*Hi again Elise,*

*Thanks again for your insights from my last outline. Per your notes the two big concerns you had were:*

1. ***The June/Dan relationship – is that the core of the story? Or is the story more about the formation of the band? If it’s the former, you feel there are beats missing and the eventual resolution of the love story felt unsatisfying. (eg: we don’t witness the beat when June falls for Dan so instead it simply feels expedient that they get together.)***
2. ***The use of narration: this felt uneven and arbitrary; random/without purpose.***

*I will endeavour to address these 2 main concerns in this next draft. A few clarifying notes:*

1. *Richard the original guitarist: My assumption is that this show will feature some band members in addition to the cast (who will also play instruments). This will mean that there’s a band member who will “double” as Richard for the first diegetic song. It would also mean that if there’s a non-diegetic song, sung by someone who’s also a member of the band, we could have their “double” playing in the show’s band while the cast member sings on-stage. I concede I don’t have all the details worked out, but I do think it’s not only achievable, but would make staging it easier and more seamless. My assumption is it’d be something like: the band is not lit when it’s a non-diegetic song; when it’s a diegetic song our cast members would play all the instruments and the band section of the stage would be fully illuminated (or something like that!).*
2. *I’m going to try a “rationale” for the narration to see how it works. (Wish me luck! LOL) It involves them being interviewed by an unseen (and unheard) interviewer. We start (as we did previously) with Dan narrating and then bring in Harry: June’s 2 love interests. Then June gets a lengthy narration – as the key player in this story (along with Dan). Tom gets only a brief look-in at this point (as the 4th most important person in the story). Lastly, we bring in Zoe and Charlie – as mentioned, the (mostly) “light relief.” Hopefully by framing this as the band recounting their journey to success, that weighting makes sense. (And it interests me thematically to consider: who gets to tell the story of those who make rock’n’roll history?)*
3. *Diegetic songs DO (broadly speaking) fulfil a function in the show: they will touch on relationship status, plot or theme. Because I have an idea (which changes constantly) of which songs I’d like to utilise, I’ve included their titles in this document. They won’t mean anything to you, but it’s helpful for me (and saves me from keeping 2 versions of this document on the go). I’ve also tried to link song style with different characters (eg – June has a certain style of song she writes which differs from Harry, etc), as well as being cognisant of moments where an up-tempo song might be useful in the shape of the show, and keeping a satisfying “mix” of different styles and tempos. NB: There may be too many songs in this iteration (I’m spoiled for choice!) but I’ll keep working on culling that in successive drafts (or when I get to the libretto itself.)*
4. *I’ve left the opening scenes as different scenes for now, though I acknowledge they could all play continuously. However, because they take place in different locations and over a long period of time I’ve written it this way for now for clarity.*
5. *I’ve left out Dan mentioning his previous relationship with Zoe; I feel it’s OK if it comes out organically through the story (I don’t think he feels it’s significantly important to mention it in the narration.)*
6. *I’ve got one version where changes are tracked in case that’s easier to read; following is a “clean” version with all “changes accepted” if you’d prefer. The 2nd one starts on P.14 (Don’t worry: it’s not a 25 page document! LOL) 😊 – thanks, Alan.*

**HOW TO MAKE GRAVY – OUTLINE (Nov 2021) – step 6**

**(changes tracked version)**

**Act 1**

1. **Stage, The Hotel Esplanade (The Espy) Melbourne, Australia; mid-1980’s**: DAN, early 20’s enters and sits on a distinctive 2-seater couch on one side of the stage. It is illuminated by a TV studio light. i.e: it’s a chair in a TV studio where an interview subject would sit. Dan introduces himself to the (actual) audience, using narration, telling us who he is and where we are: the iconic Espy – a local “rock music institution” where numerous acts got their start. He tells us he helped formed the band, The Debutantes: only he doesn’t actually play in the band. Rather, he’s their manager. A usually overlooked figure, but he’s OK with that. It’s enough that he knows that he turned this bunch of misfits into rock’n’roll legends. Besides that wasn’t even his greatest triumph in The Debutantes; his greatest triumphwas something else entirely… But all that is down the road. For now, they’re not even on the cusp of greatness. But maybe they’re on the cusp of the cusp…

The band back then was HARRY, a musician’s musician and Dan’s best friend since high school. He plays rhythm guitar and writes all their songs. (As each band member is introduced, the narrator references famous musicians that they’re reminiscent of.) **Harry** sits down next to Dan on the interview couch (referred to simply as the Couch from here on) and takes over the narration: ZOE is on bass guitar and CHARLIE is on drums and a vocalist/lead guitarist (Richard, a member of the ‘Deeper Water’ band, but not a character/cast member we ever meet). **Dan** continues, as Harry takes his place with the rest of the band members, that in 1985, they are just starting to get noticed around the pubs and clubs of Melbourne; a couple of record label A&R men are sniffing around: they’re a great live band and are starting to attract a loyal following and looking to record their first album. But if the wheels hadn’t fallen off yet, one wheel was definitely starting to look wobbly. But as one door closes… He returns to his spot behind a mixing desk and the young band plays a rousing song to the delight of the (fictional) audience. (LEAPS AND BOUNDS)

1. **Backstage/Stage, The Espy**: The band (minus Richard) stagger backstage, sweaty and on a high as they enthuse about the great gig they’re having. In the background, an ecstatic (off-stage) audience demands an encore. As they confirm their encore tracks, Zoe looks around for Richard; he’s not there. Charlie reports that he saw him heading for the toilets backstage and that Dan had gone to retrieve him. On cue, Dan returns looking ashen: Richard is passed out in a cubicle. He explains that he tried reviving him but there’s no way he can go back on. Harry’s livid; he’s had enough. This has happened too many times: Richard’s out of the band. No one objects to this but that doesn’t help them now – what to do for an encore? Dan suggests doing a song Harry wrote recently for an anticipated new album. It’s not part of their usual set but Dan argues it’s a great track and they can play it without Richard. Zoe encourages him: it’s good; back yourself. With some hesitation they return to the stage to rapturous applause and sing the new song to great acclaim. (CARELESS)
2. **Street/Diner:** JUNE, early 20’s, enters and sits on the Couch.. She narrates to the audience: she was at that gig at The Espy. It was the first time she’d seen The Debutantes play, but she was immediately blown away: she knew they were something special. She introduces herself and explains that “this” is a year before that gig. Right now, she’s on a country road outside Dijon and it looks like it’s about to piss with rain. During this June moves from the Couch, picks up a backpack and sticks out her thumb. Moving from the interview studio into the world of the scene, while continuing to narrate. She continues that she’s travelling with TOM, a fellow musician who was also at the gig. Tom wanders on-stage and acknowledges the audience. He has a guitar slung over his shoulder. He takes up the spot on the Couch left vacant by June.. June continues that she hooked up with him when they were at high school. They messed around making music together through their teens: June seemed to take it more seriously than Tom, but he had a knack for coming up with an amazing guitar riff, a catchy song title or a line of lyric, seemingly effortlessly – which really pisses her off! On cue, Tom holds up a finger and scribbles a note on a notepad he carries in his pocket. Throughout June’s monologue, Tom interjects wry comments (narrated), conveying his take on the events she’s describing.

June continues that after leaving high school they set off backpacking around Europe, but their relationship suffered. (EVERY FUCKING CITY) They landed back in Melbourne. June removes her backpack and puts on a waitress’s apron as she explains that she took on a mind-numbing job and Tom dipped in and out of various bands, building a reputation as a rising talent… and a pain in the arse. When he wasn’t doing that we was playing around with his guitar in their shared flat and smoking pot. (During this, Tom starts smoking a joint while strumming his guitar.) They drifted back into a relationship, against June’s better judgement. The scene changes to a diner, with June clearing tables. She finishes by saying that the only silver lining was her boss agreed to let the two of them play there twice a week for tips. She takes off her apron and she and Tom take up spots in the diner; her sitting behind a keyboard and Tom with his guitar. She finishes her monologue by saying that one day, a week after The Espy gig, the guys from The Debutantes walked in and everything changed…

1. **Melbourne Diner:** Harry, Zoe, Charlie and Dan enter the diner and discuss what to do next: they feel they’re on the brink of hitting the big time but they need a new guitarist before they hit the road at the end of the month. During this scene, Zoe and Dan allude to previously being in a relationship with each other. Their mutual warmth and teasing affection makes it apparent that the split was relatively amicable. June and Tom introduce themselves to the patrons as they start their next set. Harry recognises Tom: he’s seen him play a gig with another rising band. Zoe says she heard it didn’t work out, meaning he may be available. Dan counters that he’d heard he was a total nightmare. June announces the next song is one they’ve written. Tom plays acoustic guitar while June plays the keyboard. (WINTER COAT) It’s a sweet song, though it’s clear Tom is the more natural showman of the pair. Harry is impressed and says as much to his bandmates. Dan offers to talk to them and Harry joins him.

Zoe and Charlie get drinks from the bar and then head to the Couch, narrating as they go that as the mere rhythm section – who don’t write the songs – they stay out of band strategy stuff. Which suits them fine: leave the politics and the personalities to the others; they are there to play. And drink, Charlie adds. They toast each other and the lights come up on Harry, Dan, Tom and June.

Harry introduces himself and Dan, and mentions that they’re looking for a new guitarist for their band. Tom enthuses that they saw The Debutantes at The Espy last week, and is complimentary – he’s been looking to spread his wings and sees the current arrangement as a stop-gap. June takes umbrage at this comment and Tom backtracks a little. Dan asks how the two of them work together and Tom slightly reluctantly concedes that June is a genius with arrangements, melodies and taking his scraps of ideas and weaving them into awesome songs. Upon hearing this, Harry’s attitude to June changes. He mentions that they don’t have a keyboardist either… To his surprise, June is uncertain; she has a lot of her own material and she isn’t sure if Harry’s band is the right vehicle for her songs. Harry reassures her and she accepts his suggestion that they all get together for a jam and see what happens. They arrange to exchange some chord charts and lyrics ahead of the session and that they’ll “see what happens” on the day. Harry notes that June and Tom are in a relationship (off a comment like “I’ll see you at home” and a kiss). When Tom steps away to talk to Dan, Harry mentions the relationship with Tom to June who asks if it’s a problem. Referencing Zoe and Dan’s recent relationship he concedes he can hardly make a ‘no relationships in the band’ rule, but points out that it can “complicate things.” June brushes this off with a light-hearted remark alluding to her commitment to her art. Harry teases her playfully that she sounds like a heartbreaker, putting her music before true love. June gently pushes back: she’s well aware that Tom puts the relationship well behind his music (and a bunch of other things when it suits him…), why should she be held to a different standard? Harry picks up on this slightly jaded view of June’s relationship and is intrigued and clearly attracted to this no-nonsense but alluring woman. Touché.

1. **Rehearsal Room:** The planned jam session is about to get underway. June apologises that she likely smells of grease as she’s arrived straight from her waitressing job. She makes awkward small talk with Zoe, Harry, Charlie and Dan while they wait for Tom. Rather than waste time, they agree to do a number together that June wrote.

Just as they’re starting, Tom ambles in late and clearly high. He makes excuses about getting on the wrong tram but Harry is immediately unimpressed. He berates Tom: they’ve had a string of unreliable guitarists/front men and if Tom can’t show up to their first rehearsal on time and sober it doesn’t bode well. Tom pushes back and reassures they have nothing to worry about. Tom encourages them to try one of his songs. (June clarifies that Tom supplied the chorus; she came up with the melody, the arrangement and the rest of the lyrics). As they’re setting up, June angrily asides to Tom: who was she? Tom insists “it wasn’t like that” but June isn’t buying it. She isn’t interested in more of his lies: just don’t let it screw-up this opportunity for her!

Tom wows the rest of the band with the song’s raw energy and drive and his guitar playing on it. (DARLING IT HURTS) Harry grudgingly concedes Tom knows what he’s doing. He tells the duo they’re playing a bunch of pubs and clubs around the state starting at the end of the month, building up to opening for Dragon (a well-known local band) at The Palais Theatre in 12 weeks’ time: if their first few gigs on tour go well, that can act as the final audition. Dan enthuses that the Palais gig will be attended by record company reps and it’s their chance to score a recording contract. June surprises Harry and the others by insisting that they’ll only do it on the condition that their set list includes at least three of her songs. Tom, anxious not to lose the gig, pushes back, but Harry agrees to play the song June was going to play before Tom arrived. June plays it. (THEY THOUGHT I WAS ASLEEP) It’s sweet and tender and Harry is further enchanted. He surprises Tom by agreeing to consider June’s request: if a majority of the five of them (minus June) like the tracks, they’ll include them. It’s agreed and a new line-up is born.

1. **Van/desert highway (montage?)**

The band set off on a gruelling tour of small towns, crammed into a van. The Couch transforms into a van through the use of lighting and projection effects (of the road, etc). Charlie sits “in the driver’s seat” and starts with Zoe in the passenger seat beside him. The other four sit in various configurations in two rows of seats (2 abreast) behind them. They change configurations throughout the narration and song; suggesting rest stops where they stretch their legs, etc. The configurations are noted with (D) indicating the driver Each member of the band narrates to the audience, giving their take on life on the road; each gets the spotlight in turn (40 MILES TO SATURDAY NIGHT):

* Charlie (D) and Zoe
* Zoe: Cracks open a can of beer and brags that this is what she’s always wanted; No secretarial course followed by marriage and 2.5 kids for her. Her family never expected or approved of this life for her. Her straight-laced friends from the flasher suburbs of Melbourne think she’s lost her mind – though she reckons they’re really jealous. Maybe that’s part of the appeal!
* Tom (D) and Harry
* Tom: Cracks open a beer; so long as the beers are cold and the women are hot, it’s all good. (Though it’s hard when your girlfriend’s in the band – kinda cramps your style…) he surreptitiously snorts a line of coke.
* Harry, sitting with a guitar, cracks open a beer: As AC/DC sang – It’s a long way to the top if you wanna rock’n’roll. But there’s nowhere he’d rather be. Long drives give him a chance to write. There’s not much else to do. Well, drink and screw, sure. But he’s in it for the long haul. You gotta pace yourself. And the scenery gets old pretty fast: have you seen the outback of Australia?? He goes back to strumming and writing lyrics.
* Tom (D) and Dan
* Dan, pops the lid off a Coca-Cola: there’s always too much to do for partying. He reels off all the logistics of schedules, bookings, cash flow and so on. But when you believe in a band, this is the price of admission. And it’s bloody easy to screw it all up: Fleetwood Mac sold 40 million copies of Rumours and Mick Fleetwood still went bankrupt! Who the fuck thought having the drummer be the manager was good idea? He takes a call on a 1980’s-style “brick” cell phone.
* Charlie (D) and June
* June, fills a plastic cup with red wine from a cask: As long as these guys take her music seriously she’ll put up with all the hardship and bullshit. It’s always been about getting her songs out there; nothing else matters. Even though she and Zoe are chalk and cheese in many ways they share a similar outlook. Like her, June feels she’s spent her life swimming against the tide of expectations. She’s stopped talking to her parents about her music; it only ends up in an argument. So she appreciates having a girlfriend on the road with her. And then there’s Harry. There’s something about him… sure, he has charisma – the small but growing posse of groupies attests to that. But it’s more than that. He *gets* her. He wants the same things as she does. He’s got talent and he’s got drive.
* Charlie, swigs from a bottle of bourbon: the spotlight falls on him and he looks surprised. He takes a drag on a joint, shrugs and concludes: Beats working!
1. **Small town venue:** A gig has just finished. Zoe and Charlie announce they’ve established what’s the best pub in town and they’re heading there now. Harry’s keen to join them and asks the others (but especially June) if they’re coming? Dan explains he has paperwork to do ahead of the next gig; he’ll take a rain check. Tom say he and June will meet them there as soon as they’re packed-up. All but Tom, June and Dan leave.

June confronts Tom; while trying not to eavesdrop, Dan can’t help but overhear. Tom starts to make excuses about skipping the band drinks. June is immediately suspicious of his true motivation (believing he’s going off to hook-up with someone). She calls him on and it and he denies, but June is on a roll: she says she knows Tom hooked up with a fan at the last town they were in; he came to bed smelling of her. He tries to defend: she always knew he wasn’t a saint. It doesn’t change the way he feels about her; other girls don’t mean anything. (TO BE GOOD TAKES A LONG TIME (TO BE BAD NO TIME AT ALL)) June counters that she may have accepted that treatment earlier in their relationship and that’s on her; she’s not going to settle for it anymore. (DON’T EXPLAIN) She breaks it off with him but vows it won’t affect their professional relationship in the band: she’s worked too hard to throw that away just when things are coming together for them. Tom accepts this – perhaps a little too easily and leaves. Aware of Dan’s presence, an upset June asks if he heard that. Dan nods and asks if she’s OK. June supposes she is and thanks him for his concern: he doesn’t have to worry that it’ll affect the band. Dan kindly says that that wasn’t why he asked. June thanks him and exits, leaving Dan alone. The audience, though not June, is left in no doubt that Dan has feelings for her. (I’M ON YOUR SIDE)

1. **Motel Room:** June, with an overnight bag, enters a low-rent motel room with Zoe. June is thanking her for letting her crash in her room. Zoe sympathises about June’s break-up (which June’s told her about O.S.) Zoe alludes to breaking-up with Dan and the two women bond over being independent women in the male-dominated world of rock’n’roll. June quizzes Zoe on her relationship with Dan and Zoe admits that she still has a soft spot for the quiet and funny guy: he’s lacking in pretention and is one of the few truly genuine people she’s met in the music business. But they want different things. She says it’s ironic that it’s him complaining about the booze and drugs and life on the road as that’s typically the complaint of women in relationships with muso’s. But Dan is a home body at heart. He loves creating the alchemy of bringing the component parts of the band together into a glorious whole, but she feels like he could take or leave the rest of it. When June asks if it isn’t awkward (reflecting on her own situation with Tom), Zoe laughs it off: she doesn’t think Dan is capable of being bitter or snide. She muses that maybe one day he’ll seem like The One That Got Away.

Enjoying June’s company, Zoe asks if she has a place to stay when they get back to Melbourne. June admits not and Zoe suggests she moves into her flat: she had a flatmate move out recently and it’d help with the rent. June gratefully accepts. She laments to Zoe: why isn’t it possible to have it all? Artistic expression *and* a soul mate? Rock’n’roll *and* a warm, loving relationship? (CAKE AND THE CANDLE) Zoe is sceptical: it sounds nice in theory; she just doesn’t think it can work in practice: you can’t ‘serve two masters.’ And that’s why she absolutely shouldn’t succumb to Harry’s charms. June queries this and Zoe wryly points out that it’s pretty obvious Harry has taken a shine to her. June tries to laugh this off but she doesn’t seem unhappy about this news.

1. **The Espy stage:** Another successful gig, back at The Espy. The new line-up is gelling well. (FIREWOOD AND CANDLES) There’s a clear and growing chemistry between Harry and June that’s evident as they perform together (based on proximity, body language, little smiles and glances, etc.)
2. **The Espy Bar:** Afterwards all the band is buzzing at a post-show party. Tom, Zoe and Charlie are drinking heavily and/or snorting coke when Dan proudly announces that two different record labels have confirmed they’ll be sending senior people to the upcoming Palais gig and Dan has secured meetings with reps from both labels. June asks about the fate of her songs. What’s the vote? Tom’s the first to poo-poo them – he doesn’t think they’re the right sound for The Debutantes. It feels unnecessarily callous and June challenges him to try to be objective. He insists he is, but she’s not buying it. Charlie awkwardly agrees with Tom (but is much kinder about it). Harry is the first to vote in favour of them, praising them and saying that June’s influence has improved his song writing, too. Tom tartly asides to Charlie that he doubts that Harry is being objective. Zoe shuts down the snide remarks (that she has overheard) and puts in her vote for Girl Power by supporting her friend. The vote is tied; all eyes turn to Dan. Dan immediately votes in favour of the songs and is rewarded by a peck on the cheek from June.

Back in the Couch, Dan narrates: looking back he wonders how he would’ve voted if he *hadn’t* thought June’s songs were up to scratch. Would he have voted for them anyway? How objective could he be? Luckily, they were amazing so he didn’t have to worry that his feelings were clouding his judgement. He continues that he is called away to take a phone call and by the time he gets back, Harry and June are deeply ensconced in conversation. He knows they’re on a high: they can taste the success; it’s just about within reach, and they’ve got there together – it’s no wonder there’s a strong mutual attraction. Still, he wonders aloud about whether they’re too similar; whether it’s true that opposites attract; couples need some complementarity. A second studio interview chair appears on the opposite side of the stage and Zoe sits on that, wryly pointing out to Dan that the “opposites” theory didn’t pan out for her and Dan. By way of an answer, Harry and June leave together, hand-in-hand. (SURE GOT ME)

1. **Harry’s Bedroom/Misc. Locations (montage?):** Harry celebrates the start of his brand new relationship with June, sitting on the Couch he enthuses about his new-found lust for life; his re-awakened muse. June is similarly smitten. She sits on the opposite interview chair, overwhelmed by this new development and narrating her feelings accordingly. They narrate that the Palais gig is just around the corner. But as Harry wholeheartedly embraces the new relationship, June starts to feel like something’s wrong. Harry’s narrative focuses on his enhanced muse and incredible creative output; June’s is subtly different, focusing on their shared dreams and aspirations and that they are so similar, they “get each other.” And that when they’re together, nothing else seems to matter: the rest of the world just fades away. Unfortunately, sometimes the rest of the world has a way of intruding, whether that intrusion was planned or not. The sequence ends with her taking a pregnancy test (staged such that Harry is unaware) – reading instructions on a pregnancy test, sitting down to pee (staged tastefully!) and then waiting anxiously for the result. Her body language leaves no doubt that the result points to a world of complication in her/their future. (SATURDAY NIGHT AND SUNDAY MORNING/SUMMER RAIN) (i.e: at this point both June and the audience will know that she is pregnant, though no other characters will.)

(NB: Playing with the idea of a second interview chair as the narratives start to diverge – Harry’s on the one hand and June’s on the other.)

**End of Act 1**

**Act 2**

1. **The Palais (stage):** The big gig arrives and the band sings one of their standards (DUMB THINGS) as well as a new June composition (SHOES UNDER MY BED) to a rapturous audience, opening act 2. Harry and June are totally “in synch” – especially playing the more tender love song that June wrote. The only sign of trouble: June notes that Tom is unsteady on his feet.
2. **The Espy Backstage:** After the gig, Harry and June confront Tom: they can tell he’s high and he nearly blew it on-stage. Tom defends that he still played a great gig – probably better than if he’d been straight, but Harry and June aren’t buying it. June tells him in no uncertain terms to get his shit together. Harry backs her up: sort yourself out or you’re out. There’s too much at stake to take any chances on anyone who’s unreliable. (EVERYBODY LOVES YOU BABY) Harry storms off. Tom sneers at June, unimpressed that she and Harry appear to be joined at the hip all of a sudden. June gives him short shrift but suddenly feels nauseous. She makes excuses about the Chinese take-out she ate before the show and races off-stage to throw-up. Back on the Couch, Tom laments to the audience the hold that his addiction has on him. (KEEP ON COMING BACK FOR MORE)
3. **Melbourne venue (green room):** A toilet flushes (O.S.) and June enters the green room, wobbly on her feet, to find a concerned Dan. She maintains her cover story to Dan about eating something off but Dan is clearly dubious, gently pointing out they all ate the same take-out together. He points out he’s noticed she hasn’t been drinking lately. June’s surprised he’s paying that much attention to her. Not wanting her to think he’s “showing any interest” Dan covers: he keeps an eye on all his band members; that’s his job. Besides, in this environment, it’s not hard to notice when some suddenly goes teetotal. He pointedly asks if she’s “told Harry.” She shakes her head.

Harry enters and they immediately clam-up. Oblivious, Harry excitedly recounts a conversation he’s just had: he’s been asked to come up with a Christmas song for a holiday season television special. He knows they could do a cover of a traditional song but he’d love to take the opportunity of playing an original. They have a couple of days till their next gig and he asks June if she wants to come over tomorrow to throw some ideas around. June agrees, happy to be asked.

Zoe enters and offers June a lift home which she accepts and exits. Harry reflects to Dan on how far they’ve come since their big dreams in high school; Dan agrees. Harry is grateful for Dan’s continued belief in Harry and the band, and Dan is touched. Then Harry waxes lyrical about how amazing June is; what an impact she’s had on him both personally and artistically – she’s amazing and has reawakened his muse. This is clearly hard for Dan to hear but he does his best to be happy for his friend. (UNDER THE SUN)

1. **Zoe and June’s flat:** Zoe reclines on a sofa, drinking a beer and messing around with her bass guitar. A toilet flushes O.S. and June trudges in. Zoe asks if she’s OK and June again lies about why she’s being sick. They return to what they were doing: discussing Harry’s Christmas song. June heads over to a (piano) keyboard. Zoe isn’t sure why she’s not doing this with Harry and June replies she wants some ideas to bring to the party. Besides, she enjoys hanging with Zoe: she’s like the sister she never had. Mulling on the new song, June wonders aloud about a song that laments being away from loved ones at Christmas – the origins of Irving Berlin’s Dreaming of a White Christmas. Zoe suggests it could be someone in jail. She had a cousin who had that to deal with when he did eight months for breaking and entering. June likes that idea and makes a note of it. Zoe goes to grab another beer and asks if June wants one. When June declines both this and a glass of wine, the penny drops for Zoe. She asks if it’s Harry’s and if Harry knows. Busted, June replies yes and no respectively. Zoe says she had an unwanted pregnancy a couple of years ago. June is grateful to have someone to talk to and Zoe is a sympathetic ear. However, June is slightly taken aback when Zoe assumes June will want a termination, offering to go with her and be her support. (It’s clear that this is the route that Zoe took.) June hesitatingly responds that she hasn’t decided what to do about the pregnancy yet and Zoe accept this, though it’s clear she thinks the “obvious solution” is an abortion. She declares it’s unfair that women have to deal with the consequences of any “unforeseen consequences” of a relationship. June doesn’t have any answers but she, too, laments how complicated her life has suddenly become. She mentions that she doesn’t know whether she’s more anxious about telling Harry or telling her parents (she feels a big fat “I told you so!” on its way…). She has no idea what to do next. (THE PRETTY PLACE)
2. **Harry’s Flat:** Harry and June finish working on the new song: Harry loves the ‘absent at Christmas’ motif, including the jail idea (which June credits Zoe for). Harry is fired-up and both are relishing the creative collaboration. Harry talks excitedly about what a great team they make. He confesses that he’d been starting to feel stagnant; just resting on the laurels of some early tracks that had enjoyed a small cult following, but her joining the band has been a game-changer. He waxes lyrical about what a great future they could have together: they’re unstoppable! This declaration of a shared future causes June to summon the courage to tell Harry about her pregnancy. Harry’s shocked at first and June waits, anxious. He asks what she plans to do. June admits she’s not sure, but she thinks she wants to keep it – though she can’t begin to work out how that will work in practice. After a beat, Harry beams and announces that however it’ll work he wants to be there for her; they’ll make it work *together.* June is thrilled. (FINALLY SOMETHING GOOD)
3. **TV Studio/June and Zoe’s flat (montage?):** We establish time passing: Harry is back on the Couch, talking about the new album which has just been released to great acclaim. It’s shooting up the charts and Dan shuttles Harry between gigs, interviews, visits to radio stations, etc. Harry is revelling in his first real taste of rock stardom. Through this narration, June’s creative input is generously acknowledged.

Meanwhile (on another part of the stage), a heavily pregnant June waddles about her flat, listening on the radio to Harry talking about the new album. The contrast in their respective lives is striking. (EVERYBODY WANTS TO TOUCH ME) But June remains upbeat (rapt that her contribution is being recognised), sitting at her keyboard and penning new songs.

1. **Rehearsal Studio:** The band are discussing writing songs for a second album. There is much excitement – it really feels like they’re finally cracking it. Alcohol and cocaine is ubiquitous, with everyone partaking other than Dan and the very pregnant June. Dan announces that their label thinks they should ‘hop across the pond’ and play a handful of gigs on the West Coast of the US. While the band is elated the label’s showing this level of faith in them, June is alarmed: she thought they weren’t touring the States until next year? Dan responds that that *was* the plan. But with the success of the album in Australia, the label feels they need to strike while the iron is hot. June pointedly asks Harry: what about the baby? Harry reassures they’ll be back before it’s due. He stresses about the opportunity that this represents; it’s what they’ve both dreamed of! It’s clear Harry’s mind is made up so June accepts this, feeling torn. Dan hustles Harry off for an interview. Zoe approaches June and asks how she’s doing. June isn’t sure. Not unkindly Zoe points out the obvious: that this is likely to be what the future looks like. Does June really think it’ll get easier after the baby comes? She points out that June could always give the baby up for adoption. Give it a stable, secure life away from all this madness. June is left with food for thought.
2. **Stage/Side of stage, American Concert Venue/Zoe’s flat:** Dan is side-of-stage while the band plays (BEFORE TOO LONG in the background). His cell phone rings. It’s June. She asks to speak to Harry but Dan informs her their show hasn’t yet finished. (NB: This is the mid-1980’s when most people don’t have cell phones. June finds it easiest to call the only person in the band with a cell.) June blames the time difference: it feels impossible to ever get hold of him. Dan checks everything is OK. June responds that she just wanted to speak to Harry: she has a sneaking feeling the baby is coming early; she’s just pleased they’ll be home soon. Dan steels himself for delivering bad news: they’ve had such full houses, the concert promoter has them playing extra shows which will put back their return by a week-10 days. Dan apologises: he thought Harry would’ve told her. June bitterly replies he hasn’t; they’ve barely spoken the last few weeks. Dan awkwardly makes excuses: it’s been super-busy but it’s clear he feels bad for her. He asks if she has someone there and June replies she *could* ask her mum to be there with her for the birth – but she really doesn’t want to. Mum never approved of her relationship with Harry and didn’t react well to the news of June's pregnancy; it’ll simply confirm her worst suspicions about what sort of father Harry will make. Feeling bad, Dan wishes her well and they hang-up.

Harry comes side of stage as they gear-up for an encore. Tom pushes past and grabs a beer, looking daggers at Dan and Harry. Harry asks Dan what’s up with him and Dan explains he’s hidden Tom’s blow. Harry’s amused and pleased Dan is looking out for them. As the band prepares to go back on-stage for an encore, Dan tells Harry he needs to call June. He just spoke to her on his cell and she doesn’t know about the changed tour dates. Harry assures he’ll do it and heads back on-stage to rapturous applause. (SEAGULLS OF SEATTLE)

1. **Zoe’s Flat:** (a few days later) June suddenly feels contractions. Panicked she calls Dan, asking for Harry. We hear Dan’s responses (O.S.) as he explains he can’t get hold of Harry right now. Increasingly flustered, she laments that she has no choice but to call her Mum. Dan tells her to wait, he has an idea; he’ll get right back to her. June grabs her pre-packed bag for the hospital and is debating what to do next when there’s a knock at her door. She answers it to Dan, phone in hand. He explains he’s come straight from the airport; he has a cab waiting outside. They can ring her mum if she wants, but he’s there for her, too. June is incredulous: what about the band? Dan explains he got them set-up for their remaining gigs and they’re big enough to look after themselves with the help of the American promoter for the next week; he decided to fly back early. June is overwhelmed by the gesture, seeing Dan in a whole new light. She becomes emotional and gives him an affectionate kiss. It’s not passionate but it’s tender and there’s a ‘moment’ between them. June brushes it aside, wiping her teary eyes and saying she must “look a sight” but Dan disabuses her: she looks beautiful. There’s an awkward beat and Dan tris to backtrack, worried he’s overstepped. However, another contraction comes and the moment is forgotten. They dash out to the hospital. (music under: NOTHING ON MY MIND guitar riff and chorus)
2. **Hospital room:** June lies, propped-up in a hospital bed, with Dan at her bedside. He checks she doesn’t want him to call her Mum. June insists her parents can come and see the baby once it’s born. While passing the time, June muses on whether the band will be coping in his absence. Dan confesses he hates touring. He kept the real reason quiet so as not to step on Harry’s toes but he was also glad of the “excuse” (to be there for June). He loves the challenge of taking musicians he believes in to the top, but he hates life on the road. Loves the music; hates the lifestyle. He wishes he had an ounce of the talent that June or Harry has, but he doesn’t; never has. June pushes back: Dan has got The Debutantes where they are today. She shyly says that they’re all lucky to have him; she’s only just now realising how lucky. Feeling awkward, Dan enthuses about the Brill Building song writers of the past; how they wrote classics while several of them had pretty “normal” lives. Or Elton John’s lyricist, Bernie Taupin who rarely went on tour with Elton. He passionately insists that June’s is a talent that can’t go to waste. The Debutantes were always a good band; June’s contribution was what put them over the top. They have an opportunity to be one of the greats. Who says there’s only one way to achieve rock immortality?

June is touched: she tells Dan that he’s laying out a future for her where she can “have it all.” Dan shrugs, not denying it: “Why not? You deserve it.” (PETRICHOR or CAKE AND THE CANDLE REPRISE.)

June narrates from the Couch that the baby came, and Dan stayed with her throughout the birth: it wasn’t what she’d planned, but it just felt… “right.” that after the baby came,and

1. **June’s family home:**

Harry coos over baby Joe. He apologises for missing the birth and launches into plans, asking when June is moving into his flat and when she thinks she can take up her spot in the band again? June interrupts: she’s not re-joining the band. She wants to write but not tour. And she’s not moving in with Harry. Harry’s stunned but June calmly tells him she knows that she and Joe will always play second fiddle to the music. She’s reconciled herself to that. Harry’s devastated, on both a personal and artistic level: June is a major talent, she can’t just throw that away. June reassures: she’ll keep writing. Maybe she can even record with the band? But she’s going to give Joe a stable home to grow up in and she can’t do that if they’re on the road and living that lifestyle. Her legacy is more than just her music; it’s also Joe now. Harry points out how hard it’ll be to do it on her own. June enigmatically replies that she has a hunch she won’t be on her own. (BEAUTIFUL PROMISE)

1. **Dan’s apartment:** As June rocks baby Joe in a pram,Dan narrates from the Couch that he and June started seeing more of each other over the following months. At first they rationalised it was about work – the new songs, the “difficult second album,” what was going on for the band. But after a while it was obvious that it was about more than that. Of course, Dan had known it for a while – maybe since that first day in the diner. It took June a little longer to get there. But Dan was patient. And she was worth the wait. He stands by her and puts a loving hand on her shoulder. She smiles at him. (THANK YOU) Dan continues: Harry wasn’t really involved with Joe much. And the relationship just sort of happened. Having her and Joe move in with him just felt right.

Having established the baby’s asleep (and pushing the pram to a discreet corner) Dan tells June he has a surprise for her: a videotape recording of June’s new song, debuted by the band at a concert on the steps of the Sydney Opera House. They excitedly put the tape in the VCR and huddle on the sofa to watch. We see the band play an iconic tune. (HOW TO MAKE GRAVY) As the song finishes, Dan kisses June, proud and happy. The moment is interrupted by the baby waking and crying.

1. **The Espy Stage:** (Curtain call) The band go to play one of their greatest hits as an encore and invite on-stage a “very special guest who’s agreed to join them on-stage.” June comes on-stage to sing with them. (TO HER DOOR)

**The End**

**HOW TO MAKE GRAVY – OUTLINE (Nov 2021) – step 6**

**(clean version)**

**Act 1**

1. **Stage, The Hotel Esplanade (The Espy) Melbourne, Australia; mid-1980’s**: DAN, early 20’s enters and sits in a distinctive 2-seater couch on one side of the stage. It is illuminated by a TV studio light. i.e: it’s a chair in a TV studio where an interview subject would sit. Dan introduces himself to the (actual) audience, using narration, telling us who he is and where we are: the iconic Espy – a local “rock music institution” where numerous acts got their start. He tells us he helped formed the band, The Debutantes: only he doesn’t actually play in the band. Rather, he’s their manager. A usually overlooked figure, but he’s OK with that. It’s enough that he knows that he turned this bunch of misfits into rock’n’roll legends. Besides that wasn’t even his greatest triumph in The Debutantes; his greatest triumphwas something else entirely… But all that is down the road. For now, they’re not even on the cusp of greatness. But maybe they’re on the cusp of the cusp…

The band back then was HARRY, a musician’s musician and Dan’s best friend since high school. He plays rhythm guitar and writes all their songs. (As each band member is introduced, the narrator references famous musicians that they’re reminiscent of.) **Harry** sits down next to Dan on the interview couch (referred to simply as the Couch from here on) and takes over the narration: ZOE is on bass guitar and CHARLIE is on drums and a vocalist/lead guitarist (Richard, a member of the ‘Deeper Water’ band, but not a character/cast member we ever meet). **Dan** continues, as Harry takes his place with the rest of the band members, that in 1985, they are just starting to get noticed around the pubs and clubs of Melbourne; a couple of record label A&R men are sniffing around: they’re a great live band and are starting to attract a loyal following and looking to record their first album. But if the wheels hadn’t fallen off yet, one wheel was definitely starting to look wobbly. But as one door closes… He returns to his spot behind a mixing desk and the young band plays a rousing song to the delight of the (fictional) audience. (LEAPS AND BOUNDS)

1. **Backstage/Stage, The Espy**: The band (minus Richard) stagger backstage, sweaty and on a high as they enthuse about the great gig they’re having. In the background, an ecstatic (off-stage) audience demands an encore. As they confirm their encore tracks, Zoe looks around for Richard; he’s not there. Charlie reports that he saw him heading for the toilets backstage and that Dan had gone to retrieve him. On cue, Dan returns looking ashen: Richard is passed out in a cubicle. He explains that he tried reviving him but there’s no way he can go back on. Harry’s livid; he’s had enough. This has happened too many times: Richard’s out of the band. No one objects to this but that doesn’t help them now – what to do for an encore? Dan suggests doing a song Harry wrote recently for an anticipated new album. It’s not part of their usual set but Dan argues it’s a great track and they can play it without Richard. Zoe encourages him: it’s good; back yourself. With some hesitation they return to the stage to rapturous applause and sing the new song to great acclaim. (CARELESS)
2. **Street/Diner:** JUNE, early 20’s, enters and sits on the Couch.. She narrates to the audience: she was at that gig at The Espy. It was the first time she’d seen The Debutantes play, but she was immediately blown away: she knew they were something special. She introduces herself and explains that “this” is a year before that gig. Right now, she’s on a country road outside Dijon and it looks like it’s about to piss with rain. During this June moves from the Couch, picks up a backpack and sticks out her thumb. Moving from the interview studio into the world of the scene, while continuing to narrate. She continues that she’s travelling with TOM, a fellow musician who was also at the gig. Tom wanders on-stage and acknowledges the audience. He has a guitar slung over his shoulder. He takes up the spot on the Couch left vacant by June.. June continues that she hooked up with him when they were at high school. They messed around making music together through their teens: June seemed to take it more seriously than Tom, but he had a knack for coming up with an amazing guitar riff, a catchy song title or a line of lyric, seemingly effortlessly – which really pisses her off! On cue, Tom holds up a finger and scribbles a note on a notepad he carries in his pocket. Throughout June’s monologue, Tom interjects wry comments (narrated), conveying his take on the events she’s describing.

June continues that after leaving high school they set off backpacking around Europe, but their relationship suffered. (EVERY FUCKING CITY) They landed back in Melbourne. June removes her backpack and puts on a waitress’s apron as she explains that she took on a mind-numbing job and Tom dipped in and out of various bands, building a reputation as a rising talent… and a pain in the arse. When he wasn’t doing that we was playing around with his guitar in their shared flat and smoking pot. (During this, Tom starts smoking a joint while strumming his guitar.) They drifted back into a relationship, against June’s better judgement. The scene changes to a diner, with June clearing tables. She finishes by saying that the only silver lining was her boss agreed to let the two of them play there twice a week for tips. She takes off her apron and she and Tom take up spots in the diner; her sitting behind a keyboard and Tom with his guitar. She finishes her monologue by saying that one day, a week after The Espy gig, the guys from The Debutantes walked in and everything changed…

1. **Melbourne Diner:** Harry, Zoe, Charlie and Dan enter the diner and discuss what to do next: they feel they’re on the brink of hitting the big time but they need a new guitarist before they hit the road at the end of the month. During this scene, Zoe and Dan allude to previously being in a relationship with each other. Their mutual warmth and teasing affection makes it apparent that the split was relatively amicable. June and Tom introduce themselves to the patrons as they start their next set. Harry recognises Tom: he’s seen him play a gig with another rising band. Zoe says she heard it didn’t work out, meaning he may be available. Dan counters that he’d heard he was a total nightmare. June announces the next song is one they’ve written. Tom plays acoustic guitar while June plays the keyboard. (WINTER COAT) It’s a sweet song, though it’s clear Tom is the more natural showman of the pair. Harry is impressed and says as much to his bandmates. Dan offers to talk to them and Harry joins him.

Zoe and Charlie get drinks from the bar and then head to the Couch, narrating as they go that as the mere rhythm section – who don’t write the songs – they stay out of band strategy stuff. Which suits them fine: leave the politics and the personalities to the others; they are there to play. And drink, Charlie adds. They toast each other and the lights come up on Harry, Dan, Tom and June.

Harry introduces himself and Dan, and mentions that they’re looking for a new guitarist for their band. Tom enthuses that they saw The Debutantes at The Espy last week, and is complimentary – he’s been looking to spread his wings and sees the current arrangement as a stop-gap. June takes umbrage at this comment and Tom backtracks a little. Dan asks how the two of them work together and Tom slightly reluctantly concedes that June is a genius with arrangements, melodies and taking his scraps of ideas and weaving them into awesome songs. Upon hearing this, Harry’s attitude to June changes. He mentions that they don’t have a keyboardist either… To his surprise, June is uncertain; she has a lot of her own material and she isn’t sure if Harry’s band is the right vehicle for her songs. Harry reassures her and she accepts his suggestion that they all get together for a jam and see what happens. They arrange to exchange some chord charts and lyrics ahead of the session and that they’ll “see what happens” on the day. Harry notes that June and Tom are in a relationship (off a comment like “I’ll see you at home” and a kiss). When Tom steps away to talk to Dan, Harry mentions the relationship with Tom to June who asks if it’s a problem. Referencing Zoe and Dan’s recent relationship he concedes he can hardly make a ‘no relationships in the band’ rule, but points out that it can “complicate things.” June brushes this off with a light-hearted remark alluding to her commitment to her art. Harry teases her playfully that she sounds like a heartbreaker, putting her music before true love. June gently pushes back: she’s well aware that Tom puts the relationship well behind his music (and a bunch of other things when it suits him…), why should she be held to a different standard? Harry picks up on this slightly jaded view of June’s relationship and is intrigued and clearly attracted to this no-nonsense but alluring woman. Touché.

1. **Rehearsal Room:** The planned jam session is about to get underway. June apologises that she likely smells of grease as she’s arrived straight from her waitressing job. She makes awkward small talk with Zoe, Harry, Charlie and Dan while they wait for Tom. Rather than waste time, they agree to do a number together that June wrote.

Just as they’re starting, Tom ambles in late and clearly high. He makes excuses about getting on the wrong tram but Harry is immediately unimpressed. He berates Tom: they’ve had a string of unreliable guitarists/front men and if Tom can’t show up to their first rehearsal on time and sober it doesn’t bode well. Tom pushes back and reassures they have nothing to worry about. Tom encourages them to try one of his songs. (June clarifies that Tom supplied the chorus; she came up with the melody, the arrangement and the rest of the lyrics). As they’re setting up, June angrily asides to Tom: who was she? Tom insists “it wasn’t like that” but June isn’t buying it. She isn’t interested in more of his lies: just don’t let it screw-up this opportunity for her!

Tom wows the rest of the band with the song’s raw energy and drive and his guitar playing on it. (DARLING IT HURTS) Harry grudgingly concedes Tom knows what he’s doing. He tells the duo they’re playing a bunch of pubs and clubs around the state starting at the end of the month, building up to opening for Dragon (a well-known local band) at The Palais Theatre in 12 weeks’ time: if their first few gigs on tour go well, that can act as the final audition. Dan enthuses that the Palais gig will be attended by record company reps and it’s their chance to score a recording contract. June surprises Harry and the others by insisting that they’ll only do it on the condition that their set list includes at least three of her songs. Tom, anxious not to lose the gig, pushes back, but Harry agrees to play the song June was going to play before Tom arrived. June plays it. (THEY THOUGHT I WAS ASLEEP) It’s sweet and tender and Harry is further enchanted. He surprises Tom by agreeing to consider June’s request: if a majority of the five of them (minus June) like the tracks, they’ll include them. It’s agreed and a new line-up is born.

1. **Van/desert highway (montage?)**

The band set off on a gruelling tour of small towns, crammed into a van. The Couch transforms into a van through the use of lighting and projection effects (of the road, etc). Charlie sits “in the driver’s seat” and starts with Zoe in the passenger seat beside him. The other four sit in various configurations in two rows of seats (2 abreast) behind them. They change configurations throughout the narration and song; suggesting rest stops where they stretch their legs, etc. The configurations are noted with (D) indicating the driver Each member of the band narrates to the audience, giving their take on life on the road; each gets the spotlight in turn (40 MILES TO SATURDAY NIGHT):

* **Charlie (D) and Zoe**
* Zoe: Cracks open a can of beer and brags that this is what she’s always wanted; No secretarial course followed by marriage and 2.5 kids for her. Her family never expected or approved of this life for her. Her straight-laced friends from the flasher suburbs of Melbourne think she’s lost her mind – though she reckons they’re really jealous. Maybe that’s part of the appeal!
* **Tom (D) and Harry**
* Tom: Cracks open a beer; so long as the beers are cold and the women are hot, it’s all good. (Though it’s hard when your girlfriend’s in the band – kinda cramps your style…) he surreptitiously snorts a line of coke.
* Harry, sitting with a guitar, cracks open a beer: As AC/DC sang – It’s a long way to the top if you wanna rock’n’roll. But there’s nowhere he’d rather be. Long drives give him a chance to write. There’s not much else to do. Well, drink and screw, sure. But he’s in it for the long haul. You gotta pace yourself. And the scenery gets old pretty fast: have you seen the outback of Australia?? He goes back to strumming and writing lyrics.
* **Tom (D) and Dan**
* Dan, pops the lid off a Coca-Cola: there’s always too much to do for partying. He reels off all the logistics of schedules, bookings, cash flow and so on. But when you believe in a band, this is the price of admission. And it’s bloody easy to screw it all up: Fleetwood Mac sold 40 million copies of Rumours and Mick Fleetwood still went bankrupt! Who the fuck thought having the drummer be the manager was good idea? He takes a call on a 1980’s-style “brick” cell phone.
* **Charlie (D) and June**
* June, fills a plastic cup with red wine from a cask: As long as these guys take her music seriously she’ll put up with all the hardship and bullshit. It’s always been about getting her songs out there; nothing else matters. Even though she and Zoe are chalk and cheese in many ways they share a similar outlook. Like her, June feels she’s spent her life swimming against the tide of expectations. She’s stopped talking to her parents about her music; it only ends up in an argument. So she appreciates having a girlfriend on the road with her. And then there’s Harry. There’s something about him… sure, he has charisma – the small but growing posse of groupies attests to that. But it’s more than that. He *gets* her. He wants the same things as she does. He’s got talent and he’s got drive.
* Charlie, swigs from a bottle of bourbon: the spotlight falls on him and he looks surprised. He takes a drag on a joint, shrugs and concludes: Beats working!
1. **Small town venue:** A gig has just finished. Zoe and Charlie announce they’ve established what’s the best pub in town and they’re heading there now. Harry’s keen to join them and asks the others (but especially June) if they’re coming? Dan explains he has paperwork to do ahead of the next gig; he’ll take a rain check. Tom say he and June will meet them there as soon as they’re packed-up. All but Tom, June and Dan leave.

June confronts Tom; while trying not to eavesdrop, Dan can’t help but overhear. Tom starts to make excuses about skipping the band drinks. June is immediately suspicious of his true motivation (believing he’s going off to hook-up with someone). She calls him on and it and he denies, but June is on a roll: she says she knows Tom hooked up with a fan at the last town they were in; he came to bed smelling of her. He tries to defend: she always knew he wasn’t a saint. It doesn’t change the way he feels about her; other girls don’t mean anything. (TO BE GOOD TAKES A LONG TIME (TO BE BAD NO TIME AT ALL)) June counters that she may have accepted that treatment earlier in their relationship and that’s on her; she’s not going to settle for it anymore. (DON’T EXPLAIN) She breaks it off with him but vows it won’t affect their professional relationship in the band: she’s worked too hard to throw that away just when things are coming together for them. Tom accepts this – perhaps a little too easily and leaves. Aware of Dan’s presence, an upset June asks if he heard that. Dan nods and asks if she’s OK. June supposes she is and thanks him for his concern: he doesn’t have to worry that it’ll affect the band. Dan kindly says that that wasn’t why he asked. June thanks him and exits, leaving Dan alone. The audience, though not June, is left in no doubt that Dan has feelings for her. (I’M ON YOUR SIDE)

1. **Motel Room:** June, with an overnight bag, enters a low-rent motel room with Zoe. June is thanking her for letting her crash in her room. Zoe sympathises about June’s break-up (which June’s told her about O.S.) Zoe alludes to breaking-up with Dan and the two women bond over being independent women in the male-dominated world of rock’n’roll. June quizzes Zoe on her relationship with Dan and Zoe admits that she still has a soft spot for the quiet and funny guy: he’s lacking in pretention and is one of the few truly genuine people she’s met in the music business. But they want different things. She says it’s ironic that it’s him complaining about the booze and drugs and life on the road as that’s typically the complaint of women in relationships with muso’s. But Dan is a home body at heart. He loves creating the alchemy of bringing the component parts of the band together into a glorious whole, but she feels like he could take or leave the rest of it. When June asks if it isn’t awkward (reflecting on her own situation with Tom), Zoe laughs it off: she doesn’t think Dan is capable of being bitter or snide. She muses that maybe one day he’ll seem like The One That Got Away.

Enjoying June’s company, Zoe asks if she has a place to stay when they get back to Melbourne. June admits not and Zoe suggests she moves into her flat: she had a flatmate move out recently and it’d help with the rent. June gratefully accepts. She laments to Zoe: why isn’t it possible to have it all? Artistic expression *and* a soul mate? Rock’n’roll *and* a warm, loving relationship? (CAKE AND THE CANDLE) Zoe is sceptical: it sounds nice in theory; she just doesn’t think it can work in practice: you can’t ‘serve two masters.’ And that’s why she absolutely shouldn’t succumb to Harry’s charms. June queries this and Zoe wryly points out that it’s pretty obvious Harry has taken a shine to her. June tries to laugh this off but she doesn’t seem unhappy about this news.

1. **The Espy stage:** Another successful gig, back at The Espy. The new line-up is gelling well. (FIREWOOD AND CANDLES) There’s a clear and growing chemistry between Harry and June that’s evident as they perform together (based on proximity, body language, little smiles and glances, etc.)
2. **The Espy Bar:** Afterwards all the band is buzzing at a post-show party. Tom, Zoe and Charlie are drinking heavily and/or snorting coke when Dan proudly announces that two different record labels have confirmed they’ll be sending senior people to the upcoming Palais gig and Dan has secured meetings with reps from both labels. June asks about the fate of her songs. What’s the vote? Tom’s the first to poo-poo them – he doesn’t think they’re the right sound for The Debutantes. It feels unnecessarily callous and June challenges him to try to be objective. He insists he is, but she’s not buying it. Charlie awkwardly agrees with Tom (but is much kinder about it). Harry is the first to vote in favour of them, praising them and saying that June’s influence has improved his song writing, too. Tom tartly asides to Charlie that he doubts that Harry is being objective. Zoe shuts down the snide remarks (that she has overheard) and puts in her vote for Girl Power by supporting her friend. The vote is tied; all eyes turn to Dan. Dan immediately votes in favour of the songs and is rewarded by a peck on the cheek from June.

Back in the Couch, Dan narrates: looking back he wonders how he would’ve voted if he *hadn’t* thought June’s songs were up to scratch. Would he have voted for them anyway? How objective could he be? Luckily, they were amazing so he didn’t have to worry that his feelings were clouding his judgement. He continues that he is called away to take a phone call and by the time he gets back, Harry and June are deeply ensconced in conversation. He knows they’re on a high: they can taste the success; it’s just about within reach, and they’ve got there together – it’s no wonder there’s a strong mutual attraction. Still, he wonders aloud about whether they’re too similar; whether it’s true that opposites attract; couples need some complementarity. A second studio interview chair appears on the opposite side of the stage and Zoe sits on that, wryly pointing out to Dan that the “opposites” theory didn’t pan out for her and Dan. By way of an answer, Harry and June leave together, hand-in-hand. (SURE GOT ME)

1. **Harry’s Bedroom/Misc. Locations (montage?):** Harry celebrates the start of his brand new relationship with June, sitting on the Couch he enthuses about his new-found lust for life; his re-awakened muse. June is similarly smitten. She sits on the opposite interview chair, overwhelmed by this new development and narrating her feelings accordingly. They narrate that the Palais gig is just around the corner. But as Harry wholeheartedly embraces the new relationship, June starts to feel like something’s wrong. Harry’s narrative focuses on his enhanced muse and incredible creative output; June’s is subtly different, focusing on their shared dreams and aspirations and that they are so similar, they “get each other.” And that when they’re together, nothing else seems to matter: the rest of the world just fades away. Unfortunately, sometimes the rest of the world has a way of intruding, whether that intrusion was planned or not. The sequence ends with her taking a pregnancy test (staged such that Harry is unaware) – reading instructions on a pregnancy test, sitting down to pee (staged tastefully!) and then waiting anxiously for the result. Her body language leaves no doubt that the result points to a world of complication in her/their future. (SATURDAY NIGHT AND SUNDAY MORNING/SUMMER RAIN) (i.e: at this point both June and the audience will know that she is pregnant, though no other characters will.)

(NB: Playing with the idea of a second interview chair as the narratives start to diverge – Harry’s on the one hand and June’s on the other.)

**End of Act 1**

**Act 2**

1. **The Palais (stage):** The big gig arrives and the band sings one of their standards (DUMB THINGS) as well as a new June composition (SHOES UNDER MY BED) to a rapturous audience, opening act 2. Harry and June are totally “in synch” – especially playing the more tender love song that June wrote. The only sign of trouble: June notes that Tom is unsteady on his feet.
2. **The Espy Backstage:** After the gig, Harry and June confront Tom: they can tell he’s high and he nearly blew it on-stage. Tom defends that he still played a great gig – probably better than if he’d been straight, but Harry and June aren’t buying it. June tells him in no uncertain terms to get his shit together. Harry backs her up: sort yourself out or you’re out. There’s too much at stake to take any chances on anyone who’s unreliable. (EVERYBODY LOVES YOU BABY) Harry storms off. Tom sneers at June, unimpressed that she and Harry appear to be joined at the hip all of a sudden. June gives him short shrift but suddenly feels nauseous. She makes excuses about the Chinese take-out she ate before the show and races off-stage to throw-up. Back on the Couch, Tom laments to the audience the hold that his addiction has on him. (KEEP ON COMING BACK FOR MORE)
3. **Melbourne venue (green room):** A toilet flushes (O.S.) and June enters the green room, wobbly on her feet, to find a concerned Dan. She maintains her cover story to Dan about eating something off but Dan is clearly dubious, gently pointing out they all ate the same take-out together. He points out he’s noticed she hasn’t been drinking lately. June’s surprised he’s paying that much attention to her. Not wanting her to think he’s “showing any interest” Dan covers: he keeps an eye on all his band members; that’s his job. Besides, in this environment, it’s not hard to notice when some suddenly goes teetotal. He pointedly asks if she’s “told Harry.” She shakes her head.

Harry enters and they immediately clam-up. Oblivious, Harry excitedly recounts a conversation he’s just had: he’s been asked to come up with a Christmas song for a holiday season television special. He knows they could do a cover of a traditional song but he’d love to take the opportunity of playing an original. They have a couple of days till their next gig and he asks June if she wants to come over tomorrow to throw some ideas around. June agrees, happy to be asked.

Zoe enters and offers June a lift home which she accepts and exits. Harry reflects to Dan on how far they’ve come since their big dreams in high school; Dan agrees. Harry is grateful for Dan’s continued belief in Harry and the band, and Dan is touched. Then Harry waxes lyrical about how amazing June is; what an impact she’s had on him both personally and artistically – she’s amazing and has reawakened his muse. This is clearly hard for Dan to hear but he does his best to be happy for his friend. (UNDER THE SUN)

1. **Zoe and June’s flat:** Zoe reclines on a sofa, drinking a beer and messing around with her bass guitar. A toilet flushes O.S. and June trudges in. Zoe asks if she’s OK and June again lies about why she’s being sick. They return to what they were doing: discussing Harry’s Christmas song. June heads over to a (piano) keyboard. Zoe isn’t sure why she’s not doing this with Harry and June replies she wants some ideas to bring to the party. Besides, she enjoys hanging with Zoe: she’s like the sister she never had. Mulling on the new song, June wonders aloud about a song that laments being away from loved ones at Christmas – the origins of Irving Berlin’s Dreaming of a White Christmas. Zoe suggests it could be someone in jail. She had a cousin who had that to deal with when he did eight months for breaking and entering. June likes that idea and makes a note of it. Zoe goes to grab another beer and asks if June wants one. When June declines both this and a glass of wine, the penny drops for Zoe. She asks if it’s Harry’s and if Harry knows. Busted, June replies yes and no respectively. Zoe says she had an unwanted pregnancy a couple of years ago. June is grateful to have someone to talk to and Zoe is a sympathetic ear. However, June is slightly taken aback when Zoe assumes June will want a termination, offering to go with her and be her support. (It’s clear that this is the route that Zoe took.) June hesitatingly responds that she hasn’t decided what to do about the pregnancy yet and Zoe accept this, though it’s clear she thinks the “obvious solution” is an abortion. She declares it’s unfair that women have to deal with the consequences of any “unforeseen consequences” of a relationship. June doesn’t have any answers but she, too, laments how complicated her life has suddenly become. She mentions that she doesn’t know whether she’s more anxious about telling Harry or telling her parents (she feels a big fat “I told you so!” on its way…). She has no idea what to do next. (THE PRETTY PLACE)
2. **Harry’s Flat:** Harry and June finish working on the new song: Harry loves the ‘absent at Christmas’ motif, including the jail idea (which June credits Zoe for). Harry is fired-up and both are relishing the creative collaboration. Harry talks excitedly about what a great team they make. He confesses that he’d been starting to feel stagnant; just resting on the laurels of some early tracks that had enjoyed a small cult following, but her joining the band has been a game-changer. He waxes lyrical about what a great future they could have together: they’re unstoppable! This declaration of a shared future causes June to summon the courage to tell Harry about her pregnancy. Harry’s shocked at first and June waits, anxious. He asks what she plans to do. June admits she’s not sure, but she thinks she wants to keep it – though she can’t begin to work out how that will work in practice. After a beat, Harry beams and announces that however it’ll work he wants to be there for her; they’ll make it work *together.* June is thrilled. (FINALLY SOMETHING GOOD)
3. **TV Studio/June and Zoe’s flat (montage?):** We establish time passing: Harry is back on the Couch, talking about the new album which has just been released to great acclaim. It’s shooting up the charts and Dan shuttles Harry between gigs, interviews, visits to radio stations, etc. Harry is revelling in his first real taste of rock stardom. Through this narration, June’s creative input is generously acknowledged.

Meanwhile (on another part of the stage), a heavily pregnant June waddles about her flat, listening on the radio to Harry talking about the new album. The contrast in their respective lives is striking. (EVERYBODY WANTS TO TOUCH ME) But June remains upbeat (rapt that her contribution is being recognised), sitting at her keyboard and penning new songs.

1. **Rehearsal Studio:** The band are discussing writing songs for a second album. There is much excitement – it really feels like they’re finally cracking it. Alcohol and cocaine is ubiquitous, with everyone partaking other than Dan and the very pregnant June. Dan announces that their label thinks they should ‘hop across the pond’ and play a handful of gigs on the West Coast of the US. While the band is elated the label’s showing this level of faith in them, June is alarmed: she thought they weren’t touring the States until next year? Dan responds that that *was* the plan. But with the success of the album in Australia, the label feels they need to strike while the iron is hot. June pointedly asks Harry: what about the baby? Harry reassures they’ll be back before it’s due. He stresses about the opportunity that this represents; it’s what they’ve both dreamed of! It’s clear Harry’s mind is made up so June accepts this, feeling torn. Dan hustles Harry off for an interview. Zoe approaches June and asks how she’s doing. June isn’t sure. Not unkindly Zoe points out the obvious: that this is likely to be what the future looks like. Does June really think it’ll get easier after the baby comes? She points out that June could always give the baby up for adoption. Give it a stable, secure life away from all this madness. June is left with food for thought.
2. **Stage/Side of stage, American Concert Venue/Zoe’s flat:** Dan is side-of-stage while the band plays (BEFORE TOO LONG in the background). His cell phone rings. It’s June. She asks to speak to Harry but Dan informs her their show hasn’t yet finished. (NB: This is the mid-1980’s when most people don’t have cell phones. June finds it easiest to call the only person in the band with a cell.) June blames the time difference: it feels impossible to ever get hold of him. Dan checks everything is OK. June responds that she just wanted to speak to Harry: she has a sneaking feeling the baby is coming early; she’s just pleased they’ll be home soon. Dan steels himself for delivering bad news: they’ve had such full houses, the concert promoter has them playing extra shows which will put back their return by a week-10 days. Dan apologises: he thought Harry would’ve told her. June bitterly replies he hasn’t; they’ve barely spoken the last few weeks. Dan awkwardly makes excuses: it’s been super-busy but it’s clear he feels bad for her. He asks if she has someone there and June replies she *could* ask her mum to be there with her for the birth – but she really doesn’t want to. Mum never approved of her relationship with Harry and didn’t react well to the news of June's pregnancy; it’ll simply confirm her worst suspicions about what sort of father Harry will make. Feeling bad, Dan wishes her well and they hang-up.

Harry comes side of stage as they gear-up for an encore. Tom pushes past and grabs a beer, looking daggers at Dan and Harry. Harry asks Dan what’s up with him and Dan explains he’s hidden Tom’s blow. Harry’s amused and pleased Dan is looking out for them. As the band prepares to go back on-stage for an encore, Dan tells Harry he needs to call June. He just spoke to her on his cell and she doesn’t know about the changed tour dates. Harry assures he’ll do it and heads back on-stage to rapturous applause. (SEAGULLS OF SEATTLE)

1. **Zoe’s Flat:** (a few days later) June suddenly feels contractions. Panicked she calls Dan, asking for Harry. We hear Dan’s responses (O.S.) as he explains he can’t get hold of Harry right now. Increasingly flustered, she laments that she has no choice but to call her Mum. Dan tells her to wait, he has an idea; he’ll get right back to her. June grabs her pre-packed bag for the hospital and is debating what to do next when there’s a knock at her door. She answers it to Dan, phone in hand. He explains he’s come straight from the airport; he has a cab waiting outside. They can ring her mum if she wants, but he’s there for her, too. June is incredulous: what about the band? Dan explains he got them set-up for their remaining gigs and they’re big enough to look after themselves with the help of the American promoter for the next week; he decided to fly back early. June is overwhelmed by the gesture, seeing Dan in a whole new light. She becomes emotional and gives him an affectionate kiss. It’s not passionate but it’s tender and there’s a ‘moment’ between them. June brushes it aside, wiping her teary eyes and saying she must “look a sight” but Dan disabuses her: she looks beautiful. There’s an awkward beat and Dan tris to backtrack, worried he’s overstepped. However, another contraction comes and the moment is forgotten. They dash out to the hospital. (music under: NOTHING ON MY MIND guitar riff and chorus)
2. **Hospital room:** June lies, propped-up in a hospital bed, with Dan at her bedside. He checks she doesn’t want him to call her Mum. June insists her parents can come and see the baby once it’s born. While passing the time, June muses on whether the band will be coping in his absence. Dan confesses he hates touring. He kept the real reason quiet so as not to step on Harry’s toes but he was also glad of the “excuse” (to be there for June). He loves the challenge of taking musicians he believes in to the top, but he hates life on the road. Loves the music; hates the lifestyle. He wishes he had an ounce of the talent that June or Harry has, but he doesn’t; never has. June pushes back: Dan has got The Debutantes where they are today. She shyly says that they’re all lucky to have him; she’s only just now realising how lucky. Feeling awkward, Dan enthuses about the Brill Building song writers of the past; how they wrote classics while several of them had pretty “normal” lives. Or Elton John’s lyricist, Bernie Taupin who rarely went on tour with Elton. He passionately insists that June’s is a talent that can’t go to waste. The Debutantes were always a good band; June’s contribution was what put them over the top. They have an opportunity to be one of the greats. Who says there’s only one way to achieve rock immortality?

June is touched: she tells Dan that he’s laying out a future for her where she can “have it all.” Dan shrugs, not denying it: “Why not? You deserve it.” (PETRICHOR or CAKE AND THE CANDLE REPRISE.)

June narrates from the Couch that the baby came, and Dan stayed with her throughout the birth: it wasn’t what she’d planned, but it just felt… “right.” She says that after the baby came, her mum offered June her old room in the family home for a few months and she accepted. It wasn’t easy but family is family and she and her Mum soon put the past behind them while they got on with dealing with nappies and feeding and burping. She says she had a lot of time to think: in the middle of the night, feeding and rocking little baby Joe to sleep. It gave her clarity. She concludes the narration: After a couple of weeks Harry arrived.

1. **June’s family home:** Harry coos over baby Joe. He apologises for missing the birth and launches into plans, asking when June is moving into his flat and when she thinks she can take up her spot in the band again? June interrupts: she’s not re-joining the band. She wants to write but not tour. And she’s not moving in with Harry. Harry’s stunned but June calmly tells him she knows that she and Joe will always play second fiddle to the music. She’s reconciled herself to that. Harry’s devastated, on both a personal and artistic level: June is a major talent, she can’t just throw that away. June reassures: she’ll keep writing. Maybe she can even record with the band? But she’s going to give Joe a stable home to grow up in and she can’t do that if they’re on the road and living that lifestyle. Her legacy is more than just her music; it’s also Joe now. Harry points out how hard it’ll be to do it on her own. June enigmatically replies that she has a hunch she won’t be on her own. (BEAUTIFUL PROMISE)
2. **Dan’s apartment:** As June rocks baby Joe in a pram,Dan narrates from the Couch that he and June started seeing more of each other over the following months. At first they rationalised it was about work – the new songs, the “difficult second album,” what was going on for the band. But after a while it was obvious that it was about more than that. Of course, Dan had known it for a while – maybe since that first day in the diner. It took June a little longer to get there. But Dan was patient. And she was worth the wait. He stands by her and puts a loving hand on her shoulder. She smiles at him. (THANK YOU) Dan continues: Harry wasn’t really involved with Joe much. And the relationship just sort of happened. Having her and Joe move in with him just felt right.

Having established the baby’s asleep (and pushing the pram to a discreet corner) Dan tells June he has a surprise for her: a videotape recording of June’s new song, debuted by the band at a concert on the steps of the Sydney Opera House. They excitedly put the tape in the VCR and huddle on the sofa to watch. We see the band play an iconic tune. (HOW TO MAKE GRAVY) As the song finishes, Dan kisses June, proud and happy. The moment is interrupted by the baby waking and crying.

1. **The Espy Stage:** (Curtain call) The band go to play one of their greatest hits as an encore and invite on-stage a “very special guest who’s agreed to join them on-stage.” June comes on-stage to sing with them. (TO HER DOOR)

**The End**