

PICNIC AT HANGING ROCK

TWO

Draft Three

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Based on the novel

PICNIC AT HANGING ROCK

by  
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**FADE IN**

1     **INT. COLLEGE FOYER - DAY**

SUPER: MACEDON AUSTRALIA 1899 WINTER

It's early. Sound of rain.

Miranda crosses to the stairs, returning from her secret morning walk.

She's wet.

Has been caught in a shower.

Looks exhilarated.

Climbs the stairs, two at a time.

Junior governess Dora Lumley waits, on the landing.

Triumphant.

2     **INT. COLLEGE HEAD'S STUDY - DAY**

Miranda - in her uniform - stands tall in front of the Head's desk.

Mrs Appleyard studies the rebellious teen.

Dora waits for instructions.

Mrs Appleyard gets the cane.

A flash of fear in Miranda's eyes -

hidden as soon as Dora takes the implement.

MRS APPLEYARD  
Hold out your left hand, Miss Reid.  
Palm up.

Miranda does.

Mrs Appleyard turns away.

Dora brings down the cane.

WHUP!

Miranda forces herself not to flinch.

WHUP!

Miranda makes herself strong.

She has seen injured animals run, she has seen her brothers endure pain without crying.

MRS APPLEYARD (CONT'D)  
Go hard, Miss Lumley.

Again the cane comes down.

Mrs Appleyard senses Miranda's resistance.

MRS APPLEYARD (CONT'D)  
Both hands. Palms up.

Dora looks momentarily surprised - both hands is unheard of.

But she follows orders.

The stronger Miranda is -

the harder Dora brings down her implement.

Miranda can't stop the tears from falling -

but she doesn't yield.

Not even when Dora cries out from her exertions -

- and drops of blood spatter the pristine leather blotter.

3 **INT. MARION & IRMA'S ROOM - EVENING**

Miranda is the pale and silent victim of an outrage.

Minnie kneels at Miranda's feet, crying.

Changing the bloodied bandages on Miranda's hands.

Watched by Irma, Marion and Sara.

Minnie kisses Miranda's shining hair.

Exits.

MARION  
Good night Sara.

SARA  
But -

IRMA  
Go.

Sara looks pleadingly at Miranda but Miranda says nothing.

SARA  
I know where Mrs Appleyard keeps  
her special brandy.

Irma considers this - and nods.

4 **INT. COLLEGE HEAD'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Sara slips into Mrs Appleyard's bedroom.

A girl in a fairy tale, following a bright thread of curiosity into the darkness.

She takes a moment to orient herself.

Goes to the dressing table.

Slowly opens a drawer, so it doesn't make a sound.

A cognac bottle.

Sara removes it and looks around for a glass.

There's one on the nightstand.

Sound of girls' voices in the corridor outside.

She holds her breath -

but of course the girls would never dream of entering the Head's secret chamber.

Sara crosses to the night stand.

Stares down at it.

At the lock.

At the tiny key with its silk tassel.

She crouches and unlocks the cabinet door.

A bible. How disappointing.

In the shadows, at the back of the night stand - treasures.

An oriental fan.

A small tin with a blue label.

Sara's hand reaches in.

5 **INT. MARION & IRMA'S ROOM - SAME EVENING**

Sara delivers a water glass brim-full of alcohol.

IRMA

Thank you Sara. Now good night.

Sara fingers something in her pinafore pocket.

SARA  
(to Miranda) Good night.

Miranda says nothing.

Sara goes.

Irma closes the door behind her.

And places a chair under the doorknob.

MARION  
(to Miranda) Up you get.

Miranda stands.

Irma pushes the two beds together.

Together, Marion and Irma undress Miranda.

They wash her, with water from Irma's porcelain wash bowl.

They dress her in one of Irma's nightgowns.

Then they prepare themselves for bed.

Irma gives Miranda a sip of brandy.

She swallows it.

Irma hides the rest.

#### **A SHORT TIME LATER**

The three girls lie across the two beds.

Miranda in an attitude of crucifixion.

Arms outspread, wounded palms facing up.

Irma and Marion lie on either side of her.

Curled up close -

arms protectively around their injured friend.

6

#### **INT. COLLEGE ART ROOM - DAY**

The senior girls are troublesome in art class. They have put aside childish things, like spontaneity and making mistakes. So their drawings - of each other - aren't worth a second glance.

Miranda, with her swollen bandaged paws, is unable to hold a pencil.

She sits, staring at nothing.

Mrs Valange watches her. Concerned.

MRS VALANGE

Girls. I had an exciting weekend. I visited Mount Diogenes.

She unveils a painting of her own.

A landscape study of the Hanging Rock.

Gothic in style.

The mysterious Rock rises like Vengeance under a stormy sky.

MRS VALANGE (CONT'D)

Why people set sail to see temples and churches, when we have miracles like this right on our doorstep...

IRMA

(incredulous) Have you ever visited the Sistine Chapel, Miss?

MRS VALANGE

I have, as it happens, Irma. Not in a golden carriage of course, like yourself.

Blanche and her girls snigger.

MRS VALANGE (CONT'D)

I tramped from one end of Italy to the other. There's no denying it's heavenly. But a few thousand years of culture can't compare to a monument which has existed since before the birth of time...

The girls exchange amused glances.

Mrs Valange is a Character. Poor thing.

Miranda finally looks up.

Sees the painting of the Rock.

A slow pulse begins. From deep under the floorboards, the dirt, the granite.

#### **LATER**

Class has been dismissed. Miranda is absorbed in Mrs Valange's water color. She looks wistful. Haunted.

Irma and Marion wait impatiently.

MARION

We shall visit it one day. Would you like that, Miri?

Miranda nods.

IRMA

We'll go in the Spring. Why not?

MARION

Mrs Appleyard would never agree.

Irma's face says 'Nonsense. Leave it to me.'

They link arms with Miranda and gently propel her out.

The pot-boiler on the easel looks harmless enough.

7 **EXT. HANGING ROCK - DAWN - DAY 4**

The sun rises.

The Rock appears to be made of flesh, in the dawn light.

8 **EXT. PICNIC GROUND - CONTINUOUS**

TRACKER JOE (late 30s) - a Dja Dja Warrung elder - walks between the trees.

Approaching the picnic ground.

He can see the remains of the beacon fires.

A mess of footprints in the dirt.

A girl's parasol lying forgotten in the grass.

He sees probationary CONSTABLE WILKINS (20) - doggedly following SERGEANT BUMPER (30s).

Who notices Joe and greets him with a friendly nod.

9 **INT. COLLEGE - DAWN - DAY 4**

Minnie opens the drapes, the shutters.

Lights filters through lace like drifting smoke.

10 **INT. COLLEGE DINING ROOM - DAY - DAY 4**

The girls are at breakfast.

Juniors at their table - minus Edith.

Intermediates at theirs. Seniors at theirs, minus Irma, Miranda and Marion.

Dora Lumley and Mademoiselle are at the teacher's table.

Mrs Appleyard makes a determined entrance. The girls stand.

GIRLS

Good morning Mrs Appleyard.

MRS APPLEYARD

By now you will be aware that some of your companions - along with Miss McCraw - have managed to lose themselves at the Hanging Rock. A search is being undertaken to retrieve them. I have decided you may rest this morning. You will go straight up after breakfast. You may read or sew. You may not worry your parents by writing letters home.

She strides out. The girls are still standing. Exhausted. Confused.

11 **INT. COLLEGE KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS - DAY 4**

Mrs Appleyard addresses the servants.

MRS APPLEYARD

Tom - padlock the gates. Including the side gate. We don't need nosy-parkers prying into College affairs.

COOK

Pardon me, Ma'am, but there's a meat delivery today.

MRS APPLEYARD

Mr Whitehead, you may work near the front gates, so you can hear the bell.

12 **INT. COLLEGE - CONTINUOUS - DAY 3**

Minnie closes all the drapes and shutters again.

The college is in lock-down.

13 **EXT. PICNIC GROUND - DAY - DAY 4**

SHOPKEEPERS from Woodend have gathered, including Monsieur Montpelier - the sour husband - Mr Hussey.

Mike and Albert greet Bumper.

ALBERT

This is the Colonel's nephew. The Honourable Michael Fitzhubert -

MIKE

Call me Mike. How do you do.

SERGEANT BUMPER

Albert says you were here yesterday? With your uncle?

MIKE

That's right. What in heaven's name do you think has happened to them?

Bumper is surprised by Mike's flamboyant anxiety.

SERGEANT BUMPER

Folk are forever getting themselves lost in the tall timber.

ALBERT

Mike followed the girls.

MIKE

I walked behind them but not far. My boots were giving me trouble.

Joe - who is barefoot - surveys Mike's fancy footwear.

SERGEANT BUMPER

But you can show us which way they went?

Mike looks around, uncertain.

#### **A SHORT TIME LATER**

The searchers are gathered. The mood is serious but not pessimistic.

SERGEANT BUMPER (CONT'D)

The girls will have spent a long night out here. So when we find them, go easy.

SOUR HUSBAND

(sly) The widow Appleyard will be waiting for them with a pitchfork...

The searchers trudge off in two groups.

Joe sets off on his own, reading the ground.

He starts climbing.

Bumper's group follows.

SERGEANT BUMPER  
(to Mike) Leave this to the locals,  
sir. The ladies will be bringing  
tea along soon.

The Sergeant follows Tracker Joe.

Mike waits for a moment - then stubbornly tags along

14 **INT. COLLEGE FOYER - DAY - DAY 4**

Mrs Appleyard joins Mademoiselle and Doctor Mackenzie.

DOCTOR MACKENZIE  
I've managed to keep Edith Horton's  
mother at bay.

MRS APPLEYARD  
Thank you. We've had quite enough  
hysteria. If this is a prank there  
will be serious repercussions.

MADemoisELLE  
Greta would never agree to a prank.

MRS APPLEYARD  
Greta McCraw is both rational and  
dependable - rare traits in a  
woman. She's probably spent the  
night out there searching. It  
horrifies me to imagine it.

15 **INT. COLLEGE GUEST ROOM - CONTINUOUS - DAY 4**

Edith sleeps. Her face, sunburned.

She munches a little air and saliva.

Mademoiselle comes in, followed by the Head and the doctor.

Mademoiselle gently wakes Edith, who assesses the adults. Is  
she in trouble?

Mackenzie is brisk.

DOCTOR MACKENZIE  
Sit up Edith. You must tell us  
exactly what happened.

Edith sits, protecting herself with the bedclothes.

MADemoiselle

You are safe, mon petit porcelet  
doux.

DOCTOR MACKENZIE

Speak up.

EDITH

My piece of cake was the smallest  
so I had a bit of Myrtle's. I never  
had two whole pieces.

MADemoiselle

It was a pretty cake, yes?

Edith nods.

EDITH

There were flies on it. Miss McCraw  
said we should've gone to the  
Bendigo Museum instead.

DOCTOR MACKENZIE

Edith, did you and the other girls  
attempt to climb Mount Diogenes?

EDITH

They made me. I never wanted to.

DOCTOR MACKENZIE

And what happened?

EDITH

My tummy hurt. I went to sleep.

He looks frustrated.

EDITH (CONT'D)

It's true! We all did! Then they  
left me there.

Edith looks distraught. She's had a terrible scare and the  
unfairness of it feels overwhelming.

Mademoiselle takes Edith's hand.

MADemoiselle

You are so brave, to come back  
alone.

EDITH

Have you told mum?

DOCTOR MACKENZIE

Yes but she's very busy.

Edith looks disappointed.

He gives her a spoonful of dark medicine.

DOCTOR MACKENZIE (CONT'D)  
Rest now. You've had a lot of sun.

16

**EXT. HANGING ROCK UPPER PLATFORM - DAY 4**

The sun is high, the day hot and dry.

The searchers rest by the lookout.

Mike walks carefully to the edge of the rocks.

The surrounding country makes no sense to him.

Chaos, waiting to be sorted and named.

Great tumbles of rocks. Haphazard trees.

Below, the Monsieur Montpelier and the shopkeepers move through the surrounding scrub, calling and whistling.

Tracker Joe finds something on the ground.

Slips it into his pocket.

MIKE  
What's that?

Joe ignores him.

MIKE (CONT'D)  
(to Bumper) The Nig-Nog's found something. (beat) Ask him what it is.

Joe walks away.

SERGEANT BUMPER  
I don't need lessons in police work Mr Fitzhubert.

ALBERT  
I've heard the blacks use the Rock for initiations. Boys into men, that sort of thing.

SOUR HUSBAND  
Those girls have been ate and shat out by now.

MR HUSSEY  
There's no need for that kind of talk! They're ladies. Show some respect.

The sour husband's face slackens into a mask of virtue.

Joe bounds up the final steep rock incline.  
The men follow with difficulty.

17     **EXT. HANGING ROCK BALANCING BOULDERS - DAY 4**

The searchers are almost at the summit.

Two boulders the size of rooms, hang above a narrow access path.

Joe shoots a look at Bumpher.

                                  SERGEANT BUMPHER  
                                  Joe and I will go up.

18     **EXT. HANGING ROCK LOVER'S LEAP - CONTINUOUS**

Joe and Bumpher are alone. Everything seems in a state of suspension.

                                  JOE  
                                  No tracks.

                                  SERGEANT BUMPHER  
                                  What do you mean?

Joe picks up a branch and sweeps the dirt, obliterating their boot prints.

                                  SERGEANT BUMPHER (CONT'D)  
                                  Someone's cleared them?

Joe is noncommittal. Takes Edith's blue ribbon out of his pocket. Gives it to Bumpher.

                                  SERGEANT BUMPHER (CONT'D)  
                                  They got quite a way then...

Joe nods.

19     **INT. COLLEGE UPSTAIRS CORRIDOR - DAY 4**

The junior girls sneak in giddy secret to the guest room.

Getting caught by Miss Lumley would be a terrible fate.

But it's worth the risk, to find out what happened to Edith.

20     **EXT. PICNIC GROUND - MIDDAY - DAY 4**

LOCAL WIVES set out refreshments for the searchers. Mike and Albert are together. Not talking.

The Sergeant joins his wife, MRS BUMPHER. He looks worried.  
 Doctor Mackenzie arrives on horseback.

DOCTOR MACKENZIE  
 Found them?

Obviously not.

DOCTOR MACKENZIE (CONT'D)  
 I've questioned Edith Horton. She  
 has no idea where the others went.

MRS BUMPHER  
 They must be sheltering in a cave.

SERGEANT BUMPHER  
 Four women? And not a peep out of  
 them? Pitfalls everywhere. Holes.  
 Ravines. One precipice after  
 another.

MRS BUMPHER  
 They can't all have fallen in a  
 hole, love.

Trooper Nolan approaches. Limping heavily.  
 He and the sour husband greet each other.

DOCTOR MACKENZIE  
 (to Nolan) What the devil are you  
 doing here?

NOLAN  
 (defiant) Come to help.

Doctor Mackenzie grips the young man's arm and marches him  
 away.

Mrs Bumpher is intrigued.

MRS BUMPHER  
 What's that about?

Her husband neither knows nor cares.

SERGEANT BUMPHER  
 (calls) Right. Let's go again.

The search resumes.

**INT. COLLEGE GUEST ROOM - DAY 4**

The junior girls are gathered around their Queen. Who strokes  
 her little belly.

EDITH  
Mrs Appleyard says I could have a  
baby, that's the thing of it.

A horrified silence.

EDITH (CONT'D)  
I still feel awful.

MYRTLE  
Is it Morning Sickness, Edith?

Edith nods.

EDITH  
Must be. A scream woke me. It was  
the vilest sound - like when the  
middle girls all scrape their nails  
across the blackboard at the same  
time...

She makes her hands into claws - they all do, scraping the  
air, shuddering.

EDITH (CONT'D)  
I called out. Marion! Irma!  
Miranda! (beat) Miranda!

Her cries are whispers, but no less heartfelt for that.

EDITH (CONT'D)  
I ran. Something was following me,  
I could hear it in the bush,  
branches and leaves and stones  
going everywhere. And the panting.

She pants.

EDITH (CONT'D)  
I could've broken my neck. But I  
daren't because then it would've  
taken me...

Edith allows herself to be comforted by her handmaidens.

They hear scraping outside the door.

Panic.

Open the door to find Sara, eavesdropping.

Edith and Sara stare at each other.

Edith smirks.

EDITH (CONT'D)  
I climbed all the way up the  
Hanging Rock - with Miranda...

Sara looks as if she might claw Edith's eyes out.

22

**EXT. HANGING ROCK FORBIDDEN GROUND - LATE AFTERNOON**

Bumpher and his search party look tired. Resentful. What kind of place is this, that swallows people without a trace??

Joe stops, as if sensing the air.

Turns for home.

MIKE

What's wrong?

SERGEANT BUMPHER

Must be getting late.

Mike looks at his watch. Which has stopped.

MR HUSSEY

Same as yesterday.

The other men check their timepieces.

SERGEANT BUMPHER

Must be a disturbance in the magnetic fields.

Joe looks at Bumpher, as if this is utter nonsense.

Suddenly the Rock sends out shadows, to engulf them.

Joe speeds up.

SERGEANT BUMPHER (CONT'D)

The blacks won't stay out here after dark.

ALBERT

Why not?

SERGEANT BUMPHER

It's haunted. Isn't that right Joe.

JOE

He can jump ya. Then you carry that ghost.

In the narrow gloom, this doesn't feel far-fetched.

ALBERT

(intrigued) Who's ghost is it?

Joe's said all he's saying.

He's moving swiftly now.

Is soon out of sight.

The others try to keep up.

SERGEANT BUMPER  
Tomorrow, first light. Anyone who  
can spare another day.

They're all trying not to panic now -  
or stumble.

Mike slips.

Slows down, holding onto branches, for purchase.

24 Ends up falling behind.

He catches sight of Tracker Joe, below, moving gracefully.

He feels as if the bush is watching him.

Everything seems in a state of suspension.

A small animal emerges from the rocks.

Mike notices it has come from between two rock walls.

The entrance to a narrow passage.

He peers in.

Joe's eyes watch him, from the darkness. The elder sits on  
his heels, rolling a smoke.

Startled, Mike backs away.

How is that possible?

Mike scrambles up onto a boulder.

Sure enough, there is Tracker Joe, below him.

Nervous, he returns to the passage.

It's empty now.

Could he have imaged it?

23 **INT. COLLEGE HEAD'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS**

It's hot. Mrs Appleyard rinses her face.

She takes the Morocco bag down from its hiding place on the  
wardrobe.

Prepares to put the small tin in it.

Can't resist opening the tin.

Stares at the contents, as if she was staring into a crystal ball.

But it shows her the past, not the future.

She remembers...

24

**INT. LONDON MANSION - ARTIFICIAL LIGHT - MEMORY**

A gentleman's carpet. Immediate and florid.

Floor boards.

A fireplace. Soot. Grime.

Sickly shadows thrown by gaslight.

Sounds of the rabid city.

Sound of music from a different room.

The slender gilded legs of a chair.

The solid engraved legs of a sofa.

Under the sofa, balls of dust and cat hair.

A dead rat, in a trap.

Its eyes open.

Its teeth open.

Its exploded belly open and swarming.

A gentleman's shoes.

A gentleman's bag.

Morocco leather.

A man's bare feet and white legs.

His startling varicose veins bulge.

A gun shot.

Or is it someone hammering at the front door.

25

**INT. COLLEGE FOYER - CONTINUOUS**

It is.

Minnie answers it.

Alarmed, Mrs Appleyard races down the stairs.

Sergeant Bumper is at the door - exhausted and apologetic.

SERGEANT BUMPER

No news. Sorry to disturb at this  
hour. But I need some items  
belonging to the missing ladies.

26

**INT. LAKE VIEW MIKE'S ROOM - NIGHT 4**

It's hot. Mike can't sleep.

He wipes his face on his night shirt.

Walks to the chair where his jodhpurs lie in a heap.

Takes something out of the pocket.

A silk stocking.

He rests the stocking in his hand, as if it were a soft,  
living thing.

Unfurls it.

Looks down at his own bare legs.

It's clear he wants to experience the silk.

It's clear he's afraid of what he wants. Afraid of being  
judged by an invisible jury.

But fear only heightens desire.

He skims the stocking along his leg.

The silk like an electric breeze awakens his skin.

He notices the stocking is damaged.

There's a hole in it, which has been mended.

He slides his hand into the stocking -

- his arm.

The silk stretches - the hole opens again -

And opens further.

27

**EXT. PICNIC GROUND - DAY 5**

A bigger SEARCH PARTY. LOCAL FARMERS have joined the effort.

The mood is urgent.

Four gloves are laid out like exhibits.

Irma's lace mitten.

Miranda's well-worn riding glove.

Marion's buttoned leather.

A faded puce misshapen thing that could only belong to Miss McCraw.

Constable Wilkins is being bullied by a bloodhound.

Bumper holds out Miranda's glove.

The hound sniffs it.

Is released.

Mike and Albert stand by the fireplace. The bloodhound bounds over to Mike and starts barking.

Paws at Mike's trousers.

The searchers stare at Mike, who is a vision of guilt.

SERGEANT BUMPER  
Would you mind emptying your  
pockets, Mr Fitzhubert?

MIKE  
Don't be absurd.

Bumper waits.

The bloodhound bays.

28

**EXT. PICNIC GROUND FIREPLACE - DAY 5**

Bumper and Mike are alone. Sound of the searchers, calling out.

Bumper holds the stocking.

MIKE  
I was bringing it to show you.

SERGEANT BUMPER  
Why didn't you show me yesterday?

MIKE  
I didn't want to stand accused.

BUMPER  
Of what?

Bumper studies the stocking. The hole in the stocking.

SERGEANT BUMPHER  
Ever read the Sherlock Holmes  
stories?

MIKE  
No.

SERGEANT BUMPHER  
He's a detective. He collects  
facts. It's science. The new world.  
Not the flim-flam we all concoct to  
explain things. Science doesn't  
lie.

He indicates a maker's name on the heel.

SERGEANT BUMPHER (CONT'D)  
French. If I was to guess - I'd say  
Miss Leopold's. But it's not her  
scent the hound was following. So  
we may surmise the cattle station  
princess was wearing it.

Mike says nothing.

SERGEANT BUMPHER (CONT'D)  
Science will change policing. All  
men are equal in the eyes of  
science. Rich, poor. High born, low  
born. None of that'll matter in  
future.

Mike realizes he's being attacked. He looks incredulous.

SERGEANT BUMPHER (CONT'D)  
I heard on the bush telegraph  
you're in some sort of strife. Sent  
out here 'for your own good'. I  
wonder what the fact of that is?

MIKE  
(angry) I think you'll find gossip  
is not a science, Sergeant.

SERGEANT BUMPHER  
Go back to Lake View, sir, and stay  
put till after I've found the young  
ladies.

Sergeant Bumpher sets off in the direction of the Rock.

Joe appears, from the trees, and joins him.

And they're gone. Swallowed in the blink of an eye.

29     **INT. COLLEGE KITCHEN - EVENING - DAY 5**

Tom gets home from the search. He looks low.

Cook ladles out his supper. Minnie helps him off with his jacket. Mr Whitehead stands at attention - as if something formal is about to be announced.

TOM

No sign. I'd better go and tell Her Nibs.

30     **INT. COLLEGE DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS - DAY FIVE**

The teachers are at dinner. Mrs Valange, Mademoiselle, Miss Lumley and Mrs Appleyard. Trying to behave as if it's a normal day.

MRS VALANGE

I wonder if the seniors might learn about Federation.

MRS APPLEYARD

Politics?

MRS VALANGE

We're to become a nation, united under one rule of law. A new beginning. The opportunity to do better.

MRS APPLEYARD

Better than what? Appleyard College promises tradition.

Tom knocks and peers through the open door.

His face tells them all they need to know.

Mademoiselle puts aside her spoon. No need to keep pretending.

Mrs Valange reaches for Mademoiselle's hand.

Mrs Appleyard continues eating her soup.

Miss Lumley takes her lead from the Head.

DORA LUMLEY

Thank you Tom.

Tom darts a look of venom at Dora and waits to be dismissed by the Head.

Who nods that he may go.

31 **IN. COLLEGE STAIRCASE LANDING - CONTINUOUS**

Sara hides on the landing and spies on the comings and goings.

Tom, returning to the kitchen.

Minnie, carrying up the tray of puddings.

Sara's only companion is the framed photograph of Miranda.

32 **EXT. WOODEND POLICE STATION & COTTAGE - DAY 6**

Mrs Bumper hangs out the washing.

NEWS MEN straggle through the heat, to the Woodend Hotel.

Sergeant Bumper storms out of the police station.

SERGEANT BUMPER

Where the bloody hell is everyone?

He sees the news men.

MRS BUMPER

News hounds. From the city. Must've arrived on the midday train.

SERGEANT BUMPER

That's all I need.

Doctor Mack arrives in his gig.

DOCTOR MACKENZIE

Top of the morning, Sergeant. Mrs Appleyard would prefer the girls to be questioned at the College. To avoid scandal. The Colonel will meet you there as well. Sadly Mrs Fitzhubert has been so agitated by events, I've confined her to bed.

MRS BUMPER

(dry) Well, she's got her annual soiree to prepare for, hasn't she.

33 **INT. COLLEGE FOYER - DAY 6**

Chairs have been set out in the foyer.

Waiting to be interviewed are Colonel Fitzhubert, Mike and Mr Hussey.

34

INT. COLLEGE KITCHEN - DAY 6

Cook is aflutter. Mr Whitehead hovers.

Tom stomps in, agitated. Sees Minnie flirting with Constable Wilkins.

Without his hat, we can see Wilkins has a slick city haircut.

MINNIE

More tea? Junior Constable Wilkins?

CONSTABLE WILKINS

I'll spring a leak.

TOM

Someone's nicked my best trousers!

CONSTABLE WILKINS

I'll get right onto that.

Minnie giggles. Cook is eager to make her contribution.

COOK

(to Wilkins) We picnicked at the Rock when I was a girl. We were warned about the Black Hole of Calcutta. I never saw it but my brothers did. Bottomless.

TOM

Not like you!

Cook's response to his joke is a malevolent stare.

MINNIE

(to Wilkins) Did you go all the way to Lover's Leap?

CONSTABLE WILKINS

Course. Nothing. Disappeared into thin air.

He makes magician moves.

CONSTABLE WILKINS (CONT'D)

Abracadabra! Gone.

MR WHITEHEAD

(to Cook) Where'd he escape from?

CONSTABLE WILKINS

(confused) Me? Sydney.

A snort from Whitehead, as if that explains everything.

TOM

One of them could have got snake bit. The others sucked out the poison. And they all died.

MINNIE

(anguished) Stop it Tom!

TOM

What? I didn't misplace them!

But even Tom's bravado falters, under the increasing weight of events.

The mood is suddenly dark. Cook slumps. Minnie hugs herself. Mr Whitehead trembles like a very old man.

Constable Wilkins looks around and quietly goes out.

35

**INT. COLLEGE GREAT ROOM - DAY 6**

Colonel Fitzhubert is being interviewed by Bumper. Mrs Appleyard supervises the proceedings from the long sofa.

COLONEL FITZHUBERT

We didn't go wandering.

SERGEANT BUMPER

Not even to the privy?

COLONEL FITZHUBERT

Mrs Fitzhubert and I are camels, Sergeant. We hold our water. As I said, I was reading and I might have dozed off for a few minutes. But no more than that.

MRS APPLEYARD

Did you see anyone else there?

SERGEANT BUMPER

If you don't mind, Ma'am -

COLONEL FITZHUBERT

There were two horses tethered. Stock horses, fine specimens. A waler, Spanish, The other was a buckskin. Unusual in the breed.

MRS APPLEYARD

And the riders?

SERGEANT BUMPER

(objects) Mrs Appleyard -

COLONEL FITZHUBERT  
Can't recall seeing them, now you  
ask.

MRS APPLEYARD  
Is it worth asking Mrs Fitzhubert?

COLONEL FITZHUBERT  
She saw what I saw.

36     **INT. COLLEGE MIRANDA'S ROOM - DAY 6**

Dora Lumley looks through Miranda's things. Senses someone  
watching.

Sara sits on the floor, in the corner.

DORA LUMLEY  
Don't creep about like an oyster!

SARA  
Don't touch Miranda's things!

Dora raises her hand.

Sara flinches.

DORA LUMLEY  
Watch yourself, Missy.

Dora marches out.

Sara puts on her hat and her gloves.

37     **INT. COLLEGE MISS MCCRAW'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS - DAY 6**

Dora lets herself into the windowless room.

A narrow bed.

Lying on it, the remaining puce glove.

The rest is books.

Dora starts searching.

38     **INT. COLLEGE FOYER - DAY 6**

Sara crosses the foyer and sits next to Mr Hussey.

Colonel Fitzhubert has his eye on the hall clock.

He looks troubled.

39

**EXT. COLLEGE WALL / WAGONETTE - DAY 6**

Constable Wilkins questions Albert, who squats in the shade of the wagonette.

CONSTABLE WILKINS  
How long would you say Mr  
Fitzhubert was up on the Rock?

ALBERT  
I couldn't say.

CONSTABLE WILKINS  
One hour? Three? Two days?

ALBERT  
I'm a working man, I was working.

CONSTABLE WILKINS  
Did you see Miss McCraw cross the  
creek at all?

ALBERT  
Nope. Look, I told the Sergeant  
everything already, free, gratis  
and for nothing.

CONSTABLE WILKINS  
Alright, Mr Crundall, you can go.

Albert looks at Wilkins in astonishment.

ALBERT  
Where to, without my passengers?  
You big wallaby.

40

**INT. COLLEGE MARION & IRMA'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

The seniors are in the Best Room.

Rifling through Irma's things.

Her clothes.

Her jewelry.

Her perfume.

Her lingerie.

They put on embroidered evening gloves.

Sparkling shoes.

Emeralds.

A diamond tiara.

In the toilet chest, mysteries unimagined.

Lip color.

Rouge.

41 **INT. COLLEGE MISS MCCRAW'S ROOM - DAY - DAY 6**

Dora empties an old hat box.

Miss McCraw's paltry treasures tumble out.

Among them, a cheap lace collar.

A mending kit.

A single letter.

Dora starts reading it.

42 **INT. COLLEGE GREAT ROOM - DAY 6**

Mike sits elegantly, studying green leaves and sunlight through lace.

The Head's amazing eyes disembowel him, as she takes his measure.

SERGEANT BUMPER

Did you see Miss Reid take off her stockings?

MIKE

No.

Mike's embarrassment indicates he's lying.

SERGEANT BUMPER

Come off it, Mr Fitzhubert -

MRS APPLEYARD

(cuts in) There were two riders at the picnic ground. Did you notice them?

MIKE

Yes, odd looking chaps.

MRS APPLEYARD

(eager) Really? Can you describe them?

SERGEANT BUMPER

If you don't mind, Ma'am -

MIKE

Their hats were pulled down, I'm  
afraid.

Colonel Fitzhubert bumbles in without knocking.

COLONEL FITZHUBERT

It's time we got going.

43

**INT. COLLEGE CLASSROOM - CONTINUOUS**

The middle girls prepare for a ritual.

Pale eyes upon pale eyes.

A few deep breaths, to ready themselves.

They move as one to the blackboard.

Place their fingernails upon it.

One - two - and -

44

**INT. APPELYARD COLLEGE FOYER - DAY 6**

Colonel Fitzhubert strides out, followed by Mike. Mrs  
Appleyard and Bumpher close behind.

SERGEANT BUMPER

I'm not done here.

COLONEL FITZHUBERT

We can't waste an entire day on  
this nonsense.

Mrs Appleyard has seen Sara.

MRS APPELYARD

Sara?

SARA

(to Bumpher) Miranda would never  
get lost in the bush, she's the  
spirit of the trees.

Dora Lumley appears on the stairs. Clutching the letter.

DORA LUMLEY

Mrs Appleyard!

Dora can barely speak, she's so shocked.

DORA LUMLEY (CONT'D)

The girls are in terrible danger!  
Listen to this!

The sound of 50 fingernails, scraping hard across a blackboard.

45 **INT. COLLEGE GREAT ROOM - DAY**

Wilkins - eyes popping - makes a copy of the letter.

Mrs Appleyard confers with Bumpher.

SERGEANT BUMPHER

When Miss McCraw first came to work for you -

MRS APPLEYARD

Never mind Miss McCraw. It's the riders who concern me.

SERGEANT BUMPHER

I'm interested in facts, Ma'am. Not opinions. Only facts will solve this case.

MRS APPLEYARD

When did our misfortune become 'a case'?

SERGEANT BUMPHER

When the week is up. If we still haven't found them.

MRS BUMPHER

Then get back out there and look!

Sergeant Bumpher and Wilkins exchange a glance.

46 **EXT. BENDIGO ROAD / WAGONETTE - DAY**

Albert is in the driver's seat, heading home. Basking in the heat. Behind him, Mike and the Colonel drip and fan themselves.

COLONEL FITZHUBERT

(scandalised) Rum business. That letter.

MIKE

Yes. (beat) I wanted to ask you, sir. About the soiree. Do you think - under the circumstances...

COLONEL FITZHUBERT

We can't cancel. It's an event, people come up for it. More people than ever this year.

Mike's disapproval is obvious.

COLONEL FITZHUBERT (CONT'D)  
Semper progredi -

MIKE  
It does seem rather heartless -

COLONEL FITZHUBERT  
Always go on.

MIKE  
Yes I understand, sir, but -

COLONEL FITZHUBERT  
When your aunt and I lost our boys.  
A terrible business. But one went  
on. If one hadn't, the tropical  
fever might have finished us all  
off.

MIKE  
I'm sorry about my cousins -

COLONEL FITZHUBERT  
Cancelling won't help anyone.  
Michael. I don't know what happened  
at Cambridge. No, I don't care to.  
You're an honourable young man. To  
be unfairly accused hit you very  
hard. And now this disgraceful  
business. But we go on. That's who  
we are. Fitzhuberts. DO. The rest  
will follow.

MIKE  
But 'do' what?

The Colonel is taken aback. The boy's in a worse state than  
he thought.

COLONEL FITZHUBERT  
Your aunt has invited the Spracks.  
They're out from Home. The  
daughter's a fine filly.

MIKE  
(incredulous) Angela Sprack?

COLONEL FITZHUBERT  
Your aunt says she's lost the puppy  
fat.

In the box seat, Albert grins.

Dora Lumley sits on the little rag rug, returning items to  
the hat box.

One is a small, hand carved wooden object.

She studies it in puzzlement -

then intuits what it is.

A dildo.

Her face is a vision of horrified fascination.

Faint sound of drumming, from deep under the floors, the dirt, the granite.

48

**INT. COLLEGE ART ROOM - DAY - DAY 7**

Mademoiselle is alone in the art room, with the painting of the Hanging Rock. Mrs Valange arrives, with art supplies and a plaster bust for drawing class.

MRS VALANGE

Mam'selle? Are you alright?

MADemoisELLE

They have only just begun to live.  
Will they ever dance in the arms of  
a man? Will they ever love?

Her anguish prompts Mrs Valange to crush her in a hug.

MRS VALANGE

They'll turn up!

MADemoisELLE

I am to blame. For allowing them to  
go -

MRS VALANGE

No, I should never have told them  
about the Rock.

Dora Lumley passes, in the corridor outside.

Glances in.

Sees the women, apparently locked in an embrace.

Looks shocked, disapproving.

Mademoiselle and Mrs Valange have seen her as well.

Dora scuttles away, young lips pursed, young forehead  
scrunched into a frown.

Now they can't help laughing, through their tears.

MRS VALANGE (CONT'D)  
 She gives me the creeping irrits.  
 We have to look after these poor  
 girls. No one else will...

They exchange a glance and draw apart. Both aware that the  
 art teacher has strayed into dangerous territory.

MRS VALANGE (CONT'D)  
 Especially Sara. Keep an eye on  
 her. You're here full time...

Mademoiselle nods.

49     **INT. COLLEGE HEAD'S BEDROOM - AFTERNOON - DAY 7**

Mrs Appleyard admires the dress Mademoiselle has made for  
 her.

And the witty little hair adornment that matches it.

How she longs to wear it.

To dance -

to sing -

to perform.

She pulls herself together.

Reluctantly covers the dress in a cotton shroud.

Opens the wardrobe.

Locks her lovely new gown away.

50     **INT. LAKE VIEW FORMAL DRAWING ROOM - NIGHT - DAY 8**

A PIANIST, roses, the best crystal.

WELL-HEELED MELBOURNE GUESTS.

The Fitzhubert's annual soiree is underway.

The numbers are up, these are exciting times.

MELBOURNE SOCIAL CLIMBER  
 Apparently the pervert taught them  
 geography.

MELBOURNE HUSBAND  
 What do girls want with geography?

Mrs Fitzhubert and the Melbourne snob serve up gossip. ANGELA  
 SPRACK (19) - a scrawny famished-looking girl - laps it up.

MRS FITZHUBERT

The letter was from her father.  
Reverend McCraw. A Calvinist  
minister in the Outer Hebrides.

MELBOURNE SNOB

When he heard about her posting at  
the College, he wrote - 'Would that  
you had drowned at sea!'

MRS FITZHUBERT

Lest Satan lead her once again into  
those 'fierce friendships' with the  
weaker sex to which she is prone...

Angela looks puzzled.

ANGELA

But why wouldn't he want her to  
have friends?

Silence falls. All eyes to the doorway.

Doctor Mackenzie has arrived, with Mrs Appleyard. Who wears  
her plainest dress and no adornments. The guise of a grieving  
mother.

Colonel and Mrs Fitzhubert exchange an alarmed glance.

Mrs Fitzhubert bears down on the headmistress.

MRS FITZHUBERT

I'm afraid there's been a  
misunderstanding. My husband  
invited you as a chaperone for Miss  
Leopold. Who - as we all know, is  
... unable to attend.

Mrs Appleyard takes this in.

Humiliation floods through her. She looks as if she might  
drown in it.

DOCTOR MACKENZIE

There's been no misunderstanding.  
Mrs Appleyard is my special guest.  
(to Mrs A) Allow me to introduce  
you to the Governor's wife.

Doctor Mack introduces the Head to the Fitzhuberts' Special  
Guest.

The Governor's wife is chilly.

GOVERNOR'S WIFE

You have our condolences.

MRS APPLEYARD

Thank you. Of course the girls may still be found.

Mrs Fitzhubert furiously pushes her husband forward.

MRS FITZHUBERT

Do something. You invited her.

He takes the floor.

COLONEL FITZHUBERT

Friends, Melbournians, Mount Macedonians, lend me your ears.

The Governor's wife turns away from the Head. As does everyone else.

COLONEL FITZHUBERT (CONT'D)

Welcome to our first soiree of the new century. A century which will be thrown at the feet of our great monarch, Victoria, Empress of India and Queen of Kingdoms United!

COLONEL SPRACK

Hear hear!

DOCTOR MACKENZIE

I'm so sorry.

MRS APPLEYARD

There's worse in the world than second rate snobs. You must be my spy, Aiden. Perhaps our gracious hostess caught sight of the two riders. Who were they? What were they doing there?

DOCTOR MACKENZIE

They could have been anyone from anywhere. The Rock is an attraction of some renown...

She looks disappointed in him.

DOCTOR MACKENZIE (CONT'D)

But your wish is my command.

He guides her to chair, near the pianist. Where she sits and tries to recover her dignity.

She watches Mike being driven straight at Angela Sprack, by his aunt.

Angela, in turn, is prodded towards Mike by her enormously well-fed father, COLONEL SPRACK.

Angela looks as desperate to avoid the encounter as Mike does.

Their eyes communicate a mutual desire for escape.

Mrs Appleyard sees Arthur, in his stage costume, leaning on the piano.

Arthur begins to sing.

ARTHUR

(sings) Tell me, Mr Shadowman, why  
you're always near to me. You  
follow me here, you follow me  
there, up the stairs, down the  
stairs, I see you everywhere.

She looks around.

No one else seems perturbed.

When she looks back, Arthur has become an anonymous looking CROONER.

51

**EXT. LAKE VIEW, THE LAKE - CONTINUOUS - DAY 8**

Angela collapses onto an ornate bench.

Mike holds two glasses of champagne. The awkward silence is broken by the voice of a party crooner, singing *Mr Shadowman*.

MIKE

Cheers.

She tips her fizz onto the lawn, with a grimace.

ANGELA

What sin did you commit, to be sent  
down - all the way to the colonies?

Mike is silent.

Notices Albert, in the distance, in the shadows, in the lake.

The crooner croons.

ANGELA (CONT'D)

Oh for pity's sake. I need to eat  
something. Don't traipse after me.  
We both know we're never going to  
get engaged. You can't even string  
two words together.

Angela stands, adjusts her corset and staggers off.

PARTY CROONER (O.S.)  
 (sings) Mr Shadowman. Won't you  
 tell me where do you go?

The crooner whistles the chorus - the guests join in.

Mike can't stand it. He rips open his jacket, his waistcoat.

Walks around the lake path, to where Albert crouches, in the  
 water up to his nose.

MIKE  
 You look nice and cool.

ALBERT  
 Fancy a dip?

MIKE  
 I'd better not.

ALBERT  
 Beer?

Mike tries not to stare as Albert - comfortably naked - gets  
 out and fetches a beer from a bucket.

Albert's nakedness is not overtly erotic. The colony is a  
 man's world, homo-social.

MIKE  
 I want to go back to the Rock. No  
 police, no bloodhounds. Just you  
 and me. That is, if you'll come  
 along and show me the ropes. We  
 could get off early and be back for  
 dinner without any awkward  
 questions.

ALBERT  
 It's been a week -

MIKE  
 Yes I know but I've a *feeling*.

Albert's eyebrows fly up.

ALBERT  
 Every inch of that Rock's been gone  
 over with a toothcomb -

MIKE  
 I've always done what's expected of  
 me. Now I want to do what I think  
 is right. (beat) Never mind. I'll  
 go alone. Thanks for the beer.

Mike returns to the soiree.

INT. WOODEND POLICE COTTAGE - NIGHT - DAY 8

Bumper hacks up his meat and smothers it in brown sauce.

MRS BUMPHER

The lamb's already dead, love, you don't need to butcher it again.

SERGEANT BUMPHER

You wouldn't credit the dark thoughts people have, behind their smiling faces. Those missing girls have been defiled and tossed into a ravine a dozen times a day since they disappeared.

MRS BUMPHER

Shows how ignorant people are. Outrages occur behind innocent front doors. Not out in nature.

Silence.

MRS BUMPHER (CONT'D)

If they are at the bottom of a ravine, it's because they held hands and jumped. (beat) Don't look at me like that. Have you any idea what goes on in the minds of girls that age?

Obviously not. The Sergeant checks the clock.

SERGEANT BUMPHER

Missing for seven full days. It's official. This is a case.

Sound of tapping on the open window. Mr Hussey peers in.

SERGEANT BUMPHER (CONT'D)

Hussey?

MR HUSSEY

Just remembered. The missing teacher was asking about the Camel's Hump. The Old Road. Something about two sides of a triangle making a hippopotamus.

SERGEANT BUMPHER

A hypotenuse?

MR HUSSEY

Right. (beat) That toffy nephew...

SERGEANT BUMPHER

The Honorable-call-me-Mike?

MR HUSSEY

He was gone a bloody long time.

SERGEANT BUMPER

So you told me.

MR HUSSEY

Well I'm telling you again.

53     **INT. COLLEGE HEAD'S BEDROOM - NIGHT - DAY 8**

Mrs Appleyard arrives home from soiree.

She steps out of her shoes with relief.

Pours herself a glass of cognac.

Notices a strange clicking sound.

Click. Click.

Arthur sits at the dressing table.

He's naked, except for vaudevillian face make-up.

Cutting his toenails.

Click. Click.

Mrs Appleyard watches him. He doesn't acknowledge her.

MRS APPLEYARD

No, Arthur. I won't stand for it.

She goes to the Morocco bag, which has been hastily stashed.

Opens it.

Removes an Enfield revolver.

54     **EXT. ROAD TO LAKE VIEW - DAWN - DAY 9**

Mike rides the Arab past silent gardens.

The road is shadowed by the upper mountain slopes.

Virgin forest runs right down to an immaculate tennis lawn.

He hears the sound of a horse behind him.

It's Albert, on the strawberry cob.

Mike looks pleased.

55

EXT. PICNIC GROUND - DAY 9

Albert makes tea in the billy. Mike takes a stance. Self conscious.

MIKE

Did you ever want to be something?

ALBERT

Like what.

MIKE

Well, like a butler or...

Mike's imagination runs dry.

ALBERT

I've always wanted my own horse but that's more of a fancy.

MIKE

I'm supposed to be something.  
Damned if I know what.

ALBERT

Isn't being a Fitzhubert enough?

MIKE

Is being Albert Crundall enough for you?

ALBERT

I don't even know if my name is Crundall. Dad used to change his name whenever he got in a tight corner.

Mike looks shocked.

ALBERT (CONT'D)

Doesn't bother me. One name's the same as the next, far as I care.

MIKE

How extraordinary. You know what? I wouldn't mind being you.

ALBERT

Can't be much fun. Stuck amongst the nobs.

Mike looks surprised - then laughs.

MIKE

Too bloody right it's not.

He relaxes and hands Albert a mug of tea.

MIKE (CONT'D)  
Your tea, sir.

Albert grins.

Settles on the ground under a tree.

Tips his hat over his face.

And falls asleep.

Mike looks surprised.

Envious.

56 **EXT. HANGING ROCK FORBIDDEN GROUND - DAY - DAY 9**

Mike climbs.

He carries his pigskin notebook.

Tears out a page.

Pushes it onto a twig, to mark his progress.

Reaches the hidden passage.

Looks around.

Squeezes in.

57 **EXT. HANGING ROCK BIRTH CANAL - CONTINUOUS**

Mike inches along in the darkness.

Drops to his knees and crawls.

58 **EXT. HANGING ROCK WOMB - CONTINUOUS**

Mike emerges into a small amphitheater with rock walls.

The rock womb is filled with a mysterious Presence.

What is this place?

He feels a strong sensation of being watched.

The shriek of a bird is like a warning.

59 **EXT. STONE STAIRCASE - DAY - MIKE'S MEMORY**

An icy wind shrieks and wails.

MIKE'S MOTHER stands on a flight of stone steps, built in the 18th century.

She fiercely cradles her small dogs.

She looks sorry.

She looks powerless.

MIKE'S FATHER stands beside her.

A monument to disdain.

Mike - swaddled in winter coat, hat, scarf, gloves - walks away from them - backwards.

His eyes, pleading.

He climbs into the growler -

as if lifted by an invisible force.

His face now like a frightened child's...

The growler, with its single passenger, takes off -

60

**EXT. HADDINGHAM HALL GATES - DAY - MEMORY**

- and rattles through tall old gates.

HADDINGHAM HALL is spelt out in fancy ironwork.

Below is the family crest.

SEMPER PROGREDI

Mike leans out -

his ancestral home has already disappeared.

Now there is no gate, no walls, no road.

Only bleak wilderness.

And the wind.

Confused, he turns and realises there is no driver.

Just two black horses.

Speeding, like Fates, into the Unknown.

61

**EXT. HANGING ROCK WOMB - CONTINUOUS - DAY 9**

Mike sits on the rock floor, knees drawn up.

A shaft of light from above.

Around him, rotting vegetation and animal decay.

Bones, feathers, birdlime.

Rocks with jagged horns and jutting spikes, obscene knobs and scabby carbuncles.

Others smoothly rounded by the passing of a million years.

What is this place?

A womb or a tomb?

ALBERT (O.S.)

Cooee!

62

**EXT. PICNIC GROUND FIREPLACE - AFTERNOON - DAY 9**

Mike returns to the picnic ground in a state of excitement.

Albert looks relieved.

ALBERT

Thought you got lost again -

MIKE

Albert - I've been blind!

ALBERT

Have you remembered something?

MIKE

No, nothing like that. But listen.  
This Rock is older than Stonehenge.

ALBERT

That sounds right -

MIKE

Yes but I was told this a young  
country. It's hardly that, is it.

ALBERT

What we're told and what things  
are. Well.

MIKE

People act as if one's future is  
written in stone. But that's the  
past, isn't it? The future is  
something else. (beat) You don't  
know your true name and yet here  
you are - flesh and blood -

ALBERT  
I should hope so -

MIKE  
Yes! Because it's 1900! Not 1700!  
We're young! The future is not set  
in stone, and nor are we. The  
future is movement, it's light!  
It's a kind of radiance.

Albert picks up his saddle. Embarrassed.

ALBERT  
It's getting late.

Silence.

MIKE  
I apologise for squandering your  
day off.

ALBERT  
No worries. There's still time for  
a pint at the Woodend Hotel.

MIKE  
Not for me I'm afraid.

It takes Albert a moment.

ALBERT  
Where will you sleep? (beat) What  
do I tell the Colonel? I'll lose my  
job.

MIKE  
You have my word that won't happen.

ALBERT  
You're not making sense.

MIKE  
Oh I've never made sense, not to  
anyone.

ALBERT  
The heat's getting to you -

MIKE  
Sod off! Go on. Tell them whatever  
you like. I don't care! (beat)  
Those girls can't be dead! They're  
young!

ALBERT  
Calm down mate.

Silence.

ALBERT (CONT'D)  
 We could say the Arab picked up a  
 stone and you're held up in  
 Woodend. It's not too bad, sleeping  
 rough. I've done it plenty of  
 times.

Silence.

ALBERT (CONT'D)  
 I'll leave the rest of the tucker.

Albert indicates the fireplace.

ALBERT (CONT'D)  
 Cover that with dirt when you're  
 done. We don't want to start a bush  
 fire. (beat) On top of everything  
 else.

Albert walks off through the trees, to where the horses are  
 tethered.

He looks worried.

63     **EXT. PICNIC GROUND - NIGHT - DAY 9**

Smoke drifts up to the stars.

The bush is both silent and full of noise.

Rustling, shifting and scurrying.

And something heavier.

A kind of drumming.

Mike gets to his feet.

A big grey has come down to drink from the creek.

Alert on his massive haunches.

Aware of the intruder.

Mike is filled with wonder.

His first kangaroo.

What a magnificent place this is!

64     **EXT. HANGING ROCK LOWER PLATFORM - DAY - DAY 10**

The sun rises.

Pieces of paper from Mike's pigskin notebook scurry around in the breeze.

65 **INT. LAKE VIEW STABLES - DAY 10**

A beautiful summer morning.

Albert feeds the horses.

He leans against the strong, warm strawberry cob.

ALBERT  
Something's not right.

Annoyed, he fetches a saddle.

ALBERT (CONT'D)  
You'll miss me, won't you. When I  
lose my job over this nonsense.

The horse snorts with impatience to get moving.

66 **INT. COLLEGE HEAD'S STUDY - DAY**

Mrs Appleyard sits at her desk with Mademoiselle.

Who has her elegant writing paraphernalia - tablet, best paper, pen & ink.

Mrs Appleyard realises Arthur is there. Sitting on the window sill.

How loose he seems, how at home.

A man who sees you.

A man who knows where everything fits.

She stands abruptly.

MADMOISELLE  
(sympathetic) This is not easy.

MRS APPLEYARD  
No. Perhaps we should start with  
the Reverend McCraw.

MADMOISELLE  
(fierce) Why satisfy him with bad  
news?

Mrs Appleyard smiles at this.

MRS APPLEYARD  
The Reids then.

MADemoiselle

When Miranda's parents hear what has happened, they will come. And the four brothers. To take the Hanging Rock apart, stone by stone.

Silence.

MADemoiselle (CONT'D)

Justice Quade? He can't afford to make a fuss...

MRS APPLEYARD

Why don't we wait, one more day. Irma's people are all traveling. There's flooding in Queensland. By the time a letter finds any of them, their daughters may have waltzed back in through the front door.

MADemoiselle

It is a terrible dream. This wall is the same. The table. The mirror. And yet nothing is the same.

MRS APPLEYARD

Like the rest of this dreadful place. It's the two riders who concern me...

Arthur looks straight at her. Gentleman's hat, rogue's grin.

MADemoiselle

I am wondering. We could ask Edith again. If you would allow me? Perhaps she is a little afraid of you... La force intimidante.

MRS APPLEYARD

Why not. Of course this is just procrastination, pure and simple.

MADemoiselle

Of course.

Now there is a hole in Arthur's shoulder, where the light shines through.

67

**EXT. HANGING ROCK - DAY 10**

Mike climbs the rock.

He has removed his jacket and waistcoat. Rolled up his sleeves.

But he has no hat. Has brought no water.

He looks shaky.

Rounds a corner and spots something caught on a tussock.

Stops and stares in wonder.

It's Miranda's other stocking.

He lurches over to pick it up.

Trips.

Falls heavily.

PARTY CROONER (V.O.)

(sings) You follow me here, you  
follow me there, I see you  
everywhere. But when I creep into  
bed and the lights no longer glow,  
ah, then you disappear, Mr  
Shadowman. Won't you tell me where  
do you go?

Mike gets his breath back.

Reaches.

But it's not a stocking.

It's a shed python skin.

Fragile, papery, sun-warmed.

The flat head with its empty eyes is beautiful and terrible.

As if the snake, reborn, has abandoned its own pale shadow.

A brooding cloud sails across the sky and blocks out the sun.

The cicadas and the birds stop.

An ominous silence blows in, like fog. Everything seems in a  
state of suspension.

Blood runs down Mike's forehead.

Someone is coming. Footsteps.

Running.

Pebbles scatter.

Footsteps coming, closer and closer.

Mike looks scared.

With a great effort, he gets to his feet.

Keeps climbing.

Hears a man behind him, coughing, violently.

Sucking in air.

Mike speeds up.

68     **INT. COLLEGE GREAT ROOM - DAY**

Edith sits on the long couch with Mademoiselle. By the window, Mrs Appleyard keeps a low profile.

MADEMOISELLE

So we will climb together. First  
across the creek.

EDITH

I jumped.

MADEMOISELLE

Yes you are courageaux. And now we  
walk along the path.

EDITH

What path? There isn't even a  
track.

69     **EXT. HANGING ROCK PLAIN - DAY 10**

Across the plain, the Hanging Rock rises up in violent  
contrasts of light and shade.

Albert encourages the strawberry cob to descend, on the loose  
stones and slippery grass.

As soon as they're back on level ground -  
they're off like the wind.

70     **INT. COLLEGE GREAT ROOM - DAY**

Edith sways, dreamily, as Mademoiselle murmurs to her.

MADEMOISELLE

And now?

EDITH

Miranda and Irma are arguing.

MADEMOISELLE

About what?

EDITH  
Beats me. Irma Leopold has grown-up  
secrets.

Edith glances quickly at the Head, and then away.

71 **EXT. PICNIC GROUND FRINGE - DAY 10**

Albert rides into the belt of timber on the fringe of the picnic grounds.

His horse props, violently.

Lets out a long rasping whinny.

The valuable Arab stallion - with no saddle or rider - trots up to greet its stable-mate.

Albert looks shocked.

72 **EXT. PICNIC GROUND FRINGE - DAY 10**

Both horses are securely tethered.

Albert starts searching.

ALBERT  
(calls) Mike!

EDITH (O.S.)  
(calls) Miranda!

ALBERT  
(calls) Cooee!

EDITH (O.S.)  
(calls) Minrada!

73 **INT. COLLEGE GREAT ROOM - DAY**

Edith is suddenly very still. Remembering.

EDITH  
I can see the cloud now. The nasty  
red cloud.

MADEMOISELLE  
A sunset cloud?

EDITH  
No. Bright red, like a clot of  
blood. There's a vile noise, but a  
cloud can't scream, can it?

MADEMOISELLE  
Someone screams?

EDITH  
I run but I can still hear it, even  
after I pass Miss McCraw...

Mrs Appleyard and Mademoiselle lean forward.

MADEMOISELLE  
Miss McCraw?

EDITH  
I press into the Rock so she can  
get past. She tells me to wait.  
'Wait! Wait!' But I'm too scared.

74     **EXT. HANGING ROCK LOW SCRUB - DAY 10**

Albert doesn't have far to go.

Mike's body is lying in the ferns near an informal track  
created by all the recent foot traffic.

The young man is deathly pale.

His face covered in blood.

75     **INT. COLLEGE GREAT ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Edith looks frightened.

MADEMOISELLE  
Scared of what, Edith?

EDITH  
Of her!

MADEMOISELLE  
Of Miss McCraw?

EDITH  
Yes. She looks so strange...

76     **EXT. PICNIC GROUND POOL - CONTINUOUS - DAY 10**

Albert runs to the pool, taking off his shirt.

He soaks the shirt in cold water.

77     **INT. COLLEGE GREAT ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Edith's eyes are closed.

EDITH  
She isn't wearing her skirt.

MADEMOISELLE  
What do you mean?

EDITH  
Only drawers. It's rude.

MRS APPLEYARD  
You rotten little liar! I could box  
your ears till that silly head of  
yours flies off and bounces out the  
window!

EDITH  
(wails) It's true! She didn't even  
have on a petticoat!

Mrs Appleyard and Mademoiselle exchange an alarmed look.  
What the hell happened up there?

78 **EXT. HANGING ROCK LOW SCRUB - CONTINUOUS - DAY 10**

Albert gently cleans Mike's face.

Drizzles water onto Mike's parched lips.

Mike's eyes open.

Albert holds out his hand and Mike grips it.

ALBERT  
You are off your head! Don't move.  
We'll get you home.

Mike looks alarmed.

Stares at Albert.

Albert understands.

He leaps to his feet and starts climbing.

79 **EXT. HANGING ROCK UPPER PLATFORM - DAY 10**

Albert climbs as fast as he can.

Not stopping. Gasping for air.

His boots kick up pebbles and dust.

80     **EXT. HANGING ROCK PYTHON TUSSOCK - CONTINUOUS**

Albert finally stops to catch his breath.

Bends over, coughing violently.

Sucking in air.

Notices the python skin on the tussock.

Keeps climbing.

81     **EXT. HANGING ROCK BALANCING BOULDERS - DAY 10**

Albert's heartbeat drums in his ears.

A strange pulsing response seems to be coming from above.

He's dwarfed by the two great boulders.

He scrambles up and under them.

82     **EXT. HANGING ROCK MONOLITH - CONTINUOUS - DAY 10**

Albert emerges at the pinnacle. The massive outcrop of pock-marked stone hangs above him.

A stone heart. Power without compassion.

He looks around. Nothing.

Then he sees a page from Mike's notebook, weighed down by a pebble.

Right on the edge.

He scuttles to the high precipice on all fours.

Drops onto his belly and hangs over.

Far below, trees and rocks and a deep gully.

There is a ledge of sloping rock tucked just under the lip of rock.

A glimpse of slender white feet.

Unmoving.

Ants swarm over them.

**END EPISODE TWO**