

DREAMSTRUCK

By

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Dreamstruck—Character Outlines

NAT (NATHANIEL) HELMER (b January 1989, Melbourne) is a lanky Year 12 student (2006), with tousled red-brown hair and a mischievous streak. Popular at school and a champion swimmer, he trains each day. He is in a relationship with Clara and seems fated to become a lawyer like his father. All this changes after his mother and sister die in a car crash. Dreams invade his life.

CLARA HOFFNUNG (b March 1989, San Francisco) came to Australia at age five. Attractive, blonde and of medium height, she is outwardly sympathetic to others. A messy eater with a fiery temper, she equates trendiness with good taste and fitness with grace. In Year 12 (2006), she wants to study fashion design. She does part-time modelling work.

OLYMPIA SPALANZANI (b December 1988, Naples) is a young Venus with dark, wavy hair. A Year 12 student (2006), she came to Australia at age seven. A keen surfer, Olympia has a habit of whistling and walks with a perky spring in her step. She plays cello and plans to become a nurse.

DIS (b April 1983) is a biker and *Big Brother* contestant. Not overly handsome, he is down-to-earth and appealing.

MORPHEUS, dream dealer, looks 25. He is handsome and super-fit. A dark, androgynous angel, he charms both sexes. Favours T-shirts and designer jeans. Loves roller-blading.

BUSKER, thin and unkempt, looks about 30. Fiercely protective of nature. Sings, plays flute.

FREDRIK HELMER (b1950, Melbourne), Nat's father, is a successful corporate lawyer with a drinking problem. He contracts multiple sclerosis in early 1990.

MAUDE HELMER (b October 1955, Melbourne) is Nat's mother.

ALBERTINE HELMER (b January 1989, Melbourne) is Nat's twin sister. Rich red hair. Flautist. Kendo enthusiast. In Year 12 (2006).

OLYMPIA'S BOYFRIEND (b1987) Marine biology student. Surfer.

***Dreamstruck*—Production Note**

A significant number of sequences call for an intermingling of live action and animated/effects imagery.

1. INT. HOSPITAL. AFTERNOON. WINTER 2012. 1.

NAT lies comatose in Prince Edward's Hospital.

A wall clock/calendar (analogue clock-face) shows early afternoon, 6 August 2012.

Nat is hooked up to a panoply of tubes and medical paraphernalia.

His closed eyelids loom large but show not a skerrick of movement.

2. EXT. RIVERSIDE ROAD. DUSK. SPRING 2006. 2.

It is early spring. An expensive European car, containing MAUDE (at the wheel) and ALBERTINE (front seat) speeds past on the boulevard.

3. INT. CAR. DUSK. SPRING 2006. 3.

MAUDE is heavily made-up. She wears a subtly sexy dress and plenty of rings and jewellery. ALBERTINE is in school uniform; her only adornment is a discreet gold necklace. The radio is playing late-1960s Miles Davis.

4. INT. SCHOOL POOL CHANGEROOM. DUSK. SPRING 2006. 4.

NAT gets into his swim gear.

5. INT. HELMER EN SUITE. DUSK. SPRING 2006. 5.

FREDRIK soaps himself in the bath. An expensive motorised wheelchair sits next to the tub. (The bathroom is fitted out with aids to assist a disabled person to use its facilities.) Wagner (Siegfried's Rhine journey) plays through speakers set into the wall. A decanter of Scotch and a glass sit on the bath's ledge.

6. EXT. COASTAL BEACH. DUSK. SPRING 2004. 6.

OLYMPIA surfs shoreward on a friendly wave. The setting sun's rays play on the sea surface.

7. INT. DRESSING ROOM. DUSK. SPRING 2006. 7.

CLARA, in school uniform, enters a fashion photographer's storage-cum-dressing room and shuts the door behind her.

A disorderly array of equipment surrounds the dressing table. Several teen-market swimsuits hang on a rack.

Clara dumps her schoolbag on the floor.

8. INT. CAR. DUSK. SPRING 2006. 8.

The car is heading west. The backs of MAUDE'S and ALBERTINE'S heads are sheathed in the light of the setting sun. A flute case lies on the backseat.

Albertine leans forward, flicks radio to a pop music station.

RADIO DJ (O/S)
...touch that dial. We'll be
back with more of 2006's
monster hits...

9. INT. SCHOOL POOL. DUSK. SPRING 2006. 9.

NAT, carrying towel and goggles, strides out of the changing room into the pool area.

No one else is around.

10. INT. HELMER EN SUITE. DUSK. SPRING 2006. 10.

FREDRIK drops the soap into the soap holder, sighs and lies back in the bath.

11. EXT. COASTAL BEACH. DUSK. SPRING 2006. 11.

OLYMPIA emerges from the ocean carrying her surfboard.

12. INT. DRESSING ROOM. DUSK. SPRING 2006. 12.

CLARA places her blazer on an old wire hanger and hangs it on the rack.

13. INT. CAR. DUSK. SPRING 2006. 13.

MAUDE and ALBERTINE argue and wrestle with the choice of radio stations.

14. EXT. RIVERSIDE ROAD. DUSK. SPRING 2006. 14.

The car hurtles along.

15. INT. SCHOOL POOL. DUSK. SPRING 2006. 15.

NAT throws his towel onto a poolside bench.

16. INT. HELMER EN SUITE. DUSK. SPRING 2006. 16.

FREDRIK pours a drink from the decanter into his glass.

17. EXT. COASTAL BEACH. DUSK. SPRING 2004. 17.

OLYMPIA walks over the sand towards her prone BOYFRIEND.

18. INT. DRESSING ROOM. DUSK. SPRING 2006. 18.

CLARA slips her dress over her head. Her underwear is upmarket rather than schoolgirl functional.

19. INT. CAR. DUSK. SPRING 2006. 19.

MAUDE, one hand on the wheel, uses her other arm to vehemently push ALBERTINE away from the radio switch and change the station back to Miles Davis. As she does so, Maude loses control of the speeding car.

20. EXT. RIVERSIDE ROAD. DUSK. SPRING 2006. 20.

The car swerves across oncoming traffic and onto the wide grassy riverbank.

21. INT. SCHOOL POOL. DUSK. SPRING 2006. 21.

NAT stands on his lane's starting block and stares at the water.

22. INT. HELMER EN SUITE. DUSK. SPRING 2006. 22.

In the bath, FREDRIK gulps down his whisky.

23. EXT. COASTAL BEACH. DUSK. SPRING 2006. 23.

OLYMPIA puts her board down on the sand next to her boyfriend's board.

Her BOYFRIEND sits up.

24. INT. DRESSING ROOM. DUSK. SPRING 2006. 24.

CLARA'S hands fasten the bikini top behind her back.

She twirls in front of the dusty mirror, checking her costume.

25. EXT. RIVERBANK. DUSK. SPRING 2006. 25.

People partying round a barbecue scatter.

Maude's car bounces off the barbecue.

Steaks and sausages cannon into the air.

26. INT. SCHOOL POOL. DUSK. SPRING 2006. 26.

NAT pulls down and adjusts his goggles.

27. INT. PHOTOGRAPHER'S STUDIO. DUSK. SPRING 2006. 27.

A MAKE-UP ARTIST applies some final touches to CLARA.

28. INT. HELMER EN SUITE. DUSK. SPRING 2006. 28.

FREDRIK submerges himself completely under the bathwater.

29. EXT. COASTAL BEACH. DUSK. SPRING 2006. 29.

OLYMPIA and her BOYFRIEND embrace.

30. INT. PHOTOGRAPHER'S STUDIO. DUSK. SPRING 2006. 30.

CLARA poses as the FASHION PHOTOGRAPHER shoots.

31. INT. SCHOOL POOL. DUSK. SPRING 2006. 31.

NAT dives into the pool.

32. EXT. RIVER. DUSK. SPRING 2006. 32.

The car spins on into the water and sinks.

33. INT. SCHOOL POOL. DUSK. SPRING 2006. 33.

NAT swims strongly towards the far end of the pool.

34. INT. CHURCH. MORNING. SPRING 2006. 34.

A persistent thrum of heavy rain can be heard in the background (people are dressed for wet weather; their raincoats and umbrellas have dripped water).

Two flower-draped coffins are in front of the altar.

FREDRIK, wheelchair-bound, and NAT are in the front row of mourners.

Wet from rain, the school contingent, including CLARA and OLYMPIA (not together), files into the church and begins to take seats near the back.

CLARA separates from the school ranks and comes forward to sit with Nat.

A small pin, a representation of a Viking helmet, is attached to Fredrik's lapel.

Nat wears a shirt, tie, dark trousers and unpolished black shoes. Over the shirt, he wears a too-small, raggedy crewneck jumper.

FREDRIK (O/S)
(whispers)
Such a ridiculous get up...

.... /34.

34. CONT'D

Fredrik glares at Nat.

FREDRIK (CONT'D)
...why you've chosen, I
can't fathom.

Nat's hand is on his belly. He scrunches at his jumper.

NAT (O/S)
(vehement)
Mum knitted it.

Nat's fingernails pick away at a small patch of
congealed egg on his jumper.

FREDRIK (O/S)
Should have worn a jacket.
You don't have any idea.

NAT
She made it when I was
twelve.

FREDRIK
(exasperated)
Look! A real man...

NAT
You don't remember that, do
you?

Nat stares at the candles beside the coffins. Clara
takes Nat's hand and squeezes it.

FREDRIK (O/S)
...someone with Norse blood
in their veins, would show
more respect...

NAT
(hisses)
What about her blood?

Nat's free hand fiddles at the frayed hem of his
jumper.

34. CONT'D

Nat looks at Clara, and then back at the candles.

The candles blur and fill Nat's eyes with a chaotic flickering. He closes them.

35. EXT. MEMORY PARKSCAPE. DAY. 35.

It is a bright spring morning. MAUDE and four-year-olds NAT and ALBERTINE are heading towards the park's playground. The twins are racing each other on tricycles. Maude, laughing, runs to keep up.

36. INT. CHURCH. MORNING. SPRING 2006. 36.

NAT opens his eyes.

The Lutheran MINISTER stands next to the coffins.

MINISTER

...and it is particularly tragic that these deaths occurred...

The MINISTER sees the whole congregation spread out in front of him.

MINISTER (CONT'D) (O/S)

...in early spring, with new life (SNEEZES) blossoming all around...

37. INT. SPECIALIST'S. AFTERNOON. SUMMER 1990. 37.

FREDRIK and MAUDE, holding hands, sit huddled in front of the SPECIALIST. (All wear 1980s fashions and the décor exudes the period. It is a hot day. The specialist's office is in his home. The window is open and a ceiling fan whirs at high speed, ruffling loose papers.) A smoking cigarette hangs from the specialist's lips. One-year-old NAT fidgets in Maude's lap, coughing and irritated by the smoke. One-year-old ALBERTINE is asleep in the twins' pram.

.... / 37.

37. CONT'D

The specialist's hands sift through the jumbled desktop chaos—files, pens, stationery, overflowing ashtray.

MAUDE (O/S)
(exasperated)
Could you please put that
out, doctor?

The specialist stubs out the cigarette.

Maude sees sweat drops on Fredrik's temples and his tongue circling the rims of his slightly trembling lips.

Maude huddles closer to Fredrik.

The specialist finds Fredrik's file.

Fredrik sees Maude's eyes are teary.

The specialist opens Fredrik's file.

Maude's eyes tilt downwards.

Maude sees the top of Nat's head.

The specialist looks up from Fredrik's file.

SPECIALIST
I'm sorry, Mr Helmer, there
is no doubt. These latest
tests confirm multiple
sclerosis...

Maude squeezes Fredrik's hand.

Fredrik looks at Maude and Nat. He lets go of Maude's hand and leans forward, elbows on the desk, mouth set, eyes shut, hands cupping his ears.

SPECIALIST (CONT'D) (O/S)
...but it's a chronic form
which most likely will take
decades to seriously affect
you.

38. EXT. CHURCH. MORNING. SPRING 2006. 38.

The church is in a converted mansion. NAT and FREDRIK wait on the verandah outside the entrance. It is raining heavily.

Various mourners, including OLYMPIA, come up to offer their sympathies.

The two rain-spattered coffins are loaded into the hearses.

39. INT. CHURCH. MORNING. SPRING 2006. 39.

NAT comes in the front door and wanders back through the darkened main hallway.

Nat stops in front of a shelf holding a model of a Viking ship.

He examines the model carefully.

Lettering on a small metal plate indicates the ship's name is the *Oseberg*.

CLARA emerges from the toilets at the end of the hall and joins Nat in front of the model ship.

CLARA

Your grumpy old Dad wouldn't last a day if he had to live as a real Viking...

Clara drizzles her finger down the ship's sail.

CLARA (CONT'D) (O/S)

...sailing on one of these.

NAT

Look. If he didn't have MS...

Clara laughs softly.

Nat stares hard at the model. His eyes close.

40. EXT. SEASCAPE DAYDREAM. DAY. 40.

The *Oseberg*, fully-crewed, sails past a craggy coastline. 'Viking Chief Nat' stands proud and in command.

41. INT. CHURCH. MORNING. SPRING 2006. 41.

NAT remains, eyes closed in front of the model ship. CLARA walks away towards the front door.

42. INT. HELMER HOUSE. NIGHT. WINTER 1993. 42.

The bedroom's ceiling light is on. Both bedside lights are off. FREDRIK lies in bed staring at the ceiling. He wears a nightshirt.

A walking stick is propped against Fredrik's bedside cabinet.

Aslant on Fredrik's bedside cabinet is a legal brief dated July 1993.

An antique boy doll in a little sailor suit is propped on Maude's bedside cabinet.

The sounds of MAUDE brushing her teeth float through from the en suite bathroom.

Maude emerges from the bathroom in winter nightie, dressing gown and slippers. She heads through the bedroom door and into the hallway.

Fredrik surreptitiously watches Maude leave the room.

Maude switches on the hall light and walks along to the children's rooms. She leaves the hallway, enters Albertine's room, leans over four-year-old ALBERTINE'S bed. (Cutesy 'Albertine' nameplate on door; the room is illuminated by light coming in from the hallway through the open door. Albertine lies fast asleep in winter pyjamas.) Maude kisses Albertine's head, leaves Albertine's room and crosses into four-year-old NAT'S room. (Viking style 'Nat' nameplate on door. A night light softly illuminates Nat. He sleeps restlessly. Blankets are askew; the cover is on the floor.) Maude goes over and fixes Nat's bedding. She kisses and strokes Nat's forehead as he tosses in his sleep.

43. INT. HELMER BEDROOM. NIGHT. WINTER 1993. 43.

FREDRIK takes a series of swigs from a flask.

He surreptitiously returns flask to its hiding place in a bedside drawer.

The hallway light is extinguished. Maude comes in through the door, crosses to the bed, switches on her bedside light, goes back to the door, switches off the ceiling light, takes off her dressing gown, hangs it behind the door, returns to the bed, gets in and snuggles shivering under the doona.

MAUDE

(accusingly)

You forgot to turn on the electric blanket.

Fredrik lies staring at the ceiling.

Maude turns on her side of the electric blanket.

She begins to read a volume of Proust.

Fredrik looks at the bedside clock radio which shows 10.23pm.

He returns to staring at the ceiling.

Maude continues reading.

Fredrik leans over and kisses and strokes Maude.

Maude's book falls onto the doona as she cradles and kisses Fredrik's head.

Still cradling Fredrik's head, Maude picks up her book and goes on reading.

A cry penetrates through the wall from Nat's room.

NAT (O/S)

(panic-stricken)

Don't let him get me.

Fredrik turns away on his side.

.... /43.

43. CONT'D

MAUDE

Oh no, not another nightmare
Nat.

Maude throws down her book and starts to leap out of bed.

44. EXT. RIVERSIDE. AFTERNOON. SPRING 2006. 44.

NAT and CLARA walk by the river.

They negotiate a splintered gap in a post-and-rail barrier, and go down a chaotic trail of tyre ruts in the grass that is bordered by damaged vegetation.

At the water's edge, Clara throws two white roses into the river.

45. INT. SCHOOL GYM. MORNING. LATE WINTER 2006. 45.

ALBERTINE and CLARA engage in a vigorous bout of kendo practice.

The Japanese INSTRUCTOR looks on.

Bout over, the two girls remove their masks, bow and grin broadly at each other.

46. INT. ART GALLERY. MORNING. LATE WINTER 2006. 46.

A group of high school students is scattered around the gallery.

OLYMPIA gesticulates, explaining a painting to ALBERTINE.

NAT and CLARA peel off from a small group on the other side of the gallery and leave the room.

47. INT. GALLERY LOBBY. MORNING. LATE WINTER 2006. 47.

NAT and CLARA pass a poster advertising an exhibition as being held during August 2006.

48. INT. GALLERY CAFÉ. MORNING. LATE WINTER 2006. 48.

CLARA'S hand finishes drawing a fashion design concept in her visual diary (the diary lies directly in front of her almost-full glass of water), moves to her half-finished long black and lifts it from the café table to her lips. She sips sloppily (coffee dribbles down the outside of the cup) and smiles. (Clara's design idea is derivative of clothes in the painting she and Nat looked at just before they left the exhibition space.)

NAT sits drinking her in and enjoying his freshly-squeezed orange juice.

Nat, still looking at Clara, puts down the half-full glass. His lips are orange-smudged with pulpy juice.

CLARA
(giggles)

What?

Clara puts her cup down.

Nat's hands turn the open visual diary round, navigate it to his side of the table, flip through a few of the many previous drawings.

CLARA (O/S)
Well?

Nat's hands leave the visual diary open at Clara's latest sketch.

NAT (O/S)
It's great, really good.
Another winner for your
portfolio.

Clara takes Nat's hands in hers.

CLARA
Damn right. I agree.

They hold hands and exchange gazes.

Nat shifts in his seat.

.... /48.

48. CONT'D

NAT

You know, after we're
famous, someone'll do a
painting.

Clara slides the visual diary around to her side of the
glass of water and looks admiringly at her drawing.

CLARA

(laughs)

What?

NAT

Of us.

Nat fishes in his pocket, takes out a small box and
displays it.

NAT (CONT'D)

Sitting here.

Nat opens the box and flourishes a plain gold ring.

NAT (CONT'D)

When I give you this!

Clara's eagle eyes sparkle. She rocks back and forth in
her chair.

CLARA

(sucking breath in)

Wow!

Clara daintily extends a hand.

CLARA (CONT'D)

Amazing, Nat!

Nat's fingers fumble and drop the ring into the glass
of water. The small splash results in one or two drops
falling on Clara's sketch.

Clara grabs a paper serviette. She carefully dabs the
sketch to soak up the water drops.

.... /48.

48. CONT'D

The sketch's soft pencil lines are smudged in a few places.

NAT
(flustered)
Not too much damage done.

Nat leans forward and gingerly attempts to retrieve the ring from the bottom of an almost-full glass of water. Archimedes' Principle prevails. Water sloshes out onto Clara's drawing. The diary is soaked. The ring remains in the glass.

Clara looks on in disbelief.

CLARA
Huh! You idiot.

Nat yanks several paper serviettes from the dispenser on the table, stands and tries to mop up the mess. The drawing becomes more and more smudged.

CLARA (CONT'D)
(vehement)
Give it here.

Clara grabs the diary from the table and clutches it to her breast.

She glares at Nat.

Nat stands, clasped hands dangling in front of his genitals, squeezing a soggy clump of paper serviettes. Water seeps out and stains his trousers.

NAT
(hopeful)
We're still getting engaged
though?

Clara looks Nat up and down, observing his wet trousers and orange-tinged mouth.

Clara erupts into laughter, puts her diary down, takes a fresh serviette from the dispenser. Shaking with amusement, she stands and moves towards Nat.

48. CONT'D

CLARA

Fuckwit!

Using the serviette, Clara soaks up some of the water on Nat's trousers and wipes the juice from his lips.

49. EXT. SCHOOLYARD. LUNCHTIME. LATE WINTER 2006. 49.

NAT laughs and rough-houses with friends.

CLARA and ALBERTINE sit apart from the rowdiness, sharing their lunches and leafing through the pages of a teengirl magazine. Albertine eats daintily. Clara tends to collect food particles around her mouth and on her clothes.

Albertine's finger hovers above a page that features Clara as a model in a fashion spread. She's in a park wearing a hot pink summer dress ('cool casuals').

ALBERTINE

Here's you. Look!

CLARA

(mouth half full)

It was freezing that day.

ALBERTINE

That's why you look so cool!

The two girls laugh.

Clara assumes a conspiratorial air.

CLARA

Something happened on the gallery trip the other day.

ALBERTINE

(curious)

What?

CLARA

You can't tell anyone.
Promise?

.... /49.

49. CONT'D

ALBERTINE

Promise.

Clara gazes seriously at Albertine.

ALBERTINE (CONT'D)

Promise.

Clara has a chain round her neck but it is hidden under her blouse; she reaches under the top of her blouse and exposes the chain. Threaded on it, the ring Nat gave her glints in the sunlight.

ALBERTINE (CONT'D)

Ooh.

CLARA

It's from your brother.

ALBERTINE

Nat?

Both girls glance over to where Nat is fooling around with his friends.

CLARA

Uha!

ALBERTINE

Wow! So?

CLARA

Yes!

Clara and Albertine hug.

ALBERTINE

Mum and Dad'll go loopy.

CLARA

You promised not to tell.

ALBERTINE

Sure. Sure. But what about your Mum?

49. CONT'D

CLARA

Of course she knows, silly.

ALBERTINE

It's all so cool.

CLARA

And, we'll become properly engaged when I turn eighteen.

ALBERTINE

Gee, Clara that's ages.

CLARA

Six months? It's barely enough time for me to design my outfit!

ALBERTINE

(excited)

A toast!

They laugh and clink their plastic mineral water bottles.

50. INT. SCHOOL HALL. EVENING. LATE WINTER 2006. 50.

NAT jokes with friends at back of the hall. CLARA is with him.

FREDRIK, in wheelchair, and MAUDE are in the audience.

The school orchestra begins to play an arrangement of 'Danny Boy'. OLYMPIA is a cellist. ALBERTINE plays the flute.

Nat quietens down as the tune invades his awareness. His eyes close dreamily.

51. FOUR-YEAR-OLD NAT'S 'SANDMAN' DREAM. 51.

Four-year-old NAT's face lies dreaming.

.... /51.

51. CONT'D

An owl's wings flutter.

Grains of sand fly from out of the wing-feathers; the sand glistens moonlight-silver.

MORPHEUS (O/S)
Sweet dreams ...

The sand grains float down and cover the eyes of three children huddled together asleep in a big old bed of the type that inhabits fairy tales.

The downpouring of sand increases to a deluge. Children, bed and all are buried.

52. INT. NAT'S ROOM. NIGHT. WINTER 1993. 52.

Four-year-old NAT sits curled up on his bed, rocking violently.

NAT
(screaming)
Don't let him in. Don't let
the sandman get me!

MAUDE races in the door.

MAUDE
Alright Nat. It's alright.

She sits on the bed and comforts him, cradles him.

MAUDE
(croons)
O Danny boy, the pipes, the
pipes are calling...

53. INT. SCHOOL HALL. EVENING. LATE WINTER 2006. 53.

An empty blackness with tiny golden sand speckles drifting down from nowhere into nowhere.

.... /53.

53. CONT'D

MAUDE (O/S)
(croons)
from glen to glen and down
the mountainside...

The sound of Olympia's solo cello takes over from Maude and continues with the tune of 'Danny Boy'.

NAT'S eyes are shut in dreaming. He opens them slowly.

Nat's gaze is drawn to OLYMPIA playing on stage. The spotlight is on her for the solo.

Nat, rapt, smiles to himself. CLARA turns her eyes from the stage to watching Nat's face. She pouts in annoyance.

CLARA
(whispering in Nat's
ear)
I'm bored. Let's go outside.

NAT
Shush!

54. INT. AQUATIC CENTRE. NIGHT. LATE WINTER 2006. 54.

An excited crowd, including CLARA, ALBERTINE and OLYMPIA (with her BOYFRIEND), sees Nat narrowly win the race.

Clara watches enthralled as Nat is awarded a trophy.

55. INT. CLASSROOM. DAY. LATE WINTER 2006. 55.

During Legal Studies, NAT expounds on the limitations in the legal system. OLYMPIA is in the class.

..../55.

55. CONT'D

NAT

...but because they're always only judging just two sides, courts can't always promote what's best all round. Look, say a neighbourhood association's fighting the environmental impact of a large truck depot operating nearby. The court only has three options: find for the residents; find for the trucking company; or, order some sort of compromise. The court *can't*, as a solution to the case, order railway freight services to be improved so as to lessen our reliance on roads.

The TEACHER listens attentively, nodding.

56. INT. NAT'S ROOM. AFTERNOON. LATE WINTER 2006. 56.

The shelves over the desk are filled with trophies.

CLARA and NAT are in bed having furtive adolescent sex.

Muffled sounds seep through the bedroom wall—the front door opening, FREDRIK and MAUDE entering the house. Clara and Nat are too engrossed to notice.

FREDRIK (O/S)

...an 'impossible man'. I'll show you 'impossible'. Wait till we get to court and...

MAUDE (O/S)

Yes. Yes. Take refuge in the law. It'll give cold comfort.

.... /56.

56. CONT'D

FREDRIK (O/S)

More than I get from you
these days. (Pause) God,
it's hot in here...

MAUDE (O/S)

Nat's at swim practice?

FREDRIK (O/S)

(frustrated)

Yes. And Albertine's at
kendo... It's always the
kids with you...

MAUDE (O/S)

And the bottle with you...

FREDRIK (O/S)

Shut the door after you. We
don't want to heat the whole
suburb.

The sound of the front door being well and truly
slammed penetrates the wall. Nat and Clara freeze.

FREDRIK (CONT'D) (O/S)

No half measures with you,
eh Maude?

Nat and Clara uncouple and sit bolt upright. (Their
dialogue overlaps and intermingles with the parents'
dialogue from outside the bedroom.)

CLARA

Fuck!

MAUDE (O/S)

No. They're your specialty.
Right now my heart tells me
it's all or nothing.

NAT

Shit! They're home early.

56. CONT'D

MAUDE (CONT'D) (O/S)
You're the half-hearted one.

CLARA
Huh! State the bleeding
obvious.

Nat and Clara feverishly go about dressing themselves.

FREDRIK (O/S)
Yes. Yes. And you're the
hard-hearted one. Stony.

MAUDE (O/S)
Huh. Dogs can bark but the
caravan moves on.

FREDRIK (O/S)
Can't be too soon for me.

Nat's pace of dressing slows down as he gives priority
to his parents' quarrel. Clara is amused by the
argument.

MAUDE (O/S)
Fine.

FREDRIK (O/S)
Yes. Fine. Fine and dandy.

MAUDE (O/S)
OK. Now we're pals again,
I'll put dinner on then
go...

FREDRIK (O/S)
Yes, go for Christ's sake!

MAUDE (O/S)
...I'll put it on. Then I'll
go and pick up Albertine.
Make sure nothing burns.

.... /56.

56. CONT'D

FREDRIK (O/S)

Sure. Sure. Shit, I need a
drink!

Now dressed, Clara checks her face in the wardrobe
mirror.

CLARA

Shall we pop out and say
hello?

57. INT. COURTROOM. AFTERNOON. LATE SPRING 2006. 57.

On a school excursion, NAT watches FREDRIK, riding his
wheelchair like a battle-charger, harrying a witness.
OLYMPIA is among the students.

58. INT. CORRIDOR. AFTERNOON. LATE SPRING 2006. 58.

The school party exits the courtroom.

OLYMPIA draws alongside NAT as they leave.

OLYMPIA

Your Dad was pretty slick
back there.

NAT

So.

OLYMPIA

Must be hard for him.

NAT

Why? He's been doing it
forever.

OLYMPIA

No. I mean. It's only a few
weeks since...

NAT

So what?

...../58.

58. CONT'D

OLYMPIA
...since the accident.

NAT
So what would he care?

Olympia puts an arm round Nat's shoulder.

One of a group of male students walking nearby eyes the pair and nudges his mates.

STUDENT
(hollers)
Go Natty!

Nat gives student the finger.

OLYMPIA (O/S)
Oh, Nat. I know it's hard
for you too.

NAT
Fuck yes. I'm the one having
difficulty concentrating.
Not that drunken bastard.

Olympia shakes her head, leaves Nat's side and joins a group of female students.

Nat ambles on, stony-faced.

NAT
(mutters)
Fuck. Her seeing me this
way. Fuck.

Nat plops down onto an empty bench in the corridor and leans forward, his hands covering his eyes.

59. EXT. RIVERBANK. DUSK. 59.

A salvage crane hauls Maude's car out from under the river's surface.

60. INT. CORRIDOR. AFTERNOON. LATE SPRING 2006. 60.

On the corridor bench, NAT leans forward, his hands covering his eyes. As if posing for a photograph, MAUDE and ALBERTINE sit either side of him. They are dressed as they were just before the crash but are drenched in water.

61. INT. NAT'S ROOM. MORNING. SUMMER 2007. 61.

The curtains are shut. A chink of sunbeam across the messy desktop reveals a once-scrunched-now-decrumpled letter dated January 2007 advising Nat Helmer has been accepted into Commerce. Clothes are strewn on the floor. A bowl of soggy, cloggy barely-touched weetbix lies on the floor beside a half-drunken mug of coffee. The bedside clock shows 10.25.

NAT's form lies askew, huddled and hidden under the doona.

The front doorbell chimes.

Under the covers, Nat mumbles and stirs fitfully but does not attempt to emerge from his cocoon.

The bell rings again, accompanied by excited knocking.

NAT

(muttering from under
the covers)

Oh! Go away!

Nat covers his ears but the commotion from the front door continues, with CLARA'S voice entering the mix.

CLARA (O/S)

(yells)

Nat! Nat! Come on! Open up!
I've got news!

In frustration, Nat cannons out of bed. One foot lands in the cereal bowl. Nat slips and falls on his backside. Weetbix and coffee splatter across the carpet.

...../61.

61. CONT'D

NAT
(seething)
Ffffff!

CLARA (O/S)
(impatient)
Nat! Nat!

NAT
(shouts)
For fuck's sake come in!
It's not locked. It's open.
(TO HIMSELF) Stupid bitch.

Nat grabs a shirt from the floor. He morosely wipes off weetbix and coffee from his feet and pyjamas.

Clara bounds in waving a letter.

CLARA
I've got in! I've got in!

NAT
Sure you have. The door was open.

Clara stops short, recoiling from the prospect of weetbix-soiled shoes.

CLARA (CONT'D)
Ugh!

Clara takes in Nat's predicament.

CLARA (CONT'D)
(laughs)
Look at you!

NAT
Funny, eh?

Nat sighs, heaves himself up and sits on the bed.

Clara gingerly picks her way through the mess, opening the curtains before sitting down and sidling up next to Nat.

.... /61.

61. CONT'D

CLARA

See!

Clara thrusts her letter under Nat's nose.

NAT

(sarcastic)

Fashion. Big surprise.

CLARA

How about a 'well done'?

Nat goes to the window and closes the curtains.

Clara stands up.

CLARA

Fine. So you didn't get in.
Think I should care?

NAT

To Law? No, but, what the
fuck.

Clara picks up the bowl (still containing blobs of soggy weetbix) and plonks it on Nat's head.

CLARA

Yeah. What the fuck.

Clara storms out.

Nat brushes the bowl off his head. The bowl falls to the floor.

Nat buries himself under the covers.

NAT

(muffled)

Fuck fuck fuck fuck

62. INT. NAT'S ROOM. LATE NIGHT. WINTER 1993. 62.

MAUDE sits on four-year-old NAT'S bed, lovingly reading to him from Roald Dahl's *BFG*. Nat is sleepy but attentive.

MAUDE

'...The Big Friendly Giant was seated at the great table in his cave and he was doing his homework.

Sophie sat cross-legged on the table-top near by, watching him work.

The glass jar containing the one and only good dream they had caught that day stood between them.

The BFG, with great care and patience, was printing something on a piece of paper with an enormous pencil.

"What are you writing?" Sophie asked him.

"Every dream is having its special label on the bottle," the BFG said. "How else could I be finding the one I am wanting in a hurry?"'

63. INT. NAT'S ROOM. LATE AFTERNOON. SUMMER 2007. 63.

Blackness. There is the sound of FREDRIK opening the curtains. The blackness softens as a hint of orange sunlight penetrates under NAT'S bedcovers.

FREDRIK (O/S)

(loudly)

You can't stay under there forever.

.... /63.

63. CONT'D

Nat's eyes open, glint pale orange. The covers are ripped away (to the floor). Light floods in. Nat's eyes squeeze shut.

NAT

Fuck off.

Fredrik looms suit-clad and wheelchair-bound by Nat's bed.

FREDRIK

Well?

Nat, bleary-eyed, leans up on one elbow (his pyjamas still spattered with weetbix and coffee).

NAT

(sarcastic)

How was your day?

FREDRIK

(ignoring this)

Well? Are you in Law? You could have called me.

Nat sits cross-legged on his bed, scratching his back under his pyjama top.

FREDRIK (CONT'D) (O/S)

But then you've obviously been busy in this pigsty of yours.

Nat bounds from bed to his desk, grabs the creased letter and pushes it under Fredrik's nose.

NAT

Commerce OK? Commerce.

Fredrik takes the letter. He handles and ponders over it as if it were some unclean thing.

.... /63.

63. CONT'D

FREDRIK

(sighs)

Well. You'll just have to do
well with this now so you...

NAT (O/S)

(emphatic)

No way.

FREDRIK

...can transfer over to Law
next year.

Nat snatches the letter from Fredrik and tears it up.

NAT

No way. No way.

Nat drops the letter shreds in Fredrik's lap. Fredrik
brushes them to the floor.

FREDRIK

(cool)

So what do you propose? A
year in bed?

Nat clasps his hands in front of himself.

NAT

I've heard... (BREATHES)
I've heard...

FREDRIK

(sharp)

What?

NAT

The library. The one at
Prince Edward's Hospital...

FREDRIK

Yes?

....63.

63. CONT'D

NAT
...needs an Assistant.
And...

FREDRIK
Yes. And?

NAT
And... I could study
librarianship. Part-time.

FREDRIK
(angry)
Shuffle books for the glory
of some half-arsed diploma!

Fredrik whirrs around to leave. Nat yells after him.

NAT
It's a proper degree Dad.

Fredrik reaches the door. The corridor outside is in relative darkness and he is silhouetted against it.

FREDRIK
Hmph. You need a real
profession.

Nat gathers the bedcovers from the floor.

64. INT. KARAOKE BAR. NIGHT. AUTUMN 2007. 64.

CLARA finishes a hoarse rendition of 'Helter Skelter'. She leaves the stage to fractured applause and returns to the table she and NAT share. (In the background, the karaoke continues with a guy singing 'House of the Rising Sun'.)

Nat sits eating an entrée-sized spring roll and desultorily twirling a swizzle stick in his glass of Coke. Clara grabs the stick from Nat as she passes to seat herself opposite him.

.... /64.

64. CONT'D

CLARA
(petulant)
Get your own to play with.

Nat ignores her and continues carefully chewing, ostensibly watching the karaoke. Clara, intermittently humming 'Helter Skelter' in counterpoint, licks the stick clean, replaces and twirls it in her elaborate cocktail, and takes a sip.

CLARA (CONT'D)
(licks lips)
Mmmm-mmm-mmm.

Clara puts her drink down with a flourish. She dips a spring roll into the chili sauce. Drops of sauce dribble onto her dress as she raises the roll to her mouth.

Nat sees the sauce stains and smiles to himself. Clara does not notice his expression.

CLARA (CONT'D)
(chewing heartily)
Up, up and away tomorrow!
It'll be great if I win,
yes?

Nat drinks in Clara's face and eyes.

NAT
Sorry about the schtick.

Nat leans forward on his elbows and takes Clara's hands.

CLARA
Awh! (JOKINGLY) Don't tell me. You're quoting from a poem!

Nat smiles.

.... /64.

64. CONT'D

NAT

(serious)

I am going to miss you you
know.

CLARA

But winning'd be great. And
the exposure I'd...

NAT

Do you really have to go?

Nat coaxes Clara's hands forward across the table.

Their profiles draw closer together.

CLARA

The money'd be great too.
Great for us both. And Mom's
really, really supportive
about it. Not that I won't
miss my fashion course.

Nat reaches forward in an attempt to clasp Clara's face
and kiss her on the lips.

65. INT. MORPHEUS SHOP (PREMONITION). 65.

MORPHEUS stands behind his gleaming glass counter. He
gives an encouraging salesman's smile.

MORPHEUS

*Our dreams are a second
life.*

66. INT. KARAOKE BAR. NIGHT. AUTUMN 2007. 66.

Clara moves Nat's hands away from her face.

CLARA (CONT'D)

And, of course. I'll miss
you too.

.... /66.

66. CONT'D

Clara wriggles back and, using a pocket mirror, checks and repairs her smudged lipstick.

CLARA (CONT'D)

But look, it's only a few weeks and I'll be back.

Nat leans away in his chair, hands clasped on his stomach.

NAT

You've got sauce on your dress.

67. INT. HELMER LIVING ROOM. NIGHT. AUTUMN 2007. 67.

The Helmer living room is decorated 1980s style. It is a large room, containing both lounge and dining areas. A model ship kit (the *Oseberg*) lies on the cluttered coffee table. NAT, drinking Coke, and FREDRIK, drinking wine, sit watching *Big Brother*—on the TV screen, CLARA is giggling and whispering with DIS.

Nat assembles the planked hull as he watches TV.

Somewhat drunk, Fredrik gulps the last of the wine from his glass and looks jaundicedly at Nat.

FREDRIK

That's right. Fiddle away with your life.

Nat glares at Fredrik. Then he turns his attention to the TV.

On the TV screen: Clara and Dis kiss passionately.

FREDRIK (CONT'D) (O/S)

While she fiddles away with him. You're an un-Viking wimp.

Nat disengages and directs all his attention to model-making.

.... /67.

67. CONT'D

FREDRIK (CONT'D) (O/S)
Haven't the guts to do Law.

On the TV screen: Dis and Clara are groping each other.

FREDRIK (CONT'D) (O/S)
Haven't the gumption to deal
with your wayward girlfriend
there.

Nat grabs the remote from the coffee table and jabs it
to change channels.

Onto the TV screen: flashes a production of *Romeo and
Juliet*. [Act 1, Scene 4]

Fredrik slams his empty glass down on the coffee table.

FREDRIK
(sad and angry)
Librarianship indeed!

Fredrik picks up the wine bottle and takes a couple of
swigs.

Nat continues model-building, but his mind drifts more
to the TV.

On the TV screen:

ROMEO
I dreamt a dream to-night.

MERCUTIO
And so did I.

ROMEO
Well, what was yours?

MERCUTIO
That dreamers often lie.

ROMEO
*In bed asleep, while they do
dream things true.*

.... /67.

67. CONT'D

MERCUTIO

*O, then I see Queen Mab hath
been with you. She is the
fairies' midwife and she...*

Nat puts down the partly-finished model ship.

NAT

I'm off to bed.

68. INT. NAT'S ROOM. NIGHT. AUTUMN 2007. 68.

The shelves above the desk in Nat's bedroom, bare of trophies, contain several model ships—chiefly Viking, all sailing vessels.

Nat thrashes about in bed.

Nat's sleeping eyes loom large.

69. INT. NAT'S DREAM. NIGHT. AUTUMN 2007. 69.

Inside his dream, NAT'S dream-self, remote control in hand, sits on a couch in what appears to be a 1980s living room. But there are no walls and the cavernous space around the couch and dream-TV dwindles into an impenetrable blackness.

Nat's dream-self points the remote control and surfs the dream-TV channels.

A succession of images flickers before Nat's eyes.

On Nat's dream-TV: CLARA, gorgeous, awkwardly struts a shopping mall catwalk.

On Nat's dream-TV: MAUDE speeding along by the river in her car.

On Nat's dream-TV: NAT'S tenth birthday party, everyone in Viking costume (including his FREDRIK—a warrior with a walking stick).

.... /69.

69. CONT'D

On Nat's dream-TV: MAUDE, when NAT was five years old, showing him her precious old china doll (an antique boy doll in a little sailor suit).

On Nat's dream-TV: OLYMPIA breezing into the Prince Edward's Hospital library.

On Nat's dream-TV: Dis and Clara kissing effortlessly.

Nat's remote hits upon the dreamshopping channel.

Synapses sizzle inside sleeping Nat's brain.

Nat's dream-self's eyes stare catatonically at MORPHEUS on the dream-TV's dreamshopping channel.

MORPHEUS

...reality biting too hard
for your liking... find the
daily grind's getting you
frazzled... life can be a
dream... check out The
Morpheus Shop... best range
of dream-pods and
dreamsticks this side of the
Pillars of Hercules...

Nat's dream-mouth gapes.

Nat drops the remote on his bare foot.

Another electric tingle snakes round the synapses of Nat's sleeping brain.

Nat's sleeping limbs flail under the covers (featuring Viking boats with rainbow-coloured sails).

Tangled in his doona, Nat falls out of bed into water 20 or 30 centimetres deep that surrounds his bed.

Nat is not properly awake yet and his consciousness still sleepily inhabits the cavernous dreamspace, now eerily empty, bereft of its 1980s props. The darkness is red-tinged.

.... /69.

69. CONT'D

Sliverous molten-metal rivulets hiss into a central river of grimy water, pollution-shrouded reeds along its banks.

A trance-like flute melody flows through the air. The BUSKER'S face, empathetic, human-animal appears among the reeds.

MAUDE'S arm waves out from under the water, diamond rings glint brightly on the well-manicured fingers.

Nat's head emerges from under the doona. He opens his eyes. Grimy water laps at the bedlegs and recedes.

Nat gropes up for the bedside-light and flicks the switch.

The carpet is dry. Nat fumbles around. He finds a dog-eared jotting pad under the chaos on his desk and retrieves a biro from his backpack.

On the pad, Nat scribbles 'Morpheus Shop, Basement, Blackwood House, Elm St'.

70. INT. TRAIN. MORNING. AUTUMN 2007. 70.

A gloomy-faced NAT stands strap-hanging in a crowded peak hour train.

71. EXT. TRAIN. MORNING. AUTUMN 2007. 71.

The peak hour train grinds to a halt in the railyards.

72. INT. TRAIN. MORNING. AUTUMN 2007. 72.

NAT lets go of the strap and looks at his watch.

The time is 8.48.

Nat sighs and rubs his arms.

...../72.

72. CONT'D

A murky, slowed-down rendition of 'My world is empty without you' is heard on the soundtrack as Nat gazes emptily ahead.

In front of Nat, two young male COMMUTERS are having an animated conversation.

Nat continues to stare blankly.

73. INT. NAT'S PEAK HOUR DAYDREAM. AUTUMN 2007. 73.

NAT is the sole passenger on a slow-motion rollercoaster that moves in a groany type of synch with the murky, funereal rendition of 'My world is empty without you'.

As the rollercoaster oscillates between its track's peaks and valleys, Nat's head remains at a constant height above the ground because his neck grows and shrinks in length to compensate for the rollercoaster's ups and downs.

Nat's rollercoaster ride begins to speed up and the tempo of 'My world is empty without you' keeps pace with this acceleration. This sequence repeats faster and faster, becoming a dizzy, frenetic blur.

The rollercoaster screeches to a violent halt.

74. EXT. TRAIN. MORNING. AUTUMN 2007. 74.

Atop an impossibly elongated neck that pierces through the roof, NAT'S head hovers several metres above the train.

Nat's neck 'springs back' downwards and his head is squeezed like a balloon as it is pulled through the 'hole' in the train roof.

COMMUTER #1 (O/S)
...anyway if she was my
girlfriend, I'd be breaking
into that shit compound...

75. INT. TRAIN. MORNING. AUTUMN 2007. 75.

Atop his stretched neck, like a cork being pulled from a bottle, NAT'S head squeezes down through the ceiling and snaps back into its normal place.

Nat's eyes focus on the two COMMUTERS.

COMMUTER #1 (CONT'D) (O/S)
...and grabbing that bastard
Dis...

Commuter #1 'morphs' into DIS.

COMMUTER #1/DIS (CONT'D)
...what kind of wuss name is
that... spoiled fuckin'
richkid...

Commuter #2 'morphs' into CLARA.

COMMUTER #1/DIS (CONT'D) (O/S)
...I'd deck him then I'd
drag her out by those blonde
curls of hers...

COMMUTER #2/CLARA
Same here.

The two commuters revert to their normal appearance. Nervously humming 'My world is empty without you', Nat looks away from them.

NAT
hmmm hmmm hmm hmm hmm

A WOMAN seated close by looks up from reading a newspaper and glares at the humming Nat.

Nat averts his gaze to the other side of the aisle. A YOUNG GUY seated there has his Walkman 'doosh~dooshity~dooshing' for all it's worth.

A MAN standing behind Nat, snuffles and splutters into the back of Nat's neck.

.... /75.

75. CONT'D

Nat reaches to get his backpack. Swivelling the pack off his shoulders, he 'accidentally' swipes the snuffler.

Nat gets a water bottle out of his backpack and takes a swig.

The train lurches forward.

Nat looks at his watch.

The time is 8.59.

76. INT. LIBRARY. MORNING. AUTUMN 2007. 76.

OLYMPIA'S hands, bearing two nursing textbooks and her library card, place the books in a neat pile on the counter of the Prince Edward's Hospital library and give the library card into NAT'S hand.

Nat's hand swipes the card. His wrist-watch shows 9.35. The view widens to show Nat's face above the back of a computer screen on the counter.

NAT

Sorry, Olympia. You've still got quite a few outstanding fines. So...

Olympia's lips tense.

OLYMPIA

So you won't let me have these?

Nat's attitude is passive aggressive, his face a mask.

NAT

Library policy. Sorry.

Olympia's lips force into a smile.

Olympia's elegant hand touches the two piled books.

..../76.

76. CONT'D

OLYMPIA (O/S)

Look Nat. Just this once.
These two.

Nat's fingers drum on the counter's rim. His tone of voice softens.

NAT (O/S)

Sorry. You really need to pay.

Olympia's smile becomes more genuine, her eyes more open.

OLYMPIA

But can't you turn a blind eye till next week?

Nat and Olympia, in profile, face each other across the counter.

OLYMPIA (CONT'D)

Nat, I need these for an assignment on Monday...

Nat's face lifts its gaze up from his fingers and his expression registers recognition of Olympia's beauty.

OLYMPIA (CONT'D) (O/S)

...and I've already had an extension for it.

Olympia glances down at the books and up at Nat.

OLYMPIA (CONT'D)

So?

There's a hint of a smile on Nat's face.

NAT

OK. You've got to come good with the fines though, hey.

Placing her hands on the counter, Olympia leans forward. Her breasts are prominent.

.... /76.

76. CONT'D

OLYMPIA

(relieved)

Sure. Sure. It's a promise.
My allowance comes through
from Dad in a couple of
days.

Nat re-continues processing the loan.

NAT

(tentative)

Listen, Olympia.

OLYMPIA

(cute smile, curious)

Yeah?

NAT

(hesitant)

Well.

OLYMPIA

(hint of impatience)

Well what, Nat?

Nat finishes processing the loan.

NAT

(flat)

Oh. Never mind.
(GENUINE) Good luck with
your assignment.

Olympia presses Nat's hand as he gives her the books.

OLYMPIA

Thanks so much, Nat.

NAT

That's OK.

Olympia pops the books in her bag.

Nat watches wistfully as Olympia walks away.

Olympia walks off with a perky spring in her step and
whistling 'Dancing in the Dark'.

77. EXT. RIVERSIDE. LUNCHTIME. AUTUMN 2007. 77.

A wide view of the riverside: a path runs parallel to the river. Just beyond the path, an unoccupied bench faces the water. In the distance, across the river, light traffic passes along a stretch of riverside boulevard (the scene of Maude and Albertine's fatal car crash).

NAT ambles into this panorama, leaves the path and approaches the bench. His figure leans, inspecting the bench.

There is a trace of birdshit at one end of the seat.

Nat's hand swishes a paper napkin over the rest of the seat.

Nat plonks his backside down.

Nat's hands place his bagged focaccia and bottled orange juice as a barrier between himself and the streak of birdshit.

Nat slumps forward and stares at the water.

Junk is tangled in the reeds—paper scraps, old bottles, dented cans, soggy plastic bags.

There is the sound of a child yowling.

Nat swivels round and sees thin GRANDMOTHER pushing a stroller. The passenger is a stringy TODDLER.

TODDLER
(whining)
chocolate, Nana. I want some
chocolate. Now. Nana...
(CONTINUES TO YOWL)

The grandmother stares meanly at Nat as she passes by.

Nat frowns at the grandmother and toddler.

..../77.

77. CONT'D

GRANDMOTHER

(to toddler)

Be quiet now. You know your
mother...

Nat fishes his chicken and avocado focaccia from its
paper bag and takes a bite.

GRANDMOTHER (CONT'D) (O/S)

...doesn't believe in you
eating too much chocolate.

Nat opens his orange juice and swigs some down.

The sounds of the harried grandmother and whining
toddler diminish into the distance.

Nat continues biting into the focaccia and swigging
juice.

There is the sound of an old flute playing 'Danny Boy'.

Nat stares across the curve of the river to the traffic
winding along the far bank.

The BUSKER, a tattered figure sitting on the riverbank
a little way off from Nat, continues playing 'Danny
Boy' on the old flute. The flute's battered case lies
open beside the busker, a few coins in it.

Nat stuffs the juice bottle into the paper bag with his
half-eaten focaccia.

The busker watches Nat.

Nat gets up and tosses his rubbish into the reeds.

Nat heads off, away from the river.

The busker stops playing and yells after Nat.

BUSKER

Hey! What about the streams
and oceans and dolphins?

..../77.

77. CONT'D

Ignoring the busker, Nat continues walking away.

The busker continues playing (*...the pipes the pipes are calling*).

As if lured by a pied piper, Nat turns back and approaches the busker.

Avoiding the busker's eyes, Nat leans down and tosses a dollar into the open case.

78. EXT. RIVERSIDE HILL. LUNCHTIME. AUTUMN 2007. 78.

It is drizzling. NAT recedes into the distance, as he nears the summit of a hill.

Reaching the top of the hill, Nat turns.

Nat looks towards the river. Some distance away, the BUSKER is knee-deep in the water.

The busker is bagging rubbish, clearing it from the reeds.

The distant figure of the rubbish-gathering busker appears to take on the form of a Pan-like satyr.

Nat rubs his eyes.

The distant busker appears thoroughly human now.

79. INT. CITY BATHS. EARLY EVENING. AUTUMN 2007. 79.

NAT moves away down the swimming-lane, reaches the pool's end, turns and swims back up the pool.

80. EXT. CITY BATHS. EARLY EVENING. AUTUMN 2007. 80.

There is light rain. NAT emerges from the City Baths toting his commuter backpack. He pulls his parka's hood over his head.

Nat takes the jotting pad scrap from his pocket and looks at it.

.... / 80.

80. CONT'D

The scribbled note reads 'Morpheus Shop, Basement, Blackwood House, Elm St'.

Nat moves off but stops after one or two steps. He re-inspects the note.

Nat then dawdles off in a different direction.

81. EXT. 'ELM ST'. NIGHTFALL. AUTUMN 2007. 81.

The rain is quite heavy. NAT moves through a seedy streetscape searching for 'Blackwood House'. Occasional pedestrians, mainly commuters on their way home, scuttle by.

The BUSKER huddles in the shelter of a doorway, playing 'Mr Tambourine Man' on his flute. A passing commuter throws a coin into his flute case.

Stopping for a moment, Nat stares at the busker in surprise then resumes walking.

The busker, pausing briefly in his playing, watches the departing Nat and smiles to himself.

Nat reaches an intersection.

Nat peers up through the rain at the side-street's sign.

The sign reads 'Elm St'.

Nat trudges into Elm Street. It seems to swallow him up.

82. EXT. 'BLACKWOOD HOUSE'. NIGHTFALL. AUTUMN 2007.82.

Nat stands in front of a building with a neo-gothic façade.

Nat looks up through heavy rain at the sign over the entrance.

The sign says 'Blackwood House'.

83. INT. 'BLACKWOOD HOUSE'. NIGHTFALL. AUTUMN 2007.83.

NAT hurries inside and pulls back the hood of his parka.

The lobby is derelict and ramshackle.

Nat peers through the dusty glass encasing the building directory.

Just one tenant is listed. Yellowing capitals cling to the flaking black pegboard: THE MORPHEUS SHOP LWR GD.

84. INT. 'BLACKWOOD HOUSE'. NIGHTFALL. AUTUMN 2007.84.

Stairs wind round an antiquated liftwell enclosed in a meshed metal grille.

NAT descends the stairs, his boots clacking on chipped concrete.

85. INT. 'BLACKWOOD HOUSE'. NIGHTFALL. AUTUMN 2007.85.

NAT negotiates a dusty, dank-tiled basement corridor.

Rainwater ripples over the grid of grime-textured LUXFER glass bricks in the ceiling above Nat. The splashing footfalls of pedestrians scurrying in the street above are visible through this opaque mosaic.

The shadowy ripples of the pedestrian footfalls shimmer down into the gloom of the basement passageway.

The fading outside light from above falls into the gloomy corridor, tremulous, intertwining with the internal shadows.

Nat turns a corner and the gloomy passage, like some living organism, grows and expands into a large cave-like, brightly-lit vestibule.

Nat stands bewildered in the vestibule's centre.

The far wall is occupied by a wide glass shopfront.

As if fired from a slingshot, Nat rockets forward.

.... /85.

85. CONT'D

In the twinkle of an eye, Nat vibrates to a halt in front of the shop. Its gleaming, achingly-tall, seriously black, all-glass window panels are ivory-framed. Over the automatic doors, cursive yellow neon proclaims this to be: THE MORPHEUS SHOP.

Nat swallows then bounds ahead like a monkey.

The doors part and the dormant PA system springs to life. A pounding remix of 'In Dreams' floods the air (*you're mine all of the time, we're together...*).

Nat enters.

86. INT. MORPHEUS SHOP. NIGHTFALL. AUTUMN 2007. 86.

Rows and rows of very tall wooden display units line wide aisles. Ladders that enable access to the higher reaches can be slid along metal rails. Thousands of backlit, silk-lined pigeonholes populate these display shelves. Each compartment holds an opaque crystal cylinder, some fifty millimetres long and five millimetres in diameter.

NAT wanders, hesitant, browsing the aisles. He pauses now and then to take in the display and occasionally handles and examines one or other of the cylinders.

(The cylindrical dreamsticks are arranged in a bewildering array of categories and classifications... prophetic, classical, family, initiatory, delight, animals, postmodern, water, Electra, frangible, sex, avarice, faith, jealousy, love, flight, yearning, unbreakable, success, caves, hope, popularity, death, money, contemporary adult, visionary, hate, baroque, friends, kindness, delirium, romance, revenge, Oedipus, fire, Buddhist, cosmic, Marxist, flight, wisdom, despair, days of the week, destiny, synthetic, mother, historical personages, destruction, birth, paranoia, fruit, cars, heart's desire... an infinity of dreams.)

Nat stops in front of the 'mother' shelves.

Nat's attention is drawn to a dreamstick labelled 'at the park with Mum'.

.... /86.

86. CONT'D

He reaches to pick it up, changes his mind and continues to browse down the aisle.

Nat's hand reaches for and picks up a dreamstick in the 'success' section labelled 'big-time barrister'.

The 'barrister' dreamstick nestles in Nat's cupped hands.

Nat turns to move off with the 'barrister' dreamstick in his cupped hands. He stops, turns and puts the dreamstick back in its slot.

Nat continues to browse the aisles.

Nat's hands return a dreamstick labelled 'swimming hero' to its spot in the 'popularity' section.

Nat continues browsing.

In the 'heart's desire' section, Nat slides a ladder a metre or so and ascends.

The ladder reacts to Nat's climbing feet; it tenses and tremors like an acrobat in a human pyramid as a teammate climbs up to the top. The rungs strain and complain as they take Nat's weight and sproing and sigh with relief as they push his feet up and away.

Perched high on the ladder, Nat scans the upper shelves.

Nat's hand drifts over and tentatively touches dreamsticks labelled 'perfect partner', 'fiery fashionista', 'magic match', 'sea siren'.

The ladder begins to move, to slide along the guide-rail, slowly at first, then ever faster.

Nat clings on, narrowly averting himself from falling off, as the ladder picks up speed.

Nat flails to maintain his grip as the ladder hurtles down the shelves like an express train. He yells in surprise and terror.

.... /86.

86. CONT'D

NAT

Ahhh... yipes... *etc.*

Nearing the end of the aisle, the hurtling ladder mutates into a fairground helter-skelter slide.

Nat comes spiralling down the slide.

Nat flies off the end of the helter-skelter and lands with a thud on the floor.

He sits and gains his bearings. Behind him, the helter-skelter transforms back into a ladder.

NAT

(to himself)

If this is what is like to
shop till you drop, forget
it!

Right in front of Nat's eyes is the glass front of a gleaming display counter.

The counter's illuminated shelves are studded with small black objects, dream-pods, each no bigger than a cigarette packet.

Nat stares at the display in disbelief.

The dream-pods are so black they reflect nothing. They seem to be projected through from another dimension. Their sizes and shapes mutate, yet they remain 'identical'.

MORPHEUS emerges through the black velvet curtains behind the counter that screen the shop's backroom. Buffed to the max, he's wearing a Morpheus T-shirt and designer jeans.

Arms akimbo, Morpheus leans over Nat and peers sardonically down at him.

Nat looks up at Morpheus.

Morpheus helps Nat to his feet.

86. CONT'D

He looks Nat up and down and smiles.

MORPHEUS

(voice a silky purr)

Ah. I know exactly what you
want.

87. INT. SUBWAY PLATFORM. EVENING. AUTUMN 2007. 87.

NAT stands in the peak hour crowd, backpack between his feet.

88. INT. TRAIN. EVENING. AUTUMN 2007. 88.

NAT sits squashed in a window seat. A burly, work-booted COMMUTER sits next to him.

Nat slips a dreamstick into his small black Hypnos 4000 dream-pod and switches it on. Its mechanism whirrs softly and eerily.

He ties the dream-pod's 'bandanna' around his forehead and settles down in his seat.

His eyes close.

89. EXT. DREAM-POD: IRISH COAST. DAWN. 89.

A cartoon drawing of the *Oseberg*, rides the 'waves' of an 'animated' antique map ocean. The nearby green land is labelled 'Ireland'.

A fishing village, a cluster of dwellings, nestles on the map's rugged coastline.

NAT, a Viking chieftan, stands proudly in command of the ship as it sails through the dawn mists.

90. INT. DREAM-POD: VILLAGE CHIEF'S HOUSE. DAWN. 90.

In the village chief's house, CLARA, a beautiful young Celtic princess, sits brooding.

.... /90.

90. CONT'D

DIS, the chief, stands over her.

DIS
Today, you will become my
bride.

Sounds of commotion and fighting penetrate from
outside.

CLARA
Never! Return me to my
father's village.

Nat, the Viking raider, charges in brandishing his
sword.

Dis draws his sword.

Clara jumps to her feet and gets out of harm's way.

Nat and Dis fight.

Nat is winning.

Dis seizes Clara and, with his sword at her throat,
clasps her in front of him as a shield. He edges her
towards the door.

Nat backs away, lowering his sword.

Clara struggles and frees one of her pinned arms. She
draws a dagger from her breast and stabs Dis's sword
arm.

Dropping his sword, Dis yells in pain.

Clara breaks free and runs to Nat.

Dis drops to the floor and sits, staunching the flow of
blood from his arm.

Dis watches as Nat puts his arm around Clara and they
leave the house.

91. EXT. DREAM-POD: NORWEGIAN COAST. SUNSET. 91.

A cartoon drawing of the *Oseberg*, rides the 'waves' of an 'animated' antique map ocean. The fjord-riddled land is labelled 'Norway'.

On the *Oseberg*, NAT, the Viking chieftan, and CLARA, the beautiful young Celtic princess, stand embracing, piles of gold and rich booty at their feet.

92. INT. TRAIN. EVENING. AUTUMN 2007. 92.

NAT'S eyes are closed.

Nat and the other passengers feel the train jolt to a stop.

The dream-pod whirrs.

Nat's eyes flicker, half-open, then shut.

93. EXT. DREAM-POD: NORWEGIAN COAST. SUNSET. 93.

On the *Oseberg*, NAT and CLARA'S faces gaze lovingly at each other. They kiss passionately.

94. INT. TRAIN. EVENING. AUTUMN 2007. 94.

The burly, work-booted COMMUTER, hurrying to get off, treads on Nat's little-toe.

Nat snaps awake. His eyes open. He looks stunned.

NAT

Ow. Shit.

The burly commuter looks back at Nat.

COMMUTER (O/S)

Sorry mate.

95. INT. HELMER LIVING ROOM. NIGHT. AUTUMN 2007. 95.

NAT watches *Big Brother* while he fits the sail to his *Oseberg* model.

On the TV screen: CLARA sits on the *Big Brother* evictees' couch.

CLARA

I've always been someone who
needed heaps of affection. I
mean, the hothouse
atmosphere in the house, you
know...

Nat reacts with mounting scorn and disdain to Clara's
excuses.

CLARA (CONT'D) (O/S)

...the isolation from
everyday things, so, perhaps
it's just as well I've been
evicted now. But, when
you're isolated like that,
you just, you just, have to
make do with what's on
offer...

On the TV screen: Clara, wide-eyed, acts as if choking
back her tears.

CLARA (CONT'D)

...find what comfort you
can. Like Mom says, you find
the best treasures within.

Nat becomes really angry.

CLARA (CONT'D) (O/S)

Most of the housemates were
terrific...

On the TV screen: Clara becomes wistfully sentimental.

.... /95.

95. CONT'D

CLARA (CONT'D)
...especially Dis. He was a
great comfort.

Nat stands and hurls the *Oseberg* model.

It hits Clara's screen face.

On the TV screen:

CLARA (CONT'D)
And, of course, my wonderful
boyfriend back in
Melbourne...

The *Oseberg* lies broken on the floor.

On the TV screen above:

CLARA (CONT'D)
...he was always in my
thoughts and I hope... I'm
sure... he'll understand.

Nat strides out of the room.

96. INT. NAT'S ROOM. NIGHT. AUTUMN 2007. 96.

NAT sits in bed. He switches on the Hypnos 4000 dream-pod and inserts a dreamstick.

Nat's hand sets the dream-pod to *program repeat* mode.

Nat dons the dream-pod 'bandanna' and settles down to sleep.

Nat's fitful sleep is punctuated by arhythmic snores.

Nat's nose twitches under closed, tremulous eyelids.

97. EXT. SUBURBAN DREAM-POD: MARRIED BLISS. 97.

CLARA and NAT, holding hands and dressed as bride and groom, emerge out of a heart-shaped sunrise. They float on air in an idyllic blue sky. Cooing doves hover above.

The air swirls and solidifies under Nat and Clara's feet. A suburban scene takes shape around them. It is a beautiful spring day.

Nat and Clara stand in a lovely garden in front of a tasteful suburban house.

They gaze into each other's eyes.

CLARA

Oh Nathaniel Helmer, I love
you.

98. EXT. SUBURBAN DREAM-POD: SUPERMARKET CARPARK. 98.

Parking spaces are as scarce as hens' teeth. Vehicles cruise about, scrambling for spots.

Through the windscreen of their car, NAT and CLARA can be seen. They are squabbling. Nat is driving.

Nat and Clara see a car turn into the one-way lane and head straight towards them; it is travelling in the wrong direction. Nat swerves over. The oncoming car passes with millimeteres to spare.

NAT (O/S)

Shit! Come the wrong way,
why don't you?

Clara's attention is outside the vehicle. Her eyes dart and scan around.

NAT (O/S)

Christ! Every Saturday, the
same fucking disaster.

.... /98.

98. CONT'D

Clara's gaze zooms in on a car edging out of a space not too far ahead.

CLARA (O/S)
Slower. Look. There's a spot.

An oblivious elderly SHOPPER, pushing a packed and recalcitrant trolley with wonky wheels, comes onto the roadway from between parked cars, so blocking Nat's ready access to the vacant spot.

Nat brakes hard to avoid hitting the slow-moving shopper.

NAT (O/S)
God! Why do they let them out?

A tank-like 4WD, travelling the wrong way, appears out of nowhere and screeches into the vacant spot.

Ragestruck, Nat toots his horn.

99. INT. SUBURBAN DREAM-POD: SUPERMARKET. 99.

With their trolley full, NAT and CLARA stand waiting in a check-out queue.

The shopper waiting right in front of them is a MOTHER, vainly trying to control two noisy, fractious TODDLERS.

At the check-out, the OPERATOR gives up in her efforts to scan an item.

OPERATOR (O/S)
(over PA system)
Price check. Register 13.

NAT
(under his breath)
The same fucking disaster.

100. INT. SUBURBAN DREAM-POD: SATURDAY CINEMA. 100.

NAT, CLARA and CLARA'S MOTHER sit watching a film (Nat in the middle).

Clara and her mother whisper across Nat to each other.

Nat tries to concentrate on the film.

Clara's mother chews loudly on popcorn.

Nat grimaces.

Clara slurps her drink.

Nat sinks down into his seat.

101. EXT. SUBURBAN DREAM-POD: HOUSE AND GARDEN. 101.

Kneeling, NAT weeds the garden bordering the house front.

He pauses and puts his hands to his ears as the sound of CLARA singing off-key comes through the windows.

Clara's singing is drowned by the sound of a vacuum cleaner being switched on and she can be seen moving around inside as she vacuums. Nat uncovers his ears and resumes work.

Nat sighs and struggles with a particularly stubborn weed.

102. EXT. SUBURBAN DREAM-POD: CLARA'S MOTHER'S. 102.

CLARA strides onto her mother's porch, leading a shuffling NAT by the hand.

NAT
Health food again, I
suppose...

Clara rings the bell.

The front door opens. CLARA'S MOTHER beams at them.

103. INT. SUBURBAN DREAM-POD: CLARA'S MOTHER'S. 103.

NAT, CLARA and CLARA'S MOTHER sit around the dining table.

Clara and her mother prattle on with each other.

Nat disconsolately picks at the oh-so healthy vegetarian food on his plate.

104. INT. SUBURBAN DREAM-POD: NAT'S FATHER'S. 104.

FREDRIK sits in his wheelchair drinking. He hears the front door open and shut. NAT and CLARA enter the living room. Clara brandishes a plastic bag that holds several plastic containers and places it down on the table.

CLARA
We've brought you leftovers
from my Mom's.

Nat pours himself a drink.

105. INT. SUBURBAN DREAM-POD: LIBRARY. 105.

At work, NAT robotically processes a loan.

Nat hands the customer back his library card.

Nat glumly observes the waiting line as the next borrower comes to the counter. The queue stretches to the moon.

106. INT. SUBURBAN DREAM-POD: AT HOME. 106.

NAT and CLARA sit on the couch. Remote in hand, Nat watches TV. Clara opens a thick paperback bestseller. The ratio of read to unread pages indicates that she has just started the book.

Nat goes on watching TV. Now well into the book (more read pages, less unread pages), Clara turns a page; there is a quiet flipping sound.

..../106.

106. CONT'D

Nat watches TV. Clara, now a third through her book, turns another page; the flipping sound is louder.

Nat increases the TV's volume.

Nat watches TV. Clara, halfway through her book, turns a page; the flip sounds much louder.

Nat ups the TV's volume.

Nat watches TV. Clara, further through her book, flips another page; the flip's sound is earthquake-like.

(Excerpts from the 'Suburban Dream-Pod' sequence of scenes 'repeat' nightmarishly. Imagery is repetitious, chaotic. Sometimes events speed up, sometimes they are in slow motion. There is random use of blurring and jerky camera movement.)

107. INT. NAT'S ROOM. NIGHT. AUTUMN 2007. 107.

NAT wakes, sweaty and screaming.

108. INT. AIRPORT ARRIVALS. AFTERNOON. AUTUMN 2007.108.

NAT waits anxiously in the 'arrivals' lounge.

The overhead monitor indicates the flight from Brisbane has landed.

Disembarking passengers file into the 'arrivals' lounge. CLARA is amongst them.

Clara looks resignedly at Nat.

109. INT. BAGGAGE AREA. AFTERNOON. AUTUMN 2007. 109.

Luggage rides the baggage carousel.

CLARA and NAT wait by the carousel. Clara keeps an eye out for her baggage. Nat fidgets on his feet.

...../109.

109. CONT'D

NAT

So what was it all about?
That stuff with you and Dis,
eh?

CLARA

Oh Nat. It's over now. It
was just *Big Brother*. Look.
There's no big deal.

NAT

No big deal? How do you
think I felt... feel? You
were all over him, huh?

CLARA

Here's my bag. Quick! Grab
it.

Nat glares at Clara.

He snatches her bag up from the carousel.

110. INT. HELMER LIVING ROOM. NIGHT. AUTUMN 2007. 110.

NAT, CLARA and FREDRIK (in wheelchair) sit around the dining table. They eat take-away Thai. Fredrik is in uncertain control of his arms; he sometimes spills food or can't quite put it in his mouth.

NAT

(cheerful front)

Sally's off to have her baby
next week.

Fredrik sips his wine.

FREDRIK

(morose)

So what?

.... / 110.

110. CONT'D

NAT

Well, don't you see?
Ashley'll take over as
deputy librarian...

CLARA

...so you'll move up into
Ashley's job.

FREDRIK

(brightens)

Well. Good. That'll give you
a chance to stop moaning
about how the library's run.

Clara gets up and moves behind Nat's chair.

FREDRIK (CONT'D) (O/S)

You'll be able to organise
things there to your liking.

Clara leans and puts her arms around Nat's neck.

NAT

Yeah. For a couple of
months.

CLARA

You'll do just fine.

Clara goes to the couch and takes her shoes off. She
fishes nail polish remover from her bag.

FREDRIK

Look at it this way. You'll
have the power to do
something.

NAT

I guess so.

FREDRIK

And nobody lasts forever in
any job.

.... /110.

110. CONT'D

Clara begins removing her toenail polish.

FREDRIK (CONT'D) (O/S)
Some of the changes you make
will stick.

111. INT. HELMER EN SUITE. MORNING. AUTUMN 2005. 111.

NAT helps wheelchair-bound FREDRIK to shave.

112. EXT. RIVERSIDE. LUNCHTIME. AUTUMN 2007. 112.

NAT throws the remains of his ham, cheese and tomato sandwich into the rubbish bin and meanders to the water's edge.

The BUSKER, waist-deep in the reeds, is collecting rubbish, purifying the waters.

The busker has trouble dislodging something, but manages to pull it from between the reeds.

In the stance of a priest holding aloft a just-consecrated host, the busker displays a broken tree branch glistening with water droplets.

Nat sees the branch as a human arm.

Spooked, Nat shuts his eyes.

Maude's rings glint brightly on watery fingers.

113. INT. LIBRARY. LATE AFTERNOON. AUTUMN 2007. 113.

A clock on the wall behind the library counter shows 5.45pm. A sign beneath it says the library's closing time is 6pm.

Backpack swinging from one shoulder, OLYMPIA races to the counter.

Some medical textbooks are clutched precariously in Olympia's arms.

.... /113.

113. CONT'D

Olympia hurriedly plonks the books on the counter.

A book slides off the counter-top and drops onto NAT'S foot.

Nat grimaces, picks up the book and places it on the counter.

OLYMPIA
Sorry. Train to catch.

Olympia dives into her purse and produces her library card and a crisp five-dollar note.

OLYMPIA (CONT'D)
Here's those fines I owe.

For the briefest moment, Nat ogles Olympia's tits.

NAT (O/S)
Don't worry about it.

Nat's lowered, half-shut eyes rise like a china doll's mechanical eyes.

114. DREAMFLASH. 114.

For a split second, there is an image of Maude's antique china doll in a little sailor's suit.

115. INT. LIBRARY. LATE AFTERNOON. AUTUMN 2007. 115.

Nat's raised eyes open wide.

NAT
I'm glad you're able...

Olympia looks directly back at Nat.

NAT (CONT'D) (O/S)
...to come good with the
fines.

Nat's china doll eyes blink once.

...../115.

115. CONT'D

Olympia clasps her hands to her throat.

OLYMPIA
Well, I promised, didn't I?

Nat takes Olympia's card and money.

NAT
Yes... you did, of course.

Eyes focused on his computer screen, Nat begins to process Olympia's fine payment and book loans.

OLYMPIA (O/S)
Anyway... thanks all the same...

Olympia smiles to herself, then grins. One of her teeth is slightly chipped.

OLYMPIA (CONT'D)
...for turning a blind eye last week.

Nat briefly glances up at Olympia, grunts and nods, as he continues processing.

116. DREAMFLASH. 116.

MAUDE'S face flashes along NAT'S synapses.

Nat hears Maude crooning 'Danny Boy'.

Nat sees himself with Maude. He is five. She is showing him her treasured antique china doll in its little sailor's suit.

One of the doll's teeth is chipped.

117. INT. LIBRARY. LATE AFTERNOON. AUTUMN 2007. 117.

NAT hands back OLYMPIA'S library card. His fingers brush her hand.

..../117.

117. CONT'D

NAT

Oh. Don't worry about that.

Nat fumbles for change in the cash drawer.

NAT (CONT'D)

Water, uh, water under the
bridge...

Olympia's hand puts the card in her wallet.

NAT (CONT'D) (O/S)

...hope your assignment went
well.

OLYMPIA

It did. It did.

She arranges the books in a neat, rectangular pile on
the counter.

OLYMPIA (CONT'D) (O/S)

But, nursing's a bitch
though—there's always
another one!

Nat presses the change into Olympia's palm.

NAT

Here. Well then. Good luck
with the next assignment
too.

Bemused, Olympia draws in her lips.

OLYMPIA

Thanks.

Olympia puts her purse away. She gathers the books into
her backpack.

Backpack swivelled over her shoulder, Olympia turns and
moves off.

Nat's hands clutch his thighs.

..../117.

117. CONT'D

NAT
Olympia!

CLARA appears at the library door.

Olympia, halfway to the door, spins around to face Nat.

Clara sees Nat enmeshed in the spinning Olympia's wavy locks.

OLYMPIA
Yes?

Nat's gaze travels past Olympia.

Clara ploughs forward, displaying a petulant demeanour.

NAT (O/S)
(to Olympia)
Nothing... Good luck with
the assignment.

OLYMPIA
Sure... thanks.

Olympia hesitates. Clara brushes past her.

OLYMPIA
Hi, Clara.

CLARA
(grunts)
Hi.

Clara strides up to the counter.

Olympia turns away and heads for the door.

Nat watches Olympia vanish out the door.

CLARA
What was that about?

NAT
Nothing. People borrow books
you know.

.... / 117.

117. CONT'D

CLARA

Yeah. People borrow lots of things.

NAT

Yeah. What do you mean?

CLARA

Nothing.

NAT

So where do you want to go for dinner then?

CLARA

Nowhere.

NAT

What?

CLARA

I mean... not tonight, Nat.

NAT

What do you mean?

CLARA

I'm going home.

NAT

What do you mean?

CLARA

Shit, Nat. I'm not having dinner with you, OK. Date's off.

Clara storms off.

Nat plonks his hands hard down on the counter.

NAT

Fuck.

118. INT. MORPHEUS SHOP. NIGHTFALL. AUTUMN 2007. 118.

The shop PA system throbs to the beat of
'Satisfaction'.

NAT half-throws his dream-pod down on the pristinely
transparent counter. It lands with an emphatic clunk.
Instantly, the music on the PA system dies. Apart from
Nat's breathing, the only sound is the dream-pod's
'clunk' reverberating. The sound of the reverberations
continues for an unnaturally long time. Nat's breathing
slows down in synch with the attenuating 'clunk'.

NAT
(to himself)
How come there's never
anybody else here?

The silence is complete.

Nat's dream-pod lies limp on the counter. A faint
shadow, cast from behind Nat, forms on the counter-top.

MORPHEUS, appears behind Nat. He is almost as
transparent as his shadow. His form becomes denser.

The shadow on the counter is darker.

Morpheus assumes solid form.

The shadow is absolutely black.

Morpheus places a playful hand on Nat's shoulder.

Nat yelps in alarm and swivels around to face: thin
air!

NAT
Yipes!

Morpheus stands behind the counter as though he's been
there forever.

MORPHEUS
Can I help?

.... /118.

118. CONT'D

Nat swivels back round to face Morpheus.

NAT

Shit, man. Heart attack!

MORPHEUS

Well, shucks. Some people
are touchy.

Nat steadies himself on the counter. He points at the
dream-pod.

NAT

Look. I want my money back.
This thing...

Morpheus glances down at the dream-pod. It flattens and
droops, the area of counter-top beneath sagging
likewise.

MORPHEUS

(voice, static-off-
silk)

It's not
what
you want ed?

NAT

Not really. The dreams are
duds...

In the blink of an eye, Morpheus stands behind Nat.

MORPHEUS

(vocal chords rub like
sandpaper against the
words)

Really? Not what you wanted?

Nat, frozen to the spot, can't turn round. He yells his
words straight at the Hypnos 4000; the saggy, Daliesque
dream-pod percolates into and through the counter-top.

NAT

She's supposed to make me
happy!

..../118.

118. CONT'D

MORPHEUS

Ohhh.
You wanted happiness.
Well.
Hah.

Morpheus (blink of an eye) is back behind the counter.
He smacks his collagened lips.

MORPHEUS (CONT'D)

Happiness *always* demands
some sort of a sacrifice.

NAT

Sacrifice?

Nat gulps, swallows.

NAT (CONT'D)

...always?

Nat blinks. Morpheus emerges from the backroom with a
Minotaur's horn sheathed in a net of silver filigree.

MORPHEUS

Fraidso, pumpkin.

Nat's unwanted Hypnos 4000, drifts down inside the
counter, assumes its original stark, black hi-tech
appearance and comes to rest on a shelf, where it
nestles among the other dream-pods on display.

Morpheus smiles down at it.

MORPHEUS

Naturellement, j'adore all
this juicy new technology.

Morpheus shrugs.

MORPHEUS (CONT'D)

But if a customer is not
happy. Mmm?

Morpheus caresses the Minotaur's horn.

.... /118.

118. CONT'D

MORPHEUS (CONT'D)

The old ways. Well. They've
stood the test of time.

The horn emits the sweetest of airs, like Miles blowing
soft through warm honey.

MORPHEUS (CONT'D) (O/S)

Pricier than the mass-
produced stuff though.

Morpheus shakes the horn gently. Luminous sand specks
float out of its midnight black maw.

Enthralled, Nat's eyes track the luminous sand.

The specks flutter down into a tiny onyx vial that
Morpheus holds.

MORPHEUS (CONT'D) (O/S)

How 'bout we exchange that
clunky old Hypnos 4000 for a
drop of what'll do you good?

Morpheus winks conspiratorially.

MORPHEUS (CONT'D)

No extra charge for someone
like you, sweet-cheeks.

Nat fidgets. His cheeks redden.

MORPHEUS (CONT'D)

Someone really keen on
happiness.

Morpheus caps the vial and cocks his nose at Nat.

MORPHEUS (CONT'D)

Apply a few grains topically
to the eyes prior to
retiring each night.

Nat hesitates, then pockets the sand-specked vial in
his waistcoat.

..../118.

118. CONT'D

NAT
O K.
No extra charge you say.

119. INT. MORPHEUS SHOP. NIGHTFALL. AUTUMN 2007. 119.

Morpheus ushers Nat through the shop's ivory-rimmed sliding doors. He grins.

MORPHEUS
Have a nice day.

Music wafts after Nat ... *floating sky is shimmering, glimmering...* ['Julia']

120. INT. SUBWAY STATION. NIGHTFALL. AUTUMN 2007. 120.

Backpack at his feet, NAT perches at the end of a bench on the crowded subway platform.

Nat's mobile rings; he fishes it from his backpack.

NAT
Hi.

CLARA (O/S-PHONE)
It's me. I've been
thinking...

NAT
Yeah?

CLARA (O/S-PHONE)
Where are you?

NAT
At the station.

CLARA (O/S-PHONE)
(surprised)
You're still in town?

Nat glances at the platform clock. It's 6.50pm and the next train leaves at 6.53pm.

.... /120.

120. CONT'D

NAT

Yeah. Train will be here soon. What do you want?

CLARA (O/S-PHONE)

Dinner then. How about we still have dinner?

NAT

Thought you went home?

CLARA (O/S-PHONE)

Nope. Went for a drink instead. I'm in this cute little bar...

NAT

Good for you.

CLARA (O/S-PHONE)

Yeah. Good for me.

Nat inspects his free hand.

NAT

Thanks. You wouldn't believe it, but I've really got to get home.

Nat's palm glitters with stray atoms of dream-sand.

NAT

Get some sleep. An early night.

Nat switches his phone hand. He winces.

CLARA (O/S-PHONE)

Sure, baby. With Olympia.

Nat stares at his newly freed hand. He is not really listening to Clara.

Nat's other hand is also flecked with dream-sand.

...../120.

120. CONT'D

NAT
Gotta go, Bye.

Nat clumsily shoves his mobile into his backpack.

Nat rubs his palms on his thighs. He looks at his palms. They still sparkle with dream-sand.

Nat looks down at his thighs. His trousers, too, sparkle with dream-sand.

121. DAYDREAMFLASH. 121.

Cartoon NAT, holds onto a bunch of balloons.

He looks down at his feet. They float just above the ground.

Nat's hand grips tighter around the balloon-string.

He rises higher and higher.

The earth disappears into the distance.

Vaporous, unearthly ground rises to meet his feet.

Nat edges forward over the cloudy terrain.

There is a signpost: 'ROAD TO DREAMLAND'.

Nat lets go of the balloons.

122. INT. SUBWAY STATION. NIGHTFALL. AUTUMN 2007. 122.

NAT reaches into his waistcoat pocket and gets the dream-sand vial.

He rubs some sand grains into his eyes.

123. 'DREAMLAND'. 123.

The tiny dream-sand grains burst like micro-bubbles.

The scintillating micro-bubbles weave and coalesce to form the bubble-word: 'Dreamland'.

124. CAVEDREAM.

124.

The dream has the 'aura' of an Enid Blyton children's adventure.

Jolly pals, NAT and OLYMPIA explore a dark cave. They both carry torches. (An off-screen sound that is like the rushing of an underground river makes them strain to hear each other.)

Olympia sniffs the air. She comes to a stop.

OLYMPIA

What's that smell?

Nat is now a few paces ahead of Olympia. He turns around.

NAT

It's just damp... and
batshit.

Olympia wrinkles her nose.

OLYMPIA

No, there's something
metallic, hot.

Nat sceptically sniffs the air.

NAT

You're dreaming. It's just
musty cave smells.

Olympia takes a step towards Nat.

OLYMPIA

I'm going back.

Nat moves towards Olympia.

NAT

What?

Olympia puts her hands on Nat's shoulders.

.... /124.

124. CONT'D

OLYMPIA

To get Charlie. I'm going
back...

NAT

Your mum's canary?

Olympia puts her hands on her hips.

OLYMPIA

Yes.

Nat turns away.

NAT

Why? That's just wasting
time.

Olympia clasps her hands together with a muffled clap.

OLYMPIA

No. I remember I read
somewhere that a canary's...

Nat reaches back, grabs Olympia's hand and attempts to
move forward.

NAT

Come on, let's keep going.

Olympia stands her ground.

OLYMPIA

...a canary's a USEFUL THING
to bring along underground.

NAT

You're crazy.

Olympia folds her arms.

OLYMPIA

Right.

124. CONT'D

Nat moves ahead a couple of paces, then stops and turns to face Olympia.

NAT
Anyway, I'm going on.

Olympia turns to head back.

Nat watches Olympia leave.

Olympia disappears into the blackness.

Nat turns and ventures a little further into the cave.

Nat's torch batteries begin to fail.

Nat stops his forward exploration and dawdles about the cave.

Nat's torch beam dwindles in intensity, then fades altogether.

In the blackness, the rushing, river-like sound loudens.

Nat sings to comfort himself in the darkness.

NAT
*My world is empty without
you, babe...*

125. INT. SUBWAY STATION. NIGHTFALL. AUTUMN 2007. 125.

NAT, eyes closed, perches on the subway platform bench. He hums 'My world is empty without you'.

NAT
hmmm hmmm hmm hmm hmm

In the background, there is the whooshing sound of a train approaching.

126. CAVEDREAM.

126.

In the blackness, against the background of the rushing, river-like noise, there is the sound of NAT humming 'My world is empty without you'.

NAT

hmmm hmmm hmm hmm hmn

A shifting torch beam penetrates the cave. Nat sits on the rocky floor.

The beam dazzles Nat's eyes and he jumps to his feet.

NAT

(yells)

Olympia?

Nat hurtles towards the flickering torchlight. The rushing, river-like sound increases.

The torchbeam dazzles and obscures Nat's vision as he races towards it.

Nat stumbles and falls away from the light into a rushing blackness.

127. INT. SUBWAY STATION. NIGHTFALL. AUTUMN 2007. 127.

The shifting, flickering torchlight of the cavedream mutates into the blinding headlight of a subway train. Simultaneously, the rushing, river-like sound of the cavedream modulates into the whooshing sound of an approaching train.

Clutching his eyes, the dream-sand glittering on his hands and face, NAT hurtles off the platform and falls asprawl on the tracks.

128. INT. TRAIN CABIN. NIGHTFALL. AUTUMN 2007.

128.

The TRAIN DRIVER sits in his cabin.

129. INT. SUBWAY STATION. NIGHTFALL. AUTUMN 2007. 129.

Nat's form is silhouetted in the headlight beam.

130. INT. TRAIN CABIN. NIGHTFALL. AUTUMN 2007. 130.

The DRIVER jams on the brakes.

131. INT. SUBWAY STATION. NIGHTFALL. AUTUMN 2007. 131.

Sparks fly from the tracks and train wheels, as brakes screech.

Commuters on the platform scream and look aghast.

The train decelerates dramatically.

Passengers inside the crowded train panic as they are pitched about.

The braking train strikes NAT. He is carried forward a short distance before the train comes to a complete halt.

Nat lies sprawled on the tracks.

Nat's backpack lies on the ground by the bench.

From inside the backpack, Nat's mobile rings.

Shocked commuters mill about.

Nat's mobile continues ringing.

132. INT. HOSPITAL. EVENING. WINTER 2007. 132.

In plaster, with multiple fractures, NAT lies comatose in Prince Edward's Hospital. He is hooked up to a panoply of medical paraphernalia.

CLARA sits beside the bed.

Clara twiddles with the 'engagement' ring on her finger.

.... /132.

132. CONT'D

Clara stares at Nat's face.

Clara looks at the wall clock/calendar.

The clock/calendar shows 6.33pm, 21 June 2007.

Clara stands and paces the room. She goes over to the window and glances out at the street.

133. EXT. HOSPITAL. EVENING. WINTER 2007. 133.

The street outside the hospital is wet from recent rain. DIS waits by his motorbike.

134. INT. HOSPITAL. EVENING. WINTER 2007. 134.

CLARA turns from the window, returns to the bedside and sits down.

Clara takes off the 'engagement' ring and places it in NAT'S hand.

Clara's hands close Nat's fingers around the ring.

135. EXT. HOSPITAL. EVENING. WINTER 2007. 135.

CLARA hurries out the hospital entrance.

DIS sees her and smiles.

Dis mounts and starts the bike.

Clara gets onto the bike with Dis.

Clara and Dis ride away together.

136. INT. HOSPITAL. NIGHT. WINTER 2012. 136.

FREDRIK sits by NAT'S hospital bed in a motorised wheelchair (it is a later model than the one he had at the time of the fatal car crash).

The wall clock/calendar shows 11.48pm, 6 August 2012.

.... /136.

136. CONT'D

Fredrik's hands tremble, still he attempts to brush the comatose Nat's hair.

Nurse OLYMPIA SPALANZANI enters with a takeaway coffee. She pours the coffee into Fredrik's spill-proof cup and hands it to him.

Fredrik nods in gratitude and takes a sip.

Olympia picks up the hairbrush.

She begins brushing Nat's hair.

The ends of Nat's hair swirl like ripples in a stream.

137. EXT. RIVERSIDE DREAM. 137.

Beyond the reeds on the shoreline, the muddy river swirls.

NAT'S half-eaten lunch (focaccia and bottled orange juice) lies beside him on the bench.

Nat stares across to the river's far bank.

The car carrying MAUDE and ALBERTINE flies from the bank and plunges into the water.

Nat hears a busker playing 'Danny Boy'.

Nat is suddenly four years old, but still sitting on the bench, feet swinging. Maude sits next to him. She sings 'Danny Boy'.

Maude holds the antique doll with the chipped teeth up to the four-year-old Nat.

The doll's face and chipped teeth loom closer, filling Nat's field of vision.

138. INT. CHILDHOOD BEDROOM DREAM. 138.

MAUDE reads to the four-year-old NAT who lies in his childhood bed.

...../138.

138. CONT'D

MAUDE

*'The glass jar containing
the one and only good dream
they had caught that day
stood between them.'*

Maude kisses Nat goodnight. She tucks him in.

Maude's hand strokes Nat's hair.

139. INT. HOSPITAL. NIGHT. WINTER 2012. 139.

The brush in OLYMPIA'S hand brushes through Nat's hair.

140. INT. HOSPITAL. DAWN. WINTER 2012. 140.

By NAT'S bedside, Nurse OLYMPIA SPALANZANI adjusts the intravenous drip.

Nearby, the young BUSKER, now in the guise of a cleaner, polishes the ward floor. He hums Danny Boy' as he works.

The wall clock/calendar shows 6.23am, 7 August 2010.

Olympia straightens the bedclothes.

The busker/cleaner unplugs his polisher.

Olympia turns and looks at the cleaner.

OLYMPIA

He's been like this forever
it seems.

The cleaner regards Olympia sympathetically.

OLYMPIA (CONT'D) (O/S)

Each day, I say to myself:
today...

There is a tear forming in the corner of Olympia's eye.

.... /140.

140. CONT'D

OLYMPIA (CONT'D)

...this will be the day...
that he awakens.

The cleaner nods, gathers up his gear and exits.

Olympia strokes Nat gently on the cheek, dims the light and leaves.

Sparkling specks of dream-sand start to appear on Nat's motionless hands.

Nat's eyelids are closed. They glow (with the hidden activity of dream-sand specks manifesting beneath them).

An infinitude of luminous granules (under Nat's closed eyelids) dazzle his iris with mega-tiny explosions.

Over and over and over again the dream granules explode into bubbles. Pretty bubbles in the air.

One dreambubble grows enormous.

141. EXT. DREAMBUBBLE. 141.

In the dreambubble, NAT and OLYMPIA frolic in the surf under the stars on a summer's night.

142. INT. HOSPITAL. MORNING. SUMMER 2012. 142.

Token Christmas decorations festoon the ward.

NAT lies still and comatose.

Nat's finger moves hesitantly, tremulously on the attached buzzer.

Nat manages to press the buzzer.

The wall clock/calendar shows mid-morning 21 December 2012. Its seconds-hand sweeps round ever so slowly.

OLYMPIA enters and races to Nat's bedside.

.... /142.

142. CONT'D

Nat's eyes open.

Olympia and Nat look at each other's faces.

END