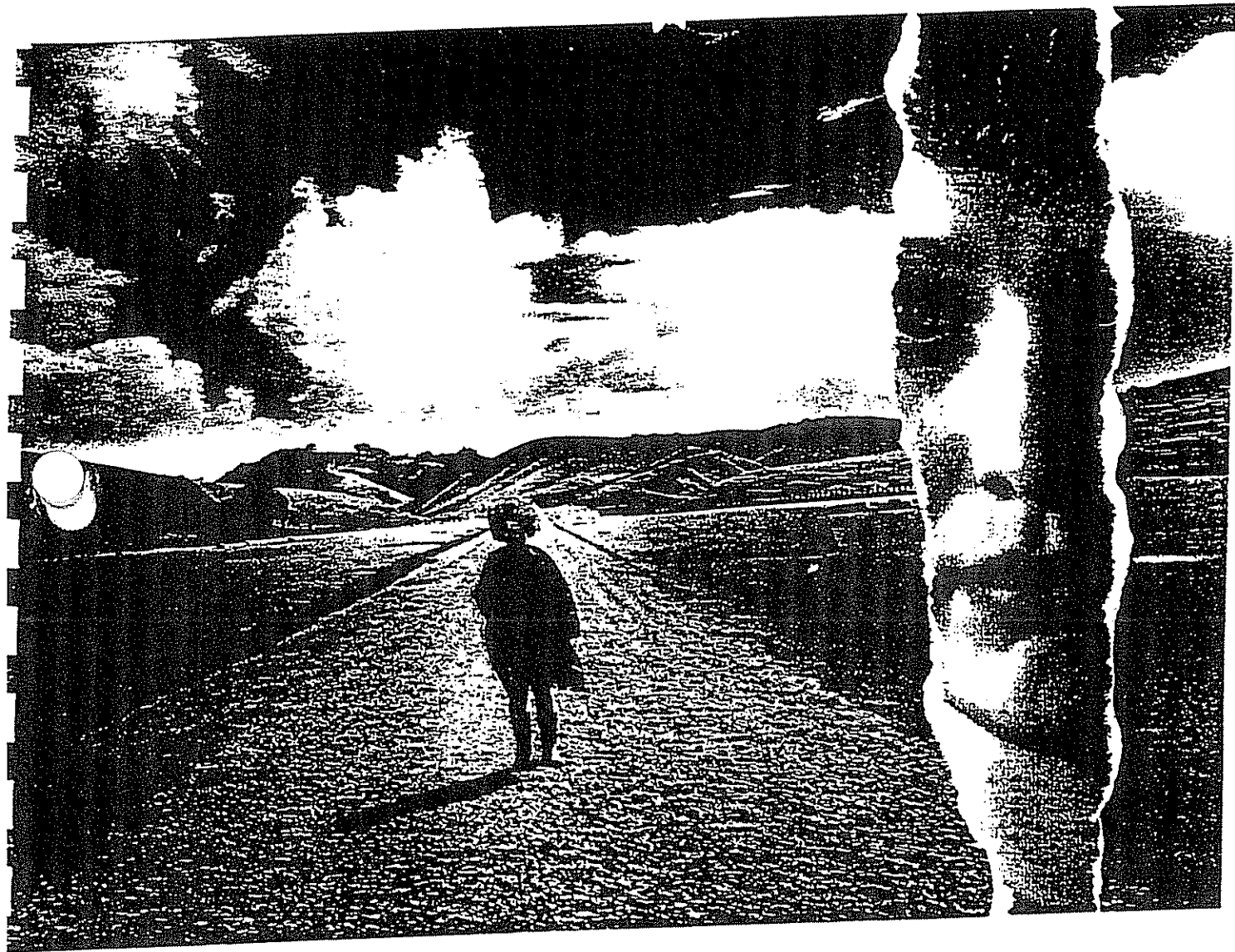


AN ANGEL AT MY TABLE

DIRECTED BY JANE CAMPION



BASED ON THE AUTOBIOGRAPHIES OF JANET FRAME

TO THE IS-LAND

AN ANGEL AT MY TABLE

THE ENVOY FROM MIRROR CITY

'ONE OF THE GREATEST AUTOBIOGRAPHIES WRITTEN THIS CENTURY'

MICHAEL HOLROYD, SUNDAY TIMES

TO THE IS-LAND

EPISODE ONE

of a three-part series for television
based on Janet Frame's autobiography

Screenplay: Laura Jones

THIRD DRAFT

April, 1989

JANET
(VO)

From the first place of liquid
darkness, within the second
place of air and light, I set
down the following record with
its mixture of fact and truths
and memories of truths and its
direction always toward the
third place, where the starting
point is myth.

over the following images:

1

- 1 Screen filled with an intensely blue sky; clouds cross the blue. The shape of a person stands dark against the sky. We are looking up, up, from an unseen baby's point of view. Silence.

BLACK SCREEN, briefly

- 2 Blades and stems of grass and weeds. Baby's tiny hands crawl through grass. The shadow of the crawling baby goes ahead on the grass, as we travel forward with the baby's hands. The sound of the baby's breathing, and movement through the grass.

BLACK SCREEN, briefly

- 3 Old, soft cotton, printed with a floral pattern, fills the screen. It is worn by Mum, who holds baby Janet. But we see only the cloth, from Janet's point of view: a floral landscape, with soft light and shade made by Mum's body under the cloth. The flowers imperceptibly moving with Mum's breathing. Silence.

BLACK SCREEN, slightly longer

- 4 A hand reaches down to sand, and picks up a smooth grey stone. It is Mum's hand. She holds the stone out, turning it.

MUM

Look, kiddies, a stone.

Bruddie and Myrtle stand close to Mum, looking up at the stone in her hand. Janet, held on Mum's hip, looks at the stone at eye-level: a small, mysterious planet; treasure. Janet looks from the stone to Bruddie and Myrtle mouthing the word soundlessly: STONE. The sound of the ocean.

BLACK SCREEN

5. Janet stands in the middle of a long, white, dusty road. She wears a golden velvet dress: her beastie dress. She looks down the road. The gate of her house on one side of her; the dark, forbidden swamp on the other side. She looks above her at the telegraph wires. They travel down the road to vanishing point. The sound of the wind in the wires is accentuated, keening, unrelieved. Janet, small and alone, feels the outside world's sadness.

BLACK SCREEN

- 6 The smooth slopes of big sandhills. Hawks circling in the sky above. Shadows cast a line across the sandhills. Janet's family - Janet now six - sits in the sun, on a sandhill, around a small fire. The sand continuing up behind them, the ocean in front; the constant sound of the surf.

A billy on the fire. Mum peels an apple, the green skin curling away in one long spiral.

MUM

It's Nini's turn.

Mum and Dad look at Janet; Baby June on Dad's lap.

JANET

Once upon a time -

Bruddie and Myrtle are talking, wriggling. Isabel attentive.

JANET

Mum, tell them to listen!

Mum frowns sshh at Myrtle and Bruddie.

JANET

Once upon a time there was a birdie.
One day a hawk flew out of the sky and
ate the birdie. Oh! Poor little
birdie! The next day the big bogie
came out from behind the hill and ate
up the hawk from eating up the little
birdie.

Janet's pleasure in her story.

EDENDALE on the black screen

- 7 Three sheds, painted railway-red, in a snowy bleak southern landscape. Day. Silence.
-

- 8 Evening. Myrtle, Bruddie and Janet in bunks in the tiny sleeping-shed they share. Myrtle and Bruddie tease Janet. Bruddie makes scrabbling and tapping noises on the wall.

MYRTLE

There's rats in the wall,
Nini, rats!

BRUDDIE

They're going to come
and get you!

Janet, frightened, pulls the blanket on the sheetless bed up over her head.

cont.

- 8 Suddenly the sound of bagpipe music can be heard from outside the shed.

The three children jump out of bed, and run to the little frosted window, wiping the moisture from the glass.

Dad, in his kilt and old suit-coat, is striding up and down in the snow outside the shed, playing his bagpipes.

The children entranced as they watch and listen.

-
- 9 The tin chimney sticks up from the kitchen shed, smoke against snow and sky. At the wood-pile behind the kitchen shed, Janet and Myrtle and Bruddie each hold a piece of wood.

Mum looks into the distance, at the sky lit from Antarctica, the light reflecting strangely off the snow.

MUM

Look, kiddies, the South Pole.

Mum points to the unseen source of light. The three children all look to where she points. The light on the skin of their faces. Janet's red mass of frizzy curls. We see her mouth make the words, soundlessly: SOUTH POLE.

WYNDHAM on the black screen

- 10 A railway house by a railway line.

-
- 11 Janet, in the little outside lavatory, looking down into the lavatory can as she pulls up her underpants under her skirt. She is fascinated, peering down.

-
- 12 Janet, with her interesting news, hurries up to Mum, who is nursing new baby June, in the kitchen.

JANET

Mum, there are little white things
wriggling in my big lots.

cont.

12 Mum's alarm frightens Janet.

MUM

Worms!

13 The family sits around the tea-table.

MUM

(to Dad)

Nini has worms.

Janet feels disgraced; she resolves on silence.

14 Janet, in the paddock behind the railway house, stares at a group of sheep. She moves towards them. They turn and run, knocking into each other; then re-group.

One of the sheep turns and looks at Janet. Directly at her, its head on one side, its face full of meaning.

15 Janet runs into the kitchen with her news.

JANET

A sheep looked at me.

The sense of an event in her voice; the family looks at her, from their various activities: Dad, wearing his coal-dust- covered blueys, emptying coal into the bin from a sack; Mum cooking tea; Myrtle setting the table with Isabel helping; Bruddie looking at the comics in the evening paper Dad has brought home; baby June unaware.

DAD

How did the sheep look at you?

JANET

With its head on one side.

DAD

Show us.

Everyone waiting; Janet suddenly shy.

JANET

I'll only show Dad.

cont.

- 15 Janet goes up close to her father, her back to the others. She shields her face with one hand, and imitates the sheep's meaningful expression.
-

- 16 A man in a white coat has hold of Janet, gripping her hard, moving his shins out of the way of her kicking feet. She is crying and struggling.

We see she is in a dentist's room and he is trying to get her to sit in the chair; the torture equipment hangs above the chair. A Nurse waits.

As the dentist gets a lock on Janet, he beckons to the Nurse. The Nurse smiles, bends forward to Janet and holds out a small pink towel folded in her hand.

NURSE

Smell the pretty pink towel.

Janet looks at the pretty pink towel with interest, stops struggling, and leans forward and puts her nose against the towel, to smell.

Janet realises, as the chloroform hits, that she has been deceived.

BLACK SCREEN

- 17 Janet's hand slides into Dad's best trousers hanging on a hook behind the bedroom door. The chink of coins.
-

- 18 Janet stands at the door of the Infants Room. She hands each child who comes in a pillow of chewing-gum, naming them: Marjorie, Joy, Billy, and so on.
-

- 19 The children sit at desks in rows, all chewing gum. Two monitors walk up and down the aisles giving out green-covered copy books.

Miss Botting turns from the board where she has lettered the day and date.

Not all the children stop chewing as she turns.

cont.

MISS BOTTING
Billy Delaware. What are you eating?

BILLY
Chewing gum, Miss Botting.

MISS BOTTING
Where did you get it?

BILLY
From Jean Frame, Miss Botting.

MISS BOTTING
Dids McIvor, where did you get your
chewing gum?

All the chewing has now stopped, everyone transfixed by the scent of
trouble.

DIDS
From Jean Frame, Miss.

MISS BOTTING
Jean Frame, where did you get the
chewing gum?

JANET
From Heath's, Miss Botting.

MISS BOTTING
Where did you get the money?

JANET
My father gave it to me.

MISS BOTTING
Where did you get the money? I want
the truth.

JANET
Dad gave it to me.

MISS BOTTING
Come out here.

Janet gets up from her desk and goes to the front of the class.

MISS BOTTING
Come up here.

Janet climbs up on to the raised platform, where Miss Botting's desk
and chair stand, in front of the blackboard.

MISS BOTTING
Now tell me where you got the money.

cont.

19

JANET
My father gave me the money.

MISS BOTTING
I want the truth.

JANET
Dad gave it to me.

MISS BOTTING
Face the blackboard.

Janet turns and faces the blackboard. Miss Botting puts her hand on Janet's back and moves her closer to the board, so she is only a few inches away from the cloudy green board.

MISS BOTTING
Now you'll stay there until you tell
me the truth.

20 Later. Janet now alone in the classroom. She is still in the same position, on the platform, in front of the blackboard. The board is now covered in words and simple Infants sentences, in Miss Botting's perfect ball-and-stick lettering.

The high sound of the school at lunch in the playground.

Janet's eyes roam across the pattern of words and numbers on the board.

21 Miss Botting, the class seated behind her, stands in front of the platform. Late afternoon sun lights the columns of dust and chalk floating in the air.

MISS BOTTING
Turn around, Jean Frame.

Janet turns around.

MISS BOTTING
Are you ready to tell me the truth?

Janet pauses; then finds herself saying, in a small voice.

JANET
I took the money out of my father's pocket.

Miss Botting pleased; the class gasps.

- 22 The next day. Janet walks through the school playground: all the games of hopscotch and jacks and ball and chasings going on around her.

We hear a chorus, like cicadas, saying THIEF THIEF THIEF THIEF THIEF. They are not children's voices, but Janet's imagination telling her what everyone must be saying and thinking.

BLACK SCREEN

The sound of a-thief-a-thief a-thief-a-thief a-thief-a-thief becomes the railway sound of a train on tracks: kaitangata kaitangata kaitangata.

- 23 Janet lying on a railway carriage seat, covered with Dad's coat. She is in a train-sick half-sleep, her head on Mum's lap.

The family sits around her. The clanging sound of the crossing bells.

Janet wakes, sits up and looks out of the window at the strange landscape: swamps, flax, rushes, willows, the light on an expanse of shadowy water. The hodda-hodda sound of the train crossing the wooden bridge over the water.

The train stopped at a station. Myrtle and Bruddie kneel at a window, looking out.

MYRTLE
(reading)

Sea-cliff.

BRUDDIE

That's where the loonies go.

MUM

Ssshh. Come away from the window,
Bruddie, Myrtle.

Janet looking up over Mum's arm, out of the window at the Railway sign: SEACLIFF in big letters.

And indeed Janet sees one of the loonies - a man stands with his back against the post of the sign, rubbing his back, side to side, over and over, his face lost to the rhythm.

Mum's arm comes down, cradling Janet, blocking her view.

56 EDEN STREET, OAMARU on the black screen

- 24 The house set four-square; the last of the light on the yellow hill rising steeply up behind the house. Bruddie is a war-crying Red Indian running around the front of the house and disappearing down the side.
-

- 25 Janet and Myrtle in the lavatory of the new house. It is outside, but with a cistern. Janet gets off the lavatory. Myrtle reaches up and pulls the chain. The two girls watch the rushing water in the bowl, the loud sound of the cistern emptying, roaring. The girls frightened; then curious.

JANET
You've broken it.

MYRTLE
No I haven't. That's what's
meant to happen.

JANET
Do it again.

- 26 Janet, Myrtle, Isabel and June in a big double-bed with brass ends. They lie in a row, on their backs, under the blanket. Night; the room full of shadows.

MYRTLE
Turn.

And - except for June who turns the wrong way - they turn on cue, on to their sides; June facing the wrong way, on the outside.

JANET
No, Chicks, you have to do it the
same way as us.

The four girls all lie on their backs again.

MYRTLE
Turn.

And this time the four girls turn, fitting together like spoons in a drawer.

JANET
And turn!

And giggling now, in rhythm, they all turn again, on cue.

- 27 A street sign on a corner reads: EDEN STREET.

Janet, Bruddie and Myrtle walking towards the sign, on their way to school.

A short dark woman dressed all in black with one built-up black shoe, appears from around the corner, limping on her shortened leg, under the street sign.

JANET/MYRTLE

The Late Lady!

And the three children start running; late for school.

- 28 The fawn cover of a Whitcombe & Tombs reader, with an illustration, in black, of a boy and a girl on a Pacific Island.

Janet, sitting at her desk, looks down at the title on the cover:
"TO THE ISLAND".

All around her - in Silent Reading - the sound of pages being turned, of desk tops opening and closing, of whispering, the dim under-hum of any classroom.

- 29 Janet and Myrtle walking home from school, their shadows long on the footpath in front of them.

JANET

I read an adventure story, about some children going to an Is-land.

MYRTLE

It's I-land.

JANET

It's not. It's Is-land. I-S-L-A-N-D.
Is-land.

MYRTLE

You don't say the S. It's a silent letter.
Like knee.

Janet unconvinced. She touches her knee.

JANET

Knee.

cont.

11

29

MYRTLE

You don't say k-nee, do you?

Janet absorbs the mysteries of silent letters.

30 Janet curled up on the coal-bin beside the fire in the kitchen. She is eating a slice of bread and golden syrup and reading "Terry and Trixie of the Circus" in the children's magazine "My Favourite".

Dad, wearing his blueys and carrying the coal sack, comes into the kitchen.

DAD

Have you come to the adventure yet?

Janet's adventure

on the black screen

31 Janet looking up at a street-sign reading: REED STREET, one way; and POND STREET the other way; the signs at right-angles.

Janet decides

on the black screen

32 Janet walking along Reed Street, past a gate where a large Alsatian jumps up at her, barking and barking, very close.

Janet observes

on the black screen

- 33 A yellow clay bank, formidably high, with water running down the bank and across the road. Janet stands in front of the bank, looking at it with interest and fear.

Janet's destination on the black screen

- 34 Down by Tyne Street. The Grain Store next to a tall, un-tenanted building with broken windows. Silence. Janet stares up at the building's facade, the dark holes of the broken windows; the mysterious interior. She feels a thrill of excited fear as she imagines what could be inside. She turns and runs away.

BLACK SCREEN

- 35 The dark bedroom. The barely discernible shapes of the four girls sleeping head-to-toe in the big double bed.

The sound of running feet, doors opening and closing, and under it all, another - frightening - unidentifiable sound.

MOTHER
(OS)

Bruddie's having a convulsion!
He's having a convulsion! Curly!
Curly!

The four girls wake, frightened, in a flap.

- 36 In the dining-room, the four girls huddle together on the King's sofa, listening to the frightening noises. It is the cold middle-of-the-night.

Mum taking down the Medical Encyclopaedia from its hiding place on top of the wardrobe in her bedroom. Frantic, she looks up the word: CONVULSION.

Dad, running, with Bruddie in his arms, down the hallway. Bruddie, now awake, and crying.

Mum, in the bathroom, running the taps, the bath filling with cold, greenish water. Dad runs in, holding crying Bruddie, and lowers him into the water.

cont.

13

36

The four girls behind him in the bathroom doorway. Janet is twitching and shivering with fear. Mum barely looks at them.

MUM
You girls back to bed!

37 The four girls cuddle together in bed, four heads side by side. They shiver with the cold and with fear. Half whispers, all overlapping, anxious.

ISABEL
What's a convulsion?

MYRTLE
It's like a fit.

JUNE
Will Bruddie die?

JANET
Ronnie Thorpe has fits.

ISABEL
Why did they put him
in the bath?

MYRTLE
You don't die from fits.

Silence as they all think of Ronnie Thorpe and the unanswerable questions. They cuddle together tighter. Janet's face twitching.

38 A small group of boys are gathered around Bruddie, who is sitting against a brick wall eating his lunch.

One of the boys imitates someone having a fit: rolling and crossing his eyes, letting his body go un-coordinated and floppy, making gargling noises, with his tongue lolling out.

The other two boys with him laugh, and one jeers at Bruddie.

BOY 2
Georgie-Porgie's queer in the head!
Georgie-Porgie's queer in the head!

Bruddie, head-down, sits it out: stubborn, humiliated, going-inward.

Janet, standing against the stone wall of the playground, watches this small tableau from a distance.

- 39 The sound of the bell ringing for end-of-lunch; children going in all directions to their classrooms.

Bruddie walks down beside a school building; his head-down walk.

Janet, walking towards him, sees him coming.

Before Bruddie sees her, she turns and hurries back the way she came, turning a corner, to escape meeting him. A conscious, shameful choice. Her face burns.

BLACK SCREEN

- 40 Dad sits on the coal-bin in the kitchen. Janet stands between his knees, while he tries to comb the tangles from her mass of frizzy red curls. He turns her around, to do the back of her hair.

DAD

This is a knotty old mop.

Janet looks out from Dad, into the kitchen. Mum is giving Bruddie his medicine; Bruddie dull with drugs. Mum totally absorbed in him. She wears a flour-sack apron over an old floral cotton dress: her uniform.

- 41 Janet stands in a line of children in twos, outside her classroom. The children talking, fidgeting. One girl shows three others the ballet positions.

The teacher stands whispering with a woman doctor, dressed in a white coat, as they look at a class-list on a clipboard.

TEACHER

Class? Quiet, please.

The class gradually quietens.

TEACHER

I want the children whose names Doctor calls - Tom McKechnie are you listening? - when you hear your name called, I want you to fall out.

DOCTOR

(reading from clipboard)

Nora Bone
Jimmy McGill
Ivor Thomas
Jean Frame

- 41 The four children all step out of the line, one by one, as their names are called.

We then see - by comparison - that they are the four poorest children in the line.

TEACHER

The rest of you may go in.

Quietly

The teacher stands at the door as the other children go into the classroom.

Janet and the three other children a small group, following the fast-walking doctor along the school corridor.

-
- 42 In a small room - like a store-room, with odds and ends of furniture in it - the doctor's equipment is laid out on a desk.

Janet's pullover on a chair. She wears a singlet and her old tartan skirt.

The doctor is standing above Janet, parting her hair, searching for nits.

The doctor then looks at Janet's neck, behind her ears; frowning. She holds out Janet's arm; points to inside the elbow.

DOCTOR

Look.

Janet looks at her arm: a tide-mark of dirt. She is shocked.

DOCTOR

When did you last wash?

JANET

Yesterday.

The doctor doesn't believe Janet.

JANET

I did! I did wash!

DOCTOR

Your ears are filthy.

- 43 Janet, again wearing her handed-down tartan skirt, now stiff with dirt, stands in the playground. Her tics and twitches, although very slight, are now more pronounced.

She is on the edge of a large group of girls playing a skipping game, All in Together, This Fine Weather, where girls are called in progressively.

Janet, Nora Bone and two timid twins are the only ones not chosen. They all look with longing at the skipping girls, chanting the rhyme.

The satisfying thud-whoosh of the new yellow rope as it arcs up through the air and cracks down on the asphalt; the row of skipping feet of the girls who are 'in'; the two girls turning.

The game finishes. One of the girls turning holds out her end of the rope.

TURNING GIRL

Whose go?

None of the skippers move to take it.

But Nora Bone runs forward and takes the end of the rope.

NORA

I'll core!

Janet hears a girl, near her, say to a friend:

GIRL

Oh, Nora Bone. She'll core forever.

Janet too proud to become known as a "girl who'll core forever".

- 44 Poppy sitting on the Glen Street claybank. It is covered with purple-flowering ice-plant.

Janet walking past the claybank. She and Poppy eye each other, as Janet keeps walking.

POPPY

(calling)

I know how to cure warts!

Janet stops walking and stands, staring up at Poppy.

Later. Janet sits with Poppy on the claybank.

They are both picking the ice-plant and squeezing out the white milky sap from the stems. Poppy rubs it on to the warts on her hands; Janet rubs it on to a wart on her shin.

cont.

17

44

POPPY

My real name isn't Poppy.

JANET

What is it?

POPPY

Marjorie. Is your name your real name?

JANET

My real name's Janet.

POPPY

Janet. That's pretty.

JANET

But I get called Jean, mostly. And
Nini. And Topsy.

POPPY

Is that because of your hair?

JANET

Yes.

POPPY

It's pretty. Can I touch it?

Janet nods yes. Poppy puts her hand up to Janet's hair and feels the
springing mass. She smiles with pleasure.

Poppy sticks her legs straight out in front of her, down the bank.

POPPY

You can touch my legs if you
like.

Janet looks, and sees little marks all over Poppy's legs.

JANET

What are they?

POPPY

Go on. Feel them.

Janet leans over and runs her hands over Poppy's legs, feeling the
little nicks.

POPPY

They're from when my dad whops me with
his machine-belt. They feel funny don't
they?

- 45 Another day. Janet and Poppy in the first pine-plantation up from 56 Eden Street. Daylight and sky can still be seen through the dark pine trunks and branches. Brown pine-needles mat the ground. The sound of the wind in the pines.

The girls are standing still, stopped by the importance of their talk.

JANET

Mum says they come from the stork.

POPPY

No. You have to fuck.

JANET

What's fuck?

POPPY

The man gets on top of the woman and he puts his thing in her and he puts a Frenchie on his thing to stop her having a baby.

Poppy pleased to know so much. Janet impressed.

Both girls suddenly excited. Poppy starts to run and chant.

POPPY

Pounds shillings and pence!
A man fell over the fence!
He fell on a lady
And squashed out a baby -

Janet is running with her now.

JANET/POPPY

Pounds shillings and pence!

They run and jump and touch the lower branches of pine trees, as they both repeat the rhyme in a wild chorus.

- 46 Beer bottles lined up in rows of twos.

Poppy and Janet are in the wash-house at the back of Poppy's house, playing school, with the beer bottles as pupils.

Janet and Poppy are running fast on the spot, knees high, on the balls of their feet.

POPPY

Faster, faster! Up on your toes
Dot Mather!

cont.

46 They stop running on the spot.

POPPY

I think we should have geography now,
Miss Frame.

JANET

We might see if they know their New
Zealand Mountains, Miss Evans.

Poppy and Janet look sternly at their pupils.

JANET

Excuse me, Miss Evans. Sally Oates!
Pay attention!

Janet lifts the Sally Oates bottle out in front of the other bottles.

POPPY

You'll have to stay in at playtime, Sally
Oates, and write out the Mountain Chain.

JANET

One hundred times!

POPPY

Smack her!

Janet lifts the Sally Oates bottle and smacks it. She drops the
bottle. It smashes on the floor. Whoops!

Poppy claps her hands, and Janet makes a bell's ding-a-ling noise.

POPPY

Class dismissed!

The two girls suddenly drop being teachers as though they'd never
done it; their bodies and voices become their own. Poppy turns to
an old beer barrel, reaches into it, and takes a thick red-covered
book from its hiding place.

POPPY

This is my special book.

Poppy holds the book out to Janet, who takes it.

Janet opens it to the title page: GRIMM'S FAIRY TALES. Its coloured
frontispiece under tissue-paper, opposite the title-page.

POPPY

You can borrow it if you like.

- 47 Myrtle, Janet, Isabel and June lie head-to-toe in the big brass bed. Janet is reading "The Blue Light" from Poppy's red "Grimm's Fairy Tales". The other three girls absorbed, responding to the story, and to Janet's passionate reading of it.

The light on; night outside, through the window.

-
- 48 IMAGES FROM LENI REIFENSTAHL'S FILM OF "THE BLUE LIGHT" JANET'S VOICE CONTINUES READING OVER THE SILENT IMAGES.
-

- 49 Janet and Poppy again in the first planny. They sit together. Poppy holds a small white paper bag of lollies, which she and Janet share. They are watching something further off: openly curious.

We see they are watching, from some distance, two figures - one lying on top of the other.

The figures are mostly hidden and we see mainly their feet and some mysterious movement, in the light and shade of the pine trees.

- 50 The Frame family gathered around the tea-table.

JANET
(casual)

Myrtle and Ted did it in the plannies
this afternoon.

Myrtle appalled.

DAD

Did what?

JANET
(casual)

Fucked.

A shock like electricity runs through the family. Dad's fist crashes down on to the table, the plates and cutlery clatter, everyone jumps. Myrtle is half out of her chair.

DAD

I forbid you to ever speak to Poppy
and Ted and any of that family ever
again. As for you -

cont.

50 But Myrtle has pushed back her chair and is off and running.

DAD
Where's the strap?

MUM
No, Curly, her weak heart!

Dad chases Myrtle, roaring as he runs after her. Mum follows them, pleading.

The other children all running away from the table, in disarray.

51 Janet, Bruddie, June and Isabel huddle together in the summerhouse. Evening; last of the light; the dark hedge behind the summerhouse. The sound of Dad bellowing and Myrtle screaming and crying, comes from the house.

52 Next morning, at the stone wall outside the school, Janet and Poppy face each other. Both have innocently 'told'.

JANET
I'm not allowed to play with you any more or ever speak to you again.

POPPY
(equally important)
I'm not allowed to speak to you, either.

They look at each other for a while. Then Janet holds out the red-covered Grimm's Fairy Tales.

JANET
Here's your special book.

Poppy reaches out and takes her Grimm's Fairy Tales. Janet's hand lets the book go. They continue looking at each other for a while.

As though in silent agreement, the two girls turn away from each other at the same second, and walk off in opposite directions.

BLACK SCREEN

53 Janet, now in Standard Four and teacher's pet, sits next to the teacher's son - a mongol boy - at the front desk.

Gussy Dymock, the teacher, is at the front of the classroom.

cont.

GUSSY
...and for homework tonight I want
you to write a Poem.

He has turned to the blackboard and is writing.

GUSSY
Copy this down...

Gussy says the words as he writes them on the board.

GUSSY
When the sun goes down and the night
draws nigh.

He turns back to the class.

GUSSY
That's the first line of your Poem.

- 54 That night, Janet sits at the kitchen table. Isabel shares the table with her, also doing her homework.

Janet is printing her poem, in pencil, into a school exercise book.

Myrtle - in passing - looks over Janet's shoulder; she holds a pair of freshly-whitened, still wet, tennis shoes in one hand.

MYRTLE
What's that?

JANET
A poem I wrote for school.

ISABEL
Read it to us.

JANET
(reads)
When the sun goes down and the night draws nigh
and the evening shadows touch the sky
when the birds fly homeward to their nest
then we know it is time to rest.

Myrtle interrupts before Janet can start the next verse.

MYRTLE
It should be 'evening shadows tint
the sky.'

JANET
Why?

cont.

23

54

MYRTLE

There are always words that go together
in poetry. Like waves 'lap', stars 'shine'
or 'twinkle', wind 'roars'. Rub out touch
and put in tint.

JANET

I like touch.

MYRTLE

It sounds wrong. 'Evening shadows tint
the sky'.

Janet picks up the rubber, unwilling.

MYRTLE

Go on, put in tint. It's more poetic.

Janet rubs out the word 'touch' and letters in 'tint'. Myrtle is
satisfied.

55 Janet sits on Gussy's knee, on the chair behind his desk.

He holds her exercise book and reads her poem aloud to the class.
Janet has stubbornly changed 'tint' back to 'touch'.

GUSSY
(reads)

When the sun goes down and the night draws nigh
and the evening shadows touch the sky
when the birds fly homeward to their nest
then we know it is time to -

And the class joins in on this last word.

GUSSY/CLASS

rest!

GUSSY
(reads)

When rabbits to their burrows run
and children have finished their daily -

GUSSY/CLASS

fun!

GUSSY
(reads)

When the tiny stars come out to peep,
then we know it is time to -

cont.

24

55

GUSSY/CLASS

sleep!

Janet's poem a popular success.

56

Janet lies on her back on the old bench in the summerhouse. She holds a book above her head, reading. The late light through the dusty unpainted lattice.

Dad appears in the summerhouse doorway - a dark figure in his blueys; he holds something secretively behind his back, pleased with himself.

DAD

How's my girl?

Dad stands in front of Janet, both hands behind his back.

DAD

Which hand?

JANET

That one!

Dad brings out an empty hand.

JANET

That one!

Dad brings out the other hand, also empty.

JANET

Both!

Dad brings out a new Railway Notebook. Holds it out to Janet.

DAD

Here you are, to write more of your poems in.

Janet takes the Notebook. It is beautiful, bound in dark blue with marbled edges and end-papers, pale-blue lined paper. She inspects it, deeply smelling the new paper: treasure.

BLACK SCREEN

57

All the children from Oamaru and the district fill the local picture theatre. Faces - amused, scornful, envious, admiring - stare up at the stage. The four Frame girls in the audience.

cont.

- 57 A boy stands centre-stage, his hands cupped around his mouth, looking down an imaginary mine-shaft. He pauses, then takes a deep, determined breath.

BOY
LOOK OUT! THERE'S...

But, in the effort, the boy has forgotten the line. He stops, confused, then humiliated, as laughter, clapping, jeering, whistling rises from the audience. Some wit calls out the rest of the line for him. The boy blunders to the steps at the side of the stage.

As the Talent Scout - an Australian man in a nifty suit - beckons the next child centre-stage.

She leaves the small group of twelve brave children who are auditioning. She is dressed in her very best clothes.

She takes up an elocution pose and bends to one side and prettily cups her hands around her mouth and yells in a lady-like way down the mine-shaft.

GIRL
Look out! There's dynamite
down there!

Clapping, applause, hooting again; lots of approval as well as jeering. Much talking and comparison from the audience.

The girl goes down the other side of the stage, prettily returning to the audience.

While Avril Luxon, a short stocky boy with flat red hair and freckles, takes his place centre-stage.

The Frame girls all excited: There's Avril Luxon! Look, Avril Luxon's going to do it! and so on.

Avril pauses for effect and quietness: The audience waits.

AVRIL
LOOK OUT! THERE'S DYNAMITE DOWN THERE!

And he's wonderful. The audience erupts into cheering and applause. Avril waves to his fans and runs down the stage steps.

The Frame girls full of admiration and proud to know him. Wasn't he good! Oh, he'll get it! He'll go to Australia! and so on.

- 58 The four girls walking home from the Audition. It has just grown dark.

Myrtle recites a poem.

cont.

58 The other three girls walk in a dream as they listen.

MYRTLE

I met at eve the Prince of Sleep
His was a still and lovely face,
He wandered through a valley steep,
Lovely in a lonely place.

59 Myrtle stands at a microphone in a tiny studio in the local radio station. She recites into the microphone.

MYRTLE

His garb was grey of lavender,
About his brow a poppy-wreath

60 The Frame family gathered closely around a radio. We hear Myrtle's voice continuing over.

MYRTLE

(on radio)

Burned like dim coals and everywhere
The air was sweeter for his breath.

Janet, eyes shut, is silently and intensely mouthing the words with Myrtle's voice.

MYRTLE

(on radio)

His twilight feet no sandals wore,
His eyes shone faint in their own flame,
Fair moths that gloomed his steps before
Seemed letters of his lovely name.

BLACK SCREEN

61 A man's large fingers pinning a medal to the chest of Janet's white dress.

We see that she is on the school stage; the Headmaster hands her an envelope and says "Very good, Jean" as the audience applauds.

Janet, full of pride, turns and crosses the stage towards the steps on the far side.

She puts up a hand to feel the medal.

cont.

61 It's not there!

Janet stops, turns, and goes back across the stage, bent down, eyes searching for the lost medal.

Then she realises it is pinned to the other side of her dress. She straightens out of her crouch, turns around, and hurries off the stage; a ripple of kindly laughter from the audience. We hear the name of the next Prizewinner being called out.

62 Later. Teachers, children and their families, are leaving the school hall. All the girls in various versions of white dresses. Some stay chatting.

Janet with her family. June leans against Janet, chinking the dux medal up and down on her dress, as

DAD
What's in the envelope?

Janet, in her excitement, has forgotten about the envelope. It is now creased and sweaty. She tears it open and takes out a ticket.

JANET
I can go to the Atha-neem. Free.

DAD
Well done, girlie!

JANET
What's the Atha-ne-um?

63 The Athaneum: a two-storied stone building in Thames Street.

Janet, a small figure, going in through the main doors.

64 Janet stands in front of a wall of books, overlooking Thames Street. Signs read:

JUVENILE SECTION. FOURTEEN AND UNDER TWENTY-ONE.

SILENCE.

PLEASE DO NOT TURN THE LEAVES DOWN.

cont.

64 Janet stares at the treasure of books: all hers to read, for free.

65 Myrtle looking at "The Girl of the Limberlost"; June and Isabel each have a "Bumper Book for Girls"; Dad is looking at a Zane Grey; Bruddie has a William book. Everyone in the kitchen, tea almost ready.

Janet goes to Mum, at the stove.

JANET

I got you "The Christmas Books", Mum.

Mum takes the book; she is excited.

MUM

Oh, Charles Dickens! "It's a cold night, said the King of the Goblins".
Oh, that's one of my favourites, Nini.

The books all distributed, Janet holds the one left: hers.

She looks down at it. It is Poppy's edition of "Grimm's Fairy Tales". She opens it to the frontispiece, under its tissue paper: an illustration in colour of "The Twelve Dancing Princesses."

66 Janet, Myrtle, Isabel and June are four Dancing Princesses, dancing at night-time in the planny.

BLACK SCREEN

67 A pair of new grey slacks laid out on the big brass bed.

Janet looks down at them: impressed.

Myrtle pulls off her skirt, leaving on her blouse and underpants.

JANET

Dad won't let you wear those.

As Myrtle takes the slacks off the bed, steps into them and zippers them up the side.

MYRTLE

He can't stop me. They're my wages.

cont.

- 67 Myrtle and Janet look at Myrtle's reflection in the narrow mirror of the small wardrobe. Myrtle smoothes her hips, twists, looking at herself from all angles. She sticks out her bottom, admiring it.

MYRTLE

(American film-star voice)
I have to be at the studio at six sharp. Okay?

JANET

Okay Chief!

Janet admiring.

BLACK SCREEN, briefly

- 68 Red velvet - old, crumpled, dusty - is lifted out of a hand-cart filled with junk, and shaken out.

We see Bruddie is holding the velvet. The four girls looking at it, close-up, inspecting this treasure. Myrtle, wearing her slacks, is smoking, blowing smoke-rings. They are in front of the summerhouse.

Janet runs her hand over the dark red material.

JANET

It's glorious.

BLACK SCREEN, briefly

- 69 Dad stalks a crying Isabel around the kitchen, threatening.

DAD

(sings)

Don't go down in the mine, Dad,
dreams very often come true.
Daddy, you know it would break my heart
if anything happened to you.

Isabel crying with fear. Dad enjoys his teasing. Mum puts an arm around Isabel, as Dad turns on Janet. The whole family slightly hysterical with Dad's teasing.

Dad swings Janet into the centre of the room, mocking her. He reaches up and angles the ceiling light - a bulb in open shade - on to Janet, like a spotlight.

DAD

Look at her! Look at her!

cont.

- 69 Everyone looks: laughing. Isabel still quietly crying against Mum, but watching the new victim. The family's big shadows thrown up against the wall.

MUM

Curly.

DAD

She's got St Vitus dancel

Janet in the centre of the group, her tics and twitches accentuated with the tension.

BLACK SCREEN, briefly

- 70 Janet, standing on a chair, wears a curiously sewn, ugly, grey school uniform. She turns slowly as Mum pins up the hem.

We are in the dining room, where Mum's Singer sewing machine stands in the light from the window. Janet's white blouse bunched up under the grey material with its cut-away yoke.

MUM

Maybe you'll be a teacher Nini, like Aunt Peg. She migrated to Canada.

BLACK SCREEN

- 71 A long school corridor. The small, black-gowned figure of Miss Lyndsay walking quickly along the corridor towards us.

The sound of her shoes on the lino.

- 72 In the classroom, we see Janet - one year older, and her curious uniform one year the worse for wear - with all the other faces in the class turned to the door: to Miss Lyndsay's dramatic entrance.

Miss Lyndsay strides into the classroom and begins to speak, with simple intensity. She crosses 'centre-stage' without pausing, holding the whole class.

MISS LYNSAY

Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and ran,
And leaping down the ridges lightly, plunged
Among the bulrush-beds, and clutch'd the sword,
And strongly wheel'd and threw it. The great brand
Made lightnings in the splendour of the moon.

cont.

- 72 Janet is enthralled; she has become Arthur and Sir Bedivere, she sees the lake, the rushes, the dying King.

MISS LYND SAY

And flashing round and round, and whirl'd in an arch
 Shot like a streamer of the northern morn,
 Seen where the moving isles of winter shock
 By night, with noises of the northern sea.
 So flash'd and fell the brand Excalibur:
 But ere he dipt the surface, rose an arm
 Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
 And caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him
 Three times, and drew him under in the mere.

And Miss Lyndsay has held Excalibur, as Sir Bedivere, and swung it three times and flung it away from her. And now her arm comes out of her black academic gown, out of the lake, and catches Excalibur and brandishes it three times.

Miss Lyndsay's patchy, brown face, her brown clothes: her intensity.

Janet sees, for a moment, the real Excalibur glinting in Miss Lyndsay's hand.

Janet is enthralled.

- 73 Janet, in her funny uniform, riding Dad's bike. Early Monday morning, before school.

- 74 Dad's bike propped outside the newsagents in town.

Janet comes out of the newsagents. She carries a parcel of butcher-wrapped meat, a light stain of blood on the paper.

She stands beside the bike, outside the shop, and eagerly opens the "Otago Daily Times" to "Dot's Page for Little Folk".

Janet sees she has a poem published.

DOT

(encouraging VO)

Ah, Queen of Sorrows, I wish you were here
 to see the sunset, a beautiful pink,
 You might take a book and sit by the mere,
 or stoop to the crystal and drink.
 Well done Jean Frame, "Amber Butterfly" from Oamaru.

- 75 Margeurite - with her straight black hair, her thin-ness, her different mannerisms, speech, voice, clothes, and therefore glamour - stands on the step in the gateway of her new house, opposite the Frame's house. The blank hot light of mid-summer mid-day.

Myrtle, Janet, Isabel and June in a tight posse of four, stare at Margeurite.

MARGEURITE

I'm really Spanish, of course. And I'm Roman Catholic. What are you?

JANET

Our mother's a Christadelphian.

Marguerite pretends to know what a Christadelphian is.

JANET

That's a lover of Christ.

MARGEURITE

The nuns in my church are the brides of Christ. They have to wear His wedding-ring.

The Frame girls out-classed.

MARGUERITE

Do you want to see me do a Spanish dance?

The Frame girls all eager.

Margeurite's face changes; she takes a few sideways steps, her head turned to the side, she raises her arms above her head, holds the pose, stamps a foot, leans her head back between her raised arms, and

MARGEURITE

Ole!

The Frame girls clap. Margeurite starts her dance again.

- 76 Margeurite and the Frame girls crowded into the Frame kitchen.

MARGEURITE

You've got your chesterfield in the kitchen?.

JANET

No, it's the King's sofa.

Margeurite senses competition in the words 'King's sofa'.

cont.

33

76

MARGEURITE

I'm going to be confirmed soon. I'm getting a whole new ensemble, all white, even the shoes. And I have to wear a veil and carry a little white prayer book.

The Frame girls admiring.

77 Later, in their shared bedroom, June twirls in her old skirt and blouse.

JANET

She called their desk an escritoire.

MYRTLE

Escritoire.

JANET

That's what I said.

MYRTLE

It's from escrire, to write, in French..

And Myrtle almost sounds like Margeurite. June and Isabel practise the Spanish dance: Ole!

78 The wild mountain country at Rakaia.

Two tents raised in a clearing. Gear under an old tarp.

Mum sits, in the heat, with a wet hanky across her forehead; her legs stretched out, green Rexona ointment covers sores on her legs; her broad feet. She is setting out eight cups - some enamel mugs, some old china - near the fire.

She sits, idle for a moment, listening to the rushing sound of the river; watching the movement of the green water through the willows.

79 Another part of the river. In a small clearing by the fast-rushing river, overhung with dense mountain growth, the four Frame girls - and Margeurite - are having a Bathing Beauty Contest. They all wear swimming togs.

The Judges sit on a log, watching the Contestant.

cont.

- 79 Myrtle - the Contestant - walks along the river bank. She stops, and takes up a typical Beach Girl pose.

JANET
She's got the best bosom.

MARGEURITE
I wouldn't give her full marks for deportment.

ISABEL
She's got the most developed fig-ewer.

JUNE
Her behind sticks out.

Myrtle drops the pose and, as Myrtle, comes back to the Judges.

MYRTLE
Your go, Margeurite.

Margeurite gracefully stands, as Myrtle takes her place on the log.

MARGEURITE
I'll show you how I do the Turn.

Margeurite walks away from them, then smoothly turns on the spot, to face towards them again.

MYRTLE
Oh that's good. Do it again.

JANET
That's what models do.

ISABEL
She's too skinny.

JUNE
She is not!

Margeurite demonstrating the Turn again. The tiny group in the big, wild landscape.

- 80 Dad, wearing old fishing-gear, holds an ancient Box Brownie. He is looking into its view-finder, at an unseen group of people. The rushing sound of the Rakaia River.

DAD
Alright. Say cheese! Hold it!

And he takes the photograph.

- 81 The family at the kitchen table, looking at the holiday photographs. Mum sits, the four girls stand, leaning around her, Bruddie sits on the table, legs swinging. Myrtle smokes.

The photo Dad took at Rakaia, in Mum's hand.

cont.

MYRTLE

Look, Jean you've got a titty showing.

Mum sees Myrtle is smoking.

MUM

Put that away.

Mum looks at the next photo. She is startled, even frightened.

JANET

Where's Myrtle?

ISABEL

Myrtle's not there!

We see that everyone is in ordinary black-and-white, except Myrtle, who is only a ghostly, transparent shape. It seems a frightening omen, and for a moment they are all spooked.

They all look at Myrtle, who blows cigarette smoke over the photograph, looking down at it, curious, peeved that she isn't there.

Janet's things for the new school year set out on the table: a new, precious geometry set, some new exercise books, a French reader, a logarithms book.

Janet, with a new bottle of ink and a new nib in her pen, writes her name, subject, and school into the exercise books.

A crumpled brown-paper parcel lies open on the table: a school uniform and blazer on the paper.

Myrtle sits at the other end of the table, whitening a pair of sandshoes.

It is very hot: bright light and a burning Westerly outside.

MYRTLE

Let's go to the baths.

JANET

I have to get ready for school.

MYRTLE

We could go swimming then go downtown and look at the boys.

Myrtle stands and takes her whitened sandshoes out of the kitchen.

Janet continues writing and blotting, pleased with her possessions arranged around her, pleased with the silence.

Myrtle comes back into the kitchen, carrying two old stiff towels and two pairs of swimmers, off the line.

cont.

36

82

She throws Janet's swimmers and towel down on to the table, shifting some of Janet's books, almost knocking over the ink bottle.

JANET

Watch out!

MYRTLE

Coming?

JANET

No. I want to do this.

Myrtle picks up the uniform and holds it up against herself; hoots.

MYRTLE

Aunt Polly's only put in two pleats!
How original.

Janet gets up and pulls the uniform away from Myrtle. They have a bit of a tussle, then Myrtle suddenly, casually, lets go.

MYRTLE

(friendly)

Oh come on, Nini, come to the baths.
You don't want to work.

JANET

I do.

Janet neatly replacing the uniform.

MYRTLE

You're boring.

And Myrtle picks up her swimmers and towel and leaves the kitchen.

83 Janet in the shaded front room. She is slyly looking out of the window, into the heat-wave day.

She sees Myrtle, Isabel and Margeurite coming out of Margeurite's house. The three girls carry togs in tightly-rolled towels. But Myrtle is unrolling her towel and folding it into a high turban on her head.

As they walk off down the street, turbanned Myrtle, hands on hips, steps out with an exaggerated sashaying walk.

84 Late afternoon. Janet still at the kitchen table. She is reading her French reader out aloud, testing the new French sounds. We see the French words, the pictures of the jolly Dumas family.

cont.

JANET

(reads)

Qui est-ce? C'est Monsieur Dumas.
C'est le pere. Qui est-ce? C'est
Madame Dumas. C'est la mere. C'est
Phillipe. C'est le fils. C'est Colette.
C'est la fille. C'est Loulou. C'est
le chien.

A knock on the kitchen door. Mum stops stoking the fire for the stove, and goes to the door.

Janet, absorbed in these new words, continues to read out aloud as Mum opens the door. Mum thinks the man standing there is a salesman, and starts to shut the door.

MUM

Nothing today, thank you.

But the man jams his foot in the closing door.

He then pushes the door open again and walks into the kitchen.

Janet stops reading, stares at this intruder.

The man looks at Janet.

DOCTOR

Send that child away.

Janet doesn't move. Mum only stares at this Stranger in her kitchen.

DOCTOR

I'm a doctor. I've come to tell you about
your daughter Myrtle. She drowned at the
Baths. They've taken her body to the Morgue.

85 In the kitchen doorway, Dad - wearing blueys, sent home early from work - faces Mum.

MUM

They've taken her to the Morgue.

Janet, Bruddie and June watch their parents, frightened.

Then, behind Dad, in the kitchen doorway, Isabel appears.

They all look at her: her frightened face and tangled hair show where she has been and what she has seen. Her towel draped over her shoulders, she holds Myrtle's dress and sandals and towel in her arms.

86 Myrtle's crushed dress lies spread out on the big brass bed.

Janet kneels beside it, stroking out the damp creases, arranging it. Suddenly she flops her head and arms down on to the dress and kneels there, still, her face hidden in Myrtle's dress.

87 Janet alone at Myrtle's grave. It is a sunken mound of earth, un-marked by a headstone.

Rain has blurred the writing on cards, and the flowers and wreaths are dying, the coloured ribbons rotting.

Janet is putting fresh flowers into a jar pushed down into the earth. She crumbles aspros into the water, crouched down to her job.

MISS LYND SAY

(OS)

Is that Myrtle?

Janet looks up to see Miss Lyndsay standing above her.

JANET

Yes.

MISS LYND SAY

What are you putting in the water?

JANET

Aspros.

MISS LYND SAY

They won't bring her back, Jean.

Miss Lyndsay's gentle, understanding tone infuriates Janet.

JANET

I know that. But the Aspros make the flowers last longer.

88 An enlarged photograph of Myrtle, wearing her swimsuit, taken at Rakaia, stands newly-framed on the dining room mantelpiece.

Two women - sympathetic neighbours - stand looking at it with Mum. June leans against Mum. Janet watches and listens, un-noticed, from a doorway.

cont.

39

88

MUM

They had to make her a new arm. The
photographer took her out of a photo
of her with the other kiddies, and
gave her a new arm, here.

Mum touches the new arm.

WOMAN 1

You couldn't tell.

WOMAN 2

It's a comfort to have a recent one
of her, Lottie.

89 In the big double bed, with the brass ends; more room now there are
only three girls.

Janet is reading to June and Isabel. Night shadows fill the room.

JANET

(reads)

Till of a sudden,
Maybe kill'd, unknown to her mate,
One forenoon the she-bird crouch'd not on the nest,
Nor return'd that afternoon, nor the next
Nor ever appear'd again.

The three girls all understand who the poet is writing about.

JUNE

That's about Myrtle

JANET

(reads)

Whichever way I turn, O I think you could give me my
mate back again if only you would,
For I am almost sure I see her dimly whichever way
I look.

BLACK SCREEN

90 Janet passing the Glen Street claybank, covered in its
purple-flowering ice-plant.

Poppy turns the corner of Glen Street and she and Janet are trapped
by surprise into talking to each other, the first time for years.

cont.

40

90

POPPY

Hullo, Jean.

JANET

Hullo, Poppy.

They look at each other: for the changes, the old feelings.

POPPY

You know I'm doing Commercial?

JANET

Yes.

POPPY

I'm doing shorthand, typing,
and double-entry book-keeping.

JANET

Do you like Commercial?

POPPY

Except for all the Grammalogues.

Janet doesn't know what a grammalogue is.

POPPY

We're always doing Grammalogues.

Janet doesn't know what to say.

POPPY

We're doing "Ode to a Nightingale",
too.

Poppy starts to say the poem; she speaks with a casual, passionate intensity, as if the poem is directly related to her own life.

POPPY

Thou wast not born for death, Immortal Bird!
No hungry generations tread thee down;
The voice I heard this passing night was heard
In ancient days by Emperor and clown...

Janet drawn into the words; into Poppy's old intimacy.

Poppy suddenly stops.

POPPY

We have to learn it by heart, for
next Tuesday.

JANET

We haven't had it yet.

POPPY

It's in our "Mount Helicon".

cont.

41

90

JANET
We'll probably have it soon.

They look at each other for a second.

POPPY
I have to go.

JANET
Alright.

POPPY
Bye, then.

JANET
Bye.

They give each other awkward little half-waves; pretending to be strangers, not knowing what else to be.

And they each walk off in their opposite directions.

BLACK SCREEN

91 Shirley in class, dreaming.

TEACHER
(VO)
Shirley? Shir-leeel

The class all looking at Shirley; who suddenly realises she is being spoken to.

TEACHER
What a dreamer you are, Shirley!
Always lost in your poetic world of
imagination!

Janet looks across at Shirley, with envy.

92 Shirley sings Schubert's "To Music".

A small figure, in uniform, centre-stage, accompanied by a teacher on an old upright piano.

Janet sees the girl in front of her turn and whisper to her friend.

GIRL
Shirley's leaving. Her father died.

cont.

- 92 Janet looks back up at Shirley: overcome with envy and longing; mixed with the emotions brought to the surface by the music.

-
- 93 Janet stands in front of the small mirror propped up on the kitchen mantelpiece, next to the clock with dragons etched on its glass.

She is copying Shirley's dreaming expression.

Dad comes into the kitchen; Janet quickly turns from the mirror.

Dad looks strained and tired. He passes Janet, then turns and comes back to her.

DAD

How did the sheep look at you?

Janet does the old, old routine: she shields her face with one hand, and puts her head slightly to one side, looking with a face full of sheep's meaning, at Dad.

Dad roars with laughter. Pleased. Janet, pleased to have pleased Dad, smiles also. But there is strain in it for both of them.

BLACK SCREEN

- 94 Janet - her school uniform now burred, patched and stained, tighter - walks with her grey-striped cat Winkles, out through the last planny and up on to the hill. She carries a bucket, her shoes covered in mud.

Scrapers the cow stands high up on the hill. It is early morning; everything wet.

Janet, climbing the hill, calls to Scrapers.

JANET

Sook-sook-sook-sook! Scrapers!
Sook-sook-sook!

Janet with Scrapers, rubs her head against the cow's warm cheek for a moment. Winkles weaving around her in the long wet grass.

The small figures of the girl, the cow, the speck of cat, on the steep hill.

- 95 Janet - now with milk in bucket - sits on top of the hill, looking down at her Kingdom By the Sea.

The distant sound of the waves over the breakwater; the familiar buildings of the town made strange by the high perspective: the town clock, the railway station and sheds, the Morgue, the tall chimneys of the woollen mills.

Winkles sits purring on Janet's shoulder, staring down with her.

- 96 Janet taking her sandshoes out of her gym locker. She wears her school uniform, not a gym uniform.

GIRL 1

Hullo Fuzzy.

Janet turns, to face two girls, both dressed in perfect gym uniform. The 'Fuzzy' is not unkind; it is now Janet's name at school.

GIRL 1

You should do something about your hair.

GIRL 2

Why don't you get it straightened? You could comb it out, make it stay flat, put oil on it, or something.

She reaches out and picks a burr out of Janet's hair.

GIRL 1

No one has hair like that.

GIRL 2

Look.

And she reaches out and puts her hands on Janet's mass of springing curls, holding the hair down flat on either side of Janet's face; the hair escapes on the crown of her head. The other girl puts a hand to hold the hair down on top of Janet's head.

The two girls consider Janet: a hopeless case.

- 97 In the playground at lunchtime. Janet sits with three other girls - all 'scholars'. One girl is writing class-marks into a small notebook, while Janet and another girl listen to Rose - a tall, asthmatic girl.

But Janet's ears and eyes are really on the Group: a group of the most popular and pretty girls in her form. All are dressed in

cont.

- 97 perfect school uniform, eating packed lunches from lunch boxes. They have the shade of the central tree in their part of the playground. The power and happiness coming from them is almost visible to Janet.

ROSE

Actually, my brother says that Karl Marx is the only rational, scientific thinker of the last two centuries. He says that without Karl Marx Russia would still be in the Dark Ages. That's why my brother is going to be an engineer, because Karl Marx says that technology is the only way to true revolution. Of course my brother is a socialist, not an actual communist. He says the Party in New Zealand's not truly Marxist.

Janet can hear occasional phrases from The Group, as Rose talks.

THE GROUP

(various voices)

Melanie's got a lovely personality
... But you've got a nice personality
too ... The Dance at the Boys' High
... when she was confirmed ... We
went out to the Willows ... When my
sister Comes Out she's going to wear
white chiffon...Your sister's got a
really lovely personality...Chiffon's
so romantic...

Rose stops talking about Karl Marx and her brother, and takes out her asthma inhaler, and uses it; as Janet stares over at the Group, with envy.

- 98 Janet has now moved, alone, into the front room of 56 Eden Street.

She opens a Railway Notebook which is already half-filled with writing, and starts to write.

JANET

(VO)

Dearest Mr. Ardenue, Today I wept in class when we read "The Scholar Gypsy". He is my ideal man. I have made up my mind not to be a teacher. I am going to be a Poet.

Janet looks up at the book propped open in front of her: we see an illustration of Arnold's Scholar Gypsy; a mysterious handsome face under a broad-brimmed grey hat, figure wrapped in a grey cloak, looking out over a misty moor.

- 99 Janet lies in bed in the front-room. Dark night outside; the cool-ness of an un-accustomed single bed.

She hears the sound of an argument between Bruddie and Dad, with intermittent pleas from Mum, coming from the kitchen. The voices rising and falling in their familiar anger and accusation; the sound of the radio on, mingles with the voices.

DAD
(VO)

No one has to have fits.
You could stop them if you
tried. Big strong boy like
you, it doesn't make sense.
Yes, down at the tip!

BRUDDIE
(VO)

You don't even care!
What would you know! I'm
earning, I'm doing things.

MUM
(VO)

Curly. He can't. Leave him. Bruddie,
don't answer back. Curly?

- 100 The dining room in early morning light.

Janet runs awkwardly into the dining room, in a panic, her legs apart, holding her bloody nightgown away from herself.

JANET

Mum! Mum! There's blood between
my legs!

She runs on, looking for Mum.

- 101 Mum tears old towelling into strips, then folds them into rectangles. She and Janet are in the bathroom. Janet's nightgown on the floor.

Janet, in singlet and underpants, stands watching Mum.

Mum holds out each end of a towelling rectangle.

MUM

You pin one end to your singlet, here,
at the front, and the other end to
your singlet at the back. Do that
first, then pull your knickers up over
it.

JANET

It'll show.

cont.

101 MUM
(firm)
No, it will not.

And Janet takes the wad of towelling from Mum.

JANET
Everyone'll see.

MUM
You can be thankful you got them at fifteen. Lots start at twelve.

102 Janet, at her desk, with her head bent down behind the open lid, tries to smell the blood from the pad. She sniffs. She is certain she can smell the stale blood. She is in a panic.

The sound of Miss Farnie teaching French; the class's replies in their schoolgirl French. Janet not joining in.

The bell sounds for the end of the lesson.

Everyone around Janet standing, gathering books for the next lesson.

Janet stands, puts a hand surreptitiously behind her, feels the back of her uniform, looks at her hand, and sees a smear of blood.

Janet sits again quickly, as the class is all activity around her. Janet's face burning.

103 The kitchen door opens and a trumpet call sounds.

Dad is in the doorway, dressed in the uniform of the National Reserve. He holds an imaginary trumpet to his mouth, and blows The Last Post again.

Mum, cooking tea; Isabel, setting the table; June, reading on the coal-bin, all stare up from what they are doing.

Janet, book in hand, appears in the dining room doorway.

Bruddie is with Dad, wearing a pork-pie hat. Both are elated.

The whole family excited.

DAD
Corporal Frame of the National Reserve at your service!

cont.

103 Dad salutes. Bruddie salutes. Everyone cheers.

DAD

They've put George in the Home Guard.

Mum raises a fighting fist, proud of her little army.

MUM

We'll show Hitler!

Janet's tics and twitches noticeable as she watches this: the reality of the war is a deep shock to her.

BLACK SCREEN

104 It is three years later; Janet has just turned eighteen.

Janet walks, head-down, reading as she walks. Her uniform is tight, patched and stained; still Aunt Polly's two-pleater.

Janet carries her schoolcase in one hand, the book held in the other hand, fingers spread open to support the book, thumb and little finger holding down the open pages.

Janet's shadow long on the footpath in front of her. The sun behind her lights up a haze of red around her mass of curls.

JANET

(VO)

Life is sweet, Jasper. There's day
and night, Jasper, both sweet
things. There's sun, moon and stars,
brother, all sweet things, there's
likewise a wind on the heath. Who
would wish to die?

A Chinese woman, carrying a shopping basket, walking towards Janet along the footpath.

Janet, without looking up, automatically side-steps and keeps on walking, without missing a beat.

105 Big newspaper letters read:

FLAG THE MOVEMENT OF THE ALLIED FORCES
FROM DAY TO DAY

We see it is the heading of a large newspaper map put up on the kitchen wall.

cont.

- 105 Janet and Isabel are changing flag-pins to details given on the BBC news. June sits at the kitchen table, carefully polishing the buttons on Dad's army Reserve uniform, each button a gleaming dome.
-

- 106 Janet, in a small group of Seniors, sings "Lord Dismiss Us With Thy Blessing". The girls are all crying, as they sing. Some girls hold on to each other, faces wet, knees buckling.

We see they are part of the end-of-year formal assembly. All the teachers, in academic gowns, and Visitors, on the school hall stage; the accompanist at the upright piano. The rest of the school singing loudly.

- 107 The Seniors - in a tight, tearful, hysterical cluster - are passing around autograph books: some with pages of various pastel colours; some plain, some elaborate.

Hands writing rhymes and messages, hands grabbing books, books thrust at others, everyone talking at once. Two girls still crying, boosting each other's weeping. Janet part of the group - all differences between sub-groups forgotten in this welter of farewells.

- 108 Miss Crowe's farewell party for the girls leaving school.

Janet, wearing her hated school uniform, sits in a corner of Miss Crowe's sitting room, on a dining room chair. She tries to make being alone 'poetic', but she just looks aloof. She holds a cup of coffee.

Rona and Katherine pass Janet.

RONA

Hi, Fuzz.

Janet gives a staccato Hulloo! She takes a sip of coffee - her first taste - and makes an involuntary face at its new, bitter flavour.

The Groups are back in force. The popular Group are all dressed in skirts and blouses, or party dresses, and talking of 'Uni' and 'bachs' and 'overseas' and 'St Mags', boyfriends and end-of-year dances. Janet is the only girl wearing school uniform.

A cluster of girls around Miss Crowe's piano. One girl plays a popular song while the group around the piano sings.

cont.

108 Miss Crowe sees Janet sitting alone. She comes up to her.

MISS CROWE
Hullo Jean. I believe it's Teachers
College for you, next year?

JANET
I still have to go for my interview.

MISS CROWE
I'm sure you'll be successful.

Janet smiles, mute, her face burning.

MISS CROWE
Do you like music, Jean?

JANET
Oh. Yes! I like Schubert.

MISS CROWE
Yes, he's one of my favourites, too -
so emotional.

Miss Crowe discomfited in the face of Janet's awkwardness, apparent
aloofness.

MISS CROWE
Well, I must mix.

She moves off, across to the girls at the piano. Janet's face burns
with all the feelings and fears in the world. She takes another sip
of the bitter coffee.

109 On Janet's bed, carefully laid out, are: Janet's old navy-blue
school coat; a white school blouse; two old flannelette
night-gowns.

Janet and Isabel stare down at them. Janet wears a "skirt and
jersey". She holds a letter with Teachers College letterhead.
Isabel takes it from her.

ISABEL
(reads)
blah blah blah ...two skirts; three
blouses; two day dresses, one
winter-weight, one summer-weight; one
special occasion dress; two jerseys
or cardigans; one pair court-shoes;
one pair walking shoes.

Janet puts her hands over her ears; stricken.

cont.

ISABEL

And that's apart from all the underwear and nightclothes.

June runs into the room.

JUNE

I found Grandpa's old dressing gown!

June holds up a family relic: an old tattered piece of checked wool.

Janet looks at it. She sits on the bed.

JUNE

Oh Chicks, no.

June drapes the dressing gown over her head and lets it fall down behind her.

Isabel checks the list again, against the clothes.

ISABEL

You're wearing: one skirt, one jersey -

JANET

(dramatic)

Oh, I'm so sick of clothes! Why don't
I just wear sack-cloth!

ISABEL

- one overcoat, one blouse, two
nightgowns.

Janet throws herself back, across the clothes; given up, dramatic.

110 At the incinerator behind the house. The yellow hill rises steeply up behind the incinerator. The clothes-line stretches with its rows of washing.

A fire in the incinerator makes everything behind it waver in the heat from the flames.

Janet - in a final, dramatic, self-conscious gesture - burns all her old stories, poems and diaries. She watches the flames licking at "Dearest Mr. Ardenue".

She looks up to the hill and the plannies, wavering behind the heat from the fire.

111 The Frame family, minus Dad, walking down Eden Street.

Bruddie leads the little group, wheeling Janet's two old suitcases in his wheelbarrow.

Mum and Isabel walk either side of Janet, who carries her briefcase. June is crouching behind Janet, picking and brushing burrs from the hem of her school coat, as they walk.

112 The faces of the Frame family lined up, through glass, outside the train carriage. They are all looking up at Janet.

She sits, with her Railway Notebook and a copy of Wordsworth on her lap. She is self-conscious, blushing, as her family mouths things to her through the closed windows. Isabel makes signs to open the window.

But all Janet will do is smile, covering her mouth with a hand, and give a little wave with her fingers, and look back down to her book, longing for the train to go.

Two soldiers sit opposite her in the carriage.

113 We hear the railway sound: kaitangata kaitangata kaitangata.

We see Janet's hand writing, looping carefully, the words forming:

Janet Paterson Frame

She is practising her new signature, over and over.

We see that Janet is sitting in the rocking railway carriage, with a new Railway Notebook on her lap.

She looks up from her signatures on the page.

She looks out at the Otago countryside: at the gleaming river, the hills, the big sky, as she travels South, to Dunedin.

114 The train in the landscape.

We see it from behind, as it gets smaller and smaller, and finally disappears, taking Janet with it, to her Future.

SCREEN FILLED WITH THE SKY

AN ANGEL AT MY TABLE

EPISODE TWO

of a three-part series for television
based on Janet Frame's autobiography

Screenplay: Laura Jones

THIRD DRAFT

April, 1989

Darkness - almost impenetrable - inside a
train carriage racketing through a tunnel.
Kaitangata kaitangata kaitangata sound of
the train, under Janet's voice quoting
Wordsworth's words.

JANET

(VO)

Full soon thy soul shall have
her earthly freight,
And custom lie upon thee with
a weight
Heavy as frost and deep almost
as life!

1

1 The train bursts out from dark to light.

Janet at a window seat in a compartment which is two long seats facing each other. She holds her Railway Notebook, a page of inky words, open on her lap with Wordsworth.

The train has come into a station. Janet looks out at the sign: SEACLIFF in big letters.

People in the carriage look out of the window, curious, murmuring: 'Seacliff' 'That's where the loonies go', A child asks 'Are they the loonies?' and a mother shushes. 'I wouldn't like to live around here' 'No, what if they escaped?' 'Mona's boy was sent up the line' 'Was he? Poor soul'. A half-heard stream of overlapping words.

Janet looking out at the platform.

A soldier, wounded, in uniform, stands un-moving on the platform near her window.

Two women patients from Seacliff, with a Nurse in mufti, walk past Janet's window to get on the train. The three women look alike, the only - and marked - difference is in the way the nurse takes charge.

JANET
(VO)

I was too fearful of the prospect of living in a big city like Dunedin to pay much attention to Seacliff Station. I was on my way to Teachers College - and to University part-time - where I would impress everyone with my Imagination and would be recognised as a True Poet. I didn't know, then, that there was a struggle about to begin nor that I would lose it so dangerously.

DUNEDIN on the black screen

2 Janet, carrying her two old suitcases, walks up Garden Terrace. She walks along the row of tiny, identical, shabby houses. She comes to Number Four and stops, looking up at its blank upper windows.

3 Janet and Aunt Isy stand at the foot of the double-bed where Uncle George lies, in his tiny upstairs bedroom.

Janet stares at his grey, dead skin, the shape of his wasted body - dying from cancer - under the bedclothes.

cont.

2

3

AUNT ISY

George, Jean has come to say
hullo to you.

JANET

Hullo, Uncle George.

UNCLE GEORGE

So you're the one who's going to
be a teacher.

Janet, awkward, looks away from Uncle George, to a row of blue and white lanolin tubes, squeezed out and crinkled, lying on the dressing-table.

AUNT ISY

She'll be the first in the family.

Janet wonders what so much lanolin is used for.

George follows Janet's eyes: he looks at the lanolin tubes, then back at Janet, who blushes.

4

Janet amongst a crowd of students leaving a lecture theatre. The noise of feet and voices released from sitting and silence.

Janet watches a beautiful blond girl with another beautiful girl, both wearing crumpled gaberdine overcoats. They are with two of the few men: a hip foursome. Janet watches them with envy and longing.

Two girls - ex-Waitikians - have seen Janet in the crowd. They push through to her.

KATHERINE

Hi Fuzzy!

RONA

Hullo Fuzzy!

Janet, only for a moment, startled to hear her old school name.

JANET

Hullo Rona, Hullo Katherine.

KATHERINE

Isn't College fun!

JANET

Yes, isn't it! I'm doing two University subjects too.

RONA

Oh, but you're a brain.

- 5 Janet, in Aunt Isy's small dark scullery, is finishing off a plate of boiled vegetables. She crouches over her plate, leaning towards a book propped up in front of her. She wolfs her food, starving.

Aunt Isy comes in with her tray and puts it on the sink.

AUNT ISY

You know, Jean, you're welcome to eat with me in the wee room.

JANET

Oh no thank you, Aunt Isy. I like to study while I eat.

AUNT ISY

You vegetarians, you eat like birds.

Aunt Isy leaves. When Janet can no longer hear her footsteps, she turns to Aunt Isy's tray.

The fatty scraps of boiled corned-beef on the plate. Janet picks them up and wolfs them down.

- 6 Janet sits on her tiny bed, a book on her drawn-up knees. Night outside.

She slowly eats the last of a Caramello bar, the wrapper open on the bed beside her. She licks her fingers, savouring the sweetness.

Janet gets off the bed, still reading, and takes the wrapper to the dressing table. She opens a drawer and puts in the wrapper. We see a pile of used sanitary napkins and old Caramello wrappers in the drawer. Janet doesn't look.

She shuts the drawer and looks at herself in the dressing table mirror. She smiles openly into the mirror, showing her decayed front teeth.

Janet shuts her mouth. Then she tries a closed-mouth smile. That will have to do.

- 7 Inside The Silver Grille it is noisy College pay-day night. Plates of food being ordered and carried; people in and out, greeting each other.

Two soldiers - one with a sleeve pinned up - eat with two girls at a table.

cont.

7 The largest group, at a centre table, includes the beautiful blonde girls. They are noisier, more aware of themselves: the envied ones.

Janet sits with Rona, Katherine and another plain girl, Leslie, at a side-table.

BRUCE
Hullo Rona.

RONA
Oh, hullo Bruce!

The three girls - but not Janet - all watch Bruce with interest as he joins a table. They are excited, leaning into each other across the table. Janet sits back, scorning this behaviour.

LESLIE
Who's he?

KATHERINE
Is that him?

RONA
He said Hullo! Do you think I should go over when we leave? You know, just stop at his table on the way out?

JANET
Why not!

The three girls look at her, at her definite tone.

JANET
Why do we have to be so conventional?
I believe in Free Love.

The other girls are shocked, but impressed.

RONA
Sssh!

KATHERINE
Fuzzy!

JANET
We weren't meant to be Monogamous.
It isn't natural.

KATHERINE
(whispers)
You mean more than one husband?

JANET
No, I mean more than one lover!

RONA
Fuzzy!

Now the three girls look around, scared of being overheard.

RONA
I vote we change the subject.

cont.

5

7

KATHERINE

You should be able to discuss these
issues, Rona.

RONA

Not here!

Janet is looking across to the noisy, popular group at their table.
She feels exhilarated. If only she were over there, talking like
this with them, one of them. She feels powerful.

JANET

I'd love a cigarette.

8

Billy the budgie hops around in his cage at Aunt Isy's. He settles
and puts his head on one side, watching Janet's face through the bars
of the cage. Janet's mouth, her skin, her hair, fill one side of his
cage.

JANET

My name is Billy, pretty, pretty
Billy.

Billy waits, then:

BILLY

My name is Billy, pretty, pretty
Billy.

Janet smiles at Billy, not hiding the decay.

Aunt Isy comes up to Janet at the cage.

AUNT ISY

Dear, have you got anything to
"burn"?

They both know what she means by "burn".

JANET

Oh no, Aunt Isy, I haven't,
thank you.

9

Janet is taking used sanitary napkins and Caramello wrappers from her
briefcase and pushing them into a dark space underneath an old tilted
gravestone. We see a pile of old napkins and Caramello wrappers
already hidden here, faded and rotting, in Dunedin South Cemetery.

cont.

- 9 Janet walking up to another, higher, part of the Cemetery. She is saying Auden's poem to herself as she walks.

JANET
 May I, composed like them
 Of Eros and of dust,
 Beleagured by the same
 Negation and despair,
 Show an affirming flame.

Janet sits on "her" grave, overlooking the city and the harbour. She takes out a Railway notebook and begins to write.

BLACK SCREEN

- 10 Janet and Isabel setting the table in the kitchen at 56 Eden Street. Mum cooking tea, in her uniform of old floral dress and flour-sack apron. Dad polishing the buttons on his Army Reserve uniform, wearing his railway blueys.

Bruddie appears in the doorway.

BRUDDIE
 They found out about me, Mum.

Bruddie dis-oriented, a bit wild, gloomy, into the kitchen.

MUM
 Never mind, laddie.

DAD
 Not again!

MUM
 Curly.

DAD
 He won't even try!

MUM
 Epilepsy's nothing to be ashamed of.

DAD
 He can't even keep a job two days!

Isabel rolls her eyes at Janet: here they go again. Janet tense.

A speechless, frustrated roar from Bruddie. He and Dad could almost hit each other.

DAD
 What's the use!

And Bruddie thumps his fist down on to the table, sending everything on it jumping.

Isabel coolly walks out of the kitchen: exaggerated disdain.

Janet twitches and jumps and dumps the cutlery in a clattering bunch down on to the table and hurries after Isabel, leaving the kitchen and the argument.

- 11 Janet, Isabel and June lying on the parched summer grass on the hill behind the house. Mid-summer heat, the intense blue of the sky curving above them. Clouds cross the blue.

ISABEL

There's...Africa...

JUNE

That one's like a...like a...

JANET

It's phallic. Everything's phallic.

JUNE

What's phallic?

JANET

It's from phallus, the Latin for penis.

JUNE

Like a dong?

ISABEL

Look, even our knees are phallic.

The three sets of knees against the sky. June and Isabel giggle together.

JANET

You'll read Freud at College.

ISABEL

I can't wait to get there.

JUNE

I'll be all alone.

Isabel rolls over and cuddles June, crooning.

ISABEL

Oh poor baby, all alone.

Isabel rolls back, the three girls again lying side by side.

ISABEL

You can have Jack when I'm gone.

JANET

We all have coffee in the Union after tutes. And you should see Mr Forrest, the Psych lecturer, he's gorgeous. He's like Ashley in 'Gone With the Wind'.

Isabel and June moan with pleasure and envy.

- 12 The narrow single bed in Janet's tiny room at Aunt Isy's. Janet and Isabel stare down at the bed. Their suitcases on the floor. Isabel angry, Janet placating.

ISABEL
I'm not going to share!

JANET
There's enough room.

ISABEL
What for, midgets!

Janet lies down on the bed, making herself small, as far over to one side as possible. She pats the space next to her.

JANET
See? Try it.

ISABEL
She must be mad. I'm going to tell Mum.

JANET
Don't say anything.

ISABEL
Why not! We're paying!

JANET
But not very much. Isabel? Please?

BLACK SCREEN

- 13 Janet marking a pile of primary school exercise books. She is working at the tiny dressing table, a towel draped over the mirror, hiding it, so she doesn't have to look at herself as she works. Cold night.

Isabel, cheeks red from skating, is throwing off her clothes, all activity, as she admires herself in the narrow wardrobe mirror. Skates chucked down on the floor.

ISABEL
Steve wants me to go all the way.

Janet keeps on marking, but listens intently.

ISABEL
We almost did it tonight. We only just stopped in time.

Isabel, half-undressed, takes out her old flanelette nightgown and finishes undressing under it.

cont.

13

ISABEL
This house is like a morgue!

JANET
What about your essay?

ISABEL
It's too cold. I'll do it tomorrow
in the Union.

Isabel jumps into bed, rubbing hands and feet to get warm. Janet
envious, disapproving, works on.

ISABEL
Why don't you ever come into the Union?
Where do you go?

14 Janet hungrily eating sandwiches as she crouches on a tall stool,
peering into a cage of rats, in the Psychology Lab. A book of poems
open beside her lunch.

JANET
(VO)
Too shy to mix, too scared to enter the
Union building, I was more and more alone.
My only romance was in poetry and
literature.

John Forrest comes quickly into the lab: his fair hair, his
handsomeness.

Janet startled, stands, stuffing her sandwiches and book clumsily
into her briefcase, trying to swallow a mouthful of food, blushing.

FORREST
Hullo.

JANET
I'm just going, Mr Forrest.

FORREST
No rules about eating in here.
(sniffs) Bit smelly.

Janet smiles, agreeing, and sits again.

15 The un-used front room at Aunt Isy's. Blinds drawn, light dim.

Janet and Isabel staring up at a row of chocolate boxes placed at
intervals around the picture rail.

cont.

10

15

JANET

She won them for her Highland dancing.

ISABEL

But they've never been opened.
Look!

The boxes are indeed intact: smooth cellophane, crisp ribbons, over cute animals, Highland dancers and spring flowers.

ISABEL

Let's open one.

JANET

We can't.

ISABEL

She won't know.

JANET

I suppose we could "test" them.

ISABEL

Yes, let's "test" them. Give me
a leg up.

Janet hoists Isabel up and Isabel reaches up and knocks one of the boxes off the picture rail. Janet drops Isabel, and catches the box as it falls.

They sit on the un-used sofa and untie the blue ribbon, and carefully pull away the cellophane from the kitten on the lid.

ISABEL

Hullo little kitty.

And lift the lid and look with greed at the tray of mixed chocolates; they smell deeply, sigh greedily.

JANET

You choose first.

Isabel's hand hovers, then chooses.

JANET

Go on.

Isabel bites. Chews. Swallows.

ISABEL

Mmm. It's not musty at all. You test one.

JANET

We shouldn't be doing this.

cont.

11

15

ISABEL

I know. Go on.

Janet has taken a chocolate. Bites into it. Mmm. Isabel finishes hers and takes another one.

16

Another day. Janet and Isabel sitting on the floor of Aunt Isy's front room. Three almost-empty chocolate boxes lie scattered around.

JANET

But what does he do with all that lanolin?

ISABEL

Maybe he rubs it on his thing.

JANET

Or maybe Aunt Isy rubs it on for him.

They are excited, fascinated, by this thought.

JANET

Ssshhh!

They both freeze, mid-bite.

JANET

What's that?

ISABEL

Aunt Isy!

JANET

Quick!

They cram the little crinkly paper cups back into the box. Janet shaking with nervousness.

Janet holds Isabel around the thighs, as Isabel reaches up and puts a re-tied box back on the picture rail.

17

Aunt Isy in her front room. The blinds are up.

She is rolling a carpet-sweeper backwards and forwards across the rug.

She stops, staring down.

A brown crinkly chocolate paper.

Aunt Isy bends down. Picks it up. Sniffs it. Looks up to her prizes. She sees some have tattered cellophane and crumpled ribbons.

12

18 Janet and Isabel, each carrying a suitcase and bundles and books, clattering down the narrow stairs.

Aunt Isy stands at the bottom of the stairs.

AUNT ISY

And I thought you were nice girls.
You're just liars and thieves!
Telling your parents those un-
truths! Stealing my Trophies!
Wicked, wicked girls!

Janet runs past Aunt Isy, but Isabel stops at the foot of the stairs and calmly, defiantly, faces Aunt Isy.

ISABEL

You should have fed us properly. We
were paying.

Janet stands between Isabel and the open front door, agitated by this confrontation, her face tic-ing and twitching, almost panting as she urges Isabel to come on.

WILLOWGLEN on the black screen

19 Janet and Isabel climbing the steep hill to tiny isolated Willowglen perched in its shade near the top of the hill. Sound of train as it hoots its way out of Oamaru, behind them, down on the flats.

JANET

(VO)

Willowglen sat high on a hill in
almost perpetual shade. It had
belonged in turn to various derelict
families. Now it was ours, the first
home we had owned.

20 Late afternoon. Inside, the house is all shadows.

Mum and Janet stand looking out of the front window - from the little house set high on its shaded hill - down at the sun lying on the flat, the late light striking into the pine plantation.

JANET

Come down on the flat and sit in
the sun.

Janet is untying Mum's apron.

cont.

13

20

MUM

One of these days I'll come and sit in the sun.

JANET

Why not now?

MUM

I've too much to do.

Janet looks at Mum, angered by Mum's life of toil. Mum holds out a hand for her apron, and automatically puts it back on, as,

JANET

No one's asking you to be a work-horse.

-
- 21 A tiny Grade Two girl stands in front of a class of children sitting at Infants desks. Janet stands near the classroom windows.

Another little girl and boy hold up a big sheet of paper with big lettering and brightly-coloured cut-out clothes on a clothes line. The little girl reads her story to the class.

GIRL

Mrs Mopple's Washing Line. Read this Story. Blow wind blow. It blew so strongly that snap went the pegs that were holding the petticoat...

-
- 22 A woman teacher appears in the doorway of Janet's classroom. It is - apparently - empty. The high sound of the children in the playground at recess floats into the classroom.

TEACHER

Miss Frame?

No answer. The door of the tall metal book-cupboard is open.

The teacher sees Janet's shoes just showing under the cupboard door.

Janet behind the open door, in front of the cupboard full of books and boxes of chalk and painting equipment. She stands still, holding a box of chalk, listening to the footsteps crossing the classroom.

The teacher comes around the cupboard door.

TEACHER

There you are. Are you coming to morning tea?

cont.

14

22

JANET
Oh no thank you, I'm busy.

TEACHER
We never see you.

Janet flustered.

JANET
Maybe tomorrow.

Janet highly nervous, unable to face the staff-room. The teacher gives up. As she leaves:

TEACHER
You've made the room lovely.

Leaving Janet with her box of coloured chalk, behind the open metal door.

JANET
(VO)
So this was how it was, face to face with
the Future. Living apart from Isabel,
pretending that I was not alone and that
teaching was what I had longed to do all
my life.

23 John Forrest stands at a piano in the Music Room, casually playing.

Janet and two other girls sit on chairs which have been drawn into a circle. Janet's chair is pulled back a bit, out of the circle, skewed slightly to one side.

John Forrest gives a final flourish, and turns, to see the three girls watching him, adoringly.

He lifts a foot - a hint of ankle - to the three girls.

Then he takes a few splayed steps towards them, delicately lifting his trouser legs to reveal red socks.

FORREST
How do you like my toe-may-toe
socks?

The three girls admire his red socks, suede shoes, brown cords, rust sports jacket with elbow patches, everything about him.

GIRL 1
They're very colourful,
Mr Forrest.

GIRL 2
Unusual.

cont.

- 23 Later. Tchaikovsky's Symphony "Pathetique" plays loudly on the gramophone in the music room.

A group of about nine students - only one boy amongst the girls - sits in the circle of chairs with John Forrest, who has his eyes shut, his head moving, conducting with the music.

Janet is troubled, tense, highly aware of everything around her. She chews on her fingers. She jumps and blinks at a crash in the music.

- 24 Students sitting, lying, on the lawns at Teachers' College, in the late winter sun.

Two of Isabel's girlfriends run up to Janet and Isabel who are walking across the grass. Isabel wears a skirt with a hand-made giraffe appliqued to it.

GIRL 1

Have you heard about the Bomb!

ISABEL

What bomb?

GIRL 2

They've dropped a Bomb on Japan!

GIRL 1

They've killed millions!

GIRL 2

It's a new kind of Bomb!

ISABEL

Have we won the War?

Isabel and her girlfriends are excited by this victory. They don't notice Janet's distress, her withdrawal.

As the girls continue to walk across the grass, through the groups and couples lying and sitting, Janet is isolated from the other three excited, talking girls.

Long shadows of the surrounding trees fall across the bodies of the scattered, lounging students.

JANET

(VO, older)

My coming of age was lit by the mushroom fire that made shadows of all those caught in its brightness. The war had pursued me through all the years of my adolescence, as part of the development of my body and mind, leaving its trace everywhere.

BLACK SCREEN

- 25 The Headmaster and Inspector stand with Janet at the front of her classroom. The children standing at their desks.

HEADMASTER

We have a very important visitor with us today, Second Class. I want you to say Good Morning to our Inspector, Mr Niles.

CLASS

Good morning Mr Niles.

INSPECTOR

Good morning, children.

The class sits as the Headmaster leaves.

Janet trying to look bright and teacherly, but shaking, dying inside.

INSPECTOR

I'll sit up the back, Miss Frame.
Just carry on as normal, forget
I'm here.

The Inspector walks up to the back of the classroom.

While Janet seems transfixed at the front of the class. The children all waiting for her.

Janet turns to the blackboard, but is unable to move or speak. She stares down at a stick of chalk lying on the wooden railing at the bottom of the board. She looks at it for a long time. It takes on a significance she doesn't understand.

Then she turns back to the class and the Inspector.

JANET

Mr Niles, would you excuse me for a moment, please?

INSPECTOR

Certainly. Miss Frame.

Janet leaves the classroom.

-
- 26 Janet walks down the corridor. The sounds from various classrooms: a teacher's voice, a song sung in rounds, a maths table chanted. All in short bursts as Janet passes the classrooms.
-

17

27 Janet walking across the deserted playground.

28 Janet, walking down Queen's drive. Unconscious of herself in the street, she steps out of her shoes and, holding them in her hand, walks on the grass in her stockinged feet. The pleasure of the long warm grass, still slightly damp, through her stockings. Her face wet with tears of strain and relief.

29 Janet in her just-tidied room at Mrs T's. It is night.

A packet of Aspros and the torn papers from the packet are on the dressing table. Janet is pouring another glass of water from a kitchen jug, and swallowing the last of the Aspros. She feels dizzy and full from the water.

Janet, still dressed, gets into bed, certain she will die.

BLACK SCREEN

SILENCE.

THEN WE HEAR A ROARING SOUND, LIKE WATER RUSHING THROUGH PIPES, MIXED WITH STATIC.

30 Janet, in bed, her nose bleeding, her face a dusky red.

She sits up, amazed at being alive. It is the middle of the next day. She tenderly presses the top of her head.

31 Janet sits with Isabel and her boyfriend Steve in the Student Canteen. Janet's hands swollen, red and crinkly. She wears a kitchen-worker's smock and small cap, limp from steam. They eat iced-buns and drink tea.

ISABEL

But what about teaching?

JANET

I've given it up. I've got a doctor's certificate.

ISABEL

But you've always wanted to be a teacher.

cont.

18

31

JANET

I'm going to be a writer.

Janet seems off-hand, daring. Isabel, for once, the cautious one, the parent.

ISABEL

But how will you earn money? How will you live?

JANET

I'll work here in the kitchen. And I'll still do Psych at University.

Janet pretends to be confident, but she feels deep panic.

ISABEL

What about your scholarship? What about Mum and Dad? I can't believe it.

32

Janet is with John Forrest as he gathers his papers and books together at the raised teacher's bench in the Psychology Lab. Other students leaving the lab. John Forrest hands Janet her essay.

FORREST

I really enjoyed your autobiography, Janet. It's very natural, has a good flow to it. The others are so stiff and serious. Maybe you have a talent for writing.

Janet is thrilled, but tries to be casual.

JANET

I have had a short-story published in "The Listener".

FORREST

Oh, I'm not wrong, then.

He looks at her seriously.

FORREST

You must have had trouble swallowing all those Aspros.

JANET

Oh no, I drank them with water, it wasn't hard, they just went down.

33 Janet undressing in her room at Mrs T's.

She is talking into the mirror, being John Forrest; she is still thrilled by his judgement.

JANET

You have a real talent for writing.

Mrs T's voice comes from the other side of Janet's door.

MRS T

(OS)

There are three men to see you downstairs, Janet. They say they're from the University.

Janet starts to throw her clothes back on.

34 John Forrest, Peter Prince and the Head of the Psychology Department are crowded into the front doorway.

Janet, mystified, comes towards them. The porch light on behind them, the dark night beyond.

HEAD

Hullo, Janet.

John Forrest and Peter Prince murmur their hullo.

JANET

Hullo.

HEAD

Mr Forrest tells me you haven't been feeling well lately. We thought you might like a little rest.

JANET

Oh, no, I'm fine now, thank you.

HEAD

It wouldn't be for long. Just to let you rest and be looked after for a little while.

JANET

Really, I'm alright.

HEAD

John will come to visit you. Won't you John?

cont.

20

34

FORREST
Of course I will.

JANET
In hospital?

HEAD
We think it wo'ld be best for you.

JANET
Do you think so?

35 Janet lies in bed in a darkened hospital ward. The small sounds of a ward at night time. She turns, comfortable, warm, looked-after, and sleeps.

36 The next day. Janet, wearing a hospital gown, walks down a corridor towards us.

She turns into the main corridor and sees the sign on the wall: a hand with an index finger pointing to the corridor she has come out of, and the words: PSYCHIATRIC WARD.

She looks at the words with shock. She feels betrayed.

BLACK SCREEN

37 Janet helps Nurse Maitland make her bed.

Janet's eyes are more on two ambulance-men who are taking away the gingery woman from the bed beside Janet's.

JANET
Is Peggy going home?

NURSE
No, she's going to another hospital.

JANET
Where?

NURSE
Up the line, to Seacliff.

Janet's fear.

cont.

21

37

NURSE
Don't worry. There's nothing wrong
with you. You won't be going there.

38 Another day. Mum, wearing her best clothes: a navy-blue suit and
navy straw hat, walks up the corridor with the pointing hand.

39 Janet, dressed again in her ordinary clothes, sits on her made
hospital bed. Her suitcase on the floor beside her.

Mum appears in the ward doorway with Matron.

Janet, faced with the prospect of going home, feels all the worries
of the world returning.

Janet doesn't stand, just stares at Mum, un-smiling.

MUM
(encouraging)
Come on, Nini.

JANET
I can't go home.

MUM
You can't stay here.

JANET
I don't want to stay here.

Mum picks up Janet's case.

MUM
Where can you go?

MATRON
After a holiday at home, you'll be
as good as new.

Janet pulls herself backwards on to the bed and works the bedspread
up over herself. Mum and Matron look at each other, dismayed.

MUM
She's usually such a happy girl.

JANET
Go away.

cont.

22

39

MUM

Nini.

Janet pulls the bedspread up over herself, sitting there, a hidden shape, voice a muffled roar.

JANET

Go away!

Matron signals for Mum to leave Janet. Mum puts down the case and the two women tip-toe away.

Janet pulls the bedspread off her face and watches the two conferring figures as they walk down the ward.

40

Inside a car travelling North along the coast road. A Police Matron sits beside the man driving.

JANET
(VO)

I thought that I would stay in hospital a few more days, then be discharged and find a job in Dunedin. I did not realise that the alternative to going home was committal to Seacliff.

Janet in the back seat, next to a window, beside two girls from Borstal. One girl sings one line from a song: I had a little dog. The other girl sings the next line: And his name was Spot. Janet stares at the shapes of the two heads in front of her.

The car travelling up to stone gate-posts, a metal arch between them spells out a name.

Janet cranes her head to see, as the car passes under the arch.

She sees the name SEACLIFF above her, then gone.

SEACLIFF HOSPITAL on the black screen

41

A sign on a door reads: DAYROOM.

Janet stands in the doorway, looking in: the room has people sitting in chairs around the walls, all staring, each looking at '...a vision on a closed, private circuit.'

The hand guides Janet into the room.

The Dayroom door is pulled shut behind her.

BLACK SCREEN

- 42 The tiny house at Willowglen, set between its hills, on the steep slope.

The tiny figure of Janet climbing the hill towards the house sitting in its shadow.

- 43 Inside the kitchen the family is about to have dinner.

Janet is in the doorway. She holds a doctor's certificate. She tells them, half with pride, half with fear:

JANET

I've got shizzofreenier.

ISABEL

What's that?

- 44 Janet and Isabel in their shared front room at Willowglen, with June. Isabel sits on her bed, against the wall, knees drawn up, looking at one of Janet's Psychology textbooks. June lies across the bed, at her feet. Janet lies on her bed, watching Isabel.

ISABEL

(reads)

Dementia Praecox, also known as
skits-o-freenia: a gradual
deterioration of the mind, with
no cure.

Janet, Isabel and June are shocked: no cure. They stare at each other. The sound of the radio clear from the kitchen. A Willowglen night: through the window the moon in the sky, the sound of the wind in the pines.

- 45 Janet - bereft - sits on a chair in John Forrest's office staring up at John Forrest who stands in front of her, leaning back against his desk.

JANET

America?

FORREST

But you don't have to (worry) -

cont.

24

45

JANET
(over)

For how long?

FORREST

One. Two years. Just to do my Ph.D.

Janet tries not to show her distress. She tries to smile.

FORREST

Janet?

She looks obediently up at him.

FORREST

I've talked to a Mrs Chandler in
Christchurch about your case and she's
very interested in you. I'm sure
you'll like her.

Janet struggles to appear casual about her sense of loss, to please
John Forrest.

JANET

Do you mean I should go to see her?

FORREST

I think you should. Also, I've shown
Denis Glover from Caxton Press your
stories and poems. He's very impressed.

John Forrest looks at her seriously, affectionately.

FORREST

You know, Janet, when I think of you, I
think of...Hugo Wolf...Van Gogh...lots of
artists have suffered from schizophrenia.

Janet stares at John Forrest. The affirmation that her sickness and
art can live together.

46 Isabel sits cross-legged on her bed, notes and coins in front of her
on the bedspread, divided into piles of various denominations.

Bruddie, June and Janet gathered around the money.

ISABEL

You should be the one going, Nini,
not me.

JANET

Oh no, I can't. You'd be the best one.

cont.

25

46

BRUDDIE
Whoever goes, you have to make sure Mum
has a lovely trip.

47 Isabel stands on the step of a train carriage, impatient.

Mum, dressed in her best, is being farewelled by Janet, Dad, Bruddie
and June, on the platform next to the carriage.

MUM
Don't forget Dad's tea is at six. And
vinegar, Nini, in the corned beef water.

JANET
(over)
Just get on the train, Mum.

ISABEL
Moth-er!

48 Isabel and Mum in train carriage. Kaitangata kaitangata as the train
rocks out of Oamaru.

Mum anxious, unable to settle. Isabel pours tea from a thermos.

MUM
Oh dear, dear, dear, I don't know.

ISABEL
What don't you know! You're on
holidays, Mum, stop worrying. Put
your feet up.

MUM
I'm alright.

ISABEL
Come on.

Isabel pats the seat. Mum smiles, conscious of breaking rules, and
shyly stretches her big legs out between the seats, her feet resting
next to Isabel. Mum gives a big sigh as she settles. Isabel cradles
her hand around Mum's feet.

ISABEL
Poor old trotters.

49 The kitchen at Willowglen. Janet cooking at the stove.

A cow puts its head in the kitchen doorway. Janet turns and looks at the cow.

JANET

She's not here.

The phone rings. The cow goes. The phone stops ringing. Then Janet hears small sounds of distress from June, then the sound of the phone being hung up.

Janet turns to watch June come into the kitchen.

JUNE

Isabel's dead. She's drowned in
Picton Harbour.

The two sisters stare at each other, then run to hold each other;
the two heads together, arms around each other.

50 On the platform of Oamaru Station, down by the Men's Lavatories and the Goods Entrance, the Funeral Director waits, with his hearse backed up as far as it can go on to the station.

The Frame family, a small group, at the other end of the platform. People near them "know" and look at them with sympathy.

The express train rushing into the station. Everyone stepping back. The wind made by the train's arrival blows skirts, and makes men put their hands to their hats.

A lead coffin being lifted out of the goods carriage and carried, awkwardly, to the hearse, supervised by the Funeral Director. Janet watches the coffin being manoeuvred into the hearse.

JUNE

(OS)

To stop her from smelling.

Janet looks around. June has whispered this, close behind Janet. No one else has heard.

And now Mum is climbing down from the train.

The family looks at her bewildered face. Her hair has turned white overnight.

JUNE

Mum, your hair.

The family gathers around Mum. They hold and stroke and touch each other.

cont.

27

50

MUM
A second one taken, Curly.

51 Mum and Janet and June are in Isabel's and Janet's shared room.

They are going through Isabel's things: her best shoes, her jiffy coat, her fitting shazaam jersey and her skirt with the applique giraffe, amongst other things laid out on her bed.

MUM
Do either of you girls want anything?

JANET
(firm)
I don't.

JUNE
Isabel always said that if we touched her clothes she'd come down and haunt us when she died.

Mum starts to gather the clothes.

MUM
Such a waste.

June reconsiders, tempted.

JUNE
I wouldn't mind the jiffy coat.

Janet watches as June picks up the jiffy coat and is not struck down.

52 Dad and Mum sit in the dining room, drinking tea, with another couple, on a sympathy visit.

Dad leans across to Mum, speaks quietly:

DAD
Is Janet coming out?

53 Janet lies on her bed, the curtains drawn against the light.

The door opens and Mum stands in the doorway.

cont.

28

53

MUM

Why don't you come out?

Janet doesn't answer, doesn't move.

54 Janet sits on a hill at Willowglen, on the sunny, far side from the house. Siggy asleep in the grass beside her.

She is writing in an exercise book and nursing a hot-water bottle against her aching jaw. She stops writing and fishes out a small pocket mirror from her skirt. She angles the mirror, inspecting her decayed teeth.

JANET
(VO)

I could not stay at Willowglen. Nor was there any escape from the horror of my decayed teeth.

CHRISTCHURCH on the black screen

55 Janet on the doorstep of an expensive, well-kept house. The door opens: a tall, angular woman dressed in browns and beiges looks down at Janet on the lower front porch.

JANET

I'm Janet Frame.

56 In the brown and beige entrance hall.

MRS C

John Forrest wrote to me about you.

But Janet, too eager for help, over-rides the niceties.

JANET

Will you help me with my teeth?

Mrs Chandler doesn't understand.

MRS C

Your teeth?

Janet nods yes.

cont.

29

56

MRS C

I don't understand.

Janet doesn't want to show Mrs Chandler, but finally - desperate - she bares her teeth.

Mrs Chandler disgusted. Janet puts her hand over her mouth.

MRS C

You'll have to have those out.

JANET

Will you come with me?

Janet is scared.

MRS C

Yes. I could.

Mrs Chandler looks at nervous Janet sympathetically for quite a while, thinking.

MRS C

After you've had your teeth seen to, I'd like you to go to Sunnyside Hospital. They have a new treatment there that appears to be successful.

JANET

Is it curable?

MRS C

With this new treatment it may be.

57

Janet - now toothless, wearing a hospital nightgown, with cold bare feet - sits on a bed in a ward at Sunnyside Hospital. She runs her tongue over her swollen gums, feeling her new toothlessness.

Other patients in the ward: one stares up, up, up; another convulsed with silent laughter; but most full of a nervous tension about the treatment to come. Janet affected by the tension.

Nurses move around the ward taking false-teeth from patients and putting them into water in cups, on which they write the patients' names. They then rub soap, followed by methylated spirits, on to the patients' temples.

A friendly Nurse is with Janet.

NURSE

You're a newie, aren't you?

cont.

30

57

JANET

Yes.

NURSE

Where are your teeth?

JANET

I've just had them pulled out.

NURSE

Have you eaten anything?

JANET

No.

The Nurse has soaped Janet's temples, and is now rubbing them over with methylated spirits. The metho runs down into Janet's ears. Janet winces away.

NURSE

Whoops there.

58 Anxious Janet lies on the treatment table.

She hears Matron whisper hoarsely to one of the Nurses:

MATRON

The gag.

The Doctor attends the knobs and switches of the EST machine.

He smiles briefly at Janet.

DOCTOR

Good morning. Well then, you know what this is all about. Matron?

And gives the signal to Matron.

MATRON

Close your eyes.

JANET

(VO)

And so the struggle for my life began. I was defenceless and did not know how to fight.

cont.

- 58 Janet closes her eyes, but they involuntarily open again. Matron, Sister and four Nurses press down on Janet's knees and shoulders, as the voltage is applied to Janet's temples, and rips through her body. Janet bucks and screams.

BLACK SCREEN

JANET
(VO)

Over the next eight years I received more than two hundred applications of electric shock treatment, each one equivalent in fear to an execution.

- 59 A long corridor in Sunnyside.

Women patients - dotted down the corridor - are polishing the floor.

They each have a heavy bumper on top of a piece of blanket, which they use to buff off the yellow sticky wax.

Most polish on their hands and knees, or in a crouch, except for one woman, who uses her feet, and stands, skating on the cloth, swinging her arms, methodically bringing her floor to a high polish.

A door in the corridor, with a sign: LINEN CUPBOARD.

- 60 Janet inside the linen cupboard. It has become her special place. She looks out through its little dusty window on to the lower park with its lawns and trees.

JANET
(VO)

I wept and wondered and dreamed the abiding dream of most mental patients - the World, Outside, Freedom. I dreamed of the world because it seemed the accepted thing to do, because I could not bear to face the thought that not all prisoners dream of freedom; but the prospect of the world terrified me.

AUCKLAND on the black screen

The sound of cicadas begins to be heard and continues over:

- 61 Janet in the garden of June's house in Auckland. She sits in a chair, like an invalid, her face up to the sun. The new-ness of this northern heat; the sound of cicadas, the sub-tropical light.

Janet looks back down to the open notebook on her lap, and continues writing, bending closer and closer over the pages.

- 62 June, her husband Wilson - who holds their baby son - and another married couple sit in June's living room. Janet sits near them, but not part of the group. She hears them talking quietly about her as though she's not there.

WOMAN

How is she now?

JUNE

Oh, she's mending.

MAN

Does she like being in Auckland?

WILSON

She seems to.

WOMAN

What was she? Before.

Janet aware of their curious, but discreet, faces turning towards her.

- 63 Janet lies in a narrow camp-bed in a spare-room in June's house. Night.

From the other side of the wall Janet hears intimate sounds of June and her husband. The sound of the baby crying; groans and laughter; feet; doors opening and shutting; low voices as they croon to the baby in their bedroom.

Janet in her "nothingness and nowhere-ness of everything and everyone around" her. She curls over, curling into herself, closing off. Absolutely still.

- 64 Next day. Late afternoon light. June stands in Janet's room, at a loss. She stares down at Janet who is in exactly the same position as we last saw her.

JUNE

Janet? Janet...

Do you want to go to a hospital?

What do you want?

Janet turns and looks at June. She can't speak. All her fears are in her mute face.

AUCKLAND MENTAL HOSPITAL on the black screen

- 65 Janet sits in the Dayroom.

She sits with a pink cretonne drawstring bag on her lap: a precious possession which shows years of wear. It is soiled and sticky. She also holds on her lap a copy of the Collected Plays of William Shakespeare. It is battered and worn. The bag and book are both treasures, talismans.

The usual figure is rattling the locked door to get out.

A woman waltzes alone, holding an imaginary partner, around and around the Dayroom.

JANET

(VO)

I behaved as others around me behaved.
I felt utterly alone. There was no-one
to talk to. As in other mental
hospitals, you were locked up, you did
as you were told or else, and that was
that.

-
- 66 Janet - thin, with sores and a dis-charging ear - sits up in bed in the hospital ward. Other beds around her made and empty; she has been sick.

June and Wilson stand smiling beside the bed. June holds out a small pile of six new books to Janet.

Janet takes them. She looks down at the top book:

"The Lagoon and other Stories" by Janet Frame.

It feels un-real to Janet as she slowly spreads the copies out on the blue and white counterpane with its New Zealand coat of arms: "Ake Ake, Onward Onward."

cont.

- 66 She holds one copy, turning it over to the back cover, then looking at the inside jacket-flaps. She is suddenly dismayed.

JANET
Where's my photograph?

JUNE
That's not the important thing.

JANET
Where's my photograph?

WILSON
The important thing is that you're an author.

Wilson is ceremoniously holding out a fountain pen to Janet.

JANET
What do I do?

JUNE
You have to sign your name here, on the title page, under here, where your name's printed.

Janet impressed.

JANET
Is that what you do?

She carefully writes in her name under her printed name on the title-page; the act gives her satisfaction, some claim on the book.

- 67 Janet in the front room at Willowglen, looking out at the sun lying down on the flat, as she sorts out her old books.

Dad carries in a small freshly-built set of bookshelves, which he puts beside the bed.

DAD
I don't want you ever to leave home again. You're not going back to that nut-house.

JANET
With the loonies? That's my Private Rest Home you're talking about.

Dad happy to be making jokes.

- 68 Janet on her old spot on the secluded Willowglen hill. Black cat Siggie keeps her company.

Janet reading a review of "The Lagoon" in the "Christchurch Press".
We see a small heading: UNORIGINAL LAGOON.

JANET
(VO, reads)
...this kind of thing has been done
too often before...no originality ...
a waste of time to publish such a book...

Janet's humiliation and despair.

Janet lifts Siggie and leans down and puts her face against the cat's warm fur. The newspaper crumpled under the cat.

JANET
Oh Siggie. What will I do?

SEACLIFF HOSPITAL on the black screen

JANET
(VO)
It was recognised that I was now in
hospital for life.

- 69 Janet, standing near the door of the Clean Dayroom, watches with fascination, as the Ward Two patients rush past the door in dirty striped smocks, clutching remnants of snacks: rainbow-sponge and fruit-cake, on their way to bed at four o'clock, all helter-skelter, clapped along by a Nurse.

NURSE
Four o'clock! Come on! Bed time!

JANET
(VO)
I inhabited a territory of loneliness
which I think resembles that place
where the dying spend their time
before death...

JANET

(VO, continues)

...and where those who do return living to the world, bring inevitably a unique point of view that is a nightmare, a treasure, and a lifelong possession.

Janet's face - thrust forward - is held by a Nurse with one hand, while with the other she paints make-up on to Janet's face. They are outside the Clinic, the make-up comes from the Ward box, and the other Ward Two women crowd in a line behind Janet, all wearing exotic party dresses.

71 A sweaty, high excitement fills the hospital's Big Hall, brightly lit over its powdered dance floor.

The men are on their marks at one side of the Hall, the women on the other, as on-stage the band plays linking music.

The Doctors and a couple of special Town Visitors sit in a row of old plush armchairs at the back of the Hall, facing the dance-floor and the stage.

The band swinging into "One Enchanted Evening" acts like the starter's gun at a race. The held-back excitement rises into action as most of the men rush across the dance floor, some sliding, elbowing, some calling out the names of their chosen partners, in their haste to get to the women. A few men stay on their side of the Hall, un-moving.

Most of the women wait - some anxious, some secure, some urging their partners to them, others blase - for their partners to claim them. One woman stands and runs to the men's side, to claim her partner, crossing through the tide of men clamouring in the opposite direction.

Janet is claimed by Eric, her permanent partner.

As they dance, Eric's mouth hangs open, his head thrust forward, his skin glistens with effort, but he has taught Janet to dance and they are secure, comfortable, together.

BAND SINGER

(sings)

One enchanted evening,
You will see a stranger -
You will see a stranger -
Across a crowded room...

72 A row of door-less lavatories.

A supervised queue of women waiting to use the lavatories.

Three women, watched by a Nurse, sit on the lavatories. Janet is standing in a fourth cubicle.

NURSE

Hurry up!

JANET

I don't want to go while they're watching.

NURSE

No one's watching!

Janet doesn't move. The Nurse suddenly grabs Janet and sweeps up her skirt, pulls down her underpants, thrusts her down on to the lavatory, all in one angry movement, as:

NURSE

You'll! Go! Miss Educated!

Janet shaking, with fear and anger, on the lavatory.

73 Evening, in a small, locked room. Canvas blankets and sheets on a mattress on the floor. Dim electric light in a cage on the ceiling. Janet is in solitary confinement.

Janet writes, with a smuggled-in pencil stub, on the wall. The lead doesn't take properly and the words are ghosts as they are formed. She writes bits of remembered poems, tenderly half-saying the words as she writes:

JANET

So twice five miles of fertile ground
With walls and towers were girdled round...

74 Dr Burt - a likeable, overworked young doctor - stands with Janet in the Clinic Office.

DR BURT

I've got good news for you, Janet.
We're putting you down for the new operation.

cont.

74 Janet has heard words like this before.

JANET
What new operation?

DR BURT
You're going to have a leucotomy.

Janet is frightened. But also frightened of prejudicing Dr Burt against her by showing her fear.

DR BURT
There's no need to be frightened.
It'll do you the world of good.

JANET
Do I have to have it?

DR BURT
It's not a question of have-to, it's
a question of what's best. And your
mother agrees, she's signed the papers.

Janet feels helpless.

JANET
I don't want to have one, Doctor.

DR BURT
Leave it to us, Janet.

75 A small group of men and women straggle along with a Nurse, being taken for a walk in the hospital grounds.

The women wear bright chiffon scarves tied in butterfly bows on top of their heads, the men wear beanies. Their bandaged heads can be seen under the scarves and beanies.

From the Dayroom windows Janet and Piona watch the chosen few. Sister comes up beside them.

PIONA
What do you fink? Do you fink they'll
get out? I fink once you're here you
never get out.

cont.

SISTER

No, Piona, no, we had one patient who was here for years until she had a leucotomy. And now she's selling hats in a hat shop, as normal as anything. Nola's having one too, Janet. You know Nola.

But Janet is frightened.

- 76 Scottish Dr Blake Palmer, the Hospital Superintendent, strolls down the ward, carrying the evening paper. It is just before lights-out and this is an unprecedented visit, causing a tremor of excitement through the ward.

Matron, accompanying Dr Palmer, indicates Janet - sitting up in bed - with a nod.

Dr Palmer stops beside Janet's bed.

Janet's first thought is of the leucotomy.

DR PALMER

Hello. Janet, isn't it?

Janet takes her chance.

JANET

Dr Palmer, what do you think?

DR PALMER

About the prize? You've heard?

Janet completely baffled.

JANET

No. About the leucotomy.

Dr Palmer is unfolding the evening paper.

DR PALMER

Have you seen the Stop Press in this evening's paper?

A ridiculous question.

DR PALMER

You've won the Hubert Church Award.

Janet, uncomprehending.

cont.

40

76

DR PALMER
For your book, "The Lagoon".

Janet takes the held out paper from him, but what he is saying is more important and she doesn't take her eyes off him.

DR PALMER
I've decided that you should stay
just as you are. I don't want you
changed.

Is Janet dreaming this?

JANET
I'm not going to have the leucotomy?

77 Kaitangata kaitangata kaitangata of a travelling train; from its windows the hills, water, sky of the outside world.

Expectant, nervous, free Janet looks out at the landscape.

JANET
(VO)
I was delivered from a lifetime in hospital. It was writing that saved me and it was through writing that I hoped to live my life. The words decide and future which had loomed so large in my childhood had a new intensity of meaning.

DUNEDIN on the black screen

78 Janet, dressed in a waitress's black dress, white apron and white starched cap pinned in her mass of springing curls - no longer an absolute beginner - takes an order from a man and woman at one of her tables in the dining room of the Grand Hotel.

JANET
Will that be all?

MAN
Yes, thank you.

Janet moves almost expertly through the tables of the busy hotel dining room.

She follows another waitress, Pat, through the swing doors into the kitchen.

- 79 Janet typing on a second-hand portable typewriter. She sits in her tiny attic room in the Hotel, typing at the dressing-table, overlooking the battlement facade of the hotel to the offices and dental rooms across the street. Beethoven's Seventh Symphony plays quietly on a second-hand portable gramophone. Perfect peace.
-

- 80 Four waitresses, including Janet, sit with shoes off, in their break, in Pat's attic room.

Pat and Mabel smoke, taking a breather, as they sit with Janet between them on Pat's bed, their backs against the wall, their sore, stockinged feet stretched out across the bed. Laura half lies in the one chair. Mabel stares at Janet, as:

JANET

Isn't she engaged?

LAURA

Oh, that's just a story.

PAT

He never comes here.

MABEL

Don't you think Janet's hair would look pretty straightened?

They all turn their attention to Janet.

LAURA

Yes, and you should wear different colours.

MABEL

Get it straightened and cut in a bob.

PAT

Green would suit you.

LAURA

Greens and browns.

Janet excited by all this attention, wanting to please.

JANET

Oh, I've tried everything with my hair. Nothing works. It's impossible.

PAT

It's a pretty colour, but you have to wear the right things with it. Not red, red'd clash. And not pink. Blue'd be good, it'd go with your eyes.

LAURA

I reckon green. Green for a redhead.

81 Janet follows Laura through the swing doors into the kitchen. A very busy lunch-time.

LAURA
(calls, loudly)
Veal a lady, beef a gent.

And is out again.

JANET
Chicken a man, beef a woman.

MOLLY
(sharp)
What?

Pat comes into the kitchen with a pile of dirty plates.

JANET
Chicken a man, beef a woman.

MOLLY
What's this "man" and "woman"
business?

Janet embarrassed.

MOLLY
I'm sick of it!

JANET
Chicken...

PAT
Molly...

MOLLY
(to Pat)
Shut up! (to Janet) Go on!

Janet can't say "chicken a gent". Everyone else in the kitchen watching, listening, but not interfering with Molly the bully. Mabel stands in the doorway waiting to call her order.

JANET
Chicken...

MOLLY
(over)
Louder!

JANET
A gent...

cont.

81 Molly cups her ear, and yells towards Janet.

MOLLY

What?

JANET

(slightly louder)

Chicken...a gent...

MOLLY

And...? Come on!

But now Janet is crying.

MOLLY

(triumphant)

Come on blubber-face!

And Janet runs past Mabel and out through the swing doors, as:

MOLLY

(calls to chef)

Chicken a gent, beef a lady! What a one!

82 Janet sits on her bed, hemming the large circular hem of a blue everglaze dance dress. Night outside the window.

Pat inspects Janet's new lipstick, squirts a drop of perfume on to her wrist, as

PAT

Don't take any notice of Molly.
Second-cooks are always like that.

Janet grateful for Pat's cameraderie.

PAT

I felt awful too, when I first came
here to work. I'd just had a nervous
breakdown.

Janet looks up at Pat, standing there with her confession.

JANET

I've been in a mental hospital.

And Janet bursts into tears. Pat sits down beside her, an arm around her.

PAT

There there.

cont.

82 Pat rocks Janet a bit.

PAT
Are you really a writer?

Janet nods as she sniffles and sobs.

JANET
Yes. I am. I've had some stories
published, and a book.

83 The stone buildings of a Dunedin street on a cold Saturday night. Mabel and Laura, with Janet and Pat behind them, walk in a foursome down the street; all expectant. They wear coats, their dance dresses frilling out under their coats. Janet, the only one without a coat, wears her new blue dress with the big circular skirt. Laura does a brief series of dance-steps as they walk.

84 The Dunedin Town Hall packed with dancing couples. The Band playing the Maxina.

Janet sits on one of the chairs which line the walls. There are men not dancing, but no one asks Janet to dance.

An older, plainer woman comes up to Janet.

WOMAN
Would you like to come upstairs and
watch them? You get a better view
from up there.

Janet offended.

JANET
No, thank you.

Janet stands and moves to another chair. How could that woman think they are alike?

Janet sits, holding her new evening bag of black sequins in her lap. She clicks open the bag and looks in at her Max Factor compact and "Evening in Paris" perfume, nestled inside the bag. She snips open the compact, and looks down at her face in the round mirror, inside the handbag.

- 85 Another day. Janet, wearing her uniform, hurries into her attic room, carrying a bulky envelope. She shuts the door behind her.

Nervously, she tears open the envelope and takes out a story and poems. Clipped to them is a letter on official "Landfall" paper. As she reads it:

JANET
(VO, reads)
...the work is interesting but the
poems aren't quite suitable for
"Landfall", while the story "Gorse Is
Not People" is too painful to
publish.

Janet's despair. She sits slumped on the bed. The envelope and rejected writing discarded beside her. She stares down at her feet in their shiny black waitresses shoes, just touching the floor.

JANET
(VO)
What could I do if I couldn't write?
Writing was to have been my rescue.

BLACK SCREEN

- 86 Mum and Janet sit on a tartan rug down on the flat.

Late afternoon sunlight across them, and striking into the pine plantation. The tiny house set high on the hill in its perpetual shadow.

Mum and Janet share sandwiches and a thermos of tea. Janet is trying to show Mum how to relax, to enjoy herself, but Mum is restless.

MUM
What if the phone rings?

JANET
Whoever it is will ring back.

MUM
It might be urgent. We won't hear
it down here.

JANET
Isn't the sun lovely?

Janet holds her face up to the warmth, eyes closed.

cont.

46

86

MUM

What if Dad comes home and finds
no dinner ready?

JANET

He can wait for once. Mum?

Janet holds out the packet of sandwiches to Mum, but Mum is
struggling to her feet, anxious to get back to the house.

MUM

I'd better get back. You stay.

The picnic, long argued-for, is a failure.

Janet miserable, feels all the old tensions rising in her, as she
watches Mum hurry heavily back up to the house.

87

Janet's packed suitcase, open, on the bed in the front room. On top
of the clothes she places two photographs of herself, in mottled fawn
frames. They are formal photographs, taken in a local studio: hair
permed, a flowered blouse with a three-leaf clover brooch, a
cardigan. Her face, repeated side by side, stares up at her.

AUCKLAND on the black screen

88

Janet sits at a small table in the bedroom of a suburban house. It
is early evening. She has dinner on a plate in front of her, but is
unable to continue eating while June's two sons and daughter crowd
curiously around her.

SON 1

Why don't you eat with us?

SON 2

Where are your children?

The tiny girl, too young to ask questions, just stares at Janet.

SON 1

Why don't you live in your own house?

June appears in the doorway.

JUNE

Boys, Pamela, come on, teatime!
Leave Auntie Janet in peace.

- 89 Janet and the two older boys in the back seat of June's car as they drive on Auckland's North Shore.

June and her daughter beside Wilson, who is driving. Janet feels like the 'funny' sister being taken for a drive.

WILSON

Frank Sargeson, the writer, lives around here, in an old bach, at Takapuna.

JUNE

He heard I was your sister and came to see me, you know. He asked if you'd like to visit him.

WILSON

We could drop in now.

JANET

Oh no, I don't know him.

Janet feels trapped, tricked into this.

- 90 June's car parked in front of a large old honeysuckle hedge. Wilson's and the children's faces all turned towards a gap in the hedge: the Watchers.

Janet and June brushing through washing hung on a line stretching from an old lemon tree to the back of the house. The dense garden with its luxuriant peppers and tomatoes.

Janet pauses, unwilling, nervous to go any further.

JANET

June? I don't want to meet him.

JUNE

Come on.

Janet obediently follows June to the back door. June knocks, Janet ready to run.

JANET

He's not home.

But he is, and the door opens and Frank Sargeson looks out at them.

JUNE

Hullo, Mr Sargeson.

He glances at June, then past her at Janet half-hidden behind June.

cont.

48

90

SARGESON
You're Janet Frame.

JUNE
(tactful)
We'll come back later.

And June ducks away, leaving Janet fully exposed to Frank Sargeson.
It takes all her will to stand her ground.

SARGESON
(smiling, as if to a child)
Come in, come in.

91 Later. Janet and Frank Sargeson sit at the counter that divides the main room into the kitchen and sitting room. Tomatoes and peppers and lemons on the bench; shelves and piles of books and journals fill the sitting room. Uncurtained windows on to the overgrown garden. They drink tea and eat honey on rye wafers.

SARGESON
Why don't you come and live here?
There's a bed and desk in the hut out
the back, already set up.

Janet startled.

SARGESON
You can't write living in suburbia,
amongst the nappies and the bourgeois
life.

JANET
But I have to find a job.

SARGESON
Why? You're a writer.

JANET
They've refused me a sickness
benefit.

Frank Sargeson is angry with 'them'.

SARGESON
Have they! After all those years in
hospital? They can't do that. Look,
I know, I've a good friend who's a
doctor, he'll fix up a benefit for
you. Of course he will!

Janet feels overwhelmed, shy and protected.

- 92 The army hut, half-hidden in Frank Sargeson's dense garden. Early sunlight. Silence.

- 93 Janet, dressed, lies on her made bed, half-reading, half day-dreaming, inside the army hut, with its built-in desk and kerosene lamp, rush mat on the floor, a small wardrobe made by an old curtain, and a small window at the head of the bed.

Janet's typewriter is set up on the desk, a pile of green typing paper beside it.

Janet hears Frank Sargeson moving around in the garden outside.

Guilty, Janet drops her book and dives to the desk and starts typing. We see the words forming on the green paper: The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog; and again.

- 94 A naked Frank Sargeson sunbathes against the eastern wall of the bach. The sound of Janet's typewriter from the army hut, rattling away non-stop. Frank Sargeson smiles.

- 95 Evening of another day. Janet stands in the bach doorway, looking across at Frank Sargeson, imagining, hoping for, his congratulations.

Sargeson is in the sitting room in an old canvas chair, wearing a green eye-shade, with Janet's story and a glass of wine. A kerosene lamp casts its light.

JANET

Mr Sargeson?

SARGESON

Come in, come in.

Janet sits in the other canvas chair. Sargeson pours her a glass of wine, as:

SARGESON

I've read your story. (reads) Every morning she rose.

He looks sternly at Janet.

cont.

50

95

SARGESON
Rose? Went up to Heaven, I suppose?
Why not say, simply, She got up.
Never use rose.

Janet is contrite.

SARGESON
The story is quite good, of its kind.

Janet very disappointed. She resolves to show him nothing else.

SARGESON
Have you read Proust?

JANET
No.

Sargeson hurries, arms and legs angular, to the books packed and piled in shelves. Excited by the thought of introducing Janet to Proust.

SARGESON
Oh, lucky girl. I wish I was reading
him for the first time again.

He plucks volume 1 of "Remembrance of Things Past" from a shelf, and also hands Janet a folded, grey flannel garment.

SARGESON
Why don't you wear these? More
comfortable.

Janet shakes out a pair of baggy grey trousers.

96 Janet in bed in the army hut. The wavering light and shadow cast by the kerosene lamp. She opens the Proust, and reads the first sentence. Bemused, entangled, by its simplicity.

JANET
(VO)
For a long time I used to go to bed
early. (pause) For a long time...
I used to go to bed early.

We see the lamp-light on the print of the first page: on the letters of the first sentence.

97 Beautiful, young, just-married Karl and Kay Stead sit on the floor in Sargeson's living room. A fire burns in the fireplace. Sargeson in one of the canvas chairs. Remains of paella, cheese, fruit, wine on a low table.

Karl is flicking pages in a book of Yeats' poems.

Janet is carrying - shyly, ceremoniously - her portable record player into the living room. She is wearing the grey trousers.

SARGESON

Here she comes! Maiden Bearing
Gramophone.

As they set it on the low table, plug it in, Kay hands Janet the Beethoven concerto she and Karl have brought. As Janet puts on the record and the music fills the room, Kay holds out her wine glass.

KAY

Who's pouring?

And Sargeson fills glasses, as Janet sits in the other canvas chair, and Karl is reading.

KARL

(reads)

We had fed the heart on fantasies,
The heart's grown brutal from the fare;
More substance in our enmities
Than in our love; O honey-bees,
Come build in the empty house of the stare.

Janet in the poem's spell. Kay goes and sits on Karl's lap.

JANET

That's wonderful.

They all look at Janet's open, intense feeling.

JANET

I've only read his earlier poems.

KAY

Tread softly because you tread on
my dreams.

JANET

I went out to a hazel wood,
Because a fire was in my head.

Janet alight with words and music and company. We haven't seen her so unselfconscious since we saw her with her sisters, as a child.

cont.

- 97 She looks up at Karl and Kay: their intimacy as they sit together, holding each other. Karl now copying Yeats's keening, declamatory Anglo-Irish voice and Kay laughing, putting a hand over his mouth, trying to stop him.
-

- 98 In the hut, Janet sits at her typewriter, typing, with concentration. She wears a green eye-shade like Frank Sargeson's. On one side is a pile of finished pages, on the other a pile of un-used green typing paper. She has started her novel.
-

- 99 Frank Sargeson shows Janet how to bind the finished manuscript. They stand at the counter with scissors and tape, both enjoying the practical task.

We see the title page: OWLS DO CRY by Janet Frame.

Sargeson picks up a page and reads aloud.

SARGESON
(reads)

It was a sin. To have watched
Aunt Nettie putting on her face.
And it was worse for her, I suppose,
because now we knew she had another
face and had another smile to it.
We had found her out, like a thief.
She kept blushing.

As Janet, agitated: No Frank, don't, please.

He puts the page back.

SARGESON
Not bad. Bit Dylan Thomas-ish. Don't
be disappointed if it comes back, it's
only your first try. Just remember,
Waldo, there are lots of other publishers.

- 100 Janet - at her desk reading - hears someone moving through the garden towards the hut. Intense mid-summer heat.

She has hung mosquito netting over the door and the window, and as she goes to the door she has a strangely muted view of the garden and June walking towards her through the long grass.

Janet stands in the doorway, holding back the mosquito netting.

cont.

JUNE

I came to tell you Mother died this morning. She had a stroke at about six o'clock and died at half past ten. Bruddie rang to tell me.

Janet tries to show as little feeling as possible.

JANET

She was worn out anyway, she was ready to die.

JUNE

Yes. I know.

JANET

Her life was awful.

JUNE

Will you be coming over as usual for the weekend?

JANET

I don't think so.

JUNE

We'll see you sometime then?

JANET

Yes.

And Janet lets the mosquito netting fall between them.

101 Late afternoon. Janet hangs a few clothes on the washing line strung from the lemon tree to the back of the bach. Wringing the clothes, flapping them out, and pegging.

Frank Sargeson comes around the side of the bach, shopping in his old canvas bag slung over one shoulder.

JANET

My mother died this morning.

SARGESON

That's sad. Still, you know what they say, parents are better dead.

JANET

(brave)

Oh yes, I know that.

And Sargeson goes on into the bach.

- 102 Night. Only moonlight through the mosquito netting over door and window. Janet a huddled shape under a sheet on this mid-summer night. The sound of her painful crying.

BLACK SCREEN

- 103 Janet taking letters out of the letter-box in the gap in the hedge. She sees a letter addressed to her. She opens it: takes in the meaning.

Awkward, excited, she runs down the side of the back.

- 104 Frank holds the letter. He has read it and, astounded, keeps scanning it, as

SARGESON

First up! I can't believe it. Not everyone's that lucky, Waldo, not the first time. Something must have clicked with them. Well, congratulations.

He holds out a hand and he and Janet shake hands.

SARGESON

It's amazing.

- 105 Janet holds a shipping-company brochure, showing pictures of elegant laughing people on board ship, full of romance and sexual adventuring. The women wear sunsuits by the pool, and glittering backless dresses on the dance-floor. Janet sits on her bed in the hut, imagining herself living this life. Her ship ticket on her lap.

JANET
(VO)

When the Literary Fund awarded me a Travel Grant, I could scarcely believe that I was to be among these passengers, even perhaps wearing a backless evening dress while someone, laughing, fixed my zip.

- 106 Frank and Janet are crouched on the floor of Sargeson's living room, above a small metal cooker and other cooking utensils. Frank demonstrates the cooker to Janet who takes notes obediently in a small notebook.

Karl and Kay Stead look on.

SARGESON

...and this whats-it fits in here.
All you need are your cooking
utensils, two pairs of trousers -

KAY

(over)

Oh, let her take a dress, Frank.

SARGESON

- she doesn't need one - a couple of
blouses and that cardigan thing.

KARL

You've got to go to Ibiza, Janet.

SARGESON

That's where your money'll last.

JANET

Ib-eetha?

KAY

It's spelt with a 'z' but you say it
in the Spanish way, 'th'.

Kay demonstrates with her tongue under her front teeth. Janet copies her, watching carefully.

WELLINGTON on the black screen

- 107 Janet, wearing a large fawn cardigan with a hood, stands while Aunt Polly inspects her. After a long, critical silence:

AUNT POLLY

What on earth are you wearing that
horrible cardigan for? It's far too
big and it's an awful colour, it's
just no colour at all. You look like
a piece of earth in it. And you can
see your whole shape through that
skirt.

JANET

It's fawn, Aunt Polly, it goes with
everything.

cont.

107

AUNT POLLY

It's drab.

Janet sees, through the small window of Aunt Polly's front room, Dad coming up the neat concrete path.

JANET

Dad.

She hurries from the front room to the front door.

Dad, shoes polished, wearing his best suit and hat, carrying a small bag, comes along the path to Janet, who hurries to meet him.

Face to face, Janet bursts into tears. Dad's lip, pouting, trembles.

DAD

So you're going to the Old Country.
Well done, Jan.

And Dad and Janet embrace, both tearful.

Aunt Polly is in the doorway.

AUNT POLLY

Oh, Curly. Look at that suit. Those
cuffs, what have you been doing to them?

And Dad and Janet, shoulder to shoulder, stand accused in front of
the Dressmaker to the World.

108 Night. The lights of Wellington across the dark water.

Janet at the Ruahine's rails, the dark water around the moving ship,
the sound of the engines. Then suddenly the motion of the ship
changes to a steeper rise and fall.

Janet's mass of hair, her pale face, exhilarated, as she looks
forward, out to the dark sky, the dark open water. The ship is on
the open sea.

JANET

(VO)

I felt like weeping with fear and
delight. My voyage had begun.

THE ENVOY FROM
MIRROR CITY

EPISODE THREE

of a three-part series for television
based on Janet Frame's autobiography

Screenplay: Laura Jones

THIRD DRAFT

April, 1989

The four sisters - Myrtle (14) Janet (10) Isabel
(8) June (6) - sit high on an Oamaru hill looking
out over the Pacific Ocean, dreaming of other
countries, future lives.

Myrtle starts to sing:

MYRTLE
(sings)
You shall go to France for me
Ha ha the wooing o'it...

Isabel joins in as Myrtle repeats the refrain.

The words cast their spell over the four girls.

1

- 1 Janet, laid out with sea-sickness, lies on a bottom bunk next to the door in a warm, throbbing six-berth cabin. Her pale face and mass of red frizzy curls in the dimness made by the upper bunk. She holds a tiny, heart-shaped bottle of smelling salts, tied with a lavender ribbon, to her nose.

JANET
(VO)

My adventure had begun. But with the feelings of bravery and excitement went the knowledge that I would not only have to prove to myself that I could live the life of a writer, but that I would have to do it alone, in a strange country.

Janet conscious of the shapes and shadows of stockings and underwear draped from every railing; of the sound of womens' voices laughing and talking. She sees only parts of their bodies framed by the top and bottom of her bunk, as they move around the cabin and climb up and down from bunks.

The clutching, tottering bodies of two young New Zealand girls pass her - down the incline, up the incline - shrieking with pleasure as the ship noses and dives at a steep angle.

The indistinct voices of a teacher from the Midlands and an Australian traveller talking about their voyages.

A figure stops at Janet's bunk, filling her view. Then the kind face of a Norwegian woman looms into the space of her bunk.

NORWEGIAN

Can I help you?

Janet shakes her head, no. She tries to smile, her face a tepid green, the little lavender bottle under her nose.

LONDON on the black screen

- 2 Janet, fighting off panic, stands in her warm brown overcoat with bulky Traveller's Joy handbag over her shoulder, facing the Manageress in the foyer of the Friends Hostel. Her two suitcases and green haversack at her feet.

JANET

But I wrote.

MANAGERESS

We've had no letter from you.

cont.

2

2

JANET
But I'm all the way from New Zealand.

MANAGERESS
We have guests from all over the world. Every day.

Janet feels the tears rising, the world hostile.

MANAGERESS
You have no friends in London?

JANET
None.

MANAGERESS
Why don't you try the Y.W.C.A.?

3 Janet sits - perfectly still, but shivering - in a cavernous bath filled with warmish green water. A tap drips into the water.

Janet stares at a sign over the bath, as if it must contain another message:

PLEASE LEAVE THE BATH AS YOU WOULD WISH OTHERS TO FIND IT

The enormous bathroom is freezing black-and-white tiled floor. A mouse runs diagonally across the floor. Janet's eyes flick to the movement, but she remains sitting quite still.

4 Janet walks with Irish Patrick Reilly towards a row of four attached rooms set squat against a tall brick boundary wall, facing the drab backyard of the main house.

Patrick carries Janet's two suitcases, bowed with the weight, while Janet lugs her haversack.

PATRICK
I hope you won't be here for the winter. A woman died of pneumonia in one of these rooms - that one - last winter.

As Patrick puts a key in the door of Number 3.

cont.

3

4

PATRICK

We had a European Prince in this one
last year.

Patrick pushes open the jammed door. They look into a tiny dark room with its single window beside the door, its narrow bed, a single electric plate with cooking utensils piled on a box next to it.

Patrick steps into the room and drops the suitcases, then swings to face Janet.

PATRICK

You can call me Patrick.

5

The table in Patrick's room, in the main house, is covered with oilcloth. Tea things - including tea-pot, cups and saucers, Peek Frean's chocolate digestives, gold-top milk - are placed and re-placed ritualistically in certain positions as Patrick and Janet talk. He does all this with satisfaction, as though earning another point on the path to perfection.

PATRICK

And what are you doing in London,
Janet?

JANET

I'm here on a Literary Grant -

PATRICK

(over, impressed)
A Literary Grant.

JANET

- but I won't be in London for long.
I'm going to Spain, it's cheaper
there.

PATRICK

You're not going alone?

JANET

Yes.

PATRICK

You'll be in danger, in a foreign
place like that. I'll look after
you while you're in London, Janet,
but you mustn't go to the Continent
on your lonesome. By the way, are
you fancy-free?

cont.

4

5 Janet frowns over the word.

JANET
Yes. I'm...fancy-free.

PATRICK
Well, watch out for the blacks.
They're everywhere in London.

JANET
I don't think people should be
referred to by the colour of their
skin.

PATRICK
You wait and see.

6 Janet, Traveller's Joy bulky over one coated shoulder, walks down a street in Parliament Hill Fields. She holds an addressed envelope in one hand, checking off numbers.

A black man, wearing a dark suit and bowler hat, stands in a gateway, watching Janet intently.

She sees him staring at her. She blushes and nervously - gallantly - smiles at him, as she passes. Her walk suddenly stiff with self-consciousness.

Janet comes to the house she is looking for: stares up at its windows, as the front door is opened: handsome Ben looking out at her.

BEN
Hullo.

JANET
I'm Frank's friend.

Ben continues looking at her.

JANET
From New Zealand.

Ben dimples at her for a while.

BEN
Janet?

7 Excited Janet sits on the floor of the bohemian's living room. The bohemians spread around on the floor, eating, talking, drinking, passing food and wine. Smoke hangs in the air.

A woman passes Janet a steaming dish of paella.

WOMAN 1
This is paella.

JANET
(eager)
Oh yes, the Spanish dish.

WOMAN 1
I learnt to make it when I lived there.

JANET
What were you doing in Spain?

WOMAN 1
I'm a painter.

The man on Janet's other side:

MAN 1
You should write to Colin, Katie, and tell him Janet's coming to Ibiza. (to Janet) Colin's a poet. He's there for a year. He'll show you round. You'll like Colin.

Janet thrilled to be part of this clever, travelled group of artists.

WOMAN 1
What do you write, Janet?

JANET
Oh, poetry, and fiction. Short stories, and I've written a novel.

MAN 1
Have you had anything published?

JANET
Yes.

WOMAN 1
Which magazine?

JANET
Oh, the short stories are a book -

cont.

WOMAN 1

A book!

MAN 1

You mean you've published a book?

JANET

A book of stories, and the novel's
being published soon.

Woman 1 calls out to the other talking people.

WOMAN 1

She's published a book!

Silence, as the bohemians stop talking and turn to look - with
awe - at self-conscious Janet.

WOMAN 2

I've never met anyone who's had a
book published. I mean someone like
us.

JANET

(apologetic)

It's only published in New Zealand.

WOMAN 2

Still...a book.

MAN 2

Who's your publisher?

Janet in an agony of shyness and pride.

JANET

Caxton Press for the stories and
Pegasus for the novel.

WOMAN 2

I've chosen my publisher.

MAN 2

Faber.

WOMAN 2

Yes. Faber and Faber.

MAN 3

T.S. Eliot's the head of Faber.

BEN

(priestly voice)

O Blessed One! Be our Saviour, Now
and at the Hour of our Publishing!

cont.

7

7

WOMAN 2
To Faber and Faber.

They all hold up their wine glasses in toast, repeating the words, including Janet, repeating the magic name.

8 Early morning light shows Janet, a huddled shape, asleep under her brown overcoat and blankets on the sofa in the bohemian's living room. Traveller's Joy stands guard beside the sofa.

Janet wakes suddenly, disoriented. She sits straight up, wild-haired, listening. But there is only silence. She stands and, very fast, starts to fold the blankets.

9 Janet coming through the front door of the house in Clapham Common. Patrick pops out of his room. He has been waiting for Janet and wags a disapproving finger at her.

PATRICK
You didn't come in last night, Janet.

Janet defensive, doesn't want to explain herself to Patrick.

JANET
I missed the bus. It was too late.

PATRICK
Where did you stay?

JANET
I spent the night with some new friends.

PATRICK
Who are these new friends?

JANET
They're writers and painters. Artists.

PATRICK
That's not the type for you, Janet. They hang about and do no work. And what about their morals? All mucking in together.

JANET
I'm a writer, too, Patrick.

cont.

- 9 During this, Patrick has beckoned Janet into his room, where they are now standing.

PATRICK

For now, maybe, but when you come back from Spain, you'll have to find a real job. We can look to our future then. This is for you.

Patrick picks up a large tin of corned beef and hands it to Janet. She takes it, staring down at the illustration of pink meat.

JANET

Thank you, Patrick.

PATRICK

You can't get decent food over there.

Janet oppressed by Patrick's possessiveness, but she isn't bold enough to shake him off. She is obedient in the face of his bullying.

PARIS on the black screen

- 10 Janet looks up, up, up - along the dark ironwork pattern of the mighty Eiffel Tower, up to its dizzying, distant peak. She rests a hand on the base of the tower as she stares up, lost in the pattern of iron and sky.
-

- 11 Janet crouches on the floor of a tiny attic room in a Paris hotel. She puts two eggs into a saucepan of water on her portable New Zealand cooker. Her Girl Guide cutlery and tin plates ready.

Janet watches the oval shapes of the two eggs suspended in water, within the circle of the saucepan rim.

She stands and goes to the window. She looks out at the evening sky and the grey stones of Paris.

Who ever thought she'd be in Paris?

JANET

(sings softly)

You can go to France for me,
Ha ha the wooing o'it...

Janet tearful, thinking of her sisters dreaming on their Oamaru hill.

- 12 A noisy counter with a sign: CONSIGNE, at the very busy Gare d'Austerlitz railway station in Paris.

Janet at the head of one of the queues at the counter, with her two suitcases, her typewriter in the haversack, Traveller's Joy and a small shopping bag.

CLERK

La suivante!

As Janet heaves across her haversack and the two suitcases:

JANET

Barcelona, s'il vous plait.

The un-listening clerk hands her a small numbered ticket in return and calls to the man in the queue behind Janet.

CLERK

Au suivant!

But Janet is still in front of him, anxious, not budging.

JANET

Excusez-moi. Vous ne voulez pas
regardez mon billet de travail?
My train ticket?

CLERK

Non, non, non!

The clerk waves her away and Janet turns from the counter, puzzled, uncertain.

- 13 Janet sits in a Spanish train, travelling through the dark night. The familiar railway sound: kaitangata kaitangata kaitangata.

Opposite Janet, a small frail boy, covered with a blanket, lies with his head on an old man's lap. The old man picks grapes from a bunch held in a paper bag. He puts them one by one into the boy's mouth. Janet watches the little jaws weakly chewing.

OLD MAN

(Spanish, to Janet)
These are good for him. They will
make him well.

JANET

Si.

Janet's phrase book "Learn Spanish with Me" lies on her lap, with her Notebook and pen.

- 14 Early morning at the Spanish border. Janet's exhilaration with a new country, a new day, a different sky. She is amongst the passengers from the train being steered into the Customs shed by debonair uniformed Border Guards. Light glints on their guns and buckles and polished boots. The old man carries the frail boy, wrapped in his blanket.
-

- 15 Janet holds her luggage ticket and stares down at the few pieces of uncollected luggage in the Customs shed. None of them are hers.

Janet can't stop her sense of panic. She speaks out, wildly, to no one in particular.

JANET

My luggage! My bags! They're not here!

She hurries to a Customs Official. People, laden with luggage, cluster around this troubled woman.

JANET

Mes baggages! Je les ai consigne a Paris!

Janet holds out her luggage ticket to the Official. He takes it, inspects it.

OFFICIAL

(Spanish)

This is a left luggage ticket, Senora. Your bags are still in Paris.

Distressed Janet can't decipher the rapid Spanish. A woman takes pity on her.

WOMAN

He say, your bags in Paris. The ticket for leaving bags in Paris, Senora. Not for coming to Spain.

Janet realises what she has done. She feels a cloud of tears rising. She looks at the circle of sympathetic, curious faces surrounding her: a murmur of sympathy rises from them.

IBIZA on the black screen

16 The ferry berthed at the quay at Ibiza.

Janet, un-encumbered by luggage, coming down the gangplank.

She is looking for Colin on the wharf. Her heart rises as she sees a handsome man standing beside a motor bike. He fits the London bohemian's description.

Colin recognises Janet and gives her a small signal with his hand.

Janet walking up to Colin, pleased to be met by this handsome poet.

JANET

Colin?

COLIN

Katie described your hair.

Janet blushes and smiles, a hand to her springing mass of frizzy red curls.

COLIN

Where's your luggage?

Janet nervous, bold.

JANET

Oh, I'm travelling light.

Colin astride his motor bike, revving the engine.

COLIN

That's easy, then. Hop on.

Janet climbs on behind Colin and the bike takes off. Janet quickly clutches around Colin's waist, hanging on, huddling into his back.

The speed of the bike, the wind, the sound of the engine, Colin so close to her, all delight Janet with a kind of excited fear.

17 Janet and Colin coming into the reception area of a small pension. Janet exhilarated from the ride; she already covets a picture of herself and Colin as part of an artists community in Ibiza.

Colin's bike behind them, outside the door, in the narrow cobbled street.

cont.

12

17

COLIN

You can stay here for a few nights
until you find something else.

He goes to the woman behind the counter and speaks in fluent Spanish.

COLIN

(Spanish)

Do you have a vacant room? (yes)
Good. The Senora would like to
stay for -

Colin turns to Janet.

COLIN

Two nights?

JANET

That's fine.

COLIN

(Spanish)

Two nights.

Colin turns from the counter, briefly, to Janet.

COLIN

Okay? Bye, then.

And signals goodbye with a casual hand, his duty done.

Janet is dismayed as she watches Colin leave the pension. She follows him to the door and watches as he gets on to his motor bike and takes off, without another glance at her.

Janet stands in the doorway, watching Colin disappear. After a moment she turns back into the pension. Her romantic picture gone, her vanity hurt, she feels the blow of sudden loneliness.

19

A small upstairs room in the pension. Janet sits on the bed, bent over her notebook, writing. She can barely decipher the words she writes. The light bulb so dim and the darkness outside so complete, that we can only make out the outlines of furniture, the shape of the window. The room seems mysterious, unknowable.

Janet goes to the window and looks out: she sees small shops opposite lit by candles: their tiny flickering flames.

The silhouette of a little girl in a full skirt running down the street. The sharp sound of her shoes on the cobbles.

- 19 The next day. Janet walking up a hill. She passes outcrops of ancient grey rocks, a small herd of wild goats.

She stands at the top, looking down on the harbour and the buildings across the harbour.

She sees, with fascination, the buildings perfectly mirrored in the clear, still water, and Shelley's words are part of it.

JANET

A ship is floating in the harbour now,
And wind is hovering o'er the mountain's brow ...
Say, my heart's sister, wilt thou sail with me?

She turns, and sees, on the other side of the hill, beyond the fields and olive groves, the transparent Mediterranean.

JANET

(VO)

This land drew from me a feeling of
tenderness as if it were mine and I
had known it long ago. It was, of
course, Shelley's world.

- 20 Janet walking along a narrow path on the ridge of the hill. Everything shaped by the wind. She is watching two women, dressed completely in black, as they bend to gather twigs and branches which they put into large woven baskets.

Janet takes her Spanish phrase book from Traveller's Joy, as she approaches the women, down the slope. The women have stopped working to watch her.

Janet checks her book.

JANET

Buenas dias.

One of the women points to the sun, correcting Janet.

CATALINA

Buenas tardes.

JANET

Buenas tardes. Jo soy de Nueva
Zelanda.

Janet points to herself.

JANET

Janet. Quiero habitacion?

cont.

- 20 Janet puts the palms of her hands together and rests her cheek on them. The two women talk excitedly to each other, then to Janet.

CATALINA
El Patron. Si. El Patron.

Catalina points to herself and then to Francesca.

CATALINA
Catalina. Francesca.

Janet repeats the names, smiling and nodding.

Francesca points to Janet.

FRANCESCA
Janetta.

JANET
No soy turista.

Janet mimes writing, in the air.

JANET
Soy escritora.

She glances at her phrase book again. She has already rehearsed this.

JANET
No hay mucho dinera.

She pats Traveller's Joy, shaking her head. No.

CATALINA
Si, Janetta. El Patron. Venga.
Venga, Janetta.

Catalina lightly takes Janet's arm, and the three set off down the hill. Janet in between the two women in black with their twig-filled baskets.

- 21 A wild cat, cornered, hissing on a kitchen table.

Catalina waving her arms, yelling at the cat to Vamoose!, stands with Janet and Francesca in the kitchen doorway of Number 6 Ignacio Riquer.

The cat flies off the table and is out between the women's legs in a grey flash, as Catalina bangs the door shut.

cont.

21 Francesca mimes lifting cases.

FRANCESCA
Equipage, Janetta?

JANET
No hay equipage. A Paris.
Not. Here.

She holds out empty hands, shaking her head. The two women look at her with awe, and some pity.

JANET
(VO)
I was a strange creature: a
foreigner with no belongings.

22 Janet in her large airy bedroom.

It is another day, and she is taking a few, new, basic clothes - underwear, sweater, black skirt, nightdress - from their parcels and lying them on the bed.

She takes the last parcel to the table under the window and takes out writing materials and arranges them on the table. Her few books already there.

Janet stares out of the large windows.

Mirror City lies across the water.

Janet sits at the table. She continues to stare out, absorbed, over the clear water, with its perfect reflection of the city.

JANET
(VO)
One day soon, I would walk around
the harbour road to the opposite
shore where the real city lay, that
I knew only as the city in the
sea.

23

JANET
(VO, cont.)
I felt as if I were trying to
walk behind a mirror.

Janet walking along a street in town, carrying a woven,
long-handled Spanish shopping basket.

cont.

- 23 She sees Colin and a convivial group of expatriates sitting at a table outside a cafe. She realises as she looks at them how lonely she has been.

Janet, self-conscious but trying to hide it, passes Colin's table, then stops as though she has just noticed him.

JANET
Oh! Hullo again.

Colin glances up. At first he doesn't seem to recognise Janet. After an awkward pause, Janet speaks excitedly, louder than she had intended.

JANET
My luggage is coming! They sent it by sea instead of by rail!

Colin's friends stop eating and talking to stare up at Janet. Colin also stares: not responding to her news. Janet falters.

JANET
And I've found a place to stay.

COLIN
(forced to it)
Ah. Good.

JANET
It has a view of the water in the town! I mean, the town in the water...it's...

Embarrassed by her jumble of words, she smiles awkwardly, backing off.

JANET
Well...Bye...

And with what she hopes is a casual wave she turns and walks off. She is blushing, humiliated, bumping into a table in passing.

- 24 Janet sitting at her table under the window - pen in hand, open notebook with drafts of a poem in front of her - suddenly jerks her head up, embarrassed once again as she remembers the cool amused faces and her eager words.

JANET
The water in the town!

And head-down she starts to write again.

BLACK SCREEN

- 25 Janet's two old suitcases and her green haversack alone on the back of an old truck travelling along a winding road up from the port. It is now winter.
-

- 25 The truck parked outside Number 6 Ignacio Riquer.

The driver stands on the back of the truck, handing down Janet's two battered suitcases and the typewriter in its green haversack, to eager Janet, Catalina and Francesca. Ship's labels on the luggage.

Janet, in her brown New Zealand overcoat, and Francesca and Catalina in layers of black clothes and shawls, all excited by the arrival of the famous luggage.

- 27 Janet's typewriter placed on the table under the window.

Objects strewn on the bed, from the first opened suitcase: books, the small stove, the Girl Guide cutlery and army pots and pans, Janet's blue tube dress of jersey silk.

Catalina and Francesca, excited by the bounty, squat on the floor with Janet as she opens the second suitcase. They sigh with envy at the packed goods.

Janet pulls out a green velvet dress. Catalina and Francesca moan with pleasure. Catalina rubs her hand over the velvet.

JANET

My sister made it for me. Mi hermana.
From an old curtain. Cortina.

As Janet holds up the crushed green velvet dress against herself, Catalina and Francesca giggle and moan.

CATALINA/FRANCESCA

Janetta's cortina...Janetta's cortina...

Janet, affected by their humour, flutters the dress against herself and does a brief shimmy.

- 28 Janet - wrapped in her New Zealand rug, with her legs through the arms of a sweater, a hot-water bottle on her lap - sits typing with frozen fingers at the table under the window. It is mid-winter. She rubs her hands together and blows into them.

cont.

18

- 28 Mirror city, across the water, is all greys. The sky a mass of thunderstorm clouds.

JANET

(VO)

I'm on my own, I told myself. I'm living the life of a writer.

29

JANET

(VO, cont.)

I was approved of because I was not a tourist. I was not American. I was an industrious escritora who did not have foreign friends.

The voice-over continues as Janet walks along a narrow winter street. The sound of bells tolling ceaselessly.

The voice-over stops as she turns a corner and joins the end of a queue of women, all rugged up in black clothes against the cold, as well as their poverty allows. They are queuing for coal and firewood. Janet has her Spanish basket, like the other women. The sound of the tolling bells comes from the church opposite the queue.

Mourners are carrying three tiny white babies' coffins into the church, followed by poor families and a few other mourners.

Hands go up all along the queue to make the sign of the cross. The woman in front of Janet turns to her and murmurs, as she crosses herself.

WOMAN

Ah, los crios. Los crios.

Janet's eyes on the little white coffins.

BLACK SCREEN

- 30 It is now Spring. Janet rides a bicycle down the street, to Number 6 Ignacio Riquere.
-

- 31 Janet, fresh from her bike ride, faces an excited, intimate Francesca, who is turning to the stairs as she speaks.

FRANCESCA

El Americano, Janet! El Americano!

cont.

31 They watch a tall young man come down the stairs into the sitting room. Janet is startled to see this stranger in her house.

EDWIN
Hi. I'm Edwin Mather. I've rented
the studio upstairs.

JANET
The studio...?

EDWIN
I'm a painter.

JANET
I didn't know there was a studio.

EDWIN
You didn't?

Janet realises her mistake. Francesca watching this exchange between the two foreigners, her glance quickly moving from face to face.

JANET
No...

EDWIN
I guess we share the kitchen,
and the outside john?

JANET
Do we?

On Janet as she watches Edwin gesturing out to the terrace, asking a question.

JANET
(VO)
I felt sick with disappointment...

32

JANET
(VO cont.)
...and a sense of betrayal for I
believed I had rented the entire house.
I had looked on Number 6 Ignacio
Riquere as my place, not to be shared
with a foreigner who spoke English.

Edwin's hands taping a detail of Picasso's "Guernica" to a wall.

As he moves away we see Janet looking closely at the greys and blacks and whites of the print.

cont.

20

32

EDWIN

Where do you get your money changed,
Janet?

Edwin moving around the large empty studio, full of light,
opening windows and doors on to the outside terrace. His
belongings piled in the centre of the room.

JANET

I changed it when I arrived, at the bank.

EDWIN

All of it? (Janet nods yes) You shouldn't
have done that. I get my American Scholarship
money changed in Andorra. That's where the
cheap money market is.

JANET

"Cheap" money?

EDWIN

If you wanted I could fix it for you too.

Janet unsure, feels dumb in the ways of the world, as she watches
energetic Edwin.

33 Janet going to her room, carrying four new candles. Scandalised
Francesca and Catalina are in wait outside her door.

FRANCESCA

Janetta!

CATALINA

La Diabla!

Catalina and Francesca look up at the ceiling, pointing to
Edwin's studio above them.

JANET

La Diabla?

CATALINA

La Diabla con Edwin.

Francesca and Catalina cross themselves.

JANET

A woman devil?

cont.

21

33

CATALINA

Si. She sleep in his bed. (Spanish)
It is a disgrace! Los Americanos!
Phoo! Thank God you are not like her.

FRANCESCA

You - good girl!

JANET

Si...

Janet once again cast as the good girl, the approved-of. But
this time it gives her no pleasure.

34

Janet in her room, the door ajar. She sees slim Dora passing the
door, coming down from Edwin's studio, wearing a shirt of
Edwin's over bare legs. *Janet feels as sexless as a block
of wood.*

35

Evening in the kitchen. Janet sits at the table eating her
Spanish food which she has cooked, a book propped in front of
her.

Edwin , Bernard and Dora - La Diabla - come into the kitchen.

EDWIN

Hi Janet. These are my friends, Dora
and Bernard. Dora, Bernard - Janet.

BERNARD

Hi, Janet.

DORA

Hi.

JANET

Hullo, Dora. Hullo, Bernard.

Janet puts down her fork. She can't eat in front of them.

She watches Edwin opening wine and getting glasses, helped by
slim Dora who wears narrow black trousers and a black sweater,
her black hair falling straight and shiny to her shoulders.

EDWIN

It's Bernard's birthday. Will you
join us in a glass of wine?

cont.

35 Bernard, perched on the table, his thigh near Janet's plate and book, is staring down admiringly at Janet. Conscious of him watching at close-range, she clumsily stands.

JANET

No thank you, Edwin. I was just going.

She scrapes unfinished food off her plate at the sink.

But Bernard has taken the wine from Edwin.

BERNARD

I'd like you to.

And hands it to Janet. She takes the glass. Their fingers touching excite Janet.

EDWIN

Dora's studying flute in Paris.

DORA

Have you been to Paris, Janet?

JANET

Yes, I spent a day in Paris on my way here.

DORA

Oh, you need more than a day for Paris.

They now all have wine.

EDWIN

To Bernard.

They raise their glasses and say Happy Birthday and drink.

BERNARD

My thirty-fourth year to Heaven.

EDWIN

I don't think Heaven's got much to do with it.

Bernard laughs. A big, easy laugh. Janet stares at his open mouth, his throat, affected by the sound of his laugh. She gulps some more wine and puts down the glass.

JANET

Thank you. I have to get back to work.

She goes to the door, clumsily picking up her book on the way, conscious of Bernard watching her.

BERNARD

You can't stay?

cont.

23

35

Janet turns at the door, shy but bold.

JANET
Happy Birthday, Bernard.

36

Janet typing at the table under the window. The light of Mirror City reflected in the dark water. The dim bulb burns overhead and four flickering candles on Janet's desk add their light.

Janet stops typing as she hears Edwin's and Bernard's voices, Dora's lighter voice and Bernard's laughter, as they come past her room and go upstairs to Edwin's studio.

37

Janet, in her blue tube dress, stands at the kitchen stove making marmalade. The big pot of bubbling orange fruit on the stove. Jars ready to receive the jam.

Bernard walks into the kitchen, bright daylight behind him.

BERNARD
Janet. Hi. Good morning. How are you?

JANET
Hello Bernard.

Bernard comes to stand by Janet at the stove.

Janet conscious of him watching her breasts moving under her dress, as she stirs the marmalade. She is pleased he is there.

38

Janet and Bernard walk past white windowless walls.

Janet, in her blue tube dress and Roman sandals, is nervously conscious of walking beside Bernard, their arms occasionally touching.

BERNARD
I couldn't work on a morning like this.

JANET
What kind of work do you do?

cont.

BERNARD

Well, back home I'm a history professor.
But I like to think of myself as a poet.
Edwin tells me you're a published author.

Bernard's voice sounds like music to Janet's already enchanted ears.

A grove of tall dark cacti, casting shadows of their exotic shapes on to the ground. Bernard and Janet walk through the tall plants, their double shadow moving across the shadow pattern of the cacti.

They are quoting from their favourite poets.

BERNARD

What about Auden?

JANET

Oh yes! (quotes)
Follow poet, follow right
To the bottom of the night.
With your unconstraining voice
Still persuade us to rejoice.

BERNARD

And Kipling? Do you know Gunga Din?

Janet embarrassed, disappointed that he could mention Kipling with Auden.

JANET

What about Yeats!?

Near the sea, a gaunt cow grazes at the end of a tethering rope, its circle of earth bare of grass.

Bernard, with encouraging noises to the cow, is withdrawing the post and leading the cow to a grassy spot.

Janet watches magnanimous Bernard as he sinks the post into the earth.

Then he picks up a stick and sharply strikes the cow twice in a burst of anger.

Janet's face twitches with the sharp blows.

cont.

- 40 But when Bernard turns back to her, she only wants to be enchanted again.
-

- 41 Janet and Bernard sit on the floor in front of a fire in the fireplace at Bernard's villa. A cool spring evening.

The sky just dark. White breakers vivid on the ocean just beyond the windows.

Janet excited by the sexual tension.

BERNARD

Have you ever been married, Janet?

JANET

No...not married...

BERNARD

I was, far too young. But I'm separated now. Do you have anyone special?

JANET

Oh, no one, well not really special.
Just a few...friends...

With a casual gesture Janet implies other, lighter liaisons.

Janet moves sideways to reach out and close a window.

Bernard follows her movement, pressing against her, holding her from behind, his face pressed into her neck, nuzzling her.

JANET

No Bernard...I've only just met you...I don't believe in...

BERNARD

What is it? What's wrong? --

Janet struggles to get free. Bernard lets go.

JANET

I mean, I don't know you.

Facing each other, breathless, crouched on the floor.

- 42 Later. Bernard has Janet pressed up against the hallway wall, next to the front door of his villa. He is moving his hands over her breasts, along her body, down over her bottom. He kisses her. Janet responds.

JANET

I have to go.

cont.

26

42

BERNARD

I know.

They continue to kiss and touch.

Blind, Janet reaches out to feel for the door handle.

43

Morning. Janet, holding a bag of breakfast cakes, knocks on the door of Bernard's white villa by the ocean.

Bernard opens the door. He is wearing a dressing gown and is surprised to see Janet.

JANET

I've brought our breakfast

She holds up the bag, for proof.

44

Janet and Bernard walking together, naked, to Bernard's bedroom. Arms around each other - walking out of step, awkward, gently bumping - as we see them from behind.

45

Janet lying in Bernard's unmade bed. Her heart thumping as she waits for Bernard, who sits naked on the edge of the bed.

Instead of sliding in beside Janet he suddenly bends and picks up a sheet of paper from the floor beside the bed.

BERNARD

Look, I just want to read you this, okay?

Janet tries to re-adjust.

BERNARD

I wrote it this morning. You know that time just after waking? It's when I'm most creative.

He has put his glasses on.

cont.

27

45

BERNARD

It's just a first draft. Okay...(reads)
Spring, in all its lightness,
Glad brightness,
Of blue-domed day - (breaks off)
I had blue-roofed but I changed it -
Of blue-domed day,
Heart-holding hills of Ohio,
Where memory stretches like miles,
And Spring renews its promise
Like the first spoken word.

Janet embarrassed by the poorness of Bernard's poem, but still entranced by his voice, his throat, his hands holding the paper.

BERNARD

Do you like it?

JANET

Mmm.

BERNARD

Really?

JANET

It must be lovely...Spring...

And Bernard is leaning closer and closer

JANET

...in Ohio...

Until he kisses her. Then he quickly takes off his glasses.

BERNARD

I was pleased with 'domed'.
'Blue-domed'.

And gets into bed with nervous, excited Janet.

46 Underwater. Bernard's legs tread water. Janet's face appears as she dives down. Janet looks at Bernard's body-less legs treading water, as she circles him, breast-stroking.

47 Night inside the villa. Janet sitting on the floor singing a Maori song-with-actions from her schooldays. Bernard laughing with pleasure. Two other Americans with them. Bernard goes to stand behind Janet as she finishes, his legs against her back. She leans against him, tilting her head back to look up at him.

cont.

28

47

JANET
(VO)

Now I joined Los Americanos. I was
Bernard's 'woman'. I discovered that
there is no warmer nest than skin.

BLACK SCREEN

48 Morning. Janet comes into the kitchen, back from Bernard's.

She feels awkward when she sees Catalina and Francesca washing
the kitchen floor, chairs on table, steam in air. Catalina
sloshing hot water, Francesca sweeping with a straw broom, skirts
hitched up, bare feet, all activity.

They stop their work to look at Janet: no longer their Janetta.

Catalina rubs a finger and thumb together.

CATALINA
(sly)

El Americano? Mucho dinera?

JANET
(cool)

No se. Posible.

They watch her leave the kitchen. Janet catches, out of the
corner of her eye, the movement of Francesca crossing herself.
Janet's face stiff with the knowledge that they believe she is
now a Female Devil.

49

Janet puts her head around the door of Edwin's studio where Edwin
is eating Canadian salmon out of a can, hunched over a book of
Miro prints. We see a few months worth of work around the
studio.

JANET
Quiere el fuego?

EDWIN
Hey, Janet! Hi.

Edwin watches Janet as she self-consciously comes into the
studio: a new sexual woman.

EDWIN
I haven't heard your typewriter
for weeks. Not writing?

cont.

49 Janet tries to laugh lightly.

JANET
I'm having a break.

EDWIN
I hope you know what you're doing.

JANET
Of course I do.

50 In Bernard's villa, Bernard and Janet are reading - English and Spanish newspapers scattered around them.

BERNARD
Well, I guess this is my last week.

Janet dismayed.

BERNARD
Hey, you knew I was going.

JANET
No.

BERNARD
(kindly)
I've got to get back, prepare for
next term and so on. More's the pity.

Janet mute. She feels stupid, betrayed.

JANET
Not next week?

Bernard laughs his lovely laugh, crouches beside her.

BERNARD
Hey, listen, I want to say...no,
listen to me...I've had a great
summer. I mean it. I'm going to
miss you.

He leans in to kiss Janet, but Janet's heart not in it.

51 The next morning in Janet's room. She stands, drearily looking down at her typewriter. She puts out a finger and rubs it across a couple of keys, through the dust. She looks at her dirty finger tips, rubbing the dust off. She lets out a big breath of nervous tension, squeezing her eyes shut.

cont.

- 51 She hears Bernard's voice downstairs greeting Catalina and Francesca. She hurries to her door and shuts it, turning the old key, with difficulty, in the lock.

She blunders back to the middle of the room, as if to hide.

Bernard's steps have stopped outside her door. We see the handle turning, the door not opening.

BERNARD
(OS)

Janet?

He tries the door again.

BERNARD
(OS)

Janet? It's me!

Janet wraps her arms around herself, and then puts her hands over her ears. She is too hurt and betrayed to want to see Bernard again.

BERNARD

Janet?

Bernard gives a last thwarted rattle to the door. Janet takes her hands away from her ears, listening as she hears his footsteps going away, the front door slamming shut.

She lifts the hem of her skirt and vigorously cleans the typewriter keys with it.

-
- 52 Janet holds a battery torch, directing it on to Edwin, in his dark studio. He stands on a table changing the light bulb.

EDWIN
Bernard's leaving on Tuesday.

JANET
Yes, he told me.

EDWIN
Maybe you need a change, too.
Why not try Andorra?

He hands Janet down the old bulb and takes the new one from her. As he screws it in.

EDWIN
It's cheaper there.

Edwin climbs down from the table and turns on the light.

cont.

- 52 Bright light floods on for a second, then blackness as the lights fuse. Only the torch-light and Edwin's "Blast!"
-

- 53 Janet sits quietly in her dark bedroom. Her back to Mirror City reflected in the water.

She first hears, then sees, Catalina and Francesca - dim shapes - come through the open door, each carrying two lit candles.

CATALINA

Janetta?

JANET

Si. I'm here.

Francesca and Catalina cross the room and put the candles on the table under the window. The three faces in the flickering candle-light.

JANET

Gracias.

Catalina looks down at Janet with affection and pity.

CATALINA

Ah, los Americanos...They disturb everything. En todos partes. Even the light, they make dark.

Janet looks up and smiles a small acknowledging smile at Catalina.

- 54 Janet in a tiny mountain bus, climbing a very steep road. She looks at the black of Northern pines against the snow of the Pyrennees.

JANET
(VO)

True Romance indeed! So much for poetry and music! I was beginning to suspect that I might be pregnant.

ANDORRA on the black screen

- 55 Janet in a classically folorn pose, sits on one of her suitcases in the square of tiny, poor, mountain-top Andorra. Her other suitcase, haversack and accumulated bits and pieces around her.

Carlos, a young man in work clothes, passes her. Janet stands.

JANET

Por favor. Quiero una habitacion?

Carlos stares at Janet, says nothing. Then he bends and picks up a suitcase and slings the haversack over his shoulder and beckons her to follow him.

CARLOS

(Spanish)

Come with me.

- 56 Janet stands in a bedroom of a third-floor apartment. The rushing sound of a mountain river below; the snowy Pyrennees looking in through the window.

A double bed with a high feather mattress, holy pictures above the bed. Janet's belongings herded around her.

Carlos, Donna and their two young boys watch Janet as she stares around the room.

ANTOINE

(Spanish, to his mother)

Where will you and Papa sleep?

DONNA

(Spanish)

With Xavier and you.

The children's big dark eyes stare at Janet the usurper.

El Vici Mario, in suit and black and white two-tone shoes, appears in the doorway. He wheels a beautiful blue and white racing bicycle.

DONNA

(Spanish, to Janet)

This is our other boarder, El Vici Mario.

Janet and El Vici bow formally to each other, murmuring greetings. El Vici looks at Janet admiringly, frankly.

- 57 Freezing night in the bedroom. Janet's breath on the air. Frost and a thin film of ice on the window pane.

Janet stands in nightgown, sweater and socks. She rubs a hand over her stomach, then presses it in various places, feeling for the baby she is certain is there. She holds her nightgown tightly across her stomach, looking for a change in shape.

Janet gets into bed. Her red hair on the feather pillows. The enormous feather quilt completely hides the shape of her body. She holds a notebook and pencil on the quilt but it is too cold to sit up and write. She tips her head back and rolls her eyes up to the Holy pictures and icons on the wall.

JANET
(VO)

Occasionally I was happy, thinking
I'd have a replica of Bernard,
picturing a boy with his face and
build and laugh or a girl with his
eyes.

58

JANET
(VO cont.)

I remembered how my small friend
Poppy had said that if Hollywood
stars didn't want their babies
they drank gin or ran up and down
mountains.

Janet sits on her bed, her typewriter balanced on her lap. She is typing her novel, from the written pages of an exercise book. Snowy morning light from the Pyrenees floods the room, lighting her hair.

- 59 A sign reads:

PERIGO
DANGER
AVALANCHES

Janet passes the sign, climbing vigorously up a mountain path, rugged up in as many clothes as she has.

Janet leaves the path and jumps from rock to rock, landing as heavily as she dares. She stops on a rock and jumps up and down, part of her willing a miscarriage. Her breath on the cold air.

- 60 Janet, wearing a sweater over her nightgown, and mittens, sits up in bed, under the enormous eiderdown. She has a French pattern book "Baby Garments" and is knitting a tiny, pale yellow matinee jacket, almost finished.

She wraps her knitting in its cloth, with the pattern book, and climbs out of bed. She bends and pulls out her suitcase from under the bed, to hide the knitting.

Before she can shut the case, she feels an acute, crippling pain. She doubles over, crouched on the floor, her face contorted, panting for breath.

-
- 61 In the tiny basic bathroom, white Janet shakes bulky blood from a towel into the lavatory bowl. She flushes the toilet. Always one hand on something for support. She tosses the bloody towel into the empty bath. She is shaking, dis-oriented.

JANET
(VO)

I knew a feeling that was stronger
than regret but not as intense as
bereavement.

BLACK SCREEN

- 62 A large tin bowl of bread and milk is passed around the breakfast table. Janet helps herself and passes the bowl to tiny Xavier.

Across the table, El Vici - in his suit-waistcoat - watches Janet admiringly as she hungrily carries the dripping bread to her mouth.

The dark faces and eyes around the table contrast with Janet's pale skin and red hair, gleaming in the early morning room.

-
- 63 El Vici, carrying a basket, wearing his suit, walks with Janet up a steep mountain path. They pass a cluster of grey stone buildings like a rocky outcrop.

Janet watches El Vici's black and white two-tone shoes leading the way up the mountain path.

cont.

EL VICI
 (English/Spanish)
 In Autumn I pick grapes in the
 South of France. Sometimes I work
 in a fur-shop here, in Spain. I
 will never live in Italy, not after
 Mussolini. That is finished for
 me.

Janet and El Vici now sitting on a bare patch of rock. The
 snowline as distinct as a shadow above them.

They have spread their picnic of bread and sausage and wine on
 the rock between them.

Suddenly El Vici leans forward and caresses Janet's breasts,
 holding them as if he's weighing them.

Janet pulls away, the prim counsellor.

JANET
 Oh no, El Vici. Non. I can't kiss
 or cuddle people I don't know well.

EL VICI
 But you walk with me in the mountains.

JANET
 Yes...

EL VICI
 No woman walk in the mountains with a
 man, Janette, unless they wish to be
 amores, lovers.

JANET
 I came as your friend.

EL VICI
 A woman not walk a solas, alone,
 everywhere, like you do. In future I
 escort you. You are Andorran now,
 Janette.

Janet finds herself passive in the face of El Vici's
 masterly-ness.

BLACK SCREEN

64 Donna and Janet kiss; Carlos and Janet embrace, as:

DONNA
 You marry here? In our church?

Proud El Vici stands beside trapped Janet.

cont.

EL VICI

Si, Donna.

DONNA

Oh, Janetta...

JANET

(Spanish/English)

I have to return to London first,
I've told El Vici. I've got things
to see to there, things I have to do.

They all smile at Janet lovingly, admiringly.

DONNA

This wonderful news. I so happy.

Janet's eyes roll, she can't focus on these people she knows she
will disappoint. She looks everywhere but at them.

65 Janet stands with Carlos, Donna, El Vici and the children beside
the tiny mountain bus. Her luggage already on board. Hugs and
kisses and tenderness, as Janet gives Donna her warm brown New
Zealand overcoat.

Janet gives Antoine her mouth-organ and kisses him. He
immediately starts playing it.

As Janet goes to kiss El Vici, last, he grabs her hand and tries
to push a ring on to her finger. Janet has a small struggle to
get her hand back, ring-less.

JANET

No, El Vici. No. Thank you. ..

EL VICI

It was my grandmother's ring.

JANET

I might lose it in London. Keep it
for me here.

EL VICI

I like you to wear my ring in London,
Janette.

JANET

When I come back, I'll wear it.

Lying Janet kisses El Vici goodbye. He has tears in his eyes, to
let his Janette go.

cont.

- 65 Janet quickly climbs into the bus. Antoine plays a reedy scale up and down the mouth-organ.

- 66 In the tiny bus, Janet watches the walls of thick-packed snow high on either side of the slowly moving bus. The freshly cleared road, the blue light reflected off the Northern snow, as the bus climbs the mountain road to France.

The late Spring clouds in the cold blue sky.

LONDON on the black screen

- 67 Janet and Patrick Reilly negotiate themselves and Janet's luggage up the dingy steps inside Waterloo Station.

PATRICK

I'm living in a new place in Clapham Common. Don't think I'm presumptuous, Janet, but I've rented a room for you there, too. The landlady likes to be called Ma. She's a real character, but tip-top.

Janet finds Patrick un-changed. She feels an oppressive dismay at being with him again.

PATRICK

I trust you're still fancy-free.

-
- 68

JANET

(VO)

Now that my Grant had run out I did not know how I was going to continue to write and earn my living.

Patrick's table in his new room is as before: tea things, Peek Frean's chocolate digestives, gold-top milk, all laid out on oilcloth, and all obsessively placed and re-placed as they talk.

Janet going down the Situations Vacant columns with a pencil, marking possibilities.

She feels Patrick is "like a conformist New Zealand conscience that has somehow travelled with her and assumed human shape".

cont.

38

68

PATRICK

You don't want to spend your time
writing. There's no money in it.
Alright for a holiday, but not now,
not for permanent.

Janet, head down, continues down the columns.

PATRICK

What about Peek Freans?

JANET

...Peek...Freans...

PATRICK

Yes. You could work in the office
there.

Janet feels overwhelmed with the dreariness, the coping, the
details.

69 Janet sits on the other side of a desk from a pleasant Matron,
who is checking Janet's application for Nursing Training.

MATRON

It's nice to have a mature
applicant, we have so many young
ones. (back to application form)
Any major illnesses?

JANET

No.

MATRON

Psychiatric treatment?

JANET

...Yes...

The Matron looks up, waits.

JANET

I spent some time in hospital in
New Zealand.

MATRON

How long is "some time"?

JANET

...Eight...eight years...

The Matron is horrified. Janet sees her mistake.

cont.

39

69

MATRON

How could you possibly think of
being a Nurse?

She has stood, fear and anger flickering across her face.

MATRON

What was the diagnosis?

JANET

Schizophrenia. But -

But the Matron cuts Janet off, as she hurries to the door, trying to smile, ashamed of her unconcealed fear and alarm.

MATRON

I'm sorry, no. No! It's out of the
question.

Janet - still sitting, silent - feels a large cold stone in her chest, weighing her down, spreading.

70 Janet looks down at a sign in a basement window of a grimy house: FEMALE WORKER WANTED APPLY WITHIN

71 Janet sits in the basement room. She is screwing arms into a doll's torso. Feet pass on the pavement outside, above eye-level.

A woman paints eyes on a doll's featureless head, as she smokes.

Other dolls' heads around her: some painted, some blank. Piles of arms and legs, hair and torsoes, wait to be assembled.

Janet picks up a head and screws it into the body with arms. Her hands on the bald head with its painted blue eyes, turning and turning, screwing the head in. It jams slightly and she has to start again.

JANET

(VO)

I felt as if all the griefs I had
ever known were beginning to surface
within me.

40

- 72 Janet walks through a warren of buildings at the Maudsley Hospital.

JANET
(VO)

In fear and despair for my life, I
needed answers to the questions I
still asked myself about my history.
I knew that talk of suicide must
always be taken seriously. Such talk
came readily to me as a shortcut to
ensure action.

Janet disappears through the doors, into the Hospital.

JANET
(VO)

I was admitted as a voluntary patient.

BLACK SCREEN

- 73 Janet, seen through windows from outside, walking down a hospital corridor.

JANET
(VO)

Finally, it was concluded that I
had never suffered from schizophrenia.
At first the truth seemed more
terrifying than the lie. How could I
now ask for help when there was
nothing wrong with me?

-
- 74 Janet, with her suitcase beside her chair, sits opposite Dr Cawley in his office at the Maudsley.

JANET
How long will it take?

DR CAWLEY
Well, you know the problems
you've been experiencing are a
direct result of all those years
in hospital. You can't undo that
quickly. I'm here whenever you need
me, but for a start, I think ^{once} a
week. *come to see me*

cont.

41

74

JANET
Only once a week?

DR CAWLEY
And I want you to write about your
time spent in hospital in New Zealand.

Worried Janet takes this idea in

DR CAWLEY
It'll help give you a clearer view to
the future.

JANET
But I haven't got a job. How will
I live?

DR CAWLEY
You don't have to worry about that,
you'll be on National Assistance.

Janet's relief as she realises her liberation.

DR CAWLEY
And if anyone tells you to "get out
and mix" when you don't want to,
don't.

BLACK SCREEN

76 Janet's new room is a large second-floor front room overlooking the street, with a large mirrored wardrobe, a fat floral armchair, a dipping stretcher-bed and a kero heater in front of an unused fireplace. The sound of gunshots and horses comes from a television in another room.

Busy Janet is dragging the green-and-white-checked, oilcloth-covered table towards the window. She manouvers it into place. Looks at it, pleased. Then hurries to the bed, where her typewriter and writing things are, and carries the typewriter to the table and is putting it down at one end when there is a knock at the door.

JANET
Yes?

The door opens and Ted, the landlord, comes into the room. He is drunk, but confident.

TED
Hullo. Settling in? I'll tell
you what you haven't got. You
haven't got a telly.

cont.

42

76

JANET

No.

TED

I work with tee-vees. How about I
get you one?

JANET

Oh. Well, yes, thank you.

Ted puts out his hand to shake Janet's hand. She automatically
puts her hand in his. He lifts her hand quickly and kisses it.
Janet pulls her hand away. Ted pleased, sways slightly.

TED

Just a token.

77 A few letters on the floor inside the front door.

Anxious Janet hurrying downstairs.

But before she can get to the letters Mrs Morgan, the landlady,
pops out of the front room - piano scales through open door - and
picks up the mail.

She is looking down at Janet's easily identifiable National
Assistance envelope.

JANET

That's for me.

Janet bursts into tears as she takes the envelope.

JANET

I'm on National Assistance.

Mrs Morgan isn't shocked or deceived.

MRS MORGAN

I suppose you know my secret by now?

JANET

No...?

MRS MORGAN

It's Ted, Mr Morgan. He's an alcoholic.
He falls in the door most nights of the
week.

Janet has stopped crying, but now Mrs Morgan bursts into tears.

78 The small backyard of the Morgan's house.

A rabbit in a hutch blinks twitching up at Janet and Mrs Morgan, who stand - their tears cleared - on the little concrete path, staring at the Morgan's clothes hanging on the clothesline.

MRS MORGAN

You can hang your washing out here if you like. I wouldn't ask just anyone to use it.

JANET

Thank you, Mrs Morgan.

MRS MORGAN

Call me Joan.

JANET

Joan. I'm Janet.

The two women, with their secrets and their shared clothesline, smile shyly at each other.

79 Janet has now sound-proofed her room. The wardrobe is moved to act as a sound-barrier, blankets strung across furniture to form a cubby. The table now in the centre of the room.

Janet typing inside the cubby. She stops typing, and can still hear: piano scales, a radio, two conflicting television programs, one variety, one Western, traffic noise, and someone hammering.

She puts one of her two records on to her new portable record-player. The sound of Schubert's songs. She sits and starts typing again, now with her own noise added to the general tide of sound.

80 Janet's eyes are on her manuscript of "Faces in the Water" on Dr Cawley's desk.

JANET

Have you read it?

DR CAWLEY

Yes, I have.

Janet disappointed with his reticence

cont.

44

80

DR CAWLEY
I'm sure getting that time out
of your system will be good for you.

JANET
But as a book do you like it?

DR CAWLEY
I told you I wasn't a literary chap.

Janet faltering.

DR CAWLEY
Have you thought of getting an agent?

JANET
I already have one.

DR CAWLEY
What do they say?

JANET
I wanted you to read it first.

DR CAWLEY
Well, that's *fine, but now that I have,*
take it to them and get their
opinion.

BLACK SCREEN

81 Nervous Janet buying the Sunday Observer and the Sunday Times at the newstand at Westminster Station. Janet hurries off holding the bulky papers.

82 In the Women's Lavatory at Westminster Station, Janet sits on a bench in the restroom. Other women at the mirrors and basins, the sound of flushing lavatories. A few women, like Janet, there for refuge.

Janet finds the Book Pages. With a shock she sees her face staring back up at her, and a review of 'Faces In The Water' with the headline POWERFUL NEW NOVEL. She lets out a held breath of nervous tension. She glances up at the washroom, her face burning, then back down to the praising review.

BLACK SCREEN

- 83 In the Morgan's tiny backyard Mrs Morgan is pegging up a row of her daughter's school shirts. Janet is un-pegging her clothes.

JANET
I'm going to meet my publisher tomorrow.

MRS MORGAN
Why don't I make a hair appointment for you?

JANET
Nothing works. I've tried.

MRS MORGAN
Oh, they could do something, I'm sure.

Mrs Morgan looks appraisingly, hopefully, at Janet's mass of frizzy curls.

- 84 Janet stands in front of her wardrobe mirror, her hair "done" in a stiff, sculptured crest. She wears a new, busily-patterned dress, as unsuccessful as her hair.

Mortified, she stares at herself. She tries to shake loose the stiff hair, with both hands, but it won't budge.

- 85 Janet in a tiny openwork cast-iron lift, rising. The dim cage throws its patterned shadows across nervous Janet.

- 86 Mark Goulden, Janet's publisher, sits behind his large desk. Janet faces him in a low, large armchair. His book lined office has windows overlooking the street.

GOULDEN
Yes, granted, your books have had good reviews, some very good. But what I want you to do now, is write a best-seller.

Janet bemused; will her obedience carry her that far? Mark Goulden has stood and gone to the bookshelves.

cont.

46

86

GOULDEN

When Wanda Lyons comes to see me,
do you know how she comes? She comes
in a Rolls Royce. You're a better
writer than Wanda.

He has picked out a couple of novels from a shelf. Confused
Janet takes them, one by one.

GOULDEN

Best seller. Best seller. Study
them. They'll give you the form.
Where is it you're living?

JANET

Camberwell.

GOULDEN

Camberwell's a wasteland. I'll make
you an offer. We'll give you an
apartment.

JANET

"Give" me?

GOULDEN

To write your next book in.

Janet wonders what 'give' means. Shyness overwhelms her. She
finds herself, once more, passive and obedient in the face of
bossiness.

JANET

I don't know...I'll have to see...

GOULDEN

There are some people I'd like you
to meet. And next time, don't forget,
you come in a Rolls.

Janet flummoxed by the kind of life he sees her living. She is
now close to tears.

87

Janet, wearing a dress and cardigan - her hair in its old mass of
curls - walks close beside an apartment building in Mayfair,
trying to shelter from heavy rain. She is already wet -
squelching shoes, soaked cardigan, hot from hurrying. Evening
light.

She approaches the entrance of the apartment block and sees Alan
Sillitoe and his wife hurrying, under an umbrella, from a taxi to
the awning over the entrance.

cont.

- 87 Rather than have to meet them yet, Janet steps back, faltering, in the rain, her face burning with nervousness as the Sillitoes disappear into the building.

Janet flicks water from her hair and tries to flatten it. She pulls out a hanky and wipes her face.

- 88 Tall, dark, polished Mrs Goulden plucks a black dress and a pair of high-heeled black shoes from a well-stocked wardrobe in the Goulden's luxurious bedroom.

She smiles at dripping, steamy Janet as she puts the dress and shoes on the enormous bed.

MRS GOULDEN

There, they should fit. I'll send Columba for your wet things. Take your time!

As she leaves, Janet stares down at the clothes on the bed, feeling like a lump of wet cloth.

- 89 Janet walking down a hallway towards the sound of voices. She wears the too-tight black dress; uncertain ankles in the toe-less high-heeled shoes.

She pauses in the doorway of the sitting room. The Sillitoes and the Gouldens turn to watch her as she comes tottering - exposed - into the room. Mark Goulden and Alan Sillitoe both stand until Janet sits.

Columba, the Portugese maid, is serving drinks.

Introductions made by Mark Goulden between Janet and Alan Sillitoe and American Ruth. Janet feels in a blunder of awkwardness as she sits back into the deep sofa and sees the evening shoes pop out in front of her.

North of England Alan, next to Janet on the sofa, turns and looks at her with admiration.

ALAN

I loved your "Faces In The Water",
it's powerful stuff, very true.
And "Scented Gardens for the Blind".

JANET

Thank you.

cont.

48

89

She feels she has to return the praise.

JANET
I enjoyed your book, too, "The
Loneliness of the Long Distance
Runner".

ALAN
Did you?

JANET
Yes, I did.

ALAN
(truthful)
I'm glad.

Columba offers Janet canapes. Janet takes one, and a drink,
which breaks up her talk with Alan. As Columba leaves the room.

ALAN
Where does she come from?

MARK
Portugal.

MRS GOULDEN
We have to mime everything. She
knows about three English words.

RUTH
Is she good?

MRS GOULDEN
Oh, wonderful, yes.

Janet looking slyly at the dark gleaming furniture, the Persian
rugs, the paintings.

MARK
Janet's in our Knightsbridge place
at the moment, writing her new book.

Janet feels like a pet monkey in fancy-dress as the friendly
faces turn to her, waiting for her to join in, become one of
them.

JANET
Yes.

She is inadequate. They all wait.

JANET
I am.

- 90 The next day. In the bedroom of the Knightsbridge apartment. Mrs Goulden's black dress hangs on the outside of the wardrobe door, the black shoes on the carpet below it.

Janet contemplates the dress and shoes and the kind of expectations they represent. Her eyes slide around the plush bedroom.

She hears the clattering sound of the mail flap.

In the hallway she sees a blue airmail envelope on the floor.

She opens the letter and as she reads her face crumples into tears.

JANET

(VO)

Dad was dead. He'd collapsed cycling to work out on the North Road and died in hospital.

- 91 Janet walking along beside shelves of books in the London Library Reading Room.

She comes to Millicent the librarian, with a trolley, shelving books.

JANET

Hullo, Millicent.

Millicent looks up.

MILLICENT

Oh hullo, Miss Frame.

JANET

I'm returning to New Zealand next week and I wondered if you'd be able to come and see me off at the ship.

MILLICENT

Well, that depends. When is it?

JANET

Two o'clock? On Tuesday?

MILLICENT

I could ask for an extended lunch hour.

cont.

91 Relieved Janet smiles at Millicent.

JANET
You could have afternoon tea on
board, if you like.

BLACK SCREEN

92 Janet, rugged-up, wearing a scarf, sits in a deck chair on the Corinthic. Empty deck chairs around her. A fine misty rain is falling, the ship steeply pitching.

Janet trying to write in her Notebook. A vomit bucket under her chair.

A young man, rolling with the ship, zig-zags up to Janet with a cup of tea. He gives it to her, accepts her thanks, and zig-zags back below deck. Janet's hands around the hot cup, her eyes shut.

93 Janet walks up the steep hill towards Willowglen perched high up in its perpetual shade.

Janet walks around the outside of the tiny house; walking over squashed, rotting pears under the pear trees, listening to the wind tossing the leaves high in the trees.

94

JANET
(VO)
Although my homecoming was as sad and
desolate as I knew it would be, I was
rewarded by the sight of a straggly
cabbage tree and hillsides covered with
golden tussocks.

Janet stands in the kitchen doorway, looking into the cold kitchen, turning her head to take everything in: Dad's long, soiled underpants on the floor, pyjamas over a chair, newspapers littered on the table with tea things. The old King's sofa, the forever unfinished eye-less hunting dog painted by Dad on black velvet.

cont.

- 94 Janet walks over to Dad's old slippers. She stares down at them. She sticks a foot out and slips it into one of the slippers. She looks down at her foot in the slipper. She moves her toes up and down, making the slipper move. She puts her other foot into the second slipper and, for a moment, as she stands there, she is Dad.

- 95 Janet, down on the flat, tending a fire. She has piles and boxes of papers to burn. We see old bills and receipts, letters and family mementoes, Dad's Zane Grey and Sexton Blake paperbacks with their loose, yellowing pages drifting through everything. She feeds them to the blazing fire.

A washing line of clothes and bed-linen can be seen propped high to dry.

The fire casts light up on to her skin and hair as she pokes a stick into the flames, stirring the pages and papers to make them burn more easily. Sparks fly into the air.

Two figures have been approaching, behind Janet, unseen by her: a man in a coat and tie and a boy with a camera.

KEN
Miss Frame?

Startled Janet turns. Hand shading her eyes.

JANET
Yes?

IEN
Ken Bowker from the local paper, Miss Frame. Sorry to disturb you. We wanted to beat the Dunedin papers to it.

Janet confused.

JANET
To what?

KEN
Your story.

- 96 Janet stands under a cabbage tree on the hill. The boy takes her photograph. Ken calls from beside him.

KEN
Could we have one sitting?

cont.

96 Janet obediently sits, arranging herself under the cabbage tree.

JANET
Like this?

KEN
That's good!

We watch Janet primly smiling under the cabbage tree, hands folded on thighs, legs curled under her to the side, back straight.

BLACK SCREEN

97 A small caravan in June's overgrown Auckland back garden. The rat-a-tat-tat of a typewriter comes from the caravan.

JANET
(VO)
I took the train and ferry North to Auckland, where I stayed for a while in a caravan in my sister June's garden.

Janet sits, in her cubby, typing. She stops, picks up a book, checks a quote, re-writes a line in her rough-copy exercise book, then types again, all in one continuous, concentrated movement.

On a hill up behind the street of suburban houses. Janet walks through the tussocky grass, in patterned light and shade from the blowing trees overhead.

JANET
(VO)
Now that writing was my only occupation, regardless of the critical and financial outcome, I felt I had found 'my place' at a deeper level than any landscape, of any country, would provide.

Janet lies in the grass, full of tall weeds, the sound of small insects whirring everywhere. She stares up at the always satisfying sky.

Back in the caravan, Janet is typing again. The speedy rattle of the keys, the hand-written draft of inky letters in the exercise book, the clear typed letters growing on the white paper in the typewriter.

cont.

97 Janet wears ear-muffs to block the noise of:

June's three children - two boys and a girl - playing in the overgrown back garden. Through the caravan's open door they appear and disappear, backwards and forwards, their voices joining the sound of Janet's typewriter.

THE END