

Fly

an Australian opera by Barry Conyngham | libretto: Murray Copland
Victoria State Opera Orchestra conducted by John Hopkins

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an Australian opera by **Barry Conyngham**
libretto by **Murray Copland**

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Premiere performance

FLY

an opera by Barry Conyngham

Victoria State Opera Orchestra

conducted by John Hopkins

director and librettist: Murray Copland

designer: Shaun Gurton

lighting designer: John Beckett

vocal preparation: Graham Cox

assisted by Helen English

stage manager: Ann Reid

produced by the Victoria State Opera

Lawrence Hargrave Anthony Roden

Maggie Hargrave Margaret Haggart

Margaret and Olive (their children)

Val Mills and Christine Ferraro

Luigi Maria D'Albertis, naturalist

John Wood

Clarence Wilcox, protégé of D'Albertis

Robert Korosy

Clergyman Malcolm Robertson

Recording produced by the Australian

Broadcasting Corporation

ABC producer Paul Petran

ABC technical production

Peter Thorp and Lou Szabolics

Post production and preparation for CD

Martin Wright (Move Records)

Cover painting (from the first performance

poster) Shaun Gurton

Photographs David Parker

and Ok Tedi Mining

Publisher Universal Edition

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Fly was first performed at the State Theatre, Victorian Arts Centre on 25 August 1984. On 29 August, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation presented **Fly** in a direct broadcast on ABC FM. The present recording was edited from the 27 and 29 August performances. The complete opera, in two Acts runs for 86 minutes; in order to contain it on compact disc, ten cuts were necessary

totalling 13 minutes. Both the composer and the librettist were closely involved in this editing process and are satisfied that the resulting recording loses nothing as a listening experience. What little action is lost is more than made up for by the creation of a continuous piece with flowing transitions from scene to scene.

- 1 The kite 4'36"
- 2 The parcel 4'04"
- 3 The marriage 4'08"
- 4 The picture 0'31"
- 5 The flight 2'15"
- 6 The waltz 4'21"
- 7 The goal 3'31"
- 8 The hat 4'07"
- 9 D'Albertis 4'48"
- 10 The blame 4'05"
- 11 Geoffrey 1'55"
- 12 The explorer 4'22"
- 13 The course 4'04"
- 14 The plunder 6'00"
- 15 The undertaking 4'43"
- 16 Darwin 2'51"
- 17 The sunset 4'50"
- 18 The clergyman 5'15"
- 19 The shears 5'33"

Barry Conyngham **FLY**
libretto: Murray Copland

ORIGINAL
VICTORIA STATE OPERA
PRODUCTION

*"... a musical triumph ... an
assured and mature work that
generates its own inner
radiance."*

NADINE AMADIO, ARTS NATIONAL,
24 HOURS

*"Fly is certainly the most
significant and ambitious
home-grown opera to be
premiered in this country for
many years."*

DAVID GYGER, OPERA AUSTRALIA

*"It is clearly a major
Australian opera. Both its
libretto and its music are put
together with fine craft ..."*

KENNETH HINCE, THE AGE

- | | | | | | |
|----|--------------|-------|----|-----------------|-------|
| 1 | The kite | 4'36" | 13 | The course | 4'04" |
| 2 | The parcel | 4'04" | 14 | The plunder | 6'00" |
| 3 | The marriage | 4'08" | 15 | The undertaking | 4'43" |
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| 11 | Geoffrey | 1'55" | | | |
| 12 | The explorer | 4'22" | | | |

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*Notes and
libretto
enclosed*

*Playing time:
73 minutes*



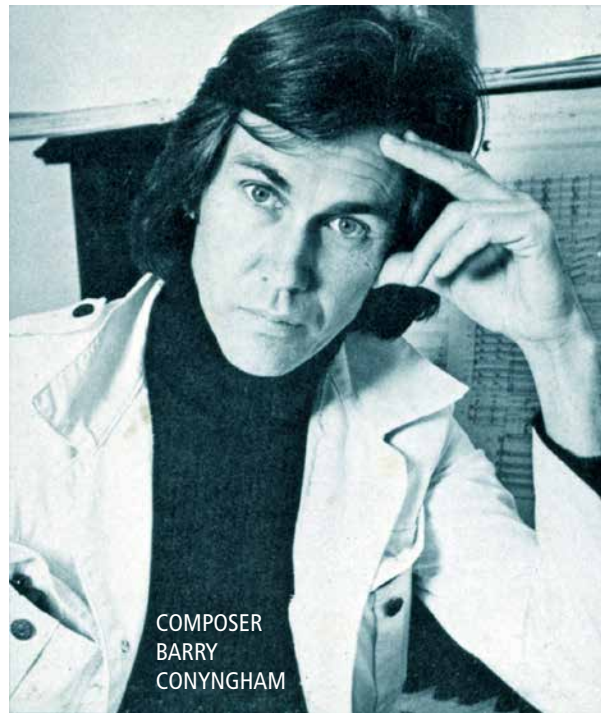
VICTORIA STATE OPERA

A note on the opera

Claims for musical or structural uniqueness in a recent opera are not commonplace these days. Usually opera is seen as a conservative form bounded by the expectations of its public, a public that has apparently rejected the considerable experimentation of the first half of this century. True, the content and theatricality of opera has been extended by recent works, but here the change is propelled by the theatre and its development. The pursuit of spectacle on one hand, with works involving elements of circus and entertainment, and complex modes of presentation on the other — dream, fantasy and other non-narrative methods — are the usual means of extending the boundaries of opera.

Thus, rather than speaking of the many ways in which *Fly* absorbs the existing tradition, in this short note I would like to focus on those unusual aspects of the piece that are very much conscious attempts to extend the form.

From the beginning, Murray Copland and I wished to pace the drama of the piece close to real life, to approach real speech rhythms. Not an original aim by any means — but it was also my desire to avoid the urgency and relentlessness of the declamatory style, and the barrenness of continuous recitative. I wished to capture some of the melodic freshness of the “popular” song, the dramatic impact of post-serial rhythmic fluidity, the formal



COMPOSER
BARRY
CONYNINGHAM

security of the “set piece”. Aims are not always results, dreams not always made real, but I wish to point the listener to the particular musical texture and the relationship between voice and orchestra that evolved in an attempt to encompass all the above elements.

The orchestra and the voice in *Fly* are often in a very free temporal relationship: the instruments pursuing a particular gesture or texture, the voice guided by the drama and the rhythm of the text suspended above it. This relationship was to enable control of the mood on the one hand, and preserve the natural pace and richness of human drama on the other. Melody, with its magical ability to communicate and reverberate, is the

genesis of all the linear elements of *Fly*, even where the lines are partitioned into small two- and three-note motives, and presented in a free rhythmical or speech rhythmical way. For example, the relationship between the set “songs” (mostly sung by Hargrave) and the material of the dialogue and group moments may be obscure at first hearing against the continuous and often tangential orchestral flow.

Finally, while the colour and texture of the orchestra owe much to recent developments (particularly the work of the Polish School and of my teachers and friends Peter Sculthorpe and Toru Takemitsu), they are used here in a technique of layering, harnessing streams of musical imagery beyond the familiar to a continuous flow, supporting the text but always tantalisingly ambiguous.

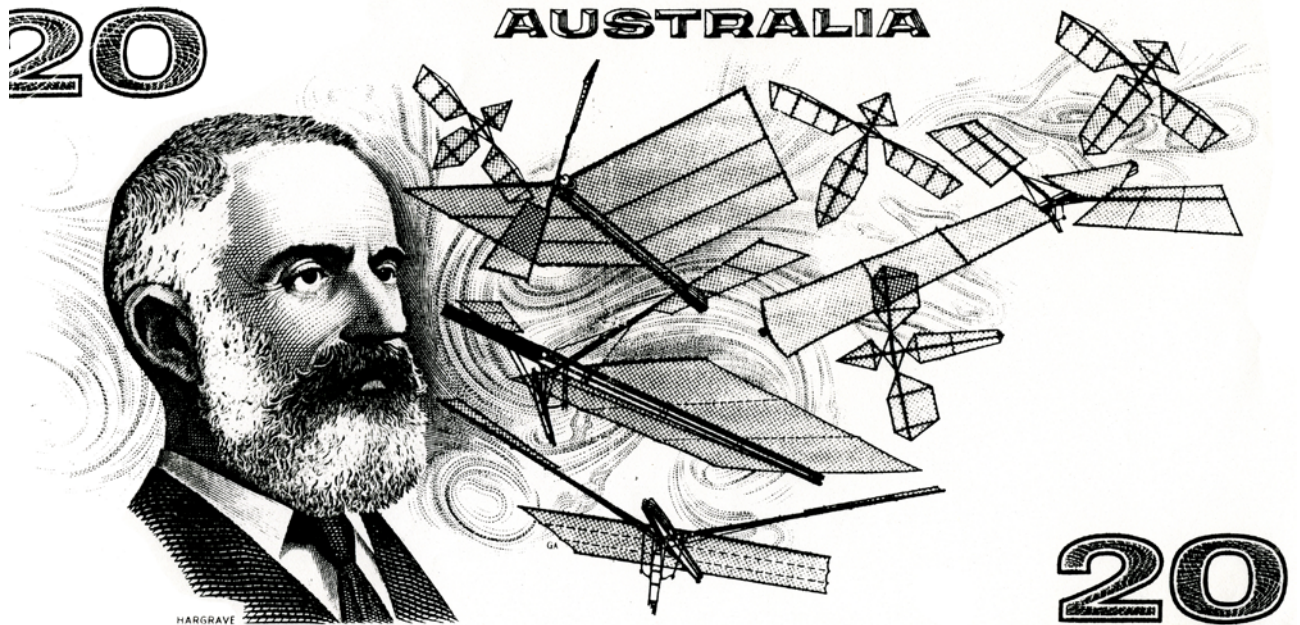
BARRY CONYNINGHAM

A note on Lawrence Hargrave

Familiarity breeds, if not contempt, a kind of invisibility. A picture of Lawrence Hargrave, alongside a few examples of his delicate aeronautical draughtsmanship, embellishes one side of the Australian twenty-dollar banknote; but his personality and achievements can hardly be said to form a vivid image in the minds of many Australians. The blame for this state of affairs may arguably be said to be Hargrave's own. There was a streak of self-defeating waywardness in his nature which, over and over again, stood in the way of his longing for fame and recognition.

Contributing, as he did, to so many fields of endeavour, his refusal ever to patent his inventions, his insistence on staying stranded in the comparative isolation of Australia, and a perverse unwillingness to push certain lines of scientific enquiry all the way to their logical fruition, have combined to impart a certain nebulous quality to his achievements: it is not always easy to estimate their intrinsic excellence, or the extent of their influence, or even exactly what they are supposed to have been. Thus one recent biographer has felt himself justified in pooh-poohing Hargrave's aeronautical contribution as of far less worth and significance than his earlier explorations in New Guinea.

That is an extreme and exceptional view, however. There have not been



THE ORIGINAL DESIGN FOR THE AUSTRALIAN \$20 NOTE, ISSUED 1966, BUT NO LONGER IN CIRCULATION

many commentators who have failed to fall under the spell of Hargrave's considerable charm, his titanic energy, and the unmistakable signs of originality and downright genius evident at every turn in his career.

One still, from time to time, stumbles across the assumption that only silly stories will do for opera — as if Da Ponte, Boito, and Hofmannsthal had lived and laboured for nothing. Lawrence Hargrave's story is anything but a silly one. Properly understood, his life was one of extraordinary inner heroism and moral integrity. Selective as this opera has obviously had to be in the number of specific incidents it could hope to dramatise, it does attempt to

tell Hargrave's story with truthfulness and clarity, and to imply a coherent interpretation of his sometimes quirky but always fascinating personality. The libretto is obviously very indebted to Hargrave's various biographers, yet may itself make claim to a certain originality, in that it seeks to explain clearly the probable emotional nexus between Hargrave's early experiences on the D'Albertis expedition up the Fly River and his later refusal to cash in on his inventions by taking out patents.

Every attempt has been made to make the opera self-explanatory — able to stand by itself, even for those who have never heard of Hargrave. However, it may be convenient here to set out a few of the

basic biographical facts.

One of the main motives that induced Hargrave's father to migrate from England to Australia was, without a doubt, an intense desire to put as much distance as possible between himself and his wife, Hargrave's mother. As a struggling young barrister, hardly able to support his wife and children, John Hargrave had suffered some form of breakdown which led his wife, on her own initiative, to have him admitted to a new public lunatic asylum at Colney Hatch in Middlesex. In a very short time, he was released, completely cured — but he never forgave his wife for what she had done to him. Within a year he had sailed for Sydney, taking only Lawrence's elder brother with him. It was 1856. Lawrence was six.

Nine years were to pass before John Hargrave sent for his younger son. Already on the voyage out, we find the youthful Lawrence fascinated by the apparently effortless motion of the great, tireless albatrosses that flew beside the ship, as if to pace her.

John Hargrave had done very well for himself in the Colony. He was now a judge — and had been Solicitor-General. He was also turning out to have a considerable flair for land-speculation. It soon became clear, however, that young Lawrence's heart was not in the legal studies to which his father had automatically destined him. Instead, at the age of seventeen, he obtained a post in the workshops of the Australian Steam

Navigation Company, where for the next five years he acquired an invaluable practical groundwork in engineering and various maritime skills.

Then, in his early twenties, there began a period of restless adventurousness. He joined one after another of the expeditions, which happened to be proliferating just at that time, aimed at opening up the unexplored interior of New Guinea. This culminated in 1876 in his spectacularly successful trip up the desperately hazardous, malaria-ridden Fly River as engineer and cartographer to the flamboyant Italian naturalist, Luigi Maria D'Albertis. They penetrated 580 miles upstream from the mouth of the river, and there is no doubt whatever that they would never have got there without the skills, and the personal courage and physical strength, of Lawrence Hargrave. The point they reached was so far beyond any hitherto considered possible by Europeans that, fourteen years after the event, Sir William McGregor, the then Administrator of New Guinea, publicly questioned D'Albertis's estimate of the distance. This provoked Hargrave to break, at long last, the silence he had so puzzlingly maintained all these years on the subject of the D'Albertis expedition. Producing his own map of the river in corroboration, he revealed that D'Albertis had extracted from him a promise never to publish his own account of the journey.

This promise, and Hargrave's

adherence to it, have puzzled some of the biographers. Yet there is no lack of evidence as to the complex characters of the two men, nor as to the nature of the tensions that built up between them during their long ordeal. These tensions may never actually have exploded in the kind of verbal show-down dramatised in this opera; this scene may be, strictly speaking, as apocryphal as the encounter, in Schiller and Donizetti, between Mary Stuart and Elizabeth. Yet Hargrave and D'Albertis were at least actually present in the same place together, cooped up in the same claustrophobic little steamer, and some of the things the libretto has them say to each other's face they were later to say on paper in a bitter exchange of letters.

Two years later, Hargrave passed out of this phase of restless travelling and adventure, marrying a Sydney girl and settling down to a post at the Sydney Observatory, where he was soon to cover himself with glory by his brilliant hypotheses on the origin of the meteorological effects caused by the explosion of Krakatoa, which brought him to the notice of the Royal Society in London.

It was at this point that Hargrave's life of intensive private experimentation really established itself, never to abate until his death thirty-five years later. The fields of his enquiry were far too numerous and varied to go into here — a few of them are mentioned in the opera — but perhaps his dominant obsession, to which he was

to return again and again, even to the extent of allowing it to divert and distract him from more promising paths, was the attempt to analyse the principles of motion and flight in the natural world. To his dying day, he was convinced that the underlying secret of all such motion was a wavelike manner of progression which he dubbed “trochiodal”.

We may leave to the experts the debate over the exact extent to which Hargrave positively contributed to the eventual achievement of human flight. There was certainly no shortage of scoffers in his own day to dismiss him as a crank. Yet it is equally certain that such an undisputed authority as Chanute in the United States had the greatest respect for Hargrave’s abilities and kept in constant touch with him.

A degree of initial success with his aviation experiments tempted Hargrave to move with his wife and children to London: this proved to be one of his more disastrous experiments. Rightly or wrongly, he considered himself to have been slighted and humiliated in London. In high dudgeon, he dragged his protesting family back to Australia and never afterwards budged from his self-imposed exile and amateur status in Sydney. The London episode no doubt exacerbated the growing tensions, amply documented, between Hargrave and his wife. The little incident, built into the opera, when Mrs. Hargrave refused to waltz with him in honour of their

son Geoffrey’s boat-race win is ruefully recounted by Hargrave himself in a letter to his eldest daughter.

There is no doubt that the failure of his experiments to achieve greater world-wide recognition was a bitter pill for Hargrave to swallow. He was a passionate Darwinian, of the old-fashioned optimistic kind, finding in Evolution a sure guarantee of future Human Progress, a Progress he was utterly dedicated to forwarding. It was essentially out of this determination to make his findings accessible to posterity that, towards the end of his life, he took the much criticised step of donating nearly two hundred of his experimental models to the Deutsches Technological Museum in Munich: he did so only after he had been turned down by New South Wales, Victoria, England, the United States, and France. By a terrible irony, in less than five years, Australia was at war with Germany, and Geoffrey, Hargrave’s beloved son, on whom he counted to bring his life’s work to fruition, died with so many others at Gallipoli. The news broke Hargrave’s heart.

Two months later he collapsed, was admitted to hospital, and died. He had kept working up to the very last.

MURRAY COPLAND



*Scenes from the original
 Victoria State Opera production:
 TOP: Mrs Hargrave, Olive, Hargrave,
 Margaret
 MIDDLE: D'Albertis, Hargrave
 LEFT: Mrs Hargrave, Margaret*

I Scene 1

1906. *The back verandah of Hargrave's house, with wooden steps to the garden below, which stretches down to the foreshore of Sydney Harbour. A screen door leads from the verandah into the house at street level; and there is a door from the garden into Hargrave's workshop in the basement. Someone (unseen) is flying a kite down on the foreshore. Olive, a schoolgirl, is watching from the verandah.*

Olive: Fly! Fly! Fly! Fly! Fly ... !

Margaret (from inside the house): Olive!
Olive!

Olive: Coming!

Lovely kite, you believe you're free;
You dream you can fly on — endlessly,
tirelessly —

Margaret (as before): Olive!

Olive (moving reluctantly towards the door):
But when they pull your string, down
you must come!

Margaret (coming out through the screen door): There you are!

Olive: I've been watching Daddy play
with his kite on the foreshore.
Look! It keeps itself so steady in the
wind! Oh, Margaret! I would so love
to be able to fly!

Margaret: Yes. So would father.

Olive: Daddy says in America for years
They've used his kites to tell about the
weather. Can it be true do you think?

Margaret: Don't you believe your father,
Olive?

Olive: Oh, yes, I do, of course! Only ...
only ... If it is true ... Won't we soon be

awfully famous and rich?

Margaret: We? Famous and rich? Not if
father can help it.

Olive: Wouldn't Daddy want to be
famous, then? Like in those Milton
lines I had for homework:
"Fame is the spur that the clear spirit
doth raise, That last — "

(She can't remember the noun.)

"That last — " ...

Margaret: "Infirmity."

(holding out her hand)

Come, Olive. Mother needs us.

Olive gives Margaret her hand.

Olive (reminding herself): "That last
infirmity."

"That last infirmity."

As they go in, the stage lights fade to darkness.

2 Scene 2

The same, a few months later. At an upstairs window Olive is using a telescope to watch her brother, Geoffrey, in a boat-race out on the harbour. Margaret, followed closely by Mrs Hargrave, hurries out through the screen door carrying high in mock processional a large postal package.

Margaret: Ta-ra-ta-ta!

Mrs Hargrave: At last! At last!

Margaret: A lifeline! A lifeline!

Mrs Hargrave: I thought they'd never
come.

Margaret (setting the package down on the
verandah table): Now to catch up with the
real world again!

Mrs Hargrave: I swear the ships take

longer every year!

Margaret (attacking the package with a large
pair of scissors): Open, Sesame! Open,
Sesame! Open!

*The package contains a stack of overseas
newspapers and magazines.*

Mrs Hargrave: Bags I *The Illustrated
London News* !

Margaret (unwrapping): Let's see
... *Country Life, The Ladies Field* ...
(Finding *The Illustrated London News* she
dangles it tantalisingly.)

Aa-ah! Ah-ha-ha! Ha-ha!

Mrs Hargrave: Give it here! Give it here!

Margaret: Paper, Lady? Latest from
lovely London!

Mrs Hargrave: Meg, I declare!

*Mrs Hargrave snatches The Illustrated
London News. Margaret searches quickly
through several papers, as if checking up on a
particular story.*

Margaret: Now we shall see ... Now we
shall see ...

Mrs Hargrave: If it is true ...

If your father sees the race is won and
lost —

If he accepts he'll never be the first —
I think he might resign himself ...

Might leave it ...

Might give us all some peace ...

Margaret: To be the first? Is that, for him,
the spur?

"To scorn delights and live laborious
days ... "

To be the first man to fly ...

Father never seems to care for glory.

Mrs Hargrave: Not care? Of course he

cares!
 Of course he cares, of course he does ...
 What you see is only pride.
 Why, that day down at the coast —
 The day the great kite hoisted him
 high —
 You don't recall, you were too young,
 But I remember!
 The way he was, the light in his face ...
 He thought it was beginning:
 "At last! At last! It is beginning" —
 That's what he said.
 But it wasn't beginning ...
 All these nine long years, all this
 labour,
 All this money poured down the
 drain,
 All his worthless junk in there ...
*(She is indicating the workshop in the
 basement.)*
 All my empty days, left on my own ...
 No, no ...
 That one short lift into the air back
 then Was no beginning ...
Olive *(encourages her brother from the
 upstairs window):*
 Sun-sparkle, harbour-swell,
 Seagull and spray ...
Margaret: It seems unfair ...
Olive: Geoffrey ... !
Margaret: He does work so hard.
Olive: Sail ... !
Margaret: And still with all the vigour of
 a boy.
3 Mrs Hargrave: Indestructible.
 I was so proud of him, when we were
 married ...

It was just after his New Guinea time
 The time he never speaks of ...
 I knew he'd sailed far up some
 desperate river:
 To me he was an Argonaut,
 Laughing at fever — my brave
 astronomer!
 Ah, Meg! It was our best time —
 Oh, Margaret, Margaret! — that magic
 summer,
 That summer of weird sunsets:
 Such colours, changing, changing ...
 Unheard-of hues!
 Folk marvelled. But, as for Laurie's
 notions,
 Why, he was "crank" and "crackpot"!
 A veil of dust and ashes — that's what
 he said —
 Of ashes, out in Earth's farthest
 atmosphere ...
Margaret, Mrs Hargrave: Krakatoa ...
Mrs Hargrave: It was Krakatoa.
Margaret, Mrs Hargrave:
 Krakatoa's cloud-wrack ...
 Krakatoa's dusty smithereens ...
Mrs Hargrave: When the world heard of
 that exploded island, They wiped the
 grins from their mouths quick-
 smart, I'll tell you!
Margaret: London ... !
Mrs Hargrave: The Royal Society
 Resounded at that time with Lawrence
 Hargrave's name!
 And in those days, although we never
 spoke of it,
 We were like Argonauts —
 And Fame and Fortune our

Hesperides ...
 I saw myself the wife of a celebrity —
 In fashionable gowns, a house in
 Kensington,
 Renowned for my at-homes — oh,
 Meg! How magical!
Margaret *(thoughtfully, to herself):*
 "Fame is the spur that the clear spirit
 doth raise
 (That last infirmity of noble mind)
 To scorn delights and live laborious
 days;
 But the fair guerdon when we hope to
 find
 And think to burst out into sudden
 blaze ... "
Mrs Hargrave: I soon came down to
 earth. To earth in Sydney. We stayed
 in Sydney. Wife of the crank inventor.
 Shoes to walk on water, adding
 machines, a sun's-rays water heater.
 I couldn't step outside the door
 without people
 pointing: "She's the wife of the mad
 kite-flyer —
 that prodigal fool who's —"
*Margaret's attention has been suddenly caught
 by something in one of the newspapers now
 scattered around the verandah. (Olive leaves
 the upstairs window at this point.)*
Margaret: Mother! Mother! Look!
4 This paper's more recent:
 A perfectly successful flight in Paris —
 Not just speculation, nor a rumour —
 Ever so many details. And a picture.
 Oh, Mother! Look at the picture!
Mrs Hargrave takes the paper and stares at the

illustration.

Mrs Hargrave: If this is true ...

Hargrave comes hurriedly out through the screen door, holding the telescope which he is opening. Olive is with him.

5 Mrs Hargrave (holding out the paper):

Laurie, have you seen this?

Hargrave gives the telescope to Olive and takes the paper.

Hargrave: Ah-ha! The elegant and ingenious — the inventive-Monsieur Santos-Dumont in his goggles Taking champagne beside his apparatus!

(He hands the paper back.)

Thank you, my dear. Clever chap.

Margaret: But these papers have only just arri— ... You knew!

Father, you knew all this had happened.

Hargrave: Of course I did. Praise be, I still have contacts:

Chanute wrote me screeds about it pronto.

He's very faithful — he keeps me up to date.

Margaret: Then, it is true? A man did truly fly?

Hargrave: Oh, absolutely! Didn't you know, Meg?

He has.

And the Wrights, of course, in private.

Dear me, yes — becoming quite the thing.

Margaret (gazing at the boats out on the water):

How strange ... ! To lift and fly ... !

Fly ... ! True ... !

Mrs Hargrave: You mean to tell me

Men have finally found out how to fly

And you never even mentioned it?

Not to me ?

Hargrave: I didn't think you'd care —

No one else in Australia seems to!

Margaret: But, father, this French plane —

Hargrave: Yes, Margaret?

Margaret: Look at it!

You can't tell me it isn't like your kites?

Hargrave: True, I can't.

Mrs Hargrave: Then why are you not mentioned?

Margaret: Not one word!

Olive (who has been watching the boat-race through the telescope):

Geoffrey's winning! Geoffrey's winning!

Geoffrey's winning! Daddy!

Mrs Hargrave: You've no one to blame but yourself!

I've told you and told you —

Hargrave: Yes, and I've told you how I feel about patents. (taking the telescope from Olive)

How are they doing?

6 Olive: I think it's all over. I think we've won.

Hargrave: We did! We won it easily! And our boy Geoffrey —

He was the clever helmsman! Ah, he's a good boy!

(He closes the telescope and sets it down on the verandah floor.)

What an occasion! I feel inclined to

dance!

Come along, Olive! Let's waltz!

Olive runs to him and they waltz boisterously.

Margaret: Father! You're supposed to be ill!

Throughout the dance Mrs Hargrave stands motionless and unsmiling. Hargrave and Olive separate. Hargrave turns to his wife.

Hargrave: Madam, will you honour me with a waltz?

Mrs Hargrave: Thank you, no.

Hargrave: Surely to honour our outstanding son?

Mrs Hargrave: I'm afraid I can't. I've a headache.

She goes and sits with her back to the others. At a loss, Olive sinks into a rocking chair and flicks over a magazine. Hargrave stands deflated. Margaret goes to him and takes his arm.

Margaret: Father, was it very terrible for you?

Hargrave: Terrible? Was what terrible?

Margaret: Hearing that it had happened:

men had flown —

But far away — without you ...

You must have been disappointed.

You must have hoped —

Hargrave: I? Here in Australia?

Without support? Without funds?

With not a

Single assistant?

You bewail the weary months of waiting

Just for the London papers — how much more

My strange materials,

Demanding such precision, delicate thicknesses,
Unheard-of lengths and shapes?
Oh, I raced!

I even led them for a leg or two!
But — oh, daughter! —
In this isolation, with no helpers,
It was no race that I could ever win.

Seeming suddenly older, Hargrave broods gloomily. Margaret, in silent sympathy, sits on the verandah steps and draws him down to sit beside her.

Hargrave: But these are boyish feelings!
Racing is fun for growing lads, but *sub Specie aeternitatis* not very dignified.

Margaret: So are you going to leave racing now
To the growing lads, Father?

Hargrave: What do you take me for?

7 These foreign flights
Are merest baby steps towards the future:
Tomorrow's wings will all be jointed, beating,
Undulating wings, wings of the albatross!
I'm on the way — I'll get there ... !
Think of what the gift of flight can do for Man:
Distance divides our proud and scattered species —
But what if, shortly, peace-arches of flight
Should link all in friendship?
That's what I call a noble goal to aim for —
An impulse in the ever-upward effort

Of our species:
Where once we wriggled, crawled,
then walked — to fly!
To fly ... ! To fly ... !

The front door bell rings inside the house.

Olive (*jumping up from the rocking chair*):
That was the bell. There's someone at the door.

Mrs Hargrave: Well, can't you answer it?
We're not in.

Olive goes into the house. Hargrave gets up, Margaret helping him. Olive comes back through the screen door carrying a hat-box.

Olive (*to her mother*):
It was Miss MacVey. I told her you were out.
She got this done sooner than she expected.
She thought you might like it for the weekend.

Mrs Hargrave has risen quickly. She looks embarrassed.

Mrs Hargrave: All right, Olive. Put it in my room, please.

Olive: But, Mummy, aren't you going to

Mrs Hargrave: In my room, Olive.

Smiling and shaking her head at her mother, Margaret runs up the verandah steps, takes the hat-box from Olive, opens it and lifts out the new hat. It is strikingly trimmed with feather-tufts of deep red and tawny gold.

Mrs Hargrave forgets her doubts; she and her daughters gasp and sigh with admiration. Hargrave, in contrast, gives a start of recognition and surprise.

Olive: Mummy, it's scrumptious! Try it on! Try it on!

Mummy, try it on! Yes, try it on,
Mummy!
Put it on!

Mrs Hargrave: She does do a good job doesn't she? Very nice.

A good job, yes ...

Margaret: Oh, it's enchanting! Really exquisite!

Go ahead, try it, Mother.

Hargrave (*going up on to the verandah*):

May I see it? May I see it?

May I see it?

May I look at it, please?

I'll be very careful.

Mrs Hargrave reluctantly hands Hargrave the hat. He very delicately touches and strokes the feathers.

8 Hargrave: *Paradisaea Raggiana.*

Named for the Marquis Raggi.

One of the Signor's noble-blooded cronies ...

Mrs Hargrave: The Signor?

Hargrave: Such a passionate crimson!
Colours of love!

You see, Meg?

Margaret: The feathers? Yes, wonderful!

Hargrave: Feast your eyes, Olive: one of New Guinea's loveliest
Birds of Paradise!

There were myriads in that jungle thirty years ago:

Lord knows how many may be left ...

Mrs Hargrave: It's too bad of you Laurie!

It's not fair!

I've got to have something to wear!

She is not expensive —

Not really expensive — but of course

you cannot rest
Till you've spoiled it for me.
I don't ask them to slaughter all these
birds.
I don't set fashion. No one sets
fashion here —
Not here, not likely, not in Australia!
But if millions of women out there in
the real world
Are going to wear feathers, I'll wear
feathers too —

And I won't feel guilty either!
*She holds out her hand for the hat, but
Hargrave whisks it out of her reach.*

Hargrave: But I agree!

We should always have the courage of
our pretensions.
Anything is better than hypocrisy —
Than hypocrisy ...and sentimentality ...
*(suddenly catching up the telescope and
offering it to Olive)*

How d'ye feel, young Hargrave?
Plucky enough to join my intrepid
band
In the exploit of the Hypocrite in the
Jungle?

Olive *(quick on the uptake, taking the
telescope and saluting):*

Yours to command, Sir! Do or die!

Hargrave: Good show!

*He crouches low with the hat hidden behind
his back and waves to Olive to come and
crouch behind him. As she moves into
position, she opens the telescope. Together
they "stalk", crouching, down the wooden
steps into the garden.*

Hargrave: Now here we come, slogging

through dark New Guinea's
Most impenetrable jungle —
A magnificent team of sturdy
explorers
That intrepidly thread the treacherous,
trackless gloom!
But, hush! Don't move! What's that
among those branches?
It is! The rarest of rare,
The ultimate Bird of Paradise,
There, preening his breast in pride!

9 *Hargrave has taken the telescope, fully
extended, from Olive; and has hung the hat on
the end of it, holding it aloft.*

Olive: Hooray! We found it!

Mrs Hargrave: Laurie, you'll spoil it!

Margaret: Father, you're feverish!
*Hargrave has passed the telescope-with-hat to
Olive who, teetering on tiptoe, continues to
hold it aloft.*

Hargrave *(staggering back melodramatically):*
Gran Dio! Non è vero! Madre mia!
A hitherto unknown-a species!

Olive: Daddy, who are you? Daddy, who
are you?

Mrs Hargrave: Olive, do stop that! Olive,
do stop that!

Margaret: Father, what nonsense! Father,
what nonsense!

Hargrave: Basta! Basta! Basta! Basta!
Silencio! Everyone stand-a back!

(He shoos the women back up the steps.)

Io non voglio anyone else-a to shoot!

Zees prize ees mine! Zee gun, please!

Olive: Sir!

*She hands him the telescope, retaining the hat
which she holds high. He circles the "bird"*

*with exaggerated precautions, taking aim with
the telescope as "gun".*

Olive: Say who you are, Daddy!

Hargrave: Ssssh!

Margaret: I'd like to know!

Hargrave: Zitti, zitti!

Mrs Hargrave: D'Albertis. Signor
D'Albertis. It's a name

He's hardly spoken once these thirty
years.

Olive: D'Albertis ...

Who is this D'Albertis?

Who is D'Albertis?

Is he a real man?

Does Daddy know him?

Won't someone tell me?

Signor D'Albertis

Sounds like a swell!

Mrs Hargrave: D'Albertis ...

Why should he suddenly

Bring up D'Albertis?

I can't imagine:

Just a few feathers

Can't be the reason ...

Too long a silence

For a feather to dispel ...

Margaret: D'Albertis ...

I might have guessed it.

I have observed,

If anyone mentions

D'Albertis,

Father grows restive,

As at the passage

Of some dark wing ...

Hargrave: What 'ave you done? I 'ave-a
tell you not to spik!

Olive careers around the lawn holding the hat

high.

Hargrave: Fly, little bird! Save your skin!
Fly! Fly!
Fly from our human vanity and greed!
Fly!

Hargrave simulates firing.

Olive, Mrs Hargrave, Margaret (*startled*):
Aaaah!

Hargrave: A wisp of smoke curls upward
from the gun
Of our unerring Leader:
And like a shooting star the jewelled
innocent
Plummets to the earth!

*Olive, still holding the hat, swoops it
groundward.*

Mrs Hargrave (*leaning over the verandah
rail*):

Olive, don't dirty it! That hat cost four
guineas!

*Hargrave bends just in time to take the hat
from Olive's hand before it reaches the ground.*

Hargrave: Four guineas.

He kneels, cradling the hat his arms.

Hargrave: O, poveretto! Leetle-a blame-e-
less veecteen!

See how zee poor expiring eyelids-a
flutter,

Weeping ze teardrop for ze life so
fleeting!

Troppo crudel D'Albertis! O, il mio
rimorso!

To end zees tiny life — for what? For
money?

No, no! To serve la filosofia naturale!
She is ze cruel mistress — I ze slave!

Oimè! Oimè! Oi — (*getting up*) So

ends the lesson —

The lesson of the hypocrite in the
jungle!

*(He closes the telescope and casually hands the
hat up to his wife.)*

Thank you, my dear.

You did well, For *Paradisaea Raggiana*
Four guineas is not bad.

*(He sets the telescope down on the verandah
floor*

and turns away from his wife.)

Olive, what is fifty times four guineas?

Up there in New Guinea

With fifty such poor corpses a
good hunter

Could buy a wife. And there

The women are as loving as the birds

*Margaret takes the hat from her mother's
hands and lays it back in the box.*

Margaret: Come upstairs, Mother.

You still haven't tried it on.

Olive: Fifty times four guineas.

Fifty times four guineas.

Fifty times four guineas.

Fifty times four guineas is two
hundred and ten pounds.

Mummy! (*She runs up the verandah
steps to her mother.*)

Did Daddy pay two hundred and ten
pounds for you?

Mrs Hargrave (*striking Olive across the
mouth*):

Hold your silly little tongue!

*Olive bursts into tears. Contrite, her mother
makes a move to comfort her. Olive rejects it.*

Mrs Hargrave (*to Hargrave*):

Now see what you've made me do!

*Margaret, comforting Olive, hurries her inside
the house.*

10 Mrs Hargrave (*advancing on her
husband*):

You blame me, don't you? Blame me
for all your failures?

Because I insist we live up to our class!

Well, I won't be blamed — I won't!

If you really wanted,

we could live in London,

London, London! —

we could live in London,

Where you could be in touch

with all this flying,

Where you could make your mark,

And I could have things elegant

for once —

Be in the swim, show a dash of style!

We could live in London ...

show a dash of style ...

We could live in London ...

you could make your mark ...

Hargrave: I blame you only when I get no
quiet!

How can my thoughts take wing,
how can they soar,

When in my home my mind finds
no tranquillity

For the buzzing of a pestilential fly

Fevering me with "London!

London!"?

We ought to thank our stars for the
Judge, my father;

We ought to thank our stars for the
coal they quarry

In the land he left, that we can live in
Sydney

In an ample style. In an ample style!
Mrs Hargrave: Ample? Ample? What do you know of ample?
 Dare you deny, if you had ample, you Too would have built and flown some crazy machine?
Hargrave: Ample? How could a man have ample
 Both to supply each new demand from you
 And to have built and flown some crazy machine?
Mrs Hargrave: Easily! Easily!
 Your kites, your engine, that French plane — you could be Famous, if only you had taken patents.
Hargrave: Patents? Never!
 If every little screw and bolt be patented,
 What will the total cost be?
 Who could afford to fly in such machines?
 Governments! Armies! Hypocrites!
 What is wanted in Australia
 Is a cheap and handy job —
 A gadget that a jackaroo can haul
 With one hand from the shed.
 I'll not clamp
 A patent on my mate. Not I!
 A patentee is just a licensed thief!
Mrs Hargrave: And what of all your effort? What of you?
Hargrave: A patentee is just a licensed thief!
Mrs Hargrave: The labourer is worthy of his hire.
 The labourer is worthy of his hire!

Hargrave: A patentee is just a licensed thief!
Mrs Hargrave: Laurie, sometimes I do believe you're mad!
Hargrave: Mad? Oh, yes — you women!
 That's what you'd all relish if you dared —
 To shut up all your men
 As my mother did my father:
 "Mad!" she said,
 "I do believe you're mad!"
 Well, mad or not,
 he ended up with fame,
 Power, and wealth —
 he ended up with
 Fame, power, and wealth! —
 So thank your lucky stars
 Judge Hargrave proved so mad!
 So thank your lucky stars
 Judge Hargrave proved so mad!
Mrs Hargrave: Mad?
 No, you're not mad!
 How I wish you were as mad as the Judge!
 He ended up with fame!
 I'd thank my lucky stars
 The day you proved so mad!
 I'd thank my lucky stars
 The day you proved so mad!
11 Geoffrey will soon be home, tired and hungry. I have work to do.
She goes into the house.
Hargrave (looking out blindly over the water):
 Geoffrey will be home soon.
 Geoffrey! Oh, my boy! My only son!
 Caught in our shameful crossfire,

How will you ever learn —
 How will you ever believe me when I tell you
 The only thing of worth I have to teach
 The Lesson of the Hypocrite in the Jungle?
 The Jungle ... !
The light fades on Hargrave. Darkness.

12 Scene 3
When the lights return Hargrave has gone back in memory to the deck of the steam launch Neva, at anchor on the Fly River, New Guinea. Hargrave, aged twenty-six, is leaning on the bulwarks, surveying river and jungle with relaxed good humour.
Hargrave: Fly ... ! Fly ... ! Fly ... !
 Primeval, feverous, devious,
 dawdling river ...
 Why is the countenance you show today
 So closed, so un-responding ... ?
 Come on, old Fly!
 Don't be ungracious!
 You have so much up your sleeve
 a man might learn from:
 You teem, you spawn, you burgeon!
 You could show me
 One supple undulation,
 one muscular impulse —
 A cockatoo's wing,
 a crocodile's languid tail?
 (He spots something in the water.)
 Ah, yes indeed!
 Gramercy, courteous Fly!
 Uno molto gentile watersnake —
 very much to the point!

(He whips out a small leather-bound diary and pencil and starts to sketch and notate.)

Yes, yes, it's right! It's right!

Always the same —

The same wavelike,
wavelike progression ...

Thank you, snake! Mille grazie, Fly!

It is well with a man when his
mind sparks to life

And things begin to shape themselves.

He continues sketching, whistling "Largo al factotum".

Hargrave (*singing*): La, la, la, la, la, la, la,
la, la!

"Fortunatissimo per verità, bravo!"

Hargrave whistles the phrase again, unaware that through the bead-curtain of the cabin-door behind him D'Albertis is slowly and painfully emerging, leaning heavily on the shoulders of his English protégé, Clarence Wilcox. Wilcox is little more than a boy, weakly good-looking and obsequious in demeanour.

Hargrave (*singing*): La, la!

(He chuckles to himself, then sings again.)

"Fortunatissimo per verità!"

D'Albertis: You are jocund, Mr Hargrave.

Hargrave (*whirling round*):

Signor D'Albertis! Should you be up?

Are you recovered?

D'Albertis: You are melodious,
Mr Hargrave.

Hargrave: Singing as I worked, Sir.

D'Albertis: You sing in Italian?

Your song may be satirical?

Hargrave: Satirical? No, Signor.

Only so far as

One saddled with an Anglo-Saxon

larynx

Cannot but parody the dulcet tones

Of a native Mediterranean.

D'Albertis: You mock at my singing!

Singing ...

Hargrave: Indeed I don't, Signor!

D'Albertis: And I these many days too
sick to sing ...

Hargrave: Sir ... !

D'Albertis: We are not all

So merrily impervious to fever.

Faithful young Wilcox has been in fear
for me.

So you enjoy Rossini?

Hargrave: Well, Signor.

As I do seem, this trip,

To have been voted general Jack-of-
All-Trades,

It seems appropriate to sing the song
Of the omniscient Figaro.

D'Albertis: You complain of the work?

Hargrave: Indeed, no! I enjoy it.

Ergo, I sing!

Also, it frightens the flies!

D'Albertis: And you look upon yourself
as "omniscient"?

Hargrave: I have to be, Signor.

13 This funny crate we sail in is a most
Demanding female.

Keeping her content

Puts a man on his mettle.

She's crying out for higher bulwarks,
so I build them.

She's hungry-mad for fuel:

I'm the stoker.

She fancies pushing beyond the map,
so I

Take bearings, set her course,
make charts,

See that she isn't swept into a
whirlpool,

Battered against the over-hanging
bank,

Rammed through by floating
tree-trunks,

Run aground on drifting islands ...

When the propeller fouls,

Who goes into the evil slime to
free her,

When the niggers won't for fear
of crocodiles?

I've thrust her up this haphazard river
(crawling, fetid river ...) —

I've thrust her up this haphazard river
Virtually single-handed —

And grand work it has been!

D'Albertis (*indicating Hargrave's diary*):

And that? Is that book also work?

Hargrave: My own work, yes.

I have been struck by certain patterns
of movement,

Modes of animal locomotion ...

These are my jottings.

D'Albertis: Your aspirations know no
bounds!

So many talents —

and now a naturalist!

Clary Wilcox, you must look to
your laurels:

You are not the only apprentice

I have on board!

Hargrave: Signor D'Albertis — !

D'Albertis: Where are the rest of my
men?

Have they deserted?

Hargrave: No, no — of course not.
Where would men desert to in this
jungle?
They are foraging.
In all that mad profusion of life
out there,
There is so little edible by man ...
And we dare not start downstream
till we've replenished.

D'Albertis: What did you say?
Downstream?
Upstream, you mean!

Hargrave: Signor! Signor! Signor!
Signor! Signor! Signor!

D'Albertis: On, on to the mountains —
The mighty inland ranges I have
dreamed of,
The proud virgin fastnesses
I must enter!

Hargrave: Signor, we've had this out
before your fever.
We've thrust her up this
haphazard river,
This mad, meandering Fly,
Far higher than man ever dreamed.
But the steamer won't go one
more inch —
Believe me, Sir!
We have achieved wonders:
We need not feel ashamed to turn
around.

D'Albertis: We! We! What is this we?
This is the D'Albertis expedition:
Luigi Maria D'Albertis is its Leader —
Italy's son, Italy's pride, and soon
The most famous naturalist alive!

Who is this we?

14 Hargrave: Your scientific voyage of
discovery
I, at your invitation, Signor D'Albertis,
Gladly and proudly joined as your
companion —
Gratefully, humbly —
these I freely grant —
Respecting both your greater age
and experience:
But still, Sir, as a colleague and
a gentleman.

D'Albertis: A gentleman! A gentleman
engineer!
You are my boiler-master —
my mechanical!
You signed it on paper!

Hargrave: A legal fiction!
A favour that I did you as a friend,
To help you over harbour
technicalities!

D'Albertis: A friend! A friend!
First, a gentleman —
now he's a friend!
You Englishmen are all mad
with arrogance.
D'Albertis is no common name
in Italy;
And though your mad old father
may be crafty
In land speculation and by
hobnobbing
With the New South Welsh politicians
may have wheedled
A judgeship for himself,
that does not make you —
And never will — the equal of

D'Albertis!

Hargrave: I am aware you are deranged
by fever.

If you were not —

D'Albertis: No, no, no! Oh, yes —
You are a strong young English bully,
and I —
I am ill, with no one to protect me —
Though faithful Clary Wilcox here
would try.
So I must bow to your incompetence,
or is it
Timidity? And let you turn us back ...
Let you tear me from this land I love ...
This virgin land that yearns to yield
herself
And all her secrets to me ...
It will be hard to part from so much
beauty ...

Hargrave: To part from so much plunder!
You have not loved this land,
you have raped it!
Your only interest in coming here
Is selfish greed —
greed for gold and glory —
Gold for D'Albertis!
Glory for D'Albertis!
Every scientific find you make
You'll hide and hoard and hawk
round all the world's
Richest museums to the
highest bidder:
I doubt if you would publish
one result
Were it not that you crave the
adulation.
Love this land!

You blaze a trail to massacre its birds,
You terrorise the natives,
mine the rivers,
Blow up their fish —
your answer to all problems
Is firecrackers!
A rare Italian mountebank!
Instead of making white men loved
and honoured,
You rob whole villages of all they own;
You even desecrate their burial sites
And leave a few cheap beads
behind for a tip!
And I, God help me,
I have plundered too —
All in the name of science!
I have allowed myself to be infected:
I have my souvenirs,
I have my specimens ...

D'Albertis: Have you, indeed?
All samples gathered on my
expedition
Should have been reported and
resigned to me.
Why was I not informed?

Hargrave (*looking with distaste at Wilcox*):
I assumed you knew
Through your usual private channels
Clarence Wilcox,
be so good as to go in to my bunk:
Under it you will find three
packing-cases.
Transfer their contents to the
Signor's area.
Empty the lot.
Maybe they will fetch the Signor
A few extra lire.

D'Albertis nods to Wilcox who goes into the cabin.

D'Albertis: And the book?

Hargrave: My personal journal?
Sir, you go too far!

D'Albertis: On possession of it physically
— well,
I don't insist ...
But I will trouble you to give
your word —
Your word "as a gentleman" —
That you will never publish it,
Nor ever take it on yourself to
promulgate
Any account of this Fly River voyage.
This is the D'Albertis Expedition:
Let no one but Luigi Maria D'Albertis
Presume to tell the world of it —
The world of it! Your word —
Have I your word? Have I your word?

Hargrave: This is not fever —
this is madness!
You are mad with self-love —
Insane with greed! Insane with greed!

D'Albertis: Give me your word!

Hargrave: You have my word.
What's more, I give my word
That if I ever come before the world
It will be modestly serving the world,
Not dazzling it with squibs,
forcing its love!
If I have anything to publish,
It will be scattered free, for all to share
Not profit from! I give my word
I will not lower myself to ogle Fame —
Flaunt myself at her, like a gaudy
Paradise bird on heat!

D'Albertis (*laughing*): You are a poor
creature —

You, an admirer of Darwin!

Hargrave: Sir, I revere Darwin.
What of it?

D'Albertis: It is not by such niminy-
piminy ethics
That the fittest shall survive:
Where are your file-sharp teeth?
Your whetted claws? (*He laughs.*)

16 In a greedy world
Of predatory, jostling kites and hawks,
The man of noble soul
Must owe it to himself to be an eagle,
To spread his wings —
And, rising high above the common
flock,
Proudest predator of all,
Fly ... ! Fly ... ! Fly ... !

Hargrave: That's not Darwinism!
That's D'Albertism!
If Man is most evolved of all
things living,
It's not because of sharper teeth
and claws:
In a greedy world
Of predatory, jostling kites and hawks
The creature with a soul
Must owe it to himself to be
the Phoenix:
To spread his wings —
But, utterly unlike all other birds,
Be no predator at all,
Only fly ... !
Fly ... !
In a greedy world
Of predatory, jostling kites and hawks,

The creature with a soul
Must owe it to himself to be the
Phoenix:
To spread his wings —
But, utterly unlike all other birds,
Be no predator at all,
Only fly ... !
Fly ... !

D'Albertis: In a greedy world
Of predatory, jostling kites and hawks,
The man of noble soul
Must owe it to himself to be an eagle,
To spread his wings —
And, rising high above the
common flock,
Proudest predator of all,
Fly ... ! Fly ... ! Fly ... !
Fly ... ! Fly ... !

*They stand glaring at each other for a moment.
Then D'Albertis, exhausted, hauls himself
slowly along the bulwarks to the cabin-door.*

D'Albertis (turning at the cabin-door):
If and when you get me back to
Sydney,
Will you expect payment for what
you've done?

Hargrave: Signor D'Albertis,
May I remind you, you engaged
my service —
My service as ... mechanical —
At one shilling a month.
You signed it on paper.

D'Albertis: One shilling a month?
Good. So be it.

*D'Albertis goes inside. The lights fade to
darkness.*

17 Scene 4

*1915. When the lights return we are back at
the house on Sydney Harbour. It is sunset.
There is a light in the basement workshop.
Mrs Hargrave is standing in the garden
gazing out over the water. Behind her,
Margaret comes out of the house and stands
for a moment on the verandah observing her
mother with an expression of compassion and
concern. Then she comes quietly down the
steps and joins her.*

Margaret: The harbour is so beautiful at
sunset.

Mrs Hargrave: Such beauty can be very
cruel ...
I don't suppose that beach a
world away
Is any less radiant at sunset
For being littered with Australian boys
All dead!

Margaret: We don't *know* that, Mother!
We don't know the extent ...

Mrs Hargrave: I'm so afraid for Geoffrey!

Margaret: Don't, Mother! Don't!
No news is good news.

Mrs Hargrave: That poor woman next
door, Mrs Templeton,
Hearing about her boy so
horribly wounded ...

Margaret: I've just come back from there.
She's much calmer.
Olive's gone in to sit with her.
Mother, Mrs Templeton apologised —
You know —
For what she said in her first burst
of grief
About Father —

Mrs Hargrave: That Laurie is a traitor?

Yes, I know.

They all say it.

They don't really mean it.

It's only something to take their minds
off — worse things ...

I feel so sorry for your Father,
Margaret.

As if his fear for Geoffrey weren't
enough,

He blames himself far more than they
ever could.

The only one I blame is myself.

I was as bad — I was worse —
than those museums!

And why should great museums
take an interest

When his own wife declares
his models junk?

18 Ah, poor man! He so badly needed
One word of thanks and recognition ...
Well, Margaret —
even now, even not knowing
What's happening to Geoff —
I can't quite bring myself
To hate the Germans.
They gave him thanks,
they gave him recognition —
Even sent a medal! Why not?
He damn well deserved one!
And now they say his models
taught the Germans
How to make planes to bomb
Australian boys!

Margaret (indicating the workshop):
Is he still working?

Mrs Hargrave: Of course. Does he ever

stop?
But he's so weary, Margaret!
Exhausted!
It's too much for him now:
he should have Geoffrey.
Geoff was so splendid those last
few months,
Easing the burden on to his
own shoulders ...
I hated it at first: I fought against it.
But I'll admit it, Meg —
yes, I could see
That same fire that has devoured
your father
Kindling again in Geoff ...

The front door bell rings inside the house.

Mrs Hargrave: Who could that — ?

At this hour?

We're not expecting —

Margaret: I'll go. *(She goes up the steps on to the verandah.)* Coming! *(She goes into the house.)*

Mrs Hargrave, wringing her hands in agitation, turns again to gaze over the water.

Mrs Hargrave *(recalling the boat-race):*

Sunset and harbour-swell,
Seagull and spray ...
Breezes, breezes,
Blow for Geoffrey ...
Help him fly ...
Help him ...

Margaret returns from the house, leading a dignified but troubled-looking clergyman.

They come down the verandah steps,

Mrs Hargrave *(turning and seeing the clergyman):*

Ah!

Margaret: This gentleman
Has come to have a private word with
Father.

The clergyman gives a little bow. Mrs Hargrave can do no more than nod wordlessly. Margaret shows the clergyman into the workshop, then returns to her mother.

Margaret: What on earth?

I thought the church had given
Father up ...

Mrs Hargrave: Margaret! Margaret!

Don't you know what it means?

They always send a clergyman.

Mrs Templeton told me.

Always a clergyman!

Margaret: Mother, it can't be!

You just imagine it!

There could be so many reasons —

Hargrave and the clergyman come out of the workshop. Hargrave is holding an opened, official-looking letter. The clergyman looks helplessly at the stricken faces of the women.

Clergyman: I can see myself out:
please don't trouble.

(with a gesture toward the workshop)

I've left my card.

If I can be of any small assistance,

Please don't hesitate ...

God be with you!

The clergyman goes quickly up the steps and into the house.

Mrs Hargrave: Laurie!

Margaret: Father!

Hargrave: Mother, our dear boy is dead.

They only say: he died doing his duty.

19 *For a long pause all three remain with positions essentially unchanged, their heads*

lowered or averted, given up to the tumult of their emotions. At last, one after another, they look up, revealing faces profoundly gripped by thought — meditative, almost detached.

Mrs Hargrave, Margaret, Hargrave:

"Fame is the spur that the clear spirit
doth raise

(That last infirmity of noble mind)

To scorn delights and live laborious
days;

But the fair guerdon when we hope to
find

And think to burst out into sudden
blaze,

Comes the blind fury with th'abhorred
shears

And slits the thin spun life ... "

Mrs Hargrave breaks down. Margaret begins to lead her into the house.

Mrs Hargrave *(pausing, looking back from the steps):* Laurie ... ?

Hargrave: It would be merciful

Never to speak ... our dear son's name
... again

In my presence!

How else am I to hope

To finish all the work ... ?

Mrs Hargrave breaks down again. Margaret leads her into the house.

Hargrave, gripped with visionary fervour, is unaware that they have gone.

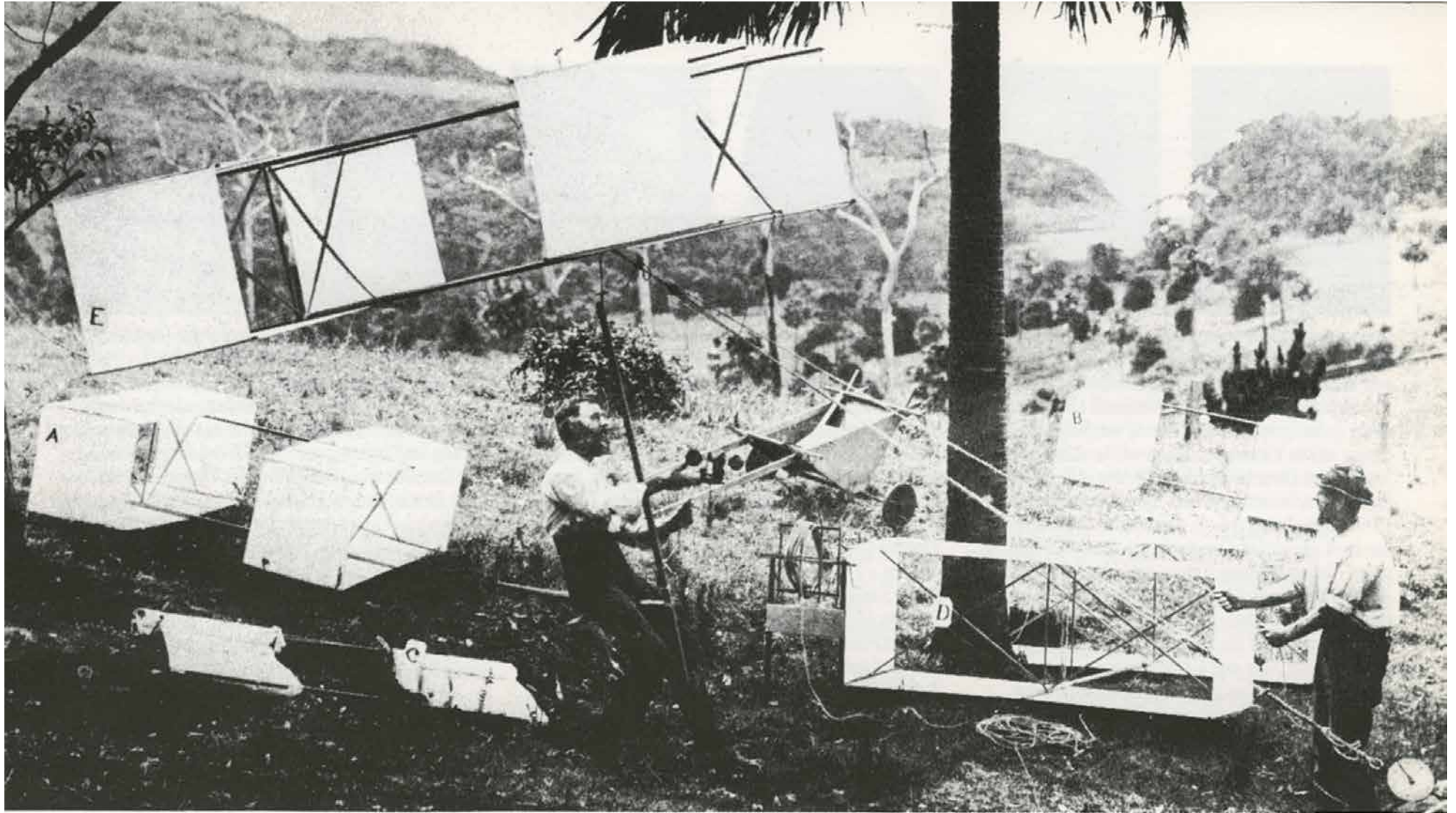
Hargrave: There is so much still worth
doing!

The future waits for Nature's beating
wing:

Flight must evolve towards the mighty
wave

Articulated in the albatross
That lets it fly ... and fly ...
and never tire!
This morning, for the very first time,
I think I just glimpsed the way ...

*Becoming aware that the others have gone, he
turns toward the workshop.*
Hargrave: The way ... !
*He goes into the workshop. The lights fade to
darkness.*



Hargrave and Swain with the kites used in their kite lift experiment.