

THE PIANO LESSON

Screenplay for a film by
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Sc 1

ADA (VO - Scs 2 to 7)
The voice you hear is not my
speaking voice, but my mind's
voice.

I have not spoken since I was
six years old. No one knows
why, not even me. My father
says it is a dark talent and
the day I take it into my head
to stop breathing will be my
last.

Today he married me to a man
I've not yet met. Soon my
daughter and I shall join him

Sc 1

in his own country. My husband
said my muteness does not
bother him. He writes and hark
this: God loves dumb creatures,
so why not he!

Were good he had God's patience
for silence affects everyone in
the end. The strange thing is I
don't think myself silent, that
is, because of my piano. I
shall miss it on the journey.

Sc 2 EXT SCOTTISH FIELD NEAR HOUSEDAY Sc 2

A woman in a dark crepe Victorian dress sits leaning against a tree,
her hands cover her face, around her neck she wears a writing pad. She
crosses a field with large bare trees, in the far background stands a
3 storey stone house.

Sc 3 INT SCOTTISH HOUSE CORRIDOR DAY Sc 3

A small girl roller skates down a dimly lit corridor. A parlour maid
looks down the hall where the girl has disappeared.

Sc 4 INT SCOTTISH HOUSE DRAWING ROOMDAY Sc 4

Three men wearing long grey aprons are fitting the packing for a
piano. On one of the men's arms is a tattoo of a whale in a wild sea.

Sc 5 EXT SCOTTISH HOUSE GROUNDS DAY Sc 5

The girl wearing her skates sits on a small black pony. An old man is
pulling it, but it won't move. (In the background, another aspect of
the grey stone house.)

Sc 6 INT SCOTTISH HOUSE FLORA'S BEDROOM NIGHTSc 6

The woman lifts back the sheets from the bottom of the sleeping girl's
bed. She is still wearing her skates. The woman cuts through the laces
and removes the boots. One disembodied skate rolls across the room.

Sc 7 INT SCOTTISH HOUSE DRAWING ROOMNIGHT Sc 7

The woman stands at a window lit by moonlight. Her skin appears
luminescently white. She touches the wooden window frame, the curtain,
the objects on the window sill, her mind abstracted, her hands
unconsciously performing a farewell. Turning from the window she moves
to a square piano crowded by packing boxes. In the dim light she
begins to play strongly. Her face strains, she is utterly involved,
unaware other own strange guttural sounds that form an eerie
accompaniment to the music.

An old maid in night-dress looks in. Abruptly the woman stops playing.
The emotion leaves her face, it whitens and seems solid like a wall.

CUT TO BLACK

Sc 8 EXT UNDERWATER BEACH DAY Sc 8

Under water a long boat passes overhead, its oars breaking the surface.

Sc 9 EXT BEACH DAY Sc 9

Amidst a riotous sea a woman, ADA, is carried to shore on the shoulders of five seamen. Her large Victorian skirt spreads across the men's arms and backs, on her head a black bonnet, around her neck her pad and pen. We should be forgiven if this woman seems a sacrificial offering as the bay they carry her to is completely uninhabited. A black sand beach on to an endless rise of dense native bush.

The breakers are chaotic, the men strain to keep their footing, calling to each other.

SEAMEN

Hold still you smutt! Blast the
boat!
Look up! Look up!
Lay to! Lay to.
Up with it you buggerers, hold
hard!
Damn me won't you hold?!
Etc.

Two of the men are black, all are battered, tattooed and tough, some are drunk.

Behind the woman is her daughter, a girl of ten in Scottish dress. She too is carried on the shoulders of seamen.

ADA is placed on the sand. She looks down at her feet sinking into the wet sand, then up at the huge confusion of fern and bush in front of her. The sound of sea behind is thunderous.

Several of the seamen have formed a group and are pissing on the sand.

Her daughter is on all fours evidently being sick. But ADA's attention is diverted to the seamen who are staggering through the waves with a huge piano shaped box. They put it down as soon as they get to shore but ADA makes gestures that they must immediately bring it to higher safer ground. The piano placed to her satisfaction she hovers near it, one hand in constant touch of it while her daughter grips her free hand.

Sc 10 EXT BEACH DAY Sc 10

TWO SEAMEN finish carrying the last crate to shore. Trunks and boxes including an open crate with hens are scattered carelessly along the shore.

The SEAMEN gather together. After a discussion in which they look between ADA and her child and their Coaster out on the sea, one of the men approaches. Behind him the other men keep their eyes out to sea or

down on the sand. They don't want to be involved. The sight of the women alone on this beach is too hopeless.

SEAMEN

It's a little rough out there.
Could be they can't get through
to you in this weather. Maybe
they'll come over land.

ADA nods.

SEAMEN

Have you things for shelter?

ADA nods.

SEAMEN

What things have you?

ADA signs to her daughter. The little girl speaks clearly and loudly without emotion.

FLORA

She says, "thank you".

Puzzled, the man walks off, then turns and comes back.

SEAMEN

Does your mother prefer to come
on with us to Nelson?

ADA signs vigorously to FLORA.

FLORA

She says, No. She says she'd
rather be boiled alive by
natives than get back in your
tub.

SEAMEN

(stunned) You be damn fortun'd
I don't smack your puppy gob,
missy. Damn lucky.

SCENE 11 DELETED

Sc 12

EXT

BEACH

DAY

Sc 12

ADA is sheltering behind the crated piano, anxiety etched on her face.

FLORA is asleep at her feet a half eaten biscuit in her hand ADA has found a gap through the crate so that she might lift the lid and play a few notes. The sweetness and comfort of the piano seem only to exaggerate their isolation and hopelessness.

2- See notes

Unable to get an answer BAINES runs after the MAORIS.

BAINES

Tai hoa! Me tatari tatou .., me
tutatou I konei.
(Wait! We are stopping.. we're
stopping.)

SUBTITLED

STEWART takes out a comb and drags it dazed and zombie like through his wet hair. Inside the darkness of his pocket, he turns over and over a small, worn edged photograph, a smudge of green light allows us to see ADA's tumbling face. Taking it in the heel of his hand he secretly looks at it. Just as the party return and settle he stares on ahead possessed and determined.

STEWART

We must get on.

The MAORIS look at BAINES bewildered.

TAME

Aue tepatupsiarehe!
(The fairy people, what can you
expect?)

SUBTITLED

Sc 16

EXT

BEACH

MORNINGS

It is early morning. The sea is calmer and the tide is again low. The party or two EUROPEANS and fourteen MAORI MEN and WOMEN come out on to the beach. About half the MAORI party head straight for the shoreline where an older woman loudly organises a pipi collection. All sorts of containers are used from flax baskets to shirts with knots in their arms. The rest follow STEWART and BAINES over to the boxes. STEWART automatically re-combs his hair, patting it against his forehead, where it sticks in a raked pattern. On his head he carefully places a formal top hat, oddly dean compared to his mud splattered suit. The party stops short of the petticoats where a tell-tale foot reveals its occupants.

STEWART

Miss McGrath, Alisdair Stewart.
You'll have to wake yourself.
I've got men here to carry your
things.

ADA and FLORA struggle up to find themselves confronted by a group of men and women. The MAORIS stare curiously and comment on the women.

Aut he anahera enci?
(Are they angels, they look
like angels.)

SUBTITLED

A man points at FLORA's feet and gestures as if holding one of the little shoes in his hand.

Te monohi hoki!
(So small!)
SUBTITLED

FLORA is struck by shyness and hides under her mother's skirt. ADA cannot look straight at STEWART and STEWART also cannot look at her.

STEWART
I see you have a good many
boxes, I'd like to know what is
in each.

As ADA does not move STEWART is puzzled.

STEWART
CAN - YOU - HEAR - ME?

ADA nods and looks up coldly, insulted by his slow loud speaking.

STEWART
Well that is good, yes that is
good, good.

STEWART smiling searches ADA's face for some sign of comprehension but is unnerved by her lack of response. He stops smiling, and, patting his hair walks to the closest box. Several of the MAORI party follow behind STEWART while one of them closely and particularly mimics him.

STEWART
What's in here?

ADA points to the writing already on the box saying "Crockery and Pots".

STEWART
Ohh, yes so it is, written
there, crockery.

STEWART
And this one?

ADA writes "bedclothes and linen" on the pad around her neck- While she writes he takes the opportunity to scrutinise her.

STEWART
You're small. I never thought
you'd be small.

He walks to another chest

STEWART
What's here?

She writes "clothes". The MAORI mimic also pretends to write.

Finally he comes to the piano box. He lifts a corner experimentally.

STEWART
What's in here then, lead?

FLORA
(gravely) It's my mother's
piano.

STEWART
A piano?

The MAORIS touch the exposed legs of the piano. STEWART speaks to the other European man BAINES.

STEWART
Tell them to carry in pairs.

Those three and those two the
black and the red, then the
suitcases.

STEWART holds BAINES back a moment.

STEWART
What do you think?

STEWART nods towards ADA. BAINES thinks a moment then turns towards ADA too.

BAINES
She looks tired.

STEWART
She's stunted, that's one
thing.

BAINES walks over to HONE a big man and the MAORJ leader, he stands tall with a great sense of his own importance. (Mana)

BAINES
Anei nga pouaka - ko era e
toro.
Me era e raa.
(Here are the boxes, those
three and those two.)

UNSUBTITLED

HONE
E Hoal

HONE takes an aggressive fighting posture towards BAINES, insulted that BAINES should suggest he might carry anything. HONE does not carrying, he is the boss. With great dignity HONE retreats, too injured to help. Other MAORIS come up and BAINES assigns them boxes. ADA gets worried, the piano is being left alone. She writes on her pad, "THE PIANO?" She shows STEWART.

STEWART
Oh no, it can't come now.

FLORA
It must come.

STEWART looks at FLORA

FLORA
She wants it to come.

STEWART
Yes and so do I, but there are
too few of us here to carry it.
TOO - HEAVY

ADA writes "I NEED THE PIANO." Her MAORI mimic copies her.

STEWART
Do you mean you don't want your
kitchenware or your clothes? Is
that what you mean?

ADA signs to FLORA.

FLORA
We can't leave the piano

STEWART
Let us not discuss this
further. I am very pleased....

STEWART slows down as he watches ADA again sign to FLORA, he has the uncomfortable impression he is being interrupted.

FLORA
Mother wants to know if they
could come back directly for
it?

STEWART is shocked, his mouth hangs slightly open, paused in mid speech. TAHU mimics this mouth drop perfectly.

FLORA
After they have taken the other
things?

STEWART is growing confused and anxious. His two mimics and their growing audience unnerve him further.

PITO
Kei Riri a te raho Maroke.
(shouted loudly at TAHU)
(Watch it dry balls is getting
touchy.)

(What is it?)
SUBTITLED

HONE
E hinga te Koroua ra B Pitama i
konci. Kare noa Kia hikina te
tapu.
(Old man Pitama died here.
(points to the spot)
The Tapu hasn't been lifted)
UNSUBTITLED

STEWART struggles up to the front to join BAINES, he speaks over the top of HONE.

STEWART
What's he say?

BAINES
Someone died here. It's tapu.

STEWART
But we came down this way
didn't we? I'm sure we did.

The MAORI leaders continue discussing.

Oh Pitama eh.

HONE
E Tarna heke atu ki ram - tiro
his atu.
Rapuhia mai he huarahi re!
(Go and look, find another
track eh!)
UNSUBTITLED

TIPI
'cia tupato he ana taniwba ke
raro na.
(Go easy there's a ghost down
there.)
SUBTITLED

HOTU
'Ca, rongu koe i te haunga a
tans tutae i te tuatahi. (You
smell his shit first.)
UNSUBTITLED

STEWART continues over the top of the MAORI discussion.

STEWART
They want more money. They are
trying to make two days out of
it?

(frowning) And where did they
get married?

AUNT MORAG checks to see if someone is coming.

FLORA
(her Scottish accent becomes
thick and expressive) In an
enormous forest, with real
fairies as bridesmaids each
holding a little elf's hand.

AUNT MORAG sits back, regarding FLORA with obvious disapproval and
disappointment. She smooths back her hair.

FLORA
No, I tell a lie, it was in a
small country church, near the
mountains

AUNT MORAG is becoming involved again. She leans forward.

AUNT MORAG
Which mountains are those dear?

FLORA
The Alps.

AUNT MORAG
Ohhh I've never been there.
(she leans forward)

FLORA
Mother used to sing the songs
in German and her voice would
echo across the valleys

That was before the
accident....

AUNT MORAG
Oh what happened?

MORAG looks over her shoulder as FLORA continues to talk, so
persuasive is FLORA's storytelling that the scene comes vividly to
life, albeit in FLORA's dark pupil.

FLORA
One day when my mother and
father were singing together in
the forest, a great storm blew
up out of nowhere. But so
passionate was their singing
that they did not notice, nor
did they stop as the rain began
to fall and when their voices
rose for the final bars of the

duet a great bolt of lightening
came out of the sky and struck
my father so that he lit up
like a torch... And at the same
moment my father was struck
dead my mother was struck dumb!
She- never-spoke-another-word.

AUNT MORAG
Ohhh ... dear. Not another word
From the shock, yes it would
be.

The story is interrupted by the return of the wedding party who are
dripping wet, exactly as the couple in the story. AUNT MORAG bustles
over to take off the wet wedding gown, her face puckered with tragedy.

AUNT MORAG
Terrible. Terrible

Before she can undo the ties ADA pulls it from herself so aggressively
that the ties and part of the gown comes apart. None of this is a
concern to ADA who is distracted with fear for her piano. She crosses
to the little window and stares anxiously at the falling rain.

Sc 24 EXT BEACH DUSK Sc 24

Soft piano music has been playing over the previous scene. Now it
builds to strength as sea water swirls high around the piano, small
and embattled on the dark rainy beach.

Sc 23 INT STEWART'S HUT BEDROOM DAY Sc 25

It's morning of the next day. ADA and FLORA sit amongst tea chests in
the bedroom. ADA is signing intently to FLORA. FLORA signs back,
sometimes using words. STEWART watches uneasy with their secret
communication. As STEWART enters the animation is suspended. ADA
stands and takes a step back as if to attention.

STEWART
I shall be gone for some days.
There is some Maori land I want
and may buy very reasonably.
(STEWART shuffles) I am hoping
you will use the time to settle
in, and, in some ways we may
start again

FLORA and ADA look at each other.

STEWART
All right?

ADA looks at him blankly, then nods.

Sc 26 EXT STEWART'S DAY Sc 26

which they are addicted.

STEWART is standing, looking on. BAINES is behind him in the kitchen removing his boots.

AUNT MORAG

(looking carefully at STEWART)
Well you stopped combing your hair, which is a good thing, it was looking over done.
(without pause but referring to the sheet) You see these are the slits that the heads will go through, show him Nessie ... they'll be dead, the Reverend is going to use animal blood, no doubt it will be very dramatic. Tea!
(for NESSIE rather than to her)

NESSIE

It will be very dramatic.

NESSIE leaves to get the tea. HENI, the MAORI girl with a Moku tickles MARI'S back while she sews.

They sing the anthem in snatches. It is background to the conversation.

STEWART

(sitting down)
What would you think if someone played a kitchen table like it were a piano?

AUNT MORAG

Like it were a piano?

STEWART

It's strange isn't it? I mean it's not a piano, it doesn't make any sound.

NESSIE puts STEWART'S tea down. BAINES comes in with his tea cup dwarfed in his big hands. He stands back leaning against a wall.

AUNT MORAG

(hissing to NESSIE) Biscuits.'
No, no sound.

NESSIE hustles back to the kitchen.

STEWART

I knew she was mute, but now I'm thinking it's more than that. I'm wondering if she's

not brain affected.

AUNT MORAG
No sound at all?

STEWART
No, it was a table.

AUNT MORAG
(musing) Well, she was very violent with the gown. She tore off a chunk of lace. if hadn't been there I'd have sworn she'd used her teeth

NESSIE
and wiped her feet an it.

STEWART
Well it has not yet come to anything. Just a concern.

AUNT MORAG pats her chest. a calming device.

AUNT MORAG
Oh, yes, yes of course, a concern.

STEWART
There is something to be said for silence

AUNT MORAG
Oh indeed. Cotton'.

She holds her needle up for NESSIE to thread.

STEWART
(warming) And with time she will, I'm sure, become affectionate.

AUNT MORAG
Certainly, there is nothing so easy to like as a pet and they are quite silent.

BAINES watches quietly on.

Sc 35 EXT STEWART'S WOODSHOP DAY Sc 35

STEWART is at the woodshop cutting firewood. He displays his virtuosity as an axeman, cutting the wood into ever more slender pieces, FLORA is watching and stacking the fallen timber. She flinches as the axe hits the wood, but scurries in to pick up the timber. BAINES is standing talking to STEWART.

BAINES

Those 80 acres, that cross the stream, what do you think of them?

STEWART

On your property?

BAINES

Yes

BAINES carries a log across for STEWART who talks without pausing in his work,

STEWART

Good, flatish land with reliable water, why? I don't have money. What are you about?

BAINES

I'd like to make a swap.

STEWART

What for?

BAINES

The piano.

STEWART

The piano on the beach? Ada's piano?

BAINES nods. STEWART stops, this is serious.

STEWART

It's not marshy is it?

STEWART has walked a few paces away from his wood chop in the direction of the land.

BAINES

No.

STEWART

You'd have to organise it up here.

BAINES

Yes, I thought that.

STEWART

Well Baines the music lover, I never would have known. Hidden talents George.

BAINES

I'll have to get lessons. It wouldn't be much use without them.

STEWART
Yes, I suppose you would.

BAINES remains silent. He looks away.

STEWART
Well Ada can play.

BAINES shrugs.

STEWART
I have it in a letter she plays well. She's been playing since she was 5 or 6.

FLORA has stopped stacking. She is lying along the top of the wood, lifting a leg up and down, watching the men.

Sc 36 INT STEWART'S KITCHEN DAY Sc 36

STEWART, flushed with his plans, is pouring tea into cups. FLORA peers at cup level through the steam. ADA sits beside her at the table.

STEWART
I have got us some excellent land. Baines has taken some queer idea to have a piano, and you are to give him lessons. Have you taught before?

ADA signs to FLORA.

FLORA
What on?

STEWART
On your piano, that is the swap.

ALA finger signs, her face furious.

STEWART
What does she say?

FLORA
She says it's her piano, and she won't have him touch it. He's an oaf, he can't read, he's ignorant.

STEWART
He wants to improve himself... and you will be able to play on

it ... (ADA is not responding well) Teach him to look after it.

ADA's breathing becomes heavy with anger, she writes Curiously on her pad.

NO! NO! THE PIANO IS MINE! IT'S MINE!

STEWART regards her note and her passion with suspicion and disdain

STEWART
(getting up) You can't go on like this, we are a family now, all of us make sacrifices and so will you. You will teach him. I shall see to that!

ADA's emotions are suddenly removed and she views STEWART blankly, eerily so.

Sc 37 EXT BUSH FROM BEACH DAY SC 37

The piano is taken up through the bush by a group of six to eight MAORI MEN. It's very heavy and awkward and they grunt and struggle with it.

HiM na ake 'nun na'.
(Lift up the back)
UNSUBTITLED

Tern - tern!
(Ass hole!)

Hei niti niti maan!
(turning around)
You lick it.)

Someone stumbles and the back of the piano comes crashing to the ground thundering out in the bottom end of the scale. People scatter. Only one stays who warrior like challenges the piano.

Sc 38 EXT PATH TO BAINES DAY Sc38

The women duck low to avoid a branch as STEWART leads them to BAINES'S hut. STEWART carries the piano stool. The path slopes up through a strange, bearded forest where the tops of trees are bare and ghost like.

STEWART
I'd try children's tunes,
nothing more complicated

ADA is unrepentant, she does not want to teach BAINES the piano.

STEWART
Just be encouraging no one expects him to be good.

Sc 39 INT/EXT BAINES' HUT DAY SC 39

The piano is the only cared for item in the rough hut

STEWART
(lifting the lid) It looks
good, very nice looking thing.
Well . I wish you luck. The girls
are very excited about the
lessons.

The "girls" look anything but excited. FLORA shy, plays obsessively
with a long strand of greasy hair. ADA is cold and grim.

STEWART
Flora will explain anything Ada says.
They talk through their fingers,
you can't believe what they say
with just their hands.

STEWART leaves. BAINES goes to the piano and lifts the lid. He looks
at them. ADA signs to FLORA.

FLORA
My mother wants to see your
hands. Hold them out.

BAINES holds out his hands, spread wide as if holding a ball.

No, no, like this

FLORA puts her neat little fingers together, first with their backs up
then she turns them over. HAINES does the same only his bands are big
and coarse. ADA signs to FLORA. BAINES is shyly keen.

FLORA
You have to wash them.

BAINES
They are washed.

ADA signs.

FLORA
Wash them again.

BAINES
The marks do not come out.
They are scars and hardened
skin.

ADA and FLORA do not move. Humiliated BAINES takes a scrub brush, soap
and bucket and goes outside. ADA can see him from the window. She
moves to her piano. She wants to touch it but she is torn by her

feelings, wanting it, but not owning it. She strokes the varnished wood with her hand and softly lifts the lid. Outside FLORA stands beside BAINES pointing out hits of his hand he should still scrub. Furtively she lays her hands on the keys. The instrument is horribly out of tune, almost every note is off. She goes outside and signs to FLORA.

FLORA
There's no tune left in the
piano so she can't teach you.

The two women leave.

Sc40 EXT STEEP BUSH HILL DAY Sc40

Two men come crashing out down a steep bush hill, They are tied to each other. BAINES, the younger and stronger, is trying to break their fall by grasping hold of branches and shoots. Finally their fall is checked. The old man is white haired, the front of his suit splattered with the debris of many meals. He sits up feeling about for his glasses. He is blind. His eyes, though closed, wobble and roll BAINES finds the glasses One of the lenses has gone, the other is very dark. The old man fits his handkerchief in the gap.

Sc 41 EXT HUGESCREE DAY Sc 41

BAINES carries the old man on his back, they cross a huge scree. Each of BAINES' steps dislodge a fall of rocks. The crashing of stones echoes across the valley. BAINES and he are but small dots in this giant earth scar

SCENE 42 DELETED

Sc 43 INT BAINES' HUT DAY Sc 43

Inside BAINES' hut the old man feels the piano.

BLIND MAN
Ah, a Broadbent. A fine
instrument. I've not come
across one here, or in the
Islands where I have tuned some
200. Yes, they like their
pianos there.

Out of his pocket he takes a carefully wrapped tuning fork. He unwraps the package, lifts the back and lid and starts to tune. He sniffs the air. BAINES watches, He sniffs close to the keys.

Scent? And salt of course.

He works on.

What will you play when it's
tuned? What music do you play?

BAINES looks over at him from the meal he is preparing.

FLORA begins a scale.

Oh, it's in tune.

She looks over at BAINES who is still gazing out the window.

FLORA
What's out there?

She gets up to see what BAINES is looking at. She sees her mother and divines BAINES is looking at nothing.

FLORA
You have to watch me where I
put my fingers.

FLORA starts again. ADA can only hear the piano faintly but moves closer as she too hears it's in tune.

As she enters the hut BAINES pulls his fingers away from the piano. FLORA sees this and stops too. She looks at her mother.

FLORA
It's in tune.

ADA checks the other notes. FLORA stands with her arms folded, a bit sulky and fluffed up.

FLORA
(Hissing) I was teaching.

ADA tries the piano. She looks over at BAINES then signs to FLORA.

FLORA
She wants to see what you can
do.

BAINES
I'd rather not play. I want to
listen and learn that way.

FLORA
Everyone has to practice.

BAINES
I just want to listen.

ADA is a bit nonplussed. She does not want to be listened to anymore than she wants to teach. She pulls a strand of her hair then signs to FLORA.

FLORA
What do you want to hear?

BAINES shrugs shyly and looks away out the window. He doesn't know

BAINES
Anything.

ADA is slow to start. Unobliging as ever she plays scales. But once begun her belligerence fades as her absorption in the music strengthens.

Sc 49 INT STEWART'S HUT/ADA'S BEDROOM NIGHT Sc 49

Back at STEWART'S hut, ADA lies dispirited on the bed. FLORA lies beside her holding ADA's hand.

FLORA
Tell me about my real father.

ADA nods and strokes FLORA's hair from her face. FLORA leans back.

How did you speak to him?

ADA signs to FLORA who watches in love with all the stories of her mother and unreal father.

ADA (subtitled)
I didn't need to speak, I could
lay thoughts out in his mind
like they were a sheet

FLORA
What happened? Why didn't you
get married?

ADA continues to sign her hands casting odd animal like shadows on the newspapered walls.

ADA cont.
After a while he became
frightened and he stopped
listening.

STEWART enters their bedroom. FLORA stops and ADA stands against the wall. STEWART finds the atmosphere curious yet impenetrable.

STEWART
Shall I kiss you goodnight?

FLORA looks up at her mother. ADA shrugs.

STEWART nods stiffly, and uncomfortably, he leaves.

Sc 50 EXT BAINES' VERANDAH DAY Sc 50

It's raining heavily, FLORA sits on the small verandah outside BAINES' hut, her legs stuck straight out into the wet. She is overseeing a merciless power game with the dog, forcing it out of the verandah with a stick.

ADA's playing can be heard inside. BAINES sits back watching ADA. Her cape on the hook is dripping a puddle on to the floor and there is a circle of drips around her skirt hem. She is totally absorbed in her piano music as she was on the beach.

BAINES watches. Her long white neck, now wet from rain, proves irresistible. He comes across the room and kisses her. ADA jumps up and prepares to leave. BAINES stands in front of the door.

BAINES

Do you know how to bargain, nod
if you do.

She doesn't move,

There's a way you can have your
piano back. Do you want it
back? You want it back?

ADA eyes him suspiciously.

BAINES

You see I'd like us to make a
deal. There's things I want to
do while you stay. If you let
me you can earn it back.

What do you think, one visit
for every key.

ADA is tense but she is thinking about it. She holds up a finger then points to the black of her dress.

BAINES

Your dress?

ADA shakes her head.

Skirt ...?

She walks over to her piano and points to a black key.

For every black one?

ADA turns raising her head, nodding.

That's a lot less, half.

BAINES is counting the keys. ADA starts for the front door.

All right, all right then, the
black keys.

She sits back at the piano. She plays the lowest black key as in

number one

She takes her hands off the piano waiting.

It's better that you play.

Obediently she begins, stopping abruptly, indignantly, as he touches her neck.

BAINES
Play... Keep playing.

After a moment she settles back to the piano.

Sc 52 EXT BAINES' VERANDAH DAY Sc 52

Outside FLORA is cradling the poor confused dog, asking him what cruel miserable person had sent him out into the cold and wet.

Sc 53 EXT RIVERHOLE NEAR BAINES' DAY Sc 53

BAINES bathes in a riverhole. He is watched by a gathering of Maori, sometimes with great seriousness, at other times with hilarity. They pass between them his clothes, trying them on and mimicking him. One of the older women HIRA crouches close to the bank keeping up a steady line of inquiry. Her manner is relaxed but focused and persistent. She smokes a pipe-

HIRA
I got the good wife for you
Peini. She pray good. Clean.
Read Bible. You sleep her
Peini. She chief daughter.

BAINES
No, no bible readers.

BAINES continues good humouredly washing.

HIRA
Why? We need you pakeha clever.
You sleep her.

TAHU

(A big man dressed as a woman)
(Background) I give her plenty
clever. (Gestures sexually)

BAINES
I have a wife.

TAHU
(camping it up) I give her
clever eb Peini. Hallelujah!

HIRA
Don't answer, he low born. Jun
look at him, mongrel. Your wife
where she?

BAINES
She lives her own life in New
Jersey, America.

HIRA
You have spare wife here Peini.
You get rnana for that. Our
chief four wives.

BAINES shakes his head amusedly. As he gets out of the river HIRA
slaps him.

I marry white man Peini, he a
whaler like you. He very good
to me. Love me, nurse me.

HIRA touches her own face where BAINES' tattoo is.

HIRA
Who do that? It not finish,
that no good Peini. You finish!

Several people on the bank are taking turns to comb their hair,
peering into a tiny piece of mirror.

Sc 54 EXT/INT BAINES' HUT DAY Sc 54

BAINES' dog hears ADA and FLORA approach. It takes off under the
house. FLORA calls the dog. It keeps well hidden. ADA has gone on
inside and the door is closed. FLORA stands outside the door left out
and lonely. She knocks. BAINES answers.

FLORA
(small voice)
I want to speak to my mother

She buries her head in her mother's skirt.

I don't want to be outside, I
want to watch.

ADA signs to FLORA.

I'll be very quiet.

ADA leads her to the door signing to her

I won't look at him!

FLORA is shut out.

Sc 55 INT BAINES' HUT DAY Sc 55

(stiffly) Well, that is a strong opinion.

FLORA
Yes, it's unholy.

Sc 57 INT BAINES' HUT DAY Sc 57

ADA is quick to remove a used plate and cup left on top of the piano.

BAINES is sitting next to the window, his elbow on the sill, his head turned away.

BAINES
Lift your skirt,

ADA stops playing. She turns to him. Thinks about it then slowly lifts her skirt a little to show her boots.

Lift it higher.

ADA pulls the skirt up fractionally so the top other boots are exposed.

BAINES nods ADA starts to play again, not so confidently as before.

BAINES moves close, he goes down on his knees to watch her feet on the pedals.

BAINES
Higher.

ADA doesn't hear.

Lift it higher.

She stops and lifts her skirt to her knees. She looks at BAINES with ill-disguised contempt. BAINES is enthralled with her legs, or what he can now see of them. He moves back to watch them from behind. He's lying on the ground, head propped on his arm. ADA's slim stockinged calves work the pedals, one of the stockings has a small hole through which her white skins shows

Sc 58 EXT MISSION HOUSE GROUNDS DUSK Sc 58

HENI holds STEWART'S horse near a wooden gate. Its wet coat steams in he night air, making the whole horse glow. HENI talks softly to it in Maori.

Sc 59 INT MISSION HOUSE NIGHT Sc 59

Inside the REVEREND is closely watched by STEWART, AUNT MORAG and NESSIE as he cuts out the shape of an axe from a piece of marbled cardboard. A lamplight flickers warm tones across their faces while the rest of the room is dark giving it a conspiratorial air.

REVEREND

Nessie, your hand out ... out here, please.

NESSIE

Oh, no use Mr Stewart, I can't act.

REVEREND

Nessie, please.

NESSIE hesitatingly puts her arm out towards him and the REVEREND chops away in the air two feet in front other, NESSIE looks at AUNT MORAG puzzled.

REVEREND

Look you are being attacked!

The REVEREND points to the opposite rose-papered wall, where his shadow and paper axe now look very real as they loom large above the crouching NESSIE chopping into her. NESSIE squeals, as does MARY.

REVEREND

And with the blood ... it will be a good effect:

Sc 60 INT BAINES' HUT DAY Sc 60

ADA's finger plays the fourth black key from the left hand side, denoting lesson four.

BAINES

Undo your dress. This part, (he indicates the top) I want to see your arms.

ADA is taken unawares. She sits a moment unsure if she wants to cooperate, then slowly she staffs to undo her buttons.

ADA pulls her arms out of the tight sleeves. Underneath she wears a worn-in bodice. Her arms are so white they seem transparent. A delicate network of blue-green veins crisscross up the soft underpart of her arms. A dark growth of hair in her armpit suggests a shadowy depth. The back of her hands, normally white, are quite tanned in comparison.

BAINES

Play.

BAINES draws his chair close. Gently he places his hand on the soft underpart of her forearm. ADA stiffens and pulls away. He grips the arm.

Two keys.

ADA continues to play. Slowly he moves his hand higher towards her shoulder. Clearly unnerved she changes the music to something brisk, almost comical. BAINES feels suddenly ridiculous, his mood broken. He

takes his hand away and moves back to the window injured. ADA is victorious, she is pleased to have won herself a respite.

Sc 61 EXT STEWART'S WOODCHOP DAY Sc 61

STEWART is at the woodchop talking to AUNT MORAG and NESSIE. MARY and HENI, AUNT MORAG'S Maori girls lie sprawled out under a tree.

AUNT MORAG
I hardly need to give one to
you, but there you are anyway.

NESSIE has been sorting through a basket of invitations, finding STEWART'S she hands it to AUNT MORAG who hands it to STEWART.

Don't be late. You will see
there are two times and since
you are accompanying a
performer, you will need to
make the earlier time

STEWART has stopped listening, he is watching ADA and FLORA pick their way through the fallen logs to BAINES path.

STEWART
Wait.

The two women stop. There is a Japanese sense of deferment to STEWART

STEWART
How are the lessons going?
ADA nods enthusiastically.
He's getting on all right?
ADA nods again
Good.

AUNT MORAG
That is good, yes.

As ADA walks on AUNT MORAG leans towards STEWART.

She seems quieted down. Is she
more affectionate?

STEWART looks after them unable to answer.

AUNT MORAG
Ah well, slowly, slowly

Sc 62 INT BAINES' HUT DAY Sc 62

BAINES secures a chair against the door while ADA is removing her dress top. She sits at the piano hugging herself against the chill. As BAINES passes he knocks the jacket off the chair back. He picks it up and takes it across to her seat by the window.

BAINES nods and ADA begins to play. BAINES fingers the still warm

jacket1 he lifts it up and smells it. ADA turns around and stops playing suddenly appalled by his odd sensual pleasure taking. She holds out her hand for the jacket, her expression stern and censorious. She indicates he should return it to the chair back. BAINES ignores her. ADA stands and comes over to BAINES. She pulls the jacket from his hands and replaces it across the chair back, but as she turns to sit,

BAINES is beside her. He pulls the shoulders of her bodice down, exposing her shoulders and some of her breast. ADA immediately stands, but BAINES is much stronger and man-handles her across to the bed. ADA struggles seriously, this is much, much more than she was expecting.

BAINES
Ada, four keys.

ADA holds up five fingers and mouths 'five'.

I just want to lie.

ADA shakes her head vigorously and again mouths five'.

All right, all right five.

ADA no longer struggles. She is stiff and still. BAINES intoxicated by the smell and presence of her skin becomes soft and gentle. He kisses and touches her with feeling and affection. Then suddenly aware of her stillness he too becomes still. He pulls himself up to see whether her face betrays her feelings. ADA seizes this opportunity to return to the uncertain sanctuary of her piano. From the bed, BAINES watches her run a hand noiselessly over the polished ivory keys, a gesture betraying affection never afforded to him. BAINES gets up. He shuts the piano lid forcing ADA to remove her hand.

ADA immediately stands and dresses, marking hurtfully BAINES' ownership of her piano.

Sc 63 EXT STEWART'S HUT SUNSETSc 63

A golden evening. STEWART in his best shirt and trousers prepares the horse and cart.

Sc 64 INT STEWART'S HUT ADA'S BEDROOM SUNSETSc 64

Inside FLORA is in her finished Angel costume, she sings softly to herself while ADA undoes the long strands of plaits and separates them to comb.

FLORA
The Holly and the Ivy...

STEWART comes in to put on his jacket, but the collar is all tucked in. ADA automatically adjusts it for him, settling it around his neck. Her touch, meant practically, strangely affects him. In an impassioned impasse, meant gallantly, he tries to kiss ADA's finger tips. The gesture falters as ADA, surprised, jumps back.

AUNT MORAG hustles over to BAINIES and pushes him in front of her towards NESSIE and the piano.

AUNT MORAG
Mr. Baines, do come and turn
pages

BAINES looks wildly about for rescue.

BAINES
I can't read music, I have just
begun.

BAINES backs off from NESSIE whose face drops in disappointment. He has spotted ADA and is eager to take a seat near her. He takes the seat next to ADA but one. He sits smiling and blinking. The teasing continues, behind him.

STEWART
(turning) Lot of fools. Come
on, move up.

ADA puts her hand on the seat and shakes her head indicating that she is saving it for FLORA. BAINES is rebuffed and looks across at ADA who ignores him.

The main lights are put out and everyone returns to their places. In the dark STEWART shyly takes ADA's hand in his. BAINES watches STEWART squeezing her hand and quite out of control stands and leaves accompanied by a chorus of eshhhhhhhhhhhhn. Satisfied, ADA watches him go.

The children file on with their candles, They stand in a group singing with great seriousness, but struck with shyness their voices are so small as barely to be heard.

-sing up Billy!
-Come on sing out!

One of the smallest promptly pees. An arm reaches under the curtain to wipe the stage.

Sc 69 INT SCHOOL RALL & BACK STAGE NIGHT Sc 69

Backstage all is ready for the main dramatic event. There seems to be more peep-holes than curtains as eyes press themselves to the little flap. The master of ceremonies, the REVEREND is on stage explaining the dramatics. He is wearing harlequin tights and rompers, his face is dramatically paled. The candles are blown out.

REVEREND
And so the young maid came upon
each and all of Bluebeard's
missing wives, their severed
heads still bleeding, their

eyes still crying.

The piano accompaniment is suspenseful while the audience shriek appreciatively. Backstage AUNT MORAG provides the dripping blood, moving between the corpses, she peers at the audience through a peep-hole in the curtain.

REVEREND

But who is it this?

(AUNT MORAG looks around gasping, fooled despite herself)

A loud improvised door slam and heavy footsteps. NESSIE, in costume, freezes. The shadow of Bluebeard moves clumsily down the cut-out banister and along the corridor.

BLUEBEARD

I am home early my sweet wife
... where art thou?

The girl scrambles for the fallen key and rushes out of the closet into the silhouette corridor.

YOUNG WIFE

Hello husband, what a surprise!

BLUEBEARD

Yes wife, a surprise indeed! So now you know my secret you, the sweetest and youngest of all my wives must be prepared to die.

BLUEBEARD pulls out a cut-out axe and moves towards her.

Two of the young warriors in CHIEF NIHE's party rise to their feet.

Auc! Ha aba ra tenei?

(Hey! What's this)

SUBTITLED

E Nilie, E Nihe he Kohuru, he kohurn?

(Nihe, Nihe is this murder?)

SUBTITLED

NIHE waves them down, but they are shaken up and only crouch above their seats. The others stare anxiously between NIHE and the stage.

NIHE

(Amused by them)

E te whsnau keite pai-he takaro tenei.

(Everything is fine this is just a game)

SUBTITLED

BLUEBEARD moves closer, the young wife drops to her knees her hands

held up in prayer.

YOUNG WIFE

No, no wait!

BLUEBEARD

I shall not wait. Bare your neck.

As BLUEBEARD raises his axe again, first one then the other of the young warriors run forward, shouting a fierce war cry and parting the audience, who flee to either side while the corpses come very much to life.

Kia hiwara! Kin hiwara!
(Be on the alert! Brace yourself)

Pokokohun - whakaputa mai ja koc!
(Coward! Show yourself, come out!)

SUBTITLED

Only NIHE and his top-hatted daughter remain calmly in their seats. The warriors have BLUEBEARD cornered and whimpering an umbrella held spear-like above him. NIHE stomps his stick, his great voice booming out.

NIHE

Hoki rnai! Hoki rnai!
(Come back here! Come back here!)

SUBTITLED

Sc 70 INT SCHOOL HALL BACK STAGE NIGHT Sc 70

Backstage the CHIEF and his party are shown the theatrical devices; the blood-bucket, the paper axe, the splits in the sheets.

Sc 71 INT BAINES' HUT DAY Sc 71

ADA goes to the piano, she is upset that BAINES has again left a plate on top of it. BAINES intercepts her, stepping several times between her and the piano. She sees the game and stands still. He steps aside. She removes the plate, gently, lovingly wiping the surface underneath. There is a sulky irritation in the ways BAINES watches her.

BAINES

I have been waiting. You are very late.

ADA starts to play, BAINES watches then looks away.

BAINES

I don't want you to play. I just want you to sit.

ADA keeps playing until she has finished. Without looking at him she holds up two fingers against the piano.

BAINES
(angry) No, not two keys.

ADA starts playing again, BAINES feels powerless. He no longer admires her absorption with the piano, he is jealous of it.

BAINES
(shouts) Two keys then!

She stops playing. There is an insolence or casualness in the way she regards BAINES. He pulls her chair back from the piano. This upsets her, as much of her confidence was associated with the instrument. BAINES kisses her passionately on the mouth. ADA pulls back, BAINES persists, he is desperate and romantic.

Sc 72 EXT BASE OF BUSH COVERED HILL DAY Sc 72

STEWART, with BAINES interpreting, talks with a group of MAORIS at the base of a bush covered hill. The MAORIS sit behind a small representation of the hill marked out with twigs on the ground. The atmosphere is tense.

MAORI NEGOTIATOR
(pointing to the places)
Nga awa kau kau, nga ana koiwi
O matoti mattia tunpuna; kei
runga katoa i te whenua nei
korerongia atu ki to tangata na
e Peini.
(The bathing waters, the caves,
that house, the remains of our
ancestors are all part of this
land. Explain it to the man
Baines.)

SUBTITLED

STEWART
(muttering to BAINES across the
previous speech) What do they
say? Are they selling? Offer
the blankets for half the land.

STEWART holds up his ten fingers and then two more.

STEWART
T-w~e-l-v~e.

BAINES
Te, kawarna paraikete mo te
tahi hawlie O
te whenna uci.

(he'll give you twelve blankets
for half the land.)
UNSUBTITLED

The MAORIS look carefully at the quality of the blankets, noting the depth of the weave and the strength of the Wool. They shake their heads as they discuss them.

STEWART
(Quietly to BAINES)
Offer the guns.

MAORI NEGOTIATOR
Kahore atu he kororo. Kahore
niaton Kote hake whentia. Engad
mate peaks ne.
(No more talk, we won't sell
the land. I will trade you
pigs, that is all.)
SUBTITLED

He messes up the pattern of twigs as he speaks.

ANGRY MAORI
(Angry to the NEGOTIATOR)
He aha te pononga 0 te whenus
pena kahore he Pu hei pupuri?
(What is the point of owning
our land if we have no guns to
hold it?)

SUBTITLED

The MAORI NEGOTIATOR gets up to leave as do the others, STEWART snatches back his blankets and sulkily shakes them out to fold.

BAINES
E hoa ma, haria atu ra takit
kia Nihe.
(Give my regards to Chief
Nihe.)

MAORI NEGOTIATOR
(Others join in)

Ac ra. Kia Ora! Kia Ora! Te
Peini.
(Yes indeed! Thank you. Thank
you, Peini.)

Sc 73EXT BUSH AT NEW BOUNDARY MARKERSDAYSc 73

BAINES and STEWART walk through the bush. STEWART laden down with his blankets, red-faced and irritable.

STEWART

What do they want it for? They don't cultivate it, burn it back, anything. How do they even know it's theirs?

BAINES stops as he comes to a freshly placed fence post. STEWART winds down his complaints watching BAINES anxiously. BAINES walks down to the next one. he touches the freshly split post.

(tentatively) I thought I might as well mark it out.

BAINES

Yes, why not.

STEWART

Ada says you're doing well with the piano?

BAINES keeps walking from post to post.

STEWART

I'll have to come and hear you play. what do you play.

BAINES

Nothing just yet

STEWART

No. Well I suppose it takes time.

Sc 74EXT STEWARTS VEGETABLE PATCHDAYSc 74

ADA has cut a good sized cabbage in the vegetable patch. She throws it to FLORA who misses, dropping it in a pool of mud, splattering her face and dress. ADA smiles and FLORA who was about to cry gives the cabbage a big football beet towards her mother. ADA's mouth falls open, but then she too kicks it and they begin to dribble the mud caked cabbage towards the hut, all the time signing playful insults. Into this arrives STEWART.

STEWART

Baines can't play a damn thing. Is that right he can't play a thing?

We're going to lose that land, the way he was carrying on over it.

Is he musical? You've got to teach him a song. Something simple.

FLORA has her foot on the cabbage, she nudges it off behind her. It roll down the hill. STEWART can't help but notice,

STEWART

What's that?

He follows the cabbage down the hill' where he scrapes some of the mud off.

This thing's been knocked to pieces.

Sc 75 INT/EXT BAINES' HUT DAY Sc 75

FLORA is seen through BAINES' window Inside, ADA as ever charts her progress on the black keys, eleven. She turns to BAINES for instructions. BAINES is not himself, he is sulky and distant.

BAINES

Do what you like. Play what you like.

ADA is perplexed by this turn about of behaviour. A little uncertainly, she sets about her playing. After a little she too turns to see what BAINES is doing. He's not there. She is surprised then anxious as she fears the deal may be off when there are flaw so few keys to go. She starts to play again, but her anxieties prove too great. She stops and listens. She looks out the window, where FLORA is mucking about in the yard. She walks to his bedroom, listens, then opens the door. BAINES stands naked looking at her. ADA is taken aback

BAINES

I want to lie together without clothes on. How many would that be?

ADA holds up ten fingers an impossibly high number of keys.

BAINES nods.

ADA is surprised; she didn't expect him to agree. ADA checks again holding up her hands.

BAINES

Yes, ten keys.

Hesitantly, she starts to undress. She lies on her petticoat, having deemed the bed too dirty. BAINES lies, very still on top of her. A scraping sound is heard.

Sc 76 EXT/INT BAINES' HUT DAY Sc 76

FLORA is outside walking on sticks and logs trying to make sure she never puts her foot on the ground. She looks over at the house suddenly aware that the piano playing has stopped again. She investigates the mystery peeping through the various cracks and holes

play at all.

STEWART continues through the trees more slowly.

STEWART
And when is the next lesson?

FLORA
Tomorrow.

FLORA puts her bucket on her head to protect herself from the rain.

Sc 80 EXT PATH TO BAINES' DAY Sc 80

The next day is very windy, the tops of trees are thrashed by fierce gusts of wind and some smaller branches crash to the ground. ADA's long dress and cape flap uncontrollably. FLORA's smaller cape stands out on end. Birds fly in mad wind-battered courses, swooped up then strangely drawn down.

Sc 81 EXT BAINES' DAY Sc 81

ADA and FLORA arrive at BAINES' place to see the piano emerge from the hut carried by six MAORI MEN, one of whom does nothing but walk beside it "plonking" the keys. Another group of MAORIS sit cross-legged on the verandah playing draughts. Panicked ADA hurries down the hill to the hut. FLORA follows behind.

Sc 82 INT BAINES' HUT DAY Sc 82

Inside the hut, HIRA, the old woman from the bathing spot, is smoking her pipe. ADA enters distraught and indicates what she has seen. Her face is flushed and whipped by the wind. She is much more expressive than normal.

BAINES
I am giving the piano back to you. I've had enough. The arrangement is making you a whore and me wretched. I want you to care for me, but you can't.

BAINES sits down on a chair and prepares to eat, somewhat ignoring ADA. ADA is confused not quite believing the situation. She watches BAINES for some kind of confirmation.

HIRA
(softly) George, can I use this comb?

BAINES nods. ADA is still watching. HIRA scrapes the inside of her pipe with the comb.

BAINES
It's yours, leave, go on go!

ADA is off balanced by the reversal of attitudes, surprised too, that she doesn't want to go. FLORA is fast to leave, ADA follows to organise and protect her piano on the journey.

Sc 83 EXT BAINES' HUT & BUSH DAY Sc 83

As she climbs out of the small valley surrounding BAINES' hut, she stops and walks back to look down at BAINES and his hut, in the EXACT same manner that she once looked at her piano from the cliff-top above the beach. BAINES is throwing the scraps of his meal to his dog, he does not look up.

Sc 84 EXT PATH TO BAINES' HUT STEEP HILL DAY Sc 84

STEWART, on his way to BAINES, sees THE PIANO BEARERS and ADA way below him in the bush. He scrambles down a steep slope towards them.

 STEWART
(stiffly from some distance)
Stop right there'. This isn't
yours what are you doing with
the piano?

The women exchange looks.

 FLORA
He's given it to us.

 STEWART
(out of breath) Hah, you're
very cunning Ada, but I've seen
through you, I'm not going to
lose the land this way. Wait
here!

STEWART is off, pounding on down through the bush.

Sc 85EXT/INT BAINES' HUT/BEDROOM DAY Sc 85

HIRA is sitting on the front step of BAINES' place, blocking STEWART'S easy access.

 HIRA
George sick, he don't wanna see
nobody. You got Tupeka for the
Hira?

STEWART goes around to a side window in BAINES' bedroom. BAINES is sitting on the bed, but lies back as he hears STEWART coming about the side of the house. STEWART opens up the window.

 STEWART
I don't think you should have
given up the piano. I will make

sure you are properly taught,
with music written on to sheets
and...

BAINES
I don't want to learn.

STEWART
You don't want to learn.

BAINES
No.

STEWART
And what does this do to our
bargain? I cannot afford the
piano if you mean me to pay.

BAINES
No, no payment. I have given it
back. I don't want it.

STEWART
Well, I doubt I want it very
much myself.

BAINES
It was more to your wife that I
gave it.

STEWART
Well, thank you, I expect she
will appreciate it.

He closes the window.

So that is agreed on?

BAINES nods.

HIRA has wandered stiffly into BAINES' room. She sits on the edge of
his bed.

HIRA
You make BIG mistake George. In
first place you should swap
land for wife. Now look, she
gone, you no land, no music
box, you got nothing.

SCENE 86 DELETED

Sc87 EXT/INT STEWART'S HUT DAY Sc 87

At the door of the hut STEWART is distributing buttons to the piano
bearers.
One squats catching them as they fall. A commotion begins as one of

the MAORIS snatches the whole jar and runs off. Two of them give chase while the others insist on tobacco.

11 See Note

Inside the hut ADA had lifted the top of the piano and is peering in while playing notes to check tune and damage.

STEWART

Is it all right? Aren't you
going to play something?

ADA pulls up a chair and seats herself at the piano. She rubs her hands and places them lightly on the keys, she turns from habit over her left shoulder where STEWART waits crossed armed. Quickly she removes her hands, stands and gestures FLORA to play. FLORA proudly takes up the seat, she pulls her lips in trying to control her happiness to say in front of both her mother and STEWART.

FLORA

What will I play?

She looks to ADA, who looks back through her not concentrating.

STEWART

Play a gig.

FLORA

(to ADA) Do I know any gigs?

STEWART

Play a song then

FLORA starts a song, ADA walks past them out of the hut, STEWART ignores her exit moving up to lean on the piano. ADA is seen through the hut window wandering amidst the ghostly, blackened trunks. STEWART'S attention is drawn to ADA, he interrupts FLORA'S singing with a sudden outburst.

STEWART

(exasperated) Why won't she
play it? We have it back, and
she just wanders off!

FLORA stops to watch her mother through the window. ADA looks towards the house as the music stops.

STEWART

Keep playing!

Grimly STEWART slaps the top of the piano to FLORA'S playing.

ADA continues to walk, her face dark and puzzled. She stops. Her head stiffly, irresistibly, lifts and turns in the direction BAINES' hut. She peers deep into the bush as if attempting to penetrate a puzzle. She thinks and walks on.

Sc 88 INT STEWART'S KITCHEN DAY Sc 88

The next day ADA and her piano face each other across the kitchen. A slit of light falls across the piano highlighting it's rosey walnut wood. ADA's expression is critical and distant.

Taking a cloth she begins to clean and polish the piano. Her finger holds down one of the keys and we glimpse an old inscription on its side, a small heart, and an arrow. Putting the cloth aside she sits at the piano to begin playing.

She starts with wholehearted feeling, her eyes closed, but before long she is surprised by a moving reflection across the piano and she 'starts', glancing over her shoulder. She stops and begins again. But once more a reflex has her glance across her left shoulder and she pauses in her playing. Disquieted she starts again and again she looks away. She stops, confused, unable to go on, unable to getup, one hand on the lid and one on the piano keys.

Sc 89 EXT PATH TO BAINES' DAY Sc 89

ADA carrying her cape and bonnet hurries through the narrow bush path to BAINES' hut, FLORA has a fist of her skirt and is pulling back. ADA turns on FLORA and snatches the skirt out of the girl's hand. ADA signs to her and continues on.

FLORA

Why? Why can't I?

ADA signs again.

FLORA

(crossing her arms) I shan't practise and I DON'T CARE!

But ADA does not wait to listen. FLORA walks back through the bush muttering childish expletives to herself. STEWART and his two MAORI helpers come out of the bush towards her. FLORA squeals with fright.

STEWART

(looking up the hill) Where's your mother? Where has she gone?

FLORA pauses petulant and grumpy.

FLORA

To HELL!

FLORA races off as fast as she can, enlivened by her wickedness. STEWART clammers back up the path. He just glimpses the distant figure of ADA nervously turning, her skirts flying as she hurries up the bush path The wind bothers the tops of the trees, setting them groaning, rubbing their branches against each other.

Sc 90 INT BAINES' HUT DAY Sc 90

ADA enters BAINES' hut, she is breathless1 announcing her presence by

simply being there, standing there. BAINES comes through from the bedroom. Seeing ADA he is aloof, suspicious and his blinking becomes pronounced.

BAINES

So what brings you here? Did you leave something? I have not found anything.

ADA does not respond, finally she looks at BAINES and her look has a vulnerability and frankness that takes him off guard.

Does he know something?

ADA shakes her head.

The piano is not harmed? It arrived safely? Would you like to sit? I am going to sit.

ADA does not sit. She stands immobilised. BAINES attempts to maintain his casual charade) he pours a tea.

He turns to her about to speak, but stops unmanned by a new fragility to her strength. He blinks rapidly

BAINES

Ada, I am unhappy because I want you, because my mind has seized on you and thinks of nothing else. This is how I suffer, I am sick with longing. I don't eat, I don't sleep. If you do not want me, if you have come with no feeling for me, then go!

BAINES walks roughly towards the door and opens it, his softness turned suddenly cruel.

Go! Go NOW! Leave!

ADA is stung by his change of tune, she takes a step towards him and eyes filling with tears of anger hits him hard across the face. BAINES' nose begins to bleed yet his face slowly lights up as if she has spoken words of love. ADA is flushed, shocked, the two face each other at this very moment of profound awareness of each other, profoundly equal. With each new breath, with every moment that their eyes remained locked together the promise of intimacy is confirmed and reconfirmed and detailed until like sleepwalkers who do not know how they came to wake where they did, they are standing next to each other and beginning to kiss each other, the lips, the cheeks, the nose. There is nothing practised about their tenderness, only their feelings and emotions guide their instincts. BAINES' face crumples with the exquisite pain of his pleasure, ADA cradles his head to her chest. BAINES struggles through her dress anxious to touch her skin.

Sc 91 EXT/INT BAINES' HUT DAY Sc 91

Outside STEWART surveys the hut suspiciously. BAINES' dog growls as he climbs on to the small verandah. Carefully STEWART peers through some loosely slatted boards. There are sounds inside which are worrying him. By standing on the seat he has found a spyhole where he can see ADA and BAINES kissing, undressing

He reels back angry, but just as we might expect him to burst through, he steps up to look again; the fatal second look, the look for curiosity. He watches BAINES bare-chested undressing ADA, her buttons burst, ADA laughs, BAINES touches her under her skirts - anywhere, he takes himself under her dress pulling down her stockings. STEWART watches, stepping down to peer lower as BAINES buries into ADA's skirt. He does not seem to notice the dog licking his hand. Suddenly he pulls his hand away and looks at it, wet with dog saliva, he wipes it on the boards and continues watching as if mesmerised.

Sc 92 INT BAINES' BEDROOM DAY Sc 92

Inside BAINES' small bedroom the raw dark boards contrast with the softness, whiteness of BAINES' and ADA's bodies, The long black strands of ADA's hair stick to her cheek and wrap around her neck. Her face is flushed and her eyes are bright. BAINES rolls his face across her chest, gently, slowly savouring the flavour of her body. Drunkenly they continue their sex slowly, slowly. ADA's breaths turn to low murmurs; these small sounds are extraordinarily moving to BAINES whose face swoons with joy.

BAINES
What? What? whisper....

Sc 93 INT BAINES' BEDROOM&UNDER HOUSE DAY Sc 93

As ADA dresses, BAINES sits on his bed watching. He is unhappy, thoughtful.

BAINES
Now you are going I am
miserable, why is that? (He
catches her hand and draws her
to him) Ada I need to know,
what will you do? Will you come
again?

ADA is distracted, collecting her buttons from the floor, concerned at the time past, worried to dress and return.

The camera cranes down and down to find STEWART wedged under the loose wooden floor slats. He cannot hear clearly, but ADA's hand reaching for each button is only inches away. One falls through a slat on to STEWART'S neck and on down his shirt collar. As she stands he rolls out.

BAINES
Wait! I don't know what you're
thinking. (gently, teasingly)

Does this mean something to
you? Hey? (Stroking a strand of
hair behind her ear) I already
miss you. Ada, do you love me?

ADA considers this question. Clearly she doesn't know, the question is more complex to her than to him, then as if by way of answer she kisses him strongly and sexually. BAINES pulls away confused. ADA finishes dressing. BAINES comes up behind her to help with the buttons.

BAINES
(anxiously) Come tomorrow. If
you are serious, come tomorrow.

ADA turns and kisses him passionately, with the new born enthusiasm of someone who has just discovered their appetite for sex. Then as quickly as she began, she takes her hood and cape and goes to leave.

BAINES
Tomorrow?

She nods and is gone.

Sc 94 INT STEWART'S HUT ADA'S BEDROOMNIGHTSc 94

FLORA and ADA are both in their white nightgowns. FLORA stands behind ADA on a chair trying to sort out the knots that have matted at the back of ADA's head. ADA shakes her head from side to side playfully, making the difficult job impossible.

FLORA
Stay still! It's the very worst
knots.

FLORA tries to hold her mother's head still but ADA's high spirits are unstoppable and her hair flies out from side to side flicking FLORA in the face.

FLORA
Mama STOP IT!

FLORA starts to giggle and retaliates flinging her own hair from side to side. The two women are twirling in the small bedroom their hair flying about them, FLORA is shrieking with the fun, then stops dizzy and sick. ADA continues flicking FLORA as she twirls.

FLORA
Stop it I feel sick!

But ADA doesn't stop, her dark hair whirls about her, as giddy and disorientated, she knocks against the walls

Sc 95 INT STEWART'S HUT NIGHT Sc 95

Next door STEWART sits on his bed listening, his hair wet and neatly combed. He has a journal of pressed botanical specimens beside him.

Hearing FLORA squealing he goes to the kitchen and standing back in the shadows, watches ADA frenetic, whirling through the part open door.

80

Sc 96 INT STEWART'S HUT ADA'S BEDROOMDAWNSc 96

Daylight floods the room as ADA secures the pins at the back of her hair.

Sc 97 EXT PATH TO BAINES' DAYSc 97

Music builds and plays throughout.) The sky is dark and the wind is ballooning ADA's cape, wrapping it up high around her. The tree tops are swaying furiously. Inside the bush it is dark and ADA hurries up through the path. She is out of breath and glancing behind her as if to guard against followers, when directly in front of her STEWART steps out onto her path. ADA stops short. The look on his face is unlike any expression she has yet seen. His eyes do not look at her, but all about her in a way more animal than human. She lowers her eyes and calling his bluff walks steadily past him. But STEWART takes her arm and spinning her back, pulls her close and blind to all protest kisses her. ADA struggles furiously. His grip falters and she steps back staring at him, then runs off down the hill, but STEWART is on top of her clasping her skirts, pulling her towards him hand over hand, she slips and falls to the ground. STEWART is upon her, lifting her dress, touching her legs, ADA goes quite still, which throws STEWART long enough for her to scramble away, yet again STEWART catches her and again they roll on the ground, STEWART touching and kissing her, ADA turning herself this way and that to avoid it. There is a cat and mouse quality to their mute struggle finally broken by FLORA calling up the path, distraught and in tears, her angel wings have twisted about her waist.

FLORA

(TOP OF HER LUNGS) Mumma!
Mumma! They are playing your
piano!

STEWART allows ADA to get up and the two women go back down the path towards home. The distant sound of the piano keys thumping.

Sc 98 INT STEWART'S HUT DAY Sc 98

At the piano and with solemn dignity sits a MAORI WOMAN. She is wearing a top hat and a long black dress, beside her stands the MAORI who absconded with the buttons, most of which he has attached to his jacket. She plays loudly with two closed fists, her companion listens gravely, placidly, blinking at the crashes, two others listen from the doorway, one with his hands over his head.

Sc 99 INT/EXT STEWART'S HUT DAY Sc 99

FLORA and ADA stand in the hut while fierce hammering can be heard outside. STEWART is boarding over the windows, barricading them in.

FLORA joins in the spirit of exercise gaily pointing out any slats STEWART has missed.

FLORA
Here Papa!

ADA's face pales in the diminishing light. Exasperated by the threatened incarceration she shakes her head with anguish and moving to the piano lifts the lid and plays several bars brutally and strongly. She passes on to the bedroom, where she picks up the small hand mirror and looks at her face puckered with frustration. She touches her face and neck tenderly, then throws herself on the bed, face to the wall, her hands over her ears.

FLORA stands over her mother.

FLORA
You shouldn't have gone up
there, should you? I don't like
it and nor does Papa. Mama, we
can play cards together.

ADA rolls over, her eyes closed she pushes her face and body against the mattress. The movement is sensual and removed. FLORA stops dealing the cards on to the bed and watches her mother puzzled.

Sc 100INT STEWART'S HUT NIGHT Sc 100

It is night and ADA is walking in the dark, ghostly in her white nightgown. She sits at her piano and begins to play loudly and strongly. Her hair is loose and she seems half-asleep. FLORA and STEWART wake to the loud playing and fumble their way to the kitchen. STEWART carries a lit candle. ADA continues her playing

FLORA passes a hand in front of ADA's face.

FLORA
She is asleep, look.

One night she was found in her nightgown on the road to London. Grandpa said her feet were cut and bleeding so badly she couldn't walk for a week.

The two watch ADA, mesmerised by her compulsive playing.

12 See Note
Sc 101EXT STREAM NEAR STEWARTS'DAY Sc 101

STEWART stands guard while ADA and FLORA wash their clothes in the stream. FLORA is taking the lead, soaping up the clothes, she passes the garments to her mother to rinse. ADA is distracted and as she takes the clothes, she just as soon lets them go and they float off down the stream past STEWART who tries to catch them but can't. Two MAORI BOYS continue the chase, enjoying the fun, thinking it a great adventure.

STEWART
You are letting the clothes
float off... They are floating

off.

ADA stares off into the distance rocking lightly back and forth as she crouches on a stone. Her dress unhitched floats down the stream behind her.

12. See notes

FLORA
Mama! Look out!

FLORA wades across to grasp yet another garment ADA has let drift off.

Sc 102EXT STEWART'S DAY Sc 102

On the way back to the barricaded hut FLORA swings between ADA and STEWART.

FLORA
One, two, three
One, two, three

ADA glances around at the bush. FLORA beams enjoying a feeling of familiness of which she is now the boss. The two women go ahead into the hut which STEWART shuts and secures with a beam.

Sc 103INT STEWART'S HUT ADA'S BEDROOMNIGHT Sc 103

It is night. ADA is tossing in the small bed beside FLORA, her hair wound across her face, she makes low moaning sounds as she pushes her face and body up against the sleeping FLORA. Her movement and moans increase until she wakes suddenly sitting bolt upright.

Sc 104INT STEWART'S KITCHEN & BEDROOMNIGHT Sc 104

ADA walks through the kitchen, small slithers of moonlight lighting her path. She walks past the piano into STEWART'S room who has gone to sleep with his candle still alight. ADA looks, then slowly her hand hovers above him before lightly touching his face. His eyes open, he looks towards ADA anxious and surprised, but as ADA continues, his reserve breaks and he is captive to his own sensations. She pulls down the sheet and strokes his neck, shoulders, chest, he reaches out towards her.

STEWART
Ada!

But ADA scowls and pulls away roughly, STEWART lies back anxious not to break the spell and when he is still ADA continues to caress his chest. His eyes well with tears and he looks up into her face like a child after a bad dream, fearful and trusting. ADA continues like a nurse spreading ointment on a wound, tenderly and attentively she strokes down towards his belly. STEWART'S skin goose bumps and he shudders. He puts his hand on hers to still it she slides hers out and continues stroking. He looks at her pleadingly and childlike, she stops and kisses the soft skin of his belly, STEWART groans clutching the mattress. ADA seems removed from STEWART as if she has a separate

curiosity of her own.

Sc 105INT STEWART'S KITCHEN DAY Sc 105

Next day AUNT MORAG stands circling in STEWART'S small darkened house. FLORA and ADA sit quietly together

AUNT MORAG
Ohhh, it's so dark, it's like a dank cave.

NESSIE
Yes, like a cave.

AUNT MORAG
Ohh no, it makes my skin creep!

STEWART comes into the house with some logs, AUNT MORAG follows him across to the fire.

AUNT MORAG
Alisdair, is it because of our play? Have the natives aggressed you?

She continues following him to the door.

I have to say you have done the wrong thing here, you see you have put the latch on the outside. When you close the door, (and she doses it) it will be the Macna that lock you in, you see? With the latch on that side you are quite trapped.

NESSIE
(nodding her head in imitation)
... you are quite trapped.

AUNT MORAG walks inside and continues to the table where her basket full of clothes and packets of food have been left. She lifts it from the table and begins to spread the cloth.

AUNT MORAG
We have just come from George Banes' and they have taken him over. It is no wonder he is leaving, he has got in too deep with the natives. They sit on his floor as proud as Kings, but without a shred of manners.

NESSIE
(in unison) ... without a shred of manners.

NESSIE and AUNT MORAG are unpacking parcels of cakes and biscuits on plates putting them about the table.

AUNT MORAG

He is quite altered, as if they had been trying some native witchcraft on him. Well tomorrow or the day after he will be gone.

STEWART

Baines is packing up?

AUNT MORAG

Well he has NOTHING to pack, but he is leaving. And it is just as well; Nessie has foolishly grown an affection for him ... we have had some tears

At this mention NESSIE's face crumples and tears again begin to flow.

AUNT MORAG

(very firmly) STOP IT! STOP!

NESSIE remarkably obeys, blinking her face back to shape.

ADA attempts to disguise her agitation, she moves to the piano and strokes it, she begins to play.

I am quite frightened of the way back, we must leave in good light. Will we be safe?

STEWART

(wanting them gone) If you leave soon, yes, I am sure of it.

STEWART and MORAG watch ADA at the piano. Her playing develops until she is fully absorbed. AUNT MORAG is intrigued despite herself

Sc 106EXT BUSY ROAD TO MISSIONDAY Sc 106

On the edge of the bush beside the dirt road to town AUNT MORAG attempts a discrete toilet stop. NESSIE keeps guard holding up the cape while one of their MAORI charges holds up another.

AUNT MORAG

You know I am thinking of the piano. She does not play the piano as we do Nessie.

The cape begins to droop as NESSIE listens.

UP! UP! No she is a strange creature and her saying is strange like a mood that passes into you. You cannot teach that

Nessie, one may like to learn
but that could not be taught.

NESSIE again lets the cape droop.

Up! Your playing is plain and
true and that is what I like.
To have a sound creep inside
you is not all pleasant

A fluttering sound in the bush.

what is that?

NESSIE
(frightened) Ohhhhhh!

MARY/HENI
(slow, relaxed) A pid-geon
Auntie.

The party finish and hurry a little spooked on the road to town.

Sc 107INT STEWART'S ROOM NIGHT Sc 107

It is night. ADA enters the room, STEWART looks at her shyly.

STEWART
I've been hoping you would
come.

ADA strokes his brow. STEWART closes his eyes, breathing heavily
relieved. ADA strokes the nape of his neck and on down his back.
STEWART'S face puckers, his eyes fill with tears. She strokes so
softly, the tenderness is shocking to him. Gently she pulls his under-
garment down, exposing his buttocks. STEWART grabs nervously at them,
hauling them up with his hands. ADA unclenches his fist and once more,
slowly pulls them down. She begins to stroke his buttocks, STEWART is
painfully eroticised, painfully vulnerable, he begins to weep, the
intimacy and soft-ness unman him and he is helpless. STEWART sits up
hunching over himself, retreating

STEWART
I want to touch you Why can't I
touch you? Do you like me?

Slowly he raises his head to look at ADA. She looks back moved by his
helplessness, but distanced as if it has nothing to do with her.

Do you?

ADA does not respond. STEWART slumps into disappointment and despair.

Why? Why not?!

Sc 108INT STEWART'S KITCHEN DAY Sc 108

The next morning, ADA, FLORA and STEWART sit together in the small dark hut. FLORA preens a miniature landscape of moss and tiny branches all piled on a dinner plate. A slit of sunlight falling across the top small branches gives it a magical glow. FLORA's small dirty fingers push in another 'tree', she looks up happily

FLORA

This is going to be Adam's tree and then I'm going to make a serpent to live here, with a very long tongue. (She pokes her tongue out and waggles it).

STEWART reads, he glances at ADA who is glum and lifeless.

Sc 109INT STEWART'S HUT DAY Sc 109

ADA and FLORA wake to sunlight streaming in on their faces, more and more of it as STEWART rips the boards from the windows FLORA runs about in nightgown and boots happy to be in the sunlight. ADA winds her hair into a bun. STEWART walks inside, he packs food and fencing equipment

STEWART

(Clears his throat) We must both get on. I have decided to trust you to stay here. You will not see Baines?

(ADA nods) Good, good. Perhaps with more trying you will come to like me?

Sc 110EXT STEWART'S DAY Sc 110

ADA hangs out washing restlessly scanning the bushline. A tiny STEWART walks along the crest of the hill, eventually dropping out of sight.

Sc 111INT STEWART'S HUT DAY Sc 111

Inside the hut ADA is pacing, anguished and frustrated. Impulsively she picks up a knife from the kitchen table, opens the back of the piano and cuts one of the keys loose. Carefully she engraves on the side in Victorian handscript.

DEAR GEORGE, YOU HAVE MY HEART. ADA McGRATH.

Sc 112EXT STEWART'S DAY Sc 112

Under the sheets FLORA has constructed a dolls' clothes line on which she hangs small strips of cloth ADA hands her the key wrapped and tied in white cotton. ADA signs. Her black shadow behind the sheet recalls the macabre play.

No!

The little girl continues defiantly with her miniature washing. ADA

rips the washing line up and flings it aside. FLORA is shocked, stunned. She takes the key and walking off she turns and shouts.

FLORA
We're not supposed to visit
him'.

ADA signals GO!

Sc 113EXT PATH TO BAINES' AT FENCEDAYS Sc 113

At the junction of the path to BAINES' hut is the beginning of STEWART'S boundary fence. At this place FLORA has paused. She looks back to see if her mother is watching; she's not- FLORA turns sharply right so that she now follows alongside STEWART'S boundary fence and away from BAINES' hut.

Sc 114EXT HILLS WITH FENCE DAY Sc 114
The fence appears and disappears behind hills. Flora too dips behind the hills to reappear on the other side. She sings a brisk song to herself.

FLORA
The grand old Duke of York. He
had ten thousand men etc.

Sc 115EXT VALLEY WITH FOXGLOVE & FENCEDAYS Sc 115
She pauses in one of the valleys, stifled by clumps or tall, mauve foxglove.

Sc 116EXT COMPLETE FENCE ON HILLDAY Sc 116
The fence line seems endless as the tired FLOW4 trudges up yet another hill but from there, she can see where the fence finishes, half way up the crest of the next hill and at this point is STEWART, driving in a new fence post. He is watched by MANA and his friend who squat passing a pipe between themselves. MANA strums tirelessly on his buttons.

FLORA
Mumma wanted me to give this to
Mr. Baines.

She holds out the cotton covered piano key. STEWART looks up.

I thought maybe it was not a
proper thing to do.

STEWART keeps working, hammering the post into the earth.

Shall I open it?

STEWART
No!!

He stops and takes the key, suspicious and uncomfortable. He slowly unwraps it and turning it over reads it. Squeezing the key in his fist, STEWART staggers off in a daze, He returns, picks up his open

pack spilling the nails. Finally he drops the pack and the key) and leaves with only his axe. FLORA follows confused. The MAORIS waste no time investigating the booty. MANA presses the piano key repeatedly.

MANA
Knare e Waita! Kaare e Wajata!
(no sing, no sing)

Sc 117EXT STEWART'S DAY Sc 117
The sky is dark and rain is falling heavily as STEWART strides fast towards the hut, his axe swinging in his hand. FLORA is far behind him, her angelwings sodden.

Sc 118INT STEWART'S HUT DAY Sc 118
STEWART bursts into the hut, his wet hair is splattered against his forehead. his face is white. ADA looks up from her book, moving her hands from the table. STEWART swings his axe hard. It slices into the table, splitting a section off her book. ADA pushes her chair back.

STEWART
(exasperated) why? WHY? I
trusted you!

He pulls the axe out of the table and swings it at the piano.

WHY?

ADA runs forward to restrain him, but it sinks deep into the wood. The struck piano lets out a strange resonant moan.

I trusted you, do you hear? I
trusted you. I could love you.

He takes her by the wrist.

Why do you do this? Why do you
make me hurt you? Do you bear?
Why have you done it? We could
be happy

STEWART shakes her violently.

You have made me angry. SPEAK!!

Sc 119EXT STEWART'S HUT & WOODCHOPDAY Sc 119

He pulls her out of the hut, past the now terrified FLORA.

You shall answer for this.
Speak or not you shall answer for
it!

He drags her out through the mud, towards the wood chop. It is raining hard.

ADA sees where they are headed and suddenly she is very scared. She

bucks and struggles, but STEWART is infinitely stronger. At the wood chop she breaks free and crawls away through the woodchips and mud. But axe in hand he grasps her by the neck of her dregs, then her hair, and pulls her backwards towards the cutting block. There, he takes her right hand and holds it in place with his boot, so that only ADA's index finger shows, ADA's head is held twisted between the wood chop and STEWART'S leg.

STEWART
(anguished) Do you love him? Do
you?! Is it him you love?

ADA blinks rigid with fear. The rain is driving down.

FLORA
No, she says NOOOOOO!!!

The axe falls. ADA's face buckles in pain. Blood squirts onto FLORA's white pinafore, her angel wings are splattered in mud.

FLORA
(Screaming) Mother!!

ADA stands. She looks faint, her finger is pulsing blood, she shakes her hand then seeing the blood she puts it behind her back shocked. She watches FLORA, concerned and confused. Uncontrollably her whole body starts to shake and as if by reflex ADA begins to walk. FLORA trots parallel to her.

FLORA
Mama!

ADA keeps walking blindly like her being depends on it. Her face is ashen, her eyes fearful as she walks unseeingly straight into a large tree stump. She sinks into the mud.

STEWART wraps the finger in a white handkerchief and gives it to FLORA who backs away from him terrified.

FLORA
(quietly) Mama.

STEWART
Take this to Baines. Tell him
if he ever tries to see her again
I'll take off another and another
and another!

The figures seem tiny amidst the rain drenched skeleton forest.

SCENE 120 DELETED*

Sc 121EXT MAORI PA DAY Sc 121

The formal farewells are over and HIRA and BAINES finishes shaking hands and pressing noses with her people.

HIRA holds his arm, she is sad and tearful. He places his hat on her head affectionately and slips her a much appreciated tin of tobacco.

A soft rain begins to fall. BAINES and HIRA make their way past the Meeting House and the low sleeping houses to the Pa entrance where his horse waits,

HIRA
I worry for us Peini. Pakeha
cunning like wind, KNOCK you
over, yet you not see it. Some
they say, how can pakeha get
our land if we won't sell it?"

A crowd of children run beside them, dogs scurry off and pigs are kicked out of the way, their owners protesting loudly. Some hold mats over their heads to protect themselves from the rain, one has a battered umbrella.

HIRA
They wrong Peini. We need guns
to hold it.

BAINES mounts his heavily laden horse. MANA pushes forward to say his farewell, but is abruptly shoved aside, evidently unpopular with the others. BAINES glances over and sees the piano key the man has fashioned into an earring.

HIRA
(angrily) I worried Feini.
What's gonna happen you, you go
home, but where we go? We got
nowhere to go.

HIRA's voice rises as BAINES lets go of her arm and rides through the group towards MANA. He takes the piano key in his hand, MANA pulls back.

MANA
(In Macit)
It is mine. I found it.

BAINES turns it over and finds the writing on it.

BAINES
(urgently)
Homni 'ci au.
(I want this.)
SUBTITLED

MANA
(sulky)
Ncrr! Naaku. It's mine. Me find
it

BAINES
He aha to hiahia? Ask for it?

Tobacco?
(What do you want?)
SUBTITLED

HIRA
(still angry)
Gun, ask for his gun!

MAYA rubs his nails up and down his buttons while he considers what he will have.

OTHERS
- Nga rarahe
(The glasses)

- Wana Putu
-Te whitiki, gettem ehoal
(The belt)
UNSUBTITLED

Sc 122EXT MAORI PA DAY Sc 122

Outside the Pa walls near the kumera gardens, HIRA holds BAINES' saddle bags. It is raining hard as he rides out, hatless, shoeless and gunless, but clutching to his chest ADA's engraved key.

HIRA
Go Peini ... Haere atu e Peini.

BAINES
I'll be back.

Sc 123EXT SCHOOL DAY Sc 123

BAINES crosses through the pony paddock of the one room colonial school hall, school house. He has a piece off flax knotted around his waist to hold up his trousers. In the paddock are five very shabby looking rides'. one huge old wagon horse, built to carry a whole family, down to a tiny sour looking Shetland. The girls have long, stained, once white pinafores and everyone wears boots that seem too big, except the little boy who has the front cut off his hoots so his toes can hang out.

Four little girls play a sedate game of skip rope, using a bush vine. BAINES watches, noticing in particular a little girl of about 9 with a book. The boys and some of the wilder girls play BullRush.

NOTE SCENE 123 REPLACES SCENES 124 AND 125
DELETE SCENES 124 AND 125

Sc 126EXT GENTLE STREKM DAY Sc 126

The girl with the book goes off sit by a little stream. BAINES follows and sits beside her.

BAINES
Can you read?

The little girl immediately closes the book and walks off.

The girl keeps walking, before she turns about to watch him from a safe distance.

Another little girl drops down from a tree.

TREE GIRL

I can.

BAINES

You can read?

(She is very small.)

TREE GIRL

Yes ... lots of things.

The skipping group of girls join them.

BIG SISTER

She can't read, she's my
sister, I ought to know.
Are those sweets?

TREE GIRL

I can read!

BIG SISTER

She can't.

BAINES holds out the packet to the little girl.

Don't give her one.

BAINES does anyway.

BIG SISTER

She can't read.

The little girl throws the lolly paper away, which one of the other girls picks up and sniffs, she hands it to the others.

Mmm Caramels

BAINES

Can you read?

He holds out the piano key BIG SISTER takes it with great authority, her friends crowd behind her. She frowns at the writing. She turns it over.

BIG SISTER

Running writing, we haven't
done that yet.

READING GIRL
Myrtle can read it, her mother
taught her.

The key is snatched from BIG SISTER and given to MYRTLE, the girl with
the book. The others crowd around.

MYRTLE
(frowning) D e a r G e o r g e

The children look over at BAINES to see if this is right so far.

You (in unison)... have

BIG SISTER
That's "My".

MYRTLE
Its not an M

BIG SISTER
Yes it is.

MYRTLE & BIG SISTER
Dear - George - you - have - my

MYRTLE
heart? (She pulls a face as if
it doesn't make sense) Ada
McGrath.

BIG SISTER
It doesn't make sense.

The little girls read it again together. MYRTLE turns the key over
matter of factly to see if there is more writing.

MYRTLE
That's all

They all look up at him.

BAINES
Say it again, just you.

Everyone turns and listens to MYRTLE

MYRTLE
Dear George you have my heart,
Ada McGrath.

She gives a little "Is that all?" gesture.

BAINES
You say it. (He points to BIG
SISTER, who has a crazy deep
voice.)

BIG SISTER

Dear George you have my heart,
Ada McGrath.

Another little girl spontaneously recites the message. And so does another. Through all this BAINES keeps his head down shaking it in disbelief and shy happiness. He starts to laugh with relief and pleasure. The little girls think it is something funny in the line and continue to repeat it, which each then appears to give BAINES fresh pleasure. Meanwhile the smallest of the girls is quietly helping herself to the sweets.

SCENE 127 DELETED

SCENE 128 DELETED

Sc 129EXT BAINES' DUSK Sc 129
BAINES rides up to his house in the evening light He is silly with happiness. HIRA comes running out to meet him

HIRA
Peini, Peini, liddle gel. I
seen her come up here, scream,
scream . blood on her. Look
bad... very bad

BAINES jumps off his horse and strides into his hut.

Sc 130INT BAINES' HUT DUSK Sc 130

Inside he finds FLORA crouching in a corner, her face is white, tear stained and splattered with mud. Her angel wings are squashed behind her and blood stained. On seeing BAINES she cries with renewed pain and relief

BAINES
What has happened? Hush, hush,
what is it?

FLORA thrusts the wrapped finger at BAINES. He takes the blood soaked object and unwraps it. The finger unravels into his hand, he reels back groaning, choking about to be sick.

FLORA
(yelling) He says you're not to
see her or he'll chop her up!

BAINES
(angry, horrified)
What happened?

But FLORA cannot speak. She bursts into loud sobs. BAINES kneels in front of her shaking her.

TELL ME! TELL ME!

BAINES stops shaking her, she scrambles away and out the door. BAINES chases after her.

Sc 131EXT BAINES DUSK Sc 131
FLORA screams as he catches her.

BAINES
Quiet down! Shhh! Where is she?

FLORA
(whimpering)
He chopped it off

BAINES
Jesus! I'll kill him! I'll kill
him.
What did she tell him?

(shaking her)
What?

HIRA
Put her down Peirn She is
liddle.

HIRA takes the quivering FLORA in her arms.

There girl. there

BAINES notices the blood on FLORA'S dress, he touches it, she shys away.

Sc 132EXT STEWARD'S HUT NIGHT Sc 132
STEWART walks outside his hut disconsolate.

Sc 133INT STEWARD'S HUT NIGHT Sc 133

STEWART enters ADA's room with a lamp. He puts it down beside her on the table. He studies her pale face and dry lips. ADA's eyes flicker open.

STEWART
(speaking to his feet)
I lost my temper. I'm sorry.

STEWART looks at ADA.

STEWART
You broke my trust, you pushed
me hard, to hard. (he sighs)
You cannot send love to HIM you
cannot do it. Even to think on
it makes me angry, very angry

ADA opens her eyes and looks at STEWART. It is evident she hears nothing and has understood nothing, she is struggling with pain. Her

face grimaces and she groans.

STEWART

I meant to love you. I clipped
your wing, that is all.

STEWART sings two lines of an English love ballad to ADA.

STEWART

We shall be together, you will
see it will be better...

Her forehead is damp with fever. She thrashes at the blankets. STEWART pulls them off to cool her. He feels her brow.

STEWART

(whispering) ...
my love bird.

Her nightgown is damp with sweat and clings to her body. STEWART reaches out to adjust her gown, his hand touches her leg and he holds it there, feeling a tingle of pleasure, that grows and builds the longer his hand remains.

STEWART

Ohhhhh my love

His hand begins to move further and further up her leg, nudging the nightgown higher and higher. He looks at her face. She is closed-eyed, unconscious. STEWART'S face crinkles into a pained expression and all his control melts into a drive to hold and extend this moment. He brings his mouth to her leg and begins to kiss her knee, her thigh. A new thought occurs to him, a terrible thought, but as he has phrased the thought to himself, he cannot resist it. He glances at her face still fevered and unconscious. Quietly, stealthily, he begins to undo his belt buckle. He bends across her to gently separate her legs. As he moves his body over her, he looks towards her and to his shame and horror she is looking directly back at him, her eyes perfectly on his, perfectly focused. Quietly STEWART moves back and pulls down her gown, all the time keeping his eyes on her.

STEWART

You are feeling better?

ADA's lips move slightly and STEWART turns suddenly as if he has heard something. Slowly he turns back to ADA.

STEWART looks at ADA intently, moving closer to her bed, closer to ADA his eyes locked on hers.

STEWART

What...?

The sound of his own voice makes him blink. He watches her as if listening to her speak in a voice that is so faint, and distant, that only with great concentration and perseverance can he make it out. As he watches her his face transforms; his eyes fill, his lips soften and

his eyebrows take on the exact expression of her own.

The kerosene lamp burns fitfully, fluttering a light pulse across their faces. STEWART moves closer to ADA. Outside a wind bangs the iron roof and rubs branches against each other making a high-pitched see-saw sound. He leans closer still.

Sc 134EXT STEWARTS NIGHT Sc 134

STEWART carrying a candle in a glass box makes his way through ghostly tree stumps. In his other arm he has his gun.

Sc 135EXT/INT BAINES' NIGHT Sc 135

At BAINES' hut STEWART steps over the curled figure of HIRA sleeping on the verandah and walks through the hut towards the bedroom where a lit candle flickers.

Sc 136INT BAINES' BEDROOMNIGHT Sc 136

In the bed lies FLORA wrapped in a blanket with BAINES beside her, axe in hand, both fast asleep. STEWART nudges BAINES awake with the butt of his rifle prodding him under the chin. BAINES wakes rudely with a start, frozen by the sight of STEWART and his rifle.

 STEWART
 Put that away, on the floor.

BAINES obeys, careful not to disturb the sleeping child. STEWART sits near the bed on a box, resting his gun across his knee, his face is glowing, he looks closely at BAINES, examining him.

 STEWART
 I look at you, at your face. I
 have had that face in my head
 hating it. But now I am here
 seeing it ... it's nothing, you
 blink, you have your mark, you
 look at me through your eyes,
 yes. you are even scared of me

STEWART laughs.

 STEWART
 Look at you!

BAINES watches him stiffly, disconcerted, unable to read STEWART'S strange mood. STEWART stares back at him.

 STEWART
 (softly)
 Has Ada ever spoken to you?

 BAINES
 You mean in signs?

 STEWART

No, words. You have never heard words?

BAINES
No, not words.

STEWART nods.

STEWART
Never thought you heard words?

BAINES shakes his head.

STEWART
(slowly)
She has spoken to me. I heard her voice. There was no sound, but I heard it here (he presses his forehead with a palm of his hand). Her voice was there in my head. I watched her lips, they did not make the words, yet the harder I listened the clearer I heard her, as clear as I hear you, as dear as I hear my own voice.

BAINES
(trying to understand)
Spoken words?

STEWART
No, but her words are in my head. (he looks at BAINES and pauses) I know what you think, that it's a trick, that I'm making it up. No, the words I heard, were her words.

BAINES
(suspiciously) What are they?

STEWART looks up at the ceiling as if reciting something he has learnt by heart and means to repeat exactly as he heard it.

STEWART
She said, "I have to go, let me go, let Baines take me away, let him try and save me. I am frightened of my will, of what it might do it is so strange and strong".

BAINES recovering himself eyes STEWART angrily.

BAINES

You punished her wrongly, it
was me, my fault.

STEWART does not answer. Finally he looks up, his eyes full with
tears.

STEWART
Understand me. I am here for
her, for her I wonder that I
don't wake, that I am not
asleep to be here talking with
you. I love her. But what is
the use? She doesn't care for
me. I wish her gone. I wish you
gone. I want to wake and find
it was a dream, that is what I
want. I want to believe I am
not this man. I want my self
back; the one I know.

FLORA moves and turns in her sleep. The two men watch. Her brow frowns
then smoothes. Her eyelids roll as her eyes dart back and forth in
dream.

Sc 137EXT STREAM NEAR BAINES'DAY Sc 137

HIRA washes out the mud from FLORA's dress and angel wings in a bush
stream.

Sc 138INT/EXT STEWART'S DAY Sc 138

ADA's trunks are delivered outside STEWART'S hut by AUNT MORAG and her
girls. ADA is led from STEWART'S hut by NESSIE. She wears a black
dress and her arm is tied in a white sling. The light outside makes
her blink. NESSIE smoothes her hair behind her shoulders. FLORA
timidly peeps at her mother from behind BAINES.

Sc 139EXT BUSH ON WAY TO BEACHDAY Sc 139

The piano is carried on ahead while in the secrecy of the bush BAINES
kisses ADA passionately. She looks back at him worried.

Sc 140EXT STEWART'S HTJT DAY Sc 140

STEWART is fencing his new land. Suddenly he looks off in to the far
distance.

Sc 141EXT BEACH DAY Sc 141

On the beach ADA sits looking out to sea while FLORA plaits her hair
in one thick braid behind her back. She places the bonnet carefully on
top. At the sea edge in front of them the piano is being loaded on the
canoe.

Sc 142EXT BEACH DAY Sc 142

HIRA and BAINES are next to each other by the canoe. HIRA is looking

at ADA,

HIRA
I worry for you.

BAINES
No, I love her, we will be a
family. I have her piano. I
will mend it, she will get
better.

HIRA
I miss you.

Sc 143EXT AT SEA/BEACH DAY Sc 143

The sea is choppy and the piano is difficult to steady in the canoe.
BAINES helps the rigging of the piano, thick rope ends coil under the
women's feet. HIRA is left on the shore with one child and two other
MAORI people.

Tears run openly down her big sad face as she sings her farewell to
BAINES.

HIRA
He rimu teretere koc etc. Peini
eeei,
Tere 'Ci Tawhiti 'ci Paniamao
eeei
He waka Teretere He waka
teretere.
Ko koe ka tere 'ci tua whakuere
eeei.

You are like seaweed drifting
in the sea BAINES.
Drift far away, drift far
beyond the horizon
A canoe glides hither, a canoe
glides thither
But you though will journey on
and eventually
be beyond the veil~)

UNSUBTITLED

(by Selwyn Mum)

MAROI OARSMEN
Tarinaharawa - alanel tahuri
ai.
(It's too heavy - the canoe
will tip over.)

SUBTITLED

BAINES
Keite pail Kaare e titahataha
aria.
(It's all right! Look it's

nicely balanced.)
SUBTITLED

ANOTHER OARSMAN
(Shrugging) Te-hau-jua-kahake
te pupuhi.
(The wind is already strong.)

ANOTHER OARSMAN
Leave it - its too heavy.

BAINES
No, she needs it, she must have
it.

SCENE 144 IS NOW COMBINED WITH SCENE 143
SCENE 144 DELETED

Sc 145EXT AT SEA/BEACHDAY Sc 145

The canoe has paddled away from the shore. FLORA leans over the edge
of the canoe, her mouth open, her hair held back by BAINES.

FLORA
I can't

BAINES rubs her back. FLORA straightens up.

I can't.

They retake their seats, FLORA's back to the piano, while BAINES sits
next to ADA. He tenderly takes her good hand. ADA removes hers and
signs to FLORA who looks at her mother then BAINES amazed.

BAINES
What did she say?

FLORA
(puzzled) She says, throw the
piano overboard.

BAINES
(to ADA) It's quite safe, they
are managing...

ADA signs again.

BAINES
(Cautiously) What?

FLORA
She says, throw it overboard.
She doesn't want it. She says
it's spoiled

BAINES

I have the key here, look, I'll
have it mended...

ADA mimes directly to BAINES, "PUSH IT OVER". Her determination is increasing.

MAORI OARSMAN

Ae! Peja. Turakina'. Bushit?
Peja te kawheha kite moana.
(Yeah she's right push it over,
push the coffin in the water.)

SUBTITLED

BAINES

(softly, urgently) Please, Ada,
you will regret it. It's your
piano, I want you to have it.

But ADA does not listen, she is adamant and begins to untie the ropes.

FLORA

(panicking)
She doesn't want IT!

The canoe is unbalancing as ADA struggles with the ropes.

BAINES

All right. sit down, sit down.

ADA sits, pleased. Her eyes glow and her face is now alive.

BAINES speaks to the MAORIS who stop paddling and together they loosen the ropes securing the piano to the canoe.

As they maneuver the piano to the edge ADA Jocks into the water. She puts her hand into the sea and moves it back and forth.

The piano is carefully lowered and with a heave topples over. As the piano splashes into the sea, the loose ropes speed their way after it. ADA watches them snake past her feet and then out of a fatal curiosity, odd and undisciplined, she steps into a loop.

The rope tightens and grips her foot so that she is snatched into the sea, and pulled by the piano down through the cold water.

Sc 146INT SEA NEAR BEACH DAY Sc 146

Bubbles tumble from her mouth. Down she falls, on and on. her eyes are open, her clothes twisting about her. The MAORIS diving after her cannot reach her in these depths. ADA begins to struggle. She kicks at the rope, but it holds tight around her boot. She kicks hard again and then with her other foot, levers herself free from her shoe. The piano and her shoe continue their fall while ADA floats above, suspended in the deep water, then suddenly her body awakes and fights, struggling upwards to the surface.

Sc 147 EXT AT SEA BEACH DAY Sc 147

As ADA breaks the surface her VOICE OVER begins:

ADA (VOICE OVER)
What a death!
What a chance!
What a surprise!
My will has chosen life!?
Still it has had me spooked and
many others besides!

ADA coughing and spluttering is pulled on to the canoe. She is wrapped in jackets and blankets.

Sc 148INT SEA NEAR BEACH DAY Sc 148

Underwater we see the canoe bottom, its oars dipping the surface

Sc 149INT ADA'S NELSON DRAWING ROOM DUSK Sc 149

ADA (VOICE OVER)
I teach piano now in Nelson.
George has fashioned me a metal
finger tip, I am quite the town
freak which satisfies! I am
learning to speak. My sound is
still so bad I am ashamed. I
practice only when I am alone
and it is dark.

ADA's hands move across the piano keys, her metal finger shines in the dull light.

DISSOLVE TO:

Sc 150INT ADA'S NELSON DRAWING ROOM NIGHT Sc 150

ADA paces up and down the small drawing room. There are no lights on only a dim blue evening wash. Over her head she has a dark cloth, her voice makes low guttural sounds as it repeats the vowels.

DISSOLVE TO:

Sc 151INT SEA BED NEAR BEACH DAY Sc 151

ADA (VOICE OVER)
At night! I think of my piano
in its ocean grave, and
sometimes of myself floating
above it. Down there everything
is so still and silent that it
lulls me to sleep. It is a
weird lullaby and so it is; it
is mine.

ADA's piano on the seabed, its lid fallen away. Above floats ADA, her hair and arms stretched out in a gesture of surrender, her body slowly

turning on the end of the rope. The seaweed's rust coloured fronds reach out to touch her.

THERE IS A SILENCE WHERE HATH BEEN NO SOUND
THERE IS A SILENCE WHERE NO SOUND MAY BE
IN THE COLD GRAVE, UNDER THE DEEP DEEP SEA.

(Hood)

NOTES AND EXTRA DIALOGUE

1.

Sc 10 SEAMAN'S DISCUSSION

The wind and the low manner of their speaking makes it impossible to hear the exact nature of the discussion.

-'Tis a dead shore, a dead shore

-Leave her here, it's what she wanted.

-A pox on you!

-Ay very nice, leave her and be lynched for the pleasure.

-Do what you like, I'm off this shore

ETC.

2.

Sc 12 ART DEPARTMENT NOTE

ADA's finger is seen INSIDE the dark crate sounding a few notes

3.

Sc 15 TRANSLATION NOTE

(i) With the MAORI language dialogue of BAINES and the MAORI PEOPLE, the general scheme is that only when necessary to sense or humour will subtitled translation be given. However for the benefit of its readers this script will translate everything noting what will and won't be subtitled.

(ii)EXTRA MAORI DIALOGUE SC 15

Awe!

(What wag that?)

-He Kehua?

(Is it a ghost)

UNSUBTITLED

(iii)Many of the MAORIS have coughs, running noses and sores.

(They have no immunity to European diseases.)

(iv)MAORI NAMES

MEN

TnTame

VitoHotu

HonePara
TipiKahu (boy)

WOMEN
TaiAni

4.
Sc 19

(i)BACKGROUND DIALOGUE FOR BEGINNING OF SCENE

He ahu te rarurarti
(what happened?)
SUBTITLED

I konei tonu, ka moe te koroua nei.
(He just decided to go to sleep)
SUBTITLED

(ii)BACKGROUND DIALOGUE FOR END OF SCENE

Taiho. Kei muri pea inga rakan nei. Auc!
Tino matatoru konei.
Me haere ake ano an ki runga.

(Hold on maybe behind this clump. Gee the
undergrowth is thick here. I'll come up again.)

UNSUBTITLED

Kahore ne huarahi - kahorene tutae.
(No track, no shit)
UNSUBTITLED

5.
Sc 29ADA's piano piece duration approximately 90 sees.

6.
Sc 30Duet 20-30 sees

7.
Sc 33FLORA's singing 20 sees

8.
Sc 34HENI/MARY phrasing of National Anthem

HENI/MARY

Got safe ah gayshy Quin
Long hf a gayshy Quin
Oat shayf a Quin
Shendab Wikitoria
Har - py en a Clohria
Long to rain ourush
Got Safe ah Quin

9.

Sc 37 TRANSLATION NOTE:

Who is it that rumbles within?
Is it Ruaumoko, is it Ruaurnoko?
Jab, smash, jab, smash
Jab, smash, jab, smash
The Taniwha, the Taniwba.
That is within ... He!
UNSUBTITLED

10.

Sc 65 The mud around the School Hall is so deep that a labyrinths of planks is setup to avoid it.

11.

Sc 87 Extra dialogue

MAORI PIANO CARRIERS

Tahi Patene ruapuri patene
Tekan patene ornatekau pwari patene
(One button, two bloody buttons.
Ten buttons, twenty bloody buttons.)
'cia Whai tarau ano ra monga patene!
(We need pants for the buttons eh!)

He patene te kai, he patene te kai A popo ka tiko patene ahan patene
ma nga tangata katoa.

(Buttons for food, buttons for food. Buttons for everybody. By
tomorrow I'll be shitting buttons.)

12.

Sc 100 Approximately 60 sec. of ADA's piano playing.