

HEATING THE WORLD by Owen Marshall-the screenplay

Scene 1

Tucker and Neville travelling together to an open day on shelter belt trials: Tucker abruptly referred to Neville's wife.

Tucker: 'Margaret likes soap, I suppose.'

Neville: 'Soap?'

Tucker: 'Women like soaps: a variety of soaps and things, I counted seven along the bath last night, and all partly used, you know.' His laugh had good-humoured ease as its intention, but conveyed bewilderment instead.

Neville: 'Shampoos.'

Tucker: 'Shampoos, all different colours, one oily, one normal, one dry, a body shampoo, a protein conditioner, an apricot facial scrub, and one enriched with the natural oil of some sort of pretzel which grows only in the Orinoco. And soft pink soap which turns to a slush like snow, and vanishes as rapidly.'

Tucker: 'It's mostly liquid stuff they buy. It just runs away. You've no idea. It just runs away down the plughole. And women don't like to share a bath, do they? We've put in a shower as well. I could dip a mob of two-tooths in the time my girls take to shower.'

Neville (half-heartedly): 'Shampoos and conditioners aren't really soaps'

Tucker: 'All do soaps' job. Can you believe seven different bottles, and others besides. Bath salts and that.'

Neville: 'Oh yes. But you wouldn't want to go back to being single again would you, Tucker?'

Tucker: 'Oh no, Hell no'

Scene 2

At the gun club.

Tucker: 'Pull. Yes, Dianne thinks I should have some new things. My clothes seem to be wearing out more rapidly these days.'

Neville: 'How come?'

Tucker: 'I reckon my stuff is getting worn away in the washing machine. Women love to get the clothes from my back.'

Neville: 'Do they indeed, you old dog.'

Tucker: 'I mean for washing. I've always felt myself it takes a day or two to feel comfortable in what you're wearing, but Dianne has it into the machine before I'm hardly used to it. Continual washing is bad for the stitching, I'd say, and seems to be shrinking the waistbands, but there no telling her. I'm getting quite a wardrobe now, you know. Women have a good deal of clothes, you know.'

Neville: 'I know.'

Tucker: 'My daughters have a drawer of pants each. Whole drawers of pants. (Absently) Scores of them. Margaret buys a fair amount of clothes?'

Neville: 'From time to time, yes. You're getting to understand why women look better than men. One reason, anyway.'

Tucker: 'I guess you're right. I've got two suits myself now, though I can't see that people are going to die regularly enough for me to need to alternate them.'

Scene 3

Sale Day at the Dobb Hotel

Tucker: 'I've rather gone off fruit.'

Neville: 'You had a kelpie that used to eat apples, but you shot it for biting your best ram.'

Tucker: 'No, no, you don't understand. There's bought fruit, see. Do you know how much a feijoa costs?'

Neville: 'Well, ah.'

Tucker: 'Much more. (Defiantly and distraught) We have bananas often in a bowl together with oranges and pears. This morning I looked at the ticket on one of the bananas. They each have their own ticket, you know. It had come from Ecuador. Ec-u-a-dor! And the thing is, see, that often fruit goes off before it's eaten and has to be thrown out. No one bothers to eat a quince, or a plum, these days. The whole crop lies beneath the trees in the orchard for the wasps and the birds.'

Neville: 'But what's that against all the advantages of marriage?'

Tucker: 'Oh, you're right there. Of course I wouldn't change for the world.'

Scene 4

Town versus Country game.

Tucker: 'You know how much a lipstick costs, just one? Twenty-nine dollars thirty-nine. It's true. It's true. And how often do you see a tube used right up? Answer me that.'

Neville: 'You're blind and bloody half-witted with it.'

Tucker: 'And Sarah wanted some shoes for aerobics.'

Neville: 'You mean aerobics.'

Tucker: 'Right.'

Neville: 'You see aerobics is ---'

Tucker: 'Okay.'

Neville: 'So she wanted sports shoes.'

Tucker: 'I went in with her myself. Reddickers had a sale and I found a decent pair reduced to fifty-five dollars.'

Neville: 'That's reasonable enough.'

Tucker: 'Oh, but they wouldn't do. Not enough hell cushioning for the effects of aerobics, the woman said. A lot of people did structural damage to their feet that way, she said, and Sarah said her friends had different ones. You wouldn't believe what I had to pay before I got out of that shop.'

Neville: 'Tell me. Back up your man, Cecil, for Christ's sake. That boy's all prick.'

Tucker: 'Six lambs at today's schedule prices. Six lambs, can you credit it - And all for jumping about in.'

Scene 5

On their way back from the match.

Tucker: 'They're wanting more changes. (Pause) Interior renovations.'

Neville: 'So?'

Tucker: 'First grade Axminster, designer wallpaper, new drapes. Ceiling repainted, pelmets removed, droop light fittings and new

fire surround tiles of Tuscan red. We'll use the room a good deal more because of it, of course.'

Neville: 'It's improving your asset, Tucker. There's that as well.'

Tucker: 'That's true. We all have duvets now. Yes, duvets on all the beds, and now we have a double dozen unused blankets folded in the cupboard. Of course I'm a believer in progress.'

Neville: 'A lot of the improvements have been on you, haven't they? I mean Dianne's done you up proud since you've been married.'

Tucker: 'True, true.'

Neville: 'That new nylon parka, for example.'

Tucker: 'An anorak. You ever heard of an anorak?'

Neville: 'Oh yes.'

Tucker: 'A bright red anorak.'

Neville: 'Very fetching.'

Scene 6

Driving home after a euchre evening.

Tucker: 'You know, soon we'll pay the highest price of the lot for milk with everything extracted - and it'll be water.'

Neville: 'It's all progress, I suppose.'

Tucker: 'Right. Right. Of course I wouldn't have it any other way.'

Arriving at Tucker's home. The back door is open.

Tucker: 'The door. Ah, God. Look, look. We're heating the world.'