

THE LAST DROP OF ST. JUDE

by

Randall Berger

An Original Screenplay

Third Draft
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THE LAST DROP OF ST. JUDE
An Original Screenplay

1 EXT. A COUNTRY VINYARD — MORNING 1

A fat bunch of deep purple grapes, bursting with juice, hang from a vine, framed by leaves turning various shades of red, yellow and green. It is a bright, clear morning.

A colourful beetle wanders lazily across the grapes. An enormous spider suddenly lunges, snatching up the beetle and sinking in its fangs. A moment later, a magpie grabs the spider and the beetle in its beak.

Suddenly, a massive mechanical grape harvester engulfs the entire row of vines ... grapes, leaves, magpie and all ... shredding everything into its hopper.

An old one-tonne farm truck bumps along an unpaved country road beside the vinyard. A young woman, MATILDA VAN HORNE, is at the wheel. An older man, ROMAN VAN HORNE, is the passenger.

MATILDA VAN HORNE drives with a determined look on her face. She is in her 30s. She isn't used to the soft floral print dress she wears and from her manner is more comfortable in moleskins.

ROMAN VAN HORNE is as tired as the truck he rides in. He is in his late 50s, but seems older. His suit has seen better days and would have filled out more when he bought it. Lines of worry crisscross his weatherworn face.

The old truck was once painted in rich, classic colours. In worn letters on the door and wooden sides can just be read: "ST JUDE'S WINERY, Est. 1886. MYRTLE VALE, AUSTRALIA"

The truck passes rolling hills of vineyards heavy with grapes, descending occasionally into misty gullies that the morning sun hasn't reached.

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED:

1

Many vineyards are being harvested with modern, high tech, soul-less machines. The modern wineries are slick, stainless steel monstrosities, like big dairies, with row upon row of gleaming tanks full of wine. Workers wear white lab coats and hair nets. Pallet loads of box wine and flagons stream out ... wine untouched by human hands or human soul.

A giant harvester disgorges its cargo into the factory crusher: grapes, stems, leaves and a glimpse of black and white feathers.

There is a prevalence of signs and logos for the "VanOrd CO-OP" on silos, gates and equipment.

A number of big VanOrd semi-trailer rigs dwarf the old farm truck and send it protesting onto the verge of the narrow country road as they rumble past.

A two-car country railmotor keeps pace with the old truck for a while where the single overgrown track parallels the unpaved country road.

2 INT. COUNTRY RAILMOTOR - MORNING

2

Passengers stare casually out of the windows at the rolling green and gold cross-stitch countryside bathed in morning light.

STEVEN HARRISON is looking out of the window at the battered ST JUDE TRUCK running alongside the train beyond his own reflection in the glass staring back. He is handsome, 30s, dressed for carefree travel: denim jacket, flannel shirt, Levi 501s, Blundstones.

The ancient railmotor PA system crackles to life.

TRAIN DRIVER (V/O)

Myrtle Glen, five minutes. Five minutes, (crackle) Glen. End of the line. We will (crackle) for 10 (crackle). 10 minutes only.

(CONTINUED)

2 CONTINUED: 2

Steven stands and retrieves his backpack from the overhead rack. Other passengers do the same.

3 EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - MORNING 3

The old truck sits at a rail crossing giving way to the slowing railmotor, the clickety-clack-clickety-clack of the bogeys making an interesting counterpoint to the dink-dink-dink-dink of the crossing bell.

The truck grinds into gear as the railmotor passes and continues along the undulating single ribbon of track into the distance.

The country road metal becomes bitumen pavement as the road enters the outskirts of the small country town of Myrtle Glen.

The ripping noise of the tires and bone shaking vibration of the corrugated road instantly vanishes inside the truck with the comparative tranquillity of the bitumen. It doesn't appear to improve the mood of the passengers, though.

4 EXT. MYRTLE GLEN MAIN STREETS - MORNING 4

MONTAGE - VARIOUS ASPECTS

The truck travels down the extra wide avenues of the country town. Like all country towns in Australia, MYRTLE GLEN looks like it was built in the 1890s.

People go about their morning business. Everyone knows everyone else and waves. Some glance at the old truck as it passes, but don't wave.

Several tour buses are parked in front of the MYRTLE VALLEY WINE EXPERIENCE CENTRE, "The Grape Escape!" disgorging scores of grey nomads, backpackers and Asian tourists, drawn by the promise of plastic displays and artificial interactivity.

(CONTINUED)

4 CONTINUED: 4

A lot of the businesses sport the ubiquitous signs for Elders, Dahlgettys and especially VanOrd.

The Truck passes the VanOrd CO-OP STORE, VanOrd PETROL, the MYRTLE VALLEY LABOUR EXCHANGE ... "Seasonal Grape Pickers wanted URGENTLY!"

The old truck pulls up in front of the VanOrd CO-OPERATIVE CREDIT UNION & BUILDING SOCIETY (Formerly The Farmer's Bank) "Building a better life for everyone in the Myrtle Valley."

5 EXT. RAILWAY STATION - MORNING 5

The diesel railmotor sits idling at the old Myrtle Glen train station for its daily 10 minute visit.

The well-kept station is the epitome of under-utilisation, with the STATIONMASTER more a caretaker, gardener and handyman than anything. And proud of it he is, too, as he struts around during his daily 10 minutes of fame and authority.

Steven alights from the railmotor car, has a bit of a stretch, looks around, hefts his backpack on one shoulder and starts walking.

6 EXT. VANORD/FARMERS BANK - MORNING 6

The old St. Jude truck is parked in a space in front of the old Farmer's Bank, the name of which can still be read in dusty relief on the Federation-era façade alongside the garish new "VanOrd CREDIT UNION" identity.

7 INT. BANK RECEPTION AREA - MORNING 7

Roman and Matilda sink uncomfortably into the leather chesterfield sofa in the high-ceilinged Bank Manager's outer office.

The modern, garish VanOrd branding is so out of place in the grand late Victorian atmosphere of the old bank.

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED:

7

The SECRETARY taps away at her computer keyboard.

We see and hear the approaching men through the frosted glass before the door to the inner sanctum opens and out comes CYRIL HAWTHORNE, the bank manager, escorting an obviously satisfied customer.

HAWTHORNE

... and with the projections for export and increased domestic consumption, you should be laughing.

CUSTOMER

Thanks, Mr. Hawthorne ...

HAWTHORNE

Cyril, please, and call me personally if you need anything.

Roman and Matilda struggle to their feet as Hawthorne emerges. He turns to them and turns on the phoney charm.

HAWTHORNE (CONT'D)

Roman ... and Matilda, isn't it? ...
Good to see you. Come on in.
Felicity? Coffee, please.

Hawthorne shuts the door after they enter the office.

8 INT. BANK MANAGER'S OFFICE - MORNING

8

Cyril Hawthorn sits in an executive chair as modern as he isn't. Tie the wrong width, jacket the wrong cut, shirt the wrong white. He is moderately overweight, clothes a little too tight everywhere. His wide, thick, out-of-date glasses reflect everything, so you can never see his eyes.

This man reeks of economic rationalism and balanced books, seeing everything in black and red.

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED:

8

Roman and Matilda have seated themselves across the desk.

HAWTHORNE

Now, we all know why I called this meeting. There doesn't have to be any animosity...

MATILDA

(Interrupting)

St. Jude has been in our family for over a hundred years and you just can't ...

HAWTHORNE

(Interrupting back)

Now, now, Miss Van Horne. Nothing is to be gained by taking an attitude like that. Business is business, so let's conduct ourselves like businessmen ... uh ... women ... uh ... people.

ROMAN

I apologise for my daughter, Mr. Hawthorne. She can be a little headstrong ... never been married.

Matilda shoots her father a look that could kill for that oft heard comment.

HAWTHORNE

Huh? Oh ... yes. Now, cards on the table, OK? St. Jude has defaulted the last three payments on its mortgage. With what you owe, you're into minority equity. The bank owns more of St. Jude than you do. Your overdraft is in the basement. The bank has been lenient, and apart from the standard penalties and reference charges, we haven't taken any action ... yet.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED: (2)

8

HAWTHORNE (CONT'D)
The fourth quarter is coming up.
Will you be able to make the
payment and begin to make up the...?

MATILDA
You know damned well we can't. You
know how much money we haven't got.

ROMAN
Matilda! ... Mr. Hawthorne. This is
going to be an excellent year ... our
best in 10. The timing's right. Let
me ... us ... bring in this vintage.

Hawthorne gestures to a map on the wall behind his
desk, with the dominant shaded areas obviously the
VanOrd Co-Operative. He focuses on a blank spot in the
middle.

HAWTHORNE
You know, Van Horne, that St. Jude
is a thorn in the side of the Co-
op. They have on more than one
occasion said they will return the
bank twice what the mortgage is
worth if we foreclose. I can't
ignore offers like that forever.
You're smack in the middle of their
biggest operation and have water
rights they desperately want ...
other growers in this valley want.
Now, your family is one of the
oldest in the valley ... maybe the
oldest ... and many a Van Horne has
sat on the Board of the old
Farmer's Bank.

Hawthorne adopts a more conciliatory tone and posture.

HAWTHORNE (CONT'D)
Look, Roman ... take the offer. It's
the future. It will put money in
your pocket.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED: (3)

8

HAWTHORNE (CONT'D)
You and Matilda can stay on and
work St. Jude's for the Co-Op ...
money for jam.

MATILDA
We don't make jam. St. Jude's make
wine. Our way.

HAWTHORNE
St. Jude's make nothing. It's a
lost cause. All right ... One more
quarter. That'll give you time to
put up the new vintage and see if
you can sell it. I can't guarantee
that the Co-Op's offer will still
stand ... I guess we'll see. I'll
have the necessary papers drawn up
... again.

The Secretary knocks as if on cue and immediately
enters with a tray noticeably bearing a single cup of
coffee as Roman and Matilda rise to leave.

ROMAN
Thank you, Mr. Hawthorne. Thank
you.

MATILDA
Thank you ... Cyril.

Roman and Matilda show themselves out as Hawthorne has
his mid-morning coffee and Anzacs. He reaches for the
telephone and dials, glancing up at the pair as they
leave.

9 EXT. VANORD/FARMER'S BANK - MORNING

9

Roman is fighting back tears of relief for their
reprieve and his humiliation as he and Matilda get into
the truck.

Matilda makes small talk as she starts the truck and
purposefully doesn't look into his eyes.

(CONTINUED)

9 CONTINUED:

9

MATILDA

Well, that gives us three months.
We're a day or two off bringing in
the grapes. A month in the vats.
Another in the barrels. We'll know
by then if we have something to
sell. We can use the old barrels
again ... they're not too bad ... no
one will know ... much. Let's go lock
down the harvester for tomorrow.

Matilda puts the truck in gear and backs out.

10 EXT. VANORD CO-OPERATIVE HEADQUARTERS - MORNING 10

Establishing shot of the exterior of the VanOrd CORPORATION headquarters, a gleaming glass tower in the upper end of an upper street in an upper financial district of an Australian capital city. It is a soul less, menacing building, devoid of any character, like some of its people and most of its products.

11 INT. VANORD CEO'S OFFICE - MORNING 11

A state-of-the-art telephone buzzes on an enormous blackwood desk, resplendent in expensive executive accoutrement and devoid of any clutter.

The telephone display identifies HAWTHORNE. A hand reaches out and lifts the gleaming handset.

The sinister presence of the VanOrd CEO has no face or voice, just a manicured right hand, huge solitaire diamond ring, solid gold Oyster Rolex, silk shirt and Italian wool suit.

No acknowledgement is required as to who has answered the silent number telephone at this end and we can hear the earnest chatter from the earpiece begin immediately as Hawthorne gives his report. The VanOrd CEO simply listens.

12 INT. BANK MANAGER'S OFFICE - DAY

12

It's HAWTHORNE's turn to listen and he begins to sweat. We can see in his face exactly what the CEO is saying, though all we can hear is what is the scratching coming from Hawthorne's earpiece. His face shows more and more panic as he realises how far his arse is on the line.

HAWTHORNE

Yes, sir, but ... I know ... Yes, I realise that ... Three months ... I mean, I couldn't just ... It would have made the bank look ... Yes, sir ... Yes, sir. No, sir ... I understand completely, sir. You don't have to remind me ... Yes, I couldn't agree more ... Yes, I will take care of everything ... Thank you ... I will ... Thank you.

Hawthorne puts down the phone as if it were a deadly snake. He wipes his face and looks very vulnerable. He grabs his telephone and frantically begins to make calls.

From the desperate look on his face, Hawthorne is going to have to kiss some serious butt and call in a lot of favours to get out of this mess.

13 INT. VANORD C.E.O'S OFFICE - MORNING

13

THE VanOrd CEO replaces the handset in its cradle as a VANORD LACKEY taps on the door and enters the palatial office.

CEO'S LACKEY

Mr. Sakamura and the Japanese group are here for the next round. I've notified the rest of the board.

The CEO beckons for them to be shown in and rises.

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED: 13

ICHIRO SAKAMURA comes in at the head of his delegation. Sakamura is in his early 60s, a "Silver," impeccably dressed and the epitome of the successful Japanese executive.

While the others bow at the waist, Sakamura merely nods his head slightly, telegraphing that he has the upper hand in whatever negotiations are about to transpire.

14 EXT. CONTRACT HARVESTER OFFICE - MORNING 14

ROMAN'S POV from inside the truck as MATILDA is seen arguing animatedly with the CONTRACT HARVESTER MANAGER on the footpath.

The Manager shakes his head and throws up his hands. Matilda is obviously singeing his ear hairs with her language. He turns and goes back into the office, Matilda shouting abuse as he goes. He glances after Matilda, picks up the telephone and dials.

Matilda gets into the truck, pounding the steering wheel.

MATILDA

Son of a fucking bitch! We had a booking. I checked it myself three weeks ago. What the fucking hell are we going to do now?

ROMAN

Matilda ... your language!

MATILDA

Fuck my language!

Matilda starts the truck, taking her frustration out on the gears.

15 INT. BANK MANAGER'S OFFICE - MORNING 15

The telephone on CYRIL HAWTHORNE'S desk rings. He reaches to pick it up.

16 EXT. MYRTLE VALLEY LABOUR EXCHANGE — MORNING 16

ROMAN'S POV in a repeat of the previous scene. We see MATILDA through the glass front of the Labour Exchange, haranguing the poor LABOUR EXCHANGE MANAGER. He shrugs apologetically, holding out his wrists as if bound together.

Matilda points to the line of workers gathered in the office. The Manager hangs his head and shakes it. Matilda stomps out of the Exchange and gets in the truck, fuming.

As she leaves, the Manager picks up the telephone and dials.

17 INT. BANK MANAGER'S OFFICE — MORNING 17

HAWTHORNE'S phone rings in its cradle again.

18 INT. THE ST. JUDE TRUCK CAB — MORNING 18

MATILDA pounds even harder on the steering wheel in frustration.

MATILDA

This is in-fucking-credible! He's telling me we don't have the right health and safety permits, so there are no pickers available to St. Jude.

ROMAN

We'll have to pick by hand ... ourselves ... like in the old days.

MATILDA

What, you and me, Uncle Max and Dorothy? Get a grip! Somebody's fu ... screwing us around, that's for bloody sure.

19 EXT. MYRTLE GLEN CARAVAN PARK - MORNING 19

As the St. Jude's truck is pulling into the Myrtle Vale Caravan Park entrance, a sedan with heavily tinted windows bearing the VanOrd logo is leaving.

CYRIL HAWTHORNE is driving the sedan. He powers down the window an inch and watches them pass. MATILDA and ROMAN are so focussed that they don't notice him.

MONTAGE - SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

Matilda is seen speaking to a number of men and women, young and old, at a series of the on-site caravans, cabins and big family tents. Big, burly Southern European men and their even bigger wives, sons, daughters and their partners and kids.

These are the itinerant fruit pickers that come to the Valley annually for work. They all shrug and shake their heads "No".

20 EXT. MYRTLE VALLEY WINE EXPERIENCE CENTRE - MORNING 20

MONTAGE - SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

MATILDA is seen speaking to individuals and pairs of YOUNG BACKPACKERS. They all chuckle and shake their heads "no", one pair miming picking grapes and chucking them into each other's mouths.

Matilda stomps back to the truck.

21 EXT. MYRTLE GLEN HOTEL - DAY 21

Establishing shot of the Myrtle Glen Hotel, a classic country town pub. The grand Victorian façade of the two storey building dominates the corner it sits on, a wide veranda running the entire length of the second floor covered with iron lace trim.

The St. Jude truck does the crazy reverse angle park that country people prefer in front of the hotel.

22 INT. LOUNGE BAR OF THE MYRTLE GLEN HOTEL — MIDDAY 22

The lounge bar is full of mainly men having a counter lunch or simply a cleansing 'liquid lunch.'

Conversation drops a notch when ROMAN and MATILDA enter, but soon cranks up again. From the hanging faces of the pair, any attempt to find grape pickers or harvesting equipment has been fruitless.

Roman sits at a table for two away from most of the others as Matilda approaches the PUBLICAN at the bar.

MATILDA

You serve any decent wines yet,
Ian?

PUBLICAN

(Too loudly)
Now, Miss Van Horne, you know my
license only allows me to serve Co-
Op wines.

The other drinkers chuckle at this tired, oft heard routine. Roman sulks deeper. Matilda snaps and turns on the room.

MATILDA

(Full of venom)
Any of you blokes want a job
picking grapes for St. Jude? Can't
pay the award, but we'll give you a
buck and a bottle a bin when we
bring in the vintage. Real wine,
not that bag-in-a-box shit. No? I
didn't think so. Gutless wonders.
(To publican) Two glasses of house
red and the Picker's Platter ...
we'll share it.

Matilda joins Roman at the table. They sit, each in their own despair.

(CONTINUED)

22 CONTINUED:

22

The Publican brings over two generous glasses of red and a plater of breads, meats, olives, antipasto vegetables, soft cheeses, etc. on a tray.

He leans towards Matilda as he places the glasses and plate on the table.

PUBLICAN

(Very quietly)

It's your '98 Reserve Shiraz ... I still have a few bottles ... For special customers only. It's a lovely drop, Matilda.

Matilda, unable to meet his eye for emotion, smiles faintly and touches his hand gently in gratitude and reaches for a note to pay.

PUBLICAN (CONT'D)

(Even more quietly)

Nah, on the house. Can't have you paying for your own wine, can we?

23 EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - AFTERNOON

23

MATILDA and ROMAN bounce along the dusty country road. In the distance, we see a man walking alongside the road. As the truck nears, he extends his hitching finger without turning. Matilda shoots by in a cloud of dust without slowing.

Suddenly, she slams on the brakes and wrenches the transmission into reverse.

She comes abreast of STEVEN, who is melodramatically dusting himself off, cracking a handsome 100 watt smile that almost causes Matilda to blush. He comes around to the driver's window as Matilda winds it down.

MATILDA

Sorry ... Can we give you a lift somewhere? There's not much left of this road anyway ... Hey, watch it!

(CONTINUED)

23 CONTINUED:

23

A tour bus roars past, sounding its horn in pique, almost collecting Steven's arse as he jumps onto the running board for safety. He finds himself very close to Matilda through the open window.

STEVEN

Ooh, that was close. Sorry. Yeah, sure, thanks. Thought I'd see how far I could go, maybe find a place to put up for a while. Work.

MATILDA

Work, huh? Not that easy to find around here.

Roman smiles to himself as he quietly watches this merry dance.

STEVEN

I suppose. We'll see. I can do just about anything.

MATILDA

Anything? We'll see. Climb aboard.

Roman goes to open his door and shift to the centre.

MATILDA (CONT'D)

Plenty of room for hired help in the back.

Steven has just climbed aboard when the truck roars off, dumping him on his arse in the truck bed.

24 EXT. ST. JUDE'S WINERY GATES — AFTERNOON

24

The truck, with STEVEN hanging on for dear life with his back to the cab, turns under a high painted arch reading "St. Jude's Winery, Est. 1886" in fading letters, with signs askew down either side proclaiming "Cellar Door Sales" and "Wine Tasting Any Time" ... and further down, "Fresh Eggs" and "Fruit Preserves."

(CONTINUED)

24 CONTINUED: 24

The truck continues down a access road lined on either side with burgeoning vines towards the clump of Victorian-era buildings and old-growth trees in the distance.

25 EXT. COURTYARD OF ST JUDE'S WINERY - AFTERNOON 25

The truck pulls up to the back veranda of the main house, a large Victorian red brick edifice with lots of white frilly bits, its walls fighting a losing battle against ivy creeper and vine roses.

Across the wide courtyard are the main vat room and other winery buildings, showing every one of their 100+ years through generations of whitewash, cobwebs, dust and repairs.

ROMAN and MATILDA alight from the truck.

The slamming truck doors brings the cook/housekeeper DOROTHY SUTTON out of the kitchen onto the veranda, wiping her hands on a tea towel: a well upholstered woman in her 60s whose flushed face and ever cheery disposition infer she is also St. Jude's head of quality control. Her menus also tend towards beef burgundy, coq au vin and wine trifle.

Dorothy carries an ancient oversized wicker-covered Thermos flask from which she pours herself a little cup and sips as she watches the following.

STEVEN drops from the back of the truck, raising an eyebrow from Dorothy.

ROMAN

Matilda, show our friend ...

STEVEN

Steven ... Steven Harrison. From Melbourne.

ROMAN

... Show Steven to one of the pickers' quarters.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

25 CONTINUED:

25

ROMAN (CONT'D)
Please, Steven, join us for dinner
tonight. At 6. Rest today,
because we're going to work your
arse off tomorrow.

MATILDA
Father ... Language!

ROMAN
That's enough cheek out of you,
Miss!

MATILDA
Glad you're feeling better, Daddy.

Roman smiles halfheartedly and nods, climbing onto the
veranda and going into the kitchen with Dorothy.

Matilda gestures towards a row of doors down the side
of the winery buildings across the courtyard and heads
off. Steven follows.

MATILDA (CONT'D)
You're lucky. My father almost
never invites hired help into the
main house.

STEVEN
Maybe he likes me.

MATILDA
Maybe he just doesn't want Dorothy
to have to lug your dinner over
here. The first room is Uncle Max.
Not my uncle ... my father's. He
won't live in the main house.
Don't know why. He was always a
bit of a black sheep, apparently.
He's harmless.

26 INT. PICKERS' QUARTERS ROOM - DAY

26

The first door is open and UNCLE MAX is lying fully
clothed on top of the bed having a geriatric snooze.

(CONTINUED)

26 CONTINUED:

26

Uncle Max is a sprightly 80-odd with lots of spark and initiative, his only concession to old age is a gnarled cane. He wears the trademark old man tweed cap, tatty cardigan, wool flannel shirt buttoned at the top and wool pants with pride.

Uncle Max opens his eyes narrowly as soon as he senses Matilda at the door.

MATILDA

(Too loudly)

Uncle Max, this is Steven. He doesn't know it yet, but he's going to help us pick. I'm afraid it's a hand job this season ... pardon the pun ... they won't contract the harvester ... rubbed out our booking.

MAX

I'm not deaf, Til. Hello, Steven. Nice to have a neighbour. Don't say hand job unless you're willing to back it up. Just trying to stir an old man up, are you? Just like your mother.

MATILDA

See you at dinner, Uncle Max.

MAX

I can still pick. Once I was the best picker in the Valley ... A gun picker, I was ... Two tonnes a day.

Matilda and Steven move out of earshot as Max continues talking. He can be heard through the walls talking on.

MATILDA

He insists on doing odd jobs around the winery, mainly keeping the rats and snakes and birds out of the vats.

Matilda opens the door to the next room.

(CONTINUED)

MATILDA (CONT'D)

Here's a room that's made up ...
Bog and bath's down the end.
Towels and extra blankets and stuff
you can get from Dorothy.

STEVEN

Thanks.

MATILDA

We don't have a pool, but you can
swim in the big tank behind the
winery. Do you have a ... like, a
friend ... a girlfriend?

STEVEN

I beg your pardon?

Matilda flushes at her own boldness. Her earlier
bravado has evaporated. She giggles stupidly.

MATILDA

Why did I ask that? Sorry, I mean
... is there ... ?

Steven is suddenly all charm, turning the volume up to
"Full." He's enjoying this.

STEVEN

I dunno ... Could be.

MATILDA

Forget it. I'll see you at dinner.

STEVEN

I'm looking forward to it ... now.

Matilda beats a hasty retreat, but not before Steven
peels off his shirt for a bath, watching her as she
goes. He smiles in hope.

27 EXT. ST. JUDE WINERY YARD - DAY 27

STEVEN plunges into the big cement tank in his jersey boxers, doing a few short laps before pulling himself up onto a cement shelf, laying out to warm himself and dry in the afternoon sun.

From her second storey room, MATILDA finds herself perving on Steven's fine form before catching herself, turning back to what she was doing.

28 INT. ST. JUDE'S FORMAL DINING ROOM - EVENING 28

MATILDA and ROMAN have already sat down to dinner. DOROTHY is bringing in steaming dishes.

There is a tap on the door and UNCLE MAX and STEVEN enter from the veranda.

Uncle Max is in his trademark old man gear, but Steven has scrubbed up a treat with a chambray shirt and wool tie. He takes Matilda's breath away. She, too, has dressed to thrill in her own way, a rare occasion.

All of the olds exchange knowing glances. Roman starts to pour the wine from a decanter.

ROMAN

Please, Steven. Sit. Have a glass of St. Jude's finest.

STEVEN

Something smells fantastic.

DOROTHY

Charmer.

MONTAGE - OVER A PERIOD OF TIME

As everyone serves themselves and passes the numerous beautiful dishes of home-grown produce and wine, Matilda steels glances at Steven and visa versa.

(CONTINUED)

As the dinner progresses, we drop in and out of the various conversations.

Later ...

STEVEN

I had become a perpetual student, doing degree on degree on degree ... picking up work lecturing and assisting. Finally, someone said I should get a life, so here I am.

MATILDA

What was her name?

STEVEN

How are you so sure she was a she?

Later ...

MATILDA

... And the guy said someone had rung up and cancelled our harvester booking, just like that. They didn't bother to check or anything. He said he let it go and now we're stuffed. The Labour Exchange says they won't let us have any pickers for at least four weeks because new regulations require us to have all kinds of safety inspections and pay worker's comp. I said show me the regulations and he said he didn't have a copy. He had pickers coming out of his ears.

STEVEN

I assume that's why you said we're going to do a hand job tomorrow.

Matilda chokes on her food. Uncle Max gratingly sucks saliva over his false teeth again. Dorothy hoots and Roman graciously steps in.

(CONTINUED)

28 CONTINUED: (2)

28

ROMAN

She means we're going to pick by hand. It's slower, but gentler on the grapes. If we each do two or three tonnes a day it should only take...

STEVEN

Two tonnes!

ROMAN

It's not as much as it sounds, and it'll help work off Dorothy's cooking.

DOROTHY

Who's for more coffee and wine trifle?

29 EXT. THE VERANDA - NIGHT

29

STEVEN and MATILDA lean on the railing. UNCLE MAX hobbles past and down the steps on his way to his room.

MATILDA

You didn't have to get all dressed up.

STEVEN

Neither did you.

MATILDA

What, this old thing?

STEVEN

Ha. On someone else it might be "this old thing." You look great.

STEVEN studies her profile as she looks out at the darkness.

STEVEN (CONTD.) (CONT'D)

Do you know what the name "Matilda" means?

(CONTINUED)

29 CONTINUED:

29

MATILDA

No. It's what the jolly swagman called his bedroll. It was my grandmother's name.

STEVEN

It's a very old and very grand name. From the Middle Ages. William the conqueror's wife was named Matilda. It means "warrior woman" ... Something like that.

MATILDA

Go on!

STEVEN

No, true. History was one of my majors.

MATILDA

What other things are you studying, city boy?

STEVEN

You. From the sounds of it, you're living up to your name. You're a very determined woman, Matilda. You'll get what you want. 'Night.

Steven heads across the yard to his room. Matilda looks after him as if she was hoping for a little more.

MATILDA

Good night.

30 EXT. ST JUDE'S WINERY AND VINEYARDS - DAWN

30

Establishing shots of St. Jude's, with the dawn sun on the grapes and vines, burning away the dew and morning mist, with the odd rabbit, cockatoo and galah flitting about. The leaves are beginning to show signs of red.

31 INT. VAT ROOM — DAWN 31

ROMAN is cleaning and priming up a large machine at one end of the vat room: an old crusher/de-stemmer.

32 INT. ST. JUDE'S KITCHEN — DAWN 32

Bleary-eyed, STEVEN sips an oversized mug of tea at the big kitchen table. MATILDA is bright-eyed and bushy tailed. UNCLE MAX sucks his tea through his dentures. DOROTHY is surreptitiously filling her thermos flask ... from last night's wine decanter.

MATILDA

Come on, city boy ... you'll have to do better than this. Hop to it.

STEVEN

Turn down the cheerfulness knob a notch or two, please. OK, so what's the plan? How do you make wine?

MATILDA

Pick the grapes, squash out the juice, let it go off for a while, put it in a bottle.

STEVEN

That's it?

MATILDA

Pretty much ... timing, variety, conditions, weather, wood, luck, a good nose and taste buds ... that's what gives you a great wine or shit-in-a-bottle.

STEVEN

Did your Dad teach you how?

(CONTINUED)

32 CONTINUED:

32

MATILDA

More than I learned in three years
at Uni. The School of Hard Knocks
offers a much higher degree.

There is a God almighty shriek of machinery and rending
of metal from outside. Everyone is on their feet and
running in seconds.

33 INT. THE VAT ROOM - DAWN

33

ROMAN stands beside the smoking ruin of the crusher/de-
stemmer. MATILDA and STEVEN come tearing into the
barn, with DOROTHY not far behind and UNCLE MAX a
distant last.

MATILDA

Shit, Dad! Are you OK? Oh,
Christ, now we're really stuffed.

ROMAN

I'm alright. It was fine last
year. It has run fine for years.
Not a whimper.

STEVEN

Can it be fixed?

Steven is now looking into the smoking hopper. He
reaches way down in and wrenches out a badly damaged
crowbar.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

I think I found the problem.

MATILDA

No shit, Sherlock. And I'll bet
there won't be one to be had in the
Valley for love or money! They've
bloody well hobbled us now.

STEVEN

What, you think someone sabotaged
it?

(CONTINUED)

33 CONTINUED:

33

MATILDA

Of course they bloody did. It's all just too damned coincidental.

STEVEN

What'll you do now ... Stomp on them by foot, like in the movies?

Steven laughs at his own joke, trying to lighten the mood. None of the rest find it that odd a suggestion at all.

MATILDA

What's so funny about that?

ROMAN

No, Steven. We have a hand press. We'll crush the whole bunch.

MATILDA

What? We haven't done one in years. It's not our style.

STEVEN

What's that?

MATILDA

We crush everything and put the whole lot into the vat, stems and all. It can give the wine greater character, but it can also end up tasting like crap.

ROMAN

Whatever we do, it'd better be quick. Those grapes aren't going to wait. The sugar says go now.

34 EXT. ST. JUDE'S VINYARDS - DAY

34

MONTAGE TRANSPIRES OVER ONE DAY

STEVEN and MATILDA pick along the rows. Matilda shows Steven how to clip the bunches.

(CONTINUED)

34 CONTINUED:

34

Buckets are filled, tipped into the bins on the back of the truck and hauled back to the vat room.

Steven is a bit of a klutz, much to the amusement of Matilda. He nicks his finger on the secateurs as he cuts a bunch of grapes from the vine. He hoists a bucket of grapes up onto his shoulder, only to overbalance and tumble backward. He stumbles on the uneven clods of dirt and takes a spill. All of this he turns into a bit of clowning for Matilda.

The bins are winched off the truck in the vat room. ROMAN shovels the bunches into a hopper and then operates the big wheel of the hand crusher which wrings juice from the luscious bunches of grapes and dumps the lot into an enormous vat.

UNCLE MAX manages to pick a bucket or two before he retires under a tree at the end of the row.

DOROTHY brings tea, water and a lunch, stopping to take the occasional nip from her Thermos.

They all work like navvies. It is backbreaking labour.

35 EXT. WINERY COURTYARD - DUSK

35

It is dusk when the group trudges back from the field.

Everyone ends up covered head to foot in dust and splashes of purple juice.

Steven, for all his relative youth and muscular physique, is knackered. Even Roman is stooped from the backbreaking toil.

36 INT. STEVEN'S PICKERS' QUARTERS ROOM - DUSK

36

Steven falls onto his bed fully clothed. Matilda pokes her head in.

(CONTINUED)

36 CONTINUED:

36

MATILDA

See you at dinner. In an hour.
Have a bath. You'll feel a million
bucks.

STEVEN

Join me? I'll split the million
bucks with you.

MATILDA

As if. I'd take you up on that,
but I'm a shower girl.

STEVEN

I can do shower. I'll wash your
hair.

MATILDA

Hmmmmmm ... Nup, not enough room. See
you at dinner.

37 INT. ST. JUDE DINNING ROOM - EVENING

37

Everyone is buggered and nodding off in their food.

STEVEN

There's got to be a way to get
people to pick these grapes.

ROMAN

How can you get people to want to
do something that you yourself find
difficult to do?

STEVEN

Marketing.

MATILDA

What, like advertising?

(CONTINUED)

37 CONTINUED:

37

STEVEN

Not exactly. Politicians make us do things we don't necessarily want to do at first ... by making it sound like we want to it. Stores make us buy things we don't need. Depends on what kind of spin you put on it.

MATILDA

Don't tell me ... You studied marketing, too, right?

STEVEN

Do you remember the story of Tom Sawyer ... By Mark Twain? He had to whitewash a fence ... a real chore ... but he got the bright idea of making all of his friends do it for him ... and even made them pay! Excuse me ... Can I use your workshop and some stuff?

Roman shrugs approval. Steven tears out of the door, not waiting for an answer, taking off his jacket and tie and rolling up his sleeves as he goes. He is a man with a mission.

Dorothy is pouring herself a nip from her Thermos as she watches him go, shamelessly copping an eyeful of his buns filling out the 50ls.

DOROTHY

Like something out of Superman. I reckon there's a bit of the Man Of Steel about him, eh, Matilda?

38 EXT. BACK VERANDA OF MAIN HOUSE - DUSK

38

In the last rays of the sun, Matilda looks across the courtyard towards the workshop. Steven can be heard knocking around doing something.

39 INT. MATILDA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 39

MATILDA draws back the curtains and looks out towards the workshop. The light is still on inside. Suddenly, it flicks off.

STEVEN drags a large, flat piece of board towards the back of the truck and levers it up onto the bed. He starts the engine and drives down the road.

Perplexed, Matilda drops the curtains and goes to bed.

40 EXT. ST. JUDE'S WINERY GATE - MORNING 40

Across the country road from the St Jude gate, vinyards are being warmed by the morning sun. A tour bus roars past. There is a sudden hiss of air brakes as it throws out the anchors and whines as it backs up through frame again.

As the bus reverses past the gate, a large signboard is revealed along with Steven's elaborate marketing idea.

In colourful, hand painted letters, it reads: "Enjoy the AUTHENTIC Wine Experience ... Picking and squashing grapes at historic St. Jude Winery ... Discounts for tour groups and families ... Lunch available ... Campsites for hire ... Exclusive Opportunity ... Not to be missed ... Numbers are strictly limited!"

41 EXT. ST. JUDE COURTYARD & VINEYARDS - DAY 41

MONTAGE - TRANSPIRES OVER THE DAY

Buses and cars jam the Courtyard and down both sides of the winery drive all the way to the gate and along the road. Bus loads of people are seen all over the place.

Steven has set up a table on the veranda and is collecting money and giving change to a queue of people, handing out buckets and secateurs. Dorothy is serving tea and scones to the bus drivers, sitting on benches lined up along the veranda.

(CONTINUED)

41 CONTINUED:

41

In the vineyard, scores of people are filling and hefting buckets of grapes. Matilda and Roman move amongst them, giving tips on how to clip the bunches and what to look for.

There is a bus load of Japanese businessmen with their white shirtsleeves and suit pants legs rolled up. It is the Japanese delegation seen earlier in the VanOrd Inner Sanctum. ICHIRO SAKAMURA is noticeable among them, obviously the head honcho, but really letting his silver grey hair down.

Several bus loads of senior citizens have joined in. Some families have pulled in and pitched their tents and parked their caravans. Kids scamper amongst the vines. It is an idyllic scene.

Uncle Max is sitting in the shade holding court amongst the truly older set who are too old to pick, regaling them with tales of the old days. Many of the women serve cool drinks and tea to the men.

Dorothy turns on a lunchtime spread with lots of preserved vegetables and brandied fruits, fresh bread, country cheese and smoked hams and chickens. And wine, of course. She prefers her Thermos flask, maintaining the charade that it's tea.

In the afternoon, everyone is taking turns squashing grapes in a big wooden tub beside the vat room, or lining up to take turns putting buckets through the hand crusher. The luscious juice flows into the main vat followed by shovels full of the pressed bunches.

The whole winery takes on an amazing character.

42 EXT. ST JUDE'S WINERY GATE - DAY

42

A familiar sedan bearing the signage of the VanOrd CO-OPERATIVE sits across from the gate. CYRIL HAWTHORNE watches the activities through binoculars. He makes a call on a mobile telephone.

43 EXT. ST. JUDE COURTYARD - DUSK 43

That evening, as the last of the buses is heard rumbling away, some of the campers have lit fires and sing campfire songs. The tents and caravans glow from lanterns. Campers queue for the loo at the pickers' quarters.

44 INT. DINNING ROOM - NIGHT 44

ROMAN, MATILDA, STEVEN, MAX and DOROTHY sit around the table, sipping wine after dinner. Dorothy sips from her rounded tin Thermos cup.

ROMAN

I don't believe it. Everything picked and squashed in one day. We couldn't even do that with a harvester.

STEVEN

And we made eight thousand dollars. Can you imagine what we could do if this was a regular gig?

MATILDA

Don't bank it. We don't want Hawthorne to get his grubby fingers on it.

There is a soft knock at the outside door. Dorothy goes and opens it.

In steps a small, stocky Asian man in a suit, holding his shoes. It is ICHIRO SAKAMURA. He bows deeply and launches into an amazing spiel, even though he knows these people won't understand him.

SAKAMURA (SUBTITLED)

"I am Ichiro Sakamura, The Chairman of Suntory Liquor Company of Japan. Thank you for this wonderful experience today.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

44 CONTINUED:

44

SAKAMURA (SUBTITLED)
*I have never known such pleasure.
You are truly magnificent
marketers. I would like to stay
for a while and learn more about
wine making and your company. I
will work hard and there is no need
to pay me."*

He continues to bow throughout, finishing his speech with the deepest bow.

The family stands or sits open mouthed, amazed and perplexed by this performance. Finally, Dorothy breaks the silence.

DOROTHY

Maybe he missed his bus. (Too loudly, to Sakamura) Missy ... You ... Bus? Do ... You ... Wanny ... To ... Use ... The ... Telephone?

Sakamura grunts and smiles to himself at the misunderstanding and decides to sacrifice face with these Gaijin and use his precious few words of English.

SAKAMURA

Stay. Work more. Like very much. Please. No pay.

STEVEN

Hey, that angle worked for me.

MATILDA

Why not ... Dad?

ROMAN

The more the merrier. We can use all the help we can get. Steven, please show our guest to his suite.

Sakamura launches into a renewed round of bowing and Japanese. Steven holds the door open for Sakamura and follows him out.

45 EXT. VERANDA AND COURTYARD — NIGHT

45

SAKAMURA immediately slips on his shoes without missing a step in practiced fashion.

STEVEN and Sakamura walk across the courtyard towards the row of pickers' rooms. Steven extends his hand. He is met with a bow and then an extended hand in return.

STEVEN

Steven Harrison.

SAKAMURA

Sakamura. Ichiro.

STEVEN

Eechee-low. Yeah, OK. You in Australia on a holiday?

SAKAMURA

Holiday. Yes-a.

STEVEN

Guess so.

SAKAMURA

Holiday you?

STEVEN

Oh, yeah. Big holiday. From everything. Here's the room. Everything's made up. Shower and toilet down there. Toilet! Down there! Got that?

Sakamura bows again deeply.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

See you in the morning.

Sakamura's minute cell phone chirps in his pocket. He reaches for it and skurries off.

(CONTINUED)

45 CONTINUED:

45

STEVEN (CONT'D)
Cute gadget.

46 EXT. OUTSIDE THE VAT ROOM - NIGHT

46

STEVEN is standing beside the enormous grape stomping tub, looking up at the stars. There is a full moon.

The tub is still full of the last of the grapes. Steven grabs a bunch and pops one in his mouth.

Suddenly, MATILDA is beside him. She picks up a bunch, too, and seductively pops a grape in her mouth, then his.

MATILDA
What are you studying now, city boy?

STEVEN
It never ceases to amaze me, how bright the stars are out here, away from the city lights. Now I know why they call it "light pollution."

MATILDA
I haven't thanked you for what you've done for us. That was brilliant. I would never have thought of that.

STEVEN
You're welcome.

MATILDA
Will you stay? Can you stay?

STEVEN
Sure. I'm learning a lot. I like your family. It seems to be growing, with that Japanese guy ... Itchy-Row.

(CONTINUED)

MATILDA

Yeah. We'll bring in this vintage yet.

STEVEN

Hmmm.

MATILDA

Steven?

STEVEN

Hmmm?

MATILDA

There's one more thing I want you to do. Tonight. I don't really know how to say it.

Steven slowly approaches Matilda and very gently kisses her. Both keep their eyes open.

MATILDA (CONT'D)

Uh ... let's make love ... to each other.

STEVEN

That's one way to say it.

MATILDA

Please. Don't make fun of me.

STEVEN

Matilda. I was hoping you would ask since I first met you.

Matilda takes Steven in her arms and kisses him passionately. Then she hands him a condom. They start to disrobe.

MATILDA

Here, you'll need this.

STEVEN

Oh, gee, thanks.

(CONTINUED)

MATILDA

I have more.

STEVEN

Yeah, I'm sure. Where shall we ...
um ...?

MATILDA

Right here. There are still more
grapes to crush.

STEVEN

You're kidding, aren't you?

MATILDA

Uh, uh. You'll see.

They kiss with renewed passion and slowly continue to undress each other in the moonlight. They crawl naked together into the centre of the bed of grapes filling the crushing tub.

STEVEN

Oh, my God. That feels incredible
... It's actually warm!

MATILDA

Just wait.

STEVEN

You've done this here, before ...

MATILDA

Maybe. All part of the authentic
wine experience.

What follows is a very slow and sensual scene of new lovers discovering each other, wallowing in the soft, warm buoyancy of the grapes, like a giant purple waterbed.

From high above, two pale bodies are lit by the moonlight, drifting against the dark contrast of the floating sea of grapes.

(CONTINUED)

46 CONTINUED: (3) 46

Mouths on all parts of bodies, grapes and leaves clinging to them, being bitten or licked off, the sounds of squishing, the juice running out into the vat.

All of these sights and sounds combine to the climax of a unique lovemaking scene. And Steven doesn't forget the condom.

47 INT. ST. JUDE'S HOUSE - NIGHT 47

STEVEN and MATILDA tiptoe up the main stairs of the darkened house, clothes in hand, leaving a trail of grape skins and juice.

ROMAN sits low in an easy chair asleep in front of the ornate fireplace. After the pair passes in the background, Roman cracks one eye open and a smile across his face.

48 INT. MATILDA'S BATHROOM - NIGHT 48

STEVEN and MATILDA look like a couple of bog monsters, covered from head to toe in grape skins, stems, leaves, etc., in their skin and hair in the middle of the enormous Victorian-era bathroom.

An huge ornate claw-footed bath with big old fashioned brass rails and shower rose stands along one wall.

They share the more than adequate shower together. As promised, Steven washes Matilda's hair and another sensuous scene transpires.

Grape juice whirls down the plug hole (a homage to Hitchcock).

49 EXT. ST. JUDE'S HOUSE & SURROUNDS - DAWN 49

Establishing shots as the Winery wakes up. Dew on the vines, rabbits amongst the rows, galahs overhead.

50 INT. MATILDA'S BEDROOM — MORNING 50

MATILDA wakes up and places a hand on the dent in the pillow beside her, remembering the night. She finds a squashed grape skin and smiles.

51 INT. PICKERS' QUARTERS WASHROOM — MORNING 51

STEVEN comes in and begins shaving at the sink. UNCLE MAX is grunting, straining, farting away and cursing in one of the stalls.

MAX

Oh, bugger me bum ... Is that you, Steven?

STEVEN

Yeah, Max.

MAX

Where were you last night, as if I didn't know?

STEVEN

Crushing grapes.

MAX

Crushing grapes, my arse.

STEVEN

Mine, actually.

MAX

Yeah, I know. Been there myself. You'll be finding bits of grape for days. Believe me.

52 INT. ST. JUDE'S HOUSE — MORNING 52

MATILDA comes down the stairs, meeting DOROTHY on her knees, spot cleaning the carpet runners on the stairs and mumbling to herself.

(CONTINUED)

52 CONTINUED:

52

MATILDA
Morning, Dorothy.

DOROTHY
You people just don't know how hard
it is to get grape stains out of
carpet.

53 INT. ST. JUDE KITCHEN - MORNING

53

STEVEN is already sitting at the kitchen table,
drinking a cup of coffee. ROMAN is reading the paper.
UNCLE MAX is methodically folding golden syrup through
his porridge. SAKAMURA is sipping a cup of Australian
tea and grimacing.

MATILDA enters and she and Steven pointedly avoid
making eye contact for appearances. This amuses Uncle
Max.

STEVEN
So, what do we do now ... just wait
till it's ready?

ROMAN
There is plenty to be done. Still
some grapes in the Pressing Tub to
be finished ...

MATILDA
Uh ... and we have to get the barrels
ready.

ROMAN
I sold the barrels last week ... to a
garden shop from the city. They
rang up and offered me twice what
they're worth. Picking them up
today. I thought we would need the
money and we can sell bulk.

MATILDA
Probably would have tasted rotten
anyway. They were pretty old.

(CONTINUED)

53 CONTINUED:

53

ROMAN

We can buy new barrels with the money from Steven's little enterprise.

MATILDA

Better order them today, then. Need them in a few weeks. I'll go, after I press the caps.

STEVEN

What's that? Can I help?

MATILDA

Sure. You can keep me company.

Uncle Max chokes on his porridge.

ROMAN

Take care up there, you two.

UNCLE MAX

That's my job, pressing the caps.

ROMAN

No, Max ... it's just too dangerous.

54 EXT. KITCHEN VERANDA - MORNING

54

MATILDA leads STEVEN out the back door and across the courtyard towards the cavernous Vat Room.

STEVEN

Dangerous?

Matilda starts to climb a ladder towards a catwalk above the open fermentation vats.

MATILDA

Fermenting wine gives off a lot of CO₂. Up there in the rafters, it can get a little thick.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

54 CONTINUED:

54

MATILDA (CONT'D)

Fall into a vat, you can kiss your
arse goodbye ... wine's thinner than
water ... Sink right to the bottom
like a stone.

STEVEN

No kidding ... Shit. What a way to
go.

MATILDA

Yeah. Give me a hand.

Matilda grabs an odd looking board on a pole.

MATILDA (CONT'D)

Really, be very careful. If you
feel light-headed, get out of here
quick.

Half a dozen stupefied pigeons drop out of the rafters
past Steven into the vat Matilda is pressing down.
They immediately sink into the wine soup. Matilda
doesn't bat an eyelid.

STEVEN

Aren't you going to fish them out?
Won't it ruin the wine?

MATILDA

Nah. All kinds of things fall into
the vats ... pigeons, bird shit,
rats, bats, snakes ... All part of
the miracle of wine making.

Steven gives a disgusted look.

MATILDA (CONT'D)

It all gets filtered out ... all the
big bits, at least ... Nothing
lives in there ... germs. Fermenting
wine'll kill anything.

STEVEN

I'll bet.

(CONTINUED)

Matilda finishes pressing the last vat and Steven comes up behind her, fondling her and kissing the nape of her neck before turning her and kissing her passionately on the mouth. She returns the kiss with equal passion. Matilda staggers comically when released.

MATILDA

Whew! I don't know if that's you
or the CO₂.

STEVEN

I've wanted to do that all morning.

MATILDA

Me, too. Let's get down from here ...
I actually think it is the CO₂. Why
did you sneak out last night?

They start down the ladder.

STEVEN

What? You wanted your father to
find me in his daughter's bed this
morning? He'd kill me.

MATILDA

He'd probably give you a reward.
He's been counting the hits and
misses for 15 years now. I think
he's pretty much given up hope on
me ... finding someone.

STEVEN

To carry on the St. Jude line?

MATILDA

Hang on a minute! That's probably
what he thinks, but not me. I can
carry on the line just fine.

STEVEN

Steady on, Warrior Woman. Just
kidding.

(CONTINUED)

54 CONTINUED: (3) 54

They kiss again as Matilda comes into Steven's arms at the bottom of the ladder.

ROMAN has entered the Vat Room. After a long wait, he clears his throat melodramatically, savoring the embarrassed looks.

ROMAN

Let's go see about those barrels,
shall we? Join us, Steven.

55 EXT. WINERY COURTYARD - MORNING 55

ROMAN, MATILDA and STEVEN leave the vat room and head across the courtyard towards the truck.

On the veranda, SAKAMURA speaks animatedly into a tiny cell phone. When he sees the trio, he ends the call with a curt comment and the phone disappears into a pocket.

STEVEN

Wonder what that was all about.

ROMAN

I wonder.

They climb into the cab and Roman starts the engine.

56 INT. THE ST. JUDE TRUCK CAB - MORNING 56

ROMAN drives, MATILDA sitting between him and STEVEN. They travel along the country road into town.

STEVEN

Much more comfortable than the last
time I rode in this death trap.

57 EXT. MYRTLE VALLEY COOPERS - MORNING 57

The truck pulls up in front of the MYRTLE VALLEY COOPERS "Suppliers of Genuine French and American Oak Barrels & Hand Made Garden Furniture". ROMAN, MATILDA and STEVEN pile out and enter the building.

58 INT. MYRTLE VALLEY COOPERS - MORNING 58

STEVEN and MATILDA walk amongst the stacked oak barrels.

ROMAN is seen entering the MANAGER'S glassed office on the balcony above the warehouse floor.

MATILDA

Without oak barrels, we won't be able to produce a really special vintage.

Suddenly a row breaks out in the Manager's office above their heads. Punches are being thrown.

A pair of STOREMEN flood up the stairs, followed by Steven and Matilda. The workers and Steven pull Roman and the Manager apart.

ROMAN

How can you say that, you bastard? St. Jude's has been buying barrels from this firm for 50, 60 years, from your grandfather. (To Matilda) He says all of the barrels out there are already bought and paid for. No new orders. No shipments due. He said we were poison for this valley, anyway.

Matilda gets right in the Manager's face.

(CONTINUED)

58 CONTINUED:

58

MATILDA

Who's bought the barrels? Most of the Co-op factories use plastic or steel. What are we going to do without barrels?

MANAGER

Pour your piss down the fucking toilet for all I care, bitch.

Steven decks the Manager with a king hit.

STEVEN

That's "Miss Bitch" to you, asshole. Come on, let's get the hell out of here.

The St. Jude trio beat a hasty retreat.

59 EXT. ST. JUDE'S WINERY GATE — LATE MORNING

59

The old St. Jude's rattletrap truck turns into the gate and revs up the road towards the buildings in a cloud of dust and exhaust.

60 INT. ST. JUDE DINING ROOM — LATE MORNING

60

SAKAMURA is arranging flowers from St. Jude's garden in an Ikebana style at the kitchen table. It brings a few interesting looks and grunts from DOROTHY.

Dorothy opens her ever-present old wicker Thermos flask and pours a drop of "tea" into the battered tin lid, maintaining the charade even so far as to blow on the contents before sipping.

ROMAN, MATILDA and STEVEN enter from the outside. Roman is holding a bloodied handkerchief to his nose.

Dorothy and Sakamura immediately rise to aid him. He sits at the table. Matilda runs cold water onto a tea towel and replaces the hankie.

(CONTINUED)

ROMAN

I guess I'm a little too old to be getting into a stoush like that.

MATILDA

Had it coming to him.

DOROTHY

What happened?

MATILDA

Someone got to the coopers and suddenly there are no barrels to be had. Dad here took offence at St. Jude being called "poison."

DOROTHY

So he should. By the way, that garden mob picked up the old barrels while you were gone.

ROMAN

Of course they would. I'd better get on the telephone and see if I can find some barrels outside of the valley.

MATILDA

You know, I'll bet that garden shop from Melbourne was a set up, too ... buying our old barrels for more than they were worth, knowing we couldn't replace them. Now we're stuffed.

STEVEN

Now you're getting paranoid.

ROMAN

Young Steven made good account of himself.

(CONTINUED)

60 CONTINUED: (2)

60

MATILDA
(Melodramatically)
Thank you for defending my honour ...
"That's Miss bitch to you,
arsehole" ... Ah, my hero!

61 INT. THE BARREL ROOM - DAY

61

MONTAGE - PASSAGE OF TIME

There is a motley collection of five odd, mismatched barrels in the cradles laid out for around 50.

A couple of more barrels appear in adjacent cradles as they are added.

ROMAN rolls one more into place in its cradle and then shakes his head in frustration.

62 EXT. THE VERANDA - DAY

62

UNCLE MAX asleep on the veranda in the sun, newspaper over his face.

63 INT. ST. JUDE'S CELLAR ROOM - DAY

63

DOROTHY fills her ubiquitous Thermos flask from a barrel in the Cellar Room, glancing around in the cool darkness to make sure no one sees her.

64 INT. THE ST. JUDE VAT ROOM - DAY

64

MONTAGE OVER TIME

MATILDA presses down the caps on the open fermentation vats. A rat walks along a rafter up in the roof of the Vat Room. It slips and falls into the vat.

STEVEN pressing down the caps on the vats on another occasion. Yet another pigeon becomes overcome by CO₂ up in the rafters and falls off its perch.

65 EXT. ST. JUDE COURTYARD - DAY 65

MONTAGE - PERIOD OF TIME

SAKAMURA rakes all of the gravel in the entire courtyard in an exquisite Japanese cloud pattern.

Everyone takes great care to gently skirt the edge of the gravel for fear of damaging it.

UNCLE MAX insists on walking straight across it.

66 EXT. ST. JUDE WINERY YARD - NIGHT 66

STEVEN and MATILDA skinny dip at night in the enormous open cement water tank, enjoying each other passionately.

67 INT. ST. JUDE HOUSE UPSTAIRS HALL - DAWN 67

STEVEN is sneaking out of MATILDA'S bedroom before dawn and comes face to face with a robed ROMAN walking down the hall to the loo.

Roman nonchalantly shrugs, indicates "You might as well stay until morning" and sends Steven back into the room.

68 INT. ST. JUDE KITCHEN - DAY 68

MONTAGE - SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

SAKAMURA is doing Japanese tea ceremony for DOROTHY on the floor of the kitchen. Some of the things he has gathered are poor excuses for the real thing, but workable.

Dorothy is fascinated as he lays out his implements, washes everything, boils the water and finally makes the tea. It is almost like watching a dance.

(CONTINUED)

68 CONTINUED:

68

Dorothy sips the resulting green tea emulsion and screws up her face in disgust, smiling and nodding.

Dorothy is now doing "old English tea ceremony" for Sakamura, explaining (no audio) as she goes. She warms the pot, takes the kettle to the pot, spins the teapot three times clockwise and puts her hand on her heart while saying "God Save The Queen."

She offers Sakamura a cup, but he gives a Kabuki scowl and waves it off with a bow, mimicking her reaction which brings a huge laugh.

Dorothy and Sakamura the clink the Japanese teacup against the old tin Thermos cup and share a nip from Dorothy's bottomless flask, finding common ground at last. The two older people are obviously drawn to each other.

69 INT. THE VAT ROOM - DAY

69

MATILDA has drawn samples off of the fermentation vats and is analysing the sugars and specific gravity of the wine in the vats. STEVEN watches.

MATILDA

That's it. We draw off the wine tomorrow.

STEVEN

We only have 12 barrels.

ROMAN

We'll just have to filter off the rest and hold it in plastic. If we get some barrels soon, we can still mature it for a while.

70 EXT. VERANDA - NIGHT

70

UNCLE MAX is enjoying a nice bottle of wine. SAKAMURA is returning to his room, notices Max and approaches. He bows and says something polite in Japanese.

(CONTINUED)

SAKAMURA (SUBTITLED)

"Good Evening, honoured Max. I hope you are well and not feeling your age too much."

UNCLE MAX

I don't understand a word you're saying, you Jap bastard.

Sakamura certainly understands the tone.

SAKAMURA

Don't like Japan?

UNCLE MAX

No, I certainly do not like bloody Japan, or the bloody Japanese. I was stationed in Darwin in '42. Sixty times you bombed us, you bastards ... sixty bloody times ... a bloody little town like Darwin.

Sakamura doesn't speak. Uncle Max takes a drink, has a bit of a cough and becomes melancholy.

UNCLE MAX (CONT'D)

But I had a bloody Toyota Land Cruiser once. Best bloody car I ever owned. I guess you bastards can't be all bad if you can build a car like that. Have a drink, Sacky-Moto.

Uncle Max hands Sakamura the glass, fills it to overflowing and drinks again himself from the bottle.

Later...

Uncle Max has out his wallet and fumbles for a dog-eared photo. They are both a bit potted now.

UNCLE MAX (CONT'D)

This is my wife, Alice, God rest her soul.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

70 CONTINUED: (2)

70

UNCLE MAX (CONT'D)
Women aren't supposed to die first,
you know. 28 years April.

Sakamura has brought out a picture of his wife.

SAKAMURA
My wife. Dead. Five years.

Uncle Max takes the photo from Sakamura and offers his.

UNCLE MAX
She scrubs up a treat. Those your
kids?

SAKAMURA
Hai. Two children. Married.

They both look sadly at each other's photos and take a
drink, lost in memories and alcohol.

Later...

UNCLE MAX
What kind of music do you like,
Sacky.

SAKAMURA
Music. Yes. Elvis. Like karaoke
very bloody much.

Sakamura begins to sing a capella Elvis in an uncannily
good impersonation. ("Blue Suede Shoes" or similar
song)

SAKAMURA (CONT'D)
*"Well, it's one for the money,
two for the show,
three to get ready,
now go, cat, go.
But don't you step on my Blue suede
shoes.
You can do anything but lay
off of my Blue suede shoes."*

(CONTINUED)

Uncle Max joins in. They continue to sing, with Uncle Max's bar room baritone not quite fitting in with Sakamura's ersatz Elvis.

UNCLE MAX/SAKAMURA

*"Well, you can knock me down,
step in my face,
slander my name all over the place.
Do anything that you want to do,
but uh-uh, honey, lay off of-a them
shoes
Don't you step on my Blue suede shoes.
You can do anything but lay
off of my Blue suede shoes.
Burn my house,
steal my car,
drink my liquor from my old fruit jar,
Do anything that you want to do,
but uh-uh, honey, lay off of my shoes
Don't you step on my Blue suede shoes.
You can do anything but lay
off of my Blue suede shoes."*

DOROTHY comes out onto the Veranda in her robe and slippers.

DOROTHY

Now listen, you silly old buggers.
Get yourselves on off to bed before
I kick your blue suede butts! Piss
off!

Both men laugh and hobble down the steps towards the quarters.

Uncle Max veers towards the Winery. Sakamura continues towards his room singing to himself as he goes, oblivious to Uncle Max's change in direction.

UNCLE MAX

Can't go to bed before I press the
caps. That's my job. Once in the
morning and once at night.

71 INT. THE VAT ROOM - NIGHT 71

UNCLE MAX hobbles into the Vat Room, leans his walking stick against the ladder and starts slowly up to the catwalk.

He sings snippets of "Blue Suede Shoes" in between mumblings and cursings about "the ladder, old age and the youngsters thinking he's too old to do his job."

As if acknowledging the inevitable and not wanting to watch, the scene stays at the bottom of the ladder, ever so slowly zooming in on the walking stick propped up in the shadows of the ladder.

We hear Uncle Max reach the top of the ladder, grapple with the pressing pole, still whinging. His speech soon slows and becomes disoriented.

We hear an ever so subtle moan, followed by a soft splash as Uncle Max tumbles through the cap and plummets silently to the bottom of the vat with a deep, reverberating thud.

72 EXT. ST. JUDE'S COURTYARD & SURROUNDS - MORNING 72

Establishing shots of a brilliant sunny morning at the Winery.

73 INT. THE VAT & BARREL ROOMS - MORNING 73

MONTAGE - PASSAGE OF TIME

It's all hands to the pump as the fermented wine is siphoned and filtered out of the open fermentation vats into the few barrels and steel holding tanks.

The cavernous barn echoes with the putt-putt of a pump and the slosh of the wine.

(CONTINUED)

73 CONTINUED:

73

ROMAN supervises, driving bungs into barrels as they are filled, directing the hoses to holding tanks, pulling the muck out of the filters periodically. It is a messy, smelly job.

Soon, STEVEN, MATILDA and SAKAMURA are also covered in splodges of wine and wine muck.

DOROTHY comes into The Vat Room with a tray of tea and scones for morning tea.

DOROTHY

Smoko!

Everyone downs tools and the pump chugs to a stop. They sit around, munching and sipping.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)

Has anyone seen Max this morning?
Wondered off again ... probably
looking for Alice.

There is a chorus of "Nos" in reply. Matilda notices the cane beside the ladder and starts to cheerfully acknowledge it.

Suddenly, she looks up and realises the implications of her discovery. Cold fear comes over her face as she drops the cane and scrambles up the ladder to the catwalk.

The others notice Matilda climbing and don't seem concerned until she reaches the top and lets out a primal cry of agony from the very depth of her soul.

Laying at the bottom of the now empty fermentation vat is UNCLE MAX.

He is lit by sunlight filtering through the dust from chinks in the roof, looking every bit as if he were curled up asleep apart from the solid purple film over his skin and clothes.

74 EXT. ST. JUDE COURTYARD - DAY

74

A Police 4x4 and a mortuary wagon are grouped in the courtyard in front of the Winery buildings.

MATILDA and DOROTHY sit together on the Veranda. The local POLICE SERGEANT is speaking to ROMAN near his car.

POLICE SERGEANT

No doubt how he went, but the powers that be have to justify their jobs. They'll have an "investigation." Take a day, tops. Go ahead and make plans.

ROMAN

Thanks, Peter.

POLICE SARGENT

I'm really sorry this had to happen on top of all of the other shit you're up against. Bastards.

Two MORGUE ATTENDANTS roll out a body bag on a low, wheeled trolley, trailing pulp as they go.

STEVEN and SAKAMURA follow them out of the barn doors, covered head to toe in vat muck from boosting Max's body out of the vat.

ROMAN

Thanks, Peter. Thanks for coming.

POLICE SERGEANT

No worries. It's my day job. Max had a good innings, Roman. Nobody can ask for better than that. I'll call you this arvo.

They shake hands and the Police Sergeant gets into his car and starts it. The Morgue Attendants shut the rear of their wagon and drive off.

(CONTINUED)

74 CONTINUED:

74

Roman climbs the steps onto the Veranda and hugs Matilda. She smiles reflectively.

MATILDA

I will miss that silly old bugger.

ROMAN

He'll be with us. We'll scatter his ashes under the vines, like your mother. He told me to do that once.

Steven and Sakamura stand respectfully below the Veranda, the vat muck drying in the sun.

ROMAN (CONT'D)

You two better get cleaned up. We have to finish draining the last vat. Then there are arrangements to be made.

75 EXT. MYRTLE VALE CEMETERY CREMATORIUM CHAPEL - DAY 75

Establishing shot of the crematorium chapel set in the picturesque cemetery. The organ music playing softly carries to the outside.

76 INT. MYRTLE VALE CEMETERY CREMATORIUM CHAPEL - DAY 76

There are a few people in the chapel at first. Soft organ music is playing. The St. Jude family sit together down the front, MATILDA, ROMAN and DOROTHY.

STEVEN and SAKAMURA sit respectfully in the row behind.

The coffin sits on the conveyor at the font of the crematorium/chapel. A row of war medals is pinned to a pillow resting in front.

Very natural arrangements of country flowers and plants abound ... gum leaves, gum flowers, hops, red hot pokers. There is one very different Ikebana arrangement from Sakamura.

(CONTINUED)

76 CONTINUED:

76

The MINISTER comes out and takes the podium. The organ music stops.

MINISTER

We are here today to celebrate the life of Maximilian Van Horne. He spent almost his entire 85 years here in the Valley, helping first his father, then his brother and finally his nephew run the winery of St. Jude.

More people begin to come into the chapel.

MINISTER (CONT'D)

St. Jude is the patron saint of those who have lost hope, but Maximilian was always full of hope, with a kind word for everyone.

The family glance sideways in wonder at each other when the Minister draws this long bow.

MINISTER (CONT'D)

Maximilian is survived here by his nephew, Roman, and his grand niece, Matilda. And of course by all of us, who knew and loved him. He expressly requested in his will that his grand niece give the eulogy.

Matilda mounts the podium. When she turns to the audience, she is staggered to see that the entire chapel is now filled to overflowing, with people standing and spilling out into the car park. She looks at them curiously, taking in every face, realising that nearly every family in the valley is represented here.

The audience is hang-faced, not only at the occasion, but also from guilt over their collective treatment of St. Jude. Even the manager of the barrel company is there, looking sheepish and with an enormous shiner.

(CONTINUED)

MATILDA

Like the Pastor said, St. Jude is the patron saint of lost causes. If he is, then he is smiling on us because we will not be a lost cause. We will survive this loss ... and the rest. I guess this isn't the time or place to discuss that. Sorry, Uncle Max. During his life, Uncle Max always put a lot of himself into St. Jude. I guess this time he went too far.

Matilda smiles and everyone relaxes.

MATILDA (CONT'D)

There's a lot of Uncle Max in the vintage this year. No one would appreciate that more than Uncle Max. It's good to see so many of our old friends here today. And his friends. It's a shame it took something like Uncle Max's death to bring down the walls that have been put up around us. If we can extend this sort of truce 'till this arvo, at least, you're all invited back to St. Jude's for a wake. Uncle Max would insist. Saturday is also the Myrtle Valley Vintage Wine Festival. Uncle Max was on the organising committee of the Wine Festival for many years. Lots of us looked forward to it when we were little like some kids look forward to Christmas. It hasn't been much fun for a few years now, but let's make this a good one. For Uncle Max. It really is good to see so many of you. My father and I thank you for coming. And Uncle Max.

(CONTINUED)

76 CONTINUED: (3)

76

The Minister steps to the mic. Matilda sits back in the pews.

MINISTER

Rather than a hymn, Maximilian requested in his last will and testament that we play this music at the appropriate time.

Out of the speakers in the chapel comes Gladys Moncrief singing "Wish Me Luck As You Wave Me Goodbye" (Or similar song).

As the music starts to play, the coffin is slowly drawn through the curtain into the crematorium.

RECORDING

*"Wish me luck as you wave me goodbye.
Cheerio - here I go - on my way.
Wish me luck as you wave me goodbye.
Not a tear - but a cheer - make it
gay.
Give me a smile I can keep for a while
In my heart while I'm away.
Till we meet once again - you and I
Wish me luck as you wave me goodbye."*

Matilda comes down the steps to her father and together they walk down the aisle through the mass of people, many whispering condolences and shaking hands.

77 EXT. MYRTLE VALE CEMETERY CREMATORIUM CHAPEL - DAY 77

MATILDA and ROMAN stand on the lawn outside the chapel, continuing to greet people and hoping they can attend the wake.

DOROTHY

Well, I'd better get home and start getting something ready for these couple of people you've invited back.

(CONTINUED)

77 CONTINUED: 77

MATILDA

We'll come, too. This is too sad here.

78 INT. CREMATORIUM - DAY 78

The CREMATORIUM ATTENDANT sits nearby, drinking a cup of tea and examining the racing form. The furnace is roaring as the heat reaches 3000 degrees. Suddenly, it begins to rumble. The Attendant looks up ... this isn't normal.

79 EXT. MYRTLE VALE CREMATORIUM AND CHAPEL - DAY 79

As the St. Jude family walks to the truck, there is a subtle rumble from behind and in the distance blue flames shoot out of the crematorium chimney as Uncle Max's 100 proof mortal coil goes sky high, unnoticed by the mourning family.

80 INT. ST JUDE KITCHEN - AFTERNOON 80

MATILDA and DOROTHY are frantically preparing platters of cheese, fruit and meats for the horde of guests that are about to descend. STEVEN and SAKAMURA are opening several bottles of St. Jude wine and letting them stand. ROMAN rushes in, bewildered.

ROMAN

Everyone, you must see this.

He returns to the veranda, immediately followed by the others.

81 EXT. ST. JUDE VERANDA - AFTERNOON 81

The group stands on the veranda looking onto the courtyard in awe.

The first guests have arrived in various trucks, utes and station wagons. Each is unloading a new French oak wine barrel.

(CONTINUED)

81 CONTINUED:

81

This moves MATILDA and ROMAN very much. They stand on the veranda watching this collective gesture of reconciliation and generosity, greeting and thanking the people as they climb the stairs and enter the house.

MONTAGE - PASSAGE OF TIME

As they watch, more guests arrive and everyone who comes to the wake brings one or more wine barrels. Soon, the courtyard is full of dozens and dozens of barrels. Some of the men have taken off their jackets and ties, rolled up their sleeves and are carrying the empty new barrels into the Barrel Room.

82 INT. THE BARREL ROOM - MORNING

82

ROMAN taps the last bung into last of the stack of barrels now filling the Barrel Room. MATILDA, STEVEN and SAKAMURA stand sweating and dripping with wine.

ROMAN

That's the last of it. With a few barrels to spare. Let's cross our fingers that this is the best vintage St. Jude has ever produced.

Matilda knocks on the wooden barrel for luck.

MATILDA

Hear that, Uncle Max? Want to put in for the Jimmy Watson? We've got that money left.

STEVEN

The Jimmy Watson ... ?

MATILDA

Given each year at the Melbourne Show for the best young red. A win can make a winery for life.

STEVEN

Do you stand a chance?

(CONTINUED)

MATILDA

Won't know for a few weeks, but
it's worth having a go. What have
we got to lose? Dad?

ROMAN

OK. If it's not too late. I'll
call. There's one job left for you
boys. We've got to press the muck
left in the bottom of the vats. The
tailings. Get down in the vats ...

STEVEN

Yeah, been there, done that.

ROMAN

... Haul the stuff out in buckets and
press it using this old thing.

Roman indicates a big hand-operated press nearby.

ROMAN (CONT'D)

Matilda will show you how it works.
Very potent stuff. Can make an
interesting drop, though. Put it in
its own barrels and mark them. And
be careful what you do with the
stuff that's left, OK? Bury it.

Sakamura bows to Roman's authority.

ROMAN (CONT'D)

I wish you'd stop doing that.

MONTAGE - PASSAGE OF TIME

STEVEN and SAKAMURA put ladders down into the vats and
haul out the thick muck of grape bunches, skins, plus
the odd purple pigeon or rat, which they put aside.

(CONTINUED)

83 CONTINUED:

83

Matilda shows them how to operate the hand press, turning the big spokes and winding down the press, with the thick, almost black liquid running into a bucket.

They filter this into barrels and mark them with chalk. It is backbreaking work and the strain shows on their faces.

When each pressing is finished, they remove the almost solid disks of waxy residue that remains and stack them to one side.

84 EXT. ST. JUDE VINYARD - AFTERNOON

84

STEVEN and SAKAMURA are pushing a couple of wheelbarrows along the road beside the vineyard. The barrows are full of the waxy purple disks from the press and a couple of shovels. Both men are obviously tired.

STEVEN

This looks a good a spot as any.

They both stop and start to dig a hole in the hard dirt. After a few half-hearted pokes, Steven gives up.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

Aw, stuff it. Let's just chuck it over the fence. Who's to know? It's biodegradable. I want to get cleaned up for the festival.

SAKAMURA

Hai.

Both men take great joy in chucking the disks into a grove of gum trees over the fence, using some like Frisbees or pretending to do skeet shooting.

When their fun is finished, they trundle back towards the Winery with the empty barrows.

(CONTINUED)

84 CONTINUED: 84

As they do, a single cockatoos lands on one of the purple disks and begins to peck at it. Another flutters in to join it. (Another Hitchcock moment).

85 INT. STEVEN'S ROOM - AFTERNOON 85

A freshly scrubbed STEVEN tightens his tie, checks his teeth, puts on a splash of cologne and musses his hair. The truck horn sounds. He grabs his jacket.

86 EXT. ST. JUDE COURTYARD - AFTERNOON 86

The truck bed is full of hampers of food and a crate of St. Jude wine. ROMAN, MATILDA AND DOROTHY are already in the cab and the engine is running.

STEVEN vaults into the back of the truck and pulls up SAKAMURA. They stand behind the cab, wind in their faces, as the truck heads off to the Festival.

87 EXT. THE GROVE OF GUM TREES - LATE AFTERNOON 87

There are now dozens of cockatoos and galahs, as well as the odd kangaroo, rabbit and emu, gnawing the waxy disks of potent pressings in the grove of gum trees.

The St. Jude truck goes by on the road in the distance.

88 EXT. THE MYRTLE GLEN SHOWGROUND - LATE AFTERNOON 88

MONTAGE - VARIOUS ASPECTS

The local all purpose showground/footy oval/racetrack is done up for the Myrtle Valley Vintage Wine Festival, proclaimed by a banner stretched over the entry.

The St. Jude truck slowly passes underneath and heads for the car park.

There are hundreds of paper lanterns, many of them purple, festooned all over the showground.

(CONTINUED)

88 CONTINUED: 88

Hundreds of people mill around. It is a strongly local Festival, celebrating the laying down of the vintages.

It is also a bit of a Field Day, with displays of wineries, equipment, suppliers.

There is a portable stage with a rock/country fusion band playing.

89 EXT. THE GROVE OF GUM TREES - DUSK 89

There are now hundreds of animals and birds tearing at the remains of the waxy disks. Many of the animals are staggering and flopping around.

90 EXT. THE MYRTLE GLEN SHOWGROUND - NIGHT 90

MONTAGE - VARIOUS ASPECTS

The food is fabulous ... roasted eggplants and peppers, yabbies drawn from a local dam and dumped straight into a boiling pot, spit roasted lamb, quail, fresh breads, smoked meats ... wines of every kind. Succulent French, German and Italian dishes.

There are lots of close-ups of mouths talking, eating, drinking, savouring. Mouths suck buttery snails, jellied eels, steaming yabbies ... things on sticks, forks and fingertips.

Sakamura has made sushi of sorts with the limited resources, including beautiful flowers made out of slices of Strass. Many people pass it over, but Steven gets Matilda to try some and then everyone tucks in.

Everyone drinks and talks of nothing else but wine. Snippets of dozens of different languages and ethnic music styles are heard.

Groups of men, women and children play boules, footy and cricket under the showground lights. The younger children scamper and play.

(CONTINUED)

90 CONTINUED: 90

Some old women, dressed in black, serve and talk amongst themselves. It is a glorious, traditional lifestyle celebration. Mixed with lots and lots of wine.

91 EXT. SHOWGROUND FRINGE — NIGHT 91

STEVEN and MATILDA walk amongst all of this in obvious infatuation.

STEVEN

This is fantastic.

MATILDA

I don't think it has ever been this wonderful.

They kiss amongst the swirl of people and celebration.

92 EXT. SHOWGROUND STAGE — NIGHT 92

SAKAMURA gets the rock/country band to play "Heartbreak Hotel" (or similar song). He takes the Showground stage and sings his little karaoke heart out in the best gig he's had since the Ginza.

SAKAMURA

*"Now since my baby left me
I've found a new place to dwell:
Down at the end of Lonely Street at
Heartbreak Hotel.
I'm ah-so lonely, I'm so lonely,
I'm ah-so lonely that I could die.
And tho' it's always crowded
You can still find some room
For broken hearted lovers
to cry there in the gloom
And be so lonely, oh so lonely,
Oh so lonely they could die.
The bell hop's tears keep flowing,
The desk clerk's dressed in black.
They been so long on Lonely Street
they never will go back*

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

92 CONTINUED:

92

 SAKAMURA (CONT'D)
*And they're so lonely,
oh they're so lonely,
They're so lonely they pray to die.
So if your baby leaves and
you have a tale to tell
Just take a walk down Lonely Street
to Heartbreak Hotel
Where you'll be lonely
and I'll be lonely,
We'll be so lonely that we could
die."*

And the crowd goes wild!

93 EXT. THE GROVE OF TREES - NIGHT

93

The pulp is now gone, eaten by the wildlife, who are charging and flapping around aimlessly in the darkness, pissed out of their brains.

Something spooks them and as a mass, they take off in the direction of the twinkling lights of the Myrtle Glen Showground in the distance.

94 EXT. THE MYRTLE GLEN SHOWGROUND - NIGHT

94

As SAKAMURA leaves the stage, a bunch of DRUNKEN SKINHEADS corner him.

 SKINHEADS

 Jap Bastard. St. Jude scum.

They surround him and close in for the kill. The poor little old Japanese man looks like he is about to meet his doom. Then he swiftly lays half a dozen blokes out cold.

Several other men take on the remaining skinheads for trying to spoil the Festival. A fight breaks out.

Just then, the mob of pissed birds, kangaroos, rabbits and emus decides to make a show of it and descend on the Showground, drawn by the lights.

(CONTINUED)

94 CONTINUED:

94

It is an amazing free for all ... people trying to save wine and food, men fighting, pissed Australian wildlife jumping and flapping all over everyone and everything.

Later ...

Things have quietened down. The animals have run off into the night. The Festival has obviously ended due to the strange behaviour of the indigenous wildlife and the local hoons.

The Festival isn't exactly ending on a high note, but it will certainly be remembered.

The St. Jude family pack up the truck and think about heading for home.

ROMAN

Someone must have dumped their pressings. Bloody idiots.

A look of guilt comes over STEVEN'S face.

DOROTHY

They'll certainly talk about this one for years.

The St. Jude truck departs the showground.

95 EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT

95

As the St. Jude truck comes around the bend towards the winery, two 4x4 wagons come rocketing in the opposite direction, causing the St. Jude truck to swerve and sending them onto the shoulder. They continue on their way.

96 EXT. ST. JUDE COURTYARD - NIGHT

96

The truck comes into the courtyard. Everyone wearily gets out and begins to carry things up onto the Veranda.

(CONTINUED)

96 CONTINUED:

96

Roman cocks an ear.

ROMAN

What's that sound?

Everyone stops what they are doing and the sound of running water is heard. All eyes turn towards the Winery buildings where the sound is emanating.

97 INT. THE BARREL ROOM – NIGHT

97

ROMAN throws on the fluoros and after a few flickers, the room is bathed in light.

The ends of all of the barrels have been bashed in with a sledge hammer. The remnants of St. Jude's last precious vintage is just going down the drains set in the floor.

Roman sits on the floor as if his heart has been torn out. He begins to weep.

MATILDA and DOROTHY comfort him.

SAKAMURA (SUBTITLED)

My company can take care of all of this.

Only STEVEN has the presence of mind to turn some of the barrels that still have a quantity of wine in them upright.

STEVEN

Come on, help me save what's left!

The others halfheartedly turn the remaining barrels upright and catch some of the wine in plastic buckets to save a few litres of St. Jude's last hope.

98 INT. ST. JUDE KITCHEN - NIGHT

98

Everyone sits around the large kitchen table, gloomily staring into their cups. DOROTHY brings the big teapot around.

STEVEN

I think I'd rather have some of Dorothy's special tea.

DOROTHY

I certainly don't know what you mean.

ROMAN

I think we all could use some of Dorothy's special "tea."

Dorothy indignantly brings out a decanter of wine and some glasses, turning up her nose at the inference.

DOROTHY

You make it sound like I'm some sort of pisspot. They say that people who have a two standard drinks a day will live an average of five years longer.

MATILDA

That means you should outlive all of us by at least 250 years.

They all share a much-needed laugh of relief, with the loudest laugh from Dorothy. Even SAKAMURA understands the joke.

ROMAN

I estimate we have around 350 litres of wine left, mostly the Merlot.

MATILDA

Plus the pressings.

(CONTINUED)

STEVEN

But I thought you couldn't use that.

MATILDA

I'd like to try.

ROMAN

What did you have in mind?

MATILDA

A little something I've been reading about ... improving the wine by cooking it under pressure. Blend the wine we have left and make it taste like it's aged four years in two weeks. I'll bet there's nothing in the rules to say we can't do that.

STEVEN

You're kidding. You still want to go through with that wine competition?

MATILDA

We have to, now. Our hope for selling a vintage this year should be hitting the Myrtle River right about now. They won't close a winery that wins the Jimmy Watson. That's worth a million bucks.

ROMAN

Does it work?

MATILDA

I don't know for sure. What have we got to lose?

ROMAN

The farm. Will you bet the farm on it ... St. Jude?

(CONTINUED)

98 CONTINUED: (2)

98

SAKAMURA

I will help.

MATILDA

I know, Saki. You've been a great help.

SAKAMURA

Not lose farm. Promise.

Everyone looks at Sakamura, wanting to believe him. Except Roman. He seems to have lost hope.

ROMAN

I'll put in the entry tomorrow.

99 INT. THE BARREL ROOM - DAY/NIGHT

99

MONTAGE - LARGE PASSAGE OF TIME

MATILDA works feverishly constructing a large apparatus that looks like a giant copper pressure cooker. STEVEN and SAKAMURA help. ROMAN looks on sceptically.

Matilda holds a temperature gauge in place while Steven tightens a bolt.

Sakamura cuts some copper tubing with a hacksaw.

Matilda lights a gas burner under the large copper pot apparatus.

Matilda pours a quantity of wine into the pot and Steven clamps the lid down.

Steven taps the temperature gauge to make sure it's registering.

Everyone stands around in anticipation as Matilda pours a glass of the cooled product. She sniffs it, tastes it, screws up her face and spats it out in disgust.

The tap is opened in the pot and the content splashes into a trough in the floor and runs into a drain.

(CONTINUED)

99 CONTINUED:

99

The entire process is repeated several times, with differing results, adding to the frustration and desperation.

Sometimes Matilda tastes and is hopeful, other times almost sick.

The amount of wine remaining begins to dwindle.

Matilda stands in a corner and weeps in frustration. When Steven goes to hold her, she turns away in shame. He won't be deterred. She acquiesces and sobs into his shoulder.

100 INT. THE BARREL ROOM – DAWN

100

MATILDA is in her robe, yawning as she comes out to check yet another batch.

She notices something is wrong and frantically looks under the copper boiler. The gas burner has gone out sometime in the night. She frowns. The gas bottle has run out. She touches the copper pot, tentatively with a few fingers and then with a full hand. It is cool. She shakes her head in failure.

She draws off a glass from the tap, almost resigned that this is going to taste like shit like all of the other attempts. She halfheartedly sniffs it.

A curious, questioning look comes over her face. She sips it, rolls it over her tongue, sucks air through it, all the time her eyes growing wider.

101 INT. ST. JUDE COURTYARD – DAWN

101

MATILDA screams in triumph and runs out into the courtyard.

MATILDA

We did it! It's great! It's
bloody fantastic! Dad, everyone,
come here, quick!

(CONTINUED)

101 CONTINUED: 101

ROMAN comes out onto the veranda. STEVEN and SAKAMURA are close behind. Everyone follows Matilda back into the barrel room.

102 INT. THE BARREL ROOM - DAWN 102

MATILDA pours everyone a small taste of the latest batch. She is so excited she runs on at the mouth a bit.

MATILDA

I'm not sure why this is different, but it is. I don't even know if I can do it again. The gas went off in the night. I don't know how long it cooked. What the temperature was. Taste it. Go on.

Everyone carefully sips the wine as if it were a miracle elixir. Everyone is amazed at the taste. Even ROMAN is ecstatic.

ROMAN

How much is there?

MATILDA

I'm not sure. Ten, Fifteen litres.

ROMAN

It's not much. Let's get it bottled. Quickly.

MONTAGE - SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

Everyone helps in bottling the precious wine. They are all still in their morning clothes and robes.

Roman carefully draws off the wine from the copper pot, trying not to make it splash.

Using a special funnel, Matilda pours it into a row of bottles as Steven and Sakamura hold them upright.

(CONTINUED)

102 CONTINUED:

102

Roman operates the hand corking press, driving corks down into the full bottles.

When nobody is looking, Dorothy fills up her enormous Thermos flask from the copper pot.

103 INT. ST. JUDE DINING ROOM – MORNING

103

The extended family sits around the table, looking at the 13 bottles in the centre of the table, completely unadorned apart from a single small white label with the number "235."

ROMAN

Well, that's it. 13 Bottles. I'm not generally a superstitious man, but ...

Roman draws out the cork ceremoniously from one of the bottles and pours each of the assembled group a glass.

ROMAN (CONT'D)

I would like to propose a toast. To everyone who has contributed to this moment ... To Matilda, to Steven, to our friend Saki from Japan, Dorothy ...

MATILDA

And you, Dad ...

ROMAN

And Uncle Max. Good luck, entry number 235. May St. Jude smile on the judges at the Jimmy Watson ... we could sure use it.

VARIOUS (AD LIB)

To St. Jude. Uncle Max. Good Luck. Kampai. L'chiam.

They all drink deeply.

(CONTINUED)

103 CONTINUED:

103

ROMAN

We'll catch the train down tomorrow morning. The entry has to be in by 2pm. Everyone treat the bottles like eggs and guard them like solid gold. No shaking. Bruises the wine.

104 EXT. ST. JUDE'S VINYARDS - DAY

104

ROMAN and MATILDA stand together deep in the rows of leafy grape vines, now devoid of grapes.

This is a very private moment for father and daughter, so Steven respectfully stands some distance away.

ROMAN

Well, Uncle Max. You will be missed, but in our hearts you will always be with us. And you're good for the soil.

Roman removes the lid from a standard modern crematorium urn and crouches to scatter Uncle Max's ashes beneath the vines.

MATILDA

Wish us luck, Uncle Max. Talk to somebody up there for us, will you?

Further speech is a little hard for both of them. Roman finishes scattering the ashes and together they slowly walk back towards where Steven waits.

When they come abreast, Steven puts his arm around Matilda's shoulder and the trio continue without breaking stride.

105 EXT. COUNTRY RAILMOTOR - MORNING

105

Establishing shots of Country Railmotor travelling through the Myrtle Valley.

106 INT. COUNTRY RAILMOTOR — MORNING

106

MONTAGE — PASSAGE OF TIME

The St. Jude family travels into Melbourne for the Royal Show.

A large wooden crate sits on the floor with the necks of a dozen wine bottle just peeking above the tea towels securely wound around each.

Above the crate sits ROMAN and SAKAMURA. DOROTHY sits opposite. On the seat behind sit STEVEN and MATILDA.

They sit silently, each in their own thoughts.

Steven and Matilda watch the scenery glide by, holding hands and occasionally looking at each other.

Dorothy goes to have a tippie from her Thermos, but thinks better of it, wanting to keep a level head.

107 EXT. SPENCER STREET STATION PLATFORM — DAY

107

The St. Jude family disembarks from the Railmotor. ROMAN and SAKAMURA carry the crate carefully between them. STEVEN and MATILDA hump the bags. DOROTHY brings up the rear with her trusty Thermos.

Unseen by the family, CYRIL HAWTHORNE, the Bank Manager, in a bad disguise that actually looks good on him, gets off the train well after the family and brings out his mobile telephone.

108 EXT. THE VICTORIA HOTEL, LIT COLLINS STREET — DAY 108

Establishing shot of this old fashioned boutique city hotel. The St. Jude troupe pile out of a taxi and into the main entrance.

109 INT. VICTORIA HOTEL FOYER - DAY 109

From the dress of the clientele, this is obviously the country person's haven in the city. Everyone is in town for the Royal Show, proclaimed by posters and a big lavish display in one corner of the foyer.

Everyone makes their way to the lift while Roman checks in.

HAWTHORNE keeps his distance and observes from behind a copy of the Weekly Times.

110 INT. VICTORIA HOTEL SUITE - DAY 110

Everyone piles into the room and plunks down on the various beds in the rooms that shoot off a main sitting room. ROMAN and SAKAMURA gently set down their precious cargo.

ROMAN

Everyone get freshened up. We'll head out to the show in an hour.

111 EXT. SHOWGROUNDS TRAIN STATION - DAY 111

The St. Jude family arrives at the RAS Showground Train Station in amongst the crush of people attending the annual Royal Show. This doesn't phase them, as they have attended many shows before.

They make their way through the crowds in the direction of the Wine Pavilion, protecting the crate as they go.

112 EXT. THE ROYAL SHOW WINE PAVILION - DAY 112

ROMAN and SAKAMURA come out of the door, still carrying the crate of wine.

ROMAN

The guy receiving entries has gone off to lunch.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

112 CONTINUED:

112

ROMAN (CONT'D)
Supposed to be back in an hour.
Saki and I'll stay here with the
wine. Why don't the three of you
go off and see some of the show and
meet us back here in an hour or so?

DOROTHY
I'd like to see the preserves
display. Maybe I'll enter ... I'm
well preserved!

STEVEN
I haven't had a good spew for a
while ... we'll go on the Mad Mouse.

MATILDA
In your dreams, Steven Harrison.
Anyway, I can hurl just as far as
you can.

Everyone goes their separate ways, leaving Sakamura and Roman sitting on a bench in front of the Pavilion.

Nearby, HAWTHORNE, unseen by the pair, once again dials his mobile phone.

Suddenly, Sakamura's mobile telephone chirps in his pocket. Roman looks at him suspiciously.

113 EXT. THE MELBOURNE SHOW - DAY

113

MONTAGE - VARIOUS ASPECTS

The Royal Melbourne Agricultural Society Show ... cake displays, fruit arrangements, animals, the Grand Parade, kids on the rides like the Skyway and the Ferris wheel, the showbags ...

Steven and Matilda go off and have some fun on the rides and things. Eating fairy floss, buying showbags, seeing sideshow displays, riding the Mad Mouse.

(CONTINUED)

113 CONTINUED:

113

They go through the Ghost Train and emerge in a passionate embrace, much to the amusement of those waiting in line.

They eat Dagwood dogs with mustard, chips, hot donuts, waffles and cream and samples of dairy products. They then both come off the Hurricane looking a little green.

Steven looks at his watch.

STEVEN

Let's get back to your Dad.

114 EXT. THE ROYAL SHOW WINE PAVILION - DAY

114

The WINE STEWARD has just come back from lunch and is opening his office, chatting to Roman.

STEWARD

Sorry I'm late. Hope you haven't been waiting long.

HAWTHORNE is seen talking to a couple of skinheads. He hands them each a hundred-dollar bill. He points out ROMAN and SAKAMURA and is obviously describing the box of wine.

115 INT. WINE PAVILION OFFICE - DAY

115

ROMAN and SAKAMURA heft the case of wine up onto the counter. Roman hands the STEWARD his entry receipt.

STEWARD

Uh, huh. St. Jude. Number #235.

The Steward reaches into the case and pulls out a bottle.

STEWARD (CONT'D)

All of these labelled correctly?

(CONTINUED)

115 CONTINUED:

115

ROMAN

As per instructions, yes ...

The SKINHEADS come ploughing into the office and grab the case off the counter, knocking Roman and Sakamura almost to the floor.

They laugh sardonically and run out of the office.

The Wine Steward picks up the telephone.

STEWARD

Get me the Security Office, please.

116 EXT. THE ROYAL SHOW WINE PAVILION - DAY

116

The SKINHEADS run straight past Steven and Matilda carrying the crate.

Steven immediately takes off after them, followed by Matilda, Roman and Sakamura.

117 EXT. ROYAL MELBOURNE SHOW MAIN FAIRWAY - DAY

117

The SKINHEADS plough through the crowds, swinging the crate of wine wildly between them.

They hoot as STEVEN gains on them. One Skinhead throws a bottle overhanded at Steven. He tries desperately to catch it, but it shatters on the pavement.

Two Victorian Police see the fracas as it whips past them and join the chase.

The Skinheads pitch a couple of more bottles, which shatter.

They run through the stands during the Grand Parade, pitching a couple of more bottles with the same results.

They come roaring down through the rides area, chucking bottles as they go.

(CONTINUED)

117 CONTINUED: 117

One Skinhead trips and falls, bringing the box down with him and tumbling over it. The remaining bottles in the box shatter.

The Skinhead still standing has one bottle in his hand. He laughs at his mate's misfortune and takes off towards the Ferris Wheel.

118 EXT. ROYAL SHOW FERRIS WHEEL - DAY 118

The last SKINHEAD leaps onto the Ferris wheel, pushing some people out of the way.

The Ferris wheel takes off just as STEVEN, THE POLICE and the rest of the St. Jude gang get there. They plead with the OPERATOR to stop it, but he can't hear them over the screaming and shrugs.

The Skinhead rides it to the top, where it stops. It seems every eye at the Royal Show is focussed on the top of the Ferris Wheel.

The skinhead holds out the last bottle of St. Jude's wine and mocks his pursuers below. Finally, he lets it drop. It plunges in slow motion and smashes against the machinery of the Ferris Wheel.

The operator brings the Ferris Wheel around and the leering Skinhead shouts in anarchic triumph at his bit of carry on.

The police arrest the two spitting, cursing skinheads and lead them away.

119 EXT. THE ROYAL SHOW WINE PAVILION - DAY 119

The despondent St. Jude family returns to the Wine Pavilion and enters the office.

120 INT. WINE PAVILION OFFICE - DAY 120

The group enters the office. The Wine Steward approaches the counter.

(CONTINUED)

120 CONTINUED:

120

STEWARD

That bunch was a nasty piece of work. Did they catch them?

ROMAN

Yes. Too late, I'm afraid. They broke every last bottle of our wine.

STEWARD

Not every last bottle. There's the one I was checking ...

The Steward reaches under the counter and brings up the last bottle marked #235, which he sets on the counter.

He doesn't set it level. It spins on its bottom, overbalances and drops off the counter, shattering on the floor in front of the horrified party.

STEWARD (CONT'D)

Uh, yes ... every last bottle. Terribly sorry.

ROMAN

That was all there was.

MATILDA

We might as well go home. There's not a drop of the vintage left.

Dorothy clears her throat. All eyes turn towards her. She waves her voluminous old fashioned wicker-covered thermos flask and a cheeky grin breaks across her face.

DOROTHY

I ... uh ... took a little of the wine when you were bottling it ... in case it got cold here in the city. For medicinal purposes, you understand.

Matilda pulls out the cork stopper and gives it a sniff.

(CONTINUED)

120 CONTINUED: (2)

120

MATILDA

There must be at least a litre in here and it smells fine.

They all let out an almighty cheer.

STEWARD

I'm afraid you can't enter it in that thing. It must be in a plain corked bottle, as you know. And there's only another 15 minutes until entries close.

STEVEN

We've got 15 minutes. Where can we get a clean bottle and a cork?

STEWARD

You can try the Trade Pavilion across the square. They have ...

MATILDA

The trade pavilion. Quick!

121 EXT. THE ROYAL SHOW WINE PAVILION - DAY

121

The St. Jude Family stream out of the Steward's Office as one and take off for the Trade Pavilion.

DOROTHY clutches the Thermos to her ample bosom.

They dash between crowds across the square towards the large building marked WINE INDUSTRY TRADE PAVILION.

122 INT. WINE TRADE PAVILION - DAY

122

The group come tearing into the Wine Trade Pavilion.

They split up, running up and down the aisles, looking for a wine bottle and cork amongst the dozens of suppliers selling wine making implements and machinery.

(CONTINUED)

122 CONTINUED:

122

On the stage, a DEMONSTRATOR is giving a demonstration of a wine bottling machine to a crowd.

DEMONSTRATOR

... and if you'll pardon the pun,
this little baby is a real corker!
Now if you'd like to speak to any
of our sales representatives
circulating amongst you, we can
arrange a personal ...

MATILDA spots the demonstration and calls out to the others.

MATILDA

Here! Over here! Hurry up!

Matilda vaults up onto the stage just ahead of the others as they converge from all points in the hall.

DEMONSTRATOR

Well, here's an eager customer ...

MATILDA

(breathless)

Please! Can we bottle some wine?
We've only got a few minutes.
Dorothy, quickly ...

DEMONSTRATOR

Well, I don't know ... this is pretty
unorthodox ...

ROMAN grabs a decanting funnel from another stand on his way up onto the stage.

Steven grabs a bottle from the machine and holds it rock steady. Roman holds the funnel. Matilda takes the Thermos from Dorothy and very carefully pours the contents into the funnel.

(CONTINUED)

122 CONTINUED: (2)

122

Slowly, the bottle fills, the precious last few drops of St. Jude running gently down the inside walls of the bottle. It just reaches the top as the Thermos runs dry.

MATILDA

How to we get the cork in?

DEMONSTRATOR

That is one of the great benefits of the Beauty Bottler 2000 model. It is simplicity ...

MATILDA

Just do it!

The demonstrator takes the bottle, inserts it in the rack and presses a button. A cork is driven into the bottle with such speed, force and noise that the St. Jude family nearly jump out of their skins. Matilda grabs the bottle and kisses the Demonstrator.

MATILDA (CONT'D)

Thanks. Thanks a lot.

DEMONSTRATOR

Well, there goes a satisfied customer.

Matilda and the others take off from the stage and in the direction of the exit.

123 EXT. THE ROYAL SHOW WINE PAVILION — DAY

123

The St. Jude mob charge back across the square and into the Wine Pavilion Office.

124 INT. WINE PAVILION OFFICE — DAY

124

MATILDA carefully puts the bottle on the counter. The WINE STEWARD smiles and looks at his watch.

(CONTINUED)

124 CONTINUED:

124

STEWARD

Just in time ... give or take.

The Steward twiddles an ink stamper, slaps it on an ink pad and then a sheet of stickers and then carefully places a plain label marked #235 on the bottle.

Taking it in both hands, he carries it into another room and carefully places it on a table with dozens of other similarly marked bottles.

He returns to the anxious and exhausted St. Jude family.

STEWARD (CONT'D)

Well, that's all you can do for now. The judging takes around five hours and the awards ceremony is this evening at 8. I'm not supposed to say it, but good luck.

125 EXT. THE ROYAL SHOW WINE PAVILION - DAY

125

The St. Jude family trudge out of the Office.

MATILDA

Well, that's it, I guess. Nothing more we can do but hope and pray.

STEVEN

I don't feel much like seeing anything else ... for now.

ROMAN

Let's go back to the hotel.

SAKAMURA

Hai.

DOROTHY

Yeah. Dibs on the first bath before you dirty buggers.

(CONTINUED)

125 CONTINUED:

125

That relieves the tension momentarily as they head for the train back to the hotel.

126 INT. SHOWGROUND TRAIN TO FLINDERS ST. - AFTERNOON 126

Everyone sits looking out the windows at the approaching city skyline, lost in their thoughts and thinking about each other.

MATILDA

Steven?

STEVEN

Huh?

MATILDA

After tonight, we're either out on our asses or we've won the biggest trophy in Australia ... with nothing to sell. We're up shit creek either way, I guess. What're you going to do? Move on, I suppose?

STEVEN

Maybe.

MATILDA

That's it? "Maybe."

STEVEN

OK. Maybe not.

Matilda pouts and stares out the window.

DOROTHY

I reckon you'll be heading back to Japan soon. Looks like you've put on a bit of weight and a bit of muscle there, Saki. Australia agrees with you.

SAKAMURA

Work hard. Too, you good cook. Bloody good.

(CONTINUED)

126 CONTINUED:

126

DOROTHY

I reckon I might be lookin' for a
job soon.

SAKAMURA

No worry you. I fix.

DOROTHY

You're a funny bugger, Saki.

The worry lines in Roman's face seem to grow deeper.

127 INT. JIMMY WATSON JUDGING HALL - NIGHT

127

MONTAGE - VARIOUS ASPECTS

File footage and recreations of the wine judging and
surrounding events.

The judging and presentation area of the wine
competition of the Royal Agricultural Society is
decorated in a festive manner.

The scene is an enormous hall full of long tables
covered in white linen, with rows and rows of wine
bottles with numbers instead of labels.

Judges in white lab coats with clipboards wander up and
down the rows and rows of bottles.

We see and hear the various judges making all kinds of
outrageous noises as they slurp, spit, snort, sniff,
suck air, roll the wine around their palettes, suck air
in through their teeth, cheeks, noses, pursed lips and
then spit the mouthful out with a practiced style.

Stainless steel buckets with umbrae of wine spray
attest to their bad aim when spitting.

They make endless notes on clipboards. They sip other
drinks and nibble things to cleanse their palates.

The last surviving bottle of St Jude wine sits amongst
hundreds of others during the judging ... entry #235.

(CONTINUED)

127 CONTINUED:

127

We see the HEAD JUDGE approach the hero wine, taste it, his brow furrows and eyes look around as if he's thinking ... "What is that flavour?" ... has another sip ... and actually swallows! The other judges begin to congregate around that bottle.

HAWTHORNE passes a message to one of the stewards who passes it on to one of the judges. He reads it in amazement and passes it on to the Head Judge.

There is a heated debate amongst the judges.

128 INT. PRESENTATION THEATRE - NIGHT

128

The audience has been gathered in the presentation area for some time and are obviously getting restless. There is a buzz of anticipation, heightened by an angry roar of boredom. Some people do a slow clap.

Finally, the Head Judge takes the stage. There is a smattering of applause and whistles.

HEAD JUDGE

I'm sorry for the delay, ladies and gentlemen. We had to have a committee ruling on a matter. This is the moment I think everyone has been waiting for ... The Jimmy Watson Trophy for the best new vintage Australian red for the year.

MATILDA almost can't hear the announcements for the blood rushing in her ears. She clutches Steve's hand almost painfully.

HEAD JUDGE (CONT'D)

Firstly, the Bronze Medal ...
Campbells Robbie Burns Shiraz.
Campbells of Rutherglen.

There is applause as members of Campbells come up and collect the award.

(CONTINUED)

HEAD JUDGE (CONT'D)
The Silver ... Wolf Blass Eaglehawk
Cab Sav, Eaglehawk Wineries, Hunter
Valley ... another medal for Woolfy ...
do you have enough of them?

The flamboyant Wolf Blass takes the stage and receives
his award

HEAD JUDGE (CONT'D)
Now, this is where the judges had a
bit of a problem. There was a
unanimous decision to award the
Gold Medal to St. Jude of Myrtle
Glen for their Uncle Max Private
Bin Special Blend ...

Applause and cheers. The Family leap from their seats.

HEAD JUDGE (CONT'D)
Please ... please ... but unfortunately
there is a minimum requirement that
one case be entered for judging and
I understand only one bottle of
this incredible wine in fact
remains. Therefore, St. Jude is
disqualified on a technicality.

Moans and even boos. The Family are shattered.

HEAD JUDGE (CONT'D)
Alright, alright. However, the
judges have decided to award the
winery of St. Jude a special
commendation for excellence in wine
making. I will read out the
judge's comments which would have
been on the Gold Medal award ...
"Uncle Max Private Bin is a unique
experience. It has a wonderful
body throughout ...

(CONTINUED)

DOROTHY

(Aside)

He ain't kidding!

HEAD JUDGE

... With an incredible depth of character and age for a wine this young. A lot of love has gone into this wine. This wine embodies the very heart and soul of what Australian winemaking is all about." I hope that this unfortunate decision won't deter St. Jude from entering in future. I'm sure if they can produce a vintage like Uncle Max again, this trophy will be theirs. Would someone from St. Jude's like to come up, please?

ROMAN starts to rise, then sits again and pushes MATILDA into the limelight. She goes up on stage, shakes hands with the judge and accepts the framed certificate. Cameras flash and there is applause.

We follow Matilda back to the St. Jude's group while the action continues behind.

HEAD JUDGE (CONT'D)

In the mean time, the Jimmy Watson Trophy this year for the best young red ...

Matilda comes back to the group. She gives her father the award. He looks at it with pride.

MATILDA

I'm sorry, Dad.

ROMAN

Imagine. St. Jude's almost won the Jimmy Watson ...

(CONTINUED)

HAWTHORNE and a couple of VanOrd Co-op SUITS have appeared.

HAWTHORNE

I'm afraid "almost wons" don't pay off the mortgage. The bank will be foreclosing on St. Jude as soon as I return to the Valley. So sorry. Business, you know. And the Co-op's offer of continued participation for your family has been withdrawn.

It is all that Roman can do to contain himself.

MATILDA

You're an asshole, Cyril.

A group of Japanese businessmen recognise Sakamura and rush towards him, bowing deeply. The most senior of this group bows deepest and launches into a spiel in Japanese.

SUBORDINATE

(subtitled)

"Honourable Sakamura. We've been most worried when we could not find you. Your instructions not to contact you, that you were doing research, did not dispel our concern. It is so good to see you are well. There are many interesting wines here that we would like to represent in Japan. Will you join us and make your selection?"

SAKAMURA launches into a rapid fire string of orders to one who is obviously his subordinate, who bows and agrees repeatedly with every word.

(CONTINUED)

SAKAMURA

(subtitled)

*"I have found just the company ...
St. Jude. I want you to immediately
settle all of their debts and see
that we have exclusive rights to
everything they produce in future
at a premium price. Don't screw
them! These are the kindest Gaijin
I have ever met. Tell them what I
have said. I don't think they have
a clue who I am."*

The Subordinate bows very deeply and approaches the bewildered St. Jude family, bowing deeply and speaking to Roman in perfect Australian-accented English.

SUBORDINATE

Mr. Sakamura has asked me to convey his profound appreciation for your service and hospitality. You may not be aware that he is the chairman of the Suntory Corporation, Japan's largest liquor company and importer of wine and spirits. He was on a fact-finding and purchasing tour when he instructed us that he wanted to spend time at your winery. Mr. Sakamura has just now instructed me to settle all of your financial liabilities and contract the supply of all of your wine at a premium to market rates.

The St. Jude family are dumbstruck.

DOROTHY

What, like he's a millionaire or something?

SUBORDINATE

I think billionaire would be more appropriate, madam.

(CONTINUED)

Dorothy takes Sakamura's arm with a sweep, much to the horror of his minions. She kisses him on the cheek, thereby doubling the horror.

DOROTHY

Crikies. This is even better than a boyfriend owning a pub!

Sakamura beams.

Roman shakes hands with the Subordinate to seal the deal, who does the "Tokyo Handshake" and presents his business card two-handed.

Hawthorne can't believe what he has just witnessed. Roman turns to him and passes on the business card.

MATILDA

Well, Hawthorne, you can draw up the final papers as soon as you return to the Valley, I think you said ... to discharge the mortgage, not foreclose. Nobody from St. Jude is ever going to have to kiss your fat arse again, that's for sure. You can bank on that.

Sakamura fires off a stream of commands to his subordinate.

SAKAMURA

(SUBTITLED)

Order this bootlicking shithead to tell his VanOrd bosses they can tear up our multimillion dollar order and shove it. We're not doing business with arseholes like that.

The Subordinate turns without expression to Hawthorne and bows politely.

(CONTINUED)

SUBORDINATE

Mr. Sakamura politely requests that you offer our regrets to the executive officers of the VanOrd Co-operative and inform them that we have decided not to purchase their product on the grounds of quality control.

A doubly dumbfounded Hawthorne and the Co-op stooges slink off in a huff. Sakamura and Dorothy go off arm in arm.

Matilda hugs her father and Steven at the same time.

MATILDA

Let's get out of here. The big city gives me the squirts.

STEVEN

Me, too. Let's go home.

They kiss and strong commitment reflects in each other's eyes. Roman couldn't be happier.

ROMAN

Where's Dorothy?

Dorothy and Sakamura are seen in the distance, working their way down row after row of wines in the judging hall, taking a sip of some and pouring a dash of others into Dorothy's beloved Thermos flask.

The enormous exhibition hall of seemingly millions of brown and green bottles on white clothed tables, disappearing into infinity, dwarfs Dorothy and Sakamura in the distance.

THE END