

Last Week on *The Deb Debacle (or, This Show Hates Me, And I'm Trying Not To Hate It Back Because There Are Still Ten Fucking Hours And 51 Damn Youtube Videos Of It Left For Me To Recap)*: The weather was rough, and so were the challenges. But on the plus side, people other than Knob finally realised that this is a game, and that games are meant to be won. Or at least attempted. Unless you're playing tiddly winks. At Tribal Council, Kadina had to choose whether keeping someone who does work around camp, is good at challenges, and has a slightly injured ankle was better to keep around than someone who does nothing around camp, seems to despise the challenges with the passion of a thousand burning nuns, and who was recently on the edge of a nervous breakdown. Both those people voted for Caren, but the other three all voted to keep the basket case, and the four remaining Kadinas have to try and outwit, outplay, and outlast seven remaining Tiparas. Not an easy thing to do when they just outwitted and outplayed themselves. All up, eleven people remain. Who will be voted out... TONIGHT?

Credits. Music from the upcoming Irish pirate film, *Shiver Me Jiggers*.

Commercials. Who would have guessed that all of Microsoft Word's alternate spellings for "dickweed" involve "duckweed"? Apparently, the evil paperclip grew up in New Zealand. I think it may have mated with a Furby to give us Russell Crowe.

This week, the annoying scenes of Returning From Tribal Council are after the credits for some reason. No, I don't know why. But I like it better this way, so please don't switch it back. It's nice to be able to tune out for a little while. I mean, aside from commercials and the credits themselves. And all that time when the show isn't on. And all the time Tipara is talking. But anyway, they are standing around the fire and NoMind intelligently observes that they have to win the next Immunity or they are even more screwed than they are already. Craig wants them to give Tipara something to think about. I don't know what's up with that, considering most of them are already thinking how they proceed once they boot all of you off after the merge. Caren confessionals that "Tribal Council last night was just a nightmare. Pure nightmare." You hear that, armed robbers of Darwin? Knives are nothing. Guns are nothing. But threaten her with Link and she'll do whatever it takes. Sylvain confessionals that he's surprised Deb got voted off. He's lucky she did, really, because otherwise it could have been him. Actually, it should have been him anyway. Sylvain tells Caren he voted for her, and she says she knows and is okay with it, with this absolutely brilliant facial expression that makes it look like he's a piece of dog poo she scraped from the bottom of her shoe. Back in his confessional, Sylvain thinks it's weird she knew it was him who voted for her. He thinks it's strange that three people voted for someone with an injury, because clearly in addition to not liking the whole competition aspect of the game, he doesn't understand it. Sylvain confronts everyone together, and they deny being in cahoots with each other. But getting to the bottom of that mystery will have to wait for another time, because Sylvain is hungry and wants to be fed, so someone else will have to cook Deb's giant fish she caught in an attempt to not be voted out.

The next morning, we wake up with Kadina again. The frying pan is dirty and fly-ridden already. Four lonely torches huddle together to escape the coldness of not being lit. Craig lies in a hammock. NoMind confessionals and breaks into tears about missing her life at home and her family and friends. If you can't figure out where this episode is headed, I can't help you. One of the big flaws about Foreshadowing is that it's always so damn obvious to see. It's like watching contestants on *The Biggest Loser* getting makeovers, and always knowing that the guy with the beard is going to get it shaved off to represent the transition between his old and new lives, even though they almost always only grow the beard for the show anyway. Yawn. NoMind realises that everybody is in the same boat, but that it's still tough.

It seems as though the editors got given more wildlife stock footage, because rather than the obligatory kangaroos, emus, and koalas, this time we get a random bird and some bottlebrush. Woo, plants! Actually, I'm not sure that even is a bottlebrush. And my father was a gardener. Go figure. But whatever it is, it's pollen-tastic.

Caren confessionals about NoMind missing her family, and basically saying she should quit her damn crying until she's at home and doesn't miss them anymore.

At Tipara, we return to the waves. Sciona confessionals about the effects no food is having on people, as the tribe goes fishing. Sophie is pleased to have finally caught a fish, and confessionals about how starving she is because they only caught one fish the last time they were there, two days ago. It seems like this would be a good time to bring this up, but the producers appear to have given the tribes excessive supplies for building their camp, but because of the alternating schedule they have with the sea and the windmill, the tribes are starving. I think it's an interesting choice, considering that there's very little actually available in the area to eat, and the weather makes it hard to even get those meager resources. It's certainly more along the lines of Survivor Africa (where almost everything had to be given to Samburu and Boran because of the environment) than Survivor Marquesas (where Maraamu and Rotu got no food and almost literally nothing to help with shelter and fire) in the producer-planned part of the survival aspect, but it's weird in that it's producing the same starvation effect that's seen more in the seasons like Marquesas where they don't get any food provided. Huh. And back to the actual season of Survivor I'm supposed to be talking about.

In other news, Lance hikes his shorts up so they look like a Speedo. I did not need to see that. He confessionals that people are starting to realise that being nice all the time is pointless and takes up too much energy. Which is weird, because you can tell in his confessional he's deliberately trying not to sound jerky. Cue a shot of Hatie botching at Lance after he suggests fishing from the beach. Hatie confessionals about how she's used to eating all day and getting energy all day, and what they're calling a meal is so tiny she wouldn't even consider it a snack. I understand she's a professional athlete and all, but so was Knob, and he seems to be dealing with it. Also, if you want more food, catch it yourself, bitch.

The tribe crowds around in some rocky outcrop, and Joel hands out some snails which are ready to be eaten, despite still being in their shells and not cooked or anything. Tasty. And speaking of tasty, one of the snails takes a dump in Knob's mouth. Go, snail! He spits it out (possibly hitting an Underwater Survivor surfacing for air), and Sciona explains to Joel how you're supposed to eat snails, because she lived in Paris for two years. Oh, wait, that's the wrong show, the wrong number of participants, the wrong gender, and (presumably) the incorrect sexuality. But near enough the right age. So one out of five is good, at least by my standards with this sort of stuff. Knob complains that "they taste like cut up Dunlop tyres", and even Princess Jane looks like she's about to bitchslap him. Hee. One point for Princess Jane. And I love how he specifies Dunlop, in case we thought they tasted like Bridgestones or Michelins. Joel wonders if they've turned savage. Sophie makes a confessional, looking a little like Kylie Minogue would have in that Comedy Company sketch from years ago, if they had had hair straighteners and spaghetti straps back then. And she-goes-she-goes-she-goes-she-goes on about how having no food makes people cranky and hungry. I am convinced she is only here to provide Exposition, because I cannot for the life of me remember her doing anything that didn't involve stating the obvious. She's sort of like the NoMind of this tribe, except all the time we've had to spend over at Kadina has allowed NoMind to get a personality. Sophie? Nothing.

This week's Sweeping Helicopter Shot is brought to you by the power of reversing. Woo! It brings us to Kadina's Rock Mail, where Craig and Caren find a little flag which reads:

*Sand between your fingers, sand between your toes  
The more sand you gather, the further it goes  
When at last your task is through  
Your reward will be shared with those who hear you*

As is customary at Tipara, Knob has to make a pathetic guess at what the challenge is, but this time he actually gets it part right in that it involves phone calls. Still not enough to count as truly correct, or to even come close to cancelling out all the other stuff that's happened, but... still. At Kadina, everybody is half asleep as they read it, but NoMind also makes the phone call conclusion. She says she's going to do whatever it takes to get it. You know, between this and the car two weeks ago, it's as if they really didn't put any planning into which rewards go where. It's like "last week a car, now salt and pepper!" Feh. Kadina leaves camp, and for the first time we don't get any challenge teaser shots.

Commercials. I am freaked out that I am only seven minutes into the show and this recap is already basically half as long as the Episode 2 recap. I guess Tim really was boring to watch.

When we return, we only get two shots of coloured barrels (Kadina's is yellow, for those who still care). We don't even get the usual cool music, but instead the sounds of wind. The tribes walk up to Link. Tipara really looks like they could use a bath. And Link really looks like he could use a new fake tanning place. He welcomes them to another day in paradise, and I appreciate his attempts to at least try and be funny. He's not succeeding, of course, but attempted sarcasm is always welcome. The challenge is all about teamwork and thinking laterally. So... Kadina is screwed, which means they're a shoe-in for Immunity. Woo! But if they lose this and save themselves, they will miss out on getting to call their loved ones on a provided Telstra mobile phone, because Telstra works even in the remote corners of Australia. Now they've got that sorted out, can they try getting some decent service in the cities? Seriously, Telstra is the most inept phone company in the world. I've spoken to Optus people all the way over in India who were able to get my crappy service problems fixed quicker than they did. And I wasn't even an Optus customer. Anyway, the winners get thirty minutes of call time to share. Which will be just enough time to get off hold with their complaints department, give or take two hours. (Can you tell I think Telstra sucks? Because they do.)

One video down, another fifty to go. Woo. On the downside, I still have to sit through some of these people for another fifty videos. And we also get stuck with Eddie McEverywhereBackThen for the last 16. Damn it. (Note to self: You know what would make fifty videos go faster? Taking less than six attempts to open the right one. I am an idiot.)

The challenge, luckily, is very simple for something Link has been working up so much. You roll an empty barrel (which really looks more like a gigantic can than a barrel) along the sand to a filling area. There, you stick the flag inside and dump sand in it any way you can until the sand reaches a marked line on the flag. Then you use a hammer and bolts to put the lid on, trapping the sand inside forever. Forever! Presumably, you take the flag out so you can get the lid on, but Link forgets to mention that. When you've got the lid on, you've got to roll the can all the way back to the start. As Link says "the first tribe home gets to call home." Notice he specifically doesn't say anything about a tribe that finishes second but might have won if they were more competent than they actually are, TIPARA.

Sciona, Lance, and Hatie are sitting out, according to Link.

Survivors ready? GO! People run and move their giant cans. Kadina gets their first, as usual almost entirely thanks to Craig. Hatie has taken on Jeff's former role of Cheering Banshee this time. Everybody figures out that they can use their clothes to dump sand in quickly, thus defeating the purpose of their being an easy way and a hard way of doing this. There's a lot of Hatie yelling and sand filling and Link reminding, and this is really the most pathetically boring challenge ever. In the history of Survivor. Ever. There are challenges where all you do for six hours is stand on a log, and they are more fun to watch. Ugh. Kadina gets theirs filled first and they go to grab their tools. Link exposit something we hadn't heard before which is that there are six bolts, and you need them all in before you can start heading back. Not that this would have made sense to say earlier or anything. But of course, Kadina, having finally built up a big lead for once, loses one of their bolts. Go figure. They start combing the beach for the missing bolt while Joel doesn't lose any of Tipara's. You can tell everyone knows how this is going to end, because we get Kadina consoling each other before the other tribe is even halfway back to the start. Caren points out the same thing I noticed last week, which is that whoever wins the reward loses Immunity. In boring news, Tipara's barrel appears to be heavy, and it's entirely possible that Knob stashed part of his ego in there. Lord knows the entire thing wouldn't fit. Tipara gets their barrel to the circle, and now has to stand it up. You know who does all the gruntwork? Rob? No, he's busy crawling and collapsing on the side. Joel? No, he gets it half an inch off the ground, relaxes, and then runs to make it look like he did something. The answer is Sophie, surprisingly enough. I think I mentioned this last week, but she really doesn't get enough credit in the show for how strong she is. That was freakishly awesome.

NoMind cries about losing. Which is actually sort of good, because usually when we get foreshadowing of the kind we did here, the person who wants it the most conveniently gets it, so... interesting, at least.

Anyway, ten minutes later, Kadina is still standing around, and the entire purpose of The Worst Challenge Ever comes to a head when Knob appoints himself Head of Rubbing It In by offering to share the Worst Reward Ever with

Kadina. It appears that all of Tipara has come to this decision (and Sophie at least tries to make it seem like Rob isn't Jesus, which is good, but doesn't mean I'm not hoping for a random crucifixion challenge, at least on a small level), but I wouldn't be surprised if we later found out something weird happened like the producers couldn't even find the bolt with a metal detector and decided just to give both tribes the reward. Like they did with the matches during that first challenge that fucked up. And it certainly looks like they told Kadina to wait around, because they usually wind up moping at their own camp when they lose challenges. And this ruins my entire point by allowing NoMind to get her phone call. Aside from the fact they probably lost the challenge fair and square, Tipara really should not have been allowed to share. This isn't a Montessori school; this is a game about beating each other. Why don't we just split the money eleven ways right now, if that's how these people are going to play?

Commercials. Who cares, I'm still steamed up.

We're back, and it looks like the editors didn't completely abandon all their emu stock footage. But they also got some goanna footage. It's Day 17, and Kadina walk to the cliffs. They try to get some of the honey Tipara took a few days ago, but it looks like it's gone (obviously). Craig confessionals that it was always going to come down to who was dumb enough to upset the bees first. And that was him. Hee. Even though it wasn't. Big smile. But Caren and Craig try to get some anyway. Caren can't believe he's doing this. Me too. People aren't nearly as hot when they're covered in bee stings. He doesn't even try to attack the hive when the bees start attacking. Hilariously, not only does Craig leap down from the embankment he's on, but he also runs past Caren and the camera guy and continues a fair way down to the beach. In his confessional, he says he's lucky the whole swarm didn't attack, but that he's that desperate for something sweet. Caren offers to take on the role, picking a stinger out of his eye. Aw.

Spiders also live here. Who knew?

At Tipara, Hatie confessionals that she keeps almost crying just because she's so tired and hungry and bitchy. Except for that last part. She seems to think she's pregnant. Apparently, the Imaginary Love Of Hatie And Knob isn't so Imaginary after all. But she's in denial. She says the game is like a rollercoaster. Yeah, the Ghost Train. Sciona confessionals that she can tell how Hatie's body is just wasting away. Oh well.

Knob and Lance are picking apart plants trying to find food. Knob confessionals that he's full of shit (he actually says he's "had three movements in sixteen days", but that's what he really means). He goes on to say that his clothes are falling off because he's losing so much weight. Lance says he feels all right, which he thinks is weird because he's older than people like Hatie and Joel who are having trouble.

Back at the Kadina Kliffs, Sylvain fishes. Hey, nice to see him finally doing something. He catches a hand-sized fish, which NoMind and Craig remove from the line, because Sylvain is clearly incapable of doing more than one thing for the tribe in a day. Caren confessionals about how the tribe is so closeknit, and we are again reminded of the Almost Fucking sleeping arrangements, because I needed to be reminded that Deb wasn't the only person responsible for Kadina's virtual orgies. Brilliantly, this is immediately followed by Caren down at the cliffs doing the "My fish was THIIIIIS big" gesture, which in this context almost definitely means the editors want us to think either Craig or Sylvain is THIIIIIS big. Unless there's something they haven't told us about NoMind yet, that is. But usually that would be part of the promotional gimmicks they would have forced down our throats before the season, and I remember no such thing, so I think we can confirm she's all woman.

Speaking of NoMind, she confessionals that she would rather talk to her friends than eat, but that the others were "a little bit blasé about it". It still means a lot to her, though. Confirming she has watched too many movies and has no actual survival skills whatsoever, NoMind uses a rock to pound a fish head in order to kill the fish. And has to take at least five attempts to do so. Caren laughs at her ineptitude. Sylvain catches another fish, which tries to escape after learning what NoMind did to the other one.

The sweeping cloud shots are back. They take us to the Worst Reward Ever, which apparently wasn't given straight after the challenge, probably because either Link hadn't paid his bill, or because the Telstra people were late in fixing the reception. The second one is more likely. I might have known the producers wouldn't let me not witness a

bunch of sap starring people we don't know and don't particularly care about. Since I hate schmaltz, hated the challenge, and certainly hate Telstra, let's keep this brief, shall we?

Lance calls his son and cries. Princess Jane talks to her mother and doesn't. She says she's loving being out here, and that there's only "23 short days" to go. Really? It feels like this season is already much longer. Hatie's mother hears how she looks and feels like the Rat Woman. That has got to be the world's lamest Superhero name, but it is completely accurate. Sciona looks bored. Hatie also tells her mother that "conniving and all that yucky stuff is not a part of this game". Well, if you're not Hatie herself, it's not a part of this game. Joel gets dehydrated crying while on the phone to his girlfriend. Knob thinks "they're trying to kill [him] out here". He wishes. I almost do too, come to think of it. In the interests of convincing us he's the Messiah, Knob gets to talk to both his wife AND his son. Gah. Sciona talks to her mother, which does seem sort of surprising. I would have figured her husband or her kids would have made more sense. But she's already forming her dinner order for when she comes home, so Sense has clearly been kidnapped and held ransom in Link's basement.

Caren talks to her boyfriend. Unsurprisingly, he does not find out about what goes on after dark. But he does find out about Caren's armpit hair. She quite clearly has her priorities in order. NoMind talks to her own boyfriend, but we hear practically nothing of their conversation. Go figure that it's one of the people I actually like who gets ignored in this whole sequence. And the only one we saw get worked up about it. Craig talks to his mum, which is great, because it adds more fuel to my Theory Fire, which is already flaming brightly. So to speak. Sylvain talks to his own mum, which I guess means I need to start a new Theory Fire. His mum asks if he's skinny, and he actually lifts his shirt up to show her, not realising that (1) he's using a phone, not a video camera; (2) the phone does not have a camera; and (3) even if it did, she'd be getting a nice view of the inside of his ear right about now. Sometimes, you just can't make this stuff up. Creepily, he looks a hell of a lot like Matty from Survivor Gabon here. God, one was bad enough.

Apparently, the editors forgot to put Sophie in Tipara's original group phone call, because she's so dull. Here she is now, talking to her children's babysitter. Her kids are being good and don't seem to be missing her. I wonder if the even remember who she is.

The editors try to make it seem as though everybody is crying here, but note that there is no inter-tribe hugging going on, and we don't get a single shot containing any Kadinās. I wonder why. And that concludes the Worst Reward Ever.

Commercials. In the Nein Newsroom tonight, Channel Nein believes nothing says "Welcome to 2009!" like repeating a thirty-year-old movie about the formation of the Village People, starring the actual Village People themselves. No wonder their ratings suck. (But that doesn't mean I wasn't doing the YMCA actions.) Also, Jeff continues to suck at selling water.

More sweeping helicopter shots chase some sort of large animal (please, oh PLEASE, let it not be a kangaroo) to Kadina's Rock Mail, where NoMind and Sylvain find a peg shaped like a pencil, which this week threatens us of another challenge thusly:

*What falls down will now stretch across  
Dig your feet in or all will be lost  
Choose your strongest to play for your tribe  
Immunity, the prize to keep you alive*

And that rhyme started out so promisingly, too. Feh. Luckily, we get spared another round of What Knob Thinks, because we move straight into the challenge snapshots, this time comprised of a bunch of pegs and the tribes standing around trying to look threatening. Well, at least they're trying.

Link welcomes everyone and takes the Bell from Sciona. A well-timed gong or whatever it is accompanies Link dumping the Bell on that crappy wooden holder it has. This challenge is unique, and not just because it sounds interesting. Each tribe has to choose only one person to play. Everyone else sits out of the challenge. But that's not

the fun part. Those two people are going to race to collect coloured pegs from a row of them in the sand. But that's still not the fun part. Whoever gets all their tribe pegs plus the central multicoloured one first wins Immunity for their tribe. Not the fun part yet. The losers have to go and see Link. That's definitely not the fun part, for them or for the recapper. So, what IS the fun part, I pretend to hear you ask? They'll be doing it while attached to bungy cords. Whee!

Everybody goes off to huddle and decide, and Kadina ignores Link's advice to pick their strongest person, picking Sylvain in the world's most confusing game of Rock, Paper, Scissors. There goes my one legal chance to see Craig in a harness. Tipara chooses Joel. Well, one out of two ain't bad. I can't tell if he's just even more bored than usual, but Link sounds absolutely shocked with both decisions. Not that I blame him, especially on Kadina's side of the equation. Who wouldn't have loved to see a Craig/Knob showdown? Especially if Craig won. But we have to watch Sylvain and Joel instead.

People ready? GO! There is running, and there is crawling. And there is Sylvain falling. Joel grabs his first peg and immediately springs back. Joel grabs his second peg, and Sylvain finally gets his first. Joel gets another peg, after much digging for traction. Joel showboats as Sylvain crawls and gets his second peg. Sylvain gets another peg, and the pair is even with three pegs each, as Link helpfully reminds us. Which is not necessary, with the graphics telling us exactly the same thing. Or perhaps the graphics weren't necessary, with Link already telling us. I'm so confused. Damn noisy fireworks. But Joel almost immediately gets his fourth peg. In a nice natural split-screen shot, Sylvain is running for Peg #4, while Joel is crawling for his fifth and last peg. They both get them, so now Joel only needs the twin peg in the middle of the row. This is actually a very close challenge, past results considered. But Sylvain appears to collapse on his way to the last peg. Knob and Sophie remind Joel about "Seven Three", whatever that means. At first I thought it was their record at challenges, but that's wrong. Tipara has won six challenges -- the true/false replacement challenge, the donut platform balancing, the crow's nest, the sunken treasure, the obstacle course, and the Worst Challenge Ever -- which would make this their seventh win. But Kadina won the buried treasure chest, the dinghy tow, the driving challenge where Sylvain got the car he didn't need, and the lobster hunt. Plus that coin toss on the first day. So it's seven-five (or seven-five-one, if you want to get all technical and count failed challenges), if that's what they're talking about. Which is a lot less lopsided than the actual results make it seem. Sylvain doesn't even appear to try for the last peg, given that Joel is literally inches away from it when he puts the final yellow peg in Kadina's post. For no reason at all, we get a slo-mo shot of Joel taking the final peg, as though the result wasn't completely obvious at that point. We also get a slo-mo shot of Sylvain crying.

So Tipara wins, and we will presumably head into the merge with seven Tipara and three Kadina. Which I now realise is what Knob and Sophie were yelling about. I am an idiot.

On another note, do I think the result could have been different if other people had been chosen? Absolutely. The challenge was not really about brute strength like Link said, but rather about gaining leverage. And the best way to gain leverage, as any tug-of-war participant knows, is to have a bigger frame. (You may imagine a sumo wrestler competing against a jockey to show this.) So there's no doubt in my mind that the much-less-weedy Craig should have done this for Kadina. And that's even without the visual images I could have gotten. Even picking NoMind would have made more sense. For Tipara, I'm not so sure. Joel is big, but he also has that not-so-bulky thing going on which is a disadvantage for this. On the other hand, Knob and Lance are smaller and would have been even less adequate. Sciona too. There's no way Princess Jane or Hatie would have been able to do it. I think maybe the best possible choice they could have made was, surprisingly enough, Sophie. She's got the leverage worked out, as we saw with the barrel earlier, and she's got the whole Amazon woman vibe going on (complete with the nobody knowing much about her). I think that had we had Craig against Sophie, it would have definitely been very very close, but that Craig would have won. Which means that Kadina's choice cost them the challenge. Aren't you glad we had this meaningless hypothetical discussion?

Commercials. You can't stop the music, nobody can stop the music... until the recapper gets embarrassed that he's not only singing along but also miming and incorporating it into the recap.

The next morning the kangaroos are up early. Again. But so are galahs. Everybody mark it off your Australian Animal Stereotype Bingo Cards. Now all we need are kookaburras, cockatoos, and platypuses (platypii? platypodes?). Oh, and a dingo to eat Hatie's possibly-imaginary baby. We get one of our first clear shots of the Kadina mast ever. I want that font for my computer.

NoMind is sleeping with Caren. Not like that, pervs. Craig confessionals that the entire challenge came down to Joel wanting it more. Which is a nice way of saying that choosing someone who was on the verge of quitting a few days ago was not the smartest thing they could have done. As I already pointed out, using reasons that did not involve sucky personalities. Caren confessionals near the Water Windmill that they're the underdogs, because they've had to do everything while Tipara sits out people. Of course, you just came back from a challenge where three of the four of you sat out. Not to mention that Tipara wouldn't have been given the chance to sit so many people out if you didn't keep making crappy decisions. Like choosing Sylvain to represent your tribe. I really want to like these people, especially considering that the other tribe sucks so much (and not in any of the good ways), but you're making it damn hard when you're so incompetent. She also takes the time to bitch about Princess Jane, even though Jane hasn't yet done anything to annoy them. Whatever. Craig bitches about her too, and it seems as though they're already thinking about what happens after the merge, and we've just missed out on any discussion about who's getting booted tonight. NoMind confessionals that everyone's sad, but they know what to expect because everyone's been there so damn much.

Craig confessionals about how he wanted to vote Sylvain out for being a threat, but now has decided not to because he does so much around camp. Not that we've seen any of it. He also says that someone else is not doing as much work as Sylvain has, and I can't see how you can do less, unless you are actively washing the pots and pans in mud and secretly cutting away pieces of the tarp every night. I also wonder who he's talking about, considering both NoMind and Caren have been shown doing camp work. Sylvain confessionals that he's not going to decide who he's voting for until they get to the boat.

Fierce drumming takes us to the beach, where Tipara has arrived to fish. Sophie can taste the fish. Of course, she really has to hope she will, because Lance confessionals that they ate the day's rice for dinner the previous night. Right on cue, Sciona catches a fish. Crisis averted. A bikini-clad Hatie swims past Knob, presumably wearing a Speedo, though it's hard to tell. Everybody is successful with their fish haul, and they decide to eat on the beach AGAIN, which makes me wonder why they can't take their stuff to camp. Joel comments that it's their "first decent meal in five days". But Knob isn't happy, and wants to catch seven more decent-sized fish before they go home, "fat, dumb, and happy". Spoilsport.

Lance confessionals that he thinks the shifting dynamic of the tribe will be more interesting after the merge, when there are three more people joining them. He wonders whether they'll be able to weasel their way into the tribe and shake the game up. It's actually a decent thought about gameplay, and one of the first I've seen all season. In some ways, Kadina is lucky they lost the challenge, because it should be somewhat easier to try and get people to flip from a possible seventh place finish after the Kadinas are booted from the merged tribe to a possible Final Four berth if they side with the Kadinas to get rid of some of the former Tiparas, compared to going from sixth (after four Kadina boots) to fifth (with four Kadinas remaining). And if they can win Immunity once they get to that late stage of the game, they could get to the final two and will almost be guaranteed of the money what with at least four Tiparas on the jury. Lance tells the tribe what he thinks and everybody pretends to care, because they all think there's no way in hell Kadina will survive. I think I like Lance, at least partially because the rest of Tipara doesn't.

Knob confessionals arrogantly that he's trying not to sound arrogant when he says Tipara is a much stronger tribe. That makes sense, considering they have two professional athletes and a mum who is stronger than either of them on the tribe, while Kadina has... Caren and Sylvain. He also admits the other tribe is the Schoolies tribe to their RSL tribe. He looks almost sad saying that he's over the hill. Oh, well. He also talks to the tribe about how they "won" the first half of the game, and Hatie immediately agrees. Shut up, Hatie. Lance points out that they probably got rid of the wrong people early on. Which is true, considering everything we now know. Follow my logic here. Let's say we got rid of sick Bald Spice in the first episode instead of Lucindork. Then, had they still lost the donut-platform task (which I'm not so sure would have happened, since Bald Spice was the one who dragged the tribe down, and Lucindork seems like she could do that task easily), Lucindork would probably have gone anyway. They would have

Tim in the tribe for the woodchopping, and would likely have won. They won the car challenge regardless. So, at this point the tribes would likely be at the very least even with 6 each, or Tipara would have been down 7-5 like Kadina was. Then Kadina would probably have lost the obstacle course and the bungy run anyway, bringing us to either five people each, or to a 6-4 split in favour of Tipara. So, yeah, their choices did impact how much they sucked at the game. (I have no idea why I'm getting so philosophical all of a sudden either.)

The windmill, against rainy clouds. Nice shot. It transitions to a shot of the windmill against sunny clouds, which is the exact opposite of the metaphor I'd expect the weather to be giving us for Kadina right about now. Craig and Sylvain are playing football. Or, a very lame version of it at least. Sylvain has learned to handpass, which is a good thing. But he can't do it without hurting himself, which is not so good.

Sylvain confessionals that Kadina is the closest tribe anyone's ever seen, and I still think that is true to this day, but that they've had the worst performances anyone's ever seen. Not true, thanks to both Ulong (in Palau) and Ravu (in Fiji) since. In fact, they are so close that nobody even appears to be forming alliances. NoMind and Sylvain just generally talk and try to enjoy what could be their last day in the game, while Caren scrubs pots and pans. Craig's whereabouts are unknown, but he is presumably doing some campwork otherwise he wouldn't keep finding reasons to vote others off for not doing anything. Caren confessionals that nobody knows who they're voting for, and that it's horrible that the tribe is shrinking so fast.

Craig and NoMind talk and astutely observe that they'll have to fight to stay in the game. Genius thought, that. And it took two people to figure out. Craig confessionals that the only difference between the two tribes is that there are more people in Tipara who wanted to win, while there were too many people just happy to turn up in Kadina. Well, Craig is off Lucindork's Christmas card list now. Craig says it's not impossible for a Kadina to win, so if he makes it to the merge, he's going to try and win every single challenge he can in order just to fuck up Tipara's strategy. And more power to him, if that's what happens. Hatie and Knob do need their comeuppance, badly. Like, six weeks ago badly.

Commercials. Dear Channel Ten: I'm already annoyed enough with The Biggest Loser for everything last year that didn't involve Bryce or the Commando. I do not need you turning the show into The Amazing Race.

Moon. Cliffs. Kadina walking into the Tribal Council boat. Link welcomes them and tells them to make themselves at home, to whatever degree they are not already doing so. Link exopits that Tipara "decimated" Kadina by winning "every Immunity Challenge bar one". Craig, you can't be happy to be on the Sucky Tribe of Losers... can you? Craig definitely isn't happy, and thinks Kadina is getting humiliated at every available opportunity. Aside from those five challenges they won, I guess. Caren, do you think the game may have turned out differently if you had kept different people? Caren thinks it's too late now and not worth thinking about, which as we all know means Caren thinks that if other people survived, she would be long gone. Sylvain, you were told to pick your strongest person, and you did that with a game of chance. Why were you such idiots? Because we couldn't decide. Okay, but when the tribe gave up on the barrel challenge, you were responsible for the bolts. Given you fucked up both times, do you think you're going home? Sylvain feels no different than usual. NoMind, how are your loved ones? She says the call was exactly what she needed to keep going. Yawn. It was Tipara's idea to share like idiots, but do you think they'll be like that after the merge? NoMind does not, unless they really are idiots. Which is entirely possible.

Time to vote. Caren votes for Sylvain because he's killing her. Presumably not literally, of course. Sylvain votes for NoMind, because he hasn't before. As you do. NoMind votes. Craig votes. That was quick.

Link goes to gather the votes. When he returns, he reminds us that as always he is going to read them, which is disappointing for all those people who thought he was going to use them to make makeshift lanterns. Sylvain. Sylvain. NoMind. Sylvain. And Sylvain is gone, before he can have an even bigger breakdown. Sylvain is snuffed and walks off. Link tersely tells Kadina they have to learn to fend for themselves (which... haven't they been doing that for the last eighteen days already?), and forces them to go back to camp. I think even he's annoyed Kadina lost again, because he seemed unusually sour tonight.

Next week: People abandon their camps and merge. It looks like both tribes have to move out, unless everybody follows Knob in Not Understanding the Tree Mail. Everybody showers, including Craig (Mmmmmmm). Hatie tries to convince Kadina that they have no plan at all. Someone finally realises the game is nasty.

Sylvain confesses that it's surreal, and that he loves the car and still needs to learn how to drive. He also says that whoever wins deserves it.