

The Wild Helicopters of the Outback

by  
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Based upon the short story "The Wild Helicopters of  
the Australian Outback" by Katrina Nicholson

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FADE IN:

EXT. TENNANT CREEK AIRFIELD - DAY

The sun beats down on the dusty, scrubby grass, reflecting off the metal roof of an empty three-sided shed.

Insects BUZZ in the dead air. There are no people around.

With a ROAR, a small two-engined plane drops down to land on the unpaved runway, kicking up twin spirals of dust.

The plane lurches to a halt in front of the shed.

The hatch swings open with a rusty CREAK.

A single passenger, ABBY BECKETT (22), a college grad in brand new jeans and plaids and a very old and dirty baseball cap, climbs through carrying a battered Army surplus duffel.

She wilts visibly when the heat hits her.

The planes's engine's ROAR as it pivots around on its landing gear.

It speeds into the air again, leaving Abby in a cloud of dust and grit.

Abby looks around uncertainly.

ABBY

Dad?

Abby heads toward the shed.

ABBY

Hello?

She pokes her head inside. There's no one there.

She fans herself with her shirt and plops down on a bench.

ABBY

Christ, was it always this hot out here?

BRUCE (O.S.)

You're spoiled, luv. Four years in Sydney with too much air con.

BRUCE (40s), a craggy Aussie cattle farmer, appears in the doorway wiping his hands on an oily rag and grinning at Abby.

ABBY

Bruce! How's my favorite neighbor?

She jumps up and runs over for a hug.

BRUCE

Your only neighbor, you mean.

Bruce squeezes her fondly and lets her go.

ABBY

What are you doing here? Where's dad?

BRUCE

He didn't think you'd fancy a seven hour drive overland, so he sent me.

ABBY

You brought Robbie?

BRUCE

She's around back.

Abby ducks around the shed to see a tiny green and white Robinson R-22 helicopter parked in the dirt behind it.

Bruce follows, hefting Abby's bag.

BRUCE

Jaysus! What have you got in here, bricks?

Abby taps the side of her nose.

ABBY

Secret science projects. I'll show you later.

Abby pats the helicopter's metal flank fondly.

ABBY

Robbie! I missed you old girl.

BRUCE

She's not alive, you know.

ABBY

I know. She's just... cute...

BRUCE  
(shakes his head)  
You sure you're Howard Beckett's  
daughter?

ABBY  
That's what they tell me.

INT. ROBINSON - DAY

Abby stows her bag behind the seats.

She and Bruce climb into the helicopter's tiny cabin, Bruce on the right, Abby on the left, and buckle their safety straps.

Bruce starts the engine. With a WHINE, the rotor blades begin to turn.

When they're THWUPPING the air steadily, Bruce turns to Abby and speaks to her through the helicopter's intercom headsets.

BRUCE  
(filtered)  
Ready?

ABBY  
(filtered)  
Beyond. Let's go home.

Bruce grabs the collective between the seats and tilts the t-bar cyclic toward his side.

He hauls back on the collective and the helicopter leaps into the air. Abby WHOOPS with joy.

EXT. BARCLY TABLELANDS - DAY

The Robinson swoops through the air over baked yellow grass. The sun glints off its flanks, contrasting it against the bright blue of the sky.

Below them, a cloud of dust marks the passage of a mob of cattle being herded by another ROBINSON, this one red.

Bruce waves at the OTHER PILOT through the windscreen.

The other pilot waves back.

They swoop down over the road, which slices through the landscape like a thin grey stripe.

Up ahead a road train lumbers along, its cab pulling three trailers.

INT. ROBINSON - DAY

In the noisy cabin, Bruce gestures at the road train and raises an eyebrow.

Abby grins.

EXT. BARCLY TABLELANDS - DAY

The Robinson swoops down on the road train from above.

INT. ROAD TRAIN - DAY

The DRIVER guides the road train along the road, one hand on the wheel, the other holding a can of lemonade.

Just as the driver raises the can to his lips, the Robinson swoops down across the windscreen with a ROAR.

The driver jerks in surprise, spilling his drink all over his lap.

Bruce and Abby wave cheerily at him through the windscreen of the Robinson.

INT. ROBINSON - DAY

Abby watches the driver shake his fist at them, shouting angrily though they can't hear him.

ABBY  
(filtered)  
Someone's been sucking lemons.

BRUCE  
(filtered)  
Ah, he's probably just got his knickers in a twist because he's gotta go back to spending half his life driving through the middle of nowhere. A lot of people are still ticked about that chopper thing not working.

ABBY  
(filtered)  
It's been ten years. You'd think  
he'd be over it by now.

BRUCE  
(filtered)  
What can I say? Some people are  
good at holding grudges. You should  
know. Your dad hates those things  
more than anyone.

ABBY  
(filtered)  
Oh believe me, I know.

Abby looks out the window forlornly.

BRUCE  
(filtered)  
Wanna have a go?

Abby turns to him, a big smile on her face.

ABBY  
(filtered)  
Really?

BRUCE  
(filtered)  
Let's see what those fancy city  
blokes have been teaching you.

ABBY  
(filtered)  
(laughs)  
I've been designing them, not  
flying them... well, mostly.

Abby tilts the cyclic bar toward her side.

ABBY  
(filtered)  
I have control.

BRUCE  
(filtered)  
You have control.

Abby jerks the cyclic hard over and the helicopter tips  
almost all the way onto its side.

Abby WHOOPS.

BRUCE  
(filtered)  
Crikey!

Abby turns hard in the other direction.

Bruce hangs onto the grab bar above his head, LAUGHING.

BRUCE  
(filtered)  
Alright, enough, luv.

Abby sits up suddenly, pointing out the windscreen.

ABBY  
(filtered)  
Look! A wild one!

Bruce follows her gaze and spots a dark, vaguely helicopter shaped blot low on the horizon, silhouetted against the sun.

BRUCE  
(filtered)  
It's probably just Stevie's rig.  
He'll be droving through here about  
now.

ABBY  
(filtered)  
No, look at the shape! It's a 204.  
Nobody flies 204s anymore. They've  
been blacklisted in Australia ever  
since the A.A.H. thing. Let's go  
have a gander.

BRUCE  
(filtered)  
Abby...

Abby ignores him, steering toward the other helicopter, which is hovering around a power junction.

The other helicopter jerks around suddenly as if it has heard the Robinson.

ABBY  
(filtered)  
Oops.

The other helicopter turns tail and flees.

ABBY  
(filtered)  
Wait! Come back!

She pushes the cyclic forward and pulls the collective up, dipping the nose down and powering the helicopter forward.

BRUCE  
(filtered)  
Leave it, luv.

ABBY  
(filtered)  
We can catch it.

BRUCE  
(filtered)  
We can't. That thing's got at least  
15 knots on us.

ABBY  
(filtered)  
Come on, Bruce! It's been ages  
since I had an adventure like this.

Bruce taps the fuel gauge.

BRUCE  
(filtered)  
We go after him, it'll be the last  
adventure we have.

ABBY  
(filtered)  
Blast. Foiled by the fuel tank.

Bruce LAUGHS.

BRUCE  
(filtered)  
Tell you what: if it's adventure  
you want, come down our way  
sometime and help Tanya train that  
blasted brumbie.

ABBY  
(filtered)  
She finally caught him?



BRUCE  
(filtered)  
Aye, and when I'm be dead and gone,  
she and that horse will still be  
trying to out stubborn the other.

Abby LAUGHS.

ABBY  
(filtered)  
Alright, then.

She lets Bruce take over control again.

EXT. BARCLY TABLELANDS - DAY

The Robinson flies over a lake.

A troop of kangaroos bound over a hill below them.

INT. ROBINSON - DAY

Bruce points through the windscreen.

BRUCE  
(filtered)  
There she is. Mile High Wind Farm.

EXT. BARCLY TABLELANDS - DAY

The tiny Robinson flies toward a collection of silver dots on the horizon which are lorded over by a great silver cloud.

The dots resolve into floating wind turbines, 400 of them, arranged in staggered rows 5,280 feet high.

The turbines' stubby blades turn lazily in the stiff wind. Rigid Zeppelin-shaped gas bags hold them aloft and heavy cables tether them to the ground.

A sky ute - a small Zeppelin with an open-topped pickup truck gondola, airplane controls, and a front mounted propeller - hovers over the turbines, spraying the gas bags with a clear fluid.

Floating 500 ft above the turbines is a huge, flat homestead building with a catwalk around the outside to which dozens of airboat fans are affixed.

Two landing grids made out of metal mesh are attached to either side of the homestead.

The homestead is suspended on struts under a massive rigid aluminum gas bag shaped like a ram-air parachute.

On the ground underneath the wind farm is a grid of cable linkages that keep the turbines in place along with several storage sheds and a transformer.

Ground-based power lines lead away from the complex.

INT. ROBINSON - DAY

Abby gazes at the wind farm through the windscreen.

ABBY  
(filtered)  
Everything looks exactly the same.

BRUCE  
(filtered)  
I think you'll find a few things  
have changed since you left.

An excitable young boy, ZACHARY (7) stands at the rail on the starboard landing grid, jumping up and down and waving his arms madly.

A grin spreads across Abby's face.

ABBY  
(filtered)  
Is that...

BRUCE  
(filtered)  
Zach. All grown up.

ABBY  
(filtered)  
Not quite yet, I hope.

A sensible woman in a flour-covered apron, TAMMY (40s), joins Zachary at the rail, smiling and waving.

Abby waves back.

ABBY  
(filtered)  
Hi mom!  
(MORE)

ABBY (cont'd)  
(beat)  
Where's...

The door to the homestead flies open and a grim looking farmer with a rifle and a bush hat, HOWARD (40s) dashes out, scanning the sky through the scope of a rifle.

ABBY  
(filtered)  
Ah, there he is.

Bruce grins weakly and raises a hand.

Recognizing them, Howard lowers the rifle, smiles, and waves.

BRUCE  
(filtered)  
Still mad as a cut snake, as you  
can see.

ABBY  
(filtered)  
Now there's something that could've  
used an update.

EXT. STARBOARD LANDING GRID - DAY

The Robinson swoops in to land. Zachary, Tammy, and Howard watch.

Bruce powers down the engine.

JACK (50s) a grizzled mechanic, and RAYLENE (50s), a tough as nails pilot, come out onto the grid, smiling and waving.

Before the helicopter's rotors even stop turning, Zachary breaks free of his mother's grasp and dashes over to the chopper.

He flings himself into Abby's arms as she gets out.

ZACHARY  
Abby!

Abby hugs him back.

ABBY  
Oi, are you sure you're my little  
brother? You looked a lot smaller  
on my webcam.

Zach lets go and crawls into the helicopter.

ZACHARY  
Is it here? Did you bring it?

TAMMY  
(laughs)  
Manners, Zachary!

ABBY  
Hi, Mum.

Abby and Tammy hug.

Howard grins and goes over to the helicopter to drag Zachary out.

HOWARD  
Alright you, keep your nose out of it.

ZACH  
Aww.

Howard sets Zachary down and smiles at his daughter. He rubs his hands together excitedly.

HOWARD  
So where's this pressie you brought me, then?

Abby rolls her eyes.

ABBY  
Nice to see you too, Dad.

Howard grins.

HOWARD  
C'mere, girl.

Howard gives his daughter a hug.

Raylene bustles over with a flat backpack like everyone else is wearing.

RAYLENE  
Into your parachute now, love.

JACK  
Can't have you falling off on your first day back, can we?

Abby sticks her arm through the strap.

ABBY  
Thanks, Raylene.

Abby hugs Raylene briefly.

ABBY  
So how are things with you two?

RAYLENE  
Oh, you know...

Abby clicks the parachute pack buckles together in the front and looks around.

ABBY  
Where's your son?

Jack doesn't meet her eyes.

ABBY  
(worried)  
Jack? Did something happen to Gav?

JACK  
No, no. He, uh, had some work to see to.

A moment of awkward silence. Abby is confused.

BRUCE  
Well, seems you've got everything under control, so I'll be off.

ABBY  
Ta, Bruce.

HOWARD  
I appreciate the favor.

BRUCE  
No worries, mate.

Bruce climbs back into the helicopter and powers it up.

The Robinson lifts off and flies away.

ABBY  
Bye, Robbie.

Howard turns to her.

HOWARD  
So? Pressie?

ZACHARY  
Me me! I want to see!

TAMMY  
Yes, luv, don't keep us waiting.

Abby LAUGHS.

ABBY  
Alright. I'll see you in the mess  
hall in a bit.

Abby turns to leave.

HOWARD  
Where are you off to?

Tammy gives him a look that says he's an idiot.

HOWARD  
Oh. Right. Well... in a bit then.

EXT. PORT LANDING GRID - DAY

Abby comes around the corner of the catwalk, still carrying her bag.

A sky ute touches down among the other sky utes and sky ute parts scattered across the grid.

GAV (22), a handsome but scruffy young mechanic, climbs out of the sky ute and hauls a big metal tank out of the flatbed.

ABBY  
Have you moved at all since I left?  
I don't think I have any memories  
of you where you're not mucking  
about on a sky ute.

Gav is briefly surprised to see her, then quickly masks it with coldness.

He wrestles the tank over to a pile of similar tanks.

GAV  
Yeah, well, some of us have work to  
do.

ABBY

I didn't mean... I just... we missed you on the landing grid and I wanted to see if you were going to come to the mess hall for the briefing. I've got a surprise.

GAV

Maybe later. I gotta finish reapplying the anti-friction coating.

ABBY

I-- okay. Um, well, I guess I'll see you around, then.

GAV

Yeah, whatever.

Abby, hurt and confused, leaves him alone.

INT. MESS HALL - DAY

Howard, Zachary, Jack and Raylene are sitting on the benches, which have been turned to face the map wall.

Abby enters through the door behind them. Tammy, who is standing by the serving window, sees the upset look on her face.

She puts her hand on Abby's shoulder.

TAMMY

It's alright, luv. Give him time. He just missed you is all.

ABBY

He's got a funny way of showing it.

TAMMY

Well, we can't all be as sensible as you.

(pats Abby's kit bag)

Come on, now, buck up. Now's your time to show off.

ABBY

Right-o.

She pastes a smile on her face and moves to the front of the room.

She sticks up some photos of a company headquarters, some Bell helicopters, an outback station, and a blueprint of an electric UH-1. She points to them in turn as she speaks.

ABBY

As you all know, eleven years ago, Australian Automated Helicopters began an ambitious project: to create a system of automated air deliveries for far-flung Outback stations.

JACK

Yes... and?

ABBY

And during the course of the project they bought up all of the Bell model 204 and 205s as well as the old army model UH-1s and fitted them with an experimental form of AI. They also removed their petrol engines and replaced them with electric batteries so that they could recharge themselves at wind farms like ours.

ZACHARY

Abby! We know all this!

ABBY

But did you also know that their new electrical systems left them vulnerable to power surges?

ZACHARY

No.

ABBY

Farmers have been trying all manner of things in the past few years - shotguns, traps, alarms - with limited success, but I've discovered a--

ZACHARY

I wanna see what's in the bag! Show me! Show me!

ABBY

(laughs)

Alright, alright.

(reaches into the bag)

(MORE)



ABBY (cont'd)  
Ladies and gents, may I present to  
you...

She pauses for effect. Everyone leans forward in their seats.

Abby whips her arm out of the bag holding what looks like an  
RPG launcher loaded with a black canister topped with two  
silver electrodes.

ABBY  
The Chopper Buster!

A collective OOOOH from her appreciative audience.

HOWARD  
How does it work?

ABBY  
It's like a giant Taser.  
(points to canister)  
This canister here is launched from  
the spring-loaded tube at high  
speed.  
(points to the electrodes)  
These electrodes here are  
magnetized, so they'll stick to the  
chopper's skin. Then it releases a  
100,000 volt charge to fry the  
power system.

Zachary jumps up and runs over to the Chopper Buster.

ZACHARY  
That is so cool! I wanna try it!  
Give it to me!

Abby holds the Chopper Buster over her head as Zachary tries  
to jump up and grab it.

ABBY  
Woah! Slow down there, sprog. This  
thing packs quite a whallop. I  
don't want you anywhere near it.

ZACHARY  
Aww.

Abby looks up and catches Gav watching from the doorway.

When he sees her looking, he slips out again.

Abby frowns.

RAYLENE  
What if we hit each other by  
mistake?

Jack SNICKERS.

RAYLENE  
(to Jack)  
What? You know it'll happen.

ABBY  
It'll hurt, no doubt about that.  
Getting hit by one of these is like  
being kicked by a kangaroo, so be  
careful where you point it. But you  
don't have to worry about the  
charge. It won't zap unless it's  
attached to something metal.

RAYLENE  
Like our sky utes?

ABBY  
Um, yeah, so don't shoot those  
either.

Everyone LAUGHS.

ABBY  
Okay, well, that's about it. If you  
want to come up and take a look  
I'll show you how to...

She trails off as she catches sight of Zachary, standing  
completely still with his head to one side like a dog,  
listening.

ABBY  
What are you--

ZACHARY  
Choppers!

With that, everyone scrambles for the doorway except for  
Tammy.

Abby is caught off guard but runs after them.

She stops, comes back for the Chopper Buster.

ABBY  
Bye, Mum!

TAMMY  
(shouting after her)  
Be careful!

EXT. PORT LANDING GRID - DAY

Abby runs out onto the landing grid holding the chopper buster.

Raylene and Jack dive their sky ute off the platform and fly off.

Gav sits in his sky ute running cockpit checks. Zachary is in the second seat.

Abby automatically runs for Gav's sky ute.

She pulls up short when she sees Zachary in her seat.

GAV  
Sorry, no room.

ABBY  
But... we were always partners.  
Jack and Raylene, Dad and Zach, me  
and you.

GAV  
(shrugs)  
Then you left.

He turns away from her.

Zach turns around to look at her.

ZACHARY  
Sorry Abby.

Gav dives the sky ute off the grid.

Abby stands alone in the middle of the grid.

HOWARD (O.S.)  
Abby! Come on!

She turns to see her dad at the controls of another sky ute, waving her over.

She dashes over and jumps in.

She buckles her safety belt just as her dad dives the sky ute off the edge of the grid.

INT. HOWARD'S SKY UTE - DAY

Howard lets the sky ute fall for a moment to build up speed.

Then he engages the engines and levels off about fifty feet above the turbines.

HOWARD  
Eyes peeled now, luv.

Abby shades her eyes with her hand and scans the sky.

She spots a cluster of seven black dots in the distance.

ABBY  
(points)  
There!

HOWARD  
Good eye, luv!

Howard steers the sky ute to head them off.

ABBY  
Not as good at Zach's ears. How can  
he hear them from so far away?

HOWARD  
What can I say? The boy's got a  
gift.

EXT. SKY OVER WIND FARM - DAY

Up ahead, Jack/Raylene and Gav/Zach catch sight of the approaching choppers too and steer toward them.

The helicopters split into three groups and head for different ends of the wind farm.

Jack/Raylene and Gav/Zach peel off to chase two of the groups.

Howard and Abby continue straight on.

The helicopters reach the turbines on the edge of the farm and slow to a hover.

The rhythmic THWAP THWAP THWAP of their rotors drowns out the straining BUZZ of the sky ute's engine.

The helicopters extend their recharging booms and each plug into the back of a turbine.

INT. HOWARD'S SKY UTE - DAY

Howard and Abby are still too far away to do anything.

ABBY

Look at how smoothly they can  
maintain a hover, even in the wake  
turbulence from the turbines.  
Incredible!

Howard waves his arms at the choppers ineffectually.

HOWARD

Oi! Rotten leeches! Get away from  
my turbines!

EXT. SKY OVER WIND FARM - DAY

The spherical electronic cameras mounted underneath the choppers' noses swivel nervously toward Howard, but the choppers don't flee.

INT. HOWARD'S SKY UTE - DAY

Howard narrows his eyes, glaring at the chopper.

HOWARD

Get your gun ready, Abby.

ABBY

But can't we--

HOWARD

Come on, luv, let's see what they  
taught you at that fancy school.

ABBY

(reluctantly)  
Okay, just get me a little  
closer...

Abby stands up and tucks the Chopper Buster into her shoulder.

She aims along the fold-up sights at the chopper closest to them.

She's got the crosshairs on the engine cowling.

She hesitates.

HOWARD

Now, Abby! Those blasted nuisances  
are stealing our ruddy power!

Abby squeezes the trigger.

The canister springs from the tube with such force that it  
knocks Abby backward into the flatbed.

EXT. SKY OVER WIND FARM - DAY

The canister arcs toward the helicopter.

It hits the metal engine cowling with a hollow BANG and  
sticks.

Nothing happens.

INT. HOWARD'S SKY UTE - DAY

Howard slaps his knee with his hat.

HOWARD

Oh for--

ABBY

Wait for it.

EXT. SKY OVER WIND FARM - DAY

Electricity arcs over the helicopter's skin.

With an electronic SQUEAL, it seizes up completely and drops  
like a stone.

Abby stands up to watch it fall, tail first, into the  
scrubby, gnarled trees below.

The trees CRACK and SCRAPE as the helicopter slides through  
them to the ground.

It lands with a THUD, sending up a cloud of dust, and lies  
still.

Howard stands in his seat, CHEERING, his arms in the air.

In their sky utes, Jack, Raylene, Gav, and Zach also CHEER.  
To Abby, it sounds like all the cheering is muffled and far away.

She's watching the other helicopters, who are flying in circles over their crashed comrade, making WAILING NOISES that can only be described as distressed.

Gav/Zach and Raylene/Jack power aggressively toward the circling helicopters.

The helicopters flee in fright.

INT. HOWARD'S SKY UTE - DAY

Howard claps Abby on the back.

He's saying something congratulatory but Abby doesn't hear it. Her eyes are on the fleeing helicopters.

INT. MESS HALL - NIGHT

A party is in full swing. COUNTRY MUSIC blasts from the stereo.

The room is packed with dusty FARMERS in wide brimmed hats and rolled up sleeves, including Bruce and TANYA (40s) a weathered but pretty farm woman.

They're all talking to the wind farm's occupants. Only Gav is missing.

Beer bottles line the serving counter. They're also clutched in the hands of the farmers.

Zachary bounces from person to person, beaming, with a fizzy drink in his hand.

Howard stands in the middle of the room talking to FARMER #1.

HOWARD

-- then it just seized up and  
dropped like a stone!

FARMER #1

Struth! Where can I get one of  
these things?

HOWARD

My daughter Abby will be selling  
'em as soon as we can get the parts  
to make more.

FARMER #1

Put me down for one.

FARMER #2

I'll take two!

Abby, who has been watching from her spot against the wall,  
makes a face.

She turns around and leaves the room.

Bruce notices her leaving. He taps his wife on the shoulder  
and nods toward Abby.

Tanya gives him a little shove toward Abby.

EXT. CATWALK - NIGHT

Abby comes out.

She leans on the catwalk railing and looks over the edge.

Below her are hundreds of blinking white and red lights from  
the wind turbines. Spirals of light rope seem to floating in  
midair where they mark the turbine's cables.

Above, the stars are bright and well defined.

PARTY SOUNDS drift through the night.

The door opens and Bruce comes out.

He leans on the railing.

BRUCE

You're missing your party.

ABBY

It's not my party. It's Dad's  
party.

BRUCE

But he threw it for you.

ABBY

He threw it for the Chopper Buster.



BRUCE  
Which you made.

ABBY  
Because it's what he wanted.

BRUCE  
But it's not what you wanted?

ABBY  
Yes. No. Maybe. I dunno. Dad was happy, but those other helicopters, they sounded so... sad when I shot down their mate, and...

BRUCE  
And?

ABBY  
And I'm not sure I want to use the Chopper Buster anymore.

BRUCE  
So don't.

ABBY  
Tell that to dad. He's in there peddling Chopper Busters to his mates like we're going to start a factory.

BRUCE  
Never mind them. All they want is to stop the choppers stealing their power.

ABBY  
So?

BRUCE  
(shrugs)  
So maybe there's more than one way to do it.

ABBY  
Hmm. I never thought of that.

EXT. STARBOARD LANDING GRID - NIGHT

Party guests depart in helicopters and sky utes.

Howard and Tammy stand by the door, waiting to say goodbye to people who are leaving. Zachary is out cold in Howard's arms, SNORING.

Tanya and Bruce come outside.

TAMMY  
Thanks for coming.

BRUCE  
Great party.

Howard shakes Bruce's hand.

Bruce puts his arm around his wife and they head for the Robinson.

INT. PORT LANDING GRID - NIGHT

Gav lies underneath a sky ute tinkering with its insides by the light of a small lantern. The rest of the landing grid is very dark.

A small SCUFF catches Gav's attention. He stares out into the blackness.

A shape appears against the starlight. It's Abby. She's wearing a shoulder satchel and carrying a big coil of rope.

She goes over to the rail. She clicks on a headlamp and uses its light to attach the end of the rope to the rail.

She throws the coil of rope over.

She attaches some clips on her belt to the rope.

Then she climbs over the rail and slides down the rope, out of sight.

Gav hesitates.

He crawls out from under the sky ute and goes over to the rail.

He looks down into the blackness. Far below, he can see headlamp descending.

Gav SIGHS.

He opens a locker and fishes out a rock climbing harness and a handheld flashlight.

EXT. GROUND UNDER WIND FARM - NIGHT

Gav abseils down the hanging rope and lands with a puff of dust, the flashlight clamped in his mouth.

He detaches his harness from the rope and transfers the flashlight to his hand.

He shines it downward, where he catches sight of a set of footprints leading away.

He follows them.

EXT. CRASH SITE - NIGHT

Gav catches sight of a light up ahead. He turns off his own light and creeps forward.

It's Abby's headlamp. She's moving it over the Army green skin of the crashed helicopter, which is sticky with oil and dust.

A big white logo on the side is a graphic of a kangaroo with googly eyes and the acronym A.A.H.

Abby pauses at the tail, inspecting the mangled tail rotor.

She climbs inside the cargo area through the missing door.

Gav moves forward silently and hides behind a low shrub.

He watches as Abby searches the interior of the helicopter.

INT. HUEY - DAY

The inside of the helicopter is extremely basic, set up as a troop carrier, with dusty old canvas benches along the sides.

Abby looks underneath and around them.

Then she turns and looks toward the cockpit. She catches sight of a pocket attached to the back of the pilot's seat.

She digs around inside and comes up with a swollen, wrinkled pilot operations manual.

ABBY

Ah ha!

Abby sits cross-legged in the cargo compartment and opens the manual.

In places the ink has run, but it's legible. Inside are helicopter diagrams and flight instructions.

ABBY

Brilliant! With this, it should be  
no trouble at all to repair you.  
Then you can be my very own  
chopper. What do you think of that?

The helicopter is silent, dead. The instruments in its panel are dark, the needles at zero.

ABBY

Of course, you can't think anything  
anymore.

(shakes her head)

What a shame. Maybe we can--

Abby interrupts herself to listen.

A faint THWOPPING floats through the night.

Gav darts out of the night and waves at her to get out.

GAV

It's them! They're coming!

ABBY

Gav! What are you doing here?

GAV

Hurry!

ABBY

Don't be stupid. You know as well  
as I do that the wild ones don't  
come at night. The infrared mode on  
their cameras gives them very poor  
depth perception. It's probably  
just Bruce. Maybe one of his  
stockmen got bitten by a snake or  
something and they've got to rush  
him to hospital.

GAV

I really don't think--

With a tremendous BUZZING ROAR like an oversized weed whacker, branches fall from the canopy above.

Gav throws his arms over his head. Abby grabs him by the shirt and hauls him into the helicopter, out of the way of the falling branches.

GAV

What--

With a CLANG of metal on metal, something lands on the roof and jolts the helicopter.

Then suddenly they're rising into the air.

Abby crawls over to the open door.

She grabs the handle, leans out and shines her headlamp upward.

Above them flies another wild helicopter, this one an old white civilian 205. Its cargo hook is attached to a special metal ring on their helicopter's Jesus nut, which holds on the main rotor.

Abby ducks back inside.

ABBY

They came back for him!

GAV

What? Who?

ABBY

The other wild ones. They came back for their mate. They're carrying him away.

GAV

And us along with it.

INT. ZACHARY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Zachary lies curled in his bunk, asleep, wearing jammies with little helicopters on them.

The model airplanes, helicopters, and airships hanging from his ceiling drift lazily in the breeze from the open window.

A very faint THWAP THWAP THWAP sound drifts through the window.

Zach sits bolt upright in bed.

ZACH  
(not fully awake)  
Choppers!  
(shakes his head to clear  
it)  
CHOPPERS!!

Zach throws back his covers and leaps out of bed.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Zachary runs down the hallway in his pajamas.

ZACHARY  
(shouting)  
CHOPPERS!!!

INT. HOWARD AND TAMMY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Howard and Tammy lie sprawled in their bunk, SNORING.

With a BANG, their door flies open and Zachary bursts in.

Tammy sits up, immediately awake.

TAMMY  
Zachary!

HOWARD  
(sleepily)  
Wazzit?

ZACHARY  
Mom, Dad, there's helicopters out  
there. I heard them.

Tammy listens.

TAMMY  
Oh, sweetie, I don't hear anything.

ZACHARY  
Well not NOW.

HOWARD  
(sleepily)  
Don't come out at night. Go back to  
bed.

ZACHARY  
But I HEARD them!

TAMMY

Your father's right, sweetie. You know the wild ones can't come out at night. They'd run into everything. It must have been a dream. Go back to bed.

ZACHARY

But...

TAMMY AND HOWARD

Bed!

Zachary lets out a FRUSTRATED GROWL and SLAMS the door.

INT. ABBY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Abby's room is full of neat shelves containing aircraft models, blueprints, and bins of separated components.

Zachary bursts in.

ZACHARY

Abby?

The bed is neatly made and empty.

INT. GAV'S ROOM - NIGHT

Gav's room is a jumble of tools and grease-stained clothes.

Zachary bursts in.

ZACHARY

Gav?

The bed is a messy snarl of covers, but its empty.

EXT. PORT LANDING GRID - NIGHT

Zachary comes outside looking for them.

He finds the Chopper Buster on a table with tools all around it, but no one working on it.

He looks under the sky ute. There's no one there.

He wanders over to the railing and sees the rope.

He grabs it, follows it down with his eyes.

Then comes the sound of THWAPPING.

A wild helicopter zooms by not far from the homestead with a second, broken helicopter suspended from its cargo hook.

Through the open door of the broken Huey, Zachary can see Abby and Gavin by the light of their flashlights.

ZACHARY  
AAAAAABYYYYYYY!!!

The helicopters zoom by and disappear into the night.

INT. HUEY - NIGHT

Abby and Gav hold onto the handles by the doors and the wind whips their clothes.

ABBY  
Okay... okay... what should we do?  
Should we jump?

GAV  
It's too dangerous. We could land  
in a billabong and drown or get  
impaled on a tree branch or  
something. Zach saw us. He'll raise  
the alarm.

ABBY  
They'll never catch us. We're going  
too fast.

GAV  
You're right. God, how are they  
ever going to find us? You don't  
have your mobile, do you?

ABBY  
No. You?

Gav shakes his head.

ABBY  
No worries. We'll just stick with  
them until they land. Then we'll  
figure something out.

Abby leans out the doorway to look around.

Gav reflexively grabs onto her belt.



GAV

In the meantime, how about we don't  
fall out of the helicopter?

INT. HOWARD AND TAMMY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Howard and Tammy are SNORING in bed.

Zachary bursts into the room.

He runs over and shakes his parents awake.

ZACHARY

Mum, Dad, get up! Abby and Gav are  
being kidnapped by a helicopter!

TAMMY

Zachary, I told you, it's just a--

ZACHARY

It's not a dream, Mum! I saw them!  
And I found this attached to the  
railing.

Zachary holds up a length of rope loaded with clips.

TAMMY

Oh my God, she must have gone after  
that damaged chopper.

ZACHARY

Yeah, and then another one came and  
carried it away. So GET UP!

Howard and Tammy burst out of bed and scramble for their  
clothes.

EXT. PORT LANDING GRID - NIGHT

Howard, Tammy, Raylene, Jack, and Zachary assemble on the  
grid, wearing whatever mismatched clothes they happened to  
grab in their haste.

HOWARD

Split up. Look for the helicopter,  
but keep an eye on the ground, too,  
in case they jumped.

JACK

Easy, mate, let's think about this.

RAYLENE

Think about what, Jack? Those are  
our kids out there!

JACK

And they'll still be lost in the  
morning, but at least none of us  
will get killed looking for them in  
the dark.

A tense silence as the three of them face off.

TAMMY

Jack's right. We'll do them no good  
tonight. We'll start out at first  
light.

(to Howard)

Okay?

Howard doesn't respond.

TAMMY

They're adults now, Howard. We have  
to trust that they can look after  
themselves for a few hours.

Howard nods tightly.

INT. HUEY - NIGHT

Abby leans out of the open doorway, studying the linkage  
between the two helicopters in wonder.

Gav pulls on her belt.

GAV

Get back in here, you nutter. Do  
you want to get chopped to bits?

Abby ducks back inside.

ABBY

It's amazing. That loop on top of  
the Jesus nut was designed so  
A.A.H. could pick up their choppers  
when they clapped out. I don't  
think they even realized it was  
possible for one to carry another.  
It explains why we never see any  
broken down ones.

GAV  
Is that all you can think about? We  
could die out here!

ABBY  
Come on. Gav. Don't you find this  
just a little bit fascinating?

GAV  
No.

ABBY  
Why'd you come after me, then?

GAV  
I had to make sure you hadn't lost  
the plot, didn't I? And clearly you  
have!

ABBY  
I have not. They recover their  
dead. That means they care.

GAV  
They're just helicopters, Abs.

ABBY  
I don't think they're "just"  
anything.

Abby sits in the doorway, gazing up at the helicopter above  
them, one foot dangling in the slipstream.

GAV  
Whatever. Just don't fall out,  
okay?

Gav grabs the carabiner on her harness and clips it to a  
loop, which he secures to the door handle.

He moves to the other side of the door and does the same for  
himself.

They settle into the doorway and gaze out into the night as  
the wind whips their hair.

EXT. PORT LANDING GRID - DAWN

Howard, Zachary, Jack, and Raylene assemble around Tammy, who  
is sitting at a map table.

TAMMY  
Anyone get any sleep?

RAYLENE  
Nope.

Jack yawns.

ZACHARY  
(miserably)  
They took Abby, Mum.

HOWARD  
So what's our plan, luv?

TAMMY  
We'll concentrate our search along  
their last known heading.

JACK  
What's out that way?

TAMMY  
Nothing.

She points to an area of the map which is completely devoid of markings for roads, elevation, and infrastructure.

JACK  
That's a lot of ground to cover.

HOWARD  
I'll call Bruce.

INT. HUEY - DAY

Gav and Abby sit in the doorway, asleep. Abby's head leans against Gav's shoulder.

The rays of the rising sun wash over Gav's face. He blinks.

He sees Abby leaning against him, but doesn't move her.

After a moment, the sun hits her face too and she awakens. Gav quickly slides away.

Abby rubs her eyes and yawns.

She looks over the landscape. It's much barer than the tableland they left behind.

The sandy dirt is red in the rising sun and the only plants are scrubby yellow patches of spinifex.

ABBY  
Where are we?

GAV  
(looks at his watch)  
Best guess, given how fast we've  
been travelling and for how long,  
I'd say we're well into the Tanami  
Desert.

ABBY  
Blast.  
(beat)  
You don't happen to have any food  
on you?

GAV  
(shakes his head)  
You?

Abby digs in her satchel and comes out with a squashed, bent granola bar.

GAV  
No water?

Abby shakes her head.

GAV  
That's not good.

The helicopter banks into a turn.

Abby and Gav lean out further to see where they're headed.

GAV  
What's that?

Ahead of them, a huge natural sandstone formation rears up out of the landscape. It has thick walls that enclose an area of desert about 500m across.

Inside, five other wild helicopters flit back and forth.

ABBY  
This must be where they live!

The helicopter carries them over the rim of the rock wall and heads toward a line of three broken helicopters that are tucked alongside one wall.

It sets them gently down on the end of the row.

Then it flies off to join the other helicopters, which are frolicking under a small geyser of crude oil.

Abby and Gav stand in the doorway looking out.

ABBY

Geez, it's like helicopter Shangri-La in here. If this is where they've been hiding all this time, it's no wonder we've never found them.

GAV

Come on, we should start looking for water. Or a way out.

ABBY

Right.

They climb out of the cargo bay.

INT. HELICOPTER HIDEOUT - DAY

Abby's gaze lingers on the three other mangled choppers. Gav points to a ledge about halfway up the wall.

GAV

Do you think you can climb up there and get a good look around if I give you a boost?

ABBY

Yup.

Gav makes a stirrup out of his hands.

Abby steps into it and he boosts her up to where she can grab a handhold.

She scrambles up the wall and stands up on the ledge.

She scans the dust-dry interior of the bowl.

ABBY

It's no good. I don't see a spring or anything.

GAV  
Maybe we can just hide out here  
until they need to recharge, then  
hitch a ride back.

ABBY  
(loudly, pointing)  
Oh my God, Gav, I think that's--

The frolicking helicopters immediately swivel their cameras  
toward her.

Abby freezes in fear.

The helicopters all go into a hover, staring intently at her.

ABBY  
Uh oh. I don't think they're too  
happy about me being here.

The helicopters' rotors THWAP the air menacingly.

GAV  
Get down! Quick!

But it's too late. As one, the helicopters lower their noses  
and power toward her.

Abby closes her eyes and cringes against the rock face as  
they bear down on her.

GAV  
Abby! No!

But the helicopters pull up and over the wall, thundering  
over Abby's head and out of the bowl.

When she opens her eyes, she and Gav are alone in a cloud of  
grit.

Abby breathes a sigh of relief.

ABBY  
That was close.

GAV  
We're still in major trouble. Our  
ride home just took off.

ABBY  
Maybe not.

Gav turns to follow her gaze. She's looking at the row of broken helicopters.

INT. HUEY - DAY

Gav follows Abby as she climbs into the cargo bay.

GAV  
You really think we can repair this thing?

Abby inspects the instrument panel.

ABBY  
There should be enough parts on the other dead choppers to get it working again. I hope.

GAV  
Yeah, me too. But won't it wake up again if we fix it? What's to stop it leaving us here as well?

ABBY  
I think the Chopper Buster will have fried its electronic brain. When we fix it, it should be a normal chopper again.

GAV  
Should be?

ABBY  
You got a better idea?

GAV  
Nope.

ABBY  
Then help me with this.

Gav joins her at the maintenance hatch and together they pry it up.

FIXING THE HELICOPTER MONTAGE

Gav reaches up to unbolt the broken tail rotor.

Abby pushes in a gauge hanging out of the instrument panel.

Gav tosses broken pieces of metal into a junk pile.



Abby swaps fuses out of her helicopter's cutout box.

Abby and Gav lift out visibly burnt battery.

Abby and Gav lie on the edges of an access door, wiring connections.

END MONTAGE

EXT. HUEY'S CARGO BAY - DAY

Gav and Abby lay in the cargo bay of their helicopter where it's shady, resting.

GAV  
Well, I'm done in.

ABBY  
Me too, and it's not even  
lunchtime.

GAV  
Christ, it's like a greenhouse in  
here.

ABBY  
I know, it's all the metal. It's  
trapping the heat.

GAV  
How much more do you think there is  
do to?

ABBY  
Another few hours' work at least.  
(beat)  
You know, I've been thinking...

GAV  
Uh oh.

ABBY  
(grinning)  
You used to say that all the time  
when we were kids.

GAV  
Yeah, cause you were always getting  
us into trouble with your mad  
ideas.

ABBY  
Remember that time we took the sky  
ute and tried to put out that brush  
fire by dumping dad's beer on it?

Gav smiles, realizes what he's doing, and drops the smile.

GAV  
(sitting up)  
We should get back to the repairs.

ABBY  
Come on, Gav. What's with this cold  
shoulder thing? I thought we were  
mates.

GAV  
We WERE mates. Now we're just two  
people who have to work together so  
they don't die in the desert.

Abby is silent for a moment while that sinks in.

ABBY  
Look, I'm sorry, okay?

GAV  
For what?

ABBY  
For leaving to go to uni. That's  
what you're cross about, isn't it?

GAV  
That's not what I'm cross about.

ABBY  
Then what?

GAV  
You never asked me.

ABBY  
Asked you what?

GAV  
To go with you. You just left.

ABBY  
Would you have come?

Gav doesn't reply.

ABBY  
That's why I didn't ask.  
(sighs)  
Look, can we start over?

Gav thinks it over.

GAV  
(shrugs)  
I guess so.

Abby sits up and hugs him.

ABBY  
Hi Gav. Sorry I've been away so  
long. I missed you.

Gav hugs her back, closing his eyes briefly.

GAV  
Me too.

He lets her go.

ABBY  
Well, shall we keep at it?

Gav nods.

They head for the door.

EXT. BARCLY TABLELANDS - DAY

Zachary looks out over the empty landscape with binoculars.  
Howard pilots the sky ute. They're really dusty and sweaty.

Howard takes out a bottle of water, uncaps it, and taps his  
son with it.

Zachary lowers the binoculars and takes the water. He drinks.

ZACHARY  
Dad?

HOWARD  
What is it, Zach?

ZACHARY  
It's really hot out.

HOWARD  
Yes it is.

ZACHARY

If we didn't have water and shade,  
we'd be in big trouble wouldn't we?

HOWARD

We would.

ZACHARY

Do you think Abby and Gav have  
water and shade?

HOWARD

I don't know, son.

Zachary puts the binoculars back to his eyes and resumes looking.

EXT. HELICOPTER HIDEOUT - DAY

Abby and Gav lugs pieces of metal away from Huey. They're both sweaty and haggard.

Gav drops his in a pile and wipes his forehead on his sleeve.

GAV

Let's take another break. I feel  
like I'm going to pass out.

Abby drops her piece.

ABBY

Okay.

Gav and Abby crawl under Huey's belly out of the sun.

GAV

I wish I had some water.

ABBY

You and me both.

GAV

I don't think we're going to last  
much longer without it.

ABBY

We just... gotta keep working. Get  
it done.

GAV

There's too much to do. There's got to be something in here we can drink to tide us over. Anything.

ABBY

There isn't, unless you drink oil.

GAV

I think I'm getting there.

Abby sits up and looks around.

ABBY

There's something we're missing.

GAV

I dunno where you'd get that idea. There are no plants. Not even spinifex.

ABBY

I know, but...

Abby crawls over and begins looking along the edge of a rock fall.

She knocks aside a rock.

GAV

You're losing it, Abs.

Abby moves further down the wall.

ABBY

Ah ha!

Gav sits up too fast, banging his head on the Huey's belly.

GAV

Ow! What is it? What did you find?

ABBY

I'm not sure.

Abby holds up a small object to the light. It's a shard of brown glass with part of a ripped yellow label on it that just says 'X'.

Gav squints at it.

GAV

Beer! Abby, It's a piece of a stubby!

ABBY

Oh yeah, I see! But how in heck did it get all the way out here?

GAV

Who cares? Where's the beer?

Abby thinks for a second, then brightens.

She starts pulling rocks away from the pile.

She CRIES OUT in delight.

GAV

Please tell me there's beer.

Abby turns to him, grinning.

ABBY

Better. Come look.

Gav goes over and looks.

In the hole Abby has excavated there's a whole crate of broken beer bottles along with cracked crates containing bottles of water, sacks of flour, horse shoes, nails, magazines, beef jerkey, quad bike tyres, and tins of petrol.

GAV

What's all this?

ABBY

The supplies the choppers were supposed to be delivering when they went rogue. They must have dumped it all here and it got covered up in a rock slide.

Gav grabs a bottle of water.

GAV

So we're not going to cark it after all.

ABBY

At least not immediately.

GAV

I'll take it.

They clink their water bottles together and down them.

LATER

Abby and Gavin sit in the middle of a pile of beef jerkey wrappers and empty water bottles.

ABBY

Ahh. That's better.

GAV

You know, maybe we should've rationed some of this stuff.

ABBY

Why? We're only going to be here a few more hours. We just have to start him up to check out his electrical system and then replace the tail rotor. Easy.

GAV

He?

ABBY

Yeah, he. My chopper. His name's Huey.

GAV

How do you figure that?

ABBY

It says right on the pedals.

INT. HUEY - DAY

Abby squeezes into the cockpit and points. Gav peeks over her shoulder.

The word HUEY is stamped into the anti-torque pedals.

GAV

Weird. So are you going to fire him up, or what?

Abby sits in the command pilot's seat and pushes the ignition switch on the cyclic stick.

There's a CLICK but nothing happens.

GAV

Dud.

ABBY

Wait.

She kicks the instrument panel.

Gav gets out.

GAV

Oh, don't be daft. That never works. Hold on while I dig out the--

Abby hits the starter button again and the engine WHINES to life.

ABBY

Ha!

She inspects the controls.

ABBY

Now I've just got to--

Without her touching anything, the navigation computer lights up. It starts CHATTERING away.

ABBY

Uh oh.

EXT. HELICOPTER HIDEOUT - DAY

Outside, the electronic eye underneath the helicopter comes to life and swivels toward Gav.

GAV

It's still alive! Abby, get out!

Abby scrambles out of the helicopter as the computer BEEPS, WHIRRS, and CLICKS.

Abby steps in front of the electronic eye.

Gav grabs her and tries to pull her away.

ABBY

Hang on, I think I can--

The engine spools up with a SCREAMING WHINE and the rotors start THWAPPING at the air.

Gav backs off outside the rotor blades' reach.

The currents throw a cloud of grit onto both of them.



GAV  
Abby, come away!

But Abby is focused on the helicopter.

Its eye is fixated on her nervously. It is vibrating in fear.

Abby holds out her hands placatingly.

ABBY  
It's alright, mate. No one's going  
to hurt you.

GAV  
Abby, are you talking to it?!

ABBY  
Shut up, Gav!

The eye swivels nervously, as if looking for a way out.

The rotors increase their speed and pitch. The helicopter  
begins to lift off.

ABBY  
No! No! You can't! You don't have a  
tail rotor! You'll spin round and  
crash.

The helicopter pauses, gazing fearfully at her.

ABBY  
Look, you probably remember me from  
the other day, but you should know  
I'm really sorry about that.

The helicopter's computer makes a electronic noise that  
sounds like a MOAN.

ABBY  
I know I shot you down, but if you  
give me a chance, I'd like to make  
it up to you.

The helicopter looks uncertain.

ABBY  
You feel that wobble in your main  
rotor? I think your Jesus nut is  
loose. It's probably from being  
lifted up and brought here to the  
graveyard.

The helicopter takes in his surroundings.

ABBY

Yeah, that's right. Your mates  
wrote you off. But I didn't. I  
fixed your electrical system.  
That's why you're awake right now.  
I can fix your rotor too.

Abby sidles closer to the helicopter.

ABBY

Just power down and let me take a  
look at it. It's alright.

The helicopter watches her. Then he SPOOLS DOWN.

ABBY

That's it...

Abby edges closer.

GAV

Abby, you can't be serious. You're  
not going up there.

Abby climbs up onto Huey's nose.

ABBY

... it's alright...

Abby edges toward the main rotor.

GAV

Abby, don't be stupid, he'll chop  
you to bits.

ABBY

It's okay. Huey's not going to hurt  
me, are you Huey?

The helicopter makes an inquiring CHIRP.

ABBY

Yeah, that's your name. Huey. Do  
you like it?

Abby stands up, her head and shoulders in between the rotors.

GAV

(petrified)  
Abby!

Abby SHHHS him. She reaches up slowly with her spanner and gives the Jesus nut a few twists.

ABBY  
Almost done...

A WHINE builds within the helicopter.

ABBY  
Not yet!

Huey stops powering up.

Abby jumps down.

Gav breathes a sigh of relief.

ABBY  
Okay.

Huey POWERS UP to test the rotor, blasting them with grit.

He CHATTERS happily and then shuts down.

ABBY  
(to Gav)  
See? We're all friends now.

Gav glares at her. He's covered in grit that has stuck to his sweaty skin and clothes.

GAV  
Only you would make friends with a wild chopper.

ABBY  
Do you want to get home or not?

Gav just scowls.

EXT. BARCLY TABLELANDS - DUSK

Bruce flies over empty landscape in his Robinson. Tanya sits next to him, binoculars to her eyes.

BRUCE  
(filtered)  
Anything?

TANY  
(filtered)  
No. It's getting too dark. I can't  
tell a tree from a 'roo.

Bruce grabs his handheld radio.

BRUCE  
(into radio)  
Listen, mate, we're losing the  
light.

HOWARD (O.S.)  
(filtered)  
Just a little longer, mate.

BRUCE  
(into radio)  
It's no use. We'll never find them  
in the dark.

A long pause.

HOWARD (O.S.)  
(filtered)  
Alright. We're heading in.

Bruce turns his helicopter for home.

EXT. HELICOPTER HIDEOUT - NIGHT

Huey's landing light illuminates a circular patch of sand in front of him. His eye swivels back and forth as he watches Gav and Abby.

Gav breaks a crate.

He tosses the slats into a hole dug in front of Huey's nose.

GAV  
How's that light coming?

Huey flicks his landing light on and off.

GAV  
Not that light, the fire.

ABBY  
Fire coming right up.

Abby douses the wood in petrol and flings in a match.

The bonfire flares up with a WHOOSH.

Abby grins.

ABBY  
Old stockman's trick.

Gav rolls his eyes.

GAV  
Stockmen were lazy.

Gav and Abby roll quad bike tyres over to the fire pit to use as chairs.

ABBY  
Bruce's were, anyway. Remember that time they forgot to hobble the horses before they went to sleep?

They sit down.

GAV  
How could I forget? We spent all day trying to help Bruce round them up with the sky utes...

ABBY  
...except the sky utes were too slow, so all we could do was point and go "look! There it was!"

They LAUGH.

ABBY  
(patting Huey's nose)  
If we'd had Huey, here, we could've done the job, easy.

Huey makes an uncertain CHIRP.

GAV  
You can't keep him, you know. He's just going to scarper the minute we get his tail rotor on. Probably leave us here to rot.

ABBY  
He wouldn't do that.  
(to Huey)  
You wouldn't do that, right?

Another uncertain BEEP from Huey.

ABBY  
Anyway, I'm starving. What's left  
to eat?

Gav digs through the crate.

GAV  
Um, flour, baking soda, salt, about  
half a bottle of water, and - ooh -  
a jar of Vegemite.

Abby makes a face.

ABBY  
So, starving it is then.

Gav walks off into the dark and comes back with a bowl-shaped  
piece of metal from a broken chopper's nose and a metal rod.

ABBY  
What are you doing with that?

GAV  
Just you wait.

Gav pours flour, water, salt, and baking soda into the bowl  
and mixes it up with the rod.

When it's thick and doughy, he puts another piece of metal  
over the bowl and shoves the whole thing into the coals.

ABBY  
Oh! You're making damper! It's been  
ages since I've had any.

GAV  
Four years.

An awkward silence.

Huey interrupts it with an inquisitive CHIRP.

ABBY  
What is it, Huey? You want to know  
about damper?

An affirmative CHIRP.

ABBY  
It's a kind of campfire bread  
stockmen make.  
(MORE)

ABBY (cont'd)  
Bruce - he's a helicopter pilot we  
know - makes it when he's droving  
his cattle cross country.

GAV  
Abby, he's a helicopter. He doesn't  
understand--

Huey cuts him off with a rude BLEAT.

Gav holds up his hands in surrender.

GAV  
Okay, whatever.

ABBY  
(to Huey)  
Anyway, we used to love going to  
down to the ground for campfires  
when we were kids. We could have  
all our mates around, drink fizzy  
drinks, tell stories about Bunyips  
and such.

GAV  
(shudders)  
Bunyips...

ABBY  
(to Huey)  
We could never have campfires aloft  
with our own families because of  
all the gas.

Huey makes another inquisitive CHIRP and looks around the  
hideout with his eye and his light.

He settles back on Abby again and MOANS.

ABBY  
I suppose you're wondering where  
all your mates went.

An affirmative BEEP.

Abby pokes the fire with a piece of metal.

ABBY  
I'm sorry, mate, but they legged it  
as soon as they saw us.

Huey makes a mournful MOAN. His eye droops.

ABBY  
Cheer up. I'm sure they'll come back.

GAV  
Yeah, all you have to do is take us home. Then they'll come back.

Huey gets excited. His rotor starts THWAPPING at the air.

Abby shoots Gav a glare.

ABBY  
Relax, Huey, we can't go anywhere in the dark. Besides, you still don't have a tail rotor.

Huey spools down, dejected.

ABBY  
(grumpily)  
Nice to know you're so eager to get rid of us.

Gav grins.

ABBY  
Is that damper ready yet or what?

Gav wrestles the makeshift pot out of the fire with the metal rod.

He flips the lid off to reveal a blackened lump of dough.

ABBY  
I remember it being less like charcoal.

GAV  
It's probably just the outside.

He picks up the lump and takes a bite.

Gav makes a face.

GAV  
Nope. Charcoal.

ABBY  
Try it with some Vegemite.

Gav spreads some Vegemite on top of the damper.



He takes a bite.

Gav makes a worse face.

GAV  
Salty charcoal.

ABBY  
(shrugs)  
Oh well. It's better than starving.

Abby tears off a lump and takes a bite.

She makes a face.

Huey makes CHATTERING helicopter laugh.

ABBY  
Or not.

EXT. PORT LANDING GRID - NIGHT

Howard comes outside. Zachary is at the railing, listening hard with his eyes closed.

Howard goes over to lean against the rail next to Zachary.

HOWARD  
Time for bed, Zach.

ZACHARY  
No.

HOWARD  
What do you mean, no?

ZACHARY  
I've got to listen for them.

HOWARD  
We're not going to find them tonight. The wild ones don't come out in the dark.

ZACHARY  
That's what you said last night.

HOWARD  
Last night was a fluke. Don't worry. They know how to handle themselves. They'll be 'right.  
(MORE)

HOWARD (cont'd)  
Now come to bed. We'll need you  
fresh for the morning.

ZACHARY  
(shakes his head)  
They need someone to watch out for  
them.

Howard SIGHS.

He goes back inside.

He returns with a blanket and pillow.

He lays the pillow on the decking and wraps Zach in the  
blanket.

Then he guides Zach to sit down on the pillow.

Zach sits there, listening. He pays no attention when Howard  
sits down beside him.

EXT. HELICOPTER HIDEOUT - NIGHT

By the light of Huey's landing light and their dying bonfire,  
Gav and Abby finish assembling their beds: bags of flour for  
pillows and tarps for blankets.

ABBY  
It won't be the most comfortable  
bed I ever slept in, but it'll do.

She lies down in her bed.

Gav just sits on his.

ABBY  
You're not going to sleep?

GAV  
Too dangerous. There could be  
snakes.

Abby whips off her tarp blankets.

ABBY  
Oh Christ, forgot about those.

She inspects her bedding carefully. Huey turns his landing  
light onto her to help.

ABBY  
Huey, you've got night vision,  
yeah?

Huey TWEETS an affirmative.

ABBY  
Can you keep your eye out for  
snakes?

Another affirmative TWEET.

Abby lays back in bed.

ABBY  
Thanks, mate. Just give us a honk  
if anything comes near.  
(to Gav)  
There now. Go to sleep.

Gav reluctantly climbs into bed, eyeing Huey suspiciously.

GAV  
I don't understand how you can  
trust that thing.

ABBY  
(yawns)  
And I don't understand why you  
won't. Just give him a chance.  
You'll see.

She rolls over and goes to sleep.

Gav lies awake, thinking.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. HELICOPTER HIDEOUT - DAY

A blaring, discordant chorus of HOOTS, WAILS, BUZZES, and ALARMS jars Abby from her sleep. She leaps out of bed and dances around in a panic, swatting at her clothes.

ABBY  
(still half-asleep)  
Snake! Snake! Get it off me!

Gav's LAUGHTER and the CHATTERING sound of a helicopter laughing wake her up fully.

She turns to see Gav leaning against Huey's nose, spanner in hand.

GAV  
Rise and shine. Time to go to work.

ABBY  
Very funny, guys.

Abby stalks past them.

GAV  
(to Huey)  
Ah, sheilas. They've got no sense of humor.

Abby grabs the replacement tail rotor off the ground.

Gav comes back to join her.

ABBY  
Did I miss something? Since when are you two best mates?

GAV  
I'm giving him a chance. Isn't that what you wanted?

She gives a SQUEAL of surprise as Gav suddenly lifts her onto his shoulders so she can reach the tail.

Abby slides the new tail rotor onto the mount and tightens the nut.

ABBY  
Um, thanks.

GAV  
No worries.

ABBY  
Uh, you can put me down now.

GAV  
Right.

Gav lifts her off his shoulders and sets her on the ground.

ABBY  
Okay, Huey, that ought to do it.  
Spool up.

Huey SPOOLS UP his engines. His rotors begin THWAPPING at the air.

Abby and Gav jump back to get out of the sudden dust storm.

They watch the tail rotor.

ABBY

Alright, it's looks like it's gonna hold. Shut down for me, okay?

Huey spools up faster.

ABBY

Did you hear me? I said shut down!

Huey changes the pitch of his rotor and leaps into the air with a joyful SQUEAL.

GAV

Oi, boofhead! You're supposed to wait for us to get on board!

Huey's happy HOOTS echo through the canyon as he circles around and powers over the wall.

ABBY

He left us! I don't believe it!

GAV

I hate to say I told you so, but I kinda did. Ruddy helicopter. We shoulda left his computer off and flown him ourselves.

ABBY

Well now what? There's not enough left here to make another one.

Gav and Abby stand there looking defeated.

Then Huey ROARS over the wall again.

GAV

Blimey!

Huey makes a circuit around the canyon.

He settles down next to them and POWERS DOWN to idle.

ABBY

Huey! You came back!

She runs over and hugs his bulbous nose.

Huey makes a sound that sounds like AWWW.

Gav runs over and jumps into the cockpit.

GAV  
Hurry up and get in before he takes  
off again.

Abby lets go of the nose and throws herself into the open cargo bay door just as Huey SPOOLS UP again.

INT. HUEY - DAY

Huey leaps into the air. Abby SCREAMS as she's thrown backward onto a bench seat.

GAV  
Here we goooooo!

Abby pulls herself forward and stands behind Gav, who's sitting in the right hand pilot's seat. She pokes him in the shoulder.

ABBY  
Out of my seat.

GAV  
Your seat?

ABBY  
Yeah. The command pilot sits on the right. That's me. I know more about helicopters than you do.

GAV  
(rolls his eyes)  
Whatever you say.

He moves into the left seat. Abby sits on the right.

Huey heels over hard, heading for a patch of spinifex.

They fumble for their straps.

GAV  
(strapping himself in)  
I hate to break it to you, but I  
don't think either of us are in  
control here.

Abby finishes with her buckles and grabs the cyclic.

ABBY

Okay Huey, fun time's over. Time to go home.

She eases over on the cyclic. Nothing happens.

ABBY

Um...

Abby stirs the soup with the cyclic.

She presses the anti-torque pedals.

She pushes up and down on the collective.

Nothing happens.

ABBY

What's going on?

Gav loosens his straps and sticks his head under the dash.

GAV

Uh oh.

ABBY

What?

GAV

The controls aren't connected to the hydraulics.

ABBY

What? What are they connected to, then?

GAV

The computer. When you move the controls you're not actually controlling the helicopter. It's more like you're sending suggestions to the computer.

ABBY

Great. Then how are we supposed to get him to go the right way?

Gav leans back and laces his arms behind his head.

GAV

I dunno. You're the command pilot.

Abby punches him in the arm.

GAV

Ow! I dunno. He seems to like you.  
Maybe you can use that.

ABBY

Huey? Hey mate, can you do me a  
favor?

Huey settles down into the patch of spinifex and waits.

ABBY

Do you think we could head east for  
a while? So you can take me home?

Huey obligingly lifts off and turns east.

ABBY

(grins)  
Thanks mate - woooooaaaaaha!

Abby and Gav reflexively grab at the useless controls as Huey  
drops abruptly out of the air.

He lands in another patch of spinifex.

GAV

What was tha--aaaaaahhhh!

Huey launches himself into the air again.

Then he drops down into a third patch of spinifex.

He launches himself into the air again and powers after a  
troop of kangaroos.

GAV

What's he doing?

Abby twists in her seat to look behind them.

There in the patches of spinifex are three crop circles.

She turns forward in time to see Huey drop down in the middle  
of the kangaroos and send them scattering.

ABBY

I think he's playing.

Huey turns and chases after some of the scattered kangaroos.



GAV

Great. Isn't he supposed to be taking us home?

ABBY

He was, and then he got distracted.

GAV

How is it that you managed to pick the only helicopter with Attention Deficit Disorder?

ABBY

I don't think he is the only one. Maybe they all are. Think about it. It would explain a lot.

GAV

Like why they can't seem to get it through their thick heads that stealing power gets them shot at?

ABBY

And why they wouldn't carry cargo to the cattle stations like they were supposed to. They got bored.

GAV

How does knowing that help us?

ABBY

I've got a hyperactive brother, remember?

(to Huey)

Huey Huey, wanna play a game?

Huey abruptly stops chasing the kangaroos.

Abby digs the bloated operations manual from her satchel.

ABBY

I have here a 700 plus page helicopter operations manual. I bet I can finish reading it before you can get us home.

Huey abruptly drops his nose and powers east like his tail's on fire.

GAV

Woah! That did it!

ABBY

I just hope he keeps it up.

GAV

You'd better get reading, then.

LATER

It's the middle of the day and the ground underneath has more grass and trees. They're back in the tableland.

Abby has her nose buried in the book. She's about halfway through. Gav is asleep in the seat next to her, SNORING.

Huey is still powering east.

Huey lets out a triumphant WARBLE. It wakes Gav and draws Abby's attention away from the book.

They look up to see a silver glint on the horizon.

GAV

Hey! We're almost home. I think  
Huey's going to win.

Huey CHIRPS smugly.

A cloud of dust is moving across the landscape in front of them.

ABBY

That must be Bruce's cattle.

Gav points through the windscreen.

GAV

And there's Bruce, look.

Bruce's Robinson is a small dot moving through the air above the cattle.

Abby shades her eyes and peers through the windscreen.

ABBY

Hey, what's that with him?

Gav follows her gaze and notices a silver blotch.

As they get closer, it resolves into the shape of a sky ute.

GAV

Uh oh.

ABBY

What?

GAV

It's Zachary and your dad.

ABBY

So? That just means they're out looking for us.

GAV

So we're in a wild helicopter, and Zachary's got the Chopper Buster.

He points out the windscreen. Zachary is standing up in his seat with the Chopper Buster on his shoulder.

Gav and Abby wave their arms frantically.

GAV

Zachary don't!

ABBY

It's us!

EXT. BARCLY TABLELANDS - DAY

Zachary obviously doesn't see them. He pulls the trigger and the canister arcs from the tube.

Huey lets out an alarmed BLEET and drops like a stone.

The canister misses them.

The recoil from the Chopper Buster flips Zachary clean out of the sky ute.

INT. HUEY - DAY

Abby grabs Gav's arm reflexively as she watches her brother fall.

GAV

It's alright. He's got his parachute on.

They watch as Zach stabilizes his tumbling and pulls the ripcord.

A small drag chute squirts out, followed by the circular red and white main.

Abby breathes a SIGH of relief, then immediately sucks it back in again.

ABBY  
Oh my god, Gav! The cattle!

EXT. BARCLY TABLELANDS - DAY

Zachary is drifting downward toward the mob of cattle. He hauls frantically on his riser, trying to turn, but to no avail.

Looking up, the STOCKMEN on horseback try to steer the cattle away, but it's not enough.

Huey lets out a SQUEAL of alarm and dives straight for Zachary.

He pulls up just in time to hook Zachary's parachute on the front skid.

INT. HUEY - DAY

Abby kisses Huey's dashboard.

ABBY  
Huey, that was brilliant! Thank you, thank you, thank you!

Huey makes an embarrassed WARBLE.

Gav unstraps himself and dives into the back.

GAV  
Help me haul him up.

Abby fumbles with her straps.

Abby and Gav haul on Zachary's risers. His head pops into view.

Abby grabs him and drags him into the cockpit. He's gibbering and his eyes are shut tight.

ZACHARY  
Don't kill me! Don't kill me! I'm sorry! I'm sorry! I'll never shoot at you again, I promise!

GAV  
Zach, you loon, it's us.

Zachary's eyes pop open.

ZACHARY  
Abby? Gav? You're alive!

He throws his arms around both of them.

ABBY  
We are, but you almost weren't.  
What did I tell you about using the  
Chopper Buster?

ZACHARY  
Sorry.

ABBY  
C'mere.

Abby hugs him again.

EXT. STARBOARD LANDING GRID - DAY

Huey lands on one end of the grid. Bruce sets his Robinson  
down on the other end.

Howard runs toward Huey from his parked sky ute.

Zachary stumbles out of Huey's cargo bay.

Abby and Gav follow.

ZACHARY  
Dad! Dad! I was falling and there  
were cows and then a big shadow  
came and it was a helicopter and I  
thought it was going to eat me but  
then it was Abby and she saved me!

Zach leaps into his father's arms.

Howard hugs him tightly.

GAV  
(undertone to Abby)  
Didn't he notice no one was flying  
when we hauled him up?

ABBY  
(undertone to Gav)  
Apparently not.

HOWARD  
I'm glad you're okay, but your mum  
is going to--

ZACHARY  
(horrified)  
Oh yeah! Mum!

He dashes inside.

ZACHARY (O.S.)  
Mom, I'm soreeeeeeee!

Howard turns to Abby with a look of awed respect.

Bruce gets out of the Robinson but doesn't approach. He just watches the others closely.

HOWARD  
Abby, is it true, what he said?

ABBY  
I... uh, actually, it was--

Gav elbows her in the side.

ABBY  
It was Gav, too. He helped.

HOWARD  
I'm sorry I never listened to you  
about the helicopter thing. I never  
realized... I thought all we needed  
were sky utes, but I never would  
have gotten to him in time...

Howard hugs Abby.

ABBY  
No worries, Dad.

Howard lets go and wanders over to Huey.

HOWARD  
So let's see the spoils of your  
conquest. You managed to get rid of  
that pesky AI, did you?

Huey's eye swivels around to glare indignantly at Howard.

Abby frantically waves at Huey to stop.

GAV  
(whispering to Abby)  
Do not tell him.

ABBY  
I won't.

Howard turns his back on her to lean in and inspect the cargo bay.

Abby holds a finger to her lips where Huey's eye can see her.

Huey looks puzzled.

They are not aware Bruce is watching them with raised eyebrows.

Abby pretends to play dead.

She gestures to Huey.

He shakes his eye back and forth minutely.

ABBY  
(hissing)  
Do it, Huey, or he'll turn you into  
spare parts.

Huey looks alarmed. As Howard emerges from the cargo bay, he sags and plays dead.

HOWARD  
(poking the eye)  
You kept this thing?

ABBY  
Yeah, it's good for seeing things  
you're trying to pick up on the  
hook.

HOWARD  
Oh, brilliant. Tammy's just got to  
see this.

Howard leaves.

When he's safely off the grid, Bruce approaches.

BRUCE  
That's no dead chopper, is it?

ABBY

Bruce! Oh my god, how much did you see?

BRUCE

All of it. You wanna tell me what you think you're doing bringing a live wild one here?

ABBY

We didn't have a choice. We were stranded and he was our only way home.

GAV

We need to get rid of it before Howard figures it out.

BRUCE

Too right.

ABBY

Wait, what'll we tell him? 'Sorry, it just went and flew off, maybe it's not dead after all?'

BRUCE

We'll jump off that bridge when we come to it.

Bruce strides over to Huey.

BRUCE

Alright, you. Git!

Huey's eye fixes on Bruce, but he doesn't move.

BRUCE

Go on, get out of here if you know what's good for ya!

Huey glares defiantly at Bruce.

ABBY

Come on, Huey. Don't you want to get back to your mates? Chase some kangaroos?

Huey looks uncertain.

GAV

You can even top off your batteries before you go. We won't tell.



Huey begins to SPOOL UP his engines.

ABBY  
That's a good boy.  
(she hugs his nose)  
Thanks for everything. I won't  
forget you.

Huey lets out an anguished electronic MOAN.

He lifts off from the landing pad.

Abby steps back and brushes tears from her eyes.

But Huey just edges toward her slightly, bumping her stomach  
with his nose.

Then he sets down and shuts off.

BRUCE  
(laughs)  
Well I'll be! It's taken a shine to  
her!  
(elbows Gav)  
Looks like you've got some  
competition, mate!

Gav turns red in the face and drops his gaze, MUTTERING  
angrily under his breath at Bruce.

Abby looks at Gav in surprise. Before she can say anything,  
Tammy, Raylene, Jack, Howard, and Zachary burst through the  
door.

They all head for Huey.

HOWARD  
Isn't she a beaut?

TAMMY  
Oh, look at all that cargo space!

ZACHARY  
Can I fly it, Mum? Please?

HOWARD AND TAMMY  
No!!

Oblivious to her family's chatter, Abby's still staring at  
Gav.

ABBY  
(quietly to Gav)  
Is it true? You said we weren't  
even mates anymore.

Gav won't meet her eyes.

He cuts behind the crowd before anyone else can turn their  
attention to him.

RAYLENE  
Abby, come show us this new toy of  
yours!

ABBY  
Yeah, sure.

She reluctantly tears her gaze away from Gav's retreating  
back.

EXT. CATWALK - DAY

Gav leaning on the railing, staring out over the farm,  
fuming.

Bruce joins him.

BRUCE  
You'd better get back down there.  
Sheilas don't like a sourpuss.

GAV  
You didn't have to say it in front  
of everyone.

BRUCE  
I did you a favor down there. Don't  
stuff it up.

GAV  
(sarcastic)  
Yes DAD.

INT. HUEY - DAY

Abby sits in the cockpit alone, checking the controls.

She's got her head under the dash and doesn't see Zachary  
approaching.

He jumps into the second seat.

ZACH

Hi!

He startles, Abby, who bangs her head off the underside of the instrument panel.

Huey CHATTERS with laughter.

Zachary looks around for the noise.

ABBY

Ow! Zachary!

ZACH

What was that noise?

ABBY

Me banging my bleeding head. What are you doing here?

ZACH

(hopeful)

Going for a ride?

ABBY

Absolutely not. Get out.

Huey's engine STARTS UP. Zachary looks confused.

ABBY

Um... I mean yes! Of course! Let's go for a ride.

She barely manages to grab the stick before Huey leaps into the air.

EXT. CATWALK - DAY

Tammy, Howard, and Bruce sit on the catwalk outside the mess hall in lawn chairs sipping coffee from mugs.

Huey zooms by in a crazy bank. Abby, and Zachary SCREAMING.

HOWARD

What the heck are those two up to now?

Bruce SNORTS with stifled laughter.

EXT. STARBOARD LANDING GRID - DAY

Abby is alone with Huey, whose engines are running. She's standing in front of his nose holding a spanner.

ABBY

I'm sorry, mate, but it's got to be done.

Abby tried to climb aboard, but Huey lifts off and backs up out of her reach.

Abby waves the spanner at him,

ABBY

Now Huey, don't be a sticky wicket.

Huey BLEATS unpleasantly.

ABBY

I don't care what you want! You've got to let me! Next time you go walkabout the jig is up. And then do you know what will happen?

Huey makes an UNCERTAIN MOAN.

Abby draws her finger across her neck, making CHOKING sound.

Huey MOANS.

Bruce comes onto the landing grid.

BRUCE

What's going on out here?

ABBY

Don't you ever go home?

BRUCE

Your mum invited me to tea to thank me for helping to look for YOU.

ABBY

(sighs)

Huey won't let me hook his rotors back up to the controls. He doesn't REALIZE that if I can't CONTROL him my dad is going to FIGURE THINGS OUT.

BRUCE  
Can't have that.

ABBY  
Exactly.  
(to Huey)  
So be a good chopper, and--

She tries to approach Huey but he WAILS at her and flies off.

Abby leans against the railing, watching him fly around the farm.

ABBY  
Son of a--

BRUCE  
(laughs)  
It's just like watching Tanya  
trying to break in that brumbie.

ABBY  
Har har. It's all a big laugh for  
you, but what if Dad looks out the  
window and sees I'm not inside?

BRUCE  
My offer still stands, you know.  
Why don't you bring your thick  
helicopter down to visit us?

ABBY  
Sure, why not? If I can get him  
down there.

BRUCE  
Just tell him there are kangaroos.

Bruce waggles his eyebrows and Abby LAUGHS.

INT. HUEY - DAY

Abby climbs in gingerly. Gav reached in to hand her a kit bag.

ABBY  
See? No spanners. No funny  
business. We're just going for a  
ride.

Huey BLEEPs like he's still mad.

GAV  
I don't think he's going for it.

ABBY  
Shhh.

GAV  
I can come with you, if you like.

ABBY  
Better not or Dad will give us both  
what for. You stay here and hold  
down the fort. I'll take care of  
this.

Huey makes a stubborn GRUMBLE.

GAV  
Of course, the point is moot anyway  
if we can't get him to go anywhere.

ABBY  
(to Huey)  
There are kangaroos at Bruce's.

Huey makes an excited WHOOP.

EXT. STARBOARD LANDING GRID - DAY

Gav steps back hastily as Huey SPOOLS UP his engines.

GAV  
Good luck!

Huey lifts off, flattening Gav's clothes against his body.

Gav heads toward the door that leads inside.

Huey blasts past the landing grid HOOTING excitedly.

ABBY (O.S.)  
(shouting)  
No, Huey, THAT WAY!!

Gav smiles and shakes his head.

EXT. FARMYARD - DAY

Tanya stands outside a circular wooden pen holding out a  
carrot in her gloved hand.

Inside the pen is a chestnut horse, approaching her cautiously.

TANYA

That's it... that's it... just a little closer...

With a loud CLATTERING of rotors, a cloud of dust blasts up into her face as Huey drops in to land in the middle of the yard.

He spooks the horse, who rears up, NEIGHING in fright.

The horse then gallops flat out to the other side of the pen, leaps the rail, and charges off into the fields.

TANYA

Blasted helicopter!

Abby climbs out of the cockpit.

ABBY

Sorry, Tanya. I tried to get him to land on the other side of the house, but I think he was curious about the horse.

Tanya shades her eyes to watch the horse gallop over a rise.

TANYA

The feeling was definitely not mutual.

ABBY

Want us to catch him for you?

TANYA

Naw, you'll just spook him worse. A horse dead of fright is no use to me. I'll just take Betsy out tomorrow and rope him again. That brumbie will be mine eventually.

ABBY

He doesn't stand a chance against you.

TANYA

Bruce tells me you may have missed your calling as a horse whisperer too, it seems. Or helicopter whisperer, I suppose.

Tanya looks up at the helicopter appraisingly.

TANYA  
What a beut.

ABBY  
He's a pain in the bum.

Huey BLEATS.

TANYA  
That's only because you don't  
understand each other properly yet.

ABBY  
I understand him just fine - all he  
wants to do is play around. I can  
get him to do work, but only if I  
make it a game. It gets old fast.

Tanya circles around Huey, rubbing his hull like it's a  
horse's flank.

TANYA  
Then we'll just have to teach him  
that following your master is fun.

ABBY  
Good luck.

TANYA  
Do you want my help or not?

ABBY  
Yes, please.

TANYA  
Then saddle up.

#### TRAINING MONTAGE

Abby stands in the middle of the dusty field. She approaches  
Huey, her arms spread out, holding a small stick.

Huey flies off. Tanya shakes her head.

Abby and Tanya sit in the cockpit as Huey flies. Abby taps on  
the right torque pedal. Huey doesn't do anything.

In the field, Abby waves her arm. Huey's eye follows it.

In the cockpit, Abby points out the window suddenly.  
Underneath, Huey's eye swivels to see what she's pointing at.



In the field, Abby throws the stick and Huey darts after it.

In the cockpit, Tanya speaks into a radio.

Bruce flies past them in the Robinson and Huey gives chase.

In the field, Abby, holding the stick, sidles around to the side, forcing Huey to move to his left if he wants to keep the stick in sight.

In the cockpit, Huey turns to follow the Robinson just as Abby hits the torque pedal.

In the field, Abby slowly rotates, holding the stick, as Huey flies in tight circles around her.

In the cockpit, Abby tilts the cyclic stick left and right as Huey follows the zigzag path of Bruce in the Robinson.

END OF MONTAGE

EXT. FARMYARD - DAY

The sun is going down as Huey and the Robinson come in for a landing.

Tanya, Abby, and Bruce climb out.

Abby pats Huey's side.

ABBY

Great work today, Huey.

Huey WARBLER with pride.

EXT. FARMYARD - NIGHT

Abby sits with Bruce and Tanya around the barbecue. Plates and cups from their supper are on the ground by their chairs.

ABBY

Thanks for all your help today,  
Tanya.

TANYA

No worries. Maybe once you've got  
your cargo situation sorted you can  
repay the favor by supplying us  
too.

ABBY  
Sure. We'd be happy to. Besides, I  
think Huey's got a thing for  
Robbie.

They look over to where Huey is parked next to the Robinson,  
eying her up and down.

ABBY  
(shouting to Huey)  
Down, boy.

Huey's eye drops in chagrin.

TANYA  
She's not alive, at any rate.

BRUCE  
(thoughtful)  
Not yet, anyway...

TANYA  
Don't you dare even think about  
giving that thing a brain. I've got  
enough stubborn to deal with in the  
horses.

Bruce raises his hands in surrender, LAUGHING.

BRUCE  
The thought never crossed my mind.

TANYA  
Of course it did. You're just a big  
ol' softie. That's why I love you.  
(she kisses him)  
But it's a bad idea.

BRUCE  
I know, luv.

TANYA  
Well, I'm knackered. I'm turning  
in. You're welcome to the spare  
upstairs, Abby.

ABBY  
Thanks, Tanya. I'll be along in a  
bit.

Tanya gathers up their dishes and leaves.

Abby takes up a stick and draws squiggles in the dirt.

BRUCE  
Something on your mind, luv?

ABBY  
Well... since you mentioned it...  
That thing that you said? About  
Gav?

Bruce LAUGHS.

BRUCE  
I wondered how long it would take  
you to get round to asking. And  
yes, it's true.

ABBY  
How do you know?

BRUCE  
You don't get to be as old as I am  
by being a nong.

ABBY  
No, I mean, he didn't say anything?

BRUCE  
Never needed to. He about shut down  
after you left.

ABBY  
Yeah, me too.

BRUCE  
You tell him that?

Abby shakes her head.

BRUCE  
You think maybe you ought to?

ABBY  
We're only just mates again. I  
don't want to mess things up.

BRUCE  
Then I guess you've got a choice to  
make. Do you say something or do  
you wonder about it forever?

ABBY  
What would you do?

Bruce nods toward Tanya, who's patting a DOG on the porch.

BRUCE  
What do you think I did?

He pats Abby on the shoulder and goes to join Tanya.

They slip their arms around each others' waists and go inside.

Abby stays outside, thinking.

EXT. FARMYARD - DAY

Abby waves to Bruce and Tanya in the doorway.

ABBY  
Bye! Thanks for everything.

TANYA  
Take care, luv.

Abby goes over to Huey and climbs inside.

INT. HUEY - DAY

Abby straps herself in.

ABBY  
Okay, Huey, let's get out of here.

Huey BLEATS a negative.

ABBY  
What do you mean, no?

Another BLEAT.

ABBY  
But I thought we were getting along.

Huey lets out an unhappy WAIL.

ABBY  
Well, what's wrong?

Huey makes a sad MOAN.

ABBY  
Is it something I did?

Huey BLEATS a negative.

ABBY  
Is it something I said?

Huey BLEATS a negative.

ABBY  
Then what is it?

Abby follows the direction of Huey's gaze and sees the Robinson.

ABBY  
You're going to miss Robbie? Is that it?

Huey MOANS sadly.

ABBY  
She's not alive like you are, Huey. She's just a thing, like a rock or a battery.

Huey MOANS again.

ABBY  
But listen, if you and I do a good job, maybe Bruce will decide to give Robbie a brain of her own. Wouldn't that be good?

Huey CHIRPS an affirmative.

ABBY  
Okay then, what are we waiting for?

Huey SPOOLS UP his engines.

INT. PORT LANDING GRID - DAY

There is no one on the deck apart from Gav, who is underneath a broken sky ute, CLANGING around with a spanner.

Abby appears at the door to the grid and knocks on the frame.

Gav slides out to see who it is. He locks eyes with Abby.

ABBY  
G'day.

GAV  
Hi.

Abby seems like she wants to say something important. Gav waits.

ABBY

Gav, I... um... Huey and I are going on our first cargo run this arvo. I could use a copilot.

Gav seems like he wanted to hear something else.

GAV

Alright.

He climbs out from under the sky ute.

INT. HUEY - DAY

Abby performs checks of Huey's instrument panel, consulting a small clipboard she has strapped to her thigh.

Gav slips into the left seat. Abby smiles nervously at him.

ABBY

Listen Gav, I--

Zachary hops into the cargo bay and plops into one of the side seats.

Zachary HOOTS with excitement.

ZACHARY

First cargo run in the new chopper!!

Abby turns around to glare at him.

ABBY

Who invited you?

ZACHARY

Dad.

Howard climbs into the cargo bay and sits across from his son.

HOWARD

We wanted to come along for the first run.

Abby and Gav exchange a worried look.

ABBY

Uh... but if you're here we can't  
carry as much.

HOWARD

No worries, we've only got a few  
things to pick up, anyway.

ABBY

But I've only been flying for a  
couple of days. It's not safe.

HOWARD

I trust you. Just look at that  
stunt you pulled to save our boy.

Abby and Gav exchange another glance. Gav shrugs. Abby SIGHS.

ABBY

Alright, buckle up.  
(undertone to Gav)  
And pray.

EXT. BARCLY TABLELANDS - DAY

Huey swoops through the air over the grassy plains.

INT. HUEY - DAY

Howard and Zachary sit in the open doorway, attached by  
safety ropes to the door handles.

They swing their feet in the slipstream.

ZACHARY

Wowwww! It's so much faster than a  
sky ute!

HOWARD

Just think of everything we'll be  
able to do with the extra time and  
money. We can even expand the farm.  
Add those new turbines we've been  
talking about...

Abby eyes Huey warily, her eyes darting between the  
instruments and her hands on the controls.

ABBY

Don't get ahead of yourself, Dad.  
We don't know if it's going to work  
out yet.

HOWARD

Why wouldn't it work out? It's  
working out right now. Don't be so  
hard on yourself.

Abby and Gav exchange a look.

GAV

It's an old helicopter, Howard.  
There could be... problems.

Huey makes a protesting BLEAT.

Abby and Gav SHUSH him.

HOWARD

What was that?

ABBY

Uh, just a navigation beep. We're  
coming up on a waypoint.

Zachary perks up, listening.

Gav notices.

GAV

(undertone to Abby)  
Uh oh...

Zachary points out the door excitedly.

ZACHARY

Look! Look! More choppers.

ABBY

Huey, no--

But Huey peels off course and heads straight for the other  
helicopters.

HOWARD

Woah! Abby, where are you going?  
We've got supplies to pick up.

Abby LAUGHS tensely.



ABBY

Oh, I know! I just wanted to give  
them a little look see.

She wrestles with the controls.

ABBY

(undertone to Huey)  
Huey! Stop it! Come on!

Gav pastes a fake smile on his face.

GAV

(undertone to Abby)  
We're dead... we're dead.

ABBY

(undertone to Gav)  
Shut up. I got this.  
(to Huey)  
Hey Huey, remember what we were  
saying about Robbie? Do you think  
Bruce is going to want to do that  
if we can't trust you?

Huey makes a SURPRISED SQUEAL and turns back onto their  
original heading.

ABBY

There, we saw them. Now back to  
business!

HOWARD

You're a few bricks short, you are.

Gav breathes a SIGH of relief.

EXT. GENERAL STORE - DAY

Huey sets down in the parking lot of the general store.

Abby, Gav, Howard, and Zachary climb out.

Howard and Zachary go into the store.

Abby looks around to see if there's anyone watching. There  
isn't.

She stands in front of Huey's nose.

ABBY

Huey, almost gave yourself away.

Huey lets out an unhappy MOAN.

ABBY

But in the end, you did the right thing. I'm so proud of you, mate.

Abby gives him a hug.

Gav pats his nose.

GAV

Who's a good listener, huh?

Huey makes an AWWW sound.

Howard and Zachary come out of the store hefting crates. Gav and Abby step away from Huey.

Abby gives Huey a thumbs up.

ABBY

Keep it up, Huey!

Huey nods his eye eagerly.

Abby and Gav run to help Howard and Zach with the crates.

INT. HUEY - DAY

Zachary and Howard are in the cargo hold, Abby and Gav in the cockpit.

Abby hits the engine start button and Huey SPOOLS UP obediently.

EXT. BARCLY TABLELANDS - DAY

Huey flies along. In the distance, there's a flock of wild helicopters.

INT. HUEY - DAY

Abby and Gav look at the wild ones through the windscreen, then at each other.

They cross their fingers.

EXT. BARCLY TABLELANDS - DAY

Huey completely ignores the wild ones and flies right past them, continuing on his way.

INT. HUEY - DAY

Abby pats Huey's instrument panel.

ABBY  
Atta boy!

EXT. STARBOARD LANDING GRID - DAY

Huey sets down on the landing grid.

Abby, Zachary, Howard, and Gav get out.

Zachary and Howard each take one crate and go inside.

Abby hangs back with Gav.

ABBY  
I'm gonna do it.

GAV  
I don't think it's a good idea.

ABBY  
It's not fair to Huey. He shouldn't have to pretend forever. And just look how good he's being.

GAV  
It won't matter. Your dad's still going to flip.

ABBY  
He'll get over it.

Howard and Zach come out onto the grid.

Zachary runs over to Abby.

ZACHARY  
Abby! Abby! That was awesome! When can I have my own helicopter?

Abby looks down at him in surprise.

HOWARD

Now that's a great idea, sprog. We could use some more great lugs like this around here.

ABBY

Well, I'm glad you think so, because there's something we want to tell you.

HOWARD

What's that?

Abby takes a deep breath.

ABBY

Well... actually...

HOWARD

Spit it out, luv.

ABBY

Huey's alive.

HOWARD

What?

ABBY

Huey's alive. He's been helping out all of his own free will.

Huey makes a FRIENDLY GREETING sound.

ABBY

See? He's friendly. So do you get it that the wild ones aren't so bad and --

Howard walks away.

ABBY

-- where are you going?

Howard goes inside and comes back out with a rifle.

He points it at Huey.

Huey SQUEALS in fear and REVS his engines.

Gav and Abby hold their hands up to stop Howard.

ABBY

Dad!

GAV

Woah! Woah! Howard, put the gun down!

HOWARD

That thing's alive? You let me put my son in a wild helicopter?

ABBY

Dad, he's friendly! He would never hurt Zach!

HOWARD

You don't know that. He's a wild one, Abby. They're unpredictable.

ABBY

I do know! I know HIM! He's not like that. If you'd just give him a chance, you--

HOWARD

Get out of the way, Abby.

ABBY

No.

Howard shoves Abby into Gav, giving him a free shot at Huey.

He FIRES but misses because Huey tail-slides off the grid.

Abby and Gav run to the edge.

Huey rights himself and flies off as fast as he can.

The rest of the crates tumble out of his hold and fall to the ground, where they break open in a cloud of dust.

Abby rounds on her dad.

ABBY

Look what you did!

HOWARD

What I did? You were the one who brought that thing into our house! What were you thinking?

ABBY

He's not a thing! He's as much my family as you are!

(MORE)

ABBY (cont'd)  
He pulled his weight, he kept his  
head down, he was listening to me,  
and then YOU went and ran him off!

HOWARD  
Now Abby, don't be--

Zachary tugs on Gav's sleeve.

GAV  
What is it?

ZACHARY  
Gav, if Huey is alive, does that  
mean it was him who saved me, not  
Abby?

GAV  
That's exactly what it means,  
sprog.

Zachary looks thoughtful.

Howard is thrown off balance.

HOWARD  
It... I'm sure it was just a  
coincidence, Zach. Don't read too  
much into it.

GAV  
No, don't read too much into it.  
You might find out something you  
don't want to know.

ABBY  
Look, I don't have time to argue  
with you. I've got to go find Huey.  
He's probably scared out of his  
mind.

HOWARD  
You can't just leave. We need you  
here.

ABBY  
Well you're only going to get me if  
Huey can stay too.

Howard grinds his teeth in frustration.

ABBY  
Fine, if that's how it's going to  
be, good riddance.

Abby turns to leave.

Then she turns back to Gav.

ABBY  
Will you come with me?

GAV  
Too right.

They walk away.

Zachary runs after them.

ZACHARY  
What about me?

GAV  
Maybe when you're older, okay  
sprog?

ZACHARY  
(about to cry)  
But... But...

Abby gives him a hug.

ABBY  
We'll be back to visit, don't  
worry.

ZACHARY  
But... but...

ABBY  
We gotta go.

They leave. Zachary swipes tears off his face.

His father puts a hand on his shoulder.

EXT. GROUND UNDER WIND FARM - DAY

Abby and Gav are down on the ground at the edge of the wind farm. They sit on the wooden fence that surrounds the grid to which the cables from the wind turbines are connected.

There's a ROAR as a ground ute approaches in a cloud of grit.

It pulls up in front of them and Bruce rolls down the driver's side window.

BRUCE  
G'day mates.

They jump off the fence and head over toward him.

ABBY  
G'day Bruce. Thanks for coming.

BRUCE  
(grins)  
I figured this day wouldn't be long  
in coming. Tanya wants me to tell  
you you're welcome to stay with us  
as long as you like.

GAV  
We appreciate it. It might be a  
while.

BRUCE  
We can always use extra hands.  
Especially now that we're droving.

They toss their bags into the load bed.

ABBY  
We'll pitch in where we can, but my  
first priority is to find Huey.

Gav gestures for Abby to take the front passenger seat. He  
climbs into the back.

INT. BRUCE'S GROUND UTE - DAY

Abby and Gav buckle up.

Bruce puts the ute in gear and roars off across the  
landscape.

Abby rests her arm on the window sill.

ABBY  
I wonder where he went.

GAV  
Probably to meet up with his mates.

ABBY  
I hope he doesn't hate me after  
this.



GAV  
I'm sure he doesn't. You're very  
hard to stay cross with, you know.

EXT. CATTLE ROUTE - DUSK

The light is fading as Bruce, Tanya and the STOCKMEN ride horses to flank a mob of cattle.

The cattle plod on along the dusty road. Everything is very dry.

There's a THWUPPING sound and Abby lands the Robinson alongside a watering hole surrounded by dry grass.

She and Gav climb out.

TANYA  
Anything?

ABBY  
Nope. Not a hair. We were listening  
to his frequency but we didn't see  
or hear any wild ones all day.

GAV  
I wonder where they all got to?  
Usually you can't get rid of them.

TANYA  
That's the way things are, luvs.  
You want it, it's not there. You  
don't, it's all over you.

BRUCE  
(calling out to stockmen)  
That's far enough for today, chaps.  
Let's set up camp.

Tanya leads the stockmen as they stop the cattle.

Abby and Gav pull their bedrolls out of the ground ute, which is following behind their mob.

EXT. CAMPSITE - NIGHT

In the distance, cattle MOO from where they're munching on a swath of grass near a watering hole. Two stockmen on horses ride slow circles around them.

The campsite isn't much - just a few bedrolls arranged in a rough circle.

In the center, Bruce fiddles with a single-burner camp stove.

Abby and Gav join him, their arms full of dry wood.

ABBY

What are you doing with that little thing? Aren't we going to have a campfire?

BRUCE

Sorry luv. No campfires. It's too dry. We might start a brushfire.

ABBY

But I like campfires.

GAV

And there's a watering hole right there.

BRUCE

You lot have no conception of how fast these things could spread.

ABBY

I think we might. We live in a house made of hydrogen.

BRUCE

Then you know this isn't something to mess around with.

GAV

Understood.

BRUCE

Good. Now help me get this blasted thing lit.

Gav grins and bends down to help.

LATER

It's late. The cattle are sleeping. Two different stockmen are on night patrol. The humans are in their sleeping bags.

One of the stockmen lies on his back, his arm behind his head, lazily smoking a cigarette. The lit end glows orange in the night.

Across the circle, Gav and Abby lay head to head in their sleeping bags.

Abby lays on her back looking up at the sky.

Gav is on his back using his arms as a pillow, eyes closed.

ABBY  
(quietly)  
Gav, are you asleep?

GAV  
Nope.

ABBY  
Thanks for coming with me.

GAV  
Of course.

A pause.

GAV  
Abby?

ABBY  
Yeah?

GAV  
How come you never came back to visit?

ABBY  
I was afraid that if I did, I'd never go back.

GAV  
Really?

ABBY  
Yeah. I missed you all so much, and the city was such a shock. All those people around all the time, never seeing the horizon...

GAV  
No snakes in your sleeping bag?

ABBY  
(laughs)  
Anyway, it was all I could do not to cry half the time when I called home on the webcam.

GAV  
We missed you too.

ABBY  
Then how come you never came on to talk? I kept asking Jack and Raylene where you were, but they always said you were busy.

GAV  
I was afraid that if I talked to you I'd end up begging you to come home.

ABBY  
Maybe it's for the best that you didn't, then. I think if you'd asked, I would have.

Gav rolls over to look at her.

GAV  
Really?

Abby nods.

GAV  
Well, it seems like it all worked out anyway. You got everything you wanted - your degree and your home.

ABBY  
Not everything, not yet.

Abby holds Gav's eyes.

She leans in and kisses him. Gav responds enthusiastically.

ABBY  
Now I do.

Gav laces his fingers through Abby's.

They lay their heads down and close their eyes, falling asleep holding hands.

Across the circle, the stockman's eyes flutter shut. The burning cigarette falls from his lips and lands in a patch of dry grass.

LATER

SHOUTS, ROARING and PANICKED MOOING jolt Abby and Gav from sleep.

It's still dark out, but everything is bright, because the grass is on fire. Flames leap into the air, whipped by the wind, spreading across the plain relentlessly.

Stockmen beat at the flames ineffectually with their singed sleeping bags.

Bruce scoops water from the hole with his hat and tosses it on the fire. It barely sizzles.

The fire spooks the cattle, who thunder toward the camp.

The patrolling stockmen try hopelessly to head them off.

The cattle stampede through the camp, crushing bedrolls and gear. Stockmen leap into the branches of trees to escape.

Bruce and Tanya are caught on one side, Gav and Abby on the other.

The flames spread toward the Robinson.

Abby runs toward it.

ABBY

Bruce! The helicopter!

Bruce has his hands full trying to catch his panicked horse.

BRUCE

You two take Robbie and get out of here!

GAV

But--

Tanya swings herself up onto the back of her passing horse.

TANYA

Do it! We can handle things down here. Go warn your families.

A look of dawning horror spreads over Gav's face.

GAV

Oh Christ, it's heading right for the farm.

BRUCE

Go!

Gav dashes for the Robinson.

INT. ROBINSON - NIGHT

Gav throws himself into the passenger seat alongside Abby, who has the engine running.

Gav clicks his straps together as Abby yanks on the collective, jerking them into the air just as the grass underneath them ignites.

Abby tilts the cyclic forward and drops the nose, powering in the direction of home.

Gav looks out the window on his side.

GAV  
(shouting)  
Oh God, look how fast it's moving.

Abby pours on more power and hands him the radio headset.

ABBY  
(shouting)  
Call the fire rescue service and  
tell them to get off their bums.

Gav fiddles with the radio dial.

EXT. BARCLY TABLELANDS - NIGHT

Huey sits on the ground with the other six helicopters, who seem to be asleep.

Huey's eye, however, is roaming.

He alights on an orange glow on the horizon.

He begins to POWER UP.

He leaves the other helicopters sleeping and goes to investigate.

When he gets closer, he sees an ocean of flame sweeping toward him.

Huey SQUEALS in alarm and turns tail to run.

INT. HOWARD AND TAMMY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Howard and Tammy lie in bed, SNORING. Abby bursts in.

ABBY  
Get up! Get up! There's a brush  
fire coming!

Both of them come awake in an instant.

HOWARD  
Fire? Where?

ABBY  
Just at the edge of Bruce's land  
and coming fast. Hurry!

She throws clothes at her parents.

They catch them and start jamming their limbs into them.

EXT. PORT LANDING GRID - NIGHT

Dressed in a hodgepodge of clothes, Howard, Tammy, Raylene, Zachary, Abby, and Gav meet up.

Howard gives orders in a state of controlled panic.

HOWARD  
We can't let the fire get under the  
farm. The superheated air currents  
will set the gas alight.

JACK  
How do we stop it?

GAV  
We don't. It's too big.

HOWARD  
We'll have to move the farm.

TAMMY  
(gasps)  
But we've never--

HOWARD  
We don't have a choice. Jack, you  
and Zachary and I will go down to  
the ground and collect the mooring  
cables.

(MORE)

HOWARD (cont'd)  
Tammy, you and Raylene will need to  
hook them up to the sky utes. Abby,  
Gav, use the helicopter to tow the  
homestead. Everyone got it?  
(he looks at each of them)  
Okay, let's get to work.

Everyone rushes off.

Gav and Abby dash onto the catwalk. They each take a swamp  
skimmer fan and throw the shutoff lever.

The move down the catwalk, shutting down fans as they come to  
them.

ABBY  
It won't be enough. The sky utes  
don't have anywhere near enough  
power to tow 400 wind turbines.

GAV  
I know. They're going to have to  
leave some behind.

ABBY  
Unless...

GAV  
Unless what?

ABBY  
Unless we can find someone who does  
have that much power.

INT. ROBINSON - NIGHT

The sky is orange in the distance with the light of the fire.

Abby maneuvers the helicopter. Gav searches the ground and  
sky around them.

GAV  
(filtered)  
This is a long shot.

ABBY  
(filtered)  
It's the only way.



GAV  
(filtered)  
If it doesn't work, we're leaving  
the homestead to be taken in the  
fire.

ABBY  
(filtered)  
I know.

GAV  
(filtered)  
If the fire scared him off--

ABBY  
(filtered)  
Gav, I know, okay! I know the risk  
I'm taking. Can you be a little  
more optimistic, please?

GAV  
(filtered)  
Right. Sorry. This is definitely  
going to work.  
(beat)  
Probably.  
(beat)  
Maybe it won't be a total disaster.

Abby turns to glare at him.

Gav sits bolt upright in his seat, pointing.

GAV  
(filtered)  
There! I see them! Eleven o'clock!

Up ahead, there's a collection of little black dots fleeing  
from the leading edge of the brushfire.

ABBY  
(filtered)  
I'm going to try and head him off.

GAV  
(filtered)  
I hope this works.

ABBY  
(filtered)  
It'll work. Have a little faith.

GAV  
(filtered)  
In a scatterbrained helicopter?

ABBY  
(filtered)  
In all of us. This isn't a one-  
person job, you know.

Abby loops around beside Huey.

ABBY  
(filtered)  
He's freaking out. We need to get  
his attention.

GAV  
(filtered)  
How? Ram him?

ABBY  
(filtered)  
No! Call his name.

Gav waves his arms.

GAV  
(shouting)  
Oi! Oi, Huey! Over here!

ABBY  
(filtered)  
On the radio, you knob!

GAV  
(filtered)  
Oh, right.

Gav fiddles with the radio until he lands on a channel full  
of panicked CLICKS, SQUEAKS, and BEEPS.

GAV  
(filtered, into radio)  
Oi, Huey! Check your 9 o'clock!

Huey puts his panic on hold long enough to glance over at  
them.

He does a double take and then focuses on them.

He gives a happy SQUEAL of recognition.

ABBY  
(filtered, into radio)  
Huey, can you hear me?

An affirmative CHIRRUP laced with fear.

ABBY  
(filtered, into radio)  
Huey, I know you're scared. But I  
need your help. My family is in  
trouble.

A MOAN from Huey.

ABBY  
(filtered, into radio)  
I know, I know, they don't like  
you. But that's just because they  
don't know you like Gav and I do.  
Give them a chance. I promise I  
won't let them shoot you, no matter  
what.

Huey is thinking.

ABBY  
(filtered, into radio)  
And you can play with the kangaroos  
as much as you want.

Still no response from Huey.

ABBY  
(filtered, into radio)  
And I'll make Bruce give Robbie a  
brain.

A happy TWEET from Huey.

ABBY  
(filtered, into radio)  
Well, what do you say, Huey? Will  
you help me?

Huey HOOTS in agreement.

ABBY  
(filtered, into radio)  
Okay, here's the thing - the fire  
is going to destroy the farm unless  
we can move it. Just the two of us  
won't be enough.  
(MORE)

ABBY (cont'd)  
Do you think your mates can help us  
tow the turbines to safety?

A silence.

Huey lets out a worried MOAN.

ABBY  
(filtered, into radio)  
I know it's dangerous, but it's the  
only way. Think of it like a game  
with really high stakes. If we win,  
free power for everyone and a place  
to play anytime they want to.

Huey thinks for a moment.

Then a flurry of CHIRPING and CLICKING comes over the radio.

GAV  
(filtered)  
What the hell's going on?

ABBY  
(filtered)  
I think they're talking about it.

After a moment, Huey comes back with a questioning CHIRP.

ABBY  
(filtered, into radio)  
I'm here, mate.

Huey makes a affirmative CHIRRUP. It's echoed by the other  
helicopters.

ABBY  
(filtered)  
Okay. Now we're in business.  
(into radio)  
Follow me, mates!

Abby turns the Robinson in the direction of home.

The flock of helicopters turns behind her, all flying in  
formation with her.

EXT. BARCLY TABLELANDS - NIGHT

Flames crackle through the yellow-brown grass, sending clouds  
of smoke into the air.

A team of VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS unroll a hose from their nearby truck.

They direct a blast of water onto the flames.

It barely makes a dent.

Other firefighters busy themselves digging ditches to try and slow it down.

Overhead, a water bomber lets loose a flood of water from its cargo bay, but it all disappears into the swirling flames.

EXT. GROUND UNDER WIND FARM - NIGHT

The sky is orange as the firestorm approaches.

Howard hurriedly unhooks the end of a huge cable from the D-ring on the ground.

Jack and Zachary snag the hooked end of the cable and drag it toward a giant O-ring, which is already connected to about a hundred cables.

Everyone is sweating and dirty.

They hook the cable to the ring.

Zachary waves his arms over his head.

Tammy lowers a cable from the sky ute floating high above Zachary's head.

Zachary jumps up and grabs it. He hooks it onto the O-Ring.

He waves again.

The sky ute BUZZES loudly as the engine strains.

Slowly, it begins dragging the cables - and the attached turbines, away.

They shout over the roaring of the storm.

JACK  
That's it! Now the next one!

They begin work on another set of cables.

Zachary looks up at the stationary homestead.

ZACHARY  
Um, Dad, the house isn't moving.

HOWARD  
Where's your sister got to now?

ZACHARY  
Maybe she didn't want to help  
because we were mean to Huey.

Howard looks at his son in surprise.

HOWARD  
No son, she would never do that.

In the distance there is a loud BOOM.

ZACHARY  
(scared)  
What was that?

JACK  
Hydrogen storage tank.

HOWARD  
Hurry. It's already at the edge of  
the farm.

Zachary runs for another D-ring.

HOWARD  
Leave it, there's no time!

Howard grabs his son and runs for the rope hanging down from  
his sky ute.

EXT. BARCLY TABLELANDS - NIGHT

A raging wall of flame coats the horizon as four sky utes  
power desperately away from it.

A dozen or so turbines have been left behind at the farm.

Tammy, Raylene, Jack, and Howard each pilot a sky ute, with  
Zachary sharing his father's.

The wind turbines are tethered in clumps of 100 behind each  
sky ute.

Their blades are frozen in place but they CLANK and BANG  
together as they're towed slowly along.

INT. HOWARD'S SKY UTE - NIGHT

Zachary watches over his shoulder, anxious, as his father pilots the sky ute.

ZACHARY  
They're going to get all dented!

HOWARD  
Better dented than destroyed.

ZACHARY  
But what about sparks?

HOWARD  
We'll have to hope the anti-friction coating holds.

Zach eyes the approaching flames.

ZACHARY  
Dad?

HOWARD  
What?

ZACHARY  
I don't think we're going to make it.

Howard looks behind them for a long moment.

HOWARD  
You're right.

Howard grabs the radio handset.

HOWARD  
(into radio)  
Listen up. It's coming on too fast.  
We'll have to dump the turbines.

RAYLENE (O.S.)  
(filtered)  
Are you sure?

JACK (O.S.)  
(filtered)  
If we lose the turbines, we'll have nothing left.

HOWARD  
(into radio)  
They're going to be destroyed  
anyway. The question is: are we  
going to go down with them?

TAMMY  
(into radio)  
We drop on three. Agreed?

RAYLENE (O.S.)  
(filtered)  
Agreed.

JACK (O.S.)  
(filtered)  
Agreed.

Howard turns to Zachary, who is watching him.

ZACHARY  
I agree too.

Zachary puts his hand on the release lever.

HOWARD  
(into radio)  
One... two...

EXT. BARCLY TABLELANDS - NIGHT

One by one, the O-rings fall away from the sky utes.

They land with a chorus of CLANGS on the ground.

The clusters of wind turbines turn and float in the eddies,  
hampered by the weight of the rings.

The sky utes surge forward with renewed power.

A tongue of fire creeps toward the turbines that were left  
behind on the farm.

A gust of wind sends a superheated current into one of them.

The wind turbine that is closest to the fire EXPLODES in a  
jet of flame.

Another one follows suit.



INT. HOWARD'S SKY UTE - NIGHT

Zachary tugs on his father's sleeve.

ZACHARY

What are we going to do now, Dad?  
How do you have a wind farm with no  
turbines?

Howard puts his free arm around his son.

HOWARD

I don't know, sprog. We'll figure  
something out. The important thing  
is that everybody's still alive to  
help with the thinking.

Zachary tilts his head to the side, a quizzical look on his  
face.

HOWARD

What is it?

ZACHARY

I hear choppers.

Howard puts both hands on the controls.

HOWARD

It's probably just your ruddy  
sister finally coming to take the  
homestead. God only knows where she  
went, but she had better get here  
in time. I want a bed to sleep in  
when this is all over.

ZACHARY

Not chopper. Choppers. Lots of  
them.

He turns around in his seat excitedly, pointing.

ZACHARY

Look! Look! Here they come!

Howard turns around to look behind them.

There's the Robinson at the head of a whole flock of  
helicopters.

EXT. MILE HIGH WIND FARM - NIGHT

Huey and two other helicopters hover near the ground while Abby lands the Robinson under the homestead.

Gav and Abby jump out, leaving the Robinson running, and run to grab the mooring cables.

They unhook two.

They drag them over and hook them to Huey's belly.

Gav and Abby each run and grab another cable.

They split up, each hooking it to a different helicopter.

They run back to the Robinson.

On Huey's lead, the three helicopters lift off.

They climb to the level of the homestead and power away from the flames, towing the massive structure behind them.

The other four helicopters drop down to hover obligingly near the dropped O-rings that the turbines are attached to.

The Robinson lifts off and lands between two of the helicopters.

Abby and Gav jump out.

They each run over to an O-ring.

They grab it and drag it toward a helicopter.

They hook the O-rings on and wave the helicopters off.

The two wild ones lift off, towing the first two sets of turbines.

INT. HOWARD'S SKY UTE - NIGHT

Howard and Zachary watch the Robinson land between the other two sets of rings.

TAMMY (O.S)  
(filtered)  
Howard, are you seeing this?!

HOWARD  
I don't ruddy believe it!

ZACHARY

The wild helicopters came to help  
us!

(to Howard)

Bet you're sorry you tried to shoot  
Huey now.

Howard frowns.

EXT. MILE HIGH WIND FARM - NIGHT

Abby and Gav hook up the last two helicopters.

They wave at the helicopters and they lift off.

Abby and Gav run back to the idling Robinson.

They lift off just before the flames overrun their position.

INT. ROBINSON - NIGHT

Abby shoves the controls forward to catch up to the other  
helicopters.

EXT. BARCLY TABLELANDS - NIGHT

The Robinson, unburdened, is able to power to the front of  
the front of the group and take the lead position.

All the helicopters follow her, Huey and the homestead crew  
directly behind and the others forming an inverted V behind  
them, towing the wind turbines.

INT. ROBINSON - NIGHT

Gav watches behind them.

Another abandoned turbine EXPLODES in the superheated wind as  
the fire crawls across the farm.

The helicopters' eyes swivel about in fright.

GAV

(filtered)

They're spooking!

ABBY

(filtered, into radio)

It's alright! It's alright!

(MORE)

ABBY (cont'd)  
Just keep following me and she'll  
be right. Just think of how many  
kangaroos there will be where we're  
going.

The helicopters settle down.

GAV  
(filtered)  
Just out of curiosity, where ARE we  
going?

Abby glances at the dashboard compass.

ABBY  
(filtered)  
Um, east? Away from the ruddy fire,  
that's all I know.

GAV  
(filtered)  
Works for me.

Abby steers up behind the sky utes and joins their formation.

EXT. BARCLY TABLELANDS - NIGHT

The large sky ute and helicopter formation presses on,  
dragging the turbines out of the danger zone.

The fire burns out of control behind them, but it's too far  
away to hurt them.

The last of the abandoned turbines EXPLODE in quick  
sucession.

INT. HOWARD'S SKY UTE - NIGHT

Zachary bounces with excitement as the helicopters pull up  
alongside them.

ZACHARY  
(into radio)  
I told you he saved me! Look! He's  
doing it again! Can we keep him,  
Mum? Puleeeeeeeeeeeze?

TAMMY (O.S.)  
(filtered)  
I hardly think we can avoid it now.

HOWARD  
(sighs)  
We'll see.

EXT. BARCLY TABLELANDS - NIGHT

The helicopters have caught up and moved ahead of them now.

The four sky utes join the rear of the V formation, their engines BUZZING madly to keep up with the helicopters, who are slowed by their towed burdens.

INT. HOWARD'S SKY UTE - NIGHT

Zachary turns back to face the fire.

ZACHARY  
Ha ha! You can't get us, now,  
loser!

He makes an "L" against his forehead at the fire.

Then he spots the Chopper Buster sitting in the load bed of the sky ute.

He turns to his dad.

ZACHARY  
Even if we don't keep them, at  
least we won't shoot them down  
anymore, right?

HOWARD  
Sadly, we can't. I don't think that  
would be a proper show of  
gratitude.

Zach picks it up the Chopper Buster and shows it to his dad.

ZACHARY  
Then we won't be using this  
anymore, right?

HOWARD  
(shakes his head)  
Nope. Better get rid of it. We  
don't want to scare away our new  
mates.

ZACHARY  
Too right!

Zachary tips the gun off the load bed.

It spins end over end as it falls.

It hits the ground with a THUMP, sending up a cloud of dust.

EXT. BARCLY TABLELANDS - NIGHT

The flames creep up on the Chopper Buster, which is lying in the dead grass.

They engulf, it, quickly blackening it and curling the label.

In the distance, the formation flies on as the Chopper Buster burns.

EXT. SEASIDE - DAY

The sky is blue and clear as the formation approaches the sea.

Tall cliffs drop down into sandy beaches lapped by the turquoise waters of a sheltered, uninhabited bay.

INT. HOWARD'S SKY UTE - DAY

Howard has bags under his eyes and a scruffy, unshaven face.

Zachary is asleep in his seat.

They are both coated with grime, sweat, and ashes.

ABBY (O.S.)

(filtered)

This looks like as good a place to stop as any. Okay troops, drop your burdens.

EXT. SEASIDE - DAY

As one, the helicopters release their load hooks.

The O-rings fall into the shallow water, anchoring their burdens to the bay.

The sky utes drop anchor on one end of the beach.

The wild helicopters flutter down to land on the other end of the beach.

Abby lands the Robinson between the two groups.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Abby and Gav get out of the Robinson and run over to the wild helicopters.

ABBY  
Huey! You were fantastic!

GAV  
Well done, all of you!

Huey CHATTERS a question.

Abby LAUGHS.

ABBY  
Yes, that means you win.

They pat the helicopters affectionately on the nose.

The helicopters CHATTER happily.

Howard approaches with Zachary hot on his heels. Howard's face is stern and set. Zachary looks worried.

ABBY  
Uh oh.

GAV  
Steady on. We're the heroes here.

ABBY  
Somehow I doubt he sees it that way  
after I left them all hanging until  
the last possible second.

Abby braces herself as Howard strides up.

Howard claps her on the shoulder, grinning.

HOWARD  
Well done, you.

He pulls her into a hug.

Abby shoots a surprised look at Gav over Howard's shoulder.

Gav mouths "told you."

Zachary jumps around excitedly, re-enacting the escape with his hands.

ZACHARY

There was a fire, and things were burning, and then there was a big boom, and we dropped everything and then the choppers came and they picked it up and they pulled it right out of a huge fire and it was AWESOME!

(to his dad)

Can we keep them?

Howard hesitates.

Tammy, Raylene, and Jack walk up.

RAYLENE

You can't deny they're useful.

JACK

And that they saved our bacon.

TAMMY

(rests her hand on  
Zachary's head)

Again.

Howard thinks.

Everyone holds their breath. Even the helicopters seem tense.

HOWARD

Well, alright.

CHEERS from the humans, happy CHATTER from the helicopters.

HOWARD

(loudly)

But ONLY if they do their bit round the farm. No more of this ditching loads and swanning about the countryside nonsense.

The cheering stops as everyone turns to look at the helicopters.

ABBY

What do you think, mates? Could be fun, if we all play the crate game together?



Huey CHATTERS an affirmative.

The other helicopters echo him.

Zachary hugs the nose of the white 205.

ZACHARY  
This one's mine.

The adults LAUGH.

The helicopter he's hugging makes an electronic AWWWW noise.

EXT. SEASIDE - DAY

The family clusters around their new helicopters.

Bruce's cattle appear at the cliff head.

Bruce, Tanya and their stockmen ride up and wave.

The wind farmers wave back.

Bruce, Tanya, and the stockmen guide the cattle down the switchback trail toward the ocean.

CREDITS MONTAGE

EXT. BARCLY TABLELANDS - DAY

Howard, Tammy, Raylene, and Jack, throw burnt metal off the D-rings.

The wild helicopters hover overhead towing turbines.

Abby, in a cockpit, pulls the cargo release and drops the O-ring.

Howard clips the end of a cable onto the D-ring.

Helicopters flit across the farm. There are two rows of turbines up.

Helicopters flit across the farm the other way. There are ten rows of turbines up.

Bruce, Tanya, and the stockmen lead the cattle across the burned landscape.

The white 205 lands in front of them and spooks the cattle.

Bruce sees Zachary through the cockpit window yelling at the helicopter, jerking on the stick and pointing up.

Bruce waves. Zach looks sheepish.

Huey zooms overhead with Abby inside, driving the brumbie that escaped from the pen toward Tanya.

Tanya perks up and gallops after it on her horse.

The white 205 joins his mates as they flit across the farm. There are now twenty rows up.

Helicopters flit across the farm again. All the turbines are in place.

The helicopters all work together to drag the homestead into place.

The helicopters are parked on the ground in a v-formation, Huey at the head next to Robbie, who now has a swiveling eye attached to her belly.

Tammy, Raylene, Jack, Bruce, Tanya, and the stockmen arrange themselves in front of the helicopters for a group photo.

Zach and Howard peg down a new sign that says "Mile High Wind and Helicopter Farm."

Gav and Abby set a camera on a fencepost and push the self-timer button.

Howard, Zach, Abby, and Gav run over and get in the shot.

Zachary ducks in under his mother's arm. Howard slots in beside her. Abby and Gav lie on the ground in front of everyone.

The camera snaps a photo of the whole group.

FADE OUT.

THE END