

# SHEILA

## THE MAGPIE

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### FULL TREATMENT

*Film Three of the SHEILA Saga*

<b>Written by</b>	Gregory J. Round
<b>Based on</b>	Original Screenplay — SHEILA: THE MAGPIE
<b>Preceded by</b>	SHEILA: OUTBACK VENGEANCE & SHEILA: THE SOMME (both scripts complete)
<b>Genre</b>	Spy Thriller   Irish War of Independence   Character Study
<b>Format</b>	Feature Film   Est. 100–115 minutes
<b>Setting</b>	County Cork, Ireland   1920–1921
<b>Tone</b>	The Wind That Shakes the Barley meets The Spy Who Came in from the Cold
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*"The bigger the cause the easier it is to forget that it's made of people."*

## 1. OVERVIEW

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SHEILA: THE MAGPIE is the third and final film in the SHEILA saga. Where the first film forged a colonial outlaw on the Queensland frontier and the second sent her into the industrial slaughter of the Somme, this film drops the same woman into the intimate, morally suffocating world of the Irish War of Independence — a conflict where the enemy wears no uniform, the allies are compromised, the trusted are treacherous, and survival depends entirely on the quality of your lies.

Ireland, 1920. Sheila Hamilton is officially dead. The British Army recorded her death in No Man's Land at the Somme four years earlier and she accepted the opportunity it offered: a new identity, a nursing post in a Cork barracks, and six months spent becoming, as the screenplay puts it, unremarkable. She has spent her entire life preparing for exactly this kind of invisibility. She is very good at it.

What the film gives us — and what makes it unlike any other Irish War of Independence film — is a protagonist who brings three decades of extraordinary experience to a conflict that has no idea what it has acquired. She has outrun colonial troopers in Queensland. She has crawled through No Man's Land under machine gun fire. She has loved and lost and survived things that should have ended her. She arrives in Cork as a nurse, stays as a spy, and leaves as something harder to name.

The film moves through the defining episodes of West Cork in 1920–21 — the Kilmichael ambush, the burning of Cork, the Battle of Crossbarry, the Bandon Valley killings — not as historical spectacle but as an environment Sheila moves through. The institutional violence is ambient and systemic. The personal drama is intimate and devastating. The two are inseparable, as they have always been in Sheila Hamilton's world.

At the centre of the film is a triangle — not romantic this time, but something more dangerous: three kinds of loyalty in collision. Sheila, operating for the IRA from inside the British barracks. Father Morrissey, the priest she trusts most, passing intelligence to Dublin to accelerate a negotiated settlement. And Thomas Archer — Sergeant Thomas Archer, Black and Tan, Australian, the man she thought dead at the Somme — who walks into her medical room and changes everything she thought she knew about the life she was living.

## 2. LOGLINE & PREMISE

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### Logline

*A Queensland outlaw turned Somme nurse, now operating as a British intelligence asset for the IRA in 1920s Cork, discovers that the priest she trusts is the informer she's hunting — and that the man she thought she'd left dead in No Man's Land has just walked into her medical room.*

### Premise

Dunmanway, County Cork. 1920. Sheila Hamilton — officially deceased — has spent six months becoming invisible inside the British colonial machinery she is systematically dismantling. She nurses the Black and Tans and passes their patrol schedules to the Flying Column. She carries folded slips of paper beneath coins and loaves of bread. She is, by any measure, the most dangerous woman in West Cork, and nobody who meets her suspects it for a moment.

Her world fractures on two axes simultaneously. The first is a message from inside the barracks: a new Australian Sergeant has arrived with orders for the western road. She has known for weeks that an Australian was coming. She has chosen not to wonder too hard about who it might be. When Thomas Archer walks through the medical room door and reads her name from an inspection slip, the past twenty years collapse into a single held breath.

The second fracture is slower and more devastating. A British intelligence source — codename Magpie — has been feeding the Flying Column's movements to Dublin Castle. The Column has been taken apart at Crossbarry. Men are dead who should not be dead. Sheila traces the intelligence failures backward through every conversation, every evening in every warm kitchen, every cup of tea, every prayer — and arrives at the man who taught her, without knowing it, that West Cork fights not for Ireland but for the twenty people on this road.

What follows is the final act of a saga that began in colonial Queensland: a woman who has spent thirty years being hunted, loved, possessed, and discarded by institutions and men who believed they could contain her, making her last set of choices in a country that is not hers — about who she will protect, what she will betray, and what it means, finally, to stop running.

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### 3. TONE & WORLD

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SHEILA: THE MAGPIE is the quietest of the three films, and by that measure the most claustrophobic. The violence in West Cork in 1920 is not the industrial scale of the Somme — it is personal, intimate, and impossible to locate in advance. A village goes about its morning. A patrol does nothing in particular. A constable stands at the end of a street and his presence is the message.

The film's visual language should reflect this: ordinary surfaces concealing extraordinary pressure. A bread stall where coins change hands over folded paper. A medical room where a nurse's hands do not shake. A kitchen that is warm and ordinary and full of a man's carefully maintained lies. The West Cork landscape — stone walls, wet fields, Atlantic light going gold at the edge of the world — is beautiful and treacherous in the same breath.

Tonally the film sits between the moral ambiguity of *The Wind That Shakes the Barley* and the cold intelligence tradecraft of *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold*. It has the intimacy of a Ken Loach drama and the structural precision of a *Le Carré* adaptation. Its violence is sudden and consequential rather than sustained — a single shot in a dark farmyard that echoes through every scene that follows. Its emotional register is exhaustion, care, and the particular grief of someone who has been fighting for so long they can no longer clearly remember what they are fighting for.

#### The Trilogy's Final Register

Each film in the saga has operated at a different register of violence and scale. The Queensland film was a colonial survival thriller — vast landscapes, physical pursuit, frontier justice. The Somme film was industrial war at its most extreme — the barrage, No Man's Land, mass death. The Magpie is something quieter and therefore more insidious: the war of the occupied town, where every transaction is double and every relationship contains a question.

This register suits Sheila perfectly because it is the register she was made for. The girl who spent her childhood reading situations and people has become a woman for whom the intelligence work of West Cork — the folded slips, the relay stones, the pattern of information moving through a town that looks ordinary — is as natural as breathing. She is not performing competence. She simply is competent, in the specific way that a person is competent when the alternative to competence is death.

The magpie — the bird, the codeword, the symbol of black-and-white thinking in a world that is entirely grey — recurs through the film as the visual and thematic signature of the piece. It appears at moments of critical transition: landing on a wall before the Black and Tan lorries arrive, cocking its head with terrible stillness. It is the thing that sees everything and says nothing. It is the film's constant question: who is watching, and from which side?



## 4. CHARACTERS

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### Sheila Hamilton — Protagonist

She is in her mid-thirties now. Lean, controlled, skilled at the particular art of performing unremarkability. She has been Sheila Hamilton the Australian nurse — quiet, keeps to herself, nods to people without intruding — for six months, and she has succeeded so thoroughly that even the people who know exactly what she is sometimes forget. The Black and Tan constable at the end of the market street nods back at her as she passes. A nurse. Going about her business.

What is new about Sheila in this film — and what the saga has been building toward — is a quality of earned exhaustion. She is not broken. She is not cynical. She is someone who has been fighting since she was fourteen years old and who has begun, for the first time, to ask what she is fighting toward rather than what she is fighting from. The question is partly prompted by Bridget — the fourteen-year-old girl who is the version of Sheila that Queensland might have produced if Queensland had offered something worth believing in. And it is partly prompted by Thomas's reappearance, which forces her to reckon with what the last twenty years have actually cost.

Her spy work is presented without glamour. It is painstaking, morally ambiguous, and conducted in the spaces between ordinary tasks. She nurses men she is working against. She passes information that saves lives and she knows that the saving of those lives has costs she cannot see and is not told about. She operates inside a system that she believes in imperfectly and serves without illusion. She is, in this, exactly the same person she has always been.

The film's final image of her — walking away from a farewell, across a wet West Cork field, into the failing light, until she is gone — is the saga's closing statement. Whereabouts unknown. She has never stopped. She will not stop. The story simply runs out of window through which to see her.

▮ *"Home is a complicated word for me."*

### Thomas Archer — The Ghost

Thomas survived the Somme. What happened to him between No Man's Land and Cobh harbour, between the mud and the Black and Tan uniform, is implied rather than stated — a man who woke up in a war and stayed in wars because it was the only life he had learned to navigate. He is thinner. His face has the quality of something left out in weather. He carries the old wound in his hip that never healed straight.

What is remarkable about Thomas in this film is the degree to which he has changed — not in kind, but in direction. The boy who could not understand why Sheila didn't choose him has become a man who has spent twenty years understanding exactly why. The man who led Anton into a machine gun

nest now trains his soldiers like soldiers rather than weapons. The man who burned with possessive love has learned, at extraordinary cost, what it means to love someone in the way they actually need rather than the way he needs to give it.

He begins passing intelligence to Sheila the moment he recognises that she is working for the column — not because she asks him to, not because he expects anything from it, but because he has watched a city burn and stood at the perimeter and held the line and finally understood what line he was holding it for. The shift is quiet and total. He does not announce it. He simply begins doing the right thing.

His final act — framing Briggs as the Magpie and walking him into the column's hands, then leaving Ireland with papers in a name that is not his — is both redemptive and tragic. He does not stay. He knows Sheila will not come with him. He asks, before he goes, whether any of it was real. She tells him every word. He nods as if that is sufficient. It is the most honest exchange of the entire saga and it contains almost nothing that needed to be said aloud.

▮ *"Once. In Queensland. And I've been paying for it since."*

### Father Morrissey — The Magpie

The revelation that the man Sheila trusts most in Ireland is the intelligence source she has been hunting is the film's structural and emotional gut-punch — and it is handled with complete moral seriousness. Father Morrissey is not a villain. He is a man who has buried fourteen parishioners in eight months and concluded that the only moral path is to accelerate an inevitable settlement, even if that means feeding information to Dublin Castle that breaks the column's operational capacity.

His logic is internally coherent. His conclusions are catastrophic. He is the most complete portrait in the trilogy of the damage done by people who love their cause more than they love the specific, named human beings inside it — and who cannot see the contradiction because their intentions are genuinely good.

The confrontation scene — Sheila at his kitchen table, naming the third book, watching him sit with being entirely known — is the film's quietest and most devastating exchange. He does not deny it. He explains himself with the gravity and care of a man who has been waiting for this conversation and is, in some terrible way, relieved it has arrived. He is not absolved. He is not destroyed. He is simply a man sitting with what he has done, in a kitchen that has been warm and ordinary and full of his carefully maintained lies.

▮ *"You gave me tea and a place to sit and told me I deserved more than half a life. And you were sending information that could have gotten me hanged."*

### **Bridget Riordan — The Inheritance**

Bridget is fourteen years old, dark-haired, furious, and the emotional heart of the film's second half. She is, explicitly, what Sheila was at the beginning of the saga — a girl of that age, in an impossible situation, with better instincts than most of the adults around her and no safe outlet for them. The difference is that Bridget has Sheila, and Sheila did not.

Their relationship is the film's most straightforwardly tender thing — the experienced woman and the fierce girl, each teaching the other something the other could not have reached alone. Bridget teaches Sheila that fighting for twenty specific people is not a failure of political imagination but an act of moral precision. Sheila teaches Bridget that the bravest thing is not always the most visible thing, and that being afraid of the right things keeps you alive.

The scene where Bridget hugs Sheila goodbye — abruptly, fiercely, abandoning dignity — and Sheila holds her for just a moment before stepping back, is the saga's most human image. Everything else in these three films has been survival. This is something else.

### **Corporal Briggs — The System's Worst Instrument**

Briggs is the film's operational antagonist, but the screenplay is careful to make him intelligent rather than cartoonish. He reads anomalies the way Sheila reads situations — methodically, without rushing, building a picture from details that a less careful man would have dismissed. His list of intelligence failures — Crookstown cache, Coppeen road, Kilbrittain crossroads — is accurate. His conclusions are accurate. He simply arrives at the wrong name.

His death — handed to the column by Thomas, walked into a field — is the film's most morally complex moment of violence. He burned a village. He shot an eighty-year-old man in his own kitchen. He is also a man who was right about something and is being killed partly to protect that secret. The film does not resolve this. Thomas does not look back. The field gives nothing back.

### **Seamus — The Column's Conscience**

Seamus is the IRA operative who connects Sheila to the column, and he is drawn with unusual care for a supporting figure. He is not an ideologue. He is a man whose stillness suggests he has been standing in ditches his entire adult life, and who uses that stillness with precision. His arrival at the safe house after Crossbarry — wet coat, the face of a man who has walked through something enormous — is one of the film's most powerful images of the human cost of a cause.

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## 5. STRUCTURE

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### ACT ONE — The Unremarkable Woman

The film opens in two registers. An ordinary morning in Dunmanway — the butcher opening his shutters, the woman pushing a pram, the official notice pinned to the post office door with its bottom third torn away. And Sheila in the market, moving through it with her basket, passing a folded slip of paper beneath bread money without breaking stride. The constable at the end of the street watches her pass. She nods. He nods back. A nurse. Going about her business.

The first act establishes the world and its rules. Information moves through bread and coins and casual conversation. The Black and Tan lorries read the village like a rock reads water — it moves around them without acknowledgement. Father Morrissey cooks stew badly and talks about Queensland light and tells Sheila she has work and that is worth a great deal. Bridget runs messages in the dark and comes back with an injured hand and does not cry and is furious about the injury rather than frightened by it.

The news that an Australian Sergeant has arrived at Bandon barracks lands quietly, almost as an aside. Sheila's hands continue moving. The dressing is tied off. She sends the patient away. Then she stands at the cabinet for a long moment doing nothing. Her left hand, at her side, has closed into a fist.

The medical inspection slip arrives. She burns it in the lamp flame. She waits. The door opens. Thomas reads the slip without looking up. Then he looks up. And the world stops.

“Not a word. Not here. Not yet.” — Sheila, in the medical room, speaking almost without moving her lips.

### ACT TWO — The Double Life

The act's architecture is a double spiral — Thomas and Sheila drawing closer while the intelligence war tightens around both of them. The safe house meetings begin. The first is raw and desperate — two people from a destroyed world, barely able to look at each other without the past consuming the present. By the third meeting they have settled into something operational and intimate: Thomas reports; Sheila processes; they speak about Anton, once, and the name falls into the room like a stone and changes the quality of the silence permanently.

The historical set-pieces anchor the act's progression. The Kilmichael ambush — which Sheila learns of through Seamus arriving wet to his knees at the back door — pulls her to a farmhouse full of wounded column men and Tom Barry sitting very still on a stool with his hands on his knees and his eyes somewhere else entirely. Their silent exchange across a low room — the nurse and the

commandant — is one of the film's most charged moments of recognition. She works through the night. She leaves before dawn. She tells Barry to keep the chest wound still for three days.

The burning of Cork is the act's emotional nadir for Thomas. He stands at the perimeter in uniform while forty buildings burn around him, holding a line he cannot identify against nothing he can see. Childers, nineteen years old, asks what they are doing there. Thomas has no answer. He goes to the medical room the next morning and sits with a cup he does not drink from and says The Library is gone in a way that is not a military report. Sheila sits opposite him and does not offer comfort. She simply stays present in the room. It is, in context, the most intimate thing she knows how to do.

Briggs has been making his list. The Crookstown cache moved before the raid. The Coppeen road column not present. The Kilbrittain crossroads abandoned. His list is accurate. He underlines Australian twice and goes to sleep confident.

The Riordan farm sequence is the act's turning point. The cache was moved — Thomas warned them. Old Pádraig Riordan refused to leave his father's house. Briggs kicks the farmhouse door open, drags the eighty-year-old from his chair, and shoots him when he drives his elbow back. Thomas stands in the doorway and says Hold and then says it again and Briggs shoots anyway. Thomas sits in the lorry afterward with the particular blankness of a man who has looked at something too long and has run out of available distance.

Bridget was in the back field. She saw. And when she comes to Sheila in the grey dawn — mud on her coat, completely still — her accusation is simple and devastating: I thought you were doing this because you believed in it.

*"There is no version of this work where everyone gets to survive. I know that. I have always known that. And I am very tired of knowing it."*

### ACT THREE — The Magpie Named

The intelligence failures have reached a point where they can no longer be explained by bad luck or poor communication. Seamus arrives after Crossbarry — a thousand British troops, lorries and armoured cars coming in from every road, the column ringed — and names the problem: a tout. The Magpie. Someone very close. Tom Barry walked them out, but three are dead and six wounded and the scale of the intelligence failure points inward.

Sheila has already begun to suspect. She traces it from the Macroom ambush through every dinner and prayer and kitchen conversation, backward through every warm evening and cup of tea, and arrives at the moment Father Morrissey almost said: we have time. The pause before the correction. The envelope behind the third book. The man of conscience who has been making calculations that leave dead farmers in their own kitchens.

The confirmation scene — in the back room of the third safe house, the lantern turned low, Thomas and Sheila working through it together — is the film's intellectual and moral core. Thomas asks why a priest would betray the IRA. Sheila explains: he is not betraying the IRA. He believes in the Free State. He is trying to end the war by breaking the column here so the political men can negotiate. He would call it mercy. He would call it anything that lets him sleep. A man trying to end the war by prolonging it.

What follows is a sequence of necessary endings, each handled with the restraint that has characterised the trilogy's best moments. Thomas removes Bridget's name from Briggs's report — both copies, in the dead of night, replaced with a document written in Briggs's voice that he has spent two weeks learning. He burns the originals in a fire that is not in the barracks.

Sheila confronts Father Morrissey in his kitchen. She names the third book. He sits. He does not deny it. He explains himself with the gravity of a man who has been waiting for this conversation. She tells him the column will know by tomorrow, from outside the network. That he will not be harmed — she has made certain of that. But he is finished as a source for anyone. Then: whatever you did, whatever you were, you were kind to me. And she goes out into the dark.

Thomas walks Briggs into a field. He has planted evidence that points to Briggs as the Magpie. The column closes in from the tree line. Briggs reads the situation in an instant — the gift of a man who has always read situations, now pointing inward. He goes for his weapon. Thomas grabs his arm. Don't. The column men take Briggs. Thomas walks back the way he came. A single shot from the field. He does not stop walking.

The Bandon Valley killings unfold in the film's final movement. Thirteen Protestant civilians shot in the weeks following the Anglo-Irish Treaty. Sheila moves through three farmhouses in a single night with her bag and her steady hands — sitting with a woman who is past weeping, treating a chest wound, examining a woman eight months pregnant whose husband is missing. At the third farm: Are you Catholic? I'm a nurse. All right then.

The farewells come quietly. Father Morrissey in his kitchen, looking at his breviary with his eyes open. Bridget in a wet field, hugging Sheila abruptly and fiercely and then watching her go until she is gone. Thomas on the dock at Cobh, holding the photograph — the Queensland riverbank, the two of them young and laughing — and letting it go into the harbour wind.

■ *"The whereabouts of Sheila Elizabeth Hamilton are to this day unknown."*

## 6. THEMES

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### **The Cause and the People Inside It**

The film's central moral argument is delivered by Bridget's dead brother Ciarán, quoted twice: he wasn't fighting for Ireland. He was fighting for the twenty people he could name. The ones on this road. In this parish. The bigger the cause the easier it is to forget that it's made of people. This is the film's thesis, and every major character is a different inflection of it. Father Morrissey forgot. Thomas is learning to remember. Sheila has always known — it is the one consistent thing across all three films.

The Bandon Valley killings sequence is the film's most direct statement of this theme. Protestant farmers — men who had no quarrel with anyone until someone gave them a rifle — are being killed in the name of a cause. The cause is real. The people are also real. The film does not adjudicate between them. It simply shows what it costs to forget the second in service of the first.

### **Institutional Betrayal, Revised**

In Queensland the institutions were colonial law. On the Somme they were military command. In Cork they are every institution simultaneously — the British administration, the IRA, the Church. All of them contain people who use them for purposes the institutions were not designed to serve. Sheila has spent three films navigating this reality. She has not become cynical about it. She has become precise. She operates inside systems she does not fully trust because the alternative is to operate outside all systems entirely — which, as Queensland demonstrated, is survivable but not sustainable.

### **Redemption as Action, Not Feeling**

Thomas's arc in this film is the closest the trilogy comes to a redemption story, and it is careful to present redemption not as a change of heart but as a change of behaviour. He does not speak at length about what he did to Anton. He said he thought about him every day. That is all. What he does instead is act differently — train his soldiers, pull back from the Kilbrittain crossroads, refuse to file a false report, remove Bridget's name from Briggs's document at three in the morning in a records room that could end his life. Redemption, the film suggests, is not a feeling. It is what you do at three in the morning when no one is watching.

### **The Woman Who Was Never Anywhere Long Enough to be Found**

The final title card — the whereabouts of Sheila Elizabeth Hamilton are to this day unknown — is both the trilogy's closing statement and its most honest admission. She was never going to be contained by any of the stories that tried to contain her: colonial law, military authority, the demands of the men who loved her, the causes that used her. She has been, since she was fourteen years old on Piebald in the Queensland outback, in motion. The story ends not with her death but with the failure of the record to keep up with her. Which is, in the end, exactly the right ending.

## 7. HISTORICAL CONTEXT

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SHEILA: THE MAGPIE is set during one of the most intensely documented and still most contested periods of Irish history. The Irish War of Independence (1919–1921) and its immediate aftermath — the Treaty negotiations, the Bandon Valley killings of April 1922 — remain subjects of active historical debate, precisely because the moral questions they raised have not been resolved.

The film engages with this period through specific, historically grounded events. The Kilmichael ambush of November 1920, in which Tom Barry's West Cork Flying Column ambushed and killed eighteen Auxiliaries, was a turning point in the conflict. The burning of Cork city in December 1920 by Black and Tan forces — forty buildings destroyed on Patrick Street, the Carnegie Library among them — provoked international condemnation. The Battle of Crossbarry in March 1921, in which Barry's column broke out of a British encirclement of over a thousand men, became one of the defining tactical achievements of the war.

The Bandon Valley killings — thirteen Protestant civilians shot in the weeks following the Anglo-Irish Treaty — remain one of the most disputed episodes of the period. The film's treatment of this event follows the documentary record in declining to assign definitive responsibility or motive, while showing, through Sheila's night-round of the farmhouses, what it meant to the people caught inside it.

Tom Barry appears briefly but significantly — sitting on a stool in a farmhouse, very still, not wounded, his eyes somewhere else entirely. His silent exchange with Sheila is not an invention: the Kilmichael ambush was followed by a night of treating wounded in concealed farmhouses, and Barry's capacity for stillness in the aftermath of violence was noted by multiple contemporaries. The film uses this documented quality without putting words in his mouth.

## 8. MARKET POSITIONING

SHEILA: THE MAGPIE targets the audience that made *The Wind That Shakes the Barley* (Loach, 2006) a Palme d'Or winner and an international theatrical success, while also reaching the prestige thriller audience that has sustained adaptations from *le Carré* and the espionage drama tradition. It is a film with a clear genre identity — spy thriller, period drama, character study — and a protagonist who is genuinely unlike anyone else in contemporary cinema.

The Irish market is significant: the War of Independence period has sustained substantial audience interest across film, television, and fiction for decades, and the perspective offered here — an outsider operating inside both sides of the conflict, with no national stake — is one the genre has not previously explored at this level. The Australian angle opens co-production pathways and a substantial secondary market.

### Comparable Titles

Title	Connection
<i>The Wind That Shakes the Barley</i> (Loach, 2006)	Irish War of Independence, moral complexity, intimate violence, Palme d'Or
<i>The Spy Who Came in from the Cold</i> (Ritt, 1965)	Intelligence tradecraft, institutional betrayal, double loyalty — the <i>le Carré</i> register
<i>Michael Collins</i> (Jordan, 1996)	The same period, from the inside — a benchmark for the genre's commercial ceiling
<i>Shadow Dancer</i> (Marsh, 2012)	Female double agent, intimate intelligence work, moral cost of surveillance
<i>Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy</i> (Alfredson, 2011)	Mole-hunting procedural, institutional betrayal, the damage of long deception
<i>Brooklyn</i> (Crowley, 2015)	Irish setting, female protagonist navigating divided loyalties, European prestige drama

As the closing chapter of the SHEILA saga, this film carries the accumulated weight of two complete preceding films — all their character relationships, emotional history, and thematic architecture paying off here. An audience that has followed Sheila from Queensland to the Somme to Cork will experience this film at a depth unavailable to a standalone feature. A new audience will find a complete and gripping spy thriller that does not require prior knowledge.

## 9. PRODUCTION & FINANCE NOTES

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Target budget: EUR €4M–€10M / AUD \$6M–\$16M. This range reflects the scale required for an authentic 1920s Irish period production — location work in County Cork, period vehicles, Black and Tan and Flying Column military detail, the practical demands of the farmhouse and barracks sets — while remaining within the range of mid-tier European co-production finance.

### Irish Finance Pathways

Ireland's Section 481 tax incentive — a 32% tax credit on qualifying Irish expenditure — is a primary component of the finance plan. Screen Ireland's production fund and development support programmes are a natural fit for a period drama of this subject matter and scale. The project's engagement with historically significant events of the Irish War of Independence positions it well for Screen Ireland's cultural mandate.

### Australian Co-Production

The Australian protagonist, the prominent Australian secondary lead, and the Australian creative team make this project eligible for formal co-production arrangements under the Australia–Ireland Film Co-Production Agreement. This pathway activates both the Australian Producer Offset (40%) and the Section 481 incentive simultaneously — a meaningful finance contribution from both territories. Screen Australia and Screen Queensland are natural funding conversation partners.

### UK Co-Production

The British colonial administration setting, the British barracks and Auxiliary characters, and the Commonwealth historical subject matter make the project eligible for UK co-production arrangements. BFI and BBC Film have demonstrated sustained interest in Irish War of Independence material — Michael Collins, The Wind That Shakes the Barley, Shadow Dancer — and the perspective offered here is distinct from all prior entries in that space.

### Streaming & Distribution

The completed trilogy — three scripts, three treatments, a published source novel, and a developed online presence — represents an unusual and commercially significant package. A streaming platform acquiring all three films acquires a prestige saga property with the kind of narrative arc and character depth that sustains sustained audience engagement across multiple entries. Netflix, Apple TV+, Stan, and the BritBox/Acorn cluster are natural conversations for a package of this profile and period setting.

## 10. THE COMPLETE TRILOGY

All three scripts are complete, copyright registered, and WGA registered. The source novel is available on Amazon. Each film functions as a standalone dramatic work. Together they constitute one of the most unusual saga properties in contemporary Australian and Irish cinema.

<b>FILM ONE</b> <b>OUTBACK VENGEANCE</b> <i>Colonial Queensland, 1890s</i>	<b>FILM TWO</b> <b>THE SOMME</b> <i>Western Front, France, 1916</i>	<b>FILM THREE</b> <b>THE MAGPIE</b> <i>County Cork, Ireland, 1920–22</i>
A fourteen-year-old outlaw becomes the most dangerous woman in colonial Queensland.	The same woman, twenty years later, conducts unauthorised night rescues in No Man's Land and discovers that her colonial past has followed her to the other side of the world.	Now officially dead, she operates as a spy in 1920s Cork — until the man she thought dead at the Somme walks through her door, and the priest she trusts proves to be the informer she is hunting.
<i>Genre: Colonial Survival Thriller / Australian Gothic</i>	<i>Genre: WWI Drama / Battlefield Survival / Character Study</i>	<i>Genre: Spy Thriller / War of Independence / Character Study</i>

### The Connective Tissue

The rhyme — I wish I were an eagle, Pie, swimming in the sky — begins as a child's vow to her horse in Film One, appears in the mud of No Man's Land in Film Two, and is entirely absent from Film Three. Its absence is its presence. Sheila no longer needs to say it. She has become it.

Thomas Carson becomes Thomas Archer — the name change is unexplained and needs no explanation. He was always becoming this. The boy who could not understand why Sheila didn't choose him grows into the man who removes her name from a report in the dead of night and asks for nothing in return and then lets the photograph go into the harbour wind.

The names of the dead accumulate across three films — Nick, Horton, Digger, Piebald, Anton — and are carried by Sheila as a private litany. In the third film she says them without saying them. They are in the way she sits with a woman who has lost everything. They are in the steadiness of her hands.

## 11. WRITER & PRODUCER

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Gregory J. Round is a Brisbane-based writer, producer, and novelist. The SHEILA trilogy represents his most sustained creative project — three complete scripts, a published source novel, and a full pitch package developed over several years. All three scripts are copyright registered and WGA registered.

The source novel SHEILA is available on Amazon (2025). A full pitch package — scripts, treatments, pitch materials, and online presence — is available at [sheila1screenplay.gregoryround.online](http://sheila1screenplay.gregoryround.online).

### **Gregory J. Round — Writer & Producer**

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