

THE ENGLISH PATIENT

by

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Based on the novel

by Michael Ondaatje

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EXT. LATE 1942. THE SAHARA DESERT. DAY.

SILENCE. THE DESERT seen from the air. An ocean of dunes for mile after mile. The late sun turns the sand every color from crimson to black.

An old AEROPLANE is flying over the Sahara. Its shadow swims over the contours of sand.

A woman's voice begins to sing unaccompanied on the track. Szerelem, szerelem, she cries, in a haunting lament for her

loved one.

INSIDE the aeroplane are two figures. One, A WOMAN, seems to be asleep. Her pale head rests against the side of the cockpit. THE PILOT, a man, wears goggles and a leather helmet. He is singing, too, but we can't hear him or the plane or anything save the singer's plaintive voice.

The plane shudders over a ridge. Beneath it A SUDDEN CLUSTER OF MEN AND MACHINES, camouflage nets draped over the sprawl of gasoline tanks and armored vehicles. An OFFICER, GERMAN, focuses his field glasses. The glasses pick out the MARKINGS on the plane. They are English. An ANTI-AIRCRAFT GUN swivels furiously.

Shocking bursts of GUNFIRE. Explosions rock the plane, which lurches violently. THE WOMAN SLUMPS FORWARD, slamming her head against the instruments. The pilot grabs her, pulls her back, but she's not conscious. The fuel tank above their heads is punctured. It sprays them both, then EXPLODES.

THE MAN FALLS OUT OF THE SKY, clinging to his dead lover. They are both ON FIRE. She is wrapped in a parachute silk and it burns fiercely. He looks up to see the flames licking at his own parachute as it carries them slowly to earth. Even his helmet is on fire, but the man makes no sound as the flames erase all that matters - his name, his past, his face, his lover.

EXT. THE DESERT. 1942. DAY.

THE PILOT HAS BEEN RESCUED BY BEDOUIN TRIBESMEN. Behind them the wreckage of the plane, still smoking, the Arabs picking over it. A SILVER THIMBLE glints in the sun, is retrieved. Another man comes across A LARGE LEATHER-BOUND BOOK and takes it over to the Pilot. The Pilot is charred. His helmet has melted into his head. He's oblivious to this, cares only about the woman who crashed with him. He twists frantically to find her. Two men pick him up and carry him across to a litter where they carefully wrap him in blankets.

EXT. THE DESERT. DUSK.

The Pilot is being carried across the desert. A mask covers his face.

His view of the world is through the slats of reed. He glimpses camels, fierce low sun, the men who carry him.

EXT. AN OASIS. DUSK.

The Pilot sees a man squat down beside him, takes a date from a sack and begin to chew it. Carefully, the Bedouin eases the mask from the Pilot's face, leaving bandages of cloth and oil, but revealing a mouth. He stops chewing and passes the pulped date into the Pilot's mouth. Mouth to mouth.

EXT. DESERT. DAWN.

THE CARAVANSERAI CROSSES THE DESERT, silhouetted against the dunes.

EXT. AN OASIS. NIGHT.

The SOUND OF GLASS, of tiny chimes. A music of glass.

AN ARAB HEAD APPEARS ON A MOVING TABLE IN THE DESERT. It floats in darkness, shimmering from the light of a fire. The image develops to reveal a man carrying a giant wooden yoke from which hang DOZENS OF SMALL GLASS BOTTLES, on different lengths of string and wire. He could be an angel.

The man approaches the litter which carries the Pilot. He's still in the protective reed mask, wrapped in blankets. The MERCHANT DOCTOR stands over the burned body and sinks sticks either side of him deep into the sand, then moves away, free of the yoke, which balances in the support of the two crutches. He puts some liquid in the Pilot's tongue, whose eyes almost instantly begin to roll. Then he slowly sets about peeling away the layers of oiled cloth which protect the Pilot's flesh.

The Merchant Doctor crouches in front of the curtain of bottles and MAKES A SKIN CUP with the soles of his feet, then leans back to pluck, hardly looking, certain bottles, which he uncorks and mixes in the bowl he'd made with his feet. This mixture he uses to anoint the burned skin. Next he finds green-black PASTE - ground Peacock Bone - and BEGINS TO RUB IT on to the Pilot's rib cage. All the while he us humming and chanting. The bottles continue to jingle.

EXT. ITALIAN HILL ROAD. EARLY 1945. DAY.

The sand gives way to trees, the jingling bottles to distant church bells, as A CONVOY OF TWENTY TRUCKS - Red Cross vehicles and some supply vehicles - snakes along a bumpy hill road. The war in Italy is largely over and the Allies are moving up the country, the wounded and supply lines slowly following.

INT. RED CROSS TRUCK. DAY.

A young CANADIAN NURSE, HANA, sits in a truck full of patients. Hana pays special care to the PATIENT lying in the stretcher alongside her. This is the PILOT - now known as THE ENGLISH PATIENT. A web of scars covers the Patient's face and body. They have the quality of a livid tattoo, magenta and green-black. The hair has largely gone and the effect is curious, lassoing his features, the strong nose, the eyes liquid. It's a warrior's face. But he has no physical strength. He coughs violently as the trucks shudders along the road.

EXT. ITALIAN HILL ROAD. DAY.

A JEEP pulls out of the line and approaches the Red Cross truck containing Hana and the Patient. The horn blows and Hana looks out to see it contains her best friend, JAN. TWO YOUNG SOLDIERS sit up front, one driving, both grinning. Jan signals for Hana's attention.

JAN

There's meant to be lace in the next village - the boys are taking me.

HANA

I'm not sewing anything else.

JAN

(mischievously)
You don't have any money, do you?
Just in case there's silk.

HANA

No!

JAN

Hana, I know you do!

Hana leans under the tarpaulin, holding some DOLLARS. The two hands - hers and Jan's - reach for each other as the vehicles bump along side by side. They laugh at the effort. Jan's GOLD BRACELET catches the sun and glints.

HANA

I'm not sewing anything else for you!

JAN

(getting the money)
I love you.

The Jeep accelerates away. Hana sighs to the patient.

Suddenly AN EXPLOSION shatters the calm as the jeep runs over a MINE. The jeep is THROWN into the air. The convoy halts and there's chaos as soldiers run back pulling people out of the vehicles. Hana runs the other way, towards the accident, until she is prevented from passing by a soldier.

EXT. ITALIAN HILL ROAD. LATER.

-- and there's still chaos as two SAPPERS arrive on motorcycles. One of them, a SIKH, wears a turban.

The motorcycles arrive at the front of the convoy. A nurse, MARY, is helping a doctor, OLIVER, attend to the injured driver. The other two bodies are covered with blankets. There's blood everywhere. The Sikh and his colleague pull out the paraphernalia of their bomb disposal equipment.

EXT. ITALIAN HILL ROAD. DAY.

KIP, the Sikh Lieutenant, and HARDY, his sergeant, explore the road ahead of the becalmed convoy, using saucer-like METAL DETECTORS and HEADSETS. Kip is young, lithe, contained, utterly focused as they inch along the debris strewn road. He stiffens as he registers metal. With a bayonet he carefully scrapes at the mud-caked surface. Something GLEAMS. Suddenly, A PAIR OF FEET walks across his vision as HANA HURRIES PAST, walking carelessly up the road. It's so surreal that neither man registers at first, and then Kip is shouting.

KIP

Hey! Hey! Stop! Hey!

HARDY

Don't move! Stand ABSOLUTELY STILL! Hana stops.

(Hardy gingerly follows her footsteps.)

HARDY (CONT'D)

(as he approaches)

Good, that's good, just stay still for me and then we're going to be fine.

He arrives at Hana. Then grabs her. He'd like to slap her face.

HARDY (CONT'D)

What are you doing?! What the bloody hell do you think you're doing?

By way of an answer she looks at the ground ahead of her feet. Jan's BRACELET lies in the mud. Hardy bends down and collects the mangled bracelet, presses it into Hana's hands.

EXT. VILLAGE. DUSK.

The CONVOY is threading through A RUINED VILLAGE, passing the souvenirs of war. An overturned vehicle now used as a game by some children, dejected refugees tramping along the side of the road. From the end of one of the buildings are hanging HALF A DOZEN CORPSES, strung upside down with crude placards denouncing, in Italian, their collaboration with the Nazis.

INT. RED CROSS TRUCK. CONTINUOUS.

Hana sees all this as she sits blankly inside the truck, the Patient swaying alongside her. She puts out her hand to steady him.

EXT. CONVOY SITE, ITALY. DUSK.

THE CONVOY is making a PITSTOP. The trucks are silhouetted in a line. Hana helps lift the Patient's stretcher onto the ground. She bends to him.

HANA

Do you need something?

The Patient nods. Hana gets up to prepare MORPHINE INJECTION from a small kit. Mary arrives. Touches Hana gently, conscious of her grief for Jan's death.

MARY

Are you okay? Oh God, Hana, you were like sisters.

HANA

(sighs angrily)

We keep moving him - in and out of the truck. Why? He's dying. What's the point?

MARY

Well, we can't hardly leave him. Do you mean leave him? We can't.

Hana has settled down beside the Patient's stretcher. She draws herself up against the night. On the hill above, she can see the outline of A SMALL MONASTERY in the moonlight. She's crying, her face a frozen mask.

HANA

I must be a curse. Anybody who loves me, anybody who gets close to me - or I must be cursed. Which is it?

The Patient laces her fingers into his crabbed hand.

EXT. THE MONASTERY. DAY.

Hana is investigating the MONASTERY OF ST. ANNA, wandering through its overgrown gardens, past a pond. What sanctuary it seems to offer.

INT. THE MONASTERY LIBRARY. DAY.

Hana explores via a gaping hole in a LIBRARY where the walls have collapsed from shelling. The garden intrudes, ivy curls around the shelves. Bloated books lie abandoned, and there's a PIANO tiled up on one side. Hana presses the keys through the filthy tarpaulin which covers it. Everywhere there are signs of a brief German occupation.

INT. MONASTERY CLOISTERS. DAY.

Past the Library is a CLOISTERS, drenched with silver light.

INT. THE MONASTERY STAIRS. DAY.

Hana goes upstairs, negotiating a huge VOID in the stone treads two thirds of the way up.

INT. THE PATIENT'S ROOM. DAY.

She comes across a small CHAPEL, with the remains of murals and an altar pressed into service by the Germans as a table. Hana finds an old bed, and a mattress.

EXT. THE MONASTERY GARDEN. DAY.

Hana comes out, passes a DRY WATER TROUGH. She hears a rustling on the gravel and turns to see A TORTOISE ambling towards the trough. On cue there's A GURGLING SOUND. THE HANDLELESS PUMP IS SUDDENLY GUSHING, splashing water everywhere. The Tortoise, clearly arriving for this, enjoys a welcome shower. Hana goes to the trough, dips her hands into the water. Looks around her, and makes a decision.

EXT. CONVOY SITE. ITALY. DAY.

The Convoy is in the final stages of loading up. Oliver passes the vehicles, deep in dispute with a determined Hana, who is carrying some sacks of rice.

HANA

The war's over - you told me yourself. How can it be desertion?

OLIVER

It's not over everywhere. I didn't mean literally.

HANA

When he dies I'll catch up.

Oliver hovers as Hana adds the rice to a small cache of provisions, then lays another blanket over the Patient.

OLIVER

It's not safe here. The whole country's crawling with Bandits and Germans and God knows what. It's madness. I can't allow it. You're not, this is natural - it's shock. For all of us. Hana -

HANA

I need morphine. A lot. And a pistol.

OLIVER
(clutching at straws)
And what if he really is a spy?

HANA
(impatiently)
He can't even move.

OLIVER
If anything happened to you I'd
never forgive myself.

Hana nods. A tiny smile. Oliver shrugs helplessly.

OLIVER (CONT'D)
We're heading for Leghorn. Livorno
the Italians call it. We'll expect
you.

INT. THE MONASTERY. DAY.

TWO SOLDIERS are helping Mary and Hana carry the Patient into
the monastery. Hana indicates the stairs.

HANA
Up there.

They struggle up the stairs, one of the Soldiers gasping as
he narrowly avoids falling into the void in the stairs. The
cot almost tips up, at which the Patient SUDDENLY SPEAKS, his
voice cracked and rasping, but still clearly aristocratic.

THE PATIENT
There was a Prince, who was dying,
and he was carried up the tower at
Pisa so he could die with a view of
the Tuscan Hills. Am I that Prince?
Hana laughs.

HANA
Because you're leaning? No, you're
just on an angle. You're too
heavy!

Mary laughs. They reach the landing. Hana kicks open the
door to the CHAPEL.

HANA (CONT'D)
In here.

INT. THE PATIENT'S ROOM. DAY.

Hana lets Mary take the weight while she goes to the bed and
pulls away the drapes, sending up a cloud of dust. They
lower the Patient onto the bed. She turns to the SOLDIERS.

HANA (CONT'D)

Thank you.

She shuts the door on them, leaving Mary staring aghast at the room, its faded frescoes, its mold, its chaos. Hana smiles, opens a shutter to let a fierce envelope of light into the room.

HANA (CONT'D)

Good.

She goes to Mary and hugs her.

INT. HANA'S ROOM. THE MONASTERY. DAY.

A smaller upstairs room completely bare. As Hana tugs off her uniform, she looks out of the window to see the departing Convoy. A cotton dress goes on over her head and she emerges looking suddenly younger and rather fragile. THROUGH THE DAMAGED FLOOR OF HER ROOM SHE HAS A VIEW OF THE PATIENT BELOW HER. SHE LOOKS AT HIM. NOW SHE HAS SCISSORS AND STARTS TO CUT OFF HER HAIR, NOT AGGRESSIVELY, BUT IN A GESTURE OF A NEW BEGINNING.

INT. THE PATIENT'S ROOM. DAY.

HANA walks down to the Patient's Room and stands in the doorway. The Patient turns his head to her. He's grinning. He puts up a thumb. On the track a song begins: Some Other Time.

EXT. BASECAMP AT POTTERY HILL. 1938. LATE DAY.

THE SONG CONTINUED IN THE DESERT where we find the singer - PETER MADOX, a weather-beaten man who is working on the guts of an BATTERED TIGER MOTH AEROPLANE. His face is blackened with oil. A second European, ALM,SY, stands beside him, holding tools and a section of the camshaft. Madox yanks out a perished rubber hose and holds it up for Almsy to inspect. Behind them is an ENCAMPMENT - some camels foraging in the meager scrub, half a dozen black tents of the BEDOUIN: guides and servants to the Alm,SY/Madox Expedition. It's 1938 and the whole continent is full of such expeditions, competing with each other, pursuing lost treasures, sources of rivers, hidden cities.

D'AGOSTINO, the team's Italian ARCHEOLOGIST, drives towards the plane in one of the expedition's adapted FORD MOTORCARS. He gets out carrying a large earthenware WATER JAR. He looks very pleased with himself as he shows the jar to Alm,SY and then passes it to Madox.

D'AGOSTINO

Thirsty?

MADOX

(sniffing inside)

What's this?

D'AGOSTINO

Don't drink it!

He reaches for the jug, then pours out a little sludge - it's a brackish and stinks. Madox makes a face.

D'AGOSTINO (CONT'D)

I can't guarantee the vintage, my friends. I just dug it out of the hill. Madox and Almsy have seen many such jugs.

MADOX

Excellent. That's terrific, D'Ag.
(to Almsy, of a tool)
Toss that up, would you.

D'AGOSTINO

(mischievously)
There are some others.

EXT. POTTERY HILL. DAY.

THE BASE OF A HILL SEEMS COMPOSED ENTIRELY OF POTTERY JARS.

D'Agostino emerges over the brow of a dune, leading Madox and Almsy. The other members of the team are already there - BERMANN, a German PHOTOGRAPHER and FOUAD, EGYPTOLOGIST from Cairo.

MADOX

(to Almsy, astonished)
My God, look at this!

They bend to touch the jars, literally hundreds of them, mostly broken, piled on top of each other. Bermann approaches them, carrying his tripod.

BERMANN

Incredible, Hmm? Quite incredible.

D'AGOSTINO

I've never seen anything like it.
There would have been enough water here to serve an army.

ALMSY

(gloomily)
Which means we're in the wrong place.

Almsy speaks with a slight but unmistakable European accent.

D'AGOSTINO

Why?

ALM,SY
Would you stockpile water near to
an Oasis? There can't be a natural
spring within fifty miles of here.

FOUAD
Or they didn't know of one.

BERMANN
So, it may not be Zerzura, still
incredible.

D'AGOSTINO
(nodding, delighted)
A pottery hill!

ALM,SY
A wild goose chase.

MADOX
(firmly)
No.

Alm,SY gives him a look. But Madox will have none of it.

MADOX (CONT'D)
No. Now we look in the other
places. We're eliminating.

The unmistakable buzz of AN AEROPLANE distracts them.

MADOX (CONT'D)
Good, and here comes
reinforcements.

EXT. BASE CAMP AT POTTERY HILL. DAY.

LATER and a smart new aeroplane, a STEERMAN, makes a smooth
landing on the flat desert. The expedition team drives over
to meet the arrivals. Alm,SY is not with them. He's
walking, apparently not so enthusiastic.

A young, kissed and newly-married couple emerge from the
plane. They are GEOFFREY AND KATHARINE CLIFTON.

And it's immediately clear that Katharine is the woman in the
plane-crash at the beginning of the film.

Madox makes all the introductions. Hands are shaken, hellos
all round, as the couple disembark in their leather flying
gear. Geoffrey removes his helmet and, in what we will come
to know as an ubiquitous gesture, produces a bottle of
CHAMPAGNE and sets off the cork with a flourish.

CLIFTON

I hereby Christen us the
International Sand Club!

EXT. BASECAMP AT POTTERY HILL. LATE DAY.

The party is in the shade of the tents. Alm,sy joins the group. Madox nods over to the Clifton plane.

MADOX
Marvelous plane. Did you look?

CLIFTON
(beaming at Alm,sy)
Isn't it? Wedding present from
Katharine's parents. I'm calling
it Rupert Bear. Hello. Geoffrey
Clifton.

MADOX
We can finally consign my old bird
to the scrapheap. Alm,sy smiles and
walks on towards the others.

D'AGOSTINO
Mrs. Clifton - Count Almasy.

KATHARINE
(smiling, offering her
hand)
Geoffrey gave me your monograph
when I was reading up on the
desert. Very impressive.

ALM,SY
(stiff)
Thank you.

KATHARINE
I wanted to meet a man who could
write such a long paper with so few
adjectives.

ALM,SY
A thing is still a thing no matter
what you place in front of it. Big
car, slow car, chauffeur-driven
car, still a car.

CLIFTON
(joining them and joining
in)
A broken car?

ALM,SY
Still a car.

CLIFFTON

(hands them champagne)
Not much use, though.

KATHARINE

Love? Romantic love, platonic
love, filial love - ? Quite
different things, surely?

CLIFTON

(hugging Katharine)
Uxoriousness - that's my favorite
kind of love. Excessive love of
one's wife.

ALM,SY

(a dry smile)
There you have me.

INT. THE PATIENT'S ROOM. THE MONASTERY. MORNING.

The morning floods into the room. The Patient lies, lost in
the desert. Then a sudden CLATTERING NOISE disturbs him.

INT. STAIRS, THE MONASTERY. DAY.

Hana is dropping armfuls of books into the cavities of the
damaged stairs, and with others, she is improvising new
steps. The heavy volumes are perfect for treading on.

INT. LIBRARY. DAY.

Hana comes in, gathers up another armful of books and carries
them out to continue her stair repairs.

INT. THE PATIENT'S ROOM. DAY.

Hana enters.

THE PATIENT

What was all the banging? Were you
fighting rats or the entire German
army?

HANA

I was repairing the stairs. I
found a library and the books were
very useful.

Hana shrugs. She's attending to him, pulling back the
sheets, plumping up the pillows. He's short of breath.

THE PATIENT

Before you find too many uses for
these books would you read some to
me?

HANA

I think they're all in Italian, but I'll look, yes. What about your own book?

THE PATIENT

(reluctant)

My book? The Herodotus? Yes, we can read him.

Hana picks up the book and hands it to him. Then she starts rummaging in her pockets.

HANA

Oh - I've found plums. We have plums in the orchard. We have an orchard! She has peeled a plum and now slips it into his mouth.

THE PATIENT

Thank you.

His mouth works with the pleasure of the taste, a little juice escaping from the mouth. Hana mops it up.

THE PATIENT (CONT'D)

The plumness of this plum.

A noise, GURGLING sound, disturbs them.

THE PATIENT (CONT'D)

What's that?

INT/EXT. THE MONASTERY. DAY.

Hana comes through the Cloisters into the garden as the gurgling increases. She's in time to catch the TORTOISE arriving once again in the WATER TROUGH just as it starts to gush with water. She shouts up to The Patient's open window.

HANA

Water!

(bends to the Tortois)

You hear it, too, don't you!

INT. THE PATIENT'S ROOM. DAY.

Close on the HERODOTUS. The Patient opens its cover, held together by leather ties. Loose PAPERS, PHOTOGRAPHS, HAND DRAWN MAPS AND SKETCHES are all collected between the pages. He claws at some water-colors which appear to be based on CAVE PAINTINGS - figures, dark-skinned warriors of the stone age, some with bows in their hands, others with plumes in their hair - arranged in abstract patterns uncannily like those of Matisse. Some appear to be swimming, another is diving. Then the Patient loses control of the papers and the whole parcel SPILLS to the floor with a crack.

INT. BASECAMP AT POTTERY HILL. DUSK.

A SHOT RINGS OUT, disturbing the evening meal. Alm,sy and others go outside. Silhouetted on a ridge, a group of men sit astride camels. One of them holds his rifle aloft, clearly pointing towards the sky - means friend. Fouad peers at the horizon.

FOUAD

European, I think, with guides.

CLIFTON

(can only see shapes)

How do you know?

MADOX

(frowns)

Yes, and I think I know who this is.

EXT. BASECAMP AT POTTERY HILL. DUSK.

ALM,SY AND MADOX WALK OUT TO INTERCEPT THE ARRIVALS as the first Arab dismounts, the procession of camels splaying out as if in collapse. Alm,sy speaks in Arabic, exchanging the ritual greetings.

DURING THIS, FENELON-BARNES, sole European in this expedition, has finally persuaded his camel to sit, and dismounts irritably, slapping the animal in disgust.

FENELON-BARNES

Ugly brute. Shits and roars and complains all day.

(bypassing Alm,sy and approaching Madox)

Of course, you have your aeroplane. Two now! Do you still call yourselves explorers? I assume not.

MADOX

(stiffly)

Fenelon-Barnes.

ALM,SY

Yes, I think a sailor can call himself an explorer, can't he? Or should Columbus have swum to America?

INT. BASECAMP AT POTTERY HILL. DUSK.

The arrivals come inside. Madox handles the introductions.

MADOX

I think you know all of us, except for Geoffrey and Katharine Clifton, who've recently come out from England.

CLIFTON

Apprentices.

MADOX

This is Clive Fenelon-Barnes.

FENELON-BARNES

(to Katharine)

I know your mother, of course.

KATHARINE

Hello.

FENELON-BARNES

I'm also searching for the lost Oasis, but by more authentic means.

MADOX

(of Alm,sy)

Anyway, my friend here has a new theory - that Zerzura doesn't exist. So we may all be chasing windmills. Have some food.

FENELON-BARNES

Well, it's certainly not between here and Dakhla. Nine days of nothing but sand and sandstorms. An egg. I found an ostrich egg and some fossils.

KATHARINE

Isn't Zerzura supposed to be protected by spirits who take on the shape of sandstorms?

ALM,SY

What kind of fossils?

FENELON-BARNES

I'll invite you to my paper at the Royal Geographical Society. Are you still a member? He takes a long drink from a bowl of frothing camel milk.

ALM,SY

I think you know I am.

FENELON-BARNES

(ignoring Alm,sy)

Quite impossible, Madox. You must know that. If you attempt to cross the Sand Sea due east of Kufra by car you'll leave your bones in the sand for me to collect.

ALM,SY

(leaving the tent)

If you come across my bones - I hope you'll do me the honor of leaving them in peace.

(to Katharine)

Excuse me.

FENELON-BARNES

You have my word as a gentleman.

(watching him leave)

I've discovered a unique type of sand-dune. I've applied to the King for permission to call it The Fenelon-Barnes Formation.

EXT. BASECAMP AT POTTERY HILL. NIGHT.

LATER, supper over, the company is entertaining itself.

Alm,sy, standing outside his tent, watches the merriment from a distance.

D'Ag is nearing the end of a passionate rendition of Puccini's E Lucevan Le Stelle. He sits down to much applause from the others and SPINS AN EMPTY CHAMPAGNE BOTTLE on the sand. It comes to rest pointing at Clifton who gets up, grinning, and plunges into Yes! We Have No Bananas with great gusto. His version involves CHANGING LANGUAGE during each line of the chorus - prompted by Oui! or Ja! or Si! from the others. Song finished, much bowing and guying, he spins the bottle and it arrives equidistant between Fenelon-Barnes and Katharine - until with a little NUDGE from the husband it settles on his wife. Katharine gets up, awkward.

KATHARINE

I can't sing.

(the audience groans)

but I can tell a story.

(to Alm,sy, who has arrived)

I might need a prompt. Do you have your Herodotus? I've noticed you carry it.

ALM,SY

I'm sorry - what have you noticed?

MADOX

Your book. Your Herodotus! Alm,sy

looks uncomfortable.

KATHARINE

(reacting quickly)

It doesn't matter. Really. I think I can muddle through. Okay - The Story of Candaules and Gyges. King Candaules was passionately in love with his wife -

(Geoffrey whistles proudly)

One day he said to Gyges, the son of somebody, anyway - his favorite warrior -

ALM,SY

(quietly prompting her)

Daskylus,

KATHARINE

(smiles)

Yes, thank you, Gyges, son of Daskylus - Candaules said to him I don't think you believe me when I tell you how beautiful my wife is. And although Gyges replied he did find the Queen magnificent the King insisted he would find some way to prove beyond dispute that she was fairest of all women. Do you all know this story?

The men all encourage her to continue her story.

INT. THE PATIENT'S ROOM. NIGHT.

- and Hana's voice CONTINUES THE STORY as she reads to the Patient who listens, eyes closed, still in the desert.

HANA

(reading from the Herodotus)

I will hide you in the room where we sleep, said Candaules. She stumbles over the word.

THE PATIENT

Candaules

HANA

(not neurotic)

Candaules, you're laughing at me.

THE PATIENT

I'm not laughing at you. Go on, please.

HANA

When my wife comes to lie down she always lays her garments one by one on a seat near the entrance of the room, and from where you stand you will be able to gaze on her at your leisure.

EXT. BASECAMP AT POTTERY HILL. NIGHT.

KATHARINE

(her story continuing)

And that evening, it's exactly as the King had told him, she goes to the chair and removes her clothes, one by one, until she stand naked in full view of Gyges. And indeed she was more lovely than he could have imagined.

Almsy stares at her, framed by the velvet black sky. Katharine turns to looks at him.

KATHARINE (CONT'D)

But then the Queen looked up and saw Gyges concealed in the shadows. And though she said nothing, she shuddered. The next day she sent for Gyges and challenged him. And hearing his story, she said this -

CLIFTON

Off with his head!

KATHERINE

- she said Either you must submit to death for gazing on that which you should not, or else kill my husband who shamed me and become King in his place.

Clifton makes a face of outrage. For Katherine the story has collapsed. She wants it to be finished.

KATHERINE (CONT'D)

So Gyges killed the King and married the Queen and became ruler of Lydia for twenty eight years. The End.

(an uncomfortable moment)

Do I spin the bottle? Almsy shrinks away from the fire, disappears into black.

MADOX

(to Clifton)

And let that be a lesson to you!

INT. THE PATIENT'S ROOM. NIGHT.

Hana looks up from the Herodotus, sees the Patient's eyes closed. Gently touches his face and whispers.

HANA
Are you asleep?

THE PATIENT
(lying)
Yes. Dropping off.

And Hana closes the book, gets up, and blows out the lamp.

INT. FENELON-BARNES TENT. POTTERY HILL. NIGHT.

PITCH BLACK and then A TORCH flickers on as Alm,sy enters Fenelon-Barnes' tent. He pulls apart his luggage, quickly and methodically. He finds what he is looking for inside a trunk: A LARGE FOSSILIZED BRANCH; a collection of stone leaves, wrapped in a piece of tarpaulin. Then he's distracted by a noise from Fenelon-Barnes' bed. Alm,sy stiffens, turns to investigate. There's A LUMP in the cot. A dog? Alm,sy eases back the blanket to reveal a YOUNG GIRL, no more than fourteen, bound hand and foot. He holds the torch to her face.

EXT. BASECAMP AT POTTERY HILL. MORNING.

The next morning. Alm,sy and Madox prepare to take off. As they talk Clifton's Rupert Bear taxis past them, a wave from Clifton and Katharine. Madox is very disturbed by what Alm,sy is telling him.

MADOX
What did you think you were doing
in his tent?

ALM,SY
Looking for the fossils. Why
should we wait until we're in
London? This girl was probably
twelve years old.

MADOX
(getting into the plane)
You shouldn't go into another man's
tent. It's inexcusable.

ALM,SY
Her hands and feet were tied.

MADOX
What did you do?

ALM,SY

I looked at them. They're shrubs,
small trees. Exquisite. And
fossilized, rock hard. He walks
away to the nose of the plane.

MADOX

I was talking about the girl.

ALM,SY

Cut the ropes. I left a note, on
his blanket.

(gleefully)

At the next Geographical Society I
shall await with great interest the
announcement of the Fenelon-Barnes
Slave Knot. The Girl wouldn't
leave, of course. Her father had
sold her for a camel. He turns over
the propeller, the engine cranks
up.

EXT. GILF KEBIR PLATEAU. MORNING.

Both planes are scouting the Gilf Kebir region. Geoffrey
flies up alongside Madox and wiggles his wings. Madox waves.

They're flying over a distinctive group of GRANITE MASSIFS,
Crater-shaped hills. The broken towers of the Gilf Kebir.
Almasy is distracted by them. He turns to Madox and points
down, indicating they should explore them.

Madox gestures to the Cliftons to PHOTOGRAPH the Massifs. A
THUMBS UP from Geoffrey.

INT. THE PATIENT'S ROOM. MORNING.

Hana gives the Patient his injection, now she begins to
change the sheet. The light streams in from the open window.
She looks up at the green hills rolling away from the
Monastery, the village in the distance.

HANA

I should try and move your bed. I
want you to be able to see the
view. It's good, it's a view from
a monastery.

THE PATIENT

I can already see.

HANA

(bending down to his
level)

How? How can you see anything?

THE PATIENT

Not the window - I can't bear the light anyway - no, I can see all the way to the desert. I've found the lost fossils.

HANA

I'm turning you.

An awkward moment as she rolls him on to his back. He grunts with the pain. She washes him very tenderly.

THE PATIENT

Zerzura, the White City of Acacias, the Oasis of Little Birds. As me about the scent of acacia - it's in this room. I can smell it. The taste of tea so black it falls into your mouth. I can taste it. I'm chewing the mint. Is there sand in my eyes? Are you cleaning sand from my ears?

HANA

No sand. That's your drugs speaking.

THE PATIENT

I can see my wife in that view.

HANA

Are you remembering more?

THE PATIENT

Could I have a cigarette?

HANA

Are you crazy?

THE PATIENT

Why are you so determined to keep me alive?

HANA

Because I'm a nurse.

EXT. THE MONASTERY GARDENS. NOON.

The TORTOISE heads towards the trough, to the gurgling accompaniment. It reaches the shade only to be greeted by the obstacle of some tennis shoes, a frock. It clambers over as the water begins to belch out. Hana, naked, kneeling in the trough, receives the shower with a great YELP of shivering joy.

EXT. THE MONASTERY CLOISTERS. NIGHT.

It's dark, but something is going on here. Hana is caught by the stray shafts of moonlight. She is SCRATCHING something on the flagstones. Her skirt is bunched up around her thighs. She throws something in the air. It's a SPILE, used to tap into the maple tree for syrup. It lands with a crack. Suddenly she is flying across the space, a hop, a skip, a jump. Then turns at the other end, dips for the stone, then back again, in this blindman's version of HOPSCOTCH.

INT. TRAIN. ITALY 1944. BEFORE DAWN.

AS HANA HOPS AND JUMPS IN THE SHADOWS SHE IS SUDDENLY ON A TRAIN IN 1944. A HOSPITAL TRAIN ploughs through the night carrying the wounded back to Naples.

Hana walks through a long carriage. HER HAIR IS LONG. She could be ten years younger than the Hana at the Monastery. And easy. She stops at the bunk of A NEW PATIENT. Hana bends to the boy. He's had shrapnel in his legs and cheek. She speaks softly to him.

HANA

How are you?

BOY

Okay.

HANA

Your leg will be fine. A lot of shrapnel came out - I saved you the pieces.

BOY

You're the prettiest girl I ever saw.

HANNA

(she hears this every day)
I don't think so.

BOY

Would you kiss me?

HANA

No, I'll get you some tea. Wait till you're in Naples. You'll find a girl there.

BOY

(innocent)
Just kiss me. It would mean such a lot to me.

HANA

(tender, believing him)
Would it? She kisses him, very

softly, on the lips.

BOY

Thank you.

He closes his eyes. Is almost instantly asleep. Hana smiles, continues along the compartment. VOICES CALL OUT.

#1 INJURED MAN

Nurse - I can't sleep.

#2 INJURED MAN

Nurse? Would you kiss me?

#3 INJURED MAN

You're so pretty!

#4 INJURED MAN

Hinky-dinky parlez-vous!

HANA

(good-naturedly waving
away their joke)

Very funny. Go to sleep.

She gets into a corridor. Mary is coming the other way. She carries a blood-soaked bundle. Hana questions her appalled expression.

MARY

Don't ask.

INT. RAILWAY STATION. DAY.

The train is arriving. Hana hangs out of a window, scouring the crowds to find her sweetheart, STUART MCGANN, a young Canadian Captain, who seeing her runs up to her window.

HANA

Where are we going? I don't want
to be kissing in a crowd. I have
six hours.

She jumps out of the moving door and into his arms.

STUART

(laughing at her ferocity)
Whoa - give me a chance!

HANA

Sorry. I took a Benzedrine.

The Station is full of desperate people trying to make do. the couple hurry through, oblivious to anyone except each other.

STUART

I've got a surprise. A boat! We can go to Capri. It's got a cabin, it's private.

HANA

I'd like to spend a night with you in a bed.

STUART

We can do that when we're very, very old.

INT. THE MONASTERY. HANA'S ROOM. NIGHT.

Hana lies alone in her bed covered by a curtain. There's a sharp NOISE. She's very frightened. She has her pistol under her pillow and pulls it out, listens, holding her breath. Another BANG. She listens.

EXT. THE MONASTERY. HANA'S GARDEN. DAY.

Hana has been reviving a vegetable patch. She comes to garden. CROWS are feasting. She's furious, shouts, runs at them. Nature, wildness, insisting on invading her peace.

EXT. THE MONASTERY. GRAVEYARD. MORNING.

Hana appears from the Cemetery, dragging A METAL CRUCIFIX. It's bigger than she is, and she drags it, as if approaching Calvary. A MAN WATCHER HER FROM A BICYCLE. He's approaching fifty, grizzled and attractive, and could be Italian. His hands are bandaged. Hana aims the cross at the soil, but is not quite bit or strong enough. The man, CARAVAGGIO, chooses this moment to introduce himself. He drops the bicycle on the ground with a clatter.

CARAVAGGIO

(very cheerful)

Buon' Giorno! Hana turns, startled and suspicious.

CARAVAGGIO (CONT'D)

Are you Hana?

HANA

What do you want?

CARAVAGGIO

I met your friend Mary. She said I should stop and see if you were okay. Apparently we're neighbors - my house is two blocks from yours in Montreal. Cabot, north of Laurier. Bonjour.

HANA

(unraveling this
information)
Bonjour.

He goes to her and - putting a bandaged hand behind her ear -
PRODUCES AN EGG. He beams, as does Hana.

CARAVAGGIO
I'd like to take credit, but it's
from Mary. My name's David
Caravaggio, but nobody ever called
me David. Caravaggio they find to
absurd to miss out on.

During this he attempts the same thing with his other hand to
Hana's other ear. THE EGG DROPS TO THE GROUND. Cursing, he
gets on his knees and starts to scoop it up, preserving it.

INT. THE MONASTERY. KITCHEN. DAY.

Hana has taken his eggs and put them into a bowl. She beats
them with a knife picking out the bits of shell. Caravaggio
watches, takes in how little food there is otherwise. The
table seems useful more as a sewing area than for cooking -
it's STREWN WITH ALTAR CLOTHS being sewn into drapes. On a
tray on the table are TWO PHIALS OF MORPHINE from the
Patient's room. As Hana turns to the stove, he's moved and
covered them with his bandaged hands, a second later and he's
juggled them into his pockets with the slightest clink. Hana
looks at him. He shrugs, nods at the eggs.

CARAVAGGIO
They're fresh. I haven't eaten an
egg in, have you noticed there are
chickens? You get chickens in Italy
but no eggs. In Africa there were
always eggs, but never chickens.
Who separates them?

HANA
You were in Africa?

CARAVAGGIO
Yeah, for a while.

HANA
So was my Patient.

CARAVAGGIO
I'd like to stay. That's the long
and short of it. I mean, you know
blah-blah if it's convenient, if
there's room blah-blah-blah. I
have to do some work here -I speak
the language. There are Partisans
to be -
(trying to paraphrase)

-we embrace them and see if we can
relieve them of their weapons, you
know - while we hug. I was a
thief, so they think I'd be good at
that.

HANA

So you can shoot a pistol?

CARAVAGGIO

(showing his hands)

No.

HANA

If you said yes I would have had a
reason. You should let me redress
those bandages. Before you go.

CARAVAGGIO

I'm okay. Look, it's a big house.
We needn't disturb each other. I
can shoot a pistol! I'll sleep in
the stables. I don't care where I
sleep. I don't sleep.

HANA

Because we're fine here. I don't
know what Mary told you about me,
but I don't need company, I don't
need to be looked at.

CARAVAGGIO

Fine. I'm not looking.

INT. THE PATIENT'S ROOM. DAY.

Hana carries in a tray. There's OMELETTE on the plate.

HANA

There's a man downstairs. He
brought us eggs.

(shows him the omelette)

He might stay.

THE PATIENT

Why? Can he lay eggs?

HANA

He's Canadian.

THE PATIENT

(brittle)

Why are people always so happy when
they collide with someone from the
same place? What happened in
Montreal when you passed a man in

the street - did you invite him to
live with you?

HANA

He needn't disturb you.

THE PATIENT

Me? He can't. I'm already
disturbed.

HANA

He won't disturb us then. I think
he's after morphine.

(she's cut the omelette
into tiny pieces)

There's a war. Where you come from
becomes important. And besides -
we're vulnerable here.

I keep hearing noises in the night.
Voices.

The Patient says nothing. She puts a spoonful of the
omelette into his mouth. He grunts.

INT. THE MONASTERY. STAIRS. DAY.

Caravaggio is in the shadows on the stairs. HE LISTENS.

EXT. CAIRO MARKET. 1938. DAY.

A STREET MARKET in full sway, a locals-only affair, blazing
with noise and bustle and barter. Emerging from a thicket of
women and begging children, KATHARINE CLIFTON carries her
purchase of an exotic-looking RUG. From nowhere she is
joined by Almsy.

ALMSY

How much did you pay?

KATHARINE

(delighted)

Hello! Good morning.

ALMSY

They don't see foreign women in
this market. How much did you pay?

KATHARINE

Seven pounds, eight, I suppose.
Why?

ALMSY

Which stall?

KATHARINE

Excuse me?

ALM,SY
You've been cheated, don't worry,
we'll take it back.

KATHARINE
(bristling)
I don't want to go back.

ALM,SY
This is not worth eight pounds,
Mrs. Clifton.

KATHARINE
I don't care to bargain.

ALM,SY
That insults them.

KATHARINE
(turning to face him)
I don't believe that. I think you
are insulted by me, somehow.
You're a foreigner too, aren't you,
here, in this market?

ALM,SY
(of the carpet)
I should be very happy to obtain
the correct price for this. I
apologize if I appear abrupt. I am
rusty at social graces.
(tart)
How do you find Cairo? Did you
visit the Pyramids?

KATHARINE
Excuse me.

He stands as she continues, pushing past him, shrugging off
the children, boiling.

INT. SHEPHEARD'S HOTEL. CAIRO. EVENING.

THE LONG BAR. The Exploration Team are drinking at a table.
They are not entirely off-duty - Alm, sy and Madox as ever
ponder the maps. Geoffrey Clifton appears, arms waving.

CLIFTON
Gentlemen, good evening! He sits
down. Madox hails the waiter.

D'AGOSTINO
How is your charming wife?

CLIFTON
Uh, marvelous. She's in love with

the hotel plumbing. She's either in the swimming pool - she swims for hours, she's a fish, quite incredible - or she's in the bath. Actually, she's just outside.

(responding to their bewildered expressions)
Chaps Only in the Long Bar.

MADOX

(standing, embarrassed)
Of course. Well, we should all go out onto the terrace.

CLIFTON

Oh no, really. She has her book.

MADOX

I won't hear of it. None of us will.

EXT. SHEPHEARD'S HOTEL TERRACE. NIGHT.

Katharine appears with Geoffrey to join the arriving Explorers. She looks exquisite in her evening clothes. Madox brings her to her seat. There is dancing inside, and couples walk to and from their tables. Katharine manages to produce a dazzling smile which includes everyone except Alm,sy.

MADOX

Mrs. Clifton, you'll have to forgive us. We're not accustomed to the company of women.

KATHARINE

Not at all. I was thoroughly enjoying by book.

(indicating they should all sit

and then nodding at Alm,sy before greeting the others)

Please. Signor D'Agostino, Herr Bermann.

CLIFTON

The team is in mourning, darling.

KATHARINE

Oh really?

MADOX

I'm afraid we're not having much luck obtaining funds for the expedition.

KATHARINE

How awful. What will you do?

MADOX

A more modest expedition, or even wait a year. Remind our families we still exist.

CLIFTON

(astonished)

Good heavens, are you married, Madox?

MADOX

Very much so. We are all, save my friend here.

He nods at Almasy. Clifton appears tremendously relieved.

CLIFTON

I feel much better, don't you darling? We were feeling rather self-conscious. Let's toast, then. To absent wives.

D'AGOSTINO

(toasting Katharine)

And present ones.

KATHARINE

(toasting Almasy)

And future ones.

INT. SHEPHEARD'S HOTEL. NIGHT.

THE BALLROOM. A dance finishes. Almasy takes over from D'Agostino to partner Katharine. They dance beautifully. The others remain on the terrace in deep conversation.

KATHARINE

Why did you follow me yesterday?

ALMASY

Excuse me?

KATHARINE

After the market, you followed me to the hotel.

ALMASY

I was concerned. As I said, women in that part of Cairo, a European women, I felt obliged to.

KATHARINE

You felt obliged to.

ALM,SY

As the wife of one of our party.

KATHARINE

(sardonic)

So why follow me? Escort me, by all means. Following me is predatory, isn't it?

The dance finishes. They walk back to their table, where Alm,sy leads Katharine back to her seat next to Clifton.

CLIFTON

I was just saying, I'm going to cable Downing Street, see if I can't stir up a few shillings - Katharine's mother and the PM's wife are best -

KATHARINE

(interrupting)

Darling, for goodness' sake!

CLIFTON

Well, she is!

INT. THE PATIENT'S ROOM. DAY.

Hana, having already replaced the bedlinen, is standing on a stepladder trying to hang home-made drapes around the bed as Caravaggio knocks tentatively, then comes in.

CARAVAGGIO

Hello.

THE PATIENT

Finally! So you're our Canadian pickpocket?

He goes to help Hana, they work as he talks.

CARAVAGGIO

Thief, I think, is more accurate.

THE PATIENT

I understand you were in Africa. Whereabouts?

CARAVAGGIO

Oh, all over.

THE PATIENT

All over? I kept trying to cover a very modest portion and still failed.

(to Hana)

Are you leaving us? Now's our
opportunity to swap war wounds.

HANA

Then I'm definitely going. And she
exits.

The men consider her.

CARAVAGGIO

Does she have war wounds?

INT. THE MONASTERY. HANA'S ROOM. DAY.

As Hana walks up her stairs she finds herself overhearing
their conversation as it threads up through the hole in the
ceiling. She strips her own bed of the curtain she uses for
a sheet.

THE PATIENT

I think anybody she ever loves
tends to die on her.

CARAVAGGIO

Are you planning to be the
exception?

THE PATIENT

Me? You've got the wrong end of
the stick, old boy.

(a pause)

So - Caravaggio - Hana thinks you
invented your name.

CARAVAGGIO

And you've forgotten yours.

THE PATIENT

I told her you would never invent
such a preposterous name.

CARAVAGGIO

I told her you can forget
everything but you never forget
your name.

EXT. BEACH CABIN. ITALY. DAY. 1944.

HANA IS STILL LISTENING BUT NOW SHE'S OUTSIDE A CABIN. She's
in her uniform, clearing things away. The Cabin door is
ajar. An OFFICER moves around, then sits to make notes.

OFFICER (O/S)

What about your rank or serial
number?

THE PATIENT (O/S)

No. I think I was a pilot. I was found near the wreckage of a plane by the Bedouin. I was with them for some time.

THIS CONVALESCENCE HOSPITAL HAS BEEN FASHIONED FROM A LONG ROW OF BATHING CABINS ON THE COAST, complete with Campari Umbrellas and metal tables, at which are seated the bandaged and the dying and the comatose, staring out to sea or in slow, muted conversation. Hana walks up to the Patient's cabin.

He is propped up with a view of the sea, which is interrupted by the pacing Officer. Hana has a blanket and a chart for the Patient's bed. She busies herself.

OFFICER

Do you remember where you were born?

THE PATIENT

Am I being interrogated? You should be trying to trick me. Ask me about Tottenham Hotspur. Or Buckingham Palace. About Marmite - I was addicted. Or make me speak German, which I can, by the way.

OFFICER

Why? Are you German?

THE PATIENT

No.

OFFICER

How do you know you're not German if you don't remember anything?

THE PATIENT

You tell me. I remember a lot of things. I remember a garden, plunging down to the sea - the Devil's Chimney we called it - and there was a cottage at the bottom, right on the shore, nothing between you and France.

OFFICER

This was your garden?

THE PATIENT

Or my wife's.

OFFICER

Then you were married?

THE PATIENT

I think so. Although I believe that to be true of a number of Germans. Might I have a glass of water?

Hana pours him a glass of water. He notices her.

THE PATIENT (CONT'D)

Thank you.

(he sips)

Look - my lungs are useless -

(makes a small gap with his fingers)

I've got this much lung, the rest of my organs are packing up - what could it possibly matter if I were Tutankhamun? I'm a bit of toast, my friend - butter me and slip a poached egg on top.

Hana leaves, smiling at the Patient's irascibility, sharing this with the Officer, who frowns. The interview continues.

EXT. BEACH CABIN. DAY.

Hana walks between the cabins. STUART steps out of the shade. He is drawn, older than last seen.

STUART

My leave is canceled. I can't meet you later.

Hana frowns, helpless. As if to emphasize this, a Staff Nurse comes by, carrying a bowl and a withering look.

INT. BEACH CABIN. DAY.

Hana enters, approaches the Patient. She's circumspect.

HANA

Excuse me -

THE PATIENT

Yes?

HANA

Can I ask - my friend, can he come in? Just for a few minutes?

THE PATIENT

Your friend?

HANA

He's going back to the front this evening. I can't see him otherwise.

THE PATIENT

Just go off. I'll be quite all right.

HANA

No, I can't go, but if it, if you weren't offended, it would be very good of you to allow us - every other cabin is crammed. This is as private as we'll get.

THE PATIENT

Well then - yes. Of course.

HANA

Thank you. Thank you.

She hurries out, returns with Stuart. They stand awkwardly.

HANA (CONT'D)

This is Captain McGann.

THE PATIENT

Please, don't waste your time on pleasantries -

STUART

Thanks.

THE PATIENT

I'm going to sing. If I sing I shan't hear anything.

And with that he bursts into a raucous, coughing version of Yes! We Have No Bananas. He changes language each verse. The couple stand, formal, then edge round to the back of the bed.

HANA

(touching his lip)
You've got a mustache.

STUART

A bit of one.

HANA

I was looking forward to this evening.

STUART

(whispers)
I had a hotel room.

HANA

(whispers)
I thought that was for when we were

very very old?

STUART

I'm feeling old.

They EMBRACE, fiercely, hardly making a sound, or moving.
THE PATIENT ROARS THE SONG.

EXT. THE MONASTERY. HANA'S GARDEN. MORNING.

A battered open backed TRUCK comes into the Monastery. An ITALIAN PARTISAN sits in the back, a SHOTGUN resting on his knees. The truck stops, and Caravaggio emerges from the passenger door. He collects some packages from the PARTISAN, including a dead RABBIT, and then exchanges a few words with the driver. Hana, who's watching all of this from her garden, sees that the driver is a WOMAN. The woman's name is GIOIA, and Caravaggio leans into the window to make his goodbye to her.

Caravaggio approaches the Vegetable Garden as Hana comes to greet him. He throws her the rabbit, and hurries up the stairs without pausing, clutching the other boxes.

CARAVAGGIO

Supper. Hana calls after him.

HANA

Where've you been?

CARAVAGGIO

(not stopping)

Rabbit hunting.

Hana looks at the rabbit. She's angry. Caravaggio hasn't been around for a week.

INT. THE MONASTERY. DOWNSTAIRS CORRIDOR. DAY.

Hana heads up for the kitchen, then stops as there's a faint CRASH from upstairs.

INT. THE MONASTERY. UPSTAIRS CORRIDOR. DAY.

Hana, the rabbit still in her hands, comes along the corridor to find Caravaggio SLUMPED on the floor, retching. The discarded NEEDLE lies beside him, the new package of MORPHINE CAPSULES ripped open. He looks up at Hanna, glazed.

HANA

I could help you. I could get you off that.

CARAVAGGIO

Can you cook the rabbit or will you try and bring that back to life?

She bends, starts clearing up, putting the morphine phials back into the box.

HANA

It's a week. We didn't know where you were - or if you coming back, or -

CARAVAGGIO

(of the drugs)
You should be happy. What were you going to do for him when it ran out? He pulls out more phials from his jacket.

HANA

What do you do? What are you doing here?

CARAVAGGIO

Some gave me a dress.
(starts to tear at a parcel)
You know what's great? What I'm learning? You win a war and you not only gain the miles you get the moral ground. Everywhere I go, we're in the right. I like that.

INT. THE PATIENT'S ROOM. DAY.

Hana comes in, carrying a batch of the new morphine. She's wearing a different FROCK. It's not new, and it's faded, but the change of color is startling.

THE PATIENT

Something smells so rich. My stomach is heaving -

HANA

He came back, he says he caught a rabbit. I'm cooking it.

THE PATIENT

That's a different dress.

HANA

He keeps asking me questions about you. Do you know him? Do you recognize him?

THE PATIENT

Do I recognize him? I recognize what he is. I like him. He's Canadian. He can read Italian. He can catch rabbits.

EXT. BASECAMP AT POTTERY HILL. DUSK.

Alm,sy squats with an ANCIENT ARAB outside his rudimentary house, while he draws on the sand, talking in some arcane dialect, scratching out a possible location for the lost oasis. The man stops speaking and scours the sky a beat or two before we or Almasy hear the faint noise of a PLANE. It's Clifton's Steerman, Rupert Bear, coming in to land. Almasy doesn't look up.

The Arab continues to talk. The newly-arrived Katharine has scrambled up the hill to speak to Alm,sy.

KATHARINE

(diffident)

Hello. Not to interrupt but we're celebrating.

She makes to leave but Alm,sy puts up a hand to keep Katharine there, but quiet.

ALM,SY

This is an incredible story - about a man hunting an Ostrich, he's been telling me about Zerzura, he thinks he's been there, but his map, the route he's describing, he couldn't survive the journey now, but he's a poet, so his map is poetry - and now we're onto an Ostrich.

(to the Arab in ARABIC)

I'm telling her your map is poetry. The Arab shrugs.

KATHARINE

What do you mean, poetry?

ALM,SY

A mountain curved like a woman's back, a plateau the shape of an ear.

KATHARINE

Sounds perfectly clear. Where does the Ostrich come in?

ALM,SY

The Ostrich is a detour. A poor man hunts an ostrich, it's the method. Nothing to do with Zerzura. To catch an ostrich you must appear not to move. The man finds a place where the ostrich feeds, a wadi, and stands where the ostrich can see him, on the

horizon, and doesn't move, doesn't eat - otherwise the ostrich will run. At nightfall, he moves, fifty, sixty yards. When the ostrich comes the next day, the man is there, but he's nearer.

(to the guide)

Haunting the ostrich.

The Guide speaks, amplifying something, picking at his robe.

ALM,SY (CONT'D)

Yes, the ostrich, it will feed a family, not just the meat, but by selling the feathers, beak, the skin, a year from this one animal. So, each day the man gets closer. And the ostrich is not sure - has something changed? - now the standing man is only a few yards from where it feeds. And then one day, the man is in the wadi, in the water. And the Ostrich comes, as always, dips into the water and the man JUMPS UP - and captures it.

He shrugs. The Arab has more to say. Alm,SY doesn't respond, quieting him with a dismissive gesture.

KATHARINE

What is he saying?

(Almasy, awkward, shakes his head)

Come on, what did he say?

ALM,SY

He said - be careful.

KATHARINE

Be careful? You mean you - or me? Who?

ALM,SY

(to the Arab)

Her or me?

The Arab speaks again. Almasy speaks without looking at her.

ALM,SY (CONT'D)

The one who appears not to be moving.

INT. TENT. BASECAMP AT POTTERY HILL. NIGHT.

Katharine comes in. Then, a beat, and Alm,SY. Clifton is holding up the champagne.

CLIFTON
Gentlemen, to Zerzura.

ALL
Zerzura.

MADOX
And a special thank you to Geoffrey
and Katharine, without whose fund
raising heroics we should still be
kicking our heels. They toast the
Cliftons.

CLIFTON
To arm-twisting.

MADOX
(to Alm,sy)
Did Katharine say? - Geoffrey has
to fly back to Cairo.

CLIFTON
Have to return the favor - take a
few photographs for the army.

KATHARINE
Darling, Peter says I could stay.

MADOX
(checking with Alm,sy)
Why not?

ALM,SY
What kind of photographs?

CLIFTON
Portraits. The Brigadier, the
Brigadier's wife, the Brigadier's
dogs, the Brigadier at the
Pyramids, the Brigadier breathing.

KATHARINE
(to Clifton)
Why do you think? About my
staying?

CLIFTON
Well look, if nobody minds, truly,
then I suppose - I shall, of
course, be bereft,

KATHARINE
(playfully poking his
ribs)
Oh.

CLIFTON

But finally able to explore the
Cairo night-life.
I shall produce an authoritative
guide to the Zinc Bars and - I want
to say Harems - am I in the right
country for Harems?

EXT. BASECAMP AT POTTERY HILL. MORNING.

As Clifton prepares to leave in the Steerman, Alm,sy
approaches.

ALM,SY

Safe journey.

CLIFTON

You too. Good luck!

ALM,SY

Clifton - your wife - do you think
it's appropriate to leave her?

CLIFTON

Appropriate?

ALM,SY

I think the desert is, it's - for a
woman - it's very tough, I wonder
if it's not too much for her.

CLIFTON

Are you mad? Katharine loves it
here. She told me yesterday.

ALM,SY

All the same, I, were I you I would
be concerned -

CLIFTON

I've known Katharine since she was
three, my aunt is her aunt, we were
practically brother and sister
before we were man and wife. I
think I'd know what is and what
isn't too much for her. I think
she's know herself.

ALM,SY

Very well.

CLIFTON

(laughing it off)

Why are you people so threatened by
a woman?!

He settles into the controls. Alm,sy watches the plane taxi

away. Doesn't move at all. Katharine waves from the tent as the Steerman takes off.

EXT. BASECAMP AT POTTERY HILL.

The THREE FORD CARS leave the campsite, loaded for a scouting expedition. The rest of the party, Bedouin, tents, camels and Tiger Moth is left behind. Madox shouts last-minute instructions from the window of his car.

EXT. DESERT EN ROUTE TO CAVE OF SWIMMERS. DAY.

FENELON-BARNES sits astride his camel, and wipes away the sweat. The desert stretches for miles, shimmering, the sun baking the sand. His GUIDES wind their headcloths tighter. Nobody speaks. Then one of them looks round, raises a hand. A BUZZING noise. They all turn. A SMALL CLOUD OF DUST EMERGES OVER A RIDGE. Locusts? A sandstorm?

A CARAVAN OF CARS, the Almsy/Madox expedition, bumps along, suspensions threatened by the constant dips and ridges. On each car there are three in the passenger cabin, the open backs crammed with drums of gasoline and water and equipment. On the front vehicle, the tenth member of the party, KAMAL, acts as a navigator and sits on a CAMEL SADDLE, a rodeo cowboy, on the roof of the leading car, driven by Madox. As they spot FENELON-BARNES they sound their horns and wave good naturedly. F-B scowls, watches them roar by, stealing his thunder.

EXT. DESERT EN ROUTE TO CAVE OF SWIMMERS. DAY.

ONE OF THE CARS IS HOPELESSLY BOGGED DOWN IN HEAVY SAND. It's contents have been unloaded, and a rope ladder is being inserted under the tires. The entire company huff and puff and argue about the best means of extricating the vehicle.

INT. CAR EN ROUTE TO CAVE OF SWIMMERS. DAY.

LATER - Almsy drives the second car, accompanied by Katharine and Al Auf. Katharine breaks the long silence.

KATHARINE

I've been thinking about - how does somebody like you decide to come to the desert? What is it? You're doing whatever you're doing - in your castle, or wherever it is you live, and one day, you say, I have to go to the desert - or what?

Almsy doesn't answer. Katharine, who has looked at him for an answer, looks away. There's another long silence.

ALMSY

I once traveled with a terrific

guide, who was taking me to Faya.
He didn't speak for nine hours.
At the end of it he pointed at the
horizon and said - Faya! That was
a good day!

Point made, they lapse again into silence. Katharine boils.

KATHARINE
Actually, you sing.

ALM,SY
Pardon?

KATHARINE
You sing. All the time.

ALM,SY
I do not.

KATHARINE
Ask Al Auf. Alm,sy asks Al Auf in
Arabic.

He laughs, nods.

KATHARINE (CONT'D)
(sings wickedly)
I'll be down to get you in the
taxi, honey, you'd better be ready
about half-past eight,!

Al Auf nods and grins furiously, joins in, impersonating
Alm,sy. Alm,sy grunts in irritation.

EXT. NEAR THE BASECAMP AT THE CAVE OF SWIMMERS. DUSK.

The group is investigating a cleft in the rocky massif. They
climb slowly. Below them, A NEW AND TEMPORARY BASE CAMP.

The group winds around the rock. Alm,sy turns to offer a
hand to Katharine behind him, pulling her up to the next rock
slab. She smiles at him. He smiles back curtly, continues.

The group stops at a level plateau. The Arabs stand apart
and SING THEIR PRAYERS AT DUSK. Al Auf leads the
incantations.

AL AUF
Allahu Akbar, Allahu Akbar,

The westerners wait respectfully. As the sun sets in glory,
Alm,sy looks over at the range of rocks. One particular
range seems to look exactly like A WOMAN'S BACK. He squints
at the rock. Alm,sy discreetly pulls out his COMPASS.

EXT. CAVE OF SWIMMERS. DUSK.

Almsy clammers up the rocks, coming through a narrow crevice to find A NATURAL SHELF. He scrambles up this path, reaching up, only to notice that his hand almost perfectly covers A PAINTED HAND on the rock, and as he digests this he realizes he has climbed past what is THE MOUTH OF A CAVE. He disappears inside.

INT. CAVE OF SWIMMERS. FLASHLIGHT.

A FLASHLIGHT squirts into the cave. Almsy treads cautiously along the narrow winding passage. He comes to an open cavern and takes his flashlight up to a wall. PAINTINGS EMERGE, figures, animals, ancient pictures. A giraffe. Cattle. Fish. Men with bows and arrows. Almsy is astonished by what he sees.

EXT. NEAR THE CAVE OF SWIMMERS. EVENING.

The others watch as a flashlight bobs and jerks among the rocks as Almsy comes scrambling down, transformed into an excited teenager.

ALMSY
Madox! Madox!

He slithers in a heap in front of the astonished expedition party. Doesn't care.

INT. CAVE OF SWIMMERS. FLASHLIGHT.

Almsy has led the whole party into the heart of the cave. Now Madox comes alongside him at the wall, his flashlight joining Almsy's and increasing the visibility of the paintings. A dark-skinned figure, apparently in the process of DIVING into water, comes clearly into view. Then others supine, arms outstretched.

MADOX
(with audible excitement)
My God, they're swimming!

The others crowd round. FIVE EXCITED FACES IN THE GREEN GLOOM OF THE CAVE.

EXT. CAVE OF SWIMMERS. DAY.

A hive of activity. The team has set up TRESTLES to catalogue the finds as the Bedouin come out with baskets of detritus, which they empty onto a growing heap as the Cave is cleared out. Entering the cave, Almsy passes with camera equipment, just as D'Ag emerges carrying the corpse of a perfectly preserved DESERT FOX. D'Ag gestures to Almsy with his customary enthusiasm, holding up the body of the fox.

D'AGOSTINO

Have you seen this? Astonishing.
Perfectly preserved.

INT. CAVE OF SWIMMERS. DAY.

Inside, Bermann is setting up LAMPS, running wires from a car BATTERY. Kamal is helping him. And as Alm,sy arrives he catches a tiny moment of tenderness between them. Bermann, seeing him, quickly disengages and busies himself with the lights. At another wall, Katharine is catching.

EXT. THE DESERT. DAY.

The CARS are heading back to Basecamp. They bounce over the sand.

INT. BERMANN'S CAR. DAY.

Bermann is driving the lead CAR along some STEEP DUNES. Alm,sy beside him. Bermann is peeling AN ORANGE, a segment of which he holds out of the window. Kamal, riding shotgun, leans down and collects it, his head dipping in to grin at Bermann. Bermann looks uneasily at Alm,sy. He wants to tell him of his passion, of his absolute love for Kamal, but he daren't.

BERMANN

I love the desert, you see. That's my, that's my - I can't think of the word.

(Alm,sy nods)

How do you explain? To someone who's never been here? Feelings which seem quite normal.

ALM,SY

(compassionate)

I don't know, my friend. I don't know.

Bermann holds out another segment of the orange, and watches the slim brown hand collect it. A MOMENTARY DISTRACTION IS ALL IT TAKES FOR HIM TO MISJUDGE THE LINE AND SUDDENLY THE DUNE COLLAPSES UNDER THE TIRE AND THE CAR LURCHES SIDEWAYS AND TOPPLES OVER THE EDGE. D'Ag - following, Fouad beside him - brakes sharply, but can't stop his own car from being caught in the avalanche of sand, and IT PLUNGES DOWN THE DUNE AND INTO BERMANN'S UPTURNED CAR WITH AN OMINOUS CRUNCH, the radiator exploding. Only Madox, Katharine beside him, and a little way behind, manages to stay clear of the trouble. He jumps out of the vehicle and slides down the dune to find pandemonium as the passengers stumble out of the cars, sand flying, smoke pouring from the upright vehicle, the wheels of the overturned car spinning wildly in the air, a puddle of oil spreading ominously.

EXT. THE DESERT. DAY.

LATER and the group have cleaned up as best as possible. D'Ag, Bermann, and Fouad are a little worse for wear. Fouad's arm is in a sling, and D'Ag is sporting a bloody head bandage. Bermann has broken a finger and is being attended to by Madox. The luggage, water and petrol have been stacked up and the men are loading up the remaining car. Alm, sy is working at the crumpled end of the vehicle. He's having no success.

EXT. THE DESERT. DAY.

Alm, sy, Kamal and two of the other young Bedouin stand around the mess of the two broken vehicles. The ONE WORKING CAR is loaded with men and provisions. Katharine sits inside, next to Madox, Alm, sy comes over to her window, to speak past her to Madox.

MADOX

I'll be back as quick as I can.
Thirty-six hours at the outside.

ALM, SY

Try to get a second radiator, we'll
bury it between here and the
Pottery Hill. And a better jack.
We planned badly.

MADOX

(nods at Alm, sy, then
shouts over
to the wrecked vehicles)
Bermann!

This is Bermann's cue to take leave of Kamal who is staying behind. Kamal makes a little bow.

KAMAL

May God make safety your companion.

Bermann nods and hurries away, squeezing into the car which jolts off, bouncing over the track.

THE VEHICLE GETS ABOUT TWENTY YARDS, ALM, SY WATCHING, BEFORE IT SINKS FORLORNLY INTO THE SOFT SAND. IT'S HOPELESSLY OVERLOADED WITH PEOPLE. THEY ALL GET OUT.

KATHARINE

I shall stay behind, of course

MADOX

Certainly not.

KATHARINE

I insist. There clearly isn't room
for us all, I'm the least able to

dig, and I'm not one of the walking wounded. Those are facts. Besides, if I remain it's the most effective method of persuading my husband to abandon whatever he's doing and rescue us. It's hard to argue with this logic.

Alm,sy shrugs.

LATER - THE MADOX CAR makes a more effective departure. And Almas,y and Katharine are left alone. THEY LOOK AT EACH OTHER as if realizing this for the first time. Almas,y immediately returns to the two damaged vehicles and helps the men stretch the cut canvas which was once a tent TO FASHION A MAKESHIFT SHELTER BETWEEN THE TWO CARS. Katharine goes to join them. There is no obstacle to the remorseless horizon, just miles of undulating dunes.

INT. SHELTER. DAY.

Alm,sy sits alone, writing into HIS HERODOTUS, a map folded in front of him, from which he makes notes. Katherine comes across with a clutch of her SKETCHES from the Cave wall. Hands them to him. They're beautiful.

ALM,SY

What's this?

KATHARINE

I thought you might paste them into your book.

ALM,SY

We took several photographs, there's no need.

KATHARINE

I'd like you to have them.

ALM,SY

(handing them back)
There's really no need. This is just a scrapbook. I should feel obliged. Thank you.

KATHARINE

(exasperated)
And that would be unconscionable, I suppose, to feel any obligation? Yes. Of course it would.

She's already turning, walking as far from him as the cramped shelter permits. He continues with his maps.

EXT. THE DESERT. NIGHT.

Katharine sits alone on top of the Dune, smoking, surveying the landscape. Below her the makeshift camp - a fresh wind flicking at the tarpaulin, THE DEEP TRACKS OF MADOX'S CAR STRETCHING OFF TOWARDS CIVILIZATION. Alm,sy emerges from the tent and, locating Katharine, heads towards her.

ALM,SY

You should come into the shelter.

KATHARINE

I'm quite all right, thank you.

ALM,SY

Look over there.

Katharine turns, scans the horizon.

KATHARINE

What am I looking at?

ALM,SY

See what's happening to them - the stars.

KATHARINE

They're so untidy. I'm just trying to rearrange them.

ALM,SY

In an hour there will be no stars.
The air is filling with sand.

He offers a hand. A little reluctantly she takes it.

EXT. SHELTER. NIGHT.

The team hurries around the improvised tent, weighing it down with packing cases, gasoline drums, water cans, bringing anything loose or light inside the tarpaulin. THE WIND is whipping up, the air busy with sand. Alm,sy pushes everyone under cover.

INT. SHELTER. NIGHT.

THE SAND SEEMS TO BE SCOURING THE TARPAULIN. Kamal and Alm,sy try to secure one vulnerable area, but suddenly there are leaks everywhere and the sand swarms inside.

It's noisy, too, and Alm,sy has to shout to make himself understood, indicating to the Bedouin to grab water and blankets and food, all the valuables, and get out. He himself finds blankets and water and shouts at Katharine to do the same. One side of the canvas suddenly RIPS apart like paper. Chaos as figures struggle in ever-worsening conditions, sand blizzarding the air.

EXT. SHELTER. NIGHT.

THE SHELTER FLIES INTO THE AIR, stranding the figures, their heads wrapped in blankets, flashlights useless. They seek safety in two groups, the tribesmen to the cabin of the overturned car, Katharine and Almsy to the upright one.

INT. CAR. NIGHT.

Inside the cabin, the sand swirling around them, Katharine and Almsy sit without speaking. Dawn is trying to break through. He pours a little water into a mug so that they can wash out their eyes and noses and mouths. She takes her silk scarf and first dries her eyes with it, then dries his.

KATHARINE

This is not very good, is it?

ALMSY

No.

KATHARINE

Shall we be all right?

ALMSY

Yes. Absolutely.

KATHARINE

Yes is a comfort. Absolutely is not.

EXT. THE DESERT. DAWN.

The sand is piling up against the two cars, the tent is swept from its moorings, the water cans are hurled up too, and then plunge ominously into sand drifts as if going under an ocean.

ALMSY (O/S)

Let me tell you about winds.
There is a whirlwind in Southern Morocco, the Aajej, against which the fellahin defend themselves with knives.

The Ghibli from Tunis rolls and rolls and produces a rather strange nervous condition. And we hear Katharine's laugh.

INT. CAR. DAWN.

Almsy sits alongside Katharine, whose head is against his shoulder. He continues his story of winds.

ALMSY

- there is the Harmattan, a red wind. Which Mariners called the sea of darkness. Red sand from this wind has flown as far as the south

coast of England, producing showers so dense they were mistaken for blood. Almsy checks to see if Katharine is still awake.

KATHARINE

Fiction. We had a house on that coast and it never rained blood. Go on. More.

ALMSY

All true. Herodotus, your friend, tells of a wind - the Simoon - so evil that a nation declared war on it and marched out to fight it in full battle dress, their swords raised.

EXT. THE DESERT. DAY.

MORNING. The sand has almost COMPLETELY ENGULFED the car on the exposed side, covering the windshield like snow, and encroaching onto the door of the protected flank.

INT. CAR. DAY.

Almsy is woken by sound of A DISTANT ENGINE. He jerks up, waking Katharine in the process, and heaves against the door. He can't open it, and has to lean his feet against the passenger door, lying across Katharine, kicking it open.

EXT. THE DESERT. DAY.

By the time Almsy emerges from the car, the sand pouring into the cabin, MADOX'S CAR IS ROARING ALONG THE HORIZON. Almsy waves, shouts, and then runs back into the car, finds his flare-gun, and SENDS A FLARE high into the sky. Katharine is with him now, and they watch, helplessly, as the car bounces away from them, Madox a man on a mission. Katharine panics, THE SAND HAS ERASED ALL TRACES OF THEM. She speaks quietly, shocked.

KATHARINE

Our tracks, where are they?

Almsy is preoccupied. He's gone back to their vehicle and returns with a shovel, STARTS TO DIG FRANTICALLY.

ALMSY

Madox will have calculated how many miles, they'll soon turn around.

KATHARINE

(realizing what he's doing)

Oh my God, the others!

She kneels with him and helps to shovel away the sand WHICH HAS COMPLETELY ENGULFED THE OTHER VEHICLE containing the three Bedouin.

ALM,SY

(during this)

Could I ask you, please, to paste you paintings into my book? I should like to have them. I should be honored.

KATHARINE

Of course. Is it, am I a terrible coward to ask how much water we have?

ALM,SY

(shoveling hard)

Water? Yes, we have water, we have a little in our can, we have water in the radiator which can be drunk. Not at all cowardly, extremely practical.

(anxious at not uncovering the boys, egging himself on)

Come on, come on!

(then back to Katharine)

There's also a plant - I've never seen it but I'm told you can cut a piece the size of a heart from this plant and the next day it will be filled with a delicious liquid.

KATHARINE

Find that plant. Cut out its heart.

They hear NOISES, scrabbling, faint thumps. Alm,SY scrapes at the sand and they find the glass of the car. The angle of the cab, tilted up to the sky, has made it impossible for the trapped boys to lever it open. Their oxygen is rapidly deteriorating. Alm,SY pulls the door and it cranks open.

EXT. THE DESERT. DAY.

Katharine sits in the car, putting her pictures into the Herodotus. It's full of ALM,SY'S HANDWRITING, PHOTOGRAPHS, SOME PRESSED FLOWERS. She deciphers a page of his words and drawings. It's almost exclusively about her, the lines studded with K.s.

She reads, astonished, then looks at him as he and two of the three Bedouin circle the area of the cars in ever-widening circles, like water-diviners, like Kip searches for mines. Kamal is slumped against the front of the car. He's sick. Alm,SY suddenly drops to his knees and begins to shovel into

the sand. He pulls out A CAN OF WATER. Turns to Katharine and holds it triumphantly in the air.

INT. THE DESERT. NIGHT.

There's a small, weak fire. The group crouch around it. The boys talk noisily to Alm,sy. Kamal is wrapped in a blanket and shivering. Alm,sy gives him water, speaks to Katherine.

ALM,SY

Kamal is passing blood. He must have had some internal damage in the crash. He needs medicine. I think we must risk the other flare.

He gets up and loads the flare with what is clearly the last charge. This time the effect is dramatic with A RED UMBRELLA OF LIGHT. Katharine comes up beside him. They wait, hope fading with the flare.

KATHARINE

(blank)

Geoffrey's not in Cairo.

(Alm,sy looks at her)

He's not actually a buffoon. And the plane wasn't a wedding present. It belongs to the British Government. They want aerial maps of the whole North Africa. So I think he's in Ethiopia. In case you were counting on his sudden appearance.

ALM,SY

And the marriage - is that a fiction?

(There's a beat.

Katharine has a hundred answers.)

KATHARINE

No, the marriage isn't a fiction.

The light from the flare fades on them and they stand in the dark. Suddenly on the far horizon, behind their heads, AN ANSWERING FLARE fireworks into the sky.

KATHARINE (CONT'D)

Thank God. Oh, thank God.

There's excited shouting from the two fit boys. They leap up and run towards the couple, who meanwhile have realized that the flare has not come from Madox, but from an approaching CAMEL CARAVAN. Alm,sy shouts to the boys for some identification.

KATHARINE (CONT'D)

Do they know them?

ALM,SY

(squinting at the horizon)

No, but I think I do.

The Caravan slowly comes into focus. IT'S FENELON-BARNES. Katharine touches Alm,sy's arm - an almost imperceptible gesture.

KATHARINE

Am I K. in your book? I think I must be.

Alm,sy turns to her. He runs the blade of his arm across her neck - the sweat leaving a clear stripe.

Fenelon-Barnes approaches, dismounts from his camel, and addresses Alm,sy.

FENELON-BARNES

I recollect your saying to ignore your bones but I assume you have no objection to my rescuing your companion?

(to Katharine)

Good evening, Mrs. Clifton.

KATHARINE

(accepting his handshake)

Hello.

FENELON-BARNES

I'd like to introduce you to my camel - the most notable beast on earth.

(to Alm,sy)

I understand you found some remarkable caves.

A goatskin bag of water is offered to Katharine. She drinks and hands it to Alm,sy.

FENELON-BARNES (CONT'D)

Paintings of swimmers? Remarkable.

EXT. CAIRO. DAY.

ANOTHER WORLD as a honking TAXI containing Alm,sy and Katharine negotiates the incredible bustle of Cairo.

EXT. SHEPHEARD'S HOTEL. DAY.

Alm,sy, still in the same clothes, and evidently weary, emerges from the cab, and pulls Katharine's belongings from the trunk, then holds open the door for her. As she walks

towards the hotel, he hands her bag to a porter. Katharine is stung.

KATHARINE

Will you not come in?

ALM,SY

No.

KATHARINE

Will you please come in?

ALM,SY

(a beat)

Mrs. Clifton - Katharine turns, disgusted.

KATHARINE

Don't.

ALM,SY

I believe you still have my book.

Katharine fishes the book from her knapsack, shoves it at him, then disappears.

INT. ALM,SY'S ROOM. DAY.

Alm, sy lying on a camp bed, face down. The walls are covered with maps, enlargements of photographs. A fan whirs over his kit which is spread, unraveled but ordered, on the stone floor. An ineffably male room, the shutters closed, just the thinnest shaft of light piercing the gloom. Alm, sy hasn't even removed his clothes, his boots kicked off below his jutting feet.

There's A KNOCK at the door. Alm, sy sleeps. Another. A third. He's roused from the dead. Stumbles to his feet, opens the door as the knocking continues.

It's Katharine. She's bathed, luminous, stands back-lit by the afternoon sun - an angel in a cotton dress. She walks past him into the room. He closes the door. She turns. He KNEELS before her, head at her thighs. She's crying, her face expressionless as her hands go to his head.

KATHARINE

You still have sand in your hair.

She starts to BEAT on his head and shoulders, violently. He pulls back, to look at her, the tears streaming down her face. She kneels and covers his face with kisses. He pulls blindly at her dress and it RIPS across her breasts.

INT. BATHROOM. DAY.

Alm,sy is in the bath. Katharine, wearing his dressing gown, pours in a jug of steaming water. Alm,sy leans over the rim of the bath. He's sewing, carefully repairing the torn dress.

KATHARINE

I'm impressed you can sew.

ALM,SY

Good.

KATHARINE

You sew very badly.

ALM,SY

You don't sew at all!

KATHARINE

A woman should never learn to sew, and if she can she should never admit to it. Close your eyes.

ALM,SY

(laughs)

That makes it harder still.

She pushes the sewing from his hands, then pours water over his head, then begins to shampoo his hair.

Alm,sy is in heaven. The biggest smile we have seen from him. She continues to massage his scalp.

ALM,SY (CONT'D)

When were you most happy?

KATHARINE

Now.

ALM,SY

When were you least happy?

KATHARINE

(a beat)

Now.

ALM,SY

Okay. And what do you love? Say everything.

KATHARINE

What do I love? I love rice pudding, and water, the fish in it, hedgehogs! The gardens at our house in Freshwater - all my secret paths.

She rinses his scalp, then slips off the robe and CLIMBS IN

BESIDE HIM, covering his neck and shoulders in kisses.

ALM,SY

What else?

KATHARINE

Marmite - addicted! Baths - not with other people! Islands. Your handwriting. I could go on all day.

(a beat)

My husband. Alm,sy nods.

ALM,SY

What do you hate most?

KATHARINE

A lie. What do you hate most?

ALM,SY

Ownership. Being owned. When you leave, you should forget me.

She freezes, pulls herself away, out of the bath, looks at him, then SLAPS HIM VERY HARD across the face.

She picks up her dress, the thread and needle dangling from it, and walks, dripping, out of the room.

INT. THE PATIENT'S ROOM. NIGHT.

To the Patient it's as if Katharine is walking out of his wall. He sighs with pain, then looks away to where Hana has fallen asleep on the bed, almost on top of him. He touches her. He speaks as if each word burns him.

THE PATIENT

Could I ask you to move? I'm sorry - but when you turn, the sheets, I can't really bear the sheets moving over me. Sorry.

HANA

(mortified, moving quickly)

Yes, of course, I'm so sorry. Stupid of me. Hana gets up, upset to have hurt him.

HANA (CONT'D)

I'm so sorry.

INT. THE MONASTERY KITCHEN. NIGHT.

Hana comes to the table, carrying a jug of water and a bowl. She's still sad. She unbuttons her dress, pulling it off her

shoulder, begins to pour the water to cool herself against the night's pressing heat.

EXT. EMERGENCY FIELD HOSPITAL. 1944. LATE DAY.

The EMERGENCY FIELD HOSPITAL is a cluster of tents practically ahead of the Front Line SPORADIC GUN FIRE, LIGHT AND HEAVY, SOUNDS THROUGHOUT. Mary walks by on her way to the Nurse's tent. It's 1944 and the war in Italy is still intense.

INT. EMERGENCY FIELD HOSPITAL TENT. LATE DAY.

JAN is washing out of her HELMET, and stands naked in her socks. Hana is using a flannel to wash Jan's back. A couple of other girls like, exhausted, on their cots. The mud is everywhere. Another nurse is making tea out of an adapted plasma can on their tiny primus.

MARY comes in and flops down. She's GIVEN BLOOD and is pale and enervated.

MARY

Okay, Type Os, the vampires wait.
Everybody's giving a pint.

JAN

Ugh! If they were sucking it out I
wouldn't mind. It's the needle I
can't stand.

HANA

(laughing)
You're a nurse - how can you be
frightened of needles!

INT. TRIAGE TENT, EMERGENCY FIELD HOSPITAL. NIGHT.

Hana walks through the main TRIAGE TENT. It's packed with the ruined bodies of the injured, swaddled in bloody bandages. Hana stops at a couple of beds, shares a word or two with the patients. She stops at another bed, leans over its occupant. His bandaged face is bloated and yellow. He's not breathing. She bends over him, his open eyes fixed in a glassy stare. No pulse. She snaps the triangular cardboard ID from his bed to indicate HE'S DIED. Then tenderly closes his eyes. THEY SUDDENLY SNAP OPEN. HE REARS UP, GRABBING HER.

WOUNDED SOLDIER

Can't wait to have me dead? You
bitch!

He slaps her hand away. Slaps at the tubes going into his arm. Hana is absolutely shocked. But just as suddenly he's sunk back into semi-consciousness.

Shaken, she sits by him and takes his hand, he pulls it away, she takes it again. He is in terrible pain. His face creased with anger. Now his hand is clutching at hers. She tries to soothe him.

HANA

Try t be calm. Ssssshhh. Come on.
Be calm now. Ssshhhh. Be
peaceful. It's okay. It's okay.

HIS FACE STILL. HIS HAND LOOSENS. Now he has gone. As Hana inspects him, a shell seems to land close by. THE LIGHTS FLICKER. She ducks, along with everyone else.

Below the bed, on slatboards, above the mud, are the now dead soldier's possessions. They include A PAIR OF TENNIS SHOES.

INT. TRIAGE TENT, EMERGENCY FIELD HOSPITAL. EVENING.

HANA, WEARING THE TENNIS SHOES, IS GIVING BLOOD. She lies in a cot, next to JAN. The shelling sounds closer.

OLIVER, the Doctor, is working on the most recent patient, a young CANADIAN Boy who is critically ill - the tubes hanging above him, of plasma and of blood. The curtain drawn around him is pulled back, to reveal the two nurses in the background. The Soldier can just see them. He's going to die any minute.

CANADIAN SOLDIER

(whispering to Oliver)

Is there anybody here from Picton?

OLIVER

Picton? I don't know.

CANADIAN SOLDIER

I'd like to see somebody from home
before I go.

Hana can only really hear Oliver's end of this conversation, but the mention of Canada chills her, and she knows, now, not later, that Stuart is dead.

HANA

(to Oliver)

Why Picton?

OLIVER

He's from there - edge of Lake
Ontario right, Soldier?

The boy nods.

JAN

(innocent)

Where's your Stuart from? Somewhere near there, isn't it?

HANA
(to Oliver)

As him what company he's with? Oliver leans over, then turns to Hana.

OLIVER
Third Canadian Fusiliers.

HANA
Does he know a Captain McGann? The boy hears this, whispers to Oliver.

CANADIAN SOLDIER
He bought it. Yesterday. Shot to bits. The shells are getting closer.

HANA
What did he say?

OLIVER
(can't look at her)
Doesn't know him.

A SHELL SUDDENLY LANDS ON TOP OF THE SITE, PERHAPS FIFTY YARDS FROM THE TENT. THE LIGHTS GO OUT. THEN ANOTHER LANDS.

Everybody is on the floor, struggling to get on a helmet.

Hana lies down, the blood still leaving her, her helmet on. Oliver is next to her in the mud. Her heart is breaking.

HANA
He's gone, hasn't he?

OLIVER
No. He's - no.

HANA
Oh God. Oh God.

The shells pound them, incredibly loud, drowning out her grief, but each explosion illuminates it for a moment.

INT. THE MONASTERY KITCHEN. NIGHT.

Caravaggio comes into the kitchen. Hana is slumped at the table, her back naked. The jug of water in front of her. She's sobbing, her shoulders heaving. Caravaggio approaches tentatively.

CARAVAGGIO
Hana?

(he touches her shoulder)
Hana? Are you alright?

HANA
(without raising her head)
Don't touch me if you're going to
try and fuck me.

CARAVAGGIO
(soothing)
I'll have some of your water. It's
hot.

She reaches for her blouse, wraps it around herself. Her
face is read with weeping.

CARAVAGGIO (CONT'D)
(gently)
You have to protect yourself from
sadness. This is the thing I've
learned.
(drinking the water)
You're in love with him, aren't
you? Your patient. Do you think
he's a saint or something? Because
of the way he looks? I don't think
he is.

HANA
I'm not in love with him. I'm in
love with ghosts. And so is he.
He's in love with ghosts.

CARAVAGGIO
Who are his ghosts?

HANA
Ask him.

CARAVAGGIO
(he holds up his hands)
What if I told you he did this to
me?

HANA
(stung)
What? How could he have? When?

CARAVAGGIO
I'm one of his ghosts and he
wouldn't even know. It's like he
slammed a door in Cairo and it
trapped my fucking hands in Tobruk.

HANA
I don't know what that means.

CARAVAGGIO

(shrugs)

Ask him. Ask your saint who he is.
Ask him who he's killed.

HANA

(furious)

Please don't creep around this
house.

INT. THE PATIENT'S ROOM. DAY.

Hana sits reading from the Herodotus. She shows the Patient the page where a CHRISTMAS CRACKER WRAPPER covered in handwriting has been glued in.

HANA

Tell me about this, this is in your
handwriting - December 22nd -
Betrayals in war are childlike
compared with our betrayals during
peace. New lovers are nervous and
tender, but smash everything - for
the heart is an organ of fire,

(she looks up)

I love that, I believe that.

(to him)

Who is K?

THE PATIENT

K is for Katharine.

EXT. AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE, DECEMBER 1938. DAY.

A CHRISTMAS PARTY FOR THE TROOPS. The incongruous attempts to create a traditional Christmas in the dusty heat of Cairo.

The Party is in the courtyard of the Moorish Palace which serves as the private residence of the British Ambassador, SIR RONNIE HAMPTON. Lots of Wives, including LADY HAMPTON and Katharine help serve tea and cake to the SOLDIERS who sit at rudimentary tables with paper plates and paper hats. A man dressed as SANTA CLAUS is giving out presents - PENGUIN PAPERBACKS, CHOCOLATE. Music blares out from a loudspeaker. Officers and Civilians walk the parameter. One of these, arriving, is Almsy. He sits in the shade, catches Katharine's attention. Katharine brings him over a cup of tea and a plate with Christmas cake on it.

ALMSY

Say you're sick.

KATHARINE

What? No!

ALMSY

Say you're feeling faint - the sun.

KATHARINE

(but a frisson)

No.

ALM,SY

I can't work. I can't sleep. Lady Hampton calls impatiently.

LADY HAMPTON

Katharine!

KATHARINE

Coming.

(to Alm,sy)

I can't sleep. I woke up shouting in the middle of the night. Geoffrey thinks it's the thing in the desert, the trauma.

ALM,SY

I can still taste you.

KATHARINE

(waving at another woman

who

pushes a trolley with

teapots)

This is empty, just coming!

ALM,SY

I'm trying to write with your taste in my mouth.

(as she leaves)

Swoon. I'll catch you.

Alm,sy sits watching the party. The Santa Claus is dragged outside by some excited Children. Alm,sy picks at his cake removing the thick marzipan icing. He's writing on A CHRISTMAS CRACKER WRAPPER, smoothing it out - December 22nd. Betrayals in war are childlike compared with out betrayals du,

Katharine, attending to a raucous table, suddenly sags at the knees, and SWOONS. People rush to her.

KATHARINE

I'm fine. How silly.

OFFICER'S WIFE

(helping her to her feet)

It's the heat.

LADY HAMPTON

You should sit down, darling.

(to the others)
She's quite all right.
(escorts Katharine away)
Are you pregnant?

KATHARINE
I don't think so.

LADY HAMPTON
(squeezing her arm)
How romantic. With Fiona I fell
over every five minutes. Ronnie
Christened me Lady Downfall.

KATHARINE
I think I might go inside and sit
down for a few minutes.

LADY HAMPTON
I'll come with you.

KATHARINE
No, please. I shall be absolutely
fine. They pass Alm,sy, who doesn't
look up from his book.

INT. STORE ROOM. AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE. DAY.

A small STOREROOM inside the Palace - Brooms, Mops, Cleaning
Equipment. Outside, the party is visible as opaque shadows
through the beveled glass of the ornate window. The sound of
carols sung by the enlisted men gives way to a version of
SILENT NIGHT played on a solitary bagpipe. Inside, ALM,SY
AND KATHARINE MAKE LOVE IN THE DARKNESS. Everything is too
fast, desperate, standing up, grabbing, hoisting clothes.

INT. CORRIDORS. AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE. DAY.

A CORRIDOR. Alm,sy appears and almost immediately collides
with the man dressed as SANTA CLAUS. He moves to one side.

CLIFTON
Have you seen Katharine?

ALM,SY
(taken aback)
What?

CLIFTON
It's Geoffrey under this.

ALM,SY
I haven't, no. Sorry.

INT. SIDE ROOM IN AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE. DAY.

Geoffrey continues scouting the warren of tiny rooms that run

off the central courtyard. He finds Katharine sitting in one, smoking, surrounded by oppressive and elaborate tiling. Clifton wonders briefly how Almsy had missed Katharine.

CLIFTON

Darling, I just heard. You poor sausage, are you all right?

KATHARINE

I'm fine. I got hot.

CLIFTON

Lady H said she thought you might be -

KATHARINE

I'm not pregnant. I'm hot. I'm too hot.

CLIFTON

Right.

KATHARINE

Aren't you?

CLIFTON

Sweltering.

(taking off his hat and beard)

Come on, I'll take you home.

KATHARINE

Can't we really go home? I can't breathe.

Aren't you dying for green, anything green, or rain, wouldn't you die to feel rain on your face? It's Christmas and it's all - I don't know - if you asked me I'd go home tomorrow. If you wanted.

CLIFTON

Sweetheart, you know we can't go home, there might be a war.

KATHARINE

(poking at his costume)

Geoffrey, you do so love putting on a disguise.

CLIFTON

I do so love you.

(he kisses her head)

What do you smell of?

KATHARINE

What?

CLIFTON

Marzipan! I think you've got marzipan in your hair. No wonder you're homesick.

INT. THE PATIENT'S ROOM. EVENING.

The Patient lies alone in his room. CLIFTON'S FACE stares back at him from among the frescoes. Then something distracts him.

THE PATIENT

Are you outside? A beat and then Caravaggio shuffles in. Like an old boxer.

CARAVAGGIO

I can't hide anymore.
(jerks up his hands)
I breathe like a dog. I lose my balance. Stealing's got harder. Caravaggio stares at the Herodotus.

CARAVAGGIO (CONT'D)

Why do I feel if I had your book I would know everything?

THE PATIENT

I don't even know if it is my book. The Bedouin found it in the plane, in the wreckage. It's mine now. I heard your breathing and thought it might be rain.
I'm dying for rain - of course I'm dying anyway - but I long to feel rain on my face.

Caravaggio comes close, scrutinizing the face, trying to repair the features. Exasperated.

CARAVAGGIO

Is it you? If I said Moose, I look different, fuck, why shouldn't you?

THE PATIENT

(impassive)
Moose.

CARAVAGGIO

(a different tack)
First wedding anniversary - what do you call it?

THE PATIENT

I don't know. Paper. Is it?

Paper?
(sharp, not wanting to
think)
I don't remember.

INT. MONASTERY LIBRARY. DAY.

Hana stands at the PIANO. It's still lop-sided, propped against the wall. She tries but can't move it. So she pulls off the dust-sheet and, with the instrument still on a tilt, begins to play the Aria from Bach's Goldberg Variations.

INT. THE PATIENT'S ROOM. DAY.

HANA'S PIANO CONTINUES. Upstairs, Caravaggio chats with the Patient while working his arms to RAISE A VEIN, a boot-lace tied around it, preparing an injection for himself, tapping the syringe. During this:

THE PATIENT

I have come to love that little tap
of the fingernail against the
syringe. Tap.

INT. MONASTERY LIBRARY. DAY.

Hana plays. GUN SHOTS punctuates the music. She's totally engrossed and only hears the second or third shot. Her hands falter, she looks up to see A SIKH SOLDIER RUNNING ACROSS THE FIELD WAVING HIS ARMS, his REVOLVER held aloft. He approaches the door, his face creased with anxiety, and raps on the shattered frame. It's KIP.

She gets up and walks past Kip standing at the door, and continues the seven or eight feet to the right and out into the garden VIA THE HOLE RIPPED OUT OF THE WALL.

HANA

Excuse me. Yes?
(of the doors)
I don't have the key to that door.

KIP

The Germans were here. The Germans were all over this area. They left mines everywhere. Pianos were their favorite hiding places.

HANA

I see.
(then mischievous)
Then may be you're safe as long as you only play Bach. He's German. Kip is looking around the piano. Hana giggles.

KIP

Is something funny?

HANA

No, but, no, not at all. I'm
sorry. You came to the doors,
that's all and -

(a little laugh)

- such good manners for someone
worried about mines. That's all.

KIP

I've met you before.

HANA

I don't think so.

Hana bends to see what Kip's looking at under the piano. Wires run from the wall to the instrument onto which is taped an EXPLOSIVE CHARGE. If Hana had succeeded in moving the piano she would have triggered the charge. Kip looks at Hana who conceals her dismay with a shrug.

EXT. THE MONASTERY GARDEN. DUSK.

Across from the terrace, HARDY AND KIP ARE PUTTING UP THEIR TENTS. Caravaggio stands, chatting amiably to them, holding a haversack, smoking a cigarette.

INT. THE PATIENT'S ROOM. DUSK.

Hana looks down from the Patient's room, watching the tents go up.

HANA

He wants us to move out, says there
could be fifty more mines in the
building. He thinks I'm mad because
I laughed at him. He's Indian, he
wears a turban.

THE PATIENT

Sikh. If he wears a turban, he's a
Sikh.

Kip glances up at the window. Hana, suddenly shy, backs away.

HANA

I'll probably marry him.

THE PATIENT

Really? That's sudden.

HANA

My mother always told me I would
summon my husband by playing the

piano.

She goes over to the Patient's bed.

HANA (CONT'D)

I liked it better when there were just the two of us.

THE PATIENT

Why? Is he staying?

HANA

With his Sergeant. A Mr. Hardy.

THE PATIENT

We should charge! Doesn't anyone have a job to do?

HANA

They have to clear all the local roads of mines. That's a big job. They won't stay in the house. They're putting up their tent in the garden.

THE PATIENT

In that case, I suppose we can't charge.

INT. OFFICE, BRITISH HQ. CAIRO. DAY.

A SMALL OFFICE, shared by two men, and a mountain of filing cabinets and paper.

There are AERIAL MAPS all over the walls. Clifton is on the telephone, while his colleague, RUPERT DOUGLAS, works at the desk.

CLIFTON

(into the phone)

Darling, it's me, I'm sorry, something's come up.

(Katharine responds)

Don't sulk - I'll be back tomorrow evening. I promise.

(Katharine responds)

Okay my precious, I love you.

Rupert makes a face at his friend's sentimentality. Clifton beams.

RUPERT

I didn't know you were going anywhere?

CLIFTON

I'm not. I'm going to surprise

her. It's our anniversary. She's forgotten, of course. What's the symbol for your first anniversary? I should get something. Is it paper?

(he knocks sharply on the wall)

Moose! Moose, you there? First Anniversary - is it cotton?

CARAVAGGIO

Is what cotton?

CLIFTON

First Wedding Anniversary.

RUPERT

(of Clifton)

He's hopeless!

CLIFTON

Your day will come, my sausage.

CARAVAGGIO

Your first anniversary is Paper.

EXT. CAIRO STREET. O/S SHEPHEARD'S HOTEL. DAY.

The approach to the Shepheard's Hotel. Geoffrey Clifton in a TAXI, champagne between his knees.

The car ahead of them SCREECHES TO A HALT as a WOMAN hurries across the street. The driver honks his horn angrily. The woman puts up a hand in apology as she skips across the street to another taxi. IT'S KATHARINE - she's dressed for a date, carries flowers, an overnight bag.

Geoffrey, at first excited, is troubled by the accouterments. Then he sees Katharine skip and his whole being punctures.

Katharine's cab roars off. His own car jerks forward.

CLIFTON

Stop!

CABBIE

Please?

CLIFTON

Stop here.

CABBIE

Yes sir.

Geoffrey sits in the cab. Fifty yards short of the hotel. The world rushes by. He finds a cigarette.

INT. ALM,SY'S ROOMS. LATE DAY.

Katharine is in bed. Alm,SY has just put A RECORD on. It's the folk song heard at the beginning of the film. He slips back under the covers. Their clothes are scattered around the room. He lies over a happy Katharine. She listens.

KATHARINE

This is - what is this?

ALM,SY

It's a folk song.

KATHARINE

Arabic?

ALM,SY

No, no, it's Hungarian. My daijka sang it to me.

KATHARINE

(as they listen)

It's beautiful. What's it about?

ALM,SY

(as if interpreting)

It's a long song - Szerelem means love, and the story - there's a Hungarian Count, he's a wanderer, a fool. For years he's on some kind of quest, who knows what? And then one day he falls under the spell of a mysterious English woman - a harpy - who beats him and hits him and he becomes her slave. He sews her clothes, he worships the hem of -

Katharine had thought for a few seconds he was serious, then she catches on and starts to beat him.

ALM,SY (CONT'D)

(laughing)

Ouch! See - you're always beating me..!

KATHARINE

You bastard, I was believing you!

They embrace, he lies over her, considering her naked back.

ALM,SY

I claim this shoulder blade - oh no, wait - I want this!

He turns her over, kisses her throat, then traces the hollow

indentation.

ALM,SY (CONT'D)

This - what's it called? - this place, I love it - this is mine!

(Katharine doesn't know)

I'm asking the King permission to call it the Almasy Bosphorous.

KATHARINE

(teasing)

I thought we were against ownership?

(kissing him)

I can stay tonight.

The luxury of this makes them both sad. The duplicity. Alm,sy rolls away on to his back.

ALM,SY

Madox knows, I think. He's tried to warn me. He keeps talking about Anna Karenina. I think it's his idea of a man-to-man chat. Its my idea of a man-to-man chat.

KATHARINE

This is a different world - is what I tell myself. A different life. And here I am a different wife.

ALM,SY

Yes. A different wife.

INT. CAB. CAIRO STREET. O/S SHEPHEARD'S HOTEL. NIGHT.

The CAB DRIVER is asleep. A loud POP! jerks him awake. In the back of the car Geoffrey has opened the champagne. He lets it overflow, then takes a swig. He notices the startled driver and puts up an apologetic arm.

CLIFTON

Sorry.

Two or three CHILDREN knock on the window, begging. Geoffrey knocks back, violently. They disappear.

CABBIE

Hotel now, sir?

GEOFFREY

No.

And he throws a silencing wad of money onto the seat by the Cabbie.

EXT. ALMASY'S HOUSE. OLD CAIRO. DAWN.

Alm,sy and Katharine wander out of his building and into the early morning streets, hand in hand.

EXT. SPICE MARKET. CAIRO. DAWN.

The MORNING PRAYERS rise out from the city's three Minarets. Alm,sy stops at a stall, which is just preparing to open for the day. He picks up a SILVER THIMBLE, points at it to the merchant who gives him a price. Without comment, Alm,sy produces the money and, beaming, hands the thimble to Katharine.

ALM,SY

I don't care to bargain.

(she smiles)

It's full of saffron, just in case you think I'm giving it to you to encourage your sewing.

KATHARINE

That day, had you followed me to the market?

ALM,SY

Of course. You didn't need to slap my face to make me feel as if you'd slapped my face.

KATHARINE

(loving him, but
frightened)

Shall we be all right?

ALM,SY

Yes. Yes.
(shrugs)
Absolutely.

EXT. CAIRO STREET. DAWN.

Katharine takes leave of Alm,sy on the street corner away from the hotel entrance. They don't kiss, there's no demonstration of feeling. He turns immediately away and disappears.

INT. CAB. CAIRO STREET. O/S SHEPHEARD'S HOTEL. DAY.

Geoffrey, unshaven, watches as Katharine crosses the street and heads towards the hotel. His expression is terrible, trying to smile, his face collapsed.

INT. THE PATIENT'S ROOM. MORNING.

Cheek to Cheek leaks into the room from a GRAMOPHONE that Caravaggio stands over proudly. The Patient opens his eyes -

is confused, dislocated - stares blankly at Caravaggio.

CARAVAGGIO

(grinning)

Thought you'd never wake up!

THE PATIENT

What? Hana comes in, sleepily,
frowns at the gramophone.

HANA

Where did you find that?

CARAVAGGIO

I liberated it.

HANA

I think that's called looting.

CARAVAGGIO

(relaxed)

No-one should own music. The real
question is who wrote the song?

THE PATIENT

Irving Berlin.

CARAVAGGIO

For?

THE PATIENT

Top Hat.

CARAVAGGIO

Is there a song you don't know?

HANA

(speaking for him)

No. He sings all the time.

She goes over to the Patient and kisses him gently.

HANA (CONT'D)

Good morning.

(of his singing)

Did you know that? You're always
singing?

THE PATIENT

I've been told that before.

HANA

Kip's another one.

She goes to the window, looks over to where the tents are
pitched, sees Hardy shaving, Kip IN THE PROCESS OF WASHING
HIS HAIR, his turban HANGING LIKE A RIBBON between two trees

to dry. He's perched a bowl on the sundial and is dipping his long coal-black hair into it. As Hana watches Kip, Caravaggio changes the record. The Patient identifies it immediately.

EXT. MONASTERY GARDEN. MORNING.

Hana walks past the tent, and passes Hardy. She's carrying a small cup, which she's a little furtive about. He's carrying a whole armada of OIL LIGHTS. He nods upstairs.

HANA

Hello.

HARDY

Hello miss.

HANA

I was going to say - if you want to eat with us, ever, you and Lieutenant Singh,

HARDY

Very kind of you, we can always eat in the town with the others -

HANA

Since Caravaggio turned up - food seems to appear, so please.

HARDY

I'll ask the Lieutenant. But thank you.

HANA

You saved my life. I haven't forgotten.

(Hardy waves that away)

I thought you were very very tall. You seemed to big - a Giant - and I felt like a child who can't keep her balance.

HARDY

(does a little mime)

A toddler

She goes on, and tentatively approaches Kip, who's still working at his hair. Kip hears her and puts out an inquiring arm, moving towards her like a blink man through the curtain of hair. He touches her.

HANA

Sorry, is it all right I'm seeing this? Kip shrugs.

HANA (CONT'D)

My hair was long. At some point.
I've forgotten what a nuisance it
is to wash. You know - if you were
ever around - we get water from the
pump at noon

He continues to wash. She holds up the cup of oil.

HANA (CONT'D)

Try this. I found a great jar of
it. Olive oil. In Naples this was
so precious it would have bought
you a wife.

KIP

Thank you.

She stands for a second, then walks away. Kip examines the
oil, calls after her.

KIP (CONT'D)

For my hair?

HANA

(turning, smiling)
Yes, for your hair.

EXT. THE MONASTERY. HANA'S GARDEN. DAY.

HANA IS GARDENING, close to the crucifix, which is now a full
fledged Scarecrow. Broken bottles, fragments of stained
glass and shards from a mirror are hung from the crossbar,
syringes too, all jangling and tinkling and catching the
sunlight.

Kip and Hardy drive off to work on their motorcycles. She
watches them, catching Kip's careless wave to her. She looks
briefly at herself in A PIECE OF MIRROR dangling from the
Scarecrow.

INT. THE MONASTERY. UPSTAIRS LANDING. DAY.

Hana walks along the landing with a tray. There's a message
on several doors in the corridor from Kip: SAFE, then a
couple with the warning: DANGER. She hears noise from the
Patient's room. Listens for a second before going in.

THE PATIENT (O/S)

Because you're reading it too fast!

THE PATIENT (O/S) (CONT'D)

Not at all.

THE PATIENT (O/S) (CONT'D)

You have to read Kipling slowly!
Your eye is too impatient - think

about the speed of his pen.

(quoting Kipling to
demonstrate)

What is it - He sat comma in
defiance of municipal orders comma
astride the gun Zamzammah on her
brick, What is it?

INT. THE PATIENT'S ROOM. DAY.

During this, Hana comes through with the tray, finds Kip
perched on the window, relishing his skirmish with the
Patient, who has condensed milk dribbling down his neck.

KIP

Brick platform opposite the old
Ajaib-Gher -

THE PATIENT

- The Wonder House comma as the
natives called the Lahore Museum.

KIP

It's still there, the cannon,
outside the museum.
It was made of metal cups and bowls
taken from every household in the
city as tax, then melted down. Then
later they fired the cannon at my
people - comma - The natives.

THE PATIENT

So what do you really object to -
the writer or what he's writing
about?

KIP

What I really object to, Uncle, is
your finishing all my condensed
milk.

(snatching up the empty
can)

And the message everywhere in your
book - however slowly I read it -
that the best destiny for India is
to be ruled by the British.

THE PATIENT

Hana, we have discovered a shared
please - the boy and I.

HANA

Arguing about books.

THE PATIENT

Condensed milk - one of the truly

great inventions.

KIP

(grinning, leaving)

I'll get another tin. Hana and the Patient are alone.

HANA

I didn't like that book either.
It's all about men. Too many men.
Just like this house.

THE PATIENT

You like him, don't you? Your voice changes.

HANA

I don't think it does.
(a beat)
Anyway, he's indifferent to me.

THE PATIENT

I don't think it's indifference.

Kip comes bounding in with a fresh can.

THE PATIENT (CONT'D)

Hana was just telling me that you were indifferent -

HANA

(appalled)

Hey! -

THE PATIENT

- to her cooking.

KIP

Well, I'm indifferent to cooking,
not Hana's cooking in particular.
(stabbing at the tin with
a bayonet)
Have either of you ever tried
condensed milk sandwiches?

DELETED.

INT. THE PATIENT'S ROOM. MORNING.

Caravaggio and the Patient are singing - an Arab song which they both know from Cairo days. THUNDER accompanies them. It's pouring. Suddenly the door is flung open and HANA, KIP and HARDY appear. They have the stretcher with them.

EXT. THE MONASTERY CLOISTERS. MORNING.

A whoop precedes THE HEADLONG RUSH OF KIP, HARDLY and

CARAVAGGIO as they cart the Patient across the Cloisters like manic stretcher-bearers. Hana is with them, holding an umbrella over the Patient who bounces uncomfortably. He is nervous, a little giddy. The rain buckets down.

THE PATIENT

(no irony)

Careful - careful! EXT. THE
MONASTERY GARDEN. MORNING.

The storm tour includes a trip around the pond. The Patient pushes away the umbrella, lets the rain drench him. He grins at Hana.

THE PATIENT (CONT'D)

This is wonderful!

KIP

(to Hana)

What's he saying?

HANA

He's saying it's wonderful!

INT. LIBRARY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF EGYPTOLOGY. DAY.

Madox and Almsy are camped in one corner of THE LIBRARY, hunched over their maps and papers and journals and clashing furiously over the site of the next part of the expedition.

MADOX

(pushing away his charts)

And I'm telling you there's nothing there to explore.

ALMSY

No, because you can't see from the air! If you could explore from the air life would be very simple!

(he yanks up a map)

Look! What is that? Is that a wadi? That whole spur is a real possibility.

MADOX

Which we've overflown twice.

ALMSY

Which we couldn't explore because of rocks, because of cross-winds, it's sloppy.

(stabbing another location)

And here - and here - we could be staring at Zerzura.

Other readers look over at this unseemly skirmish.

MADOX

So - on Thursday you don't trust
Bell's map - Bell was a fool, Bell
couldn't draw a map, but on Friday
he's suddenly infallible?

Alm,sy is surprised by Madox' anger.

MADOX (CONT'D)

And where are the Expedition Maps?

ALM,SY

In my room.

MADOX

Those maps belong to His Majesty's
Government. They're confidential.
They shouldn't be left lying around
for any Tom, Dick or Mary to have
sight of.

ALM,SY

What's the matter with you?

MADOX

Don't be so bloody na,ve. You know
there's a war breaking out.

(he tosses a slip of paper
onto
the map, recites its
message)

This arrived this morning. By
order of the British Government -
all International Expeditions to be
aborted by May 1939.

INT. CAIRO STREET. DAY.

Alm,sy and Madox walk down this busy and rather narrow street
without pavements. Both of them somber.

ALM,SY

Why do they care about our maps?

MADOX

What do we find in the desert?
Arrow heads, spears. In a war, if
you own the desert, you own North
Africa.

ALM,SY

(contemptuous)
Own the desert.

Alm,sy hesitates at a junction, clearly about to take leave

of Madox.

ALM,SY (CONT'D)

That place at the base of a woman's throat? You know - the hollow - here - does that have an official name?

Madox looks at him.

MADOX

For God's sake, man - pull yourself together.

INT. OPEN-AIR CINEMA. CAIRO. EVENING.

The OPEN-AIR CINEMA is just beginning its evening programme.

PATHE NEWS BEGINS and we date the event to April 1939. Stories of imminent war jostle with images of Merrie England. Village greens, sporting victories, Cruft's Dog Show. Alone among the necking couples - mostly soldiers with their Egyptian girlfriends - in an otherwise empty block, is Katharine. She's waiting for Alm, sy. A SOLDIER comes over to Katharine's row and settles a couple of seats away from her.

SOLDIER

Beggin your pardon, miss, but have you got a lighter?

Katharine lights his cigarette and returns to the screen. An item about Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers and TOP HAT. The stars do their stuff. The soldier moves a seat nearer.

SOLDIER (CONT'D)

(leering)

I love Ginger, she's a foxy girl, ain't she?

KATHARINE

Fuck off.

SOLDIER

What?

KATHARINE

You heard me.

The Soldier slinks off, muttering. Katharine is wretched. She sits head down, not watching the screen, marooned in her despair about duplicity, sordid assignments.

Alm, sy arrives, slides in beside Katharine, his shadow momentarily large across the screen.

ALM,SY

Sorry.

They watch the screen. Katharine is weeping. Alm,SY doesn't understand. He puts his arm around her.

KATHARINE

I can't do this, I can't do this
any more.

EXT. GROPPY PARK. CAIRO. EVENING.

A man walks round with A HAND BELL - announcing that the Park is closing. He turns off the gaslights which illuminate the animal cages. Alm,SY and Katharine sit stiffly on a bench. They don't speak. Alm,SY puts his hands to his head, he rubs his shoulders. The lights are gradually being extinguished around them.

Finally, Katharine gets up.

KATHARINE

I'd better get back.
(she keeps him away with a
hand)
Say goodbye here.

ALM,SY

I'm not agreeing. Don't think I'm
agreeing, because I'm not.

They stand, awkward. Katharine rehearses her position. The bell clangs.

KATHARINE

I just know - any minute he'll find
out, we'll barge into somebody
we'll - and it will ill him.

ALM,SY

Don't go over it again, please.

He takes her hands, lays his cheeks into them, then releases them, gets up, walks away. She walks towards the gate. He calls after her.

ALM,SY (CONT'D)

Katharine -

He walks towards her, his smile awful.

ALM,SY (CONT'D)

I just wanted you to know. I'm not
missing you yet. She nods, can't
find this funny.

KATHARINE

You will. You will.

Then she turns sharply from him and catches her head against the gatepost, staggers at the shock of it, then hurries away.

INT. THE PATIENT'S ROOM. MORNING.

Hana sits with the English Patient - the room shuttered against the morning light. His breathing is noticeably worsening, a shudder of a breath, the shallow rise and fall of his chest perceptible. Hana frets, touches his wrist, feeling for the pulse.

THE PATIENT

I'm still here.

HANA

You'd better be.

THE PATIENT

Don't depend on it. Will you? That little bit of air, each day there's less of it, which is all right, which is quite all right.

She squeezes his hand, suddenly overwhelmed.

THE PATIENT (CONT'D)

(brightly)

I've been talking to Caravaggio - my research assistant - there's meant to be a ghost in the Cloisters. I can join him!

There's some kind of noise from the garden. Muffled shouts.

THE PATIENT (CONT'D)

It's the boy.

Hana goes to the window, opens the shutters. The day pours in.

EXT. MONASTERY OLIVE GROVES. DAY.

Hana sees Kip - barely visible - standing at the far perimeter of the garden in the olive groves, HIS HANDS RAISED ABOVE HIM, HIS LEG HELD OUT STRANGELY. WIRES run from his foot in all directions as if he'd trodden in some elaborate steel cobweb.

EXT. MONASTERY OLIVE GROVES. DAY.

Hana appears at the edge of the Olive groves and hurries towards Kip, who hasn't moved. He shouts warning her.

KIP

Go to the left! Keep to the left!
There are mines and trip wires
everywhere!

Hana stops, hoists up her skirt and circles left, tentative
in the long grass. He shouts, doesn't want her close.

KIP (CONT'D)

Get Hardy. He's on the other side
of town. In the hills. Get him to
hurry.

She keeps coming, can see that he needs her.

HANA

It's okay - I'll help. Please.

KIP

The mines, the wires, there's a
trick. Some explode if you stretch
the wires, some if you cut them.

HANA

What do I do?

KIP

There's a mine here, but the others
are far enough away, I think at
least to give me a chance. I have
to work out which one to cut before
I fall over.

HANA

So I follow the wires?

KIP

You get Hardy.

HANA

I follow the wires.

She kneels at his feet and tries to trace the tangled route
of the web.

KIP

Don't touch them.

She follows one wire back to the closest mine, and traces
another back to Kip's foot. Then she finds another one
leading off to a second mine some thirty metres away.

HANA

Why would anyone do this?

KIP

I've done this. I've had to do
this.

Then Hana's suddenly tense.

HANA

Give me a second.

She turns and tiptoes RIGHT THROUGH THE DANGER AREA, straight to what had seized her attention. Kip is appalled.

KIP

What are you doing?! Hana!

Heedless, she dodges another mine and its web of wires just as THE TORTOISE clambers onto a clump of rock, which is, in fact, ANOTHER CONCRETE-COVERED MINE.

Hana snatches him up as he ambles towards the metal. She turns, holding the protesting animal in triumph. HER FOOT SNAGS ON A WIRE. She has to ease it off, in arabesque, still clutching the tortoise. She goes sideways to the safe zone - setting down the animal. Then she's back with Kip. He's seething. She is strangely elated.

KIP (CONT'D)

What is this business with you and explosives? Do you think you're immune?

HANA

I promise you that was the right thing to do. He's my good luck.

(she gets the pliers from his belt,

and hands them to him)

Now cut. This one.

(she indicates the wire)

I hope we don't die.

KIP

Okay. Get away from here. Quick.

HANA

I'm not scared. So many people have died around me. But I would be a shame for us.

(shrugs)

I don't feel like being shy.

KIP

You must get away. Before I cut.

I'm not cutting if you're here.

He's struggling. He's going to topple over if he cuts.

HANA

Actually, you can't cut, can you?

You'll fall over. Give me the pliers.

KIP

No. But he hands them over.

HANA

Kiss me. Before I cut. Just in case.

KIP

Don't talk. Check again. Lie flat and then cut.

Hana checks, lies down. He bends as close to the ground as he dares AND KISSES HER, THEN SHE IMMEDIATELY CUTS.

INT. THE PATIENT'S ROOM. CONTINUOUS.

The Patient lies in bed. He's agitated by the silence. SUDDENLY THERE'S AN EXPLOSION. He tries to shout, a croak which quickly reduces him to coughing and breathlessness.

THE PATIENT

Hana! Hana! Kip! Hana! He tries to move. He can't. He's frantic.

FOOTSTEPS, as someone hurtles up the stairs. It's Hana. She's ashamed to have forgotten him. She rushes to him.

HANA

I'm sorry. I forgot you'd be worrying. We're all safe. It was a mine, but not the mine. Nobody's hurt. I'm sorry.

She calms him. He's exhausted. His eyes shine.

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD. ITALY. LATE DAY.

Hana clings onto Kip as the TRIUMPH MOTORCYCLE hares along the circling road. She has her arms around his waist. His head turns to her for a second and she smiles.

EXT. ROAD BLOCK. TUSCANY. DUSK.

Kip and Hana have been detained at a ROAD BLOCK. Kip is being questioned at a sentry post, his papers over-thoroughly inspected and accompanied by several meaningful glances at Hana, who waits, standing by the motorcycle. One of the SOLDIERS saunters over and returns her papers.

SOLDIER

And you're definitely traveling with him of your own free will?

HANA

Yes.

SOLDIER

(clearly disapproving)

Just wanting to be sure. And he's taking you to church?

HANA

(deadpan)

Yes. We're going to a funeral. A cow has died. And in his religion they're sacred.

The Soldier isn't sure what to make of this. He signals to his companion who returns Kip's papers.

Kip walks back to the motorcycles. He says nothing. He kicks the starter. Hana gets on, slides her arms lovingly around him.

EXT. BRIDGE. ITALY. DUSK.

IT'S GETTING DARK. The bike, headlights on, crosses a bridge. Kip has strapped on his crimson emergency light as they sail along the winding crest of mountain ridge that is a spine down Italy.

EXT. AREZZO. DUSK.

Kip steers the motorbike into the deserted PIAZZA.

They dismount and Kip starts to unbuckle his bulging satchel and unload the panniers. Hana still doesn't know what's in store and looks questioningly at Kip as he walks up to the door of the CHURCH.

INT. CHURCH. DUSK.

They enter the Church. It's in almost total darkness. THEN A FLARE SUDDENLY ILLUMINATES THE INTERIOR. It's magnificent. Kip holds the flare, crimson on one arm, green pouring up from the other. Hana walks behind him, still perplexed. There is PROTECTIVE SCAFFOLDING EVERYWHERE, AND SANDBAGS PILED UP HIGH AROUND THE ALTARS, AND THE STATUES.

A SECOND FLARE. Kip has appeared through A SECRET DOOR high in the church, literally emerging from one of the frescoes which are momentarily visible. He flings a rope over the rafters.

Now Kip circles Hana with the rope, MAKING A SLING across her waist and shoulder. He lights a smaller flare and hands it to her before disappearing.

Hana stands holding the flare. She can't see Kip, can only hear him scrambling.

HANA

Kip?

He runs up the sandbags, right up into the rafters. He collects the other end of the rope which is attached to Hana. Holding onto it, he just STEPS OFF INTO THE DARKNESS.

SIMULTANEOUSLY HANA IS SWUNG UP INTO THE AIR, her startled yelp echoing around the Church. Kip touches ground, while Hana swings through space, coming to rest about three feet from the FRESCOED WALLS, painted by Piero Della Francesca. Hana's flare makes a halo around her head.

Now Kip, on the ground, still holding the rope, walks forward and causes Hana to SWING to the right.

She lets out a giddy laugh, exhilarated and nervous, and she flies, illuminating - en passant - faces, bodies, angels. Kip guides the rope as if they were making love, which in a way they are.

Hana arrives, hovering, in front of THE QUEEN OF SHEBA TALKING TO SOLOMON. She's overwhelmed. She reaches out to touch the giant neck of the sad Queen.

Kip slowly lets her down, paying out the length of the rope. Hana's face is full of tears. He smiles, holds her.

INT. THE PATIENT'S ROOM. EVENING.

Caravaggio is with the Patient. He sits in the window. Fiddles with the bandages of his hands.

THE PATIENT

There was a general who wore a patch over a perfectly good eye. The men fought harder for him. Sometimes I think I could get up and dance. What's under your bandages?

Caravaggio goes to him, holding out his hands, the bandage ends trailing.

CARAVAGGIO

Hold the ends.

The Patient holds them. Caravaggio walks backwards, the bandages unraveling and unraveling.

INT. TOBRUK. BRITISH HEADQUARTERS. JUNE 1942. DAY.

Caravaggio, thumbs intact and wearing a crumpled linen suit, walks through the mangled corridors of British HQ. Smoke is rising from buildings, the ominous scream of Stuka dive bombers in the distance as the harbor is pounded, the steady thud of explosions. TOBRUK IS UNDER SIEGE. BHQ is a place in the throws of dismantling itself. SECRETARIES are

visiting braziers manned by ARAB BOYS who stoke the fires as boxes of papers are fed into them. ASHES hover in the air.

INT. BHQ. TOBRUK. DAY.

Caravaggio walks through a large room crowded with desks. From one of them, a young woman, AICHA, kisses him, frowning at the chaos and the shelling.

AICHA

He's waiting for you.

Some doors are open, revealing men and women in uniform urgently SHREDDING DOCUMENTS. Caravaggio knocks at an office whose door is ajar and where the incumbent, FENELON-BARNES, is stripping the room of his personal possessions- photographs, stone branches, a cricket bat.

INT. FENELON-BARNES OFFICE. BHQ. TOBRUK. DAY.

Caravaggio enters.

FENELON-BARNES

(barely looking up)

What a bloody flap, eh? I heard from Alexandria this morning - apparently no-one there is accepting British pounds. And if you pick up a telephone everybody's practicing their German.

(holds up some gramophone records)

What do you do - do you take these things?

(then, awkward)

Look, Moose, we need you to stay in Tobruk. A bit of a short straw but the thinking is we'll be back - I mean, we will be back - but, and in the interim we need eyes and ears on the ground.

A BIG BOMB lands nearby. The building shudders and plaster dust drops from the ceiling. Almost oblivious, the two men head out of the office. Fenelon-Barnes lugs the TRUNK last glimpsed in his tent by Almsy, until Caravaggio takes over.

INT. CORRIDOR OF BRITISH HEADQUARTERS. TOBRUK. DAY.

Fenelon-Barnes and Caravaggio make their way down the stairs and to the entrance.

CARAVAGGIO

We have 30, 000 troops in Tobruk.
What are they going to be doing?

FENELON-BARNES

(continuing to pack)

Giving Rommel a bloody nose. That's my suggestion. But did you hear the BBC last nigh? Tobruk is of no strategic importance - makes you wonder. AICHA is at the bottom of the stairs.

She falls into step.

FENELON-BARNES (CONT'D)

Jerry's got our maps you know. Swines.

Before the war we helped them run about the desert making maps - and now they get spies into Cairo using our maps, they'll get Rommel into Cairo using our maps. The whole of the desert like a bus route and we gave it to them. Any foreigner who turned up - welcome to the Royal Geographic, take our maps. Madox went mad, you know - you knew Peter Madox? - after he found out he'd been betrayed by his friend. Absolutely destroyed the poor sod. Shot himself in a church in Dorset.

Caravaggio opens the door, Fenelon-Barnes goes through.

EXT. BRITISH HEADQUARTERS. TOBRUK. DAY.

The Fenelon-Barnes trunk is taken from Caravaggio and joins the pile of luggage and artifacts, which wait to be shipped out.

FENELON-BARNES

I'd like to get that bastard Alm, sy
- settle the score, eh? That's my
fantasy - said he, clearing out.
Must have been a spy all along.

DELETED.

EXT. TOBRUK DOCKSIDE. DAY.

A GERMAN TROOP CARRIER rumbles forward passing a line of BEDRAGGLED BRITISH POWS as they're marched along the side of harbor.

EXT. TOBRUK RUINED QUARTER. DAY.

A HILL OF SALVAGED ARMY BOOTS is being explored by a couple of GERMAN SOLDIERS in search of better footwear. Below them the POWS trudge by, one of them barefoot. ONE OF THE GERMANS

tosses down a pair of boots then continues his own perusal.

EXT. TOBRUK SQUARE. DAY.

A crowd of Tobruk CIVILIANS - French and Italians among the MOSTLY ARAB FACES. Their papers are being thoroughly checked by officers sitting at open desks. IN A LINE, WEARING HIS SHABBY SUIT, IS CARAVAGGIO. AN ARAB WOMAN in front of him is arguing over the identity of her ominously CAUCASIAN-LOOKING CHILD. An INTERPRETER mediates. The OFFICER doesn't believe the woman. She's getting frantic at the possibility of losing her child.

Suddenly there's a disturbance as a WOMAN is dragged along the line by her hair.

She's bloodied, and has been tortured, and it's hard to recognize her as the pretty AICHA. She touches a couple of people in the line. They're horrified. Soldiers pull them away. Caravaggio doesn't look, stares straight ahead. An officer watches him AS HE TURNS BRIEFLY AND HELPLESSLY OUT OF CONCERN FOR HER. THEIR EYES CATCH FOR AN INSTANT AND THE OFFICER SEES IT.

CARAVAGGIO RUNS, bolts for cover, vaulting the rubble which blocks one corner of the square. The CONGREGATION throws itself to the ground until the square has only standing soldiers and a running man.

EXT. TOBRUK. INTERIOR OF RUINED BUILDING. DAY.

Shots pursue Caravaggio as he disappears behind the rubble, then bobs up again as he darts inside a blasted building. He clambers up some ruined stairs, heaves over the wall.

EXT. TOBRUK. FACADE OF RUINED BUILDING. DAY.

CARAVAGGIO grabs a metal bar on the facade of the building, from which he hangs, looking for the next foothold. Soldiers appear along the top of the building, shouting, rifles ready. AN OFFICER arrives and stops the soldiers firing, and the others begin to laugh as Caravaggio hangs from the bar fifteen feet above a balcony, slowly losing his strength. Another SOLDIER waits for him in the balcony below. Now he starts to laugh. Caravaggio hangs.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM. TOBRUK. NOVEMBER 13,1942. DAY.

Caravaggio is slumped at a table, HIS HANDS MANACLED TO ITS THICK WOODEN LEGS. There's A TELEPHONE at another table in the corner of the room attended by a CLERK with A STENOGRAPHER working next to him. The room has stone walls which appear damp, and no windows. SOLDIERS stand guard at the door. It's a horrible room. Caravaggio is trying to sleep, he's unshaven, and pasty-looking. His interrogator, Miller, seems incredibly tired and aggravated. He's on the phone.

M,LLER
(in German)
Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes.

He slams down the phone and comes back to the table.

M,LLER (CONT'D)
David Caravaggio.

CARAVAGGIO
No.

M,LLER
Petty thief, six months
imprisonment Kingston Penitentiary,
1937.

CARAVAGGIO
(barely with humor)
I keep explaining. You've got the
wrong man. My name is Bellini -
Antonio Bellini. Bellini,
Caravaggio, both painters, I think
that is confusing you.

M,ller doesn't even pay attention, he's going through a file.
Pulls out some photographs, starts spreading them out.

M,LLER
Is this you?

CARAVAGGIO
I don't know.

M,LLER
It is you. This was taken in Cairo
at British Headquarters - July 41.
And so was this - August 41. And
this -February 42.

CARAVAGGIO
It's impossible. I was buying or
selling something. I've been to
Cairo many times.

M,LLER
You are a Canadian spy working for
the Allies. Code-name Moose.

THE PHONE rings again, is answered. The Clerk calls to
M,ller who gets up, irritably. Caravaggio addresses the
room.

CARAVAGGIO
Could I have a doctor? I am
passing blood. I must be bleeding

internally.

(to the clerk)

Can you get a doctor? Look -
(he spits onto the table,
there's blood in his
mouth)

I'm leaking blood.

(he indicates a Guard)

He kicks me. He kicks me all the
time.

Nobody responds. Müller is irascible on the phone, checking
his watch, negotiating time. The call finishes.

CLERK

(in German)

He's asking for a doctor.

MÜLLER

(to Caravaggio)

You want a doctor?

CARAVAGGIO

Yes, I've been asking for weeks, a
month, I don't know, also my leg
was -

MÜLLER

We don't have a doctor, but we do
have a nurse.

CARAVAGGIO

A nurse? Well, sure, a nurse is
great. A nurse? Great.

Müller nods at the Clerk, who instantly gets up. Just then
the telephone rings again. He hesitates.

MÜLLER

(in German)

Leave it and get the nurse!

The Clerk exits. The phone rings. The Stenographer is
plagued by flies. Suddenly he slaps at one.

MÜLLER (CONT'D)

(snapping)

Why is there so much nose? I can't
hear myself think!

(turns to Caravaggio)

Look - give me something. So we
can all get out of this room. A
name. A code.

(wiping his face)

It's too hot.

CARAVAGGIO

I slept with the girl. I've got a wife in Tripoli. A girl comes up and points at you, you only see trouble.

The NURSE comes in. She is Arab and her head is covered.

M,LLER

I'll tell you what I'm going to do. This is your nurse, by the way. She's Moslem, so she'll understand all of this. What's the punishment for adultery? Let's leave it at that. You're married and you were fucking another woman, so that's - is it the hands that are cut off? Or is that for stealing? Does anyone know?

There's silence. M,ller turns to Caravaggio.

M,LLER (CONT'D)

Well, you must know. You were brought up Libya, yes?

CARAVAGGIO

Don't cut me.

M,LLER

Or was it Toronto?

CARAVAGGIO

(ashen)

Don't cut me. Come on.

Now the phone starts again. The CLERK picks it up, there's a terse exchange, he puts the receiver on the desk, waits for the moment to interrupt M,ller.

M,LLER

Ten fingers. How about this? You give me a name for every finger - doesn't matter who. I get something, you keep something. I'm trying to be reasonable. Fenelon Barnes, we could call that two names.

(pauses, suddenly puzzled)

Are thumbs fingers?

(in GERMAN to the others)

Is a thumb a finger?

No response. M,ller opens his palms to Caravaggio.

M,LLER (CONT'D)

I get no help from these people.

CLERK
(in German)
The telephone -

Müller walks over, takes the receiver and slams it down. an AIR RAID SIREN is going off somewhere, and now the faint sound of explosions is also discernible, but all muffled in this room with the steady clack-clack of the STENOGRAPHER. At that moment, Müller suddenly becomes aware of what is happening. He turns on the Stenographer.

MÜLLER
(in German)
What are you doing?

STENOGRAPHER
(awkward, in German)
That Geneva Convention. I'm -

Müller peremptorily rips out the paper, throws it on the floor.

CARAVAGGIO
You can't do that! Hey - come on!

DURING THIS Müller's gone to the table, pulled out a drawer and produced A CUT-THROAT RAZOR. He hands it to the nurse, makes a line across his own left thumb and jerks his head towards Caravaggio. The nurse is extremely reluctant. Müller claps his hands, pushes her towards Caravaggio.

MÜLLER
Go! Hey! Go! Caravaggio is in
terror.

CARAVAGGIO
Oh Jesus. Oh Jesus Christ.

The guards come away from the door and press down on Caravaggio's shoulders to prevent him from moving. The nurse, grim-faced, approaches, kneels at the table.

CARAVAGGIO (CONT'D)
(as she prepares to cut)
Listen, I'll give you a name. What
name did you say? I knew them! I
promise. Please - please!

And then he SCREAMS AND SCREAMS and jerks up, carrying the guards and the table with him, all heaving off the ground, the nurse thrown off balance. He falls to the floor, ROARING WITH PAIN, blood everywhere, the table on top of him. The AIR RAID is continuing outside, the PHONE IS RINGING, the nurse stands, pale, blood all over her uniform.

M,LLER

Cut the other thumb.

He stabs at his own right thumb.

M,LLER (CONT'D)

This one! Come on!

The nurse, horrified, shakes her head. M,ller snatches the razor from her and heads towards the prostate Caravaggio.

One Guard has got to his feet and grips Caravaggio around the neck in half-nelson, others holding his legs, while M,ller approaches. Caravaggio can't move. He's gurgling as the Guard almost strangles him. His eyes are streaming with tears.

Now M,ller is at his other hand, and the ROAR of pain again lifts Caravaggio to his feet, THE WHOLE TABLE RISING IN THE AIR, his mutilated hands slipping from the handcuffs lie Houdini, the drawers of the table SPILLING their contents everywhere, before he sinks to his knees like a gored bull and BLACKS OUT.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM. TOBRUK. DAY.

LATER, and Caravaggio comes round. His eyes open and then his face spasms with pain. He looks down at his ruined hands, then realizes he's alone on the floor of the room, the papers still scattered, the table on its side. He gets up and staggers out of the open door and up the stairs.

INT. STAIRS FROM INTERROGATION ROOM. TOBRUK. DAY.

The corridor is deserted, but the body of a GERMAN SOLDIER sprawls on the stairs leading up to daylight. Outside Caravaggio can hear fighting.

EXT. ROOF. INTERROGATION BUILDING. DAY.

Caravaggio walks unsteadily along the roof of the building. Grey and yellow gusts of smoke and the rat-ta-tat-tat of machine gun fire accompany him, and there's the sound of vehicles screeching and people shouting nearby, but no visual clues as to what's happening.

SUDDENLY A PARACHUTE FLOATS DOWN BY HIM. THEN ANOTHER. THEN ANOTHER. HE'S SURROUNDED BY PARACHUTES. THE BRITISH ARE RECLAIMING TOBRUK. A PARATROOPER LANDS ON THE ROOF, AND GESTURES TO CARAVAGGIO TO RAISE HIS HANDS. HE SLOWLY DOES SO.

INT. THE PATIENT'S ROOM. NIGHT.

Caravaggio stands in front of the bed, holding up his NAKED HANDS to the Patient, like a man surrendering - two flaps like gills where his thumbs were. The Patient reaches out to

take his hands and gently lowers them. Caravaggio finds his bandages, start to wrap them back round his fists.

CARAVAGGIO

The man who took my thumbs, I found him eventually - he's dead. The man who took my photograph, I found him too - that took me a year. He's dead. Another man took that man across the desert to Cairo. Now I intend to find him.

The LIGHTS FROM THE MOTORBIKE approaching the Monastery, its growl. Caravaggio goes to the window and watches as Kip and Hana arrive.

INT. AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE. CAIRO, 1939. NIGHT.

Last seen at the Troops Christmas party, the INNER COURTYARD has been transformed into an elegant outdoor banquet, with band. The Almsy/Madox team is assembled for A FAREWELL DINNER. They are waiting for Almsy to arrive, his seat conspicuously empty. He is very late. And then he's there, dangerous drunk, terribly dashing. He practically dances to his chair, which he drags violently away from its position opposite Katharine. He bows to Lady Hampton.

ALMSY

I believe I'm rather late.

MADOX

(ignoring the drama of this entrance)

Good, we're all here? A toast, to the International Sand club - may it soon resurface.

THE OTHERS

The International Sand Club!

ALMSY

(raising his glass)

Misfits, buggers, fascists, and paedophiles. God bless us every one.

The others drink, trying to ignore his mood.

ALMSY (CONT'D)

Oops! Mustn't say International. Dirty word. Filthy word. His Majesty! Die F,hrer! Il Duce.

CLIFTON

Sorry, what's your point?

ALM,SY

(ignoring the remark)

And the people here don't want us.
Are you kidding? The Egyptians are
desperate to get rid of the
Colonials.

(to an embarrassed Fouad)

- isn't that right?

Their best people get down on hands
and knees begging to be spared a
knighthood.

(to his host, Sir Hampton)

Isn't that right?

Ronnie Hampton shrugs. They're all very uncomfortable.
Alm,sy glares at Clifton.

ALM,SY (CONT'D)

What's my point?

(standing up)

Oh! I've invented a new dance -
the Bosphorus Hug. Anybody up to
it? Madox? D'Ag? Come on
D'Aggers.

D'AGOSTINO

Let's eat first. Sit down.

The Band is now playing Manhattan - Alm,sy, without missing a
beat, begins to sing, replacing the words with alternatives
he knows. He lurches around. Katharine can't look at him.

ALM,SY

We'll bathe at Brighton, the fish
we'll frighten when we're in. your
bathing suit so thin will make the
shellfish grin, fin to fin. --
Those were the words - actually -
before they were cleaned up. Could
be a song for you, Mrs. Clifton -
(a perfect English accent)
- with your love of bathing.

Madox gets up and pulls Alm,sy into his chair, taking charge.

MADOX

Look, either shut up, or go home.

ALM,SY

(darkly)

Absolutely right, shut up.
Lashings of apologies all round.

EXT. AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE. NIGHT.

Later, now MOST OF THE GROUP ARE DANCING. We see Katharine

dancing with Rupert Douglas, enjoying herself. Bermann is there and even Madox jogging and grinning foolishly. Clifton looks at Katharine who, as the dance ends, excuses herself to go to the cloakroom. Almsy hovers in the shadows, unseen.

INT. AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE. NIGHT.

Katharine comes along the familiar warren of rooms and corridors and is suddenly confronted by Almsy, tortured and out of control.

ALMSY

Why did you hold his collar?

KATHARINE

What?

ALMSY

(mimicking her inflection)

What? What? That boy, that little boy, you were holding his collar, gripping his collar, what for?

KATHARINE

Would you let me pass?

ALMSY

Is he next? Do you drag him into your little room? Where is it? Is this it?

KATHARINE

Don't do this.

ALMSY

I've watched you - on verandahs, at Garden Parties, at the Races - how can you stand there? How can you ever smile? As if your life hadn't capsized?

KATHARINE

You know why? He tries to hold her. She resists

ALMSY

Dance with me.

KATHARINE

No.

ALMSY

Dance with me. I want to touch you. I want the things which are mine. Which belong to me.

KATHARINE

Do you think you're the only one
who feels anything? Is that what
you think?

Some women, flushed with dancing, turn the corner on the way
to the Ladies Room. They collect Katharine in their train
and leave Almsy to fall back into the shadows.

INT. THE PATIENTS' ROOM. NIGHT.

Hana sits with the Patient. His eyes are full of tears. He
opens them, sees her, watching over him. He's embarrassed.

THE PATIENT

Why don't you go?
(wiping his eyes)
You should sleep.

HANA

Would you like me to?

He nods. She gets up, touches his hand, then leaves.

INT. THE MONASTERY, LANDING AND STAIRS. NIGHT.

Hana leaves the room, then turns and sees A TINY LAMP on the
floor, it's made from a SNAIL SHELL and oil. She bends to it
curiously, then sees a second lamp half-way down the stairs,
then a third further down. She smiles in the light, then
follows the trail.

EXT. THE MONASTERY CLOISTERS. NIGHT.

In the Cloisters THE TRAIL OF SHELL LAMPS CONTINUES, like
tiny cat's eyes. As they reach the hopscotch chalk marks,
they outline the squares. Hana HOPSCOTCHES and then follows
the light, disappearing round a corner.

INT. THE MONASTERY STABLES. NIGHT.

Hana comes through into the stables. The lamps lead her,
then they stop. She peers into the shadows.

KIP (O/S)

Hana.

She turns to the voice. He steps out of the darkness.

HANA

(happy)
Kip. And he goes to her.

EXT. THE MONASTERY STABLES. EARLY MORNING.

Hardy knocks cautiously on the door of the stables.
Eventually Hana opens the door.

HARDY
I was looking for the Lieutenant
Singh.

HANA
He's sleeping.

HARDY
Only we have to go to work.

HANA
I'll tell him. What is it? Is it
a mine?

HARDY
A bomb. At the Viaduct. She closes
the door, then reappears.

HANA
Does he have to go?

HARDY
Pardon me?

HANA
What if you couldn't find him?
(Hardy's bewildered)
Sergeant, not today, please. Not
this morning.

Kip comes to the door, winding his turban.

KIP
What's happening? Am I needed?

HARDY
I'm afraid so, sir. Kip hurries to
his tent. Hana follows him.

HANA
Don't go. I'm frightened. I can
love a coward, I can't love another
dead man.

KIP
This is what I do. I do this every
day.

And he's ready, Hardy having wheeled out their motorcycles.
He gets on his, and they're away, Hana hardly able to look.

EXT. A VIADUCT NORTH OF THE MONASTERY. DAY.

KIP IS LOWERED BY A PULLEY INTO THE SHAFT THE SAPPERS HAVE
MADE AROUND THE BOMB. Hardy supervises. The bombs huge - 2,

000 lbs, and protrudes ostrich-like from the pit, its nose sunk into a pool of sludge at the base of the viaduct.

Kip steps off and sinks knee deep in mud, grunting in disgust.

Warily, he touches his huge opponent, feeling the condition of the case. He wipes the metal. Reveals a serial number, calls it out to Hardy, who's perched on the bank.

KIP

Serial number - KK-1P2600.

He's hypnotized by the number: KK-1P: a bomb with his name on it.

EXT. ROAD APPROACHING VIADUCT. DAY.

Hana cycles along on Caravaggio's bicycle. A TANK comes roaring up behind her, then a second and a third, loaded up with people, citizens and soldiers, and children, waving flags and gesticulating. She lets the metal circus go by.

INT. BOMB SHAFT. DAY.

Back in the shaft, Kip works away, his fingers shaking with the cold from the oxygen he's using to freeze the fuse. Suddenly there's a VIOLENT TREMOR. The ground is SHUDDERING, and the bomb slips horribly. Kip GRABS AT IT helplessly as if trying to stop a man from falling, instead it falls on him pushing him into the sludge.

KIP

Hardy! Hardy! What's happening?!

EXT. VIADUCT. DAY.

The TANKS are rumbling towards the Viaduct. HORNS start sounding. HARDY, below, bellows at his men above for explanation.

HARDY

Corporal!? Dade!!

DADE

Tanks, sir. Don't know what it's about. God only knows.

HARDY

(incredulous)

What is this - a bloody carnival?
Stop them!

Three Sappers run across the bridge towards the oncoming procession. They wave their orange flags, the tanks wave back with their flags - Stars and Stripes, Union Jacks. Now SHOTS are ringing out. In the shaft, oblivious, Kip slides out from under the bomb, the oxygen spurting everywhere, all

over his clothes, hissing on the surface of the water. Hardy bends into the shaft, heedless of his own safety.

HARDY (CONT'D)

You've got to cut, sir, that frost won't last.

KIP

Go away.

HARDY

Yessir.

KIP

This is making me incredibly angry.

He rubs his hands to warm them up, locates his needle pliers and slips them through the tiny gap. His hand touches the casing and the freeze BURNS his hand. He jerks back, DROPPING THE PLIERS into the sludge, cursing.

Now he's on his hands and knees in the sludge, trying frantically to find the pliers. Hardy looks at his watch, he can't help. The seconds run out as Kip grovels in the mud. Totally submerged, he suddenly comes out with the pliers, goes straight to the fuse, no finesse, and cuts. There's a snip. Then nothing. Then Kip laughs at Hardy.

KIP (CONT'D)

Kiss me.

Hardy is already at the winch, hauling it up. Kip can hardly clip on the halter - his hands numb and burned. As the pulley jerks he just clings on, rising from the grip of the mud like an ancient corpse out of a bog.

The other sappers have gathered around the edge of the site. Great elation on their faces.

HARDY

Get a blanket!
(not getting attention)
Dade! Get the Lieutenant a blanket.

DADE

It's over, Sarge. It's over.
Jerry's surrendered.
(to Kip)
Sir, congratulations! Kip shakes his hand.

Kip shakes Hardy's hand.

KIP

Congratulations.

And now they're all shaking hands, and slapping backs and the SOLDIERS FROM THE TANKS are there and the victory celebrations begin. Kip's blank, drained, not taking anything in, as Dade wraps a blanket around his shoulders.

HANA'S ON TOP OF THE VIADUCT, watching as Kip is wrapped in his blanket, the men celebrating. She shouts with relief from the top of the bridge.

HANA

Kip!

INT. THE PATIENT'S ROOM. NIGHT.

A VICTORY CELEBRATION PARTY.

The gramophone plays Frank Sinatra. Kip sits in the window, the shutters open, the village lit up behind his head, nodding to the music, sucking out of his condensed milk. Elsewhere there is an open bottle of cognac, some wine. The Patient has a beaker of wine. Caravaggio is dancing with Hana.

HANA

Kip - come and dance with me

KIP

(a sly wobble of the head)

Yes. Later.

Caravaggio swirls past the Patient - nodding at the cognac.

CARAVAGGIO

Have a drink.

THE PATIENT

I've had a drink. Fatal.

CARAVAGGIO

Well, anything you do is likely to be fatal, so you know -

THE PATIENT

Very true!

EXT. VILLAGE SQUARE. NIGHT.

A tiny PIAZZA where the Sappers and the Villagers are having their own, more raucous, Victory Feste. There are accordions, there's dancing, and there's HARDY, stripped to some exotic underpants, a large tattoo: DORIS inside a heart, clambering up the EQUESTRIAN STATUE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE FOUNTAIN. He's astride the horse and now straining to get up to the tip of the outstretched sword, so that he can hang the UNION JACK FLAG he has in his mouth.

BLACKLER, one of the Sappers, is Hardy's assistant. He's drunk and slips from his ladder, falling flat on his back into the fountain with a great splash, to much hilarity.

INT. THE PATIENT'S ROOM. NIGHT.

Hana and Caravaggio are still dancing. The music has stopped. Caravaggio changes the record. Hana goes to Kip for a second, beaming, before Caravaggio has snatched her away again. The Patient taps along to the music.

THE PATIENT

Who knows the Bosphorus Hug?

HANA

Never heard of it.

THE PATIENT

That was a dance we invented at the International Sand Club.

CARAVAGGIO

(cryptic)

What? You and Madox? Or you and Katharine Clifton?

THE PATIENT

(a small laugh)

What?

There's a muddled thud in the distance, Kip's ears prick up. He glances for an instant out of the window.

HANA

(anxious, of the noise)

What was that?

She is spinning with Caravaggio. When she comes round again, Kip has gone.

EXT. VILLAGE SQUARE. ITALY 1945. NIGHT.

Kip's motorbike skids into the tiny PIAZZA.

A MILITARY AMBULANCE IS ALREADY THERE. Dade and SPALDING are presiding as the paramedics take two bodies into the rear of the truck. The shattered fountain, the sluiced flagstones, shining wet and slick, give some clues as to what's happened, as do the elderly standing in the shadows, the distressed girls, arm in arm. ONE GIRL, young and quite striking, is particularly inconsolable, her grief sobbed out at the doors of the ambulance.

SPALDING salutes Kip, who waves his salute away, just wanting to know what happened.

SPALDING

Booby trap. They was running up the Union Jack, sir, up off that statue - It just went off.

DADE

Should have been me. It was my idea but Sergeant Hardy climbed up, sir, him and Blackler.

Kip goes to the ambulance. Spalding tries to stop him.

SPALDING

Sir - you don't want to look.

Kip steps into the back of the ambulance, bends over both bodies, does look, then comes out, past the weeping girl.

KIP

Who's that girl?

DADE

His fiancée, sir.

KIP

(astonished)

Hardy's?

DADE

Kept it a bit dark.

EXT. THE MONASTERY. APPROACHING DAWN.

Kip has pulled out all of Hardy's gear. Now he starts on the tent. Hana comes out into the step. Kip turns, his eyes brimming, sees her, sighs, then turns back and kicks at the pegs, collapsing the tent.

Now he's trying to fold a shirt. Hana takes it from him. She folds it. Then together they start to fold the tent, Kip orchestrating, not wanting to talk. Finally, Kip looks at Hana, stiff with emotion.

KIP

I was thinking yesterday - yesterday! - the Patient, Hardy: they're everything that's good about England. I couldn't even say what that was. We didn't exchange two personal words, and we've been together through some terrible things, some -

(incredulous)

he was engaged to a girl in the village! - I mean -

(looks at Hana)

and us - he never once. He didn't

ask me if I could spin the ball at cricket or the kamasutra or - I don't even know what I'm talking about.

HANA
You loved him.

INT. THE PATIENT'S ROOM. EVENING.

Caravaggio, reading Dante aloud in Italian, smoking, walks over to the window, looks out.

EXT. KIP'S TENT. EVENING.

Hana is approaching Kip's tent, carrying a light. She ducks inside the tent and the light disappears.

INT. THE PATIENT'S ROOM. EVENING.

Caravaggio turns back into the room, towards the Patient, still reading.

INT. KIP'S TENT. NIGHT.

Hana lies over Kip, unraveling his turban, slowly, sensual.

HANA
If one night I didn't come to the tent, what would you do?

KIP
I try not to expect you.

HANA
But if it got late and I hadn't shown up?

KIP
Then I'd think there must be a reason.

HANA
You wouldn't come to find me?
(Kip shrugs)
That makes me never want to come here. But she continues unraveling the turban.

HANA (CONT'D)
Then I tell myself he spends all day searching, in the night he wants to be found.

EXT. BASECAMP AT THE CAVE OF SWIMMERS. 1939. DAY.

The Expedition Team is packing up the Basecamp. Madox and Alm,sy are loading things into the plane. FOUAD, AL AUF and others work at the cars.

MADOX

Had a letter from my wife. The wisteria is still out, which I'm looking forward to. She says Dorset is gripped with Invasion Fever. Wrong coast I should have thought, still.

ALM,SY

Right.

MADOX

Bermann thinks he'll be interned, poor fellow. I'm going to do what I can, but. And D'Ag turns out to be a great admirer of Mussolini. So now you can say I told you so.

ALM,SY

I told you so.

MADOX

We didn't care about countries. Did we? Brits, Arabs, Hungarians, Germans. None of that mattered, did it? It was something finer than that.

ALM,SY

Yes. It was. Thanks for the compass. I'll look after it for you.

MADOX

(shrugging this off)
When's Clifton picking you up?

ALM,SY

Tomorrow afternoon. Don't worry. I'll be ready.

MADOX

I'll leave the plane in the hangar at Kufra Oasis. So if you need it,hard to know how long one's talking about. We might all be back in a month or two.

Madox kneels and takes A HANDFUL OF SAND, puts it into his pocket. He throws his haversack into the plane then turns. Alm,sy puts out a hand. This is a moment of great emotional weight for them both, conducted as if nothing were happening.

MADOX (CONT'D)

I have to teach myself not to read too much into everything. Comes of too long having to read so much into hardly anything at all.

ALM,SY

Goodbye, my friend. They shake hands.

MADOX

May God make safety your companion.

ALM,SY

(a tradition)

There is no God.

(smiles)

But I hope someone looks after you.

Madox clambers into his plane, then remembers something, jabs at his throat.

MADOX

In case you're still wondering - this is called the supasternal notch.

Alm,SY nods, goes to the propeller.

MADOX (CONT'D)

Come and visit us in Dorset. When all this nonsense is over.

(then shrugs)

You'll never come to Dorset.

The plane roars into life. Alm,SY watches it taxi away - then heads back to continue with his packing up.

INT. THE PATIENT'S ROOM. NIGHT.

MADOX SHOOTS HIMSELF BEHIND THE ALTAR IN THE ROOM. The Patient's stertorous breathing, each intake accompanied by a small noise, a note, suddenly stops. Then steadies again. He appears to be alone.

EXT. GARDEN. NIGHT.

Kip is in the tent, looking out of the flap, waiting for Hana.

INT. THE MONASTERY KITCHEN. NIGHT.

Kip walks in looking for Hana.

INT. THE PATIENT'S ROOM. NIGHT.

Kip enters, sees Hana is not with the Patient, hears his uneven breathing, then goes out. From the shadows of the room, CARAVAGGIO shifts position. He's slumped on the floor, staring at the man prone in the bed.

INT. HANA'S ROOM. NIGHT.

Into her bedroom, Kip can't find her there either. He turns to go, walking down the wooden stairs, until her voice stops him in his tracks. She's in the shadows of the eaves.

HANA

Sometimes I need you to find me.

INT. THE PATIENT'S ROOM. NIGHT.

The Patient's eyes open to see Caravaggio at the morphine.

THE PATIENT

Hana tells me you're leaving.

CARAVAGGIO

(preparing the injection)

There are going to be trials, they want me to interpret, don't they know I'm allergic to courtrooms?

THE PATIENT

We shall miss you.

He delivers the injection. The Patient sighs. Caravaggio takes off his jacket. A pistol is stuck in his waistband. The Patient sees it.

CARAVAGGIO

So, I come across the Hospital Convoy

(holds up the syringe)

I was looking for this stuff, and some nurse, Mary, Hana's friend, tells me about you and Hana, hiding in a monastery, in purdah, whatever it is - retreat -

(he administers his own injection,

using his teeth grip the sleeve)

how you'd come in from the Desert and you were burned and you didn't know your name but you knew the words to every song there was and you had one possession -

(picks it up)

- a copy of Herodotus - and it was full of letters and cuttings, and then I knew it must be you.

THE PATIENT

Me?

CARAVAGGIO

I'd seen you writing in that book.
At the Embassy in Cairo, when I had
thumbs and you had a face. And a
name.

THE PATIENT

I see.

CARAVAGGIO

Before you went over to the
Germans, before you got Rommel's
spy across the desert and inside
British headquarters. He took some
pretty good photographs - I saw
mine in that torture room in
Tobruk, so they made an impression.

THE PATIENT

And you thought you'd come and
settle the score?

CARAVAGGIO

You were the only man who knew the
desert well enough, the only man
who would cross seventeen hundred
miles of nothing.

THE PATIENT

I had to get back to the desert. I
made a promise. The rest meant
nothing to me.

CARAVAGGIO

What did you say?

THE PATIENT

The rest meant nothing to me.

CARAVAGGIO

There was a result to what you did.
It wasn't just another expedition.
(holds up hands)
It did this. If the British hadn't
unearthed your nosey photographer
in Cairo thousands of people could
have died.

THE PATIENT

Thousands of people did die, just
different people.

CARAVAGGIO

But you were among the British,
they were your friends - why betray
them?

THE PATIENT

(a bitter laugh)

Is that what you thought? That I
betrayed the British? The British
betrayed me. The British betrayed
me.

EXT. BASECAMP AT CAVE OF SWIMMERS. 1939. DAY.

Alm,sy sits on a ridge transferring map of information from
his Herodotus onto a sheet of paper. He looks up at the
sound of Clifton's approaching Steerman. He folds up the map
and sticks it inside one of Clifton's CHAMPAGNE BOTTLES and
lodges it between the rocks.

INT. STEERMAN. DAY.

Clifton is flying the STEERMAN up to Gilf Kebir. From the
air it's possible to make out Alm,sy scrambling down from the
ridge towards where the stones indicate a landing area,
carrying the last of the materials from the Cave of Swimmers.
Alm,sy waves in recognition and welcome.

EXT. BASECAMP AT THE CAVE OF SWIMMERS. DAY.

Alm,sy watches as the plane drops towards him, shielding his
eyes against the sun. the plane bounces along the runway,
not quite landing. Alm,sy continues packing the equipment.

Alm,sy looks up to see the plane swerve, now suddenly HEADING
STRAIGHT TOWARDS HIM. He's completely vulnerable, nowhere to
run. He dives at the ground. THE PLANE SMASHES AGAINST AN
INVISIBLE RIDGE AND TURNS OVER AND OVER, the wings snapping
off like twigs as it hurtles past the prostrate Alm,sy. He
gets to his feet and starts to run towards the wreckage.

A blue line of smoke is uncoiling from the plane, but no
fire. Alm,sy pulls away the debris to find GEOFFREY -
SLUMPED, NECK BROKEN, BLOODY. He tries to move him, and in
the process reveals, to his ABSOLUTE horror, KATHARINE,
STARING GRIMLY AHEAD, UNABLE TO MOVE. He's frantic.

ALM,SY

Katharine! Oh dear God, Katharine -
what are you doing here?

KATHARINE

(eyes rolling, an
incredible weariness)

I can't move. I can't get out.

Alm,sy starts to pull at the wreck around her.

DURING THIS -

ALM,SY

Why did he bring you?

KATHARINE

A surprise, he said.

Alm,sy inspects Clifton, tries to find a pulse. The smoke circles around them. Katharine looks at her husband.

KATHARINE (CONT'D)

Poor Geoffrey. He knew. He must have known all the time. He was shouting - I love you, Katharine, I love you so much. Is he badly hurt?

His neck is odd.

Alm,sy puts his arm around Katharine to try and pull her clear. She can't stand the pain.

KATHARINE (CONT'D)

Please don't move me. It hurts too much.

ALM,SY

We've got to get you out of here.

KATHARINE

It hurts too much.

ALM,SY

(can't bear to hurt her)

I know, darling, I'm sorry.

The smoke thickens. He pulls - hard - the pain from which causes Katharine to gasp, then pass out. They slip haphazardly to the ground, cushioned a little by the sand. He lifts her gently into his arms and carries her from the danger of the place, then turns and runs back. THE PLANE SUDDENLY ERUPTS IN FLAMES. Alm,sy dashes into the fire, disappearing into the smoke before emerging with Clifton over his shoulder, fireman's-lift style.

EXT. THE CAVE OF SWIMMERS. DAY.

He has WRAPPED KATHARINE IN THE SILK FOLDS OF HER PARACHUTE and emerges from the near the familiar cleft in the rock, struggling with the exertion of the climb as they approach the Cave of Swimmers. He has a large water bottle slung around his neck and a haversack, and is loaded like a pack horse. Katharine opens her eyes.

KATHARINE

(whispering)
Why did you hate me?

ALM,SY
What?

KATHARINE
Don't you know you drove everybody
mad?

ALM,SY
Don't talk.

KATHARINE
(gasping)
You speak so many bloody languages
and you never want to talk.

They stagger on. He suddenly notices a stain of gold at her neck. It's saffron, leaking from a silver THIMBLE which hangs from a black ribbon.

ALM,SY
(overwhelmed)
You're wearing the thimble.

KATHARINE
Of course. You idiot. I always
wear it. I've always worn it. I've
always loved you.

Alm,sy CRIES as he walks - huge sobs, no words - convulsed with the pain of it. They approach the Cave.

INT. CAVE OF SWIMMERS. DAY.

Alm,sy comes through in shadows, carrying Katharine, blocking out the light that pours into the entrance of the cave. Once inside, he sets her down incredibly gently, makes a bed of blankets and the parachute. He turns on his flashlight.

KATHARINE
It's so cold.

ALM,SY
I know. I'm sorry. I'll make a
fire. I'll be back.

KATHARINE
(panicking suddenly)
Don't leave me!

ALM,SY
I'm just going to find things for
the fire.

INT. CAVE OF SWIMMERS. TORCHLIGHT.

Alm,sy returns with the stocks of ACACIA TWIGS the Expedition had cached. As he makes the fire, the light sends his shadow flitting across the walls.

KATHARINE

Shall we be all right?

ALM,SY

Yes. Absolutely.

KATHARINE

(with a laugh)

Oh dear.

ALM,SY

(as he works)

Listen to me, Katharine. You've broken your ankle and I'm going to have to try and bind it. I think your wrist might be broken, too - and some ribs, which is why it's hurting you to breathe. I'm going to have to walk to El Taj. Given all the traffic in the desert these days I should bump into one army or another before I reach there - or Fenelon-Barnes and his camel. And then I'll be back and we'll be fine, and I'll never leave you.

The fire is lit and he comes over to her, kneels beside her.

KATHARINE

Do you promise? I wouldn't want to die here. I wouldn't want to die in the desert. I've always had a rather elaborate funeral in mind, with particular hymns. Very English. And I know exactly where I want to be buried. In our garden. Where I grew up. With a view of the sea. So promise me you'll come back for you.

ALM,SY

I promise I'll come back. I promise I'll never leave you. And there's plenty of water and food. You can have a party.

He kisses her tenderly. Pulls out his HERODOTUS and lays it beside her. Then he puts down the FLASHLIGHT.

ALM,SY (CONT'D)

And a good read.

(of the flashlight
battery)
Don't waste it.

KATHARINE

Thank you.
(clouds over)
Will you bury Geoffrey? I know
he's dead.

ALM,SY

I'm sorry, Katharine.

KATHARINE

I know.

ALM,SY

Every night I cut out my heart but
in the morning it was full again.

He's tearing strips from the parachute with his knife. As he starts to bind her wrist he gets her to talk, trying to distract her from the pain.

ALM,SY (CONT'D)

Tell me about your garden.

KATHARINE

(tries to focus)
Our Garden, our garden - not so
much the garden, but the copse
alongside it, wild, a secret way
plunging down to the shore and then
nothing but water between you and
France. The Devil's Chimney it was
called -

(he pulls tight on the
binding)

The Devil's Chimney, I don't know
why.

(he kisses her)

Darling. My darling.

EXT. THE DESERT. DUSK.

ALM,SY BURYING CLIFTON. He's dug a narrow trench, and now he goes to the body. Clifton's face is oil stained, bloody. Alm,SY takes his handkerchief and, pouring his precious water into it, CLEANS GEOFFREY'S FACE.

THE PATIENT'S (O/S)

Seventy miles, north - north west.
I had Madox's compass. A man can
walk in the desert as fast as a
camel. That's about two and a half
miles an hour.

EXT. THE DESERT. NIGHT.

Alamos's walking. He slides and collapses as he misjudges a dune, gets up, stumbles on.

THE PATIENT (O/S)

I stopped at noon and at twilight.
Three days there, I told her, then
three hours back by jeep. Don't go
anywhere. I'll be back.

EXT. THE DESERT. DAWN.

He trudges on, his eyes opening and closing. He's singing to keep awake. Darktown Strutter's Ball. - I'll be down to get you in the taxi, honey. He does a little shuffle. Looks behind at the crazy trail of his footprints.

EXT. THE CHOTT. DAWN.

A vast flat expanse of dried salt lake. A remorseless horizon. Almasly walks, checking the compass, squinting at the sun. then he sees a cloud of dust traveling across the horizon. It comes closer moving at great speed, reveals itself. An OSTRICH.

EXT. WELL. DAY.

Almasly lowers himself by an old rope down into a gully. He approaches a pile of stones and removes them to reveal a brackish pool of filthy water. He drinks, pouring water over his head, grimacing at the taste, but parched too.

EXT. APPROACHING EL TAJ. DAY.

Almasly gets his first sight of the fortress town of EL TAJ and sinks to his knees, in relief and exhaustion. Then he gets up and trudges towards the town. A CORPORAL with a rifle in his hands appears.

INT. EL TAJ. DAY.

The Corporal brings Almasly into a square. A young OFFICER appears from the shadows of his office. His JEEP is parked in the shade.

OFFICER

Good morning!

ALMASLY

Could I trouble you for some water?

OFFICER

(registering the accented
English)

Yes, of course.

(the Corporal has a water
bottle,
hands it to Alm,sy)
So, golly, where have you come
from?

ALM,SY
(gulping the water)
I desperately need a jeep. There's
been an accident.

OFFICER
I see.

ALM,SY
(brain racing)
No, I'm not thinking clearly - I
need a doctor too, to come with me,
can I take this vehicle? I'll pay,
of course - and some morphine and,
(calculating)
Seventy miles - I can be back here
by dusk.

OFFICER
Do you have your papers, sir?

ALM,SY
What?

OFFICER
If I could just see some
identification.

ALM,SY
Am I not talking sense? - forgive
me, I'm, I've been walking, I've -
there's a woman badly injured at
Gilf Kebir, in the Cave of
Swimmers. I am a member of the
Royal Geographical Society.

OFFICER
Right. And what's your name, sir?

ALM,SY
Count Laszlo de Alm,sy. The Officer
is writing this down. A glance at
his Corporal.

OFFICER
Alm,sy - would you mind just
spelling that for me? What
nationality would that be?

ALM,SY
Look, listen to me. A woman is

dying - my wife! - is dying seventy miles from here. I have been walking for three days! I don't want to spell my name, I want you to give me this jeep!

OFFICER

(writing)

I understand you are agitated - perhaps you would like to sit down while I radio back to HQ -

ALM,SY

(snapping)

No! NO! Don't radio anybody, just give me the fucking jeep!

Alm,sy sets on the Officer, hauling him by the lapels, but then immediately loses his balance. As he stumbles up he gets the stock of the Corporal's RIFLE across his head, KNOCKING HIM TO THE GROUND.

EXT. EL TAJ STREET. DAY.

Alm,sy, head pounding, is in the back of the jeep, chained to the tailgate. He's desperate. The Corporal is driving.

ALM,SY

(shouting hoarse)

Hey! Hey! Stop this jeep! Let me out of here - there's a woman dying, there's a woman dying while I'm - Hey!

CORPORAL

Shut-up!

ALM,SY

Please - I beg you, I beg you, I beg you, please listen to me, this is a terrible mistake. Just stop, please, and listen to me. My wife is dying.

CORPORAL

Listen, Fritz, if I have to listen to another word from you I'll give you a fucking good hiding.

ALM,SY

Fritz? What are you talking about? Who's Fritz?

CORPORAL

That's your name innit? Count Fucking Arsehole Von Bismarck?

What's that supposed to be then,
Irish?

Alm,sy, berserk, starts to yank at his chains, screaming.

ALM,SY
Let me out, let me out, let me out -
Katharine! Katharine!

INT. CAVE OF SWIMMERS. TORCHLIGHT.

Katharine has been writing in the Herodotus. The torchlight
FLICKERS. She shakes the torch. It FLICKERS again. Then
goes out. Absolute BLACKNESS. The sound of her trembling
breath.

EXT. A TRAIN. THE DESERT. DUSK.

A TRAIN scuttles through the desert.

INT. THE TRAIN. THE DESERT. DUSK.

Alm,sy is HANDCUFFED to the metal grille of the goods
compartment. He's lying down amongst a bunch of other
prisoners and their little bundles of possessions in this
makeshift cell - some Arabs, some Italians.

A SERGEANT pushes a lavatory-bound prisoner along the
corridor, leaving behind A YOUNG PRIVATE who sits on a
packing case, with a rifle across his lap, reading a Penguin
edition of Gulliver's Travels. Alm,sy is in complete despair
to be on the train. He tries to move, but he's locked tight
to the grille. He rattles the cuffs against the metal.

ALM,SY
Excuse me.
(the Soldier looks up)
I also need to use the lavatory.

SOLDIER
You'll have to wait.
(calls up the corridor)
Sarge! Jerry wants to use the lav -
says it's urgent.

ALM,SY
Where are we going, please?

SOLDIER
To the coast. Benghazi. Soon be
there. Get a boat home. You'll be
all right.

ALM,SY CAN'T BEAR THIS NEWS. The SERGEANT returns.

SERGEANT
What's up?

-
ALM,SY
Cramps. It's urgent.

SERGEANT
Go on then - you take him.

INT. THE TRAIN CORRIDOR. THE DESERT. DAY.

The Soldier pushes Alm,sy along the corridor. They arrive outside the lavatory. The Soldier is distracted for a split second. Enough for Alm,sy to ELBOW HIM savagely in the stomach, winding him, then he KICKS HIM REPEATEDLY in the head. He wraps his cuffs around the Soldier's neck and - yanking them together and twisting - produces a tiny, efficient and sickening snap.

He finds the KEY to the handcuffs, unlocks them, grabs the soldier and drags him into the empty lavatory.

INT. TRAIN. THE DESERT. EVENING.

Alm,sy arrives at the rear of the train, passes the Kitchen carriage, where Arabs sweat over the boiler. He pulls open the back door only to surprise a GUARD, who's lolling casually, enjoying the sunset. Alm,sy SHOOTS HIM with his stole rifle. He clambers over the guard rail and leaps off the train - tumbling into the desert sunset.

EXT. RAILWAY TRACK. THE DESERT. EVENING.

Alm,sy, silhouetted against the evening sky, walks back down the track, THREE HUNDRED MILES AWAY from the dying Katharine Clifton, no way now of saving her. He is a tiny speck in the vast desert. His heart broken. He sinks to his knees in despair.

INT. THE PATIENT'S ROOM. NIGHT.

The Patient is exhausted. He has said aloud what has tortured him. His failure to save Katharine. He looks at Caravaggio.

THE PATIENT
So yes. She died because of me.
Because I loved her. Because I had
the wrong name.

INT. THE MONASTERY STABLES. DAY.

Kip is working at a BLACKSMITH'S FORGE in the Stables. He is heating pieces of metal. He has arranged his material on a bench - a bayonet, a rifle, a piece of bomb casting.

Hana enters, goes up, hugs him from behind.

HANA

What are you up to?

KIP

That gun at Lahor, Kipling's cannon - Zamzammah - remember? That was made out of the metal of ordinary things. I want to make an ordinary thing out of guns. His bayonet is thrust into the forge. It's red hot.

KIP (CONT'D)

When I went to England I was amazed at what went on, the waste - I'd been taught to re-use everything, the dung from a cow to cool a radiator, a fork to fix a typewriter - India could live for a hundred years on what I saw thrown away.

HANA

I should go to the house, get breakfast.

KIP

The lamp was burning all night in his room. Caravaggio was there with him.

She goes to kiss him. He is over the fire and protests.

KIP (CONT'D)

This is hot!

HANA

(teasing him)

Nya-nya-nya!

INT. THE PATIENT'S ROOM. DAY.

Caravaggio is injecting the Patient with morphine.

CARAVAGGIO

And did you never see Katharine?
You never got back to the Cave?

THE PATIENT

Yes, I got back there finally to keep my promise. To come back for her. And then of course I couldn't, I couldn't even do that properly.

INT. THE MONASTERY STABLES. DAY.

Kip hammers the metal into its new shape. He stops,

distracted by something he's listening to on his crystal set. It's new he seems not to fully understand, about a bomb dropping on Japan. A NEW KIND OF BOMB.

THE METAL GLOWS A VIVID RED ON THE ANVIL.

Suddenly Kip slops it into the trough of water, sending a great hissing column of steam.

INT. THE PATIENT'S ROOM. DAY.

Caravaggio sits by the Patient.

CARAVAGGIO

You get to the morning and the poison leaks away, doesn't it? Black nights, fucking black nights, when you want to howl like a dog. I thought I would kill you. You killed my friends, you ruined my hands. But the girl was always here, like some Guardian Angel.

THE PATIENT

You can't kill me. I died years ago.

CARAVAGGIO

No, now I can't kill you.

Kip storms into the room, walks straight up to the Patient and POINTS A GUN AT HIM. Caravaggio is taken by surprise.

CARAVAGGIO (CONT'D)

Kip - what are - ?

KIP

Stay out of this.

THE PATIENT

Kip?

KIP

I looked up to you, Uncle. My brother always said I was a fool. Never trust the British, he said: the deal-makers, the map-makers; never shake hands with them.

THE PATIENT

What are you talking about?

KIP

What have I been doing all this time? Do you know how many mines I've seen? - more mines than there

are soldiers, more - how many mines we've put in the ground ourselves, stuffed in corpses, dropped out of the sky. And now this.

He approaches the bed. Caravaggio tries to intervene.

CARAVAGGIO

Kip, listen - Kip sings the rifle at him, KNOCKING HIM to the floor.

KIP

I said keep out of this!

He pulls off his earphones and rams them around the Patient's head, dropping the set onto the bed. The Patient listens, coughing.

KIP (CONT'D)

Can you hear? Can you hear what they're celebrating? I listened to you, Uncle. Sitting at your feet - always sitting at somebody's feet - trying to learn. The right way to hold a teacup, otherwise you're out, the pukkah knot in your tie - as if everything can be explained in terms of a cricket bat and an accent.

CARAVAGGIO

Kip -

KIP

Kip! - it's not even my name because you can't say it. Kirpal Singh Bhuller is my name.

Hana runs in, alerted by the commotion, stunned by what she sees.

CARAVAGGIO

Well, then ask him his name!

HANA

(getting in between Kip and the Patient)

What's happened? Kip! What's happening? Don't shoot, please, don't shoot anybody.

KIP

They're excited! They're happy about destroying a whole city. Would they do that to a White Man's City? Never!

THE PATIENT
(pulling off the
earphones)

Go on, do it. I don't need to hear
any more.

CARAVAGGIO

Kip, listen, he lost everything
because he wasn't English - Jesus! -
shoot me, I'm more English than he
is!

Kip levels the gun at the Patient. Then breaks it open,
throws it down on the bed, next to the earphones, from which
the news continues to leak, some words audible - Eunola Gay,
Hiroshima, and from different voices - It was beautiful!
just beautiful! Bang! the biggest bang you ever saw!

EXT. KIP'S TENT. LATE DAY.

Hana approaches. Kip is inside the tent, the flap zipped.
She sees his shadow move, then freeze as she calls his name.
It's like a confessional. The flap between them, the man in
shadows, Hana crouched, forlorn.

HANA

Kip. Kip. It's me.

(no response)

Why? It's another bomb. However
big, what's the difference?

There've been so many bombs. What
about Coventry? What about
Dresden? Where were those cities?

(no response)

I don't understand. Let me come
in. The shadow doesn't move. Hana
is at a loss.

INT. THE PATIENT'S ROOM. EVENING.

The Patient becomes aware of something in the room, opens his
eyes, squints into the darkness and sees A FIGURE hovering
against the wall. He's in the Cave, he thinks, he's seeing
the painted figures moving, he's seeing the Swimmer.

KIP - bare chested, no turban, hair loose - stands in the
shadows at the foot of the Patient's bed.

INT. HANA'S ROOM. EVENING.

Kip comes into the room. Hana sits in the corner. She is
nervous of him, his look, his intensity.

KIP

Will you come with me?

HANA

Of course. When?

KIP

I mean home. India.

HANA

Kip, I -

KIP

(interrupting this)

I know - here I am always a brown man, there you would be always a white woman.

HANA

Is that what you think? Is that what you think I think?

KIP

It's what I've learned.

HANA

I'm thinking about your heart, not your skin. And how to reach it. And that I don't think I can. A bomb has ruined us, just not the bomb I thought would ruin us.

She stands, goes to him.

HANA (CONT'D)

I've clung to you. I've clung to you. Kip. Life a raft.

KIP

(clinging to her)

Then come with me.

EXT. THE MONASTERY. DAY.

Next morning and Kip has attached what he was making in the forge - A NEW HANDLE - to the pump. Now he works it, producing a steady stream of water. His motorbike is against the wall. He goes to it. Caravaggio is watching. He hugs Kip, wrapping his arms around the boy like a bear.

EXT. HANA'S VEGETABLE GARDEN. DAY.

HANA stands by her Vegetable Garden. Kip stops the motorbike. She goes to him, stands, FASTENS THE TOP BUTTON of his coat. You feel she might jump on the seat behind him. But she doesn't.

HANA

I'll always go back to that church.
Look at my painting.

- - -
KIP

I'll always go back to that church.

HANA

So one day we'll meet.

He nods, winds up the throttle, and is gone.

INT. THE PATIENT'S ROOM. DAY.

Hana comes in carrying FLOWERS and sets them down on the table next to a clutch of MORPHINE AMPOULES. She picks up the hypodermic to prepare his injection. She takes a phial. THE PATIENT REACHES OUT AND PUSHES TWO MORE TOWARDS HER. THEIR EYES MEET, THEN HE SHOVELS ANOTHER, THEN ALL OF THEM. She looks at him. IT'S A MASSIVE, LETHAL DOSE.

Hana starts to prepare the injection, her eyes filling with tears. The Patient nods, smiles, whispers.

THE PATIENT

Thank you. Thank you.

She kisses him, gently on the mouth. He closes his eyes.

THE PATIENT (CONT'D)

Read to me, will you? Read me to sleep.

EXT.(NEAR THE) BASECAMP. CAVE OF SWIMMERS. 1942. DAY.

The familiar cleft in the rocks. A PLANE is coming in to land.

INT. CAVE OF SWIMMERS. TORCHLIGHT.

A flashlight flickers in the cave. ALM,SY APPEARS.

KATHARINE'S CORPSE lies where he left her - a ghost on a bed of silk and blankets. The chill of the cave has preserved her. She could be asleep. She clutches the Herodotus.

ALM,SY

Katharine, my darling.

He sobs, whispering to her. He's terribly cold, exhausted. He slips underneath the covers to be next to her, and closes his eyes.

ALM,SY (CONT'D)

I'm so tired.

INT. THE PATIENT'S ROOM. DAY.

The Patient is slipping away. Hana is reading from the last

pages of the Herodotus where KATHARINE HAS WRITTEN IN THE MARGINS.

HANA

My darling, I'm waiting for you -
how long is a day in the dark, or a
week?

The Patient looks across AND WHAT HE SEES IS KATHARINE BESIDE HIM IN THE BED, SMILING, STROKING HIS HEAD, SPEAKING TO HIM.

INT. CAVE OF SWIMMERS. FLASHLIGHT.

Katharine is writing. The FLASHLIGHT is faint. She shivers.

KATHARINE (O/S)

the fire is gone now, and I'm
horribly cold. I really ought to
drag myself outside but then there
would be the sun.

She passes the flashlight across the wall, the painted figures dancing in the pale light.

KATHARINE (O/S) (CONT'D)

I'm afraid I waste the light on the
paintings and on writing these
words.

INT. THE PATIENT'S ROOM. DAY.

THE BED IS EMPTY, THE MATTRESS STRIPPED. Hana stands in the doorway, then sees THE HERODOTUS on the bedside table.

She picks it up, goes to the page of Katharine's letter, continues to read.

KATHARINE (O/S)

We die, we die rich with lovers and
tribes, tastes we have swallowed.

EXT. LANE OUTSIDE THE MONASTERY GARDEN. DAY.

Caravaggio is at the gate to the Monastery. The TRUCK we saw before is waiting with him. The PARTISAN with his head bandana and shotgun remains the same, but now there are CHILDREN in the back and a WOMAN sits behind the man, nursing a two-year-old.

CARAVAGGIO

Hana! Come on!

He gets up into the BALUSTRADE, tentatively finds his balance, then starts to walk, heel to toe - slowly, and then with more confidence - along the long thin line of stone. The children watch intently. He turns and bows.

KATHARINE (O/S)

.bodies we have entered and swum up
like rivers, fears we have hidden
in like this wretched cave,

EXT. THE MONASTERY CLOISTERS. DAY.

Hana walks across the cloisters, passing the chalked hopscotch squares, leaving it all behind. Then she stops, bends, retrieves A SNAIL SHELL, keeps going. KATHARINE'S VOICE CONTINUES.

INT. THE CAVE OF SWIMMERS. TORCHLIGHT.

ALM,SY SMUDGES KATHARINE'S PALE FACE WITH COLOR. OCHRE across her brow, BLUE on her eyelids, RED on her lips. He presses his cheek to hers, smoothes her hair.

KATHARINE (O/S)

.I want all this marked on my body.
We are the real countries, not the
boundaries drawn on maps with the
names of powerful men,

EXT. THE LANE OUTSIDE MONASTERY GARDEN. DAY.

KATHARINE'S VOICE CONTINUES. Hana comes out to the truck, carrying her small bundle. Caravaggio effects some introduction, beginning with the woman driver, Gioia. She and Caravaggio smile like lovers.

CARAVAGGIO

Hana - this is Gioia.

Gioia smiles, shakes her hand. Then Hana meets the others - Gioia's brother and wife, their children. She smiles at them.

HANA

Buon' giorno.

CARAVAGGIO

She can take you as far as
Florence.

HANA

I can get in the back.

And she clambers up, sits down between the children. They exchange some small stiff, shy smiles, and then the truck bounces away. Hana takes one final look at the Monastery as it disappears around the bend and then turns and confronts the life insisting noisily in the truck.

EXT. CAVE OF SWIMMERS. DAY.

Almsy comes out of the cave, carrying the bundle of Katharine in his arms, wrapped in the silks of her parachute.

KATHARINE (O/S)

I know you will come and carry me out into the palace of winds, the rumors of water. That's all I've wanted - to walk in such a place with you, with friends, on earth without maps.

EXT. TIGER MOTH. DAY.

THE PLANE growls and complains into the air.

INT. TIGER MOTH. DAY.

INSIDE THE COCKPIT: THE COUPLE AS AT THE FRONT OF THE FILM. Almsy obliterated by goggles and helmet. Katharine behind him, slumped forwards as if sleeping.

Almsy banks across the plateau of the Gilf Kebir and glances down. In a ravine is a sudden OASIS OF WHITE ACACIAS. He is mesmerized.

And then it's gone and he passes into the earth without maps - the desert - as it stretches out for mile after mile.

KATHARINE (O/S)

The lamp's gone out and I'm writing in the darkness.

Almsy, the English Patient, begins to sing - Szerelem, Szerelem - until that also fades and is replaced by the woman's tender lament heard at the beginning of the film, singing for all that has been lost.

The sound of gun fire.

THE END.