EXT. HIGHWAY MOTEL - DAY

Marianne crosses the busy highway in front of the motel. Almost unrecognisable without makeup she wears the same clothes from the day before.

Half running along the road she holds out her arm to hitch a ride. A car stops. The driver is unkempt with tattoos. Without hesitation she gets in.

EXT. BEAN'S HOUSE - DAY

Daria and Blake are loading their belongings into an old station wagon. Bean looks on from the door.

INT. BEAN'S HOUSE, LOUNGE ROOM - DAY

The lounge room, as in previous scenes, is turned upside down. Blake enters to get another load, Bean follows.

BEAN

Blake, wish you weren't going.

BLAKE

It's too small here. We're not getting anywhere.

BEAN

Who'm I gonna play with now?  
Won't even be able to pay the rent.

Blake pushes past him with another box.

BLAKE

Maybe you'll have to give up a few things. It's not good the way you're living.

Blake exits. Bean looks sadly after him.

INT. AMENDARIZ CAR - DAY

Paulo, Patricia and Patrick, move through the leafy streets and well-tended gardens of an older suburb. Patrick and Patricia stare out the windows. In one of the

front yards a little girl plays under a sprinkler,  
watched over by her mother. Her father videos the scene.

EXT. AMENDARIZ FAMILY HOME, FRONT YARD - DAY

The car pulls into the driveway of their home. Patricia and Patrick get out and enter the house. Paulo puts the car into the garage. He is crossing the front yard on his way to the house when something catches his eye.

Marianne is standing across the road, half hidden behind a tree. Paulo stares at her and she walks over to the gate. She tries to smile but her mouth is no longer under her control.

MARIANNE  
(her voice failing)  
I'm sorry to disturb you. I . .  
. I . . . Can I talk to you . .  
. please . . .?

PAULO  
Excuse me?

Marianne is overwhelmed by the situation. Paulo is confused. Then it dawns on him who she is.

PAULO (CONT'D)  
You are the driver.

Marianne looks like a guilty child.

PAULO (CONT'D)  
Why are you come here?

MARIANNE  
I wanted . . . I wanted . . . I  
wanted to ask you . . .

Marianne, dazed and staring, cannot continue.

PAULO  
Get away from us!

Patricia appears in the front doorway.

PATRICIA  
Paulo, what is it?

Marianne jumps at the sight of Patricia. Her face embodies a depth of pain that is hard to look at.

PAULO  
Stay inside Patricia.

But Patricia determinedly approaches Marianne, walking past her husband.

PATRICIA  
Who are you?

MARIANNE  
Marianne.

PATRICIA  
You killed our daughter?

Marianne grips the gate to steady herself.

PAULO  
She's probably still drunk.

MARIANNE  
I . . . I didn't know. Please .  
. .

PAULO  
Come inside Patricia!

MARIANNE  
Please, forgive me. Please.

Patricia covers her mouth in horror. Paulo leads her back inside the house. Marianne stands motionless.

PAULO  
I should punish you myself. Then  
I'm in trouble! Get away! We  
ring the police!

Paulo shuts the door firmly. Marianne stumbles off.

INT./EXT. AMENDARIZ FAMILY HOME, HALL - CONTINUOUS

Patrick is in the hall when his parents enter through the front door. Once inside Patricia breaks down.

PATRICK  
What's wrong?

PAULO  
Go to your room!

PATRICK

What did she want?

PATRICIA

Because of her! Because of her!

Paulo pushes Patricia into their bedroom and shuts the door.

Patrick exits to the front yard but by now there no is there. He goes to the gate. The empty street stretches before him.

EXT. INTERSECTION OF GROVE ST. & OCEAN AVE. - DAY

Bean walks across Grove Street and settles down on the pavement, ready to play his guitar. Then he notices the 'No Loitering' signs. One is right in front of his usual spot.

He's not sure what they are all about and begins to play. He's hardly begun when Rex, the RSL club manager, comes over.

REX

Mate, don't you see the new sign.

BEAN

Doesn't loitering mean doing nothing?

REX

No, hanging around. Like you.

BEAN

I'm doing something.

REX

You can get fined now you know.  
If the police see you.

Rex walks off.

Bean tries to go back to playing but can't keep his mind on it. He seems hurt by what's just taken place. And the signs seem like a personal insult. He packs up.

INT. MARIANNE'S UNIT, BATHROOM - DAY

The bath is running. Marianne sits naked on the edge, shivering. She is trying to remove a blade from a safety razor but it snaps and splinters.

She leaves the room, returning with a kitchen knife. She gets into the tub, closes her eyes and runs the blade across her wrist. It barely grazes her.

INT. ROB'S APARTMENT - DUSK

ROB, a clean-cut UK migrant in his 40s, is in his lounge room with PAM, his girl friend (30s) and an agitated Bean. Bean as always has his guitar with him.

It's an ordinary room with a plasma TV and a good sound system. 1970s 'cock rock' plays loudly. Pam has a bowl of pot and a bong beside her. Rob and Bean are arguing.

BEAN  
Jeez can't you give me credit  
for once? Fuck!

ROB  
Mate, I'm not a charity.

BEAN  
Like, you must have made a  
fortune off me by now!

PAM  
(Packing a cone)  
Here, have another one.

She passes him the bong.

BEAN  
Na. It's doing nothing for me.

Pam shrugs and pulls the cone herself. She packs another and passes it to Rob.

BEAN (CONT'D)  
Man, this music's so crap.

Rob puts down the bong and eyeballs Bean. O.S. a knock on the door. Rob exits to get the door. When he's gone Bean decides on another cone after all.

INT. ROB'S APARTMENT, HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Rob opens the door to a fresh faced Marianne. She seems calm and centred, maybe just a little dazed. At first Rob doesn't recognise her.

ROB  
Hey Marianne, long time! Come in.

Marianne follows Rob into the lounge room.

ROB  
Remember Pam?

The women acknowledge each other. No one introduces her to Bean, who isn't feeling very sociable anyway. Marianne takes a seat. Pam offers her a cone.

ROB  
Saw David last week. He tells me he's takin' a trip to South America. He'll find good material down there, lucky bugger.

Marianne winces and pulls the cone.

ROB  
(To Marianne)  
Only got hash at the moment. OK?

MARIANNE  
Oh. Actually I wanted um, smack.

ROB  
(Raising his eyebrows)  
Oh, we have lost touch. A hundred?

MARIANNE  
\$500. Save me coming back for awhile.

Bean's eyes widen. Rob exits.

While waiting for Rob to return, Marianne and Pam watch TV. Bean however keeps stealing glances at Marianne. Suddenly he's very interested.

BEAN  
You look really familiar. Do you live round here?

MARIANNE

Yeah. Couple of streets away.

BEAN

I play down in the town. You  
might of seen me too.

MARIANNE

Maybe. I don't know. I don't go  
out much.

Rob returns and hands Marianne a small package, pocketing  
the money she hands to him. Now Marianne gets on her  
feet.

PAM

We're ordering food if you want  
some?

MARIANNE

Oh no. (A BEAT) Things to do.  
Stuff.

ROB

Yeah. A lot of stuff to do.

MARIANNE

See ya everyone.

Unmistakably, sadness flits across her face as she says  
goodbye and then shows herself out.

ROB

That's new for her.

PAM

Yeah, I was surprised too.

ROB

A lot of gear for a little girl.

EXT. OCEAN STREET - SUNSET, A MINUTE LATER

Marianne is walking up the headland on Ocean Ave when an  
out-of-breath Bean catches up, guitar on his back.

BEAN

Good time for a walk, hey?

MARIANNE

I guess.



Bean stops to get his breath back but Marianne just keeps on walking. Bean has to catch her up again.

BEAN  
Babe's in a hurry.

Marianne just keeps on walking.

BEAN (CONT'D)  
Don't be like that.

MARIANNE  
Look I've got stuff to do. OK?

BEAN  
Do you have a kit? I've got  
brand new launchers.

Marianne doesn't get it.

BEAN (CONT'D)  
Syringes.

Marianne now realises she doesn't know how to take the heroin and hesitates. They are in front of a dense bushy terrain at the top of the headland.

Bean touches her shoulder tenderly.

BEAN  
Seen the view from here?

She looks toward the bush.

MARIANNE  
In there? What's in there?

BEAN  
Best blastoff spot in town.

He holds out his hand for her. Before she can resist he leads her, half crawling, through the bushes to a cliff top. They come out onto a vista of a loud, tremendous ocean stretching as far as the eye can see in every direction. The sky is flushed with the setting sun.

Marianne, blasted by the fresh sea air, the sound and the spectacle lets herself be swept up in the moment. She moves away from Bean into her own space. Bean, respecting her response, keeps his distance. After a few minutes he softly begins to play his guitar.

Eventually Marianne looks at him. In the late summer light he glows with beauty. Their eyes meet.

Marianne gives him a soft, passionate kiss. Bean puts his guitar off to one side and they lie down. Then Marianne accidentally taps the guitar with her foot. The sea crashing on the rocks below blocks out the sound of the guitar sliding away down the slope.

FADE OUT.

EXT. CLIFF OVERLOOKING THE SEA - DAY

FADE IN.

Kristine struggles through thick bush, pushing aside branches and stumbling over undergrowth. Her arms and face are scratched. She arrives at the cliff which overlooks the ocean. She takes off her outer garments. The empty foil from the sleeping pills falls out of a pocket. There were four pills in all.

EXT. BEAN'S HOUSE, BEAN'S BEDROOM - DAY

Marianne is sitting up in Bean's bed with a coffee, watching him prepare two syringes of heroin. She notices he is preparing one smaller than the other.

MARIANNE

Who's the small one for?

BEAN

You gotta start small at first.

MARIANNE

So you get all the fun huh?

EXT. CLIFF OVER LOOKING THE SEA - THAT MOMENT

Meanwhile Kristine has reached the bottom of the same cliff Marianne and Bean were on the night before. She scrambles over boulders trying to get to the water. Finally she manages to get past the rocks and dive into the sea.

Coming up she floats on her back.

Kristine's POV: the sky and clouds swirl above her.

EXT. INNER CITY SHOPPING AREA - THAT MOMENT

We see the sky and clouds and then descend to a busy inner-city suburb. Here the streets are lively with creative types, members of the 'queer' universe, students, addictive personalities, vagrants, yuppies, children, 'dinks', 'ferals'. Gawking tourists complete the picture. Every block has someone busking, on a street where sex clubs coexist with greengrocers.

George, dressed elegantly in low key drag, exits from a bank, shoulder bag swinging. He presents as a poised, self-confident person.

He notices a dog tied to a signpost and stops to pat her.

GEORGE

Hello beautiful. Aren't you  
cute?

The owner of the dog, a THIN MAN, returns.

THIN MAN

(To George)  
Hello yourself.

INT. BEAN'S HOUSE, BEAN'S BEDROOM - THAT MOMENT

Marianne and Bean are now fighting over the heroin.

MARIANNE

You're ripping me off!

BEAN

No, I'm looking out for you.

MARIANNE

Give me the rest!

Bean hands over the bag of heroin.

BEAN

You're not fooling anyone.

He indicates her 'virgin' unmarked arms. On her wrist a long shallow cut is also visible.

INT. GEORGE'S ROOM AT NUEVO MONDO - THAT MOMENT

A typical pub room with clothes and female paraphernalia scattered everywhere. Beside the bed is the photo of George with his family.

Suddenly the door flies open and George and the Thin Man enter. George backs away from him, then falls onto the bed. He seems nervous but willing.

The Thin Man takes off his shirt and trousers. George watches the two of them in a mirror.

EXT. THE SEA - THAT MOMENT

Kristine is still floating in the sea, letting the current take her wherever it will. She's getting drowsy and suddenly, she goes under the water.

INT. BEAN'S HOUSE, BEAN'S BEDROOM - THAT MOMENT

Marianne and Bean's argument is continuing. Marianne is now getting dressed.

MARIANNE

What do you care? You got a free score.

BEAN

Right. And I thought I was cynical.

Marianne looks at him.

BEAN

The smack, sure, I'm not gonna deny it.(A BEAT) But I like you too. I do.

MARIANNE

Sure. That must be why you ran after me last night.

Bean takes a playful swipe at her.

BEAN

Yeah. And I would'a kicked you out this morning if I didn't want you around.

But Marianne isn't buying it.

BEAN (CONT'D)

I mean it Marianne.

MARIANNE  
We don't even know each other.

BEAN  
I've seen you before.

MARIANNE  
Yeah at a drug dealers.

BEAN  
No, at that accident.

INT. GEORGE'S ROOM AT NEUVO MONDO - THAT MOMENT

In his underpants the Thin Man falls upon George, kissing his neck and putting his hand up George's dress. George, highly aroused, closes his eyes and groans.

THIN MAN  
Oh, you're hot baby. Feel that?  
Huh? Mmm, you got a nice one.  
Oh, yeah. See if you like what I  
got.

The man takes off his underpants. George freezes, then shifts away from him.

THIN MAN  
What's wrong? Am I talking too  
much?

INT. BEAN'S HOUSE, BEAN'S BEDROOM - THAT MOMENT

Marianne is recovering from the shock of Bean's revelation.

BEAN  
Yeah. I was there too see.

MARIANNE  
You know about that? What I . .  
. ?

Bean nods.

MARIANNE  
And you still talk to me?

BEAN

Yeah. Why wouldn't I? I don't  
judge you.

With profound relief Marianne wraps her arms around him.

EXT. THE SEA NEAR THE HEADLAND - THAT MOMENT

Kristine is now under the water. But instead of sinking she finds her feet touch the bottom. She lands on her backside in the shallow water.

It seems she has merely floated around the headland with the incoming tide and is still not far out from the headland.

But by now the sleeping pills are taking effect and she's finding it hard to stay awake. Even in the shallow water it is hard to keep her head above water.

INT. KRISTINE'S BEDROOM (FANTASY) - NIGHT

Kristine and Rosetta are lying in bed, cuddled up together.

KRISTINE  
Why did you have to die?

ROSETTA  
Everyone does.

KRISTINE  
What is all this? Rosetta, what happens next?

ROSETTA  
Then you find out.

KRISTINE  
What? What do I find out?

But Rosetta doesn't answer.

INT. GEORGE'S ROOM AT NEUVO MONDO - THAT MOMENT

The Thin Man closes the door on his way out. George looks at the photo of his family. Behind him is a barred window.

INT. BEAN'S HOUSE, BEAN'S BEDROOM - A MOMENT EARLIER

Marianne and Bean are embracing.

BEAN

Anything you do is OK by me.

Marianne moves out of his arms.

EXT. THE SEA NEAR THE HEADLAND - THAT MOMENT

Kristine is trying to get up on her feet and out of the water. But it's hard to stop from falling over.

INT. BEAN'S HOUSE, BEAN'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Marianne is sitting on the bed - her mood has changed from relief to sadness.

BEAN

What's wrong? What happened?

MARIANNE

I have to go.

Bean grabs the wrist she tried to cut.

BEAN

Why? So you can check out?

Marianne sheds some tears.

MARIANNE

I don't know. I don't know. I'm  
in trouble. I might go to  
prison.

Bean hugs her tighter.

BEAN

The cops! They always hang it on  
some innocent.

INT. KRISTINE'S BEDROOM (FANTASY) - THAT MOMENT

Kristine is sleeping peacefully in Rosetta's arms.

ROSETTA

Everything is as it should be.

EXT. THE HEADLAND - THAT MOMENT

With great difficulty Kristine manages to climb out of the water and onto the rocks. Slowly she struggles away from the water, then collapses between two large boulders on a strip of sand, where she immediately falls asleep.

But the tide is coming in and the waves begin to wash over the rocks not far from where Kristine sleeps. It looks like the sea is still threatening her.

INT. BEAN'S HOUSE, BEAN'S BEDROOM - THAT MOMENT

Marianne steps back from Bean.

MARIANNE

But that's the problem. I'm not innocent.

BEAN

Of course you are!

MARIANNE

No, I'm not!

BEAN

You didn't deliberately do it.  
It was an accident, right?

MARIANNE

Not all of it. I was drunk.

BEAN

God! Don't buy this crap! You  
have some money right? Lets just  
take off. I'm ready.

Marianne finds it tempting.

MARIANNE

And her family?

BEAN

How can you help them?

Marianne tries to sort through her feelings.

MARIANNE

I can't. It's isn't. . . (A  
BEAT) I keep remembering this  
movie. About someone who hurt a  
lot of people. She . . . let God  
decide what should happen to  
her.



BEAN  
Yeah, which God?

MARIANNE  
Don't you see? I . . . I . . .  
was responsible for Rosetta.  
More than anyone. And something  
has to happen because of that. I  
need it to.

The words hang in the air. Hot tears begin to fall down Marianne's face and she brushes away impatiently.

Bean, sensing truth in what she's said, backs off, both disappointed and confronted.

EXT. BUSH ON HEADLAND - THAT MOMENT

Police search through the headland. They are finding it tough going. Suddenly one of them trips and holds up a pair of girls' shoes.

POLICE OFFICER  
Over here! Look's like someone's  
clothes.

INT. BEAN'S HOUSE, BEAN'S BEDROOM - THAT MOMENT

Bean is standing away from Marianne.

BEAN  
No one else can judge you. No  
one knows except you.

Marianne smiles softly.

MARIANNE  
But maybe this time they have  
to.

Suddenly Marianne feels light, free, absolutely fine. She puts on her jacket, ready to leave. Bean just looks away.

BEAN  
Sorry. I thought you were  
different.

Marianne is hurt by his rejection but takes it in her stride. After a last look, she exits from the room. Bean watches her walk across the lounge room and leave through the front door.

Then he finds the hits and gets ready to shoot up. He notices she has left the bag of heroin behind.

EXT. INTERSECTION OF GROVE ST. & OCEAN AVE. - DUSK

From up in the air we can see down the entire length of Grove Street. A police rescue van comes charging down the street towards us. Then the street lights either side of road are turned on.

On the corner Monte Bianco Pizzeria is open. Two older Mediterranean men standing in the doorway. Christopher is beside them.

The first storey windows are also alight.

EXT. BEACH FRONT - NIGHT

Mark and Lucy wait anxiously on the beach. The lights of police torches dart in all directions cutting shafts through the darkness.

INT. MARIANNE'S UNIT - NIGHT

Arriving home Marianne finds several police calling cards under her door. She picks them up and looks at them.

INT. GEORGE'S ROOM AT NEUVO MONDO - NIGHT

George dials a number on his mobile phone. The LCD panel reads: 'Home.'

INT. MARATEA HOUSE, KITCHEN - THAT MOMENT

Nadia looks out the window to see what the commotion on the ocean front is all about. The phone rings. She checks the caller ID panel and lets the answering service pick it up.

INT. GEORGE'S ROOM AT NEUVO MONDO - THAT MOMENT

George smiles into the phone as it picks up but then the answering machine message clicks in.

NADIA (V.O.)  
Hello. We're not in right now  
but if you'd like to leave a

message for Nadia, Chris or  
Blair please do so after the  
beat.

A loud beep follows.

GEORGE

Hi gang. Just me, your father.  
Nadia just letting you know I've  
put another chunk of cash in the  
bank today. Have a look, should  
be there.

INT. MARATEA HOUSE, KITCHEN - THAT MOMENT

George's message is being heard in the room.

GEORGE (V.O.)

And, I'd like to speak to the  
kids. OK? So please give them my  
love and my phone number. Bye.

The beep, beep, beep of the terminating call is loud.  
Blair has walked into the room.

BLAIR

Daddy pick up the phone! You  
said he was gone! You said he  
left us! You said he didn't want  
to see us anymore!

Blair thumps Nadia, she tries to ward off his fists.

EXT. HEADLAND CLIFF - NIGHT

Police search the cliff face under the headland. Their  
torches flash across the rocks and into the sea. One  
officer slips and lands on a sharp rock. A guitar twangs.

POLICE OFFICER #1

Shit!

POLICE OFFICER #2

You OK?

The police officer holds up the guitar.

POLICE OFFICER #1

Might be hers.

A torch shines on the guitar. It looks in perfect shape.

INT. MARIANNE'S UNIT, KITCHEN - NIGHT

Marianne opens a kitchen drawer and finds her mobile phone still where she left it. She picks it up: there are now six messages waiting. She spies her reflection in the chrome of the phone case. She looks herself in the eye.

MARIANNE  
(barely audible)  
I love you.

She dials her answering service and waits.

EXT. OCEAN FRONT - NIGHT

The sky and sea are dark. Stars twinkle, the moon bounces off the black waves. Mark and Lucy wait, looking out to sea.

INT. NUEVO MONDO - NIGHT

It's always a busy night at Nuevo Mondo. Annie and her boyfriend SAUL (30s) are among the dancers on the floor; a fair crowd is having drinks, and there is now a new dining area to the side of the bar. The diners are being fed from a window in the wall: 'Georgie Boy's', George's new bistro. At this moment George, looking increasingly subtle and androgenous, is cleaning up for the night and talking to Shamus, who's having a beer. George looks at his mobile phone.

GEORGE  
Does she ever ask about me?

SHAMUS  
How? She doesn't even talk to me anymore. It's awful.(A BEAT) I'm on the look out for another job.

GEORGE  
Oh, no please! She needs help.  
Hang in there.

SHAMUS  
She's got heaps of help. Don't ask me to stay so you can feel OK. OK?

GEORGE  
Christ, is this only way I can keep in touch with my family?

Shamus squeezes George's hand.

SHAMUS

We've all been through it baby.  
Sometimes they accept you,  
sometimes they don't. And if  
they don't you have to move on.  
That's all there is too it.

GEORGE

But you can't move on from your  
kids! God know's what they're  
thinking? Or feeling. I'm  
miserable over it. It's not  
right!

Shamus lifts his elbows for George to wipe down the  
counter.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Aw, what do I expect?

George shrugs, and checks his mobile yet again.

INT. MARATEA HOUSE, KITCHEN - THAT MOMENT

Nadia dials a number and waits.

INT. NUEVO MONDO - THAT MOMENT

Annie has now joined George and Shamus, and Saul is just  
bringing over some drinks. Saul and Annie take about a  
millisecond to begin smooching. George finds himself  
watching, envying their relationship. He jumps in when  
they come up for air. George always becomes a little camp  
when he's speaking to Annie.

GEORGE

(To Annie)

We're taking a little survey,  
sweetie. And we're wondering:  
are you still in touch with your  
family?

ANNIE

Huh? What? You mean my  
biologicals? No! We're 'kaput'.  
(COMICALLY) They couldn't accept  
my commitment to viscose!

Saul and Shamus crack up. George smiles sadly.

GEORGE  
Never got over it, eh?

Annie shakes her head.

SAUL  
(To Annie)  
When we have our kids, princess,  
you'll have a family again.

SHAMUS  
And now for a bedtime story!  
Tell us how you gonna have kids,  
kids?

SAUL  
Hello! The old fashioned way  
really is old fashioned!

GEORGE  
Yeah, but doesn't an 'old  
fashioned' woman still need to  
be involved. At some point.

ANNIE  
What a downer you guys are! We  
will defy science. Or adopt! Or  
something.

SHAMUS  
(Raising his glass)  
Good luck in John Howard's  
Australia.

George wags his finger at them.

GEORGE  
Now, I want you to be honest. Is  
it fair to bring kids into this  
situation?

ANNIE  
(Getting shirty)  
What situation? What's wrong  
with us?

GEORGE  
No. No. I mean, in here it's OK  
but outside - people think we're  
freaks! And they' don't keep it  
to themselves.

ANNIE

Well up theirs! What do they know? Most of us know how to love better than they ever will. We know ourselves better than they do and we know we're alright! They don't even know us. I don't care what they think.

SAUL

(To Annie)

Bravo baby! You're gonna be a great mother.

ANNIE

(Giggling)

Hurry up then Saul, let's go upstairs and get me started!

SHAMUS

Way too much info guys! George, let's drown our sorrows.

But George is staring into space, far, far away.

EXT. INTERSECTION OF GROVE ST. & OCEAN AVE. - NIGHT

The police rescue squad carry a very wet Kristine in a stretcher to the ambulance. Lucy and Mark walk beside Kristine, who is semi-conscious.

KRISTINE

Don't wanna go back. Don't make me.

Kristine is loaded into the ambulance. Lucy gets in after her, waving goodbye to Mark. The vehicle pulls out, passing the dark pizzeria on the way.

INT. MARATEA HOME, MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

George tip toes into the very dark bedroom. We hear someone breathing. He kneels down by the bed. As his eyes adjust Nadia's face becomes visible. George strokes her cheek and whispers into her ear.

GEORGE

Nadia.

She stirs.

GEORGE  
Nadia, it's just me.

NADIA  
(sleepily)  
Georgio?

GEORGE  
Bella! How I've missed you.

Suddenly someone else sits up in the bed. George gasps. The light comes on. Murray, who we recognise as a pizzeria customer from an earlier scene, is in bed with Nadia. Both men jump to their feet.

MURRAY  
What the . . . ? You scared the  
shit out of me. (TO NADIA) Is  
that even him?

Nadia gets out of bed and throws on a dressing gown.

NADIA  
George, what are you doing here?

MURRAY  
My god! He could have killed us  
in our bed.

GEORGE  
Our bed?

NADIA  
Glenn! The boys!

GEORGE  
It's OK. I'm not a psychopath.  
Yet.

George sits on the bed, overcome by sadness and loss. Nadia feels a twinge of sympathy.

NADIA  
(To Murray)  
Check on them, will you?

Nadia closes the door after him. She takes a seat on the bed too.

GEORGE  
I'm sorry. I never imagined  
you'd be here with someone else.



NADIA  
No. You wouldn't.

GEORGE  
I worry about loosing you. I  
just didn't think it would be  
tonight.

NADIA  
It wasn't George.

A beat. Murray enters the room again.

MURRAY  
Kids, safe and sound!

NADIA  
That's a relief. (A BEAT) Give  
us a minute?

Murray exits, none too happy about it. George takes the  
plunge.

GEORGE  
Oh, Nadia. I wanted to tell you.  
There's something I've sorted.  
I'm not into men. Hah! I'm just  
a boring old heterosexual. (A  
BEAT) And I still love you.  
That's one thing that never  
changes.

He tries to take her hand but Nadia moves away.

NADIA  
(Indicating his 'get  
up')  
George, but you're still, like  
you are. And that doesn't change  
either . . .

GEORGE  
(Cutting in)  
Jesus, there's no discussion  
with you is there? 18 years,  
bang, it's over, gone! Out with  
the old, in with the new! No  
regrets!

NADIA  
Yeah, well, we can't all live  
for the night.

GEORGE

I work nights. All that's changed is I'm not allowed home after. But you still get the pay packet anyway.

NADIA

You made the choice. You make it every time you put on a skirt.

GEORGE

No, you made the choice. I never had one.

NADIA

I don't believe that.

GEORGE

If you'd stop saying 'no, no, no' and THINK, you'd see it's not the end of the world. (A BEAT) I'm still having a life! People get used to things. Even this!

NADIA

It was the end of our world.

GEORGE

Tell me what difference it makes? How does it affect things between you and me? You never had a problem 'til I took it outside this room.

Nadia has nothing to say.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

I'm the same. No, better. Content. Not searching. Depressed. (A BEAT) Except now I'm always yearning for you. And my sons. (A BEAT) You ask me to give up my very self. But you! You won't give me a moment. If you did you might find that there's more ways to live than we ever imagined.

Despite her resistance Nadia has been listening. He is utterly sincere, absolutely 'straight' and something in her knows it. Yet it's beyond her to take what he's

offering. She see him as an earring, shaved skin, male lips in lipstick.

NADIA

I can't imagine that life. Maybe I'm not brave. (A BEAT) But I know children need protection. A world that makes sense.

GEORGE

When has it ever made sense? Babies dying of cancer! Suicide bombers! Your protection is pure bull! I'm being honest. Truthful about my feelings! How can that hurt children? Hah, maybe they'll start being honest too. And you'll have a problem with that as well.

Nadia flops in a chair.

NADIA

Your needs! Always your needs!

GEORGE

Getting what I cannot do without is not selfish. You cause the pain. With your bloody ignorance.

Nadia glares at him. She will not budge. Murray enters the room.

GEORGE

I can demand to see them. I have more right than him!

NADIA

Try. If you think a court will favour a transsexual who lives in a sex club!

GEORGE

I'm not . . . it's not . . . it doesn't matter.

George exits, pushing past Murray.

CUT TO BLACK.

INT. INSTITUTION, KRISTINE'S WARD - DAY

FADE IN.

Kristine's POV: Kristine opens her eyes. Bean's guitar is leaning against a metal bed stand. She reaches out and twangs the strings.

EXT. KRISTINE'S HOME - NIGHT

The lights are on in one window of the house. We hear raised voices coming from inside.

INT. KRISTINE'S HOME, MASTER BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Lucy and Mark are fighting. Mark paces like a trapped animal while Lucy sits small and scared. On the bedside table is the result of a positive pregnancy test.

LUCY

Please believe me. I didn't do it deliberately!

MARK

How can you stop taking contraceptives by accident?

LUCY

I wasn't thinking straight. All that we've been through with Kristine! But I didn't mean . . .

MARK

(Cutting in)  
Forgot for two months? (A BEAT)  
God, I should have known anyway.  
The way you're on at me all the time!

LUCY

I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

MARK

And there's nothing I can do about it.

Lucy hugs her stomach.

MARK (CONT'D)

Oh shit! Shit! Shit!

Mark exits the room, then O.S. a door slams.

INT. MONTE BIANCO PIZZERIA - DAY

The pizzeria is closed but Nadia and her MOTHER (70s), are preparing for business. Outside a postman drops the mail in through a letter slot in the front door. Nadia collects it, choosing one to open.

Nadia's POV: The letter head reads: 'Critchley and Gilhhotra Attorneys'.

Nadia reads with increasing anxiety. Her mother rushes over.

MOTHER  
What is it? What's wrong?

EXT. THE ST JOHN CENTRE - DAY

A two storey institutional building adjoining park lands. Beside the main entrance are the words: The St. John Centre.

INT. THE ST JOHN CENTRE, KRISTINE'S WARD - DAY

Kristine is hanging out in the ward with three other girls her age: BETH, SOFIE and AGNES.

Kristine sits on her bed with Sofie. We can tell it's Kristine's bed because there are a pile of library books on her bedside table. These have very different titles from her collection at home and include such random subjects as animal intelligence, architecture, environmentalism and comparative religion.

At this moment Sofie is reading to her friends from a book on astrology. Kristine is 'doodling' on her (Bean's) guitar when the scene begins.

SOFIE  
Pisces is the sign of universal  
love and compassion.

Agnes gives Beth a hug and comically kisses her. Kristine plays the first few chords of 'Smoke on the Water.' All the girls look at her.

KRISTINE  
That's all I know!

SOFIE

However, they often lead a se,  
seq-uest-ered life and need to  
retreat from the world and  
regain their sense of self.

BETH  
That's true.

SOFIE  
OK. The fish (LAUGHTER) is very  
spiritual and consistently  
unselfish. They make great  
friends. They also have huge  
creative potential and an  
imagination as broad as the  
heavens itself.

BETH  
Yeah, I'm a creative speller.

The girls all laugh.

AGNES  
That's all of us done, hey?

KRISTINE  
Read Scorpio next.

BETH  
Who's that?

KRISTINE  
My mother.

Kristine puts down the guitar and picks up a notebook  
from the bed stand. While the conversation, and then the  
reading, continues she idly flicks through the pages of  
the notebook and in this way we get the chance to see  
inside.

On the first page of the book is the mended photo of the  
Rosette Nebula that was once on Kristine's wall at home.  
Elsewhere are also photos from magazines, drawings,  
poems, quotes, and general diary-type entries. Some of  
these are:

'If you bring forth what is within you, what you bring  
forth will save you. If you do not bring forth what is  
within you, what you do not bring forth will destroy  
you.'

'Everything is as it should be'.

'We must examine what we want need and decide how much we need it and if it's worth the cost. For us and others.'

SOFIE (O.S.)  
Can someone else read?

AGNES (O.S.)  
Here, I will. (A BEAT) So,  
Scorpio. OK. Key words:  
secretive, charismatic, deeply  
sexual.

KRISTINE/BETH  
Gross. No way.

AGNES  
It gets better! The idea of  
complete union with those they  
love is very important to this  
sun sign. This is one way they  
aim to help others reach a  
higher state of being. Ego is  
the enemy of the Scorpion, who  
at best is a healer, at worst  
tries to take away other  
people's right to their own  
choices.

BETH (O.S.)  
Oh! Does she wanna know  
everything? Then tells you off  
about it!

KRISTINE (O.S.)  
She . . . she tries to help.  
What she thinks is a help.

AGNES (O.S.)  
But it fully doesn't help,  
right?

Kristine nods.

SOFIE  
When you talk to her?

KRISTINE  
Are you sure your parents will  
really be OK?

SOFIE  
Yeah, they want you to move in  
with us. They think you're a

good influence! Like they know?  
And they're away heaps.

AGNES  
Can I move in too?

BETH  
And me!

SOFIE  
OK. Whenever my parents are out  
- you can all come over and  
we'll have a wicked party!

BETH  
And then after school we'll all  
get a flat together. OK?

AGNES/SOFIE/KRISTINE  
Yeah. Definitely. For sure.

SOFIE  
So Kristine, talk to your mother  
alright?

KRISTINE  
Yeah, I will.

INT. THE ST JOHN'S CENTRE, HALLWAY - DAY

A NURSE in plain clothing walks down the halls of the institution. Through the windows some women are seen playing table tennis outside.

The nurse passes a room where a group of women sit in a circle, one of them is crying.

Then she enters another long hall. Two young women are listening to music in a lounge off the hall.

INT. THE ST JOHN CENTRE, KRISTINE'S WARD - DAY

The nurse puts her head around the door of Kristine's ward. Kristine is writing something in her book. Sofie, the only other person in the ward, is reading.

NURSE  
Kristine, your mother's here.

The girls look at each other.



NURSE  
Hurry up! She's waiting.

The nurse exits. The girls clasp hands for a moment.

EXT. THE ST JOHN CENTRE, PARK LANDS - DAY

Kristine and Lucy stroll in the park next to the St. John Centre. Lucy's pregnancy is now showing.

LUCY  
The doctor says you're doing  
very, very well.

Kristine shrugs.

LUCY  
He said you can come home when  
ever you like. Do you feel  
ready?

Kristine looks across the park.

KRISTINE  
I don't know. They said I could  
do Year 11 here. Or . . . maybe  
go somewhere else even.

LUCY  
I thought you hated it?

KRISTINE  
Not any more. They leave you  
alone mostly.

LUCY  
You don't feel ready to come  
home?

Kristine doesn't answer.

LUCY  
You have to put your health  
first of course.

Lucy blows her nose.

KRISTINE  
What's wrong?

LUCY  
I should tell you. Mark's gone  
to Thailand.

KRISTINE  
For how long?

LUCY  
He's based there now.

KRISTINE  
Huh? Are you moving?

LUCY  
No. We're . . . taking a break.  
From the relationship.

KRISTINE  
You're breaking up? Why?

A beat.

LUCY  
He doesn't . . . we're not the  
same. It just doesn't work.

KRISTINE  
But, can't you make up it with  
him?

LUCY  
No. (A BEAT) No one can serve  
two masters.

KRISTINE  
What? Who are the masters?

LUCY  
He doesn't believe what I, what  
we, do.

KRISTINE  
So? Since when did matter.

LUCY  
When you don't have the same  
priorities . . .

Kristine walks away from her mother.

KRISTINE  
I can't believe he'd leave you  
now.

LUCY

It'll be harder. Especially once  
the baby . . . But if it's going  
to upset you again, I want you  
to stay her.

Kristine studies her mother. Her pain is real.

LUCY

I couldn't bear it - to go  
through something like this  
again.

But Kristine clearly is pressured and finally, after much  
hesitation, gives in.

KRISTINE

I'll help. Come home.

Lucy, obviously relieved, embraces her.

LUCY

You're sure you can handle it?

Kristine nods.

KRISTINE

After all, only two more years  
to go.

Kristine looks out across the park lands to a huddle of  
city buildings beyond.

INT. GEORGE'S FLAT, BED ROOM - DAY

George is choosing between two pairs of shoes: flat  
sandals or runners.

EXT. BACK OF MONTE BIANCO PIZZERIA - DAY

George, looking androgenous with subtle make up and toned  
down hair, knocks on the back door of what used to be his  
home. Almost immediately the door bursts open and Blair  
joyously tumbles into his arms.

BLAIR

Daddy! Daddy!

Christopher also appears, but does not move beyond the  
doorway. George opens his arms but Christopher steps out  
of the doorway and gives George a wide berth.

INT. MONTE BIANCO PIZZERIA, INSIDE BACK DOOR - CONTINUOUS

Nadia closes the door. Murray puts his arm around her.

EXT. GEORGE'S FLAT - DAY

George opens the door to his newly rented, one bedroom flat. A wide eyed Christopher and Blair run inside, exploring the rooms quickly. Meanwhile George spreads some takeaway food out on the coffee table.

CHRISTOPHER

So small!

Blair sees the double bunks against one wall of the bedroom and new toys on each bed. Blair grabs a soft toy from the bottom bunk.

BLAIR

Look Chris!

But Christopher isn't impressed.

CHRISTOPHER

Where's the TV?

GEORGE

I'll have one next time Chris.

Christopher rolls his eyes and looks out the window onto the heavily trafficked streets below. Blair joins him.

BLAIR

Wow! You can see everything!

CHRISTOPHER

It's really noisy.

GEORGE

You know something boys, at night the traffic sounds just like the ocean! Just like at home. You wait!

Christopher looks at his dad, possibly for the first time that day.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Now, here's our lunch. It's not often we get takeaway, is it? Unless we make it of course!

Blair climbs onto his father's lap and immediately tucks in. Christopher picks, eying his father suspiciously. George simply watches them eat, over joyed to be in their company.

CHRISTOPHER  
Why do ya look like that?

George takes a deep breath.

GEORGE  
Well, I didn't like the way I  
was before. But this way I feel  
better.

CHRISTOPHER  
(Mumbling)  
Look like a girl.

GEORGE  
Yes. Yes. In a way.

CHRISTOPHER  
Looks really dumb.

BLAIR  
Shut up!

GEORGE  
Shh. Shh. It's OK. We can talk  
about it.

The boys are silent for a moment.

CHRISTOPHER  
Boy's aren't the same as girls,  
Dad! Boys don't wear stuff on  
their face.

GEORGE  
Yes. That's true. Boys and girls  
are usually different. But then  
sometimes they can be not much  
different too. I'm a boy who  
wants to look and act like a  
girl. But I'm not a girl. I'm  
still a boy. There's a few of us  
about. A few idiots.

Christopher laughs and eats with more gusto.

CHRISTOPHER  
Looks really bad Dad!

George suffers his judgement.

GEORGE

But I'm still your father, you know. And I'll be your father no matter what happens. And no matter what you do too.

This pleases Christopher, although he merely shrugs.

CHRISTOPHER

Mum doesn't like it.

GEORGE

It's hard for her.

CHRISTOPHER

I don't want to be a girl!

GEORGE

No!

CHRISTOPHER

Why don't you and mum get back together?

George looks at him tenderly.

CHRISTOPHER

'Cause of Murray! I wish he'd shrivel up and die!

GEORGE

No Chris. Don't say that.

Christopher shrugs.

BLAIR

Daddy, what's dying?

GEORGE

Oh. Well. OK. (A BEAT) It's when our lives end. Usually, not until we are very old. And we go gently to sleep.

BLAIR

What happens then?

GEORGE

Ah. Well. Some people say we just stay asleep. Some people

say we got somewhere else.  
Others that they don't know.

Blair keeps eating.

EXT. CITY BEACH - DAY

George, make up free, in a T shirt and short board shorts, wades with his sons into the sea. The boys hold his hands and they all jump over the waves as one.

Nearby, two teenage boys are horsing around in the water. One whispers to the other - indicating George - and they both laugh.

TEENAGE BOY 1  
(camping it up)  
Careful - you'll chip my nail  
polish.

Christopher realises they are making fun of his father and drops George's hand.

All of a sudden a larger wave crashes over them, dunking them all and sending everyone in a different direction. The teenage boys get swept still further away.

Blair, has swallowed some salt water and cries. George laughs, gathers him up and keeps an eye on Christopher too. Christopher checks out where the teenage boys are and then allows his father to hold his hand again. All three jump the next wave again.

INT. CATHOLIC CHURCH - DAY

A Catholic church is fractionally filled with worshipers for the Sunday service. The congregation pray together, speaking as one.

CONGREGATION  
Our father who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name etc.

Kristine sits beside Lucy, who is now heavily pregnant. Lucy is praying with the rest of the congregation but Kristine does not. Instead she sits with eyes closed, deep in her own world, perhaps even in her own prayer.

Lucy looks at her daughter, but Kristine remains oblivious to her gaze.

INT. MARIANNE'S UNIT, BEDROOM - DAY

The blinds are pulled up in Marianne's bedroom and she sleeps peacefully.

EXT. INTERSECTION OF GROVE ST. & OCEAN AVE. - DAY

We are now back at the car accident. Rosetta steps out onto the road and trips on the branch. She falls, blood comes from her head. Her eyes are glassy, yet something is reflected in them.

Her POV: The road stretches away. The trees blow in the wind. The ocean is loud.

We move back along Grove Street. Now the people in the town are somehow different, more alive, energetic, more interested in their surroundings. Even their clothes are different: some dress with care and adventure, others wear the first thing that came to hand.

Young and old are in dialogue. The park has become a place where all ages gather, families, single people, different colours and cultures. Some of them are playing catch over the war memorial, others are picnicking, or just mingling.

All along the street different styles of music are being performed by musicians or broadcast from radios. All these musical styles should create a cacophony, yet they seem to blend.

An old man is dancing in the middle of the road; on lookers applaud him. Some get out of their cars to watch.

Suddenly a window closes over the scene, on the inside of the window is a mirror. Then slowly, still moving back, FADE OUT.

CREDITS ROLL.