

ARTHUR (V.O.)
*A break from the sun is welcomed
this day...*

THE PACIFIC OCEAN - MIDDAY

The RUMBLE of a passenger steam ship cuts through ocean.
Clouds darken the horizon with rain.

SUPER: 1902, PACIFIC OCEAN

Under cover of an awning, ARTHUR (17) jots in a journal.
His face bruised, hair unkempt, world weary.

ARTHUR (V.O.)
*...a day to look deep within. As
though my under-flesh has been
painted with the tattoo of the
tribals; a round, brown, husk-
filled ink-blot. What leads a man
to crusade for immortality? What
makes him so sure he will find it?*

CUT TO:

ISLAND OF KABAKON, PAPUA NEW GUINEA - LATE DAY

6 NAKED WHITE BUTTOCKS watch a small sailboat approach.

SUPER: PAPUA NEW GUINEA, 8 MONTHS EARLIER

ARTHUR (16), pressed shirt and slacks stands on the bow.
He seems years younger, more composed, more naive.

ARTHUR (V.O.)
*As far from anything that could be
confused as civilization, it is
wondrous that anyone ever made it
to that place. Conviction is a
motivation like none other.*

Among the tanned, bearded NAKED MEN the leader appears.
ELWIN (40's) waves big, a charmer if ever you saw one.

ELWIN
Ahoy! I was expecting a poet, not
the son of a dignitary.

ARTHUR
Fortuitous for myself that I am
neither.

Elwin LAUGHS.
Arthur removes his shoes and rolls up his slacks.

ELWIN
And perhaps it has been too long
since I have seen clothing. Please
be welcome, Arthur.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ARTHUR

By the nakedness, it is fair to
assume I am in the right place?

ELWIN

Yes you are, no doubt.

Arthur jumps from the boat, sinking himself to his waist.
The group smile at his misfortune, he trudges forward.
Elwin steps forward, hand out to shake.

ELWIN (CONT'D)

I am Elwin, Lord of the land. Come
meet my Order of the Sun.

The first man, a tall German VIT (40's) shakes his hand.

VIT

I am Vit, pleasure.

Arthur moves through the group, shaking hands with each.

ARTHUR (V.O.)

*Elwin held that man was born a
tropical animal and should wander
as Adam did, with the sun beating
down from Heaven upon his
nakedness. Sun worship, a God
within sight.*

COMMUNITY DWELLINGS - SUNSET

The sun is low, dying the land gold and pink.
Camp decorated with coconut shells and flowers.

Arthur unloads his bag into a fabric tent.
He observes the others busy themselves along the sand.
Firewood stacked, coconut cut and wrapped in leaf.

ARTHUR (V.O.)

*And for those loyal to the sun,
the noblest of food is a stone
fruit that grows closest to its
rays: its husk like hair, indents
like eyes, the very existence of
man staring back at you. To eat
coconut, is to eat life. This is
gospel in the Order.*

ORDER OF THE SUN - BEACH - NIGHT

The fire pit now ABLAZE.
Faces under-lit, shadows dancing in the CRACKLE.
Dinner is roasted coconut within palm leaves.

ELWIN

You are a learned boy Arthur, from
a good background.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ARTHUR

I am.

VIT

But you must be a teenager still.

ARTHUR

16 years.

VIT

Old? I'm not sure that classifies as learned.

ELWIN

Come now Vit, don't be coarse. Let Arthur give his own praise and let us judge not till then.

Arthur takes his time, his chance to shine.

ARTHUR

I'm not sure what classifies as learned, but I am academically prized. I received 8 school first prizes last year, and an additional 8 this year. It is the most awarded in any given year. This is Greek, Latin, and French literature. I have written original works in both Greek and Latin - short fiction, published - and I am here to see if there is subject for non-fiction. A novel.

ELWIN

A novel? How novel. Perhaps this is your chance at French.

The group LAUGH, Elwin watches Arthur's reaction.

ELWIN (CONT'D)

Forgive an old kook. Any chance at humor must be taken when you live on an island. It is impressive.

Arthur nods, Elwin takes him in.
Then slaps Vit's shoulder.

ELWIN (CONT'D)

A prodigy Vit! I felt something special about this boy. Providence he would wash upon our shores.

ARTHUR

I merely required a subject.

VIT

An eccentric one no doubt.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

They share a glance.

ELWIN

He craves adventure Vit. To escape
the mundane, am I right?

ARTHUR

As it is said, the sufferings of
the banal are enormous.

ELWIN

And one must be born a poet,
senses soaking in every happening
like waves as they strike the
sand. So here you are, among men
of questionable acumen. Some may
say. You, may say.

ARTHUR

I am yet to question, my goal is
to observe.

Elwin takes him in, Arthur holds true.
Elwin spreads his arms wide as he bows low.

ELWIN

Beyond the viewing glass we will
wander then.

VIT

How long is your break from study?

ARTHUR

As long as it may take.

Elwin LAUGHS, turns and jogs for ocean.

ELWIN

Adventure Vit! It is school enough
for some! Perhaps not for Germans.

Arthur smiles and pulls out his notebook.
Elwin SPLASHES in the water.
All OTHERS follow in the swim, except Vit.

VIT

Be careful what ink you describe
Elwin with. Eccentric, is just a
scratch of the surface.

ARTHUR

It is a good thing I write in
pencil then.

Stand off, Elwin HOWLS at the moon in the distance.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

ARTHUR (V.O.) (CONT'D)
*Vit was a realist. Politically
 disillusioned no doubt, why else
 would you live life as an unshaven
 naked vegetarian as far from
 civilization as one could manage.*

5 white men frolic in the sea.
 Like angelic sprites in a medieval painting.
 Vit glances at the fun, mind flaring with the flames.

ARTHUR (V.O.) (CONT'D)
*Unlike Elwin's religious devotion
 to the coconut, Vit was a man
 still tied to society. German
 skepticism. Just dipping a toe in
 the Elixir of life.*

PALM FARM - DAY

Arthur scribes under a palm, now shirtless in shorts.
 Down at the beach the Order exercise.
 Stretches, jumping jacks, it is all a bit comical.

ARTHUR (V.O.)
*Everything the Order did seemed a
 farce of itself. Daily activities
 to keep cultured minds sharp, time
 spent basking in the sun God under
 a sky they were not born.*

COMMUNITY DWELLINGS - DAY

Arthur walks calmly past make-shift huts and tents.
 He nibbles on coconut.

ARTHUR (V.O.)
*Or reading outdated texts, one of
 the thousand Elwin brought when he
 first came to the island.*

Arthur stops in front of Elwin's hut.
 An entire wall lined with worn books.

ARTHUR (V.O.) (CONT'D)
*How a man can survive alone for a
 year without company still alludes
 me. What is to say he came away
 unscathed?*

PAPUA NEW GUINEA - MORNING

Elwin and Arthur sail toward a coming harbour.
 Tropical land surrounds, lush and full.
 Boat filled to the brim with coconut paraphernalia.

ARTHUR
 Why did you chose this island?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ELWIN

Nudism is considered immoral in Europe, have you not heard?

ARTHUR

There are plenty of places you could retreat.

ELWIN

I get fair barter with coconuts here, among other things.

ARTHUR

In a region known for headhunters and cannibals.

ELWIN

You think I am hiding.

ARTHUR

Aren't you?

ELWIN

Perhaps. But then aren't you? You could follow any subject you wish, obviously travel is of no concern, yet you chose an outcast, worlds away. A sun worshipper with dubious views on the coconut.

ARTHUR

Coconuts are intrinsically comical.

Elwin lets go the sail, bringing the boat to a stop. He turns and faces Arthur.

ELWIN

Please don't think me a fool Arthur, I know why you are here. I am your chance at immortality. A preacher of the obscure to which you can ridicule without consequence and be labelled brave just for the experience.

Arthur sits wordless, waves LAP at the boat.

ELWIN (CONT'D)

But you misjudge yourself. Your vanity keeps you sharp, but your fear is laid out for all to see.

ARTHUR

And what do I fear? Death by coconut?

Arthur smiles uncomfortably, showing his age at last.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

1.

ELWIN

Life, dear boy. The brightest in
your class, top awards every year,
and you leave it behind?

ARTHUS

Because it bored me.

ELWIN

Because it scared you. Because
every target you aimed you hit,
and you knew, maybe soon in your
future that you could miss. So you
quit while ahead. Never realizing
failure, never drinking its sting.
Instead you come to me. A story so
bizarre that even if you did miss,
it would not matter. You risk side-
stepping a chance at greatness
Arthur, because you curtail the
possibility of failure.

Arthur, now pale as snow, just swallows at him.

ELWIN (CONT'D)

Tread careful, or you'll find
yourself just another wayward
soul, living among the
headhunters.

And with this, he tugs back the sail.
Boat LURCHING in the breeze.
Arthur reaches for the tiller, dazed and raw.

ARTHUR (V.O.)

*Even in a land where man eats the
flesh of man, there is invariably
the most peril within oneself.*

COMMUNITY DWELLINGS - VIT HUT - SUNRISE

Vit SCREAMS out in agony, rolling in his bed.
Both his feet curled awkwardly toward the floor.
Pottery SMASHES, coconut shells BANG on the ground.

COMMUNITY DWELLINGS - CONTINUOUS

Arthur throws back his tent door to the SOUND.
Others jog past him to Vit's hut, he follows.

Elwin comes from his hut.

ELWIN

What is happening?

ARTHUR

I don't know, it's Vit.

COMMUNITY DWELLINGS - VIT HUT - SUNRISE

Elwin pushes through the others, goes down to Vit.
Arthur watches from the door.

ELWIN
Tell me what is wrong.

VIT
My legs, they cramp without yield.
My muscles feel as if they will
tear from the bone.

Elwin moves to Vit's feet.
A large rash is revealed down Vit's side.

ELWIN
We must stretch them out. Be
strong my friend.

Elwin takes hold of a foot, pulls it back hard.
Vit and Elwin CRY out, the cramp releases.

ELWIN (CONT'D)
There it goes. Just one more.

Elwin again pulls hard, and the cramp releases!
The force of it sends Vit from his bed.
He takes Elwin and a cabinet DOWN with him.

They both roll on their back and begin to LAUGH.
HUFFING breath as they do.

And then Elwin sees it...
A jar of dried fish has fallen from the cabinet.
Vit continues his GIGGLE unknowingly.

Elwin jumps to his feet, takes hold the jar.
Vit's laughter has stopped.

ELWIN (CONT'D)
What is this?

Vit swallows.

VIT
It is fish Elwin, for when I crave
a different flavor...

ELWIN
A flavor? You risk your life for a
flavor?

VIT
I am hardly risking my life with
tuna.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ELWIN

Why do you think your legs cramp?
And your rash not subside? You are
not living a natural life, feeding
on the salt of the sea. A humans
natural state is that of
vegetation, growth above ground
touched directly by the hand of
the sun.

VIT

Man cannot consume only coconuts
and leaves, he requires animal
nutrients to feed his muscles, his
brain, this is ludicrous...

Elwin tosses the jar across the room.

ELWIN

The brain receives it's energy
through the hairs roots, the
nearest system to the sun. The
sun, the healer and giver of life.

Elwin sways, looking around at his people.

ELWIN (CONT'D)

And the coconut the only food man
needs, for even its shape, that of
a head, is proof of its gentry.

He then hurries out of the hut.

ARTHUR (V.O.)

*Conviction. It is sometimes all a
man has.*

ORDER OF THE SUN - BEACH - LATE DAY

Rain FALLS, trees SWAY, a squall is atop the village.

The villagers hide in their huts SILENTLY.
All except Elwin who sits stoic by the ocean.
Soaked to the bone, drenched in thought.

ARTHUR (V.O.)

*Not long after, Vit left the
island. The weeks following were
the most isolating days I can
remember. And for Elwin, isolation
became his brace. A captain in the
tides of mutiny.*

WORK STATION - DAY

The Order SLICE open coconuts skillfully.
They pour the juice and GRATE the meat into piles.
Arthur makes ready a fire, his skin now golden brown.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ARTHUR (V.O.)

From then on, Elwin instilled a strict monodiet of coconut. The constant consumption of which was to lead us all to immortality.

PALM FARM - DAY

A machete HACKS at a coconut, it FALLS.
Arthur collects it as Elwin descends his ladder.

He moves it around the Palm with effort and climbs again.
Arthur keeps a close eye on him, noticing a limp.
Just behind Elwin's knee, a gruesome ulcer flares red.

ARTHUR

How long have you been on the monodiet yourself Elwin?

ELWIN

A query? It has been a time hasn't it, still writing I presume?

ARTHUR

How long has it been?

Elwin descends the ladder.

ELWIN

I will never understand why you always dance around your real question. You wonder of the ulcer on my leg.

ARTHUR

Do you truly believe this is sustainable? You are withering.

ELWIN

I am becoming Godly. The suns power has rendered immunity upon me and no blister will deter this.

ARTHUR

Immunity cannot be achieved through that of a stone fruit.

Elwin points the blade at Arthur, closer than comfort.
His body swaying like that of a tree.

ELWIN

Says you! A child. All life comes from the sun and the food closest is the righteous coconut. Our brains, the righteous organ. Don't you see? There is no sickness I cannot overcome.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Elwin drops the machete, exhausted.

ARTHUR
Except madness. I'm sorry my
friend, but your coconut has
turned you mad.

Elwin dismisses Arthur with a wave of the hand.
He stumbles away, picking up a coconut and taking it in.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
We should leave this place. Before
we all find our end here.

Elwin turns, throws the coconut at Arthur.
CRACKING him square in the face, he stumbles back.
Blood pours from his nose.

ELWIN
You should leave this place! You
know nothing of life. Of
conviction. Go to your family and
eat yeast from your silver spoon,
you are no longer welcome here!

Elwin props himself against a tree trunk, COUGHS.
Arthur stands off, bleeding at the God of nakedness.

ARTHUR
Goodbye Elwin.

Coconuts sway in their canopy's high above the ground.
Uncaring of human interest.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA - LATE DAY

Arthur bounces in the waves on the sail boat.
All the other men of the Order beside him.

ARTHUR (V.O.)
*Upon Vit's return to Germany he
deeming the Order a cult and this
spread as fires do.*

The passengers are helped upon the dock.
Arthur gives one final look to the distance.

ARTHUR (V.O.) (CONT'D)
*The months subsequent, the
government of the islands
instilled a ban on all new
immigrants, halting any further
travel to the country. Elwin's
Utopia was no more.*

ORDER OF THE SUN - BEACH - DAY

Elwin sits on the beach, facing the sun.
His body stiff, propped awkward.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ARTHUR (V.O.)
*Man is a social creature, a tribe
 animal. We were never built to be
 alone. Isolation has a tendency of
 turning brilliance into dust.*

Elwin a statue without breath.
 His face frozen in a deep smile, sun punching his face.

ARTHUR (V.O.) (CONT'D)
*But then brilliance never found
 itself that far from madness to
 begin with, so one may never
 realize himself insane. Who's to
 say we lucid are any better off.*

A wave CRASHES into his rigid body.

CUT TO:

BERLIN - LATE DAY

A wet cobblestone street a BUZZ with people.

SUPER: BERLIN GERMANY, 1903

A MAN holds a newspaper above his head.
 He moves swiftly through the crowd.
 Covering himself from the SPLASH of rain.

Traversing up some steps he enters an apartment.

APARTMENT - FOYER - CONTINUOUS

The door swings open, BANGING against a piece of mail.

The Man picks up the mail, we now see him as VIT (40's).
 Though with a considerable amount of weight back.

APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Vit sits in his large chair, opening the package:
 A hard cover novel, *THE LIFE WE EAT*.

He opens to the first page: *By Arthur Duncan-King*
 Handwritten below: *I hope the ink is befitting the man.*

Vit takes it in with a smile.

ARTHUR (V.O.)
*What leads a man to crusade for
 immortality? Conviction. For he
 knows he may not find what he's
 looking for, but he won't know
 himself, until he tries.*

Vit reaches for his reading glasses.
 Cracks open the cover and settles in.

FADE TO BLACK.