

The Tasmanian Devil

by

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(based on James McQueen's novel, Hook's Mountain)

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FADE IN:

CARD: 1980 Tasmania.

Last Year's Man (Leonard Cohen) plays through the opening scenes.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

A 4WD is parked out of sight on an unmade country road that bisects recently clear-felled land.

Scattered ash-heaps indicate the land is being prepared for reforestation.

INT. 4WD - DAY

MONSON, a surly logger, looks through binoculars, at a camp of anti-logging PROTESTERS, 400 metres up the road.

EXT. 4WD - DAY

We follow his line of vision, across the clear-felled land to the camp of ad-hoc tents set either side of the unmade road.

EXT. PROTESTERS' CAMP - DAY

A dozen PROTESTERS erect a moveable blockade under the orchestration of ASH, 35. Everything about Ash's appearance implies a rejection of conventional values.

Nearby, ELLEN CARTER, 26, strums acoustic guitar by a camp fire. Her bulky clothes and unkempt demeanour hide her natural beauty. STEPHEN, 5, Ellen's son, pale and sickly, hovers over the fire.

GWEN, 25, working on the blockade, is enthralled with Ellen whose voice now replaces Leonard Cohen's.

We hover above the camp and glide along the unmade road. The clear-felled land transitions into natural luxurious forest, seemingly untouched by civilization.

In the distance a 1978 ute approaches.

INT. HOOK'S UTE - DAY

LACHLAN HOOK, 55, super fit, wears a well-worn bush shirt, dungarees and Rolex watch. An open Caramello Bar is on the dashboard. The interior of the ute is immaculate. A .303 Lee-Enfield rifle, with modern telescopic sights, sits above the back window. Two dead rabbits bounce on the back seat.

The road is slippery and Hook drives in the centre to maintain constant speed.

Hook reaches the beginning of the clear-felled terrain.

EXT. PROTESTERS' CAMP - DAY

Ash assesses Gwen's fascination with Ellen as minimising Gwen's contribution. He points his hammer to the terrain but directs his comments at Ellen.

ASH

This was once mythical, wild, poetic.

Ellen stops singing, to the disappointment of Gwen.

ASH (CONT'D)

Look at it! We have a chance here to really do something special. If we *all* pull together!

Ellen shakes her head, resentful.

ASH (CONT'D)

You have a problem with that?

ELLEN

Aren't you like preaching to the converted?

ASH

You've just arrived and now you're one of the converted!

ELLEN

So!

ASH

It's the so-called converted who're the dangerous ones.

Ellen laughs derisively. Gwen puts her hand on Ash's arm but he jerks away.

ASH (CONT'D)

(to Gwen)

Because they think their conversion is enough!

ELLEN

I'm committed to saving the forests!

ASH

(advancing on Ellen)

And because you indulge in the security of your apathy!

ELLEN
I'm here aren't I?

Ash looks to the others, smiles. They reciprocate.

ASH
Are you ready to die to save the forest?

Ellen smiles bemusedly.

ASH (CONT'D)
(turning from Ellen)
Don't talk about commitment until you're
ready to die!

A horn blares. The Protesters react to the sound of an oncoming truck. Ash drops the hammer, grabs one end of the blockade.

ASH (CONT'D)
Let's go.

EXT. LOGGING TRUCK - DAY

A truck loaded with felled timber and horn blaring tailgates Hook.

INT. HOOK'S UTE - DAY

Hook observes the impatient DRIVER through his rear view mirror. He shifts gear and moves to the left allowing the truck just enough to pass.

EXT. UNMADE ROAD - DAY

The truck zooms past, immediately cutting in. Hook is forced to decelerate into a skid, stopping abruptly.

INT. HOOK'S UTE - DAY

Dust from the truck obscures Hook's vision.

HOOK
Idiot!

EXT. PROTESTERS' CAMP - DAY

PROTESTERS, holding placards, stand in front of the blockade, Ash defiantly in the center. Ellen, still by the fire, clutches Stephen's arm.

INT. 4WD - DAY

Monson talks into a CB transceiver. We see through Monson's binoculars the Protesters on the road.

INT. LOGGING TRUCK - DAY

The Driver holsters his CB transceiver, plants his foot and speeds towards the Protesters.

LOGGING DRIVER 1
Chickenshits!

EXT. PROTESTERS' CAMP - DAY

The truck aims for the middle of the blockade. Ash is first to jump aside. The Protesters scramble as the horn-blaring truck shatters the blockade. Ash lands near Ellen.

ELLEN
Guess none of us are really that committed, eh?

EXT. 4WD - DAY

The truck roars past the 4WD, covering it in dust.

An empty logging truck approaches from the opposite direction. They pass in cavalier fashion.

EXT. PROTESTERS' CAMP - DAY

Ash sees the empty truck approaching. He snatches Stephen, drags him to the center of the road.

ASH
Are you prepared to put his life on the line? Because I am!

Ellen desperately attempts to pull Stephen from Ash. The Protesters, thrown by Ash's behaviour, watch.

INT. HOOK'S UTE - DAY

Hook drives towards Ash, Stephen and Ellen. He can see past them to the approaching truck. Hook skids to a halt in the middle of the road.

Ellen frantically looks his way.

Hook emerges with his rifle, aims at the truck.

INT. LOGGING TRUCK 2 - DAY

DRIVER 2 blasts his horn as he maintains speed towards them.

Ash defiantly remains steadfast, clutching the struggling Stephen.

Driver 2 sees Hook aiming at him.

EXT. UNMADE ROAD - DAY

Hook squeezes the trigger, then manually cocks the bolt.

The logging truck veers off the road at the last moment narrowly avoiding Hook and the others. It almost loses control but returns to the road and speeds off.

Hook puts chocolate in his mouth.

HOOK

Caramello guts.

The 4WD speeds off.

The Protesters gather themselves, appreciatively advance on Hook.

Ellen realises there is no magazine in Hook's rifle.

ASH

Join the cause, man.

Hook looks at a distraught Ellen now putting a jumper on Stephen. His judgmental look says it all. She turns her back on Hook. Hook glances at the smashed blockade, ambles to Ash, indicates Ellen and Stephen.

HOOK

If I have a *cause, man*, I don't expect others to fight my battles.

EXT. HOOK'S UTE - DAY

Hook drives along a bitumen road. A sign reads: **MYOLA Pop 1200**. A locomotive track runs parallel to the bitumen road.

INT. HOOK'S UTE - DAY

Hook observes felled trees being loaded from trucks onto a transport locomotive.

A police car pulls in behind Hook, motioning him over.

Hook remains in the ute. Two POLICE cautiously approach.

EXT. HOOK'S UTE - DAY

Policeman One writes down Hook's number plate.

POLICEMAN 2

Licence?

Hook passes his licence to the policeman who hands it to Policeman One who returns to the police car.

Policeman Two searches through the window. The rifle is missing.

POLICEMAN 2 (CONT'D)

You part of that protester's mob?

HOOK

What protesters?

Policeman One returns, nods okay and hands the licence to Policeman Two who hands it to Hook.

POLICEMAN 2

Someone's bound to get hurt.

EXT. MAIN ROAD, TOWN - DAY

Hook drives up the main road of Myola, a small town dependent on the timber industry. LOCALS curiously watch.

INT. HOOK'S UTE - DAY

Hook parks outside a Hardware Store. WORKERS unload chipboard sheets from a truck. MADE IN JAPAN is prominently displayed on the chipboard casing.

ARTHUR, 45, an Aboriginal, dressed in threadbare overalls, pushes a barrow containing scavenged refuse, including metal spikes used for securing railway sleepers, down a lane next to the Hardware Store.

INT. HARDWARE STORE, BACKYARD - DAY

Hook is shown timber by THOMAS, 40. Workers stack the chipboard sheets in the backyard of the Hardware Store.

The store OWNER, 60, attends a CUSTOMER, while observing Hook.

Near the gateway leading into the backyard of the Hardware Store Arthur fossicks among discarded timber strewn around a fire in a metal drum.

The Owner notices Arthur pick up discarded chipboard, shake his head and drop it. The Owner angrily motions to Thomas.

THOMAS
Hey, get away from that.

ARTHUR
It's shit anyway!

THOMAS
Piss off!
(to Hook)
Fucken scavengers.

Arthur breaks a piece of chipboard over his knee, tosses the pieces into the fire. Thomas hurries towards Arthur.

THOMAS (CONT'D)
Get out!

Arthur hastily wheels his barrow away.

HOOK
Aboriginal isn't he?

The Owner looks askance at Hook.

STORE OWNER
No Abos round here, mate.

EXT. RAILWAY TRACK - DAWN

A locomotive loaded with logs passes noisily through the mist of a beautiful valley.

INT. ARTHUR'S CABIN - DAWN

Arthur sleeps inside his darkened cabin, on a single camp bed low to the floor, undisturbed by the noise of the locomotive. Books are stacked in makeshift bookcases. Among the few photos on a bench is an old framed picture of an Aboriginal soldier (Arthur's Dad) in WW2 uniform.

The roar of the locomotive is replaced by the distant noise of a tractor.

Arthur opens his door to blinding morning light.

EXT. ARTHUR'S CABIN - DAY

The outside walls of Arthur's derelict cabin have been repaired with rusted corrugated iron and the cabin is surrounded by collected junk. A dirt track leads to the cabin which is half way up a gentle slopping hill of natural forest.

The view is breathtaking. In the distance is the valley through which the locomotive passes. Across the valley, in another direction but overlooking the train line, is BLUE HILL, a mountain dense in natural forest and tall timber.

From his doorway Arthur sees directly across the valley a tractor towing a caravan up the unmade road of a small hill.

Arthur pans his binoculars down the small hill to a FOR SALE sign which has a SOLD sign across it, amid an area of mature pine trees.

Arthur pans back to the tractor. We zoom in to see Hook's ute leading the tractor.

EXT. HOOK'S BUILDING SITE - DAY

Hook stops at a natural building site 200 meters up the side of the hill.

EXT. ARTHUR'S CABIN - DAY

Arthur drinks tea. He peers through his binoculars, sees a bulldozer excavating a building site area.

EXT. ARTHUR'S CABIN - DAWN

The next day Arthur sits atop the ridging of his cabin, looking at Hook's site through his binoculars. The bulldozer has gone and Hook has pegged out his foundation area for his house. In the background is a mocked up bush dunny.

EXT. HOOK'S BUILDING SITE - DAY

Hook, stripped to the waist, sweats in the afternoon sun, as he digs his foundation trench. Didgeridoo music is heard. He looks across the valley.

INT. ARTHUR'S CABIN - DAY

The cabin is dark. A didgeridoo resting on the floor vibrates as it plays.

There is a loud knock. Arthur slightly opens his door and peers at the silhouette of the towering Hook covered in mud.

EXT. ARTHUR'S CABIN - DAY

Arthur squints up.

HOOK
They told me you sometimes did odd
jobs.

INT. HOOK'S DUNNY - DAY

BLOWFLIES swarm around the makeshift seat, galvanized pan
and bucket of sawdust.

ARTHUR V.O.
Depends.

Arthur and Hook stand at the open door of Hook's dunny.

HOOK
Five dollars a time...for the job.

Arthur smiles agreement.

HOOK (CONT'D)
Another five for the bloody indignity.

EXT. HOOK'S DUNNY - DAY

Arthur storms off leaving a confused Hook.

Arthur kicks at a mound of sand next to screenings, a
concrete mixer and bags of cement.

EXT. HOOK'S BUILDING SITE - DAY

Hook mixes cement using a cement mixer powered from the
car battery of his ute.

EXT. ARTHUR'S CABIN - DAY

From his rooftop Arthur watches Hook through binoculars
empty cement into the wheelbarrow. Hook tips the cement
into a box framework for a slab.

EXT. HOOK'S BUILDING SITE - DAY

Hook carries a shovel and newspaper into the bush.

EXT. ARTHUR'S CABIN - DAY

Arthur watches Hook return without the newspaper. Hook
angrily glares in Arthur's direction.

Arthur quickly lowers the binoculars, smiles to himself.

INT. HOOK'S CARAVAN - NIGHT

Hook reads a building book by candlelight. Classical music plays on a transistor radio. The contents of the caravan have been arranged in military precision with the blankets and sheets stripped and neatly folded at the head of the bed. There is a loud knock at the door.

Hook opens the door to Arthur wearing cut-off overalls.

ARTHUR

Just the five a week'll do.

EXT. HOOK'S BUILDING SITE - NIGHT

Hook hands Arthur \$50 as they walk to the dunny with the aid of a kerosene lamp.

HOOK

Ten weeks in advance.

Arthur pockets the money.

HOOK (CONT'D)

Should have a septic by then.

LATER: Hook watches Arthur return the empty can to the dunny. Arthur shuts the dunny door, turns to Hook.

ARTHUR

I'd of thought you'd emptied a few cans in your time.

Hook laughs warmly.

HOOK

Once crawled into an enemy shit-pit. Had to lie there for a week.

Arthur is surprised by Hook's revelation.

HOOK (CONT'D)

Took years to get rid of the smell.

Arthur grins. Hook holds his hand out.

HOOK (CONT'D)

Hook, Lachlan Hook.

Arthur wipes his hands on his overalls, holds a hand out. Hook eagerly shakes it.

ARTHUR

Lachlan? Ha, ha, that's a bit rich. Artie.

HOOK

Arthur.

ARTHUR

Artie.

Arthur is standing on a mound and their shadows from the moon are the same height.

EXT. MAIN ROAD, TOWN - DAY

Hook parks outside the Post Office. A poster advertises a Tasmanian devil with a facial tumor and a help prevent message. On his way into the Post Office Hook nods to a local WOMAN, 40, who ignores him.

INT. POST OFFICE - DAY

Hook is handed a bundle of letters from the POST MISTRESS. Nothing is said but she keenly watches him shuffle through his letters, remove one, tear the others up without opening them and drop them in the bin, to her astonishment.

INT. ARTHUR'S CABIN - DAY

Hook enters. The cabin is cluttered with scavenged artifacts and chaotic. The bed has never been made. Arthur instantly attempts to tidy but Hook puts a gentle hand on his shoulder and shakes his head.

LATER: They drink tea in front of the fire.

ARTHUR

Haven't had many visitors.

HOOK

Are you happy here?

ARTHUR

Happy?

HOOK

Stupid question. No one's happy.

ARTHUR

Yes I suppose I am sometimes. Yes.

HOOK

Good, maybe it's catching.

Wood explodes in the fire. Hook tenses. Arthur notices Hook's eyes flicker from left to right.

INT. HOOK'S UTE - DAY

Hook is returning from Myola in pouring rain along the unmade road. New sections have been clear-felled. In the distance is an intersection.

Hook sees Ellen and Stephen get out of a car and hurry to a wooden bus shelter. The car speeds away.

INT. BUS SHELTER - DAY

Ellen, soaking and wearing a motley drizabone, carries a packed rucksack and guitar wrapped in oilskin. Stephen is shivering, pale and still sickly.

STEPHEN

Where're we going?

ELLEN

We'll get a ride.

Ellen watches Hook's ute slow as it approaches.

INT. HOOK'S UTE - DAY

Hook stops his ute, leans over and opens the passenger door.

INT. BUS SHELTER - DAY

Ellen notices groceries on the passenger seat. Hook puts the groceries on the floor, indicates for her to get in. She sees the rifle above the back window, looks long and hard at Hook before responding.

ELLEN

Where you goin'?

HOOK

Never mind that. You can't stay here, in this, with a kid. Get in.

Ellen hesitates. A shivering Stephen grabs her arm. She gathers her belongings and ushers Stephen to the car.

INT. HOOK'S UTE - DAY

Ellen puts the guitar between herself and Hook, then settles Stephen.

HOOK

Where you headed?

ELLEN

Dulverston.

HOOK

That's a fair way. It'll be dark in an hour.

ELLEN

I know.

They drive in silence. Ellen covertly watches Hook, his hands, his legs, his Rolex watch. Although Hook is aware she's appraising him he avoids returning her glimpses.

Stephen spies a Caramello Bar on the dashboard. Hook offers the chocolate to Stephen who looks to Ellen for permission. She shakes her head. Stephen shakes his head. Hook returns the chocolate to the dashboard.

They drive through acres of land desecrated by loggers. Ellen mournfully looks out the window.

LATER: It is dusk and still raining. They drive through natural forest, then come a pine plantation at the entrance of Hook's property. Hook stops the ute at the bottom of the two hundred metre track leading up to his house.

Ellen looks at the pine plantation with disdain. She prepares to get out, moves to open the door. Hook contemplates before speaking.

HOOK

There's a hippy commune ten miles on.

Ellen looks at him.

HOOK (CONT'D)

I'll drive you there. They'll take you in.

She laughs.

HOOK (CONT'D)

What?

ELLEN

You're a bit old to be doing the social worker thing, aren't you?

She opens the door.

HOOK

Or you can stay at my place for the night.

She searches deep into his eyes.

ELLEN
You married?

Hook laughs.

HOOK
I live alone.

ELLEN
Um, thanks but...

Ellen glances at Stephen shivering, considers, then turns to Hook.

ELLEN (CONT'D)
Look, um, it'd be great, like if we could, just stay over.

She forces a smile at Stephen who doesn't respond.

EXT. HOOK'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The house is finished, a dam has filled with water, a vegie patch flourishes and a carefully stacked woodheap has been slightly eroded.

Arthur, soaking and holding a packet of bread watches Ellen carry Stephen to the front door.

Hook has Ellen's rucksack and guitar. They are unaware of Arthur.

INT. HOOK'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The house is immaculate but austere. Hook pushes the door open, dumps her belongings and immediately goes to the fireplace trampling mud on the floor in the process.

Ellen, holding Stephen, remains at the door. She surveys the unique design of the house. A large room containing kitchen and lounge room in one, with an enormous rock fireplace. A new rifle hangs on a wall. Ellen notices the mud Hook trampled in.

Hook indicates to put Stephen on the couch. He lights the prepared fire.

Ellen puts Stephen on the couch, unbuttons his damp coat and removes his shoes. She removes her boots and puts them by the door.

HOOK
He's half frozen.

Ellen lifts Stephen to the fire. Hook prepares plates and cutlery in the kitchen area.

MOMENTS LATER: Ellen has arranged Stephen's wet clothes by the roaring fire.

Hook appears with three steaming mugs of Cocoa.

HOOK (CONT'D)
Might be too hot for the boy.

Ellen takes two mugs, puts one down and blows on the other before putting it to Stephen's lips. He gulps heartily but she prevents him drinking too quickly.

HOOK (CONT'D)
Whisky if you like.

She shakes her head irritably. Hook puts a good serving in his mug.

HOOK (CONT'D)
What's his name?

She indicates for Stephen to speak but he doesn't.

ELLEN
Stephen.

HOOK
Doesn't say much.

ELLEN
Neither would you if you were bloody freezing.

HOOK
Mine's Hook.

Ellen slightly sneers at his name. She notices Hook looking at her bare fingers.

HOOK (CONT'D)
You married?

ELLEN
Sorta, it didn't work out.

HOOK
Me too. Club's getting bigger all the time, eh?

Ellen smiles, slightly relaxes.

ELLEN
Ellen...Carter.

HOOK
 Now...food. Um, nothing flash. Um,
 can you cook?

She glares at him, shakes her head.

HOOK (CONT'D)
 Tough luck, eh. I was hoping...

ELLEN
 (sharply)
 I'm not hungry!

Hook goes to the kitchen area. Stephen hands Ellen his empty mug. She sits, contemplating her fate.

HOOK
 Lavatory's out the back.

Hook indicates a torch hanging by the door.

HOOK (CONT'D)
 Torch is on a hook by the door.

Stephen sniggers. Hook looks inquisitively at him.

STEPHEN
 You said *on a hook*, ha, ha.

Hook roars laughing. Ellen smiles.

LATER: Stephen is asleep in Ellen's arms. Hook carries a tray containing three plates of bacon, eggs and tomatoes on toast. Stephen wakes, his eyes light up. Ellen looks horrified.

HOOK
 What?

Ellen shakes her head bemused.

HOOK (CONT'D)
 What?

She indicates the food.

ELLEN
 Battery hens, pigs, processed bread
 and tomatoes probably full of artificial
 dye!

Hook looks at her as one would an imbecile.

HOOK
 I grew them myself.

MOMENTS LATER: Hook sits in front of the fire with the three plates of food in front of him. He eats from the three plates. Ellen's rucksack is open and Stephen and Ellen eat from a container of nuts and dried apple.

Stephen looks hungrily at Hook's plate. Ellen puts a nut in Stephen's hand. Hook puts an entire egg in his mouth.

HOOK (CONT'D)

Yum.

ELLEN

Don't!

Stephen is almost drooling.

ELLEN (CONT'D)

I want him to learn good habits.

Hook looks at the wet clothes in front of the fire and shakes his head.

HOOK

How old is he?

ELLEN

(to Stephen)

How old are you?

STEPHEN

Five. How old are you?

Hook puts his arm straight out.

HOOK

Oh, this old.

Stephen looks confused. Hook laughs. Ellen gives Hook a filthy look.

HOOK (CONT'D)

Around fifty or something.

ELLEN

He's old, darling. Very old.

STEPHEN

Like Grandpa?

Ellen goes rigid, trembles, struggles against the trembling. Stephen hugs her. She comes out of it almost immediately. Hook curiously observes.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, Mummy. I'm sorry.

Ellen hugs Stephen tightly.

HOOK
There's a bed behind the curtain, a
double bed.

Ellen looks hesitantly at Hook.

HOOK (CONT'D)
You and the boy take that. I'll use a
sleeping bag by the fire.

ELLEN
Oh no, I couldn't do that.

HOOK
Please, you're guests.

INT. HOOK'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The double bed with a rabbit skin rug is in a small windowless alcove behind a curtain. Ellen tucks Stephen in. He's already asleep before she pulls the covers over him. She lovingly kisses him.

INT. HOOK'S HOUSE - NIGHT

As Ellen returns Hook is rolling a cigarette. Coffee percolates on an intricately designed hot-plate in the fire.

HOOK
Want one?

She smiles and removes a tin from her rucksack. She rolls a joint from the little left in the tin. Hook drags hard on his cigarette. She lights the joint, inhales then offers Hook a drag.

HOOK (CONT'D)
Never touch the stuff.

She looks at him disbelievingly.

HOOK (CONT'D)
No small vices, fairdinkum.

Ellen smiles. Hook pours coffee, indicates if she wants whisky.

ELLEN
Never touch the stuff.

He looks at her disbelievingly.

ELLEN (CONT'D)
You have many friends?

Hook shakes his head.

ELLEN (CONT'D)
You don't feel the need for contact?

HOOK
I've had too much contact.

ELLEN
I know what you mean.

HOOK
At your age?

ELLEN
I'm twenty-six.

HOOK
I'd of thought younger.

ELLEN
I married young. In the end it just
didn't work out.

INT. HOOK'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ellen, wearing an old tracksuit, lies on top of the blankets in the double bed. She can hear the fire crackling and see the glow through the curtain. Stephen sleeps soundly under the blankets.

LATER: Ellen, under the blankets, is awoken, startled, from a sound in the house. She can faintly hear sounds of wildlife from outside. She cuddles the sleeping Stephen as she listens to Hook moving about.

INT. HOOK'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Hook, naked to the waist and sweating, stares out a window at the moonlit Blue Hill.

LATER: He returns to the sleeping bag in front of the fire, turns the drying clothes. Ellen's purse falls from her jeans. Hook opens the purse. It contains only small change.

INT. HOOK'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ellen stares up at the beams.

LATER: It's dawn and Ellen wakes. Stephen sleeps. She observes Hook's sparse clothes neatly hung in a makeshift rack. A gunshot echoes from outside. She jumps up.

INT. HOOK'S HOUSE - DAY

Ellen hurries into the house area. The fire is raging. Hook, in the kitchen area, appears not to notice her. He has shaved and his hair is combed.

Ellen and Stephen's clothes are neatly folded next to the fire.

Hook is making toast and breaking eggs into a pan. Ellen glances at the rifle still hanging on the wall.

HOOK
Nearly ready, sit down.

ELLEN
Um...

HOOK
Oh, bathroom's through there.

Hook indicates a door leading off the kitchen.

INT. HOOK'S BATHROOM - DAY

The bathroom is spotless. Two new toothbrushes are on the sink along with two folded army-colored towels. She contemplates locking the door but doesn't.

She puts toothpaste on her finger, washes her teeth then rinses. She washes her face in cold water, removes her tracksuit top and washes under her arms. She considers using the towel but instead flicks the water off and pats herself dry with her tracksuit top.

She checks herself in the mirror, resists the urge to run her hands through her hair, then exits.

INT. HOOK'S HOUSE - DAY

A gunshot is heard as she enters the kitchen area. She winces. Hook smiles.

ELLEN
Why build a toilet outside?

HOOK
That's a long story.

Hook watches Ellen prepare clothes for Stephen and put the dried clothes into the rucksack.

Hook puts three plates of eggs and toast on the table.

HOOK (CONT'D)

The eggs are what they call free range.

ELLEN

I'll bet.

HOOK

The bread's gratis which means the profits don't go to multinationals and the coffee, well the coffee's bloody coffee.

ELLEN

People like you never give a stuff.

HOOK

Like me...?

ELLEN

Who rip out old-growth forest, replace it with pines. As long as you can make a quid. I'm alright Jack, stuff the environment.

Somewhat astonished at Ellen's attack Hook is unable to respond because Stephen enters rubbing his eyes. Ellen turns her back on Hook. She hugs Stephen, who spies the eggs and immediately sits at the table.

Hook picks up a piece of toast containing an egg and bites into it.

STEPHEN

Can I?

Ellen sits at the table, cautiously looks at the eggs.

ELLEN

If you're lying!

Hook smiles. Stephen picks up a piece of toast containing an egg and bites into it.

STEPHEN

Yum.

Ellen scraps the egg off her toast and puts the toast to one side.

HOOK

It's wholemeal.

ELLEN

It's still processed!

HOOK

What, are you a dietician or something?

She doesn't respond.

HOOK (CONT'D)

How long have you been on the road?

Ellen doesn't answer. Stephen whispers.

STEPHEN

Three days.

HOOK

Where did you sleep the night before last?

Ellen shrugs her shoulders.

STEPHEN

Haystack.

Hook's look is disapproving.

ELLEN

It was more like a barn.

HOOK

You in a hurry to get somewhere?

She shrugs her shoulders.

HOOK (CONT'D)

Why don't you both stay here for a day or two?

Ellen almost laughs.

ELLEN

Why?

HOOK

Why what?

ELLEN

You like to be alone. It's obvious. Why would a loner want a stray bitch and pup cluttering up his tidy little life?

Hook looks her up and down. Misinterpreting his intention she pulls her tracksuit top up around her neck. Hook smiles.

HOOK

I'm sorry. I've got a few things to do. I'll drive you to Dulverston.

ELLEN

Why do you assume we want to go to Dulverston?

HOOK

Because you said...Look, wherever you want to go then.

They sit in silence.

LATER: Hook has stacked the dishes ready to be washed. Ellen watches Stephen put his shirt on. Stephen purposefully takes his time. A tear escapes, cascades down his cheek. Another falls but Ellen wipes them before putting her cheek to his arm.

ELLEN

Carn, we've gotta go.

Stephen's sad eyes peer at her.

ELLEN (CONT'D)

Put your shoes on.

Stephen goes to the fireplace to put his shoes on. Hook has placed playing cards and a set of knucklebones next to them. Stephen looks at Ellen.

HOOK

Don't need them. Thought the boy might like them.

STEPHEN

Can I, mum?

Ellen smiles.

ELLEN

Thanks.

Stephen picks up the cards. A fifty dollar note falls out.

HOOK

Get the kid a raincoat...and some gumboots.

Ellen puts the fifty dollars on the kitchen table.

ELLEN

Thanks, but...

HOOK

What?

ELLEN

You probably don't think too much of me, dragging a kid round the country, but I've been buggered around by everybody, bloody so-called experts.

HOOK

They're everywhere. Bloody roads should be sign posted.

Ellen looks at Stephen playing with the knucklebones.

ELLEN

Um...

HOOK

Look...

ELLEN

If I can...If I can change my mind...

Hook just looks at her. She drops her eyes.

ELLEN (CONT'D)

We'd like to stay a day maybe.

Hook carefully hangs up the tea towel.

HOOK

Good, that's settled then.

ELLEN

One thing though.

Hook waits apprehensively. Ellen pushes the money towards Hook.

ELLEN (CONT'D)

I don't wash dishes. *He* expected that.

EXT. HOOK'S HOUSE - DAY

Hook gets into his ute. Ellen, smoking, sits with Stephen on the front doorstep.

HOOK

Wanta come?

Ellen shakes her head.

HOOK (CONT'D)

Need anything, you know...?

Smiling she shakes her head. Hook turns the ute around.

ELLEN

Oh um...

Hook stops the ute.

ELLEN (CONT'D)

...if they have anything healthy,
um...no never mind.

HOOK

What, ice-cream?

She irritably turns away. Hook laughs.

EXT. LOCAL TIP - DAY

Hook drives into the local tip, pulls alongside Arthur scavenging through refuse. Although Arthur is aware of Hook's ute he doesn't acknowledge it.

INT. HOOK'S UTE - DAY

Hook watches Arthur, disappointed in his attitude.

INT. HOOK'S HOUSE - DAY

Stephen plays cards. Ellen sits at Hook's tidy working desk containing minimum accessories.

She opens a drawer of ordered documents. She closes it without touching the documents. She opens the next drawer containing a bundle of fifty dollar notes.

INT. HOOK'S UTE - DAY

Hook drives up the track to his house.

INT. HOOK'S HOUSE - DAY

Hook enters the front door. Ellen's rucksack and guitar are near the door. Ellen fusses with Stephen's shirt.

HOOK

Geeze it's bloody freezing. Why didn't
you light a fire?

She doesn't respond. He sees her belongings.

HOOK (CONT'D)

What's this?

ELLEN

It's your bed. I can't sleep in it.

She sees his disappointment. Hook scoops her rucksack and guitar up.

INT. HOOK'S BEDROOM - DAY

Hook dumps her belongings on the bed. Ellen stands at the curtain.

HOOK

It's my place and you do what I say.

Ellen stiffens at his tone.

HOOK (CONT'D)

Please?

She relaxes.

HOOK (CONT'D)

Is that how he used to talk to you?

She leaves. Hook follows her.

ELLEN

Is that how you talked to your wife?

HOOK

No, that's how she talked to me.

Hook opens the drawer containing the money and without checking drops more money in.

LATER: Hook carries in fruit and fresh vegetables. Ellen smiles approvingly.

HOOK (CONT'D)

We've got a guest coming to dinner.

Ellen freaks, almost trembling.

HOOK (CONT'D)

That a problem?

Ellen controls herself, indicates the stained and wrinkled dress she's wearing.

HOOK (CONT'D)

Wait till you see how he dresses.

Ellen forces a smile.

LATER: Through the kitchen window Hook admires Ellen and Stephen playing near the pond.

EXT. HOOK'S HOUSE - DAY

Ellen shows Stephen a native orchid. Kneeling she holds it under Stephen's chin and laughs.

A shadow covers them. She gasps as she looks up to see Arthur in an ill-fitting jacket and tie, with a dead wallaby slung over his shoulder. Hook appears.

HOOK

Ah, you've met Arthur, good.

LATER: Arthur, Ellen and Stephen share an awkward silence as Hook guts and skins the wallaby.

ELLEN

I thought they were protected?

HOOK

They are. This one's a bit bruised though.

Her look demands further explanation.

HOOK (CONT'D)

Probably a logging truck.

Stephen, part behind Ellen, peeks at Arthur.

ELLEN

(to Arthur)

Do you drive a logging truck?

Arthur laughs.

HOOK

I take it you've never met a proper Aborigine?

ELLEN

Not in Tasmania, no.

Arthur laughs. Ellen, annoyed with the gutting of the wallaby, glares at Hook.

ELLEN (CONT'D)

You're not *eating* that?

HOOK

Educate her, Arthur.

ARTHUR

The government and the likes, they like to pretend we died out see, let's them off the hook.

Stephen laughs at Arthur using *hook*. Ellen smiles. Hook holds up the wallaby's intestines.

HOOK

Anyone for a wallaby milkshake?

Ellen nearly vomits. Hook and Arthur laugh.

Hook attaches the wallaby skin to a stretching frame. He smiles to himself at Ellen's retching.

INT. HOOK'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Hook prepares dinner. Arthur is telling a story to the mesmerized Stephen.

ARTHUR

So the Captain lines up all the soldiers and they spread out in this great big line stretching all across the bottom of Tasmania...

Ellen rolls her eyes in disbelief.

STEPHEN

Why?

ARTHUR

So they can capture all the Aborigines.

HOOK

It was called The Black Line.

ARTHUR

And he gives each soldier a big bag.

STEPHEN

What for?

ARTHUR

To put their heads in of course.

STEPHEN

Who's heads?

ARTHUR

My people's.

ELLEN

He's just trying to scare you.

STEPHEN

I know.

LATER: They sit round the table. Hook, Arthur and Stephen stare at their plates containing vegetables only.

Ellen heartily eats. She puts a piece of carrot on Stephen's fork.

Hook sneaks a glance at Arthur who's attempting to capture a roll of carrot with his fork. Hook forces a smile for Ellen's sake. She pops a whole Brussels sprout in her mouth.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

Mum?

Ellen glares at Stephen as she swallows the Brussels sprout. Hook and Arthur roll their eyes in amazement.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

Do I have to?

She glares at Hook.

ELLEN

See!

STEPHEN

Do I?

Hook and Arthur hang on her response. She pushes her plate away, stands, stomps to the kitchen.

ELLEN

I hear one bloody complaint, we're outa here.

Ellen searches the kitchen for ingredients.

STEPHEN

She really means it.

With chef-like manipulation she proficiently cooks. Hook watches in amazement.

ELLEN

And don't think we're eating an endangered species because we're not!

She turns Hook's transistor to a music station playing instrumental fiddle. She moves to the music.

Hook jumps up and performs a mad impromptu bush dance. Arthur rolls his eyes for Stephen's benefit. Hook laughs as his dancing builds.

Arthur gets a metre long cardboard roll and plays didgeridoo. Combined with the fiddle the sound is earthy and unique. Stephen is fascinated.

Hook, exhausted, flops in a chair.

LATER: Arthur shows Stephen how to make a noise through the cardboard roll. Although Stephen's sound is sporadic Arthur dances, traditional style, to it. Ellen's eyes light up.

LATER: They sit in front of a sumptuous feast of cheese, macaroni, stir-fry vegies and chips. They look to Ellen.

ELLEN (CONT'D)
What're you waiting for?

All heartily hoe into the meal.

Ellen notices Stephen smiling warmly at Arthur who points to the ceiling. As Stephen looks up Arthur steals a chip from Stephen's plate and eats it.

STEPHEN
Hey, I saw you.

ARTHUR
They're bad for you.

STEPHEN
How come you're allowed?

ARTHUR
Because I'm a bad man.

Ellen speaks quietly to Hook.

ELLEN
I've been trying to interest him in music for yonks.

Hook acknowledges with a sympathetic smile.

ELLEN (CONT'D)
Gawd his old man was a bastard!

Tears fill her eyes as she watches Arthur and Stephen laughing together.

STEPHEN
Did they really put your heads in a bag?

ARTHUR
Not that time.

STEPHEN
Good.

ARTHUR

That time they only managed to capture two little nippers, your size, and one of them was sick. But in the end they put our heads on islands and my people died.

ELLEN

Why did they do that?

Arthur shrugs his shoulders, looks down at his meal.

ARTHUR

Some people are like that.

Stephen looks knowingly at Ellen. Arthur excuses himself, goes outside.

HOOK

Let's just say that after they exterminated them, the land around Hobart Town tripled in price.

ELLEN

Arthur survived.

HOOK

Hundreds survived but people pretend otherwise and they hate it.

ELLEN

How could anyone hate Arthur?

HOOK

Every time they see him he's a constant reminder of what we're bloody capable of.

Arthur returns, sits at the table. Stephen puts his little hand on Arthur's hand.

STEPHEN

I'm glad they didn't get you.

Arthur ruffles his hair.

ARTHUR

Hey, you haven't finished your vegies.

STEPHEN

I'm full.

Arthur notices Ellen's guitar leaning against the wall. He smiles at Ellen. She shakes her head.

ELLEN

Oh no, definitely not.

Arthur jumps up, dances traditional style.

HOOK

He won't stop till you do.

STEPHEN

Please, Mum.

She shakes her head. Stephen flops to the floor. Hook, unsure whether Stephen is serious, grabs him and swings him onto his shoulders. Stephen screams arching his back. Arthur stops dancing. Hook attempts to hug Stephen. Ellen watches, allowing Hook to deal with Stephen.

HOOK

It's okay. You're okay. I've got you.

Stephen struggles and continuously punches Hook's watch.

HOOK (CONT'D)

Come on, mate, you'll only hurt yourself.

Ellen takes Stephen from Hook but Stephen still attempts to hit Hook's watch. She holds him tight until he settles. Hook gently rubs his hand down the back of Stephen's hair. Stephen winches but his eyes close.

Arthur looks on not knowing what to do or say.

INT. HOOK'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ellen puts the sleeping Stephen onto the double bed. Hook removes Stephen's shoes, looks at the worn soles. Ellen tucks him in. Hook puts his watch to his ear, grins at Ellen.

ELLEN

(whispering)

It was only a toy watch...but when his father gave it to him some big kids took it off him. "Why didn't you stand up to them?" he screamed at him. Then he'd shake him. How could someone do that to a child?

HOOK

Because he was a bastard.

INT. HOOK'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Hook and Ellen return from the bedroom.

ARTHUR
I'd better go.

ELLEN
Oh no, please don't.

HOOK
I can run you home.

ELLEN
Not yet.

ARTHUR
(looking at the
guitar)
I might reconsider...

HOOK
Well that's settled then.

Hook unwraps the guitar, looks at the curved wood.

HOOK (CONT'D)
Rosewood, the best.

He hands it to her.

ELLEN
I'm a bit rusty.

HOOK
So am I.

ARTHUR
Hah, rub him down with a mudbrick and
he's anyone's.

She tunes the guitar. Hook and Arthur watch expectantly. She shakes her head with feigned annoyance then sings Leonard Cohen's, ***The Ballad Of Absent Marie***. However, she is reluctant to give herself over to the song.

Arthur closes his eyes and moves to her singing. Hook looks deep into her eyes, penetrating her emotional wall. She closes her eyes slowly giving herself completely to the song.

Hook listens fascinated. Ellen is aware of the way Hook watches her.

INT. HOOK'S UTE - NIGHT

The song continues as Hook drives Arthur home. Hook suddenly swings onto a side road.

They drive over rough terrain. Hook stops.

EXT. CLEAR-FELLED LAND - NIGHT

They are in the middle of clear-felled land illuminated by the moon. From a bird's eye view we see the ant-sized ute on a lunar surface of desecrated terrain. The song finishes.

INT. HOOK'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Hook returns. Ellen is in the kitchen. She has stacked the dirty dishes and cleared everything else away. Hook notices her wrapped guitar next to her packed rucksack.

ELLEN

He's special, isn't he?

HOOK

Oh yes, he's special alright.

Hook removes his watch puts it on the kitchen window ledge. He gets the whisky.

ELLEN

Um, I'd better get to bed.

She notices Hook looking at her packed rucksack.

ELLEN (CONT'D)

Thought we'd best move on.

Hook conceals his disappointment.

INT. HOOK'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ellen changes into her tracksuit silently so as not to wake Stephen. As she folds her clothes she can hear Hook washing dishes.

She creeps out with her folded clothes.

INT. HOOK'S HOUSE - NIGHT

She tiptoes to her rucksack. Hook, stripped to the waist is shaving at the kitchen sink. He doesn't turn.

ELLEN

Sorry.

She puts her clothes in the rucksack. Hook smiles at her through half a beard of lather.

HOOK
I hate gray whiskers.

She looks, almost admiringly, at his muscular back.

INT. HOOK'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ellen lies awake in bed.

INT. HOOK'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Hook looks out the window at the moon shining on Blue Hill.

EXT. HOOK'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Hook's face is pressed against the now fogged window. We pull back into the night and circle the house.

EXT. HOOK'S HOUSE - DAY

The ute is outside the front door. The Rucksack and guitar are on the ground. Ellen is straightening Stephen's collar. Hook grabs the rucksack and guitar.

HOOK
Hop in.

INT. HOOK'S UTE - DAY

The three silently look straight ahead as Hook drives uncharacteristically slow.

LATER: Stephen gazes out the window forlornly.

LATER: As they approach Myola Ellen puts on a beanie.

HOOK
I'll take you on to Dulverston.

ELLEN
You don't have to.

They pass through Myola to the stare of locals. Ellen looks straight ahead.

LATER: The Protesters have set up camp on the other side of Myola. Ellen watches as they drive past the Protesters. Ash waves. She doesn't respond.

HOOK
You wanta stop?

She shakes her head. They continue in silence.

HOOK (CONT'D)

Idiots anyway, most of them. What are they gonna achieve out here in no man's land?

Ellen, infuriated, looks out the passenger window.

HOOK (CONT'D)

If they want to achieve something they've got to get fair dinkum. Waving banners is a waste of time.

ELLEN

(to herself)

At least they've got the guts to take a stance.

Hook scoffs.

LATER: They approach a sign showing **DULVERSTON POP 3000**.

EXT. DULVERSTON, MAIN STREET - DAY

The ute drives up the main street of Dulverston. Nobody shows interest in the ute.

INT. HOOK'S UTE - DAY

Hook stops the ute outside a bus depot.

EXT. BUS DEPOT - DAY

They get out of the Ute. Ellen cautiously looks around before looking in the back of the ute for her rucksack and guitar. Only the guitar is there.

HOOK

Shit! Didn't I put it in?

Ellen rolls her eyes furiously.

HOOK (CONT'D)

Must be getting Alzheimers.

ELLEN

You did that on purpose!

HOOK

Why would I do that?

ELLEN

All the bloody same!

He shrugs his shoulders but her anger is unrelenting. He moves a tarp to reveal her rucksack, smiles. She shakes her head disapprovingly. He hops in the ute.

HOOK
Won't be long.

As he drives off she yells.

ELLEN
Wait...

But Hook has gone.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Ellen and Stephen sit in a park opposite the bus depot. Hook returns, parks his ute, jumps out. Ellen, somewhat confused, forces a smile.

HOOK
Come on.

Hook, carrying a manila envelope, walks towards the town.

ELLEN
Where?

HOOK
Come on.

EXT. MAIN STREET, TOWN - DAY

Hook hurries up the main street, with Ellen and Stephen close behind.

They pass LOCALS and arrive at a Jewelers.

INT. JEWELER - DAY

Hook enters the Jewelers. The JEWELER, 50, smiles. Ellen and Stephen remain outside.

EXT. JEWELER - DAY

Hook exits and takes a reluctant Ellen's hand.

INT. JEWELER - DAY

Hook reenters dragging Ellen. Stephen follows. The Jeweler motions to his WIFE, 40, who instantly appears from behind a curtain. She looks them up and down, almost with disdain.

JEWELER
How may I help you?

Hook looks at the bewildered Ellen, ponders.

HOOK
I'd like to see some stones.

The Jeweler smirks. The Wife keeps a close eye on Stephen who stands in the background.

HOOK (CONT'D)
Stones, yes.

JEWELER
Any special stones you had in mind?
HMMMMMMMM?
(aside to his wife)
Kidney maybe?

Ellen hears the Jeweler and smiles.

HOOK
Emeralds'll do.

JEWELER
Emeralds of course. What price range
was Sir considering?

HOOK
Just show me what you've got.

JEWELER
Felicity, would you bring this gentleman
the emerald collection?

Felicity disappears behind the curtain. The Jeweler smiles bemusedly. Felicity returns with a small tray with two tiny emeralds and two rings.

Hook holds one of the rings to the light. He drops it on the tray.

HOOK
If that's the best you've got you're
wasting my time!

The Jeweler nods to Felicity who disappears behind the curtain.

ELLEN
(whispering)
What're you doing?

Hook ignores her. Felicity returns with a velvet tray containing a ring, two bracelets and a necklace designed around a large emerald.

Hook picks up the necklace, holds it to the light, smiles, turns to Ellen. He fastens it gently round her neck.

Felicity stands between them and the door. Ellen is embarrassed by Hook's behaviour.

HOOK

How much?

The Jeweler struggles to contain his mirth.

JEWELER

That's a fraction over one carat.
It's on consignment from one of our
very prominent clients.

HOOK

How much?

JEWELER

Four thousand, eight hundred
dollars...cash.

The Jeweler holds a hand out for the necklace. Felicity smirks at Ellen. Hook drops the envelope on the counter.

HOOK

And I want a watch, the best you've
got.

The Jeweler removes bundles of fifty dollar notes from the envelope and simultaneously indicates quickly for Felicity to fetch a tray of watches.

Ellen is speechless. Felicity fetches a tray of expensive watches from the window.

JEWELER

Um...the certificate for the emerald
will take a little...

HOOK

The lady will wear it. And I'd like
to use your telephone.

Without waiting for a response Hook goes behind the curtain.

JEWELER

Of course, by all means...and a chair
for Madam?

Ellen shakes her head, still stunned by Hook's behaviour.

INT. JEWELER'S BACK ROOM - DAY

Hook is on the phone as Felicity enters with the tray of watches. He indicates for her to wait and turns his back on her.

He hangs up, pulls an old piece of paper from his pocket and dials a number scrawled on the paper.

HOOK
It's for the boy.

Felicity turns to leave.

HOOK (CONT'D)
And Felicity...?

She stops.

HOOK (CONT'D)
Make certain it works.

INT. JEWELER - DAY

Felicity is trying watches on Stephen whose saucer-grin is infectious. Hook returns. The Jeweler has counted out the money.

ELLEN
What in the hell did you do that for?

HOOK
Don't you like it?

ELLEN
Of course I bloody like it, but you can't afford that sort of thing.

The Jeweler is cautiously listening.

HOOK
You needed it.

ELLEN
Bullshit!

HOOK
Maybe you don't know it but you needed it.

Tears well in Ellen's eyes.

HOOK (CONT'D)
Oh Christ, don't bloody cry. You can't with an emerald like that. It's immoral.

ELLEN

Shit, what're you doing to me?

Hook indicates the envelope.

HOOK

I want you to take the rest. Get the kid some decent shoes.

ELLEN

You can't do this without telling me why.

HOOK

I'm not trying to buy you, nothing like that.

ELLEN

You could have bought me much cheaper than this.

Hook gestures erratically. Ellen instinctively ducks. Felicity conveniently turns away.

HOOK

I'm sorry.

ELLEN

You may as well, everyone else has.

Ellen trembles, building almost fit-like. The Jeweler concerned, doesn't know what to do. Hook shakes Ellen. She comes out of it.

HOOK

Oh fuck, I'm so sorry.

The Jeweler listens, somewhat embarrassed as he removes bands from a gold watch chain. Hook looks deep into her eyes, disappearing.

ELLEN

His father's on the mainland. He wants to take him.

INT. HOOK'S UTE - DAY

Hook drives, almost recklessly and looks straight ahead as the ute passes the clear-felled land.

ELLEN V.O.

I'm not being selfish. I know him taking Stephen would be a bad thing.

LATER: the ute speeds up the track to Hook's house.

ELLEN V.O. (CONT'D)

His family's got lots of money. They're important and they help him, lawyers, everything.

EXT. HOOK'S HOUSE - DAY

We see the back of the ute pull up outside Hook's house. A loaf of bread in on the doorstep.

INT. HOOK'S HOUSE - DAY

Ellen watches Stephen through the window as she hurriedly undresses. Stephen, looking at his watch, sits by the pond. In the background is Blue Hill.

ELLEN V.O.

I'm sure they don't know where we are. But I can't get a pension or apply for the dole because then they'd find me. Sometimes I have to do...sorta like casual jobs...then find somewhere far away.

She turns, naked, except for the necklace, faces Hook.

ELLEN

Promise you won't hurt me?

Hook is naked, his clothes neatly folded on the floor. A savage scar traverses his lower stomach. He goes to her.

ELLEN (CONT'D)

Promise me.

HOOK

No one's ever going to hurt you, I promise.

They kiss passionately, manoeuvre each other towards the bedroom.

INT. HOOK'S BEDROOM - DAY

Ellen pulls Hook onto the bed, straddles him and slides down his body. He restrains her.

ELLEN

I want to.

HOOK

You don't have to.

ELLEN

I know.

He relaxes and her eyes tease him. Hook gently draws her up. They kiss.

Their love making is physical, passionate and culminates in simultaneous climaxes.

LATER: They lie beside each other, gently touching hands. She runs her hand along Hook's thigh. He shivers.

ELLEN (CONT'D)
Gawd, I needed that.

Hook laughs.

ELLEN (CONT'D)
What?

HOOK
You needed it?

She smiles, looks at the necklace.

ELLEN
Tell me you're not sorry, Hook.

He kisses her shoulder, nuzzles her breast.

ELLEN (CONT'D)
Tell me.

HOOK
I'm not sorry.

ELLEN
That was good, Hook, the best.

Hook's eyes light up. Stephen appears through the curtain. He carries the bread. Hook attempts to cover himself. Ellen laughs.

STEPHEN
Why is Hook in our bed?

Hook looks to Ellen to respond.

ELLEN
From now on you'll be sleeping outside and Hook and I'll be sleeping in this bed. Okay?

STEPHEN
Will I be cold?

Ellen laughs, indicates for Stephen to come to her. She hugs him tight, pulling him onto the bed.

ELLEN

Let's have a looksee.

He holds his watch out. Stephen's smile says thank you to Hook who leans over and ruffles his hair.

INT. HOOK'S BATHROOM - DAY

Ellen, naked, carefully places the necklace in its box. She wraps the box in tissue paper and puts it on a shelf. She looks at herself in the mirror, trusting what she sees.

INT. ARTHUR'S CABIN - DAY

Arthur slowly opens the door of his darkened cabin to be greeted by Ellen. Her smile says it all for Arthur.

ARTHUR

It was bound to happen.

She enters, looks around, notices a bowl of chopped meat by the door. Arthur attempts to tidy. She picks up the photo of the Aboriginal in WW2 soldier uniform, puts it back.

ELLEN

Don't. I like how it is.

Arthur stops tidying.

ARTHUR

He has that effect on people, doesn't he?

ELLEN

Tell me about him.

Ellen removes a book from a makeshift bookcase.

ELLEN (CONT'D)

Does he read? Borrowed anything?

ARTHUR

A couple of things. The Arab one, Lawrence. Couple of things on ancient building.

ELLEN

He read them?

Arthur shrugs.

ELLEN (CONT'D)

He say anything about them?

ARTHUR
Nothing much.

ELLEN
I want to know, Artie. He's such a hard man to know.

ARTHUR
He said something when he returned Lawrence.

Ellen picks up the binoculars.

ELLEN
What?

ARTHUR
(thinking)
Beware the courage of the coward.

ELLEN
Who do you think he was he talking about?

Ellen stands in the open doorway, looks through the binoculars at Hook's house. She sees Hook piggybacking Stephen around the pond.

ARTHUR
(miming a rifle shot)
Dunno, really. He won the Queen's Bisley you know. Gave the medallion to a spectator.

There is a disturbing screech. Ellen jumps in fright. Arthur laughs, grabs the bowl of chopped meat.

EXT. ARTHUR'S CABIN - DAY

Arthur puts the bowl at the edge of the bush. A Tasmanian devil, the size of a small dog, appears. Ellen moves. The devil snarls at her, revealing a facial tumor. Ellen is horrified.

ARTHUR
White man's disease.

The devil chomps into the meat.

INT. HOOK'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Hook puts an entire biscuit into his mouth. He is bare-chested by the fire. Ellen looks at the rifles on the wall. She takes the .303 down.

HOOK

Belonged to my Old Man. I put the scope on. He wouldn't have approved. "If you can't hit something with open sights you deserve to miss!"

She returns the gun to the wall.

ELLEN

Tell me about the war, what it did to you?

Hook laughs to himself.

HOOK

That little bastard.

Ellen smiles.

HOOK (CONT'D)

You'll only wanta go.

ELLEN

Maybe, but I'll wanta go if you don't tell me.

HOOK

They trained me. It was all I knew. A few things happened...and I realised the only ones you could trust, depend on, were the men you'd trained with, fought with. In them there was comfort...not a lot mind you...but the only comfort you had...And then when it's all over you're thinking of getting out of the army...Well, Jesus, it's a new world out there, isn't it? And it's filled with strangers, people you distrust...It's frightening... and I mean frightening...People don't understand you...You're an embarrassment to them. For all kinds of reasons...and they look at you as if you're wounded...

ELLEN

Is that where you got this?

She runs her finger across the scar on his stomach.

HOOK

Never felt that...but I felt the other stuff, every bit of it. So I get this brilliant idea. I'll stay in the army, their army. I'll stay in their fucken army!

She puts her fingers across his mouth but he pulls away. His voice increases in intensity.

HOOK (CONT'D)

Because you're safe. You're among your own kind. They made you into the perfect killing machine.

She is shocked.

HOOK (CONT'D)

The most efficient killing machine on earth...and when it's all over the last thing it wants is what it's bloody created!

She overcomes her horror and hugs Hook.

INT. HOOK'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Naked, they make love, rolling and turning. At times Hook seems in a trance but she cups his face and kisses him to excitement. She runs her tongue across his scar. He writhes in pain, his arms above his head.

EXT. BOTTOM OF BLUE HILL - DAY

Hook, Ellen and Stephen walk through the rich, verdant undergrowth at the foot of Blue Hill. It is untouched and spectacular. Ellen has her hair braided with green fern. She is euphoric. Hook has his rifle slung over his shoulder.

Hook looks across the valley to his house.

Ellen gallops like a wild filly among the tall ferns, in and out of the spectacular hardwoods. Hook watches her admiringly.

They come upon enormous Mountain Ash trees. Hook, Ellen and Stephen join hands round the circumference of a tree but can only cover one third of the tree trunk.

Further into this temperate rainforest, among the myrtle and ferns a dream-like mist arises from a natural stream. Ellen, walks naked into the stream. She submerges fully, arising in slow-motion with water cascading rainbow-like from the arc of her hair. Hook, naked, joins her, shivers as he submerges. Stephen watches, giggling.

Ellen stands at the edge of the stream. She covers her entire body with mud. Her eyes glisten through her face-pack as she exfoliates herself with the mud.

EXT. HOOK'S HOUSE - DAY

Hook chops wood. Ellen parks the ute outside the front door. Stephen jumps from the ute and hops into the back, grabs a box of live chickens. Hook is not exactly excited.

ELLEN
We can have free range eggs.

HOOK
They're bloody chickens!

ELLEN
They'll grow.

HOOK
Where are we gonna put them?

She playfully hits him. He relents when he sees Stephen cuddling one.

STEPHEN
I'm calling this one Hook.

EXT. HOOK'S HOUSE, BACK SECTION - DAY

Hook and Ellen build a chook pen from chicken wire and scrap timber. Stephen watches over the box of chickens.

LATER: The pen is completed. Stephen releases the chickens from the box. Ellen hugs and kisses Hook.

Arthur appears carrying two loafs of bread, notices the bum-feathers of the chickens.

ARTHUR
They're bloody roosters, mate.

Hook is mortified.

INT. MONSON'S 4WD - DAY

Monson, in his car outside the Hardware Store, watches Hook, Ellen and Stephen get in the ute.

Monson observes them as they drive past.

Arthur wheels his barrow containing pine cones and metal spikes down the lane next to the hardware store.

EXT. 4WD - DAY

Monson jumps out.

MONSON

What're you doing with those?

Arthur picks up a pine cone.

MONSON (CONT'D)

The fucken spikes?

ARTHUR

I sell them.

MONSON

Who to?

Arthur ignores Monson.

EXT. HARDWARE STORE, BACKYARD - DAY

Arthur puts pine cones in the burning drum, warms his hands. TIMLIN, a driver for the hardware store, appears next to him.

TIMLIN

Artie?

Arthur smiles.

TIMLIN (CONT'D)

There's some spuds out the back. Help yerself.

ARTHUR

Thanks, Kevin.

Arthur wheels his barrow towards a back shed. Monson, grinning with amusement, blocks his path.

MONSON

So, are yer gettin' any?

Arthur doesn't answer.

MONSON (CONT'D)

The flue-bum. Yer getting up her or what?

Arthur turns his barrow around and heads off. Timlin blocks him.

MONSON (CONT'D)

Doesn't the old cunt put yer in the wack up?

Arthur halts.

MONSON (CONT'D)

Black gristle not good enough for the
slut?

Arthur, uncontrollably launches himself at Monson, who deftly steps to one side and smashes Arthur to the side of the face. Arthur falls to his knees, struggling to remain conscious. Monson savagely kicks him in the stomach and ribs. Timlin watches.

MONSON (CONT'D)

I'll give yer have a go at me, yer
black turd!

Monson grabs Arthur by the throat, squeezes so hard that Arthur blacks out. Timlin attempts to pull Monson away. Monson pushes Arthur to the ground, where he remains unconscious. Monson continually kicks him.

MONSON (CONT'D)

You remember this, cunt, I'm giving
you yer life back. Understand that,
yer black cunt!

Monson kicks the barrow over. The few remaining pine cones spill out.

INT. HOOK'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Hook and Stephen sit at the table. They have finished their evening meal. Ellen prepares coffee. Stephen reads a kid's book. She brings the coffee to the table, then produces a new bottle of Scotch. Hook's eyes light up. He opens the Scotch but only pours a fraction into his coffee. Ellen's eyes question.

HOOK

Don't need it any more.

Ellen stares unemotionally at the bottle.

HOOK (CONT'D)

What?

She indicates nothing. Hook looks questioningly at her.

ELLEN

Just something someone accused me
of. They were right but I've never
felt happier.

Smiling, she pours more whisky into Hook's cup.

HOOK

What's say tomorrow we get ourselves
some meat?

STEPHEN

Yeah.

Ellen raises an eyebrow. Hook squeezes Stephen's bicep.

HOOK

Protein. Gotta build those muscles up
for carrying school books.

They look at Ellen. She nods acceptance.

EXT. BOTTOM OF BLUE HILL - DAY

Hook, Ellen and Stephen walk through the lush undergrowth. Hook sees a wallaby in the distance, removes his rifle, aims. Ellen steps in front of him. He slowly lowers the rifle. She smiles, moves away. He quickly aims and fires.

Distraught she covers her ears. Hook walks in the direction of the shot.

LATER: Hook is nearing where the wallaby was. A distraught Ellen runs ahead. Stephen walks behind Hook.

Ellen searches unsuccessfully for the wallaby.

Hook holds up a dead fox. Ellen laughs, runs and hugs him.

LATER: Hook carries the fox and two dead rabbits. Ellen heads up the mountain, looks for Hook to follow.

HOOK

(indicating Stephen)

Too dangerous.

Ellen, realising it's not a good idea to go up the mountain, takes Stephen's hand. They continue skirting the bottom of Blue Hill.

EXT. BLUE HILL, BOTTOM, OPPOSITE SIDE - DAY

They approach the bottom of the other side of Blue Hill. Hook has Stephen on his shoulders. Ellen walking twenty meters ahead notices smoke rising.

She runs, stops, devastated, clutches her head.

Hook, realising something is wrong, hurries to her.

The entire back of the mountain has been clear felled. Mounds of debris are ready to be mulched into trucks. Other mounds are smoldering.

WORKERS throw debris onto the biggest fire. Monson is in a truck being filled with mulch from a mechanical mulcher.

Ellen runs hysterically through the work area. The Workers angrily indicate for her to get out.

Ellen sprints past the workers, running through the clear-felled land.

Exhausted, she falls to the ground, rolling over and over in the muddy soil, her face covered in soil, creating a darkened mask.

Hook removes Stephen from his shoulders, drops the rifle and rabbits. Ellen moves towards the rifle. Hook moves it away with his boot. She turns in the direction she was running. We are confronted with acres of newly planted pine trees.

Hook, Ellen and Stephen return through the Workers. Hook has his arm round Ellen. Stephen follows carrying the rabbits. Monson leers at Ellen from his truck.

WORKER 1

You're trespassing, you know!

WORKER 2

This is a no shooting area, Pal!

WORKER 3

We're sorry if it upsets you, darling, but this is our livelihood.

Ellen turns to respond, but Hook clutches her tight preventing her. She pulls away from Hook, confronts the Workers.

ELLEN

We people are guilty of what we've done and what we've failed to do. And saying *sorry* is a bit irrelevant, don't you think?

The Workers look at each other confused. Suddenly Monson's truck screams past, almost touching them. We pull up to see the entire back side of Blue hill has been clear-felled.

INT. HOOK'S UTE - DAY

Hook drives slowly. Ellen holds Stephen, but, with her mud streaked face, gazes at the passing forest. Tears stream down her face creating white rivulets.

LATER: The ute approaches the bottom of Hook's drive. When she sees the pine plantation at the bottom of Hook's property she sobs loudly.

Hook gently touches her thigh. She hugs Stephen.

ELLEN
How do I explain it to him when it's
all gone?

INT. HOOK'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Stephen sleeps on the couch. Hook cleans the mechanism of his rifle. Ellen reclines sullenly, glances at Hook.

HOOK
(quietly)
When I said...the only ones I could
trust were the ones I trained with
and fought with...I should've added
they trusted me... I got them all...

ELLEN
That's bullshit, Hook! Bullshit!

HOOK
Those idiots with their banners
are not going to stop anything!

Ellen laughs derisively.

ELLEN
I don't even own anything but I
know it's my fight. Why'd you
join the bloody army?

Hook refuses to answer.

ELLEN (CONT'D)
You can't just let them destroy
everything and do nothing.

Hook pushes the gun away.

ELLEN (CONT'D)
(indicating stephen)
I can raise him by myself...but he
wouldn't have you. Those people
on the blockade, Hook, they don't
want anything for themselves.

HOOK
Don't they?

She remains silent.

HOOK (CONT'D)
My men, they needed me...I got
them all killed, every one of them.

EXT. HOOK'S HOUSE, VEGIE GARDEN - DAY

Ellen weeds the vegie garden. Stephen, distressed runs to her.

STEPHEN

Hook's sick.

Ellen races from the vegie garden.

EXT. CHOOK PEN - DAY

Ellen looks at Hook the chook sitting on eggs while the other chooks forage for scraps. Ellen smiles.

ELLEN

She's just clucky, darling.

LATER: Hook has made a wire cage, suspended two meters from the ground. Ellen and Stephen mournfully look at Hook the chook in the cage.

HOOK

It's the best cure in the world,
guaranteed to work.

STEPHEN

How do you know?

Hook looks across at Blue Hill.

HOOK

Trust me, Son. It cured every complaint
I ever had.

Ellen doesn't know whether to believe him or not. Hook walks away.

HOOK (CONT'D)

Carn.

INT. HOOK'S UTE - DAY

Hook pulls his ute up outside the Council Offices in Dulverston. Ellen and Stephen sit in the front.

EXT. HOOK'S UTE - DAY

Hook gets out of his ute. Ellen and Stephen follow.

INT. COUNCIL OFFICE - DAY

Ellen collects literature. Hook stands at a counter while PETRIE, 40, wearing a neat green sweater with gold scarf

and glasses, finishes what he's writing, files it and looks up at Hook.

PETRIE

Hmmmmm?

HOOK

I'd like some information on the logging of Blue Hill and the pines they're planting.

PETRIE

Blue Hill, hmmmmm? Yes that's in our jurisdiction. What would you like to know?

HOOK

How come they're planting pines everywhere?

PETRIE

Yes, that would be our reforestation project. Ministerial approval. Bilateral.

HOOK

I couldn't care if it's bifocal! They're chopping down the forest and planting pines everywhere.

PETRIE

Could perhaps, Sir, put his concerns on paper and forward them to us?

Hook laughs.

INT. HOOK'S UTE - DAY

Hook pulls up outside the Forestry Commission and parks at a forty-five degree angle. Other cars have parked parallel to the kerb.

INT. FORESTRY COMMISSION - DAY

Hook, Ellen and Stephen enter the Forestry Commission. Three WORKERS occupy separate desks. The walls are covered with forestry literature and huge photos of old growth forest. SILVIA, 35, politely responds to Hook's presence, but continually looks Ellen up and down.

SILVIA

Now, how can I help you?

HOOK

You can start by telling me who's decision it was to log Blue Hill.

SILVIA

In respect to...?

ELLEN

In respect to why anyone in their right mind would desecrate one of the most natural environments in the world and replace it with spindly European matchsticks.

The other Workers observe Silvia patiently explaining to Hook while ignoring Ellen.

SILVIA

All decisions to log undergo a thorough procedure. Applications for approval are presented to us for detailed assessment including environmental impact evaluation.

Ellen angrily turns away.

SILVIA (CONT'D)

Once we're satisfied they are forwarded to the relevant Minister for approval.

HOOK

So it's your decision?

SILVIA

No, it's the Minister's.

HOOK

But you're the one who assesses it?

Silvia nods. Hook rolls his eyes for Ellen's sake.

SILVIA

It would have been part of a strategic plan...

HOOK

Did you bloody approve it or not?

SILVIA

Um...is this in relation to a personal query?

HOOK

Too damn right it is. My property is directly opposite...

Silvia reaches for a form.

SILVIA
I'll just take your personal details.

Ellen leaves.

HOOK
Can you stop logging Blue Hill until I
can officially sort this out?

Silvia looks to the other workers

SILVIA
Um, I'm afraid if the contract's been
implemented...

HOOK
I'll buy the contract out.

SILVIA
That's not how it operates
unfortunately.

HOOK
Who can I see? Who's your OIC?

SILVIA
I'm in charge here.

Silvia smiles almost triumphantly. Hook storms out.

INT. HOOK'S TUE - DAY

They silently drive past the protesters, who watch without
acknowledging, except Gwen who waves.

LATER: Up ahead a wombat dawdles across the road. Hook
slows to a crawl.

A loaded truck zooms over the horizon, straight over the
wombat. Ellen screams hysterically. Hook screams at the
truck to stop, but unaware of the wombat it speeds past.

EXT. HOOK'S UTE - DAY

Hook jumps from the ute.

The wombat is in the throes of dying. Hook turns on the
spot in circles.

Ellen, still hysterical in the ute, smothers Stephen.

HOOK
Shit! Shit! Shit!

INT. HOOK'S UTE - DAY

Ellen sobs.

STEPHEN
What's wrong, mummy?

A gunshot jolts them.

INT. FORESTRY COMMISSION - DAY

Hook, with the dead wombat across his shoulders, kicks the door to the Forestry Commission open. He runs into the office and heaves the dead wombat at the three office workers. It crashes over their desks as they scramble for cover.

HOOK
Do the paper work on this, you bastards!

Ellen, in the doorway, is shocked.

INT. HOOK'S UTE - DAY

Hook speeds. Ellen, arms tightly folded, gazes out the window. Stephen sits silently in the middle. Hook, aware Ellen is disturbed, slows to a safe speed.

Hook sneaks a glance at Ellen. She breaks into a grin. Hook roars laughing.

EXT. ARTHUR'S CABIN - DAY

We see Arthur from behind. He sips a mug of tea and looks at Blue Hill. Smoke flows from his chimney. Stephen creeps up behind him.

STEPHEN
Boo.

Arthur doesn't react. Stephen moves in front of Arthur who is struggling to breathe.

ARTHUR
(painfully)
I knew it was you.

Stephen's broad smile immediately disappears. Hook and Ellen, approaching, are aware of Stephen's reaction. The ute is parked in the background. Arthur agonisingly lifts his arm and ruffles Stephen's hair.

Hook angrily turns away when he sees Arthur's face. Ellen gasps.

Ellen goes to gently touch Arthur who winches away.

ELLEN
What happened, Artie?

ARTHUR
Gettin' old. Slipped down one of them,
you know, bloody devil holes.

Hook angrily kicks the dirt.

ELLEN
We've gotta get you to hospital.

Arthur forces a laugh.

ARTHUR
I'm okay. It only the pain that's
hurting.

ELLEN
At least come inside, into bed.

ARTHUR
It's easier to stand. Us black fellows
we're used to standing. Bloody white
fellows pinched our seats.

Arthur attempts to stand with one leg bent with the foot resting on the opposite knee. Hook looks Arthur straight in the eye.

HOOK
Who was it?

Arthur looks at the ground.

HOOK (CONT'D)
I'll find out.

He turns around and screams at the Mountain.

HOOK (CONT'D)
I'll find out. You hear me?

Ellen is surprised at Hook's reaction. Arthur attempts to smile for her benefit.

HOOK (CONT'D)
Drop 'em.

Arthur, embarrassed, awkwardly shifts his weight from one foot to the other.

HOOK (CONT'D)
Drop your pants.

Arthur loosens his belt. His patched dungarees fall to his boots. Ellen conveniently walks Stephen to the cabin. Hook gently removes Arthur's jumper and shirt. Arthur's body is black and blue.

Hook firmly but lightly runs his hands over Arthur's body. Arthur winches but says nothing. Hook follows the tendons to the muscle origin and runs his fingers along the muscle. He prods and presses Arthur's ribs. Arthur gasps for breath.

Hook looks closely at Arthur's face, his blackened eye and cut lip.

Ellen returns with cups of coffee.

HOOK (CONT'D)

You'll live. Two broken ribs, maybe three, but the rest is superficial. We'll strap 'em. You'll be frightening wallabies in no time.

Arthur painfully takes a cup.

HOOK (CONT'D)

They said something about me, didn't they?

Arthur doesn't respond.

HOOK (CONT'D)

Put the fire screen up. We're going to our place.

Hook grins at Ellen.

HOOK (CONT'D)

Rabbit stew and bacon. And some bloody whisky for our coffee.

INT. HOOK'S HOUSE - NIGHT

They have eaten and sit around the fire. Stephen sleeps. Arthur half sits, half lies on cushions.

Ellen tunes her guitar, sings Leonard Cohen's, *Last Year's Man*.

Hook hands Arthur a mug of coffee. Hook pours whisky into an empty coffee cup, skoals it, refills it then attempts to put whisky into Arthur's cup. Arthur puts his cup aside. Hook skoals his whisky.

Ellen, concerned with hook's drinking, stops singing and takes the whisky. Hook grabs it from her and pours more into his cup.

HOOK
Thought you lot liked a drink.

ARTHUR
Only when we want to forget.

Arthur and Hook share a smile, laugh loudly.

Hook drinks directly from the whisky bottle. Ellen watches uneasy.

EXT. HOOK'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A drunken Hook assists Arthur to the dunny.

INT. HOOK'S DUNNY - NIGHT

Hook lowers Arthur onto the pricey porcelain pan. Pain and embarrassment are evident in Arthur's struggle.

Hook remains in the dunny with Arthur.

EXT. ARTHUR'S CABIN - NIGHT

Hook, drunk, helps Arthur into his cabin.

ELLEN V.O.
You help me. You help Artie, but
you won't help yourself.

HOOK V.O.
(drunkenly)
You're right...I'm a hypocrite.

INT. HOOK'S BEDROOM - DAY

Hook lies in the double bed in the early dawn.

A soundscape of kookaburras and squawking birds wakes Hook. He reaches his arm over to nothing.

He jumps out of bed. Ellen's rucksack and guitar have gone.

INT. HOOK'S HOUSE - DAY

Stephen's bed is empty.

A blank note is on the table alongside a pen.

INT. HOOK'S HOUSE, BATHROOM - DAY

Hook checks the necklace box. The necklace is there.

EXT. HOOK'S HOUSE - DAY

Hook stands at the pond. He looks across at Blue Hill. There is sadness in his eyes.

EXT/INT. UTE/MAIN STREET MYOLA - DAY

Hook slowly drives through Myola, searching.

EXT. CLEAR-FELLED LAND - DAY

A metal spike, used to hold railway sleepers, is surreptitiously hammered into a tree-trunk.

EXT/INT. UTE/MAIN STREET DULVERSTON - DAY

Hook passes shops, the park. He parks outside the bus station.

INT. BUS STATION - DAY

Hook scans the deserted bus station

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Hook is returning home.

INT. HOOK'S UTE - DAY

An unopened Caramello Bar is on the seat. Hook drives past a mature pine plantation. Suddenly he u-turns.

LATER: Hook speeds out the other side of Dulverston.

LATER: Hook turns off the main road onto an unmade road leading into the forest.

EXT. PROTESTERS' CAMP - DAY

Leonard Cohen's *Joan Of Arc* sung by Ellen is heard.

The Protesters have grown in number. Their camp is at the end of the unmade road that leads to a clear-felled area. There are no Loggers as the Protesters have placed felled pine trees across the road denying Loggers access. Tents are spotted around the camp. The Protesters sit around a fire. Ellen plays guitar as she sings. Ash and Gwen sit either side of her.

EXT. ROAD TO PROTESTERS' CAMP - DAY

Hook is prevented from continuing by a log. He leaves the ute and approaches the Protesters' camp.

EXT. PROTESTERS' CAMP - DAY

Hook can see the Protesters and hear Ellen singing as he approaches.

Hook stops, watches her, listens. Her eyes are closed. The Protesters are unaware of Hook's presence.

Hook slowly backs away from the camp.

EXT. ENTRANCE TO HOOK'S PROPERTY - DAWN

Hook, at the edge of his pine plantation, pulls a start cord. His chainsaw roars into action.

Hook professionally cuts a pine tree, a wedge cut on one side and a straight cut above the wedge on the opposite side. The pine crashes to the ground.

THE NEXT DAY: All the pines have been felled. Timlin drives a dozer pushing the pines into a great heap.

Hook, with chainsaw buzzing, moves among the felled pines, cutting branches to assist.

LATER: Timlin, finished, stops the dozer.

TIMLIN

You're mad, mate. I could get you a decent price.

Hook shakes his head. Carrying the chainsaw he walks up the drive.

INT. HOOK'S BEDROOM - DAY

Hook lies alone in bed. He stares vacantly at the ceiling. The passing locomotive can be heard. It merges into the roar of a truck.

Hook jumps out of bed.

EXT. ENTRANCE TO HOOK'S PROPERTY - DAY

Timlin directs a logging truck, driven by Monson. Timlin's brand new four wheel drive is parked inside the entrance to Hook's property.

Hook, rifle in hand, races down the drive.

Timlin indicates for Monson to stop which he does.

HOOK
What're you doing?

TIMLIN
I thought...ah, since you didn't want them...I'd take them off your hands, sorta...

HOOK
You thought wrong, mate. Now piss off, the lot of you.

Timlin gets into his car. Monson, still in his truck, notices a bundle of papers by the pile of pines. He screams out the window.

MONSON
They won't burn. They're too green you idiot.

Hook aims his rifle at Monson's tire. Monson backs so fast he almost rams the four wheel drive.

Timlin screeches away.

LATER: A petrol tanker arrives.

The tanker pours petrol onto the pines.

LATER: The tanker lays a trail of petrol to the road.

Hook lights a match.

The tanker DRIVER sees Hook with the burning match, accelerates away.

Hook drops the match.

INT. TANKER - DAY

Through the rear vision mirror the Tanker Driver views an enormous fire explosion.

INT. ENTRANCE TO HOOK'S PROPERTY - DAY

Hook, with blackened face watches the inferno of burning logs.

LATER: Hook sits mesmerised by the fire which has all but burned the logs.

A fire engine, siren blaring, arrives. Hook remains sitting. The engine pulls up next to Hook.

INT. FIRE ENGINE - DAY

Three FIREMEN are in the cabin. The SENIOR FIRE OFFICER indicates for the other two to remain in the engine. He gets out.

INT. ENTRANCE TO HOOK'S PROPERTY - DAY

The SFO stands next to Hook, watching the fire.

SENIOR FIRE OFFICER
You're supposed to get a permit.

Hook nods.

HOOK
I know.

The SFO indicates the pines.

SENIOR FIRE OFFICER
Bloody things are everywhere. Fire hazard I reckon.

The SFO looks skyward.

SENIOR FIRE OFFICER (CONT'D)
Look like we're in for a spot of rain.

LATER: The fire engine has gone and the fire died down. It's late afternoon and Hook is in the same spot. A figure casts a shadow next to him. He turns. Ellen, with guitar, looks at him.

ELLEN
You're a good man, Hook.

Stephen holds his watch out to show Hook.

HOOK
What time is it?

STEPHEN
Dunno.

HOOK
I'll have to teach you then.

Ellen smiles and for the first time in days Hook smiles.

INT. HOOK'S BEDROOM - DAY

Hook and Ellen make passionate love to the sounds of guitar and didgeridoo. The music increases as their love making builds.

INT. SAW MILL - DAY

The music merges into the earsplitting sound of a log being cut by an enormous circular saw.

A metal spike slightly protrudes from the log about to be sawn. A worker screams too late.

SAWMILL WORKER

Spike!

Sparks fly from the saw as the metal spike hits the blade. The log jerks off the moving bench and the blade disintegrates sending metal through the mill.

A WORKER hits the emergency stop button. The machinery grinds to a halt.

There is silence as WORKERS attend a severely injured WORKER slumped against a wall. Part of the blade protrudes from his shoulder.

INT. TIMLIN'S 4WD - DAY

Timlin watches Hook park his ute on an angle outside the post office. He lights a cigarette.

EXT. POST OFFICE - DAY

Hook, Ellen and Stephen enter the post office.

Timlin u-turns and parks behind Hook's ute, blocking it. He remains in his car.

INT. TIMLIN'S 4WD - DAY

When Timlin sees Hook, Ellen and Stephen leave the post office he butts his cigarette in the ashtray.

EXT. POST OFFICE - DAY

Timlin hops from his car, locks it.

HOOK

Is that yours?

Timlin continues into the post office.

TIMLIN

Only be a sec.

HOOK

I'm in a hurry.

Timlin ignores Hook and enters the post office.

INT. HOOK'S UTE - DAY

Hook grips the steering wheel. Ellen and Stephen sit silently next to him.

Hook checks his watch. Stephen playfully checks his watch. Hook looks at the post office, starts his car. Ellen glances apprehensively as Hook puts the car in reverse, revs the engine and slams into Timlin's 4WD.

EXT. HOOK'S UTE - DAY

The ute crushes the driver's door. The ute stalls.

INT. HOOK'S UTE - DAY

Ellen holds Stephen who is terrified. Hook restarts the ute, moves it forward jerkily. Ellen and Stephen jerk back. Hook turns off the engine, gets out.

EXT. HOOK'S UTE - DAY

Timlin races from the post office, stops abruptly.

TIMLIN

You fucken stupid fucken idiot!

Hook smiles. The post mistress appears.

HOOK

Don't swear, God is everywhere.

TIMLIN

Jesus fucken Christ!

Timlin moves towards Hook.

INT. HOOK'S UTE - DAY

Ellen clutches Stephen.

EXT. HOOK'S UTE - DAY

Hook prepares himself, closes his fists.

HOOK

Let's see how good you really are.

Hook places himself square on to Timlin. Hook's face is almost electric white. Timlin stops, then proceeds to move around Hook.

TIMLIN
You're a fucken lunatic!

Hook jumps in front of Timlin.

HOOK
(quietly)
You ever say anything to me again,
I'll have you. You understand?

Timlin goes to walk around Hook but Hook pushes him in the chest.

HOOK (CONT'D)
Understand?

INT. HOOK'S UTE - DAY

Ellen watches Timlin drop his head. Hook pushes him in the chest again. Timlin nods. Hook allows Timlin to pass.

EXT. HOOK'S UTE - DAY

Timlin attempts to open the crushed door. It won't budge. He gets in the passenger side. Hook, smiling, watches him.

Timlin roars off, crunching gears.

INT. HOOK'S UTE - DAY

Hook gets in his ute. Ellen looks wearily at him. Hook ruffles Stephen's hair and starts the car.

HOOK
I know what we need.

LATER: They drive home. Hook and Stephen eat ice-cream. Ellen's arms are tightly folded as she stares straight ahead. Hook and Stephen grin to each other.

INT. HOOK'S BEDROOM - DAY

Ellen wakes from a nap. Stephen sleeps next to her. She hears voices outside

INT. HOOK'S HOUSE - DAY

Ellen has her back and head pressed against the wall listening to the conversation. Through a window she can see a Government car occupied by a CHAUFFEUR.

CHARLES, 60, is dressed in an expensive dark suit. Hook is making coffee.

He puts milk and two sugars in a cup, hands it to Charles.

CHARLES

You don't forget d'you?

HOOK

Not everything.

CHARLES

You haven't changed, have you?

Hook laughs.

HOOK

There's this hoity toity Colonel. Duntroon Fairies we called them. "I hear you're having a little trouble up there." he says. "Oh," I say. "We seem to have this pocket of enemy and just at the moment they have us fucken surrounded. Plus they have heavy artillery which we were guaranteed was fucken impossible to have in this area!" "Oh," he says. "We'll blow them out. We'll lay mines. "How in the fucken hell," I say "are you going to mine a swamp?" "In that case," he says, "we'll burn them out. This new stuff, napalm." "Then we'll have to pull back, won't we?" I say. Silence. Bloody silence.

Hook angrily closes in on Charles.

HOOK (CONT'D)

"Listen," I say, "I'm a very nervous man. I'm a very sick man. If you come up here making these jokes I'm gonna piss all over you. You get my bloody message?"

Hook backs.

HOOK (CONT'D)

Eventually they all got that message.

Charles sips his coffee, looks around the house.

CHARLES

It's not something a man like you could forgive, is it?

Hook looks Charles directly in the eyes.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

No, I've never thought of you as the forgiving kind.

Charles notices Stephen's shoes by the fireplace.

CHARLES (CONT'D)
Living by yourself?

Hook laughs.

HOOK
You trying to tell me something,
Charles?

Charles shakes his head.

CHARLES
Believe it or not we are concerned
with your welfare.

HOOK
I'll tell you what you're concerned
with, Charles. There's a file somewhere
with my name on it. And you've watched
me over the years.

Ellen listens intently.

HOOK (CONT'D)
If you want to do me a favour, Charles,
you just tell your lot, and that
includes the locals, to leave me alone.

Charles puts his empty mug on the table.

CHARLES
Goodbye, Lachlan.

Charles goes to the door.

HOOK
Charles?

Charles turns back.

HOOK (CONT'D)
Next time they use napalm I won't be
so forgiving.

Charles smiles, exits. Ellen moves into the room, watches
the Chauffeur open the car door for Charles.

ELLEN
Who was that?

HOOK
The undertaker.

ELLEN

Who?

HOOK

No one of importance.

Ellen watches the car drive away. Stephen enters rubbing his eyes.

STEPHEN

Was that Grandpa?

Hook laughs. Ellen shakes her head while still looking out the window.

ELLEN

No, Darling.

EXT. PROTESTERS' CAMP - DAY

The sun streams through high trees onto Protesters eating lunch around a fire. A transistor radio plays classical music. Suddenly the tranquillity is disrupted by the emergence of an angry group of saw mill WORKERS and LOCALS, including Monson and Timlin, armed with makeshift weapons.

They ferociously attack the Protesters, chasing down and beating many.

Ash attacks the main group with his fists. He punches one in the face but is immediately hit with an axe handle. The mob pound him senseless.

The tents are set alight. The screams of the Protesters abruptly stop.

EXT. ARTHUR'S CABIN - DAY

Arthur, Hook, Ellen drink coffee as they look at the emerging desecration of blue hill. Stephen plays by himself.

ELLEN

I want to go to the top of Blue Hill.

HOOK

Be dangerous with the boy.

ARTHUR

He can look after me.

ELLEN

That's settled then.

EXT. BOTTOM OF BLUE HILL - DAY

Hook and Ellen walk through dense undergrowth at the bottom of Blue Hill.

Guitar and didgeridoo combine creating an earthy accompaniment.

EXT. CLEAR-FELLED LAND, BLUE HILL - DAY

The music transcends into the roaring of chainsaws as Ellen, wearing a backpack, and Hook, without his rifle, emerge from the undergrowth to discover LOGGERS chain-sawing old growth trees at the bottom of Blue Hill.

Hook grabs a LOGGER wielding a chainsaw and jerks him away from cutting a tree. Ellen attempts to pull Hook back but Hook aggressively shoves the Logger in the chest. The Logger points the active chainsaw at Hook and moves towards him. Hook stands his ground. Ellen screams.

Another Logger pushes Hook back. Two more Loggers surround Hook. The MANAGER, 45, stands between the Logger and Hook. The Logger turns his chainsaw off.

MANAGER

What d'you think you're fucken doing?

LOGGER WITH CHAINSAW

Fucken idiot!

HOOK

This...

Hook indicates the surrounds.

HOOK (CONT'D)

...This land belongs to the people.
Can't you see that?

LOGGER WITH CHAINSAW

It's Crown land!

MANAGER

That's right, pal. It's Crown land
and we have a contract.

LOGGER WITH CHAINSAW

We are the fucken people!

MANAGER

If you have a problem take it up with
the proper authorities.

ELLEN

It'll be too late by then.

MANAGER

This is scheduled for reforestation.
In a couple of years you'll never know
anyone was here.

Ellen turns away and makes to go up the mountain.

MANAGER (CONT'D)

You can't go up there. It's off limits.

Two Loggers block her. Two more Loggers arrive.

MANAGER (CONT'D)

My advice is for you to leave. No
need for an incident.

A bulldozer arrives in a truck driven by Monson. Ellen
angrily storms back the way they came. Hook follows.

LOGGER WITH CHAINSAW

Next time we won't be so friendly!

INT. HOOK'S UTE - DAY

Hook drives in silence. Ellen finishes rolling a joint,
lights it and draws heavily. She offers it to Hook who
shakes his head.

A fox crosses the road in front of them. Hook doesn't
slow. Ellen glares at him. He slows.

HOOK

They're too smart anyway.

They drive in silence.

EXT. HOOK'S HOUSE - DAY

Hook stands by the pond, looks across at the increasing
damage to the bottom of Blue Hill. His eyes sear anger
the more he watches. Stephen appears alongside Hook. He
brandishes a pretend sword.

STEPHEN

What's your favourite weapon, Hook?

Hook doesn't look at Stephen, he continues staring at Blue
Hill.

HOOK

Oh, I use them all, the rifle, machine
gun, but I like the grenade best.

STEPHEN

What's a grenade?

HOOK

Well it's like a lot of little bullets,
whizzing in all directions.

STEPHEN

Wow. Can I have one?

HOOK

Not now.

INT. HOOK'S HOUSE - DAY

Ellen writes at the table. Hook passes her, removes a
rifle from the wall.

ELLEN

We can write, to papers, council,
members of parliament.

Hook scoffs.

ELLEN (CONT'D)

They'll listen. They will.

HOOK

I made money in Madagascar. I
exported to China. Everyone wrote
letters to stop us.

He points his rifle at her guitar.

HOOK (CONT'D)

How many rosewood trees you think
they have in Madagascar today?
Not a one. Plenty of guitars
though. No one could've stopped
me no matter what they did.

Hook looks through the rifle sights, pulls the trigger.

INT. HOOK'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The sound of frightened chooks wakes Ellen. She looks for
Hook but he's not there.

EXT. HOOK'S CHOOK PEN - NIGHT

Ellen, shining a torch, creeps to the chook pen. She hears
a loud shush and shines the torch on the chook pen.

Hook sits cross-legged and naked in the middle of the pen,
rifle in his lap. His body is covered in mud, an empty
bottle of whisky on the ground.

ELLEN
What're you doing?

HOOK
Shush. Yer fox, he's a cunning bastard,
but I'll get him.

ELLEN
Oh, Hook, come back to bed. You'll
freeze.

HOOK
Ha, ha, that's when I'll get him.
Kill the light.

Ellen turns the torch off. Moonlight highlights her
distress.

INT. HOOK'S HOUSE - DAY

Dishes are piled at the sink waiting to be washed. A fire
burns in the fireplace. Hook searches drawers.

ELLEN
Can we talk?

HOOK
Sure, what about?

ELLEN
Everything.

Hook leaves without responding.

INT. HOOK'S CARAVAN - DAY

Hook frantically searches his caravan. He finds a small
bundle wrapped in material tucked away under the bed.

INT. HOOK'S HOUSE - DAY

Stephen plays cards by himself. Hook towers over him.

HOOK
I told you a lie you know.

Stephen's look implies he doesn't know what Hook is talking
about.

HOOK (CONT'D)
I told you my favourite weapon was
the grenade.

Ellen enters, stops and observes.

HOOK (CONT'D)
I should've said it was the knife.

Hook removes a knife from a scabbard on his belt. Ellen watches apprehensively.

HOOK (CONT'D)
You see, Son, what we forget...it's all about killing, really...killing people. That's what they've taught you...

Ellen is horrified. She steels herself, approaches.

ELLEN
Oh, there you are.

Stephen doesn't take his eyes from Hook.

HOOK
(ignoring Ellen)
...Suddenly it's your highest bloody duty...And before you know it you're the bloody leader. The first throat I ever cut...

ELLEN
Hook!

Hook smiles, puts his knife in the scabbard.

HOOK
Oh, hi, Honey. How's about I cook tonight?

Ellen nods.

HOOK (CONT'D)
That's settled then.

Hook moves towards the door.

ELLEN
Where're you going?

HOOK
We need meat, don't we?

Ellen holds her hand out.

HOOK (CONT'D)
Oh yeah.

Hook hands her the scabbard.

HOOK (CONT'D)

You were right, you know. If nobody did anything there'd be nothing would there?

INT. HOOK'S UTE - DAY

Hook drives towards town, through the tree-felled land. Leonard Cohen's *Last Year's Man* is heard.

INT. STORE - DAY

Hook puts food items in a shopping basket: cans of Brie, Camembert, pate, French stick, white wine.

From the toy section Hook puts a child's puzzle into the basket.

INT. HOOK'S UTE - DAY

Hook returns along the same road. Food, including numerous vegies, are on the seat.

LATER: The ute heads up the drive to the house.

Hook looks at the house. There is no smoke coming from the chimney. The front door is open.

He skids the ute to a halt outside the front door.

EXT. HOOK'S HOUSE - DAY

Hook races into the house.

INT. HOOK'S HOUSE - DAY

Hook sees that the dishes have been washed and neatly stacked.

HOOK

Oh no.

He races to the bedroom.

INT. HOOK'S BEDROOM - DAY

The bed is made. Ellen's guitar in on the bed but Ellen and Stephen's clothes have gone.

INT. HOOK'S HOUSE - DAY

Hook looks around his house. There is no trace of Ellen or Stephen's things.

He desperately searches for a note but there is none. He opens the drawer of his desk. The envelope is there filled with money.

He runs to the bathroom.

INT. HOOK'S BATHROOM - DAY

Hook searches the shelf for the necklace. It's gone.

INT. HOOK'S HOUSE - DAY

Hook returns to the couch, slumps into it. He laughs, building hysterically.

EXT. HOOK'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Hook's hysterical laughter is heard as Arthur opens the front door.

INT. HOOK'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Arthur enters. Hook is slumped in the couch. An empty wine bottle lies on the floor. Hook drinks from a near-empty whisky bottle.

Arthur stands in front of Hook.

HOOK
I'm glad she took the emerald, mate.

ARTHUR
She caught the bus, with the boy.

HOOK
It really suited her, that.

ARTHUR
She came to see me before she went.

Hook looks at Arthur indicating for Arthur to continue.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
Said she couldn't watch you hurt yourself and that...

Arthur stops.

HOOK
What?

ARTHUR
She didn't say it, but she loves you. Too much, I suppose.

Hook stares straight ahead.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
I'll stay with you, for tonight.

HOOK
Not tonight, mate. Not tonight.

EXT. HOOK'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Hook staggers into the night. He looks across at Blue Hill, screams.

HOOK
Yer fucken cunts!

He throws the empty whisky bottle towards Blue Hill.

The bottle smashes next to Arthur, squatting. He watches Hook stagger towards the caravan, fall and lay face down.

Arthur goes to him.

INT. HOOK'S CARAVAN - NIGHT

Hook lies on the caravan bed.

HOOK
(mumbling)
The black beast is loose.

EXT. HOOK'S CARAVAN - DAY

It is mid afternoon. The door to the caravan opens. Hook emerges blinded by the sun. He falls to his knees and vomits.

INT. HOOK'S HOUSE - DAY

Hook gets a bottle of wine. Unable to find a corkscrew he attempts to push the cork in with a pen. Frustrated he smashes the top against the sink, then pours the wine down his throat.

EXT. HOOK'S HOUSE - DAY

Hook staggers outside. He throws the empty wine bottle away and staggers towards his ute. He stumbles in his attempt to open the car door.

He gets in the ute but leaves the driver's door open. He attempts to put the keys in the ignition.

Arthur's hand snatches the keys. Hook falls from the ute, lays on his back, hand flailing for the keys.

HOOK

Not supposed to be here, are yer?

Hook passes out.

Arthur puts him over his shoulder and carries him inside.

INT. HOOK'S HOUSE - DAY

Hook, covered with the rabbit skin blanket, sleeps on the couch.

Arthur pours himself a mug of coffee.

LATER: Hook tosses and turns in his sleep. Arthur, sitting by the fire, watches.

Darkness. A rooster crow is heard.

NEXT DAY: One eye of Hook opens, then the other. Hook squints from the sunlight streaming through the windows.

Hook sits up, stubble visible on his face. Arthur sits by the fire.

HOOK

How long have I been out?

Arthur puts his arm straight out.

ARTHUR

Oh, about this long.

Hook smiles.

HOOK

What's for dinner?

ARTHUR

Vegetables.

Hook laughs. They both laugh.

EXT. HOOK'S HOUSE - DAY

Days have passed. The flowers have blossomed in the pond.

Hook hasn't shaved. He stands by the pond, looks across at Blue Hill. More scarring has appeared.

INT. HOOK'S UTE - DAY

Hook drives into the Protesters' Camp. The rifle, plus magazine, are above the back window.

EXT. PROTESTERS' CAMP - DAY

Hook searches among the Protesters for Ellen. There are only six and one large tent. They prepare placards with anti-logging slogans.

Ash is attaching rope to a banner. His face is bruised.

ASH
She's not here, man.

HOOK
You seen her?

Ash shakes his head.

ASH
Too committed to other things.

HOOK
What other things?

ASH
Ask the man, man.

HOOK
What fucken man?

Ash laughs.

ASH
Not that man, man.

Hook shakes his head and turns to leave.

ASH (CONT'D)
Why not join the cause?

Hook stops, picks up a placard, drops it.

HOOK
It's wood. Where d'you think it came from? The sausage factory? The bridge you drove over to get here, wood. Your parent's house, probably wood.

ASH
That argument doesn't wash, man. You really should read the literature.

Hook goes to leave, turns.

HOOK

If you want to save the planet get
fairdinkum, stop being a fucken
hypocrite!

ASH

We're not hypocrites. We're not against
using wood. We're against arseholes
exploiting the forests. Trees belong
to the planet. They're family, man.
You'd fight to protect your family,
wouldn't you? Isn't that why you're
here?

Hook turns, leaves.

INT. HOOK'S UTE - DAY

Hook pulls up at the bottom of Blue Hill.

EXT. HOOK'S UTE - DAY

Hook slings the rifle over his shoulder and locks the ute.

EXT. BLUE HILL - DAY

Hook walks through pristine forest. Chainsaws can be heard.

EXT. BLUE HILL, CLEAR-FELLED AREA - DAY

Hook emerges from the pristine forest to the clear-felled
area. Loggers are chain-sawing trees. A mechanical pick-
up puts the prepared trunks onto the back of a low loader.

Hook walks through the Workers who cautiously watch him.

Hook disappears up the mountain. The Manager speaks into
the handset of a car radio transmitter. We hear the
locomotive passing.

EXT. BLUE HILL, A THIRD OF THE WAY UP - DAY

Hook walks upwards through ancient trees, exquisite ferns
and flora. The chainsaws are barely audible. We hear the
music of birds.

EXT. BLUE HILL, HALF WAY UP - DAY

Hook climbs a gully, lifts himself over a ledge, heads
towards the summit. The chainsaws are no longer audible.

Hook pauses, looks across at his house. He continues towards the summit.

EXT. BLUE HILL, SUMMIT - DAY

Exhausted, Hook lifts himself over bare rocks to the summit.

Hook crawls across the bare slope. It is windy and chilly. He drinks from a puddle of water.

Hook lays on his back, panting. Above, the sky is blue. A wedge-tailed eagle circles. Hook points the rifle at the eagle, sights the eagle through his telescopic sight.

Hook pulls the trigger. Nothing.

Hook rolls onto his stomach, looks down the other side of the mountain now ringed by pines, and extending a third the way up the mountain.

He crawls across to the other side of the summit, looks through his telescopic sight at the workers. He sees a police car arriving.

EXT. BOTTOM OF BLUE HILL - DAY

Hook emerges from the mountain.

The Workers are gathered to one side. Two POLICE stand in front of the police car.

The Sergeant approaches Hook.

SERGEANT

You got a licence for that thing?

HOOK

Oh yes.

EXT. HOOK'S UTE - DAY

The passenger door to Hook's ute is open. Hook hands the sergeant his gun licence. The other POLICEMAN checks inside Hook's ute. The Sergeant checks the licence, hands it back.

SERGEANT

I can't stop you being here, this being Crown land and that, but you give me cause to lock you up and I sure as hell will.

The Sergeant looks for a response from Hook. Hook doesn't react. The Police return to their car.

INT. HOOK'S HOUSE - DAY

Hook cleans his rifle at the table. His beard has grown. The house is untidy and dusty. The sleeping bag is in front of the fire.

EXT. BLUE HILL - DAY

The bottom on Blue Hill has been significantly clear-felled. Workers start to ascend the mountain.

Hook arrives jogging, rifle over shoulder and a small backpack strapped to his back.

The Workers ignore him as he jogs up the mountain.

EXT. BLUE HILL, HALF WAY UP - DAY

DAYS LATER. Hook, dressed differently but with the backpack, scurries up the mountain at an incredible pace.

EXT. BLUE HILL, SUMMIT - DAY

Hook bounds to the summit.

EXT. BLUE HILL, CLEAR-FELLED AREA - DAY

Hook jogs among the Workers.

EXT. HOOK'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Hook stares across at Blue Hill. It has been clear-felled a third of the way up.

INT. HOOK'S CARAVAN - NIGHT

Candle-light creates an eerie mosaic on a bench containing papers and documents. Hook, dressed in jungle fatigues, puts the papers and documents into a metal container.

On the bench is the knife and boxes of bullets.

EXT. ARTHUR'S CABIN - NIGHT

Hook quietly pushes an envelope under Arthur's door.

INT. HOOK'S HOUSE - DAWN

Hook's house is spotless again. The dishes have been done, the sleeping bag gone and the fire place cleaned out. The fridge door is open and the fridge empty.

EXT. BLUE HILL, CLEAR-FELLED AREA - DAWN

Hook parks his car where workers' cars normally park.

He locks the car, puts the keys in his pocket.

With backpack and rifle Hook ascends the mountain. A condom is stretched over the telescopic sight.

He passes hundreds of small pines in containers ready for planting.

EXT. BLUE HILL, PART WAY UP - DAY

Hook lies on a camouflaged groundsheet. His rifle points down the mountain. He can hear a vehicle arriving.

EXT. BLUE HILL, CLEAR-FELLED AREA - DAY

A car parks next to Hook's ute.

EXT. BLUE HILL, PART WAY UP - DAY

Hook removes the condom from the telescopic sights.

Through the sight he sees more cars. A truck containing a backhoe arrives.

EXT. BLUE HILL, CLEAR-FELLED AREA - DAY

Monson gets out of the truck, lowers the back and attaches ramps for the backhoe.

The Workers, carrying chainsaws, makes their way up the mountain.

Monson drives the back-hoe off the truck.

EXT. BLUE HILL, PART WAY UP - DAY

Hook takes bullets from a pouch strapped to his chest and loads the rifle.

EXT. BLUE HILL, CLEAR-FELLED AREA - DAY

Monson swivels the backhoe and points it in the direction of Blue Hill.

EXT. BLUE HILL, PART WAY UP - DAY

Through Hook's sights Monson is caught in the cross. Hook moves the sight to the front tire.

Hook squeezes the trigger. The sound is deafening.

EXT. BLUE HILL, CLEAR-FELLED AREA - DAY

The front tyre explodes simultaneously to the echo of the rifle. The backhoe skids on the flat tyre in the dirt.

The Workers immediately stop, look around at the skidding backhoe.

Another shot and the second front tyre flattens.

MONSON

Fuck!

Monson jumps from the backhoe and runs for the cover of the truck.

Two more shots and both front tyres of the truck flatten. Monson, terrified, hides behind the truck.

EXT. BLUE HILL, PART WAY UP - DAY

Hook rolls onto his back and laughs heartily.

He look through the sights and sees the Workers scampering to their cars.

HOOK

That'll bring the big boys.

LATER: The four empty shells lie in a line on the groundsheet. A distant police siren is heard.

EXT. BLUE HILL, CLEAR FELLED AREA - DAY

The police car parks in front of the truck. The Workers have parked their cars further back. The Sergeant and Constable remain in the car.

Monson cautiously runs to the police car and gets in the back.

EXT. BLUE HILL, CLEAR-FELLED AREA - DAY

The Sergeant, with bullhorn, gets out of the police car.

He indicates for everyone to stay back. He stands in front of the police car.

EXT. BLUE HILL, PART WAY UP - DAY

Hook watches the sergeant through his sights.

SERGEANT

Mr Hook, Mr Hook, we know it's you.
Let's end this before it gets nasty.
There's a lot of innocent people down
here. Put down your weapon, come out
and we'll sort all this out.

Hook stands and shouts.

HOOK

I've taken possession of this mountain.
There'll be no more logging. Do you
hear me?

EXT. BLUE HILL, CLEAR-FELLED AREA - DAY

The Sheriff squints looking for Hook but Hook is concealed.

SERGEANT

I hear you but this is government land.

HOOK

The land belongs to the people

Monson points to where he thinks Hook is. A LOGGER with a
rifle scrambles next to Monson. The Logger aims the rifle
in the direction Monson points.

SERGEANT

It's government land.

EXT. BLUE HILL, PART WAY UP - DAY

Hook is behind a tree.

HOOK

Tell them I'm the new owner.

SERGEANT

We can discuss all this civilly.

HOOK

I intend to remain so until you stop
logging, permanently. You hear me?
No more fucking logging!

EXT. BLUE HILL, CLEAR FELLED AREA - DAY

Monson gesticulates to the Sergeant.

MONSON

We've got him.

The Sergeant indicates for the Logger not to shoot.

SERGEANT

Let's talk about it like civilized people.

HOOK V.O.

Then act civilized! Get rid of the loggers.

SERGEANT

That's something we can talk about.

The Logger fires.

EXT. BLUE HILL, PART WAY UP - DAY

A bullet hits a tree thirty metres from Hook. Hook laughs.

EXT. BLUE HILL, CLEAR FELLED AREA - DAY

The Logger fires again. The Sergeant screams at the Logger.

SERGEANT

One more and I'll lock you up!

The Logger reluctantly lowers his rifle

EXT. BLUE HILL, PART WAY UP - DAY

Hook aims his rifle, fires.

EXT. BLUE HILL, CLEAR-FELLED AREA - DAY

A bullet smashes into one headlight of the police car. The Sergeant looks straight ahead.

INT. POLICE CAR - DAY

Another shot and the second headlight smashes. The Constable ducks under the dashboard.

EXT. BLUE HILL, CLEAR-FELLED AREA - DAY

The Sergeant hasn't flinched. He walks towards Blue Hill.

HOOK V.O.

This is my mountain, now piss off!

SERGEANT

Can't do that, Son.

The Sergeant keeps walking towards the mountain.

EXT. POLICE CAR - DAY

A bullet thuds into the petrol tank of the police car.
Petrol spurts out.

Another shot.

EXT. BLUE HILL, CLEAR-FELLED AREA - DAY

The Sergeant sees a bullet pierce the petrol tank of the backhoe.

EXT. BACKHOE - DAY

Petrol gushes from the petrol tank of the back-hoe.

Another shot. A bullet ricochets off the backhoe. Sparks fly.

EXT. BLUE HILL, CLEAR FELLED AREA - DAY

The Sergeant runs towards the police car.

SERGEANT

Get out! Get out of the car!

EXT. POLICE CAR - DAY

The Constable cautiously gets out of the car.

SERGEANT

Run!

Another shot and the backhoe explodes in flames. The Sergeant, Monson, the Logger and the Constable run for their lives. Fire engulfs the police car.

LATER: The Fire Engine arrives. The police car, backhoe and truck are burnt out shells.

The Workers and Monson stand well back watching the Chief Fire Officer inspecting the burning cars.

A FIREMAN has the fire hose ready. The Chief Fire Officer shakes his head, indicating the burning vehicles.

SENIOR FIRE OFFICER

Waste of water.

Monson angrily grabs an axe.

EXT. HOOK'S UTE - DAY

Monson jumps onto the bonnet of Hook's ute and destroys the ute with the axe. The Workers cheer Monson. The Sergeant smiles.

Hook's hysterical laughter can be heard echoing from the mountain.

EXT. VALLEY - DAY

A locomotive, loaded with logs travels through the valley.

EXT. BLUE HILL, HALF WAY UP - DAY

Hook aims the rifle at the locomotive. He fires consecutive shots.

EXT. VALLEY - DAY

Bullets pound the locomotive engine. Steam hisses through bullet entry points.

INT. LOCOMOTIVE CABIN - DAY

A bullet shatters a cabin window. The DRIVER slams on the brakes.

EXT. VALLEY - DAY

The locomotive grinds to a sudden halt causing the logs to whiplash. A support breaks away from a section. Logs tumble off the trailers.

EXT. BLUE HILL, CLEAR FELLED AREA - DAY

The Sergeant and the Workers watch the locomotive catastrophe in horror.

SERGEANT

Bloody hell!

EXT. BLUE HILL, HALF WAY UP - DAY

We see the lush greenery in all its splendor. A helicopter hovers above.

Something moves in the greenery. It is Hook perfectly camouflaged, observing the helicopter through miniature binoculars.

INT. HELICOPTER - DAY

Two armed POLICE look out opposite windows as the helicopter circles high. Their views are restricted by the density of the mountain growth. One shakes his head to the PILOT. The helicopter speeds away.

EXT. BLUE HILL, CLEAR-FELLED AREA - NIGHT

A police Caravan and tents have been set up on the track leading to the foot of Blue Hill.

A portable generator, lights strung among the caravan, tents and communication devices create a carnival atmosphere.

A mobile food stall sells coffee and hamburgers.

Local POLICE, PLAIN-CLOTHED POLICE and SPECIAL WEAPONS PERSONNEL produce a flurry of activity.

There is the crackle of radios and two-way conversations.

An eerie sight of singing Protesters led by Ash and Gwen carrying lighted candles emerges from the bush.

PROTESTERS

(singing)

*They paved paradise
And put up a parking lot*

SERGEANT

Oh no!

The locals, aghast, angrily gesticulate at the Protesters who wisely decide to remain well back.

PROTESTERS

*With a pink hotel, a boutique
And a swinging hot spot*

INT. POLICE CARAVAN - DAY

WILSON, Head of Special Weapons, scans maps spread over a table. The Sergeant points to locations on the maps. Monson assists. The Protesters can faintly be heard singing.

SERGEANT

He'll come down when he's cold and hungry.

WILSON

This one doesn't intend coming down.

SERGEANT

They all come down.

Wilson shakes his head, indicates an envelope, similar to the one Hook left under Arthur's door, on the table.

WILSON

Papers and registration for his ute.
He donated it to the Forestry
Commission.

The Sheriff shakes his head at Monson.

WILSON (CONT'D)

We have a fucken lunatic up there!

Charles steps forward.

CHARLES

That's not exactly true.

WILSON

And you are?

CHARLES

As of now, your boss.

Wilson disbelievingly scoffs. Charles hands Wilson a portable phone. He smiles as he watches Wilson listen to the phone. Wilson hands it back.

WILSON

I didn't hear one word of that.

Wilson pushes past Charles and exits.

CHARLES

He's a trained killer, the best.

EXT. POLICE CARAVAN - NIGHT

Wilson turns, faces Charles.

WILSON

In the morning, you're my boss. Right now my boys are about to bring down a psychopath in civilian clothing. He may be the best, but we're better. That's what I do, Mister and no department or whatever wants to get in my way. You understand?

Charles smiles. Wilson walks away.

CHARLES

It's an Enfield 301 modified. Upgraded sights...

Wilson laughs derisively.

WILSON

What is he, a World War One veteran?

EXT. BLUE HILL, A THIRD OF THE WAY UP - NIGHT

The heavily armed Special Weapons Platoon make their way up the mountain in formation line. They wear flak jackets.

CHARLES V.O.

But if you go up there in the night it won't be the Enfield he'll use.

Wilson laughs derisively.

Although the SWP walk in a straight line (a la the infamous Black Line) they use the trees as safety and continually check each other.

Hook, his face camouflaged in mud, has one ear to the ground, listening.

MOMENTS LATER: Hook is motionless as two SW Police pass him either side.

Hook watches the SW Police ascend the mountain. They are straying from formation as fatigue sets in.

Hook creeps up behind a straggler, Wilson, grabs him round the neck and holds the knife to his throat. Wilson struggles. Hook pulls the knife in hard. Wilson ceases struggling.

HOOK

(whispering)

Can always pick the Officer; he's the one leading the rear.

Hook ties Wilson hands behind his back, hitched high between his shoulder blades with the rope passing round his neck. Wilson's jacket lies on the ground.

HOOK (CONT'D)

Call them in.

WILSON

Get fucked!

Hook puts his mouth close to Wilson's ear.

HOOK
I can certainly arrange that. Call them in.

WILSON
You call them in.

Hook picks up Wilson's Armalite, checks it, then fires it into the ground near Wilson's face. Wilson gasps for breath.

EXT. BLUE HILL, CLEAR-FELLED AREA - NIGHT

Charles smiles to himself, sips coffee.

EXT. BLUE HILL, A THIRD OF THE WAY UP - NIGHT

Hook, dressed in Wilson's jacket, has his foot on Wilson's head.

HOOK
(screaming)
I've got him. Over here.

SW Police scramble towards Hook.

HOOK (CONT'D)
How many?

Wilson refuses to answer. Hook squeezes Wilson's nose and holds his hand over his mouth. Wilson struggles to breathe. Hook releases his nose.

HOOK (CONT'D)
How many?

Hook squeezes his nose again. Wilson thrashes around. Hook releases his mouth.

WILSON
Eight.

Hook gags Wilson.

HOOK
(screaming)
Over here.

Four SW Police approach the struggling Wilson. Hook is strategically placed behind a tree. One of the SW Police attempts to untie Wilson. Hook fires the Armalite over their heads.

HOOK (CONT'D)

If I don't see eight bodies on the ground face down, fingers intertwined on the back of your heads, then your so-called Commander-In-Chief is a dead man.

The four SW Police, shocked, fall to the ground, hands behind their head. Wilson is now gasping to survive.

HOOK (CONT'D)

I need four more.

Four SW Police emerge and fall next to their buddies. Hook uncoils rope.

MOMENTS LATER: The SW Police sit in a semi-circle, hands handcuffed behind their backs, rope attaching them together at the neck, around a fire.

The contents of their pockets and their weaponry is in a small pile.

Hook, Armalite between his knees, sits on the other side. He smiles at them, pops chocolate into his mouth and talks to Wilson who glares hatred.

HOOK (CONT'D)

Ultimately, son, most of us want to live. Those who don't, well we're the dangerous ones. Now, I have one small request.

Hook grins at the stern-faced captives.

EXT. BLUE HILL, CLEAR-FELLED AREA - NIGHT

The Media have set up camp next to the Police Caravan and tent.

Police have cordoned off an area with tape behind which LOCALS have gathered. Monson stands proudly among the Locals.

A VENDOR sells coffee in competition to the mobile hamburger stall. Some of the Locals drink cans of beer. Many have rifles slung over their shoulders. The scene has taken on a festival atmosphere. The Protesters sing continuously.

The Sergeant looks through night binoculars at Blue Hill.

SW POLICE V.O.

(singing)

*How many roads must a man walk down
Before they'll call him a man?*

The Locals, assuming Hook has been captured, clap and cheer derisively at the Protesters who cease singing. The Sergeant slaps the Constable hard on the back.

SW POLICE V.O. (CONT'D)

(singing)

*The answer my friend is blowing in the
wind, the answer is blowing in the
wind.*

Charles grins to himself.

LATER: The Locals are in party mode drinking and boisterously behaving.

SW POLICE V.O. (CONT'D)

(singing)

*Little boxes on the hillside, little
boxes made of ticky tacky...*

MORNING: The singing has been going all night. The Locals sleep around a large fire. The Protesters look on glumly.

LOCAL

(shouting)

They're coming down.

The Sergeant sees a naked man emerge from the undergrowth a third of the way up Blue Hill.

SW POLICE V.O.

(singing)

*They paved paradise
And put up a parking lot
They took all the trees
And put them in a tree museum
And they charged the people
A dollar and a half just to see 'em.*

The Locals, assuming it's Hook, cheer, until it is apparent that the SW Police, naked, hands behind their backs and roped single file at the neck, led by Wilson, emerge from the forest.

The cheering ceases. The Protesters commence singing.

PROTESTERS

(singing)

*Don't it always seem to go
That you don't know what you've got
Till it's gone
They paved paradise
And put up a parking lot...*

The Sergeant runs towards the SW Police. Shots are fired by Hook from an Armalite that sprays the dirt in front of the Sergeant who freezes.

INT. BLUE HILL, TENT - DAY

Charles speaks into his portable phone.

EXT. SKY ABOVE BLUE HILL - DAY

A helicopter reconnaissances above Blue Hill.

INT. HELICOPTER - DAY

Through the window of the helicopter we see army trucks arrive and strategically circle the circumference of Blue Hill.

EXT. BLUE HILL, CLEAR-FELLED AREA - DAY

More army vehicles arrive in the clear-felled area. SOLDIERS alight.

Charles smiles. COLONEL DONALD salutes Charles and follows him into an army tent.

INT. ARMY TENT - DAY

The tent has been set up as a mobile headquarters with telephones, large table containing maps of the area and the latest technology for gathering data. A contrite Wilson watches.

CHARLES

This is a mission of the utmost importance.

Charles addresses Wilson.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

Your men will assist Colonel Donald in securing the front and back lower perimeters. I don't want him slipping out, nor do I want anyone getting in.

Donald looks at Wilson who nods.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

First we stem the flow of information.

EXT. BLUE HILL, CLEAR-FELLED AREA - DAY

SOLDIERS escort the reluctant MEDIA from the area.

CHARLES V.O.

Next we control all access. The only people moving in and out will be on my say so.

SOLDIERS force the Locals and Protesters to leave.

Barriers are placed at the entrance to the clear-felled area by SOLDIERS to prevent anyone entering.

INT. ARMY TENT - DAY

A SOLDIER brings coffee and sandwiches wrapped in foil into the tent. Charles is putting on his highly-decorated military uniform.

Charles calmly sips coffee. The sandwiches remain wrapped.

EXT. BLUE HILL, CLEAR-FELLED AREA - DAY

Only soldiers are in the clear-felled area.

A large army truck arrives. Heavily armed SOLDIERS alight.

Charles and Donald engage in a private discussion. Donald salutes Charles who returns the salute and hurries to the newly-arrived SOLDIERS.

Charles checks the direction of the sun and with his back directly to the sun walks in the direction of Blue Hill. He carries a bullhorn that has a microphone attached around his neck.

EXT. BLUE HILL, A THIRD OF THE WAY UP - DAY

Charles stops a third of the way up Blue Hill. He looks into the forest but is unable to see Hook.

EXT. BLUE HILL, HALF WAY UP - DAY

Through the undergrowth Hook watches Charles. He aims the rifle at Charles, picks him up in the telescopic sights.

EXT. BLUE HILL, A THIRD OF THE WAY UP - DAY

Charles switches the bullhorn on.

CHARLES

Lachlan, you know who this is...If you care to come down now...Just leave your rifle and walk down the hill anywhere...

EXT. BLUE HILL, HALF WAY UP - DAY

The cross of the telescopic sights aims at Charles' head.
Hook looks to his right. A low branch moves.

EXT. BLUE HILL, A THIRD OF THE WAY UP - DAY

Small beads of sweat glisten on Charles' forehead.

CHARLES

We'll see that the press are kept
away...

EXT. BLUE HILL, HALF WAY UP - DAY

Hook laughs. He cautiously looks around.

EXT. BLUE HILL, A THIRD OF THE WAY UP - DAY

CHARLES

...that there's no fuss...no courts,
nothing like that...We'll get you out
quietly...Lachlan, you don't like me,
I know, but you know I'm not a liar.

Hook's derisive laughter echoes loud.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

Come down...I promise no harm will
come to you.

HOOK V.O.

What about the trees, Charles?

CHARLES

What about the trees, Lachlan?

HOOK

You gonna send them home in body bags?

CHARLES

I'm sorry if you think I've let you
down, Lachlan.

HOOK

We're all guilty of what we've done,
Charles and what we've failed to do
and saying sorry to a wombat is a bit
fucken late.

CHARLES

Come on down, Lachlan.

(MORE)

CHARLES (CONT'D)

We'll put you in a nice mental home for a few months, unfit to plead...then we'll let you go when you've promised to behave.

EXT. BACK OF BLUE HILL - DAY

A regiment of heavily armed SOLDIERS, led by Donald, scale the summit. They manoeuvre down the slope towards Hook's position.

HOOK V.O.

It's gone beyond that, Charles. We both know that.

CHARLES V.O.

You don't come down, these fancy dress bastards'll have your balls. They think they're SAS or something.

EXT. BLUE HILL, SUMMIT - DAY

Donald's men are a third of the way down the summit. Donald looks through high-powered binoculars. He sees a camouflaged figure moving. Donald speaks into a two-way receiver.

EXT. BLUE HILL, A THIRD OF THE WAY UP - DAY

DONALD V.O.

I have a confirmation.

Charles whispers into a concealed microphone.

CHARLES

Sure it's him?

DONALD V.O.

Affirmative.

CHARLES

Lachlan, we've never gone in for bullshit.

Hook laughs.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

You've made your point. Come down, before they get carried away.

The laughter continues.

CHARLES (CONT'D)
(whispering)
Take him out.

EXT. BLUE HILL, SUMMIT - DAY

Donald motions to two soldiers with high-powered rifles aimed in Hook's direction.

One soldier has his telescopic sight aimed at the back of his target. The soldier nods to Donald. The other soldier similarly nods.

Donald quickly nods to both soldiers. They fire two rounds each.

The telescopic sights show the bullets striking their target. The target falls to ground, remains motionless.

Both Soldiers give thumbs up to Donald.

EXT. BLUE HILL, A THIRD OF THE WAY UP - DAY

The shots echo through the valley.

DONALD V.O.
Target eliminated.

Charles smiles to himself. He hurries up the mountain.

EXT. BLUE HILL, HALF WAY UP - DAY

Soldiers coming down approach the motionless target. Donald motions them to stop and proceed with caution.

Charles, ascending, approaches the motionless target.

Donald and Charles simultaneously reach the target. The soldiers arrive. Donald kicks it over. It is a SW uniform stuffed with grass with a rabbit secured by wire that has been shot to pieces.

Suddenly Charles notices movement to his left. Charles immediately drops to the ground.

Donald simultaneously notices movement in the opposite direction and also drops to the ground. The soldiers hit the ground and open fire in both directions.

CHARLES
Stop! Stop!

The soldiers stop firing.

CHARLES (CONT'D)
Before you kill us all.

Charles and Donald look at scarecrows made from the clothes of the SW police each with a live rabbit tied inside.

DONALD
Fucken bastard!

They look for Hook but can't see him.

DONALD (CONT'D)
(shouting)
You're a dead man!

HOOK V.O.
Come up my mountain again I'll kill
you all. Next time I see a uniform,
and that includes you, Charles, I'll
put a bullet through it's purple heart.
Now get out!

A shot is heard and the rabbit in the scarecrow is killed. The soldiers drop to the ground. Donald looks at Charles for permission to attack. Charles shakes his head.

CHARLES
Too many casualties!!

HOOK V.O.
You've got five seconds.

Charles, Donald and the soldiers run down the mountain.

EXT. BLUE HILL, HALF WAY UP - NIGHT

Hook has dug a hole approx 18" deep. He has put a metal mug at the bottom, filled the hole with greenery and anchored a black plastic sheet over the hole with dirt. As he retrieves the mug of water he senses movement and sharply turns with knife at the ready.

Arthur throws him Charles' sandwiches. Hook catches them and smiles.

HOOK
What're you doing here?

ARTHUR
Someone has to empty the can.

Hook laughs.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
You're in all the big papers. Famous.
(MORE)

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

There was a photograph of them coppers.
Ha, ha, my people would've laughed at
that.

Hook opens the sandwiches.

HOOK

Where'd you get these?

ARTHUR

Some bigwig down there.

Hook laughingly shakes his head. He eats the sandwiches.

HOOK

If I had of had half a dozen like you
things would've been different.

ARTHUR

They're preparing to attack the
mountain.

HOOK

That's the whole idea.

ARTHUR

I'm staying with you.

HOOK

No you're not.

ARTHUR

This is my land, mate.

HOOK

You ever killed anyone?

Arthur doesn't answer.

HOOK (CONT'D)

Then you're no good to me, mate.

Arthur looks solemn. Hook puts his arm round his shoulder.

HOOK (CONT'D)

If I was picking a squad you'd be the
last person I'd pick. But if I was
picking the bloke I'd wanta come back
as, it's you, Artie. Now there's a
couple of things I forgot to do.

ARTHUR

What?

HOOK

I forgot to feed the chooks.

Hook kisses him on top of the head. Arthur's eyes light up.

INT. ARMY TENT - DAY

Six selected JOURNALISTS sit on deck chairs and listen to Charles. They scribble notes as he talks. Donald stands to the side, his eyes forever checking the situation. The journalist's behaviour is exemplary.

JOURNALIST 1

What is he asking for?

Charles smiles.

CHARLES

We believe it's a dispute with Local Council over the illegal construction of an outside toilet.

JOURNALIST 1

Locals claim it's an anti-logging protest.

JOURNALIST 2

Against the clear-felling of Blue Hill.

EXT. VALLEY - DAY

Arthur urgently travels through natural forest.

CHARLES V.O.

Lachlan Hook, I can assure you, is presently incapable of rational behaviour.

JOURNALIST 2 V.O.

Why not leave him up there till he comes down?

CHARLES V.O.

Can't.

JOURNALIST 1 V.O.

Why not?

CHARLES V.O.

He's broken the law.

EXT. CLEAR-FELLED LAND - DAY

Arthur jogs through the clear-felled terrain.

JOURNALIST 2 V.O.
Is it true he's a military man?

JOURNALIST 1 V.O.
That he served under your command?

INT. ARMY TENT - DAY

Charles motions to Donald.

CHARLES
Colonel Donald has details of his
military history.

Donald distributes photocopied foolscap. The Journalists quickly assess these.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Arthur jogs along the unmade road leading to Hook's place.

JOURNALIST 2 V.O.
What was he dismissed for?

CHARLES V.O.
Insubordination.

JOURNALIST 2 V.O.
Who by?

CHARLES V.O.
A military court. He was responsible
for the death of his entire platoon.

INT. ARMY TENT - DAY

A SOLDIER distributes coffee and biscuits to the appreciative Journalists.

JOURNALIST 1
He fought in Somalia?

CHARLES
After he left us, as a Soldier of
Fortune.

JOURNALIST 1
A mercenary?

JOURNALIST 2
But you trained him.

Charles doesn't respond.

EXT. HOOK'S HOUSE - DAY

Arthur approaches the entrance to the road leading up to Hook's House.

JOURNALIST 2 V.O.
This says he's a wealthy man.

CHARLES V.O.
Correct.

JOURNALIST 2 V.O.
That he made his money investing in Japanese companies, Mosho Enterprises, Tokyo Inc.

A military police car is parked at the entrance. Arthur passes it, checking for occupants. It is empty.

INT. ARMY TENT - DAY

Charles smiles.

CHARLES
Ironic when you consider Mosho Timbers are the world's leading producers of chipboard. This is not about logging. This is a simple dispute that has unfortunately escalated into an all out attack on the State.

JOURNALIST 2
What other companies has he been involved in?

CHARLES
Now I have a job to do.

Donald ushers the Journalists out.

EXT. HOOK'S HOUSE - DUSK

Arthur creeps up to Hook's house. Police tape is stretched across the track half way up.

INT. ARMY TENT - DAY

A Soldier escorts Sergeant Wilson in.

CHARLES
I need your help.

Donald hands Wilson a manilia folder. Wilson opens the folder, assesses it and nods. Wilson leaves.

DONALD

Let me napalm the mountain.

Charles contemplates.

DONALD (CONT'D)

End this fiasco immediately.

CHARLES

That's what he wants, to die a hero.

EXT. HOOK'S HOUSE - DAY

Arthur creeps through the undergrowth towards Hook's house. Military cars are parked outside.

EXT. ARMY TENT - DAY

Military vehicles arrive.

INT. ARMY TENT - DAY

It's late afternoon. Charles sleeps in his uniform on a portable bunk. A soldier enters the tent. Charles wakes.

EXT. ARMY TENT - DAY

Charles, dressed in civilian clothes, exits the tent. A police car is parked outside.

Ellen and Stephen are pat searched by Wilson. Ellen holds her jacket. An armed CONSTABLE stands guard.

CHARLES

Hello, Ellen.

Ellen ignores him. Charles looks at Stephen.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

You must be Stephen.

Ellen indicates for Stephen not to respond.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

Come inside.

Charles nods to Wilson who takes Ellen's jacket.

INT. ARMY TENT - DUSK

Charles eats a hearty meal. Ellen and Stephen stand before him. There are no spare chairs. On the table are the folder and necklace in the box which is open.

Charles indicates for them to eat with him. Stephen moves to but Ellen prevents him by moving him behind her. Charles looks Ellen over. She shivers.

CHARLES

I imagine it hasn't been easy on you.

She doesn't react. Charles picks up the necklace.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

He must've really liked you.

Charles returns the necklace to the box which he pushes towards Ellen.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

I need your help, Ellen. He'll listen to you.

She shakes her head.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

You want him to die?

ELLEN

It'll be your fault.

STEPHEN

Who's going to die, Mummy?

ELLEN

No one, Darling.

CHARLES

You like Mr Hook, don't you, Son?

Stephen shows Charles his watch.

STEPHEN

He gave me this.

CHARLES

I know. How old are you, son?

Stephen puts his hand straight out.

STEPHEN

This old.

CHARLES

(accusing)

Has the boy started school? Hmmmmmmm?

She doesn't respond.

ELLEN
Wait outside, Darling.

Stephen leaves.

ELLEN (CONT'D)
Leave my son alone.

CHARLES
One phone call and he'll be back with
his father, permanent.

She considers, hesitating. Charles rings a number.

CHARLES (CONT'D)
Put me through to Rick Lawson.

Charles smiles at Ellen. Ellen begins trembling but wills herself out of it. Charles puts his hand over the mouthpiece.

CHARLES (CONT'D)
You're the only person he'll come down
for.
(into the phone)
Rick...?

Ellen pushes down the connector. Charles replaces the phone.

EXT. HOOK'S HOUSE - DUSK

Two SOLDIERS guard Hook's house.

ELLEN V.O.
He won't speak to me.

CHARLES V.O.
Yes he will.

Arthur creeps round the back, enters the dunny.

INT. ARMY TENT - DUSK

Ellen shivers. Charles puts his military jacket around her.

CHARLES
Wear this.

EXT. ARMY TENT - DUSK

Wilson walks her towards the mountain.

Charles takes Stephen's hand. They walk away from the tent.

CHARLES
How would you like to see Daddy?

STEPHEN
Will he hurt Mummy?

Charles doesn't respond.

INT. HOOK'S DUNNY - DUSK

Arthur reaches behind the can and removes a metal container. He opens the container. It is full of money. He unfolds a document.

INT. POLICE CAR - NIGHT

Stephen sits alone in the police car.

EXT. BLUE HILL, CLEAR-FELLED AREA - NIGHT

A full moon lights the early evening. Charles, wearing a beanie, waits behind an army truck. Ellen, dressed in his jacket, walks towards Blue Hill.

EXT. BLUE HILL, CLEAR-FELLED AREA - NIGHT

Ellen tentatively approaches Blue Hill.

CHARLES V.O.
When you get half way up the clear-felled area rise your arm. I'll let him know through the loud hailer you want to speak to him.

Charles watches Ellen walk towards Blue Hill.

EXT. BLUE HILL, THREE QUARTERS UP - NIGHT

We see through Hook's binoculars what appears to be Charles making his way toward the mountain. Hook sprints down the slopes

EXT. BLUE HILL, CLEAR-FELLED AREA - NIGHT

Ellen slowly makes her way up the clear-felled area.

EXT. BLUE HILL, HALF WAY UP - NIGHT

Hook sprints towards the middle of the mountain. He halts abruptly, looks through his binoculars, sees 'Charles'.

HOOK

Fuck! You are a fucken idiot, Charles!
I warned you!

Hook trains his gun on 'Charles'.

EXT. ARMY TENT - NIGHT

Behind the army tent soldiers have erected heavy artillery
trained on Blue Hill.

EXT. BLUE HILL, CLEAR-FELLED AREA - NIGHT

Charles is at the edge of the clear-felled area with a
bull-horn.

Donald waits in the background for Charles's decision.

Stephen appears next to Charles.

STEPHEN

Where's Mummy going?

CHARLES

(angrily)
Go back to the car.

Stephen runs after Ellen.

EXT. BLUE HILL, HALF WAY UP - NIGHT

Hook has 'Charles'' chest in his sights.

HOOK

I warned you, Charles.

EXT. BLUE HILL, A THIRD OF THE WAY UP - DAY

Ellen looks backwards towards Charles, begins to raise
her hand, but sees Stephen running towards her grabbed by
Wilson, then sees the heavy artillery.

ELLEN

(screaming)
No!

EXT. BLUE HILL, HALF WAY UP - NIGHT

Hook squeezes the trigger.

EXT. BLUE HILL, CLEAR-FELLED AREA - NIGHT

A bullet shatters into Charles' head killing him instantly. Donald, momentarily shocked, yells.

DONALD

Now.

EXT. ARMY TENT - NIGHT

The heavy artillery roars into action.

EXT. BLUE HILL, HALF WAY UP - NIGHT

The area surrounding Hook explodes.

EXT. BLUE HILL, A THIRD OF THE WAY UP - NIGHT

Ellen runs towards Hook's position which is exploding everywhere.

A helicopter appears. Two rockets shoot from the helicopter into the landscape. The entire mountain erupts into flames.

Ellen is halted by the force of the eruption. She falls to her knees.

EXT. HOOK'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Hook's house burns. The two soldiers watch hopelessly as the timber ceiling burns high. The dunny remains intact.

Arthur looks across at the exploding Blue Hill, which lights up the night.

EXT. BLUE HILL - DAY

The landscape has been devastated. Arthur, Ellen and Stephen stand on the summit. Ellen wears the emerald necklace.

She scatters a handful of ash from a small urn.

They look across at the ruins of Hook's house.

ARTHUR

It's what he wanted.

Ellen nods.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

He bequeathed the land to my people.

Arthur hands her a manila envelope of money.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

He wanted you to have this.

Ellen shakes her head, refusing to take it.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

He wanted you to write letters, to
continue the fight.

Reluctantly she takes the envelope. Arthur rubs his hand
on Ellen's hand and ceremonially rubs the ash from her
hand on his face.

We pull back to a bird's eye view of Arthur, Ellen and
Stephen on the desolated mountain.

The Ballad Of Absent Marie, sung by Ellen, plays over the
credits

FADE OUT