

# SHEILA

## THE SOMME

---

### FULL TREATMENT

*Film Two of the SHEILA Saga*

<b>Written by</b>	Gregory J. Round
<b>Based on</b>	Original Screenplay — SHEILA: THE SOMME
<b>Preceded by</b>	SHEILA: OUTBACK VENGEANCE (script complete)
<b>Genre</b>	WWI Drama   Battlefield Survival   Character Study
<b>Format</b>	Feature Film   Est. 110–120 minutes
<b>Setting</b>	The Western Front — The Somme, France   1916
<b>Tone</b>	The Hurt Locker meets The English Patient
<b>Copyright</b>	© 2025 Gregory J. Round   WGA / Copyright Registered
<b>Contact</b>	gregoryround123@outlook.com   +61 403 615 699

*"Thousands of miles from Australia and still fighting."*

## 1. OVERVIEW

---

SHEILA: THE SOMME is the second film in a two-part saga. Where the first film — SHEILA: OUTBACK VENGEANCE — told the story of a fourteen-year-old girl forged into an outlaw by colonial Queensland's frontier violence, this film carries that same woman to the Western Front in 1916, where the industrial-scale slaughter of the Somme meets a protagonist who has already survived something just as pitiless and far more intimate.

Sheila Hamilton is now a battlefield nurse. She has enlisted under an assumed identity, trading one form of survival for another. The Somme is not a place she came to because she believed in the war. She came because the world she knew in Queensland burned to the ground and a uniform was the only door left open to her. She is not a victim of the Western Front. She is, as she has always been, its most alert intelligence — the woman who reads a situation faster than anyone around her and pays for that clarity at every turn.

The film follows Sheila as she defies standing orders to conduct unauthorised night rescues in No Man's Land, discovers that her colonial past has followed her to the other side of the world in the form of Thomas Carson, and falls into a brief but genuine love with the army surgeon Captain Anton — a man whose decency cannot survive contact with what Sheila and Thomas carry between them.

SHEILA: THE SOMME is a war film about what war does to people who were already broken before they arrived. It is also a love story — complicated, costly, and without consolation. And it is a new chapter in a portrait of a woman who has spent her entire life being told by institutions, by men, and by circumstance what she is allowed to be — and who has, every single time, refused.

## 2. LOGLINE & PREMISE

---

### Logline

*A colonial outlaw turned battlefield nurse defies military orders to rescue the dying from No Man's Land on the Somme — until the man she was a bushranger with in Australia, follows her from the other side of the world and destroys the one person who made the war survivable.*

### Premise

1916. The Somme. The most lethal battlefield in human history. Thousands of wounded men lie in No Man's Land calling for help that doctrine says cannot come. Sheila Hamilton — nursing sister, former Queensland bushranger, fugitive — decides she will go out anyway.

She is not supposed to be here. She enlisted under a false identity. She wears trousers under her nurse's coat. She has already survived a colonial frontier that should have killed her twice over. The Somme is simply the next impossible situation she has walked into and refused to die in.

What she does not know — cannot know — is that Thomas Carson, the boy she ran from in Queensland, the boy who loved her in the way that destroys things, has ended up in the same trench. When a German flare illuminates No Man's Land during one of her illegal rescue missions and she rolls a wounded soldier over to check his breathing, she is looking at the face of her past.

The collision of these two worlds — the Western Front and colonial Queensland, institutional authority and personal history, love as care and love as possession — produces the film's central tragedy. Sheila finds something worth living for in the kindness of Captain Anton. Thomas, who has never learned the difference between protecting someone and owning them, cannot allow it.

### 3. TONE & WORLD

---

The Western Front is presented not as spectacle but as weather — a permanent condition that the characters move through rather than confront. The visual grammar is intimate and physical: close on faces, close on hands, close on mud. The landscape is vast and broken, the sky low and colourless. Shellfire is not exciting. It is ambient, relentless, and exhausted.

Tonally the film sits between the moral seriousness of *The Hurt Locker* and the interior emotional precision of *The English Patient*. It shares Gallipoli's combination of Australian character and institutional futility, without the sentimentality. The violence is systemic, embedded, and costly — never thrilling for its own sake. When Sheila pulls a dying man through mud, we feel the weight of him. When she loses Anton, we feel the weight of that too.

The film's sound design carries as much world-building as the image. The barrage is not a dramatic set-piece — it is a geological event, a VISSERROOL-THUD-SHRIEEK layered into continuous deafening sound that the characters must simply endure. The silence after a barrage is not peace. It is the interval before the next one.

#### **The Queensland Counterpoint**

SHEILA: THE SOMME is in constant dialogue with the first film. The rhyme Sheila invented for her horse Piebald — I wish I were an eagle, Pie, swimming in the sky — runs through both films as the emotional thread connecting the child she was to the woman she has become. The names of her dead — Nick, Horton, Digger, Piebald — are spoken here as a private litany. The colonial world is present in every scene even when it is invisible.

This dialogue between the two films is not optional for the audience — each film is designed to stand alone — but it rewards those who see them in sequence. The boy who kills Sheila's father in Queensland to save her, and who cannot understand why she is not grateful, becomes the man who leads a surgeon into a machine gun nest twenty years later for the same reason. The wound is the same. The damage is permanent. The film does not explain this. It shows it.

---

## 4. CHARACTERS

---

### Sheila Hamilton — Protagonist

A woman in her early thirties. Former Queensland bushranger, currently nursing sister on the Western Front — a rank she holds under a false identity. Lean, mud-streaked, trousers under her nurse's coat. She moves through the hospital system with the competence of someone who learned medicine the way she learned everything: under pressure, without a net.

Sheila is not performing toughness. She is simply operating at the only level she has ever known. The institution around her — military hierarchy, medical doctrine, standing orders — is a system she navigates with the same cool intelligence she brought to colonial Queensland: find the weakness, work around it, keep moving. When Major Morrison forbids her from going into No Man's Land, she goes anyway. When he puts her under guard, she cuts the back of her tent.

What makes Sheila extraordinary — and what the film takes care to show — is that her courage is not the absence of fear. It is the presence of something she values more than safety. In Queensland that was survival and justice. On the Somme it is the sound of wounded men calling from the dark, and her refusal to pretend she cannot hear them.

She is also a woman who has lost almost everyone she has ever loved: Nick, Horton, Digger, Piebald. When she finds something worth loving again — in Anton's genuine decency, his willingness to be present without demanding anything — she does not know how to protect it. She is used to things being taken. She is not used to being the one who stays.

▮ *"Thousands of miles from Australia and still fighting."*

### Captain Anton — The Surgeon

An army surgeon in his thirties or forties. Career military, controlled, exhausted in the way that only someone who has been stitching men back together under artillery can be exhausted. He is the institutional figure who chooses, repeatedly, not to act institutionally.

Anton sees Sheila clearly from the beginning — not her history, which he does not know, but her competence, her moral intelligence, and the cost she is paying to exercise it. When she wants to go into No Man's Land, he does not immediately forbid it. He asks how. When she tells him she is a wanted woman from colonial Queensland, his first response is not to report her. It is to tell her that the woman he knows saved lives in No Man's Land when she was told not to, and that she knows courage.

Anton is the film's moral centre precisely because he has no dramatic history. He is simply a good man in an impossible place, doing his job, and quietly choosing the right thing when the right thing costs him. That quality — ordinary decency under pressure — is what Sheila has never had access to before. It is also, Thomas correctly identifies, the quality that will get him killed.

His death in No Man's Land — led there by Thomas under the guise of a rescue mission, sent forward into a machine gun nest — is the film's central wound. He dies trying to understand something Sheila told him she did not know how to explain. He dies with his eyes open, face down in the mud, and Sheila trying CPR in the dark while bullets snap past her head.

▮ *"Then steal me too. Steal these days. Steal this moment. Steal whatever you need."*

### **Sergeant Thomas (Tommy) Carson — The Complication**

Thomas is now in his mid-thirties. He was the boy in Queensland who killed Sheila's father, who rode across a continent on a stolen horse to find her, who burst into her cabin on the steamboat and demanded she choose. Twenty years have not changed him. They have only given his possessiveness more practice.

He is wounded when Sheila finds him in No Man's Land — shrapnel in his thigh and foot, a head wound, face caked in mud and blood. She rolls him over and for a moment, in the green-white light of a German flare, the whole film compresses into a single image: two people from a destroyed world, meeting each other again in the middle of another one.

Thomas loves Sheila. This is never in question. The tragedy is that his love has always been expressed as the right to decide what happens to her. He killed her father not because she asked him to but because he couldn't bear to watch. He leads Anton into a machine gun nest not because he hates him but because he cannot tolerate the idea of Sheila having something he cannot control. He is the most dangerous kind of character: one who genuinely believes he is protecting the person he is destroying.

His final act — blowing up Morrison's bunker to free Sheila from confinement, then going into No Man's Land to rescue her when she is captured by a German patrol — contains both the best and the worst of him. He saves her life. He has already cost her the only thing that made it worth living. When Sheila is shot in the final sequence and lies bleeding in the mud, Thomas holds her hand and sings the rhyme from her childhood. Then he makes the decision she told him not to make.

▮ *"You love me the way a man loves a thing he owns. Nothing has changed. It's the steamboat all over again."*

### **Major Morrison — Institutional Authority**

Morrison is the military institution personified: rigid, correct, responsible, and completely unable to make room for what Sheila is doing. He is not a villain. He is a man whose job is to hold a system together under conditions that are destroying it, and who cannot afford to acknowledge that the system has failed the men dying in No Man's Land.

His arc is more nuanced than it first appears. When Sheila's unauthorised night rescues begin producing results — men alive who should be dead, numbers that make his casualty figures look different — he does not immediately crush the operation. He lets it run. He tells her she is forming an experimental unit, unofficial, and that it ends if a nurse so much as looks like dying. And then: Prove me wrong. That moment — a senior officer acknowledging that the woman he has been trying to stop was right — is the film's most quietly significant institutional concession.

His death in the explosion Thomas plants in his bunker is morally ambiguous. He was about to send Sheila back to England. Thomas, characteristically, decided to remove the obstacle.

### **Elsie — The Companion**

A young nurse, early twenties, terrified and determined in equal measure. Elsie is the film's moral witness — the person who sees Sheila clearly, who chooses to follow her into No Man's Land even when she understands what it could cost, and who says simply: You can't stop me. She is the uncomplicated version of the loyalty that Thomas corrupts. She stays because she chooses to. She asks for nothing in return.

---

## 5. STRUCTURE

---

### ACT ONE — The Barrage

The film opens in two registers simultaneously. A strong sun rises over the Australian outback — white, flat, a thin strip of brown. An eagle cries. Then: CUT TO BLACK. Silence. Then the distant rumble begins, building into the barrage sequence at the field hospital triage that opens the action proper.

The barrage is our introduction to the world Sheila now inhabits: canvas tents, stretchers, wounded men everywhere, the air full of VISSERROOL-THUD-SHRIEEK and cordite and dirt and blood. We find Sheila already working — mud-streaked, blood on her sleeves, kneeling beside a soldier with a mangled leg, tying off a wound with shaking hands as the earth bucks around her.

The opening act establishes the world, the institutional hierarchy, and the central dramatic problem. Sheila can hear the wounded men calling from No Man's Land. The stretcher bearers cannot do what she can do. She approaches Major Morrison and asks permission to take a small unit out at night. He refuses. She goes anyway.

The first incursion into No Man's Land — Sheila and Elsie and two experienced bearers, crawling through mud and wire in darkness — ends without a rescue. The soldier they find is too far gone. Sheila stays with him, holds his hand, injects morphine. She closes his eyes and signals the retreat. One man died medicated with a nurse instead of alone. Morrison, confronted with this fact, cannot find the words to respond to it. He confines her to her tent.

“There are thousands of wounded men out there. Do you think you can save or comfort them all?” — Morrison

### ACT TWO — The Night Rescues

Sheila cuts the back of her tent and goes out again. And again. A montage of night incursions accumulates across the act's centre: the second night produces one survivor; the third, two; by the seventh night, eight men are brought back alive. The bearers learn tourniquets. Sheila maps shell holes like streets. Whispered signals replace spoken words.

Morrison, reviewing casualty figures that no longer add up, confronts Anton. Anton tells him the recoveries are hers. Morrison's response — making the operation unofficial, experimental, Sheila personally responsible for its conduct — is not a capitulation but it is an acknowledgement. The institution has bent, slightly, toward the evidence.

Into this world: Thomas Carson. Found in a shell hole during a night rescue, face down, shrapnel in his thigh and foot and a head wound. Sheila rolls him over with a nurse's efficiency — and the flare blooms overhead and the green-white light shows her the face she has not seen since Queensland.

The Vignacourt sequence — two days' leave, a modest inn, soft French countryside — is the film's emotional fulcrum. Three people moving around each other in the deceptive calm of a world without shells. Anton and Sheila falling into something they cannot name. Thomas watching them and making his calculations. The chapel scene, where all three sit in separate pews unable to speak, followed by Thomas stepping into Anton's path: a warning that Anton dismisses and should not.

In the inn's common room, Sheila tells Anton what she is. Former bushranger. Wanted. The usual sins. Colonial Queensland was wild and I loved it. Anton's response — you saved men in No Man's Land when you were told not to; you hold their hands while they die; if you were a criminal you're the strangest one I've ever met — is not naïve. It is precise. He sees what she did, not what she was.

Sheila visits Thomas that night and tells him clearly: I'm not yours. The conversation that follows is the cleanest articulation in either film of what Thomas's love actually is. Did you ever love me? — I loved what we were. When we were young. — And now? — Now I'm tired. Thomas nods. Right. Then he looks at her with the eyes of a man who has already decided something.

▮ *"He was my peace." — Sheila, after Anton's death*

### ACT THREE — No Man's Land

The return to the Somme. A major assault has failed catastrophically. Thousands of Diggers have walked into machine gun fire. The battlefield grows silent and then the cries begin from the wounded in No Man's Land.

Anton's death is the act's first blow. Thomas, under the guise of a rescue mission, leads the surgeon forward into darkness — hanging back on his wounded leg, telling Anton to push further, to check a noise to the left. Anton steps into open ground. A machine gun finds him. He dies face down in the mud with his eyes open and Sheila, when she finds him, tries CPR in the darkness and then tries to drag him while the bearers pull her back.

The confrontation that follows is the film's emotional detonation. Sheila does not scream at Thomas. She speaks with a terrible, exhausted precision. Each word a verdict. You killed the best man I've ever known. — I love you. — Yes. You do. And then: You love me the way a man loves a thing he owns. Nothing has changed. It's the steamboat all over again. Get out. And if you come near me again, Thomas Carson, I will kill you myself.

Morrison, confronting Sheila over Anton's death and her role in it, plans to send her back to England under guard. Thomas plants explosives in Morrison's bunker and kills him. Sheila, freed from her tent by the explosion, goes back out into No Man's Land — one more rescue mission, one more night, one more time she refuses to stop.

She is captured by a German patrol. Thomas, hearing she is alive and being held, disguises himself in a German overcoat and goes in after her. Inside the German medical dugout, she finds wounded men and begins treating them — because that is what she does, even now, even here, even in enemy lines. Thomas extracts her at gunpoint.

The final sequence: Thomas and Sheila running through No Man's Land, machine gun fire raking the mud around them. Thomas is hit. Sheila half-carries him. Then — Sheila is hit. She goes down. She cannot feel her legs. Blood in the mud. The British wire is visible. British voices shout from the trench. And the German patrol closes in behind them.

Thomas holds her hand. He looks at the pistol. She yanks his wrist down. Don't you do it. He whispers that he is afraid of himself. She says if you love me then stop deciding how people die. He lowers the pistol. They sing the rhyme together — I wish I were an eagle, Pie, swimming in the sky — her voice fading. She passes out dreaming of the river and Piebald.

CUT TO BLACK. Two gunshots. Thomas's voice: Trying not to die, Pie.

*"If you love me... then stop deciding how people die." — Sheila's final words to Thomas*

## 6. THEMES

---

### **Institutional Indifference and Its Limits**

The military command structure in this film is not corrupt. Morrison is doing his job. The standing orders that keep nurses out of No Man's Land are rational — lives saved by unauthorised rescues do not offset the institutional chaos of nurses being killed or captured in the field. The system is not wrong about everything. It is simply wrong about Sheila Hamilton, specifically, and the film makes that distinction with care.

Sheila's repeated experience of institutional refusal — Morrison saying no, the Infantry Sergeant saying no, she being put under guard — and her equally repeated decision to act anyway is not presented as heroic rebellion. It is presented as the only logical response available to someone who can hear the wounded and knows what to do about it. The system cannot see what she sees. She cannot pretend she doesn't see it.

### **Possessive Love as Violence**

The central dramatic argument of both films — made explicit here — is that Thomas's love for Sheila is genuine and catastrophic in equal measure. He has never understood the difference between protecting someone and controlling them. In Queensland he killed her father and could not understand why she was not grateful. On the Somme he kills the man she loves and advances the same logic: I couldn't let him put you in danger.

The film does not make Thomas a monster. It makes him recognisable. He is the man who genuinely believes his love gives him the right to make decisions about the person he loves. That belief — that love confers ownership — is presented without judgement and without exculpation. The damage it causes is shown in full.

### **Survival as Moral Accumulation**

Sheila has been surviving since she was fourteen years old. Every survival has cost her something. On the Somme that cost reaches its highest point: the one person who offered her something other than endurance is gone. What remains is the thing she has always had — the refusal to stop. Whether that refusal is courage or compulsion is a question the film leaves open.

### **War and the Already-Broken**

SHEILA: THE SOMME is interested in what the Western Front does to people who arrived already damaged. Sheila does not discover horror on the Somme — she recognises it. The mud and wire and industrial death of No Man's Land rhymes with something she has already known. That recognition is part of what makes her effective out there, and part of what makes her impossible to save.

## 7. MARKET POSITIONING

SHEILA: THE SOMME targets the audience that made *The Hurt Locker*, *1917*, *Gallipoli*, and *The English Patient* significant both critically and commercially. This is an audience with appetite for serious, physically immersive war drama told from an intimate human perspective — that does not sanitise its subject matter and does not resolve its moral questions cheaply.

The film's distinctive qualities — an Australian female protagonist, the colonial backstory as counterpoint, the possessive love triangle — position it apart from the standard WWI film without placing it outside the genre's commercial range. The action sequences are real and visceral. The emotional core is as strong as any prestige drama. The final thirty minutes deliver the kind of sustained tension that genre audiences reward.

### Comparable Titles

Title	Connection
<i>1917</i> (Mendes, 2019)	Sustained physical tension, intimate WWI perspective, formal ambition
<i>The Hurt Locker</i> (Bigelow, 2008)	War as psychological pressure, institutional friction, female-directed male world
<i>Gallipoli</i> (Weir, 1981)	Australian character and mateship against institutional futility
<i>The English Patient</i> (Minghella, 1996)	Love triangle, war, memory, the cost of attachment
<i>The Nightingale</i> (Kent, 2018)	Australian female protagonist, colonial violence, moral seriousness
<i>Testament of Youth</i> (Williams, 2014)	WWI nursing, female perspective, loss and survival

The existence of a complete prequel — SHEILA: OUTBACK VENGEANCE, also script-complete — positions this as a franchise property with long-term value. A distributor or platform acquiring THE SOMME acquires the option on a colonial thriller that functions as an origin story for every choice Sheila makes under fire on the Western Front. Both films work as standalones. Together they are one of the most unusual two-film packages in contemporary Australian cinema.

## 8. PRODUCTION & FINANCE NOTES

---

Target budget: AUD \$5M–\$12M. This range reflects the scale required for an authentic WWI production — period locations, practical trench construction, the No Man's Land sequences which require controlled exterior environments, period medical and military detail, and the sustained action of the final act — while remaining within the range of mid-tier international co-production finance.

### Australian Incentives

The production qualifies for the federal Producer Offset at 40% for Australian productions meeting the significant Australian content test, on the basis of the Australian protagonist, Australian military unit, and Australian creative team. This meaningfully reduces the net budget requirement and strengthens the finance plan.

### Co-Production Pathways

The Western Front setting, British Commonwealth forces, and British character presence (Morrison, Anton) make the film eligible for formal co-production arrangements with the UK (BFI / BBC Film) and France (CNC). A UK co-producer brings access to additional offset incentives and strengthens the international sales position significantly. French location shooting activates French incentive mechanisms.

### Streaming & Pre-Sales

Pre-sale and licensing conversations with platforms demonstrating appetite for prestige war drama — Netflix, Amazon Prime, Stan, Acorn TV, BritBox — represent a credible component of the finance plan. A festival strategy targeting Venice, Toronto, or Sundance, consistent with comparable titles in the comparable list above, would substantially strengthen the pre-sale position.

### Director

The project is actively seeking a director with proven capacity for physically immersive drama, morally serious material, and intimate character work within demanding genre frameworks. The creative package — two complete scripts, this treatment, the published source novel, and the online presence — is fully developed and ready for director attachment conversations.

## 9. THE TWO-FILM SAGA

Both films are complete as screenplays. Each functions as a standalone dramatic work with its own complete shape, world, and emotional resolution. They reward an audience that sees them in sequence, with every element of the colonial film paying off on the Western Front.

<b>SHEILA: OUTBACK VENGEANCE</b> <i>Colonial Queensland, late 19th century</i>	<b>SHEILA: THE SOMME</b> <i>Western Front, France, 1916</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 the men from her past follow her to the other side of the world.
<i>Genre: Colonial Survival Thriller / Australian Gothic</i>	<i>Genre: WWI Drama / Battlefield Survival / Character Study</i>

### What Connects the Two Films

The rhyme — I wish I were an eagle, Pie, swimming in the sky — begins as a child's private vow to her horse in Film One and ends as a dying woman's last conscious thought in Film Two. Between those two moments, it is spoken in times of terror, exhaustion, and grief. It is the emotional signature of the entire saga.

Thomas Carson appears in both films as the same person: a boy and then a man who loves Sheila with everything he has, and whose love has never learned how to not destroy the things it touches. His arc is the saga's central moral argument, running beneath everything else.

The names of Sheila's dead — Nick, Horton, Digger, Piebald — are spoken or referenced in both films. In the second film they are a private litany, a list of everyone she has already survived losing. Anton joins that list. She carries them all.

A distributor or streaming platform acquiring one film is acquiring an option on both. Together they constitute one of the most unusual saga properties in contemporary Australian cinema: a female outlaw origin story that becomes a WWI film, a love triangle that spans two decades and two continents, and a portrait of a woman who refuses to stop for anyone or anything — including the end of the world.

## 10. WRITER & PRODUCER

---

Gregory J. Round is a Brisbane-based writer, producer, and novelist. SHEILA: THE SOMME is the second script in the SHEILA saga. Both scripts are complete, 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**

[gregoryround123@outlook.com](mailto:gregoryround123@outlook.com) | +61 403 615 699

[gregoryround.online](http://gregoryround.online) | [sheila1screenplay.gregoryround.online](http://sheila1screenplay.gregoryround.online)

© 2025 Gregory J. Round | WGA / Copyright Registered | All Rights Reserved