

Liberty University

How a Balanced Christian Message in Film Can Inspire Christ-Like Transformation

Thesis Defense

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Dedication

This thesis and this creative manuscript are dedicated to the two people who taught me how to read and write and established the importance of hard work and dreaming: to Mom and Dad, with love.

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I am eternally grateful to Timberlake Church for not only employment but for strengthening and pouring into me as a person. I will forever remember the flexibility and love you all gave me so that I could finish my degree while serving in ministry. I want to acknowledge my professional mentor and work father, Mark Coleman, whose leadership has shaped me into the woman I am today.

Artist Statement

This thesis will attempt to examine the need for a balanced Christian message in film and how everyday acts of the Christian faith can inspire Christ-like transformation within society. This thesis will also explore the importance of developing faith and spiritual disciplines through the creative screenplay, *All Hail the Hoodlums*. Throughout history, living as a faithful Christian and practicing spiritual disciplines can appear to go directly against society's natural flow as belief in a Creator oppose man's selfishness and sinful nature. Seemingly, society at large currently projects that believing in a Monotheistic and Triune God and having a deep personal relationship with something "spiritual" is preposterous (Carr-Chellman, 2017). Furthermore, the word "discipline" also distinguishes the wildly popular worldview of "do whatever makes you happy" as it requires doing hard and resilient practices which benefits are not immediately seen (Young, 2012). While faith is common in society and there are seemingly churches on every corner, deep acts of faith like spiritual disciplines can seem rare and even rarer in film. Through the creative screenplay *All Hail the Hoodlums*, this thesis will attempt to showcase the importance of a balanced Christian message and elements of the Christian life for the purpose of sparking transformation in the Lord, personal development, and growth within audience members with a fun, action-packed historical drama and project.

This thesis project will also aim to showcase how movies, documentaries, and television shows allow for natural creative expression to display a message or present an acute awareness of an issue, including the Gospel message. There is power in film, and there is power in believers who strengthen their relationship with God through core practices like prayer, serving, and giving. By using creative screenplays and films as strategic tools to showcase spiritual disciplines and a realistic look at a relationship with Christ, the Gospel message could seemingly

reach a broader audience. With this in mind, while the screenplay *All Hail the Hoodlums* is not an exclusively Christian film, spiritual disciplines and solid faith practices are heavily intertwined within the subtext of the creative screenplay, indicating its value within the thesis project.

The Theological Basis of Incorporating the Gospel Message into Film

This study will attempt to reveal how God speaks through avenues of art and literature, and how it is evident throughout history and art. Whether it is a painting depicting the crucifixion or an autobiography about missionaries taking the Gospel to an unreached people group, God speaks through all art forms (Doberenz, 2020). Not only does God express Himself and His characteristics through art and literature, but it is also said that The Heavenly Father gifts individuals with talents and passions for the purpose of the continuation of the Gospel (1 Peter 4:10 and 1 Corinthians 12:7-11 ESV). Scripture also reminds believers, “For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith” (Romans 12:4-6). Evidently, with the word of God as a basis for believers to live their lives according to, the Gospel also reminds believers to pursue faith and use the giftings God gives to each of His children (1 Corinthians 12:4-6).

As film, cinematography, and creative screenplays are newer to the list of art forms (within the last century); there is an apparent learning curve that artists and writers must conquer to create a seamless merge between the Gospel message and film (Mauck, 2014). While there is still much for screenwriters and cinematographers to discover and learn when consolidating core Christian beliefs into film, there are films that execute the collaboration wonderfully

(Vorontzov, 2021). For example, movies like *The Lord of the Rings Trilogy*, *The Chronicles of Narnia*, *The Christmas Carol (any rendition)*, *Avengers: End Game*, and *Schindler's List* utilize blending Christian themes under the surface without a hitch while making beautiful films that became critically acclaimed. With these films as examples, there is no telling what the Lord can do through films if believers pursue their giftings and merge the Gospel message. Throughout scripture, there are constant reminders for believers to remember the importance of remaining strong, steadfast, and persistent in the Lord's giftings, even when there are new trials and paths to accomplish (2 Chronicles 15:17, Philippians 4:13, 1 Corinthians 15:58, and 1 Timothy 4:12).

The Need for a Balanced Christian Messages in Streamline Film

As previously noted, some films masterfully combine Christian themes under the surface while the final products remain in the highest category in terms of quality and story. However, it often takes a knowledgeable believer to identify the deep Christian themes and the overall Gospel message that are woven into these films (Wilkinson, 2016). Amos N. Wilder laments about the difficulty when observing Christian themes in art. Wilder writes, "Evidently, one has to go far afield to identify today any really deep, organic relation between religion and art in a communal or civic sense: in a sense would include the economic life as well as the strictly religious" (Wilder, 262). With this in mind, there are films and television series that display Christian themes throughout the film while creating enjoyable art. Films and television series like *Remember the Titans*, *Disney's Sergeant York*, *The Crown* and even childish films like *A Charlie Brown Christmas* and *Nacho Libre* are excellent examples of how faith can blend seamlessly in film. Undoubtedly, the Holy Spirit can work through many avenues to speak to individuals, but it is a wonder if there is space for films that boldly incorporate faith yet are not categorized as purely Christian films (Doberenz, 2020).

The term “Christian films” is usually classified into two genres. The first genre would consist of beloved stories from the Bible turned into movies or television series like *The Chosen*, *The Nativity Story*, *The Prince of Egypt*, and even *Jonah: A VeggieTales movie*. The second genre of Christian films would normally cover Christian dramas that depict Christians in the modern day who must overcome trials or difficult seasons. Films like *The Case for Christ*, *God’s Not Dead*, *Courageous*, and *I Can Only Imagine* are examples of this second genre of Christian films (Baker, 2013). While these films display the Gospel message effectively, they can be exclusive because the audience these types of films attract are usually already Christian (Wilkinson, 2016). With this in mind, this thesis attempts to display the need for normal films that showcases regular elements of faith and strong Christians inside of society to create a balanced film for the enjoyment of believers and non-believers alike.

The Background the Screenplay and The Vision

With a deep desire to reach a larger audience with a strong faith story, *All Hail the Hoodlums* was born. However, the screenplay did not start as an action-packed story with faith intertwined. The creative screenplay came in a haunting vision one evening while finishing a Bachelor of Science in Theology and Creative Writing at Liberty University. The original story was entirely different, and the genre would have undoubtedly been characterized as a psychological thriller with underlines of twisted romance and horror. While the original story will always remain special because of the vivid and unique story, there was an isolating nature to the story due to some of the themes and the overall genre. Along the way of developing the story to what it is today, the Lord spoke directly into different sections to modify the screenplay so that it became a more accessible story for a broader audience to enjoy; it was a season of many impetuses.

After the season of transformation, the vision of where the screenplay should go was finally set with approval from mentors and friends. However, the story stayed unwritten until the Spring of 2022, when it was time to begin the required creative screenwriting courses to complete the Master of Fine Arts degree at Liberty University. With this time of incubation, *All Hail the Hoodlums* not only transformed into a much different story, but it also honors the World War II historical era and the mighty word of God after much research. Now in the category of a historical drama with moments of action and subtle romance, *All Hail the Hoodlums* has a message, call to action, transformational protagonist, depictions of spiritual disciplines, and mentions of faith in ways that showcase how believers operate in the world when times get tough.

As *All Hail the Hoodlums* is not solely a Christian film, the film does showcase moments of characters clinging onto faith amid dangerous moments of war and how faith makes a difference. The screenplay also displays how elements of faith and practicing spiritual disciplines in the everyday life influences individuals lives and gives hope to those who are around them. These subtle messages of faith and hints of spiritual disciplines are practical as they do not overwhelm the screen nor appear to solely push an agenda. As all writing students know, good stories and good writers have the edge when they show over tell audience members every detail (Trottier, 193). With this writing practice as a core piece of a foundation, it was vital for this creative screenplay to display faith and spiritual disciplines artfully instead of directly telling audience members about the Gospel message.

What are the Spiritual Disciplines?

As previously discussed, one of the core ways of incorporating faith into the creative screenplay *All Hail the Hoodlums* is through subtle moments of spiritual disciplines. There are

eleven core spiritual disciplines described in the Bible (Whitley, 4). These disciplines are studying the word of God, stewardship, prayer, fasting, service, worship, silence and isolation, evangelism, personal expression through the pen and page, furthering discipleship, and learning. These spiritual disciplines are seemingly for all believers to incorporate into daily life to strengthen their relationship between with the Lord. *In Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, Donald S Whitney writes, “The Spiritual Disciplines are those practices found in Scripture that promote spiritual growth among believers in the gospel of Jesus Christ” (4). It is evident in the word of God that these core spiritual disciplines are to equip believers to incorporate in their lives and to also disciple other believers (Romans 5:1-5). As depicted in Scripture and in Whitley’s text, some of the spiritual disciplines are for every day or hourly; others are for seasons to ensure continuous growth (Whitley 8).

One of the powerful elements in the Christian faith is how Christians can appear to be beacon of hope to those surrounding them because the Light of the Lord works through them, and daily practice of discipline creates a stronger person (Willard, 1998). When depicting elements of spiritual disciplines or characters who practice such things, there is an ostensibly balanced glimmer of how the Lord can transform lives. Whitley writes, “Spiritual Disciplines are activities, not attitudes” (6), showcasing that the eleven disciplines are elements in life that will influence the attitude of the heart and mind. The living and breathing word of God, with its many signs and wonders, is perfect as it is (Krauth, 2019). However, as God gifts individuals with creativity, there are opportunities to pay homage to the inner workings of the Bible to continue to establish the art form and strives for a balanced Christian message. De Gruchy discusses this when speaking about theologians blending the Gospel with art:

For them, the visual arts, whether as products of faith or despair, the work of believers or non-believers, or intended for the sanctuary, home, gallery or public square, have the potential to awaken sensibility to reality in all its tragic ugliness and transforming beauty. They enhance life by providing pleasure, a major purpose of the arts, but they also help us see in fresh and sometimes startling ways what would otherwise be hidden from sight. They help define and renew our humanity (De Gruchy 2).

The Theological Basis of Spiritual Disciplines

The Christian Church widely supports the theological basis that spiritual disciplines are crucial in strengthening believers' foundation and growing their relationship with God (Carr-Chellman, 2017). The two words *spiritual* and *disciplines* appear to defy the status quo when broken down, hinting that these disciplines should be pursued in an effort to rise above normalcy. The foundation of these disciplines is built on the core beliefs of Christianity, for when an individual receives the trinity into their hearts, they receive eternal life and justification (Whitley 197). The basic grounds of justification can be simplified and conceptualized as "just as if an individual never sinned" or the individual's sins have been washed away. It is a beautiful affair, yet it is not widely spoken about or displayed through film (David, 2017). While creative screenplays and films are not mentioned directly in the word of God, it is evident that imagination, creativity, and personal gifts are from the Lord to share the Gospel message and further the Kingdom. The Apostle Paul writes, "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving" (Colossians 3:23-24, ESV). In his book about the correlation between theology, imagination, and creativity, Guite reports this:

In God the living power of Primary Imagination actually causes things to exist; indeed, it is the Logos ‘through whom all things were made’. In the human being the Primary Imagination is the living power whereby all things, including humanity itself, are perceived. Because our Primary Imagination is a repetition in our finite mind of God’s eternal act of creation, it enables us so to read God’s work as to glimpse through them the mind of their Maker—unless, of course, we perversely choose to refuse that glimpse, refuse to hear ‘that eternal language’, which ‘God utters’, just as we might choose to describe our own language entirely in terms of its physicality and not in terms of its meaning. (Guite, 169)

After accepting Jesus as Lord and Savior, believers are called to grow and strengthen their faith after justification through a process called sanctification (2 Timothy 2:21). Sanctification is uncomplicatedly defined as the process of being made holy throughout the word of God. Sanctification is made possible through spiritual disciplines and faith in God, acting as the core foundation for a believer’s life (Towns, 1969). Whitney continues in his writings about spiritual disciplines, “They are habits of devotion and experiential Christianity that have been practiced by the people of God since biblical times” (4). A daily relationship with God to produce spiritual growth becomes a strive and a habit because transformation is not an overnight process. It is ostensibly that film and the Christian life have much in common; they do not exclude, and there is something for everyone to find enjoyment, transformational growth, and deep meaning within both avenues.

The Literary Context

This thesis will discuss the literary context of a balanced Gospel message and spiritual disciplines in films as it correlates to the project, and emphasizing the creative screenplay, *All*

Hail the Hoodlums. This creative screenplay is a World War II drama with a spin that displays different points of view of the bloody and tragic war. Through writing and cinematography, *All Hail the Hoodlums* portrays the need to help others, even if an individual does not feel equipped or eloquent enough to get the job done. The protagonist's story is loosely based on the Bible character Moses and his life story. Through this screenplay, creativity and strategy are also celebrated through individuals as they are given gifts from the Lord to display their goodness.

The creative screenplay, *All Hail the Hoodlums*, is set in 1943 as the Allies and the Axis Armies rage in a war against each other and each are desperate to get the upper hand from one another. The Allies suspect many strategies and war secrets are being sold to the enemy from within their borders. The British Empire takes action against the enemy by crafting an undercover team of highly skilled soldiers to uncover the two-faced war men. After creating the perfect plan, Captain Brooks Theyry and his undercover team know they need a secret weapon to execute their plan successfully. That secret comes in the form of a young woman named Lonnie.

Lonnie Carmichael is a young volunteer nurse and retired child actress who moves back to England to be with her beloved father and sister after the war begins. After her father goes away to translate for The British Empire and her younger sister is sent away to the countryside with the other children, Lonnie is left alone to aid in war efforts and run her father's store. Deep within a war zone, Lonnie tries to find a normal routine to distract her; however, Captain Brooks Theyry has other plans when he hears of the famous stars' return home. With the approval from his general, Captain Theyry must persuade Lonnie into playing the biggest role of her lifetime for the good of the world and her family.

The Significance

In a time of tragedy, bloodshed, and war against God's chosen people, the effects of World War II reached every corner of the world and affected every individual's life in many ways. When the world faced hardship, there was a significant higher call to let go of selfishness and aid in helping others in any way possible. *All Hail the Hoodlums* showcases different points of view of how many different individuals became heroes even if they were not soldiers on the front lines. Through dedicated housekeepers, skilled electricians, and shopkeeper daughters, this screenplay shows that there is a place to help if there is an effort to lay down one's selfishness.

The significance of the need of a balanced Gospel message and spiritual disciples are mainly shown through the protagonist Lonnie Carmichael. Lonnie is a small nineteen-year-old young woman who is terrified of losing her father and sister. As she lived through many traumas as a child movie star, Lonnie clings to her faith as it is the continuous thing that keeps her head above water. While Lonnie never utters that she is a devoted Christian, her diligence in practicing spiritual disciplines like prayer and service reflects her morals and willingness to serve in an effort to rescue God's chosen people who are being maliciously killed. Though Lonnie is a young female with a commanding captain in charge of the undercover operation, she does not let this hinder her diligence in choosing the right path and calling her team to follow her example. For example, after a heated exchange one night, Brooks and Lonnie make their beds at sunrise. After completing her task, Lonnie takes a moment to pray, and her heart softens toward Brooks' anger, yet when they reconnect in the hallway face to face, Brooks is still visibly angry with Lonnie. This small scene implies the difference between military/world discipline and spiritual discipline. Overall, this creative screenplay aims to showcase the difference that God can make in the small details of life which can influence the big picture to broader audience to inspire Christ-like transformation within their lives.

To conclude this artist's statement, by showcasing elements of the Christian faith and the Gospel message, producing balanced Christian films have the potential to inspire creativity and Christ-like transformation in believers and non-believers. This mission in the film industry may also bridge the gap between Christianity and streamline film seamlessly while still producing masterful and well-crafted films. It is no secret that the world will always need God, the Gospel, and movement toward growth. Film and screenplays are wonderful ways of incorporating this message and to also showcase the Almighty Creator's beauty, mastery, and method to display His greatness authority, and jealousy for all the people on earth.

Critical Essay

The foundational motive for the creative screenplay *All Hail the Hoodlums* is to showcase how a balanced Christian life and message in an ordinary film could potentially reach broader audiences while sparking inspiration and transformation through aspects of faith. *All Hail the Hoodlums* is set in the middle of World War II, where all hope seems lost for those fighting for justice to rescue God's chosen people. With this as the setting and the centerpiece of the screenplay, the connection to Christianity through morality, goodness, turning evil, leaning on the Lord, and desiring to help others is evident throughout the story. By incorporating a balanced Christian message and elements of faith in films written for broad audience, the Gospel message could seemingly spark inspiration and transform viewers lives.

With this in mind, the screenplay, *All Hail the Hoodlums* was specifically written to implement the basis of this thesis. In the manuscript, the Allies attempt to gain the upper hand against the Axis Army during the second world war. In a valiant defense response, The British Empire crafts a team of highly skilled military war men ready to stop the enemy in their tracks. The team's primary mission is to lure two-faced war men into confession of their war crimes

while pulling off an elaborate undercover façade. Not only do the Allies hope for this plan to cease the advancement of the Axis Army, but they pray it could aid in ending the bloodshed of innocent lives all together. Through elaborate schemes and planning, the undercover team realize that they require a secret weapon to execute their mission flawlessly. The screenplay is purposely written to show the harshness of the war and world so that when there are nods to faith and the peaceful characteristic of Christ, it is welcomed change on the screen.

The secret weapon of the team and the main way of implementing a balanced Christian message is through the protagonist. Not only does the protagonist's introduction come exactly at the right time, but her presence acts as a consistent glimmer of hope throughout the film. When the war shakes the world to its core, an unassuming Lonnie Carmichael enters as a mature, steady, faithful character who above all else, relies on a higher power to see her to the next day. As Lonnie takes life in stride despite the current state of world, her faith in the Lord and her daily practice of spiritual disciplines show the divine difference believing in God makes. Though Lonnie has seen her fair share of heartache and hardships, her diligence in seeking the Lord daily creates unwavering strength within her and her team is drawn to the young woman. The comparison between the two contrasting moods of calm and wild brings a balance to the screen and an emphasis on the difference faith can make in an individual's life. The hope of the screenplay is to not only execute a balanced Christian message but to also create a new trend of incorporating the Gospel into all elements film that will influence audience members positively.

Target Audience

The target audience of *All Hail the Hoodlums* is adults and mature teens with the approval of their parents. As the genre is historical fiction with elements of thrilling sequences and subtle romance, the screenplay is not designed for young children. However, while this

screenplay is not in the wheelhouse of child entertainment, it does not include overly crude language, nudity, or implications to marital relations. Research shows that embracing culture instead of forcing sex, language, violence, and political agenda is better received, and the actual message is more easily identifiable for audience members (Laughlin, 2016). While the screenplay refrains from writing inappropriate language and material, it does not shy away from man's sinful nature and the reality of society. This choice to include man's sinful nature is purposeful, as it displays the reality of the world in which believers reside while awaiting the Kingdom.

The target audience is incredibly important to the foundation of *All Hail the Hoodlums* as it is written simultaneously for believers and the unbelievers for the purpose of entertainment and shedding light on the Christian life. The idea of this screenplay seemingly differs from much of the modern-day faith-based films as sharing the Gospel is the not the sole purpose of the film. Instead, this film focuses on implementing the Christian life into the story's steam line, so it is present throughout instead of overwhelming everything else. However, while Christian films do not aim to push an agenda, unbelievers and critics may still struggle to see past the central message of faith, Christianity, and The Trinity and enjoy they film. Alissa Wilkinson laments about the struggles of loving Jesus and loving good films simultaneously because faith-based movies are often only written for the "churchgoer" (2016). It is evident that the mixture of faith-based films and quality viewing experiences that reach broad audiences is still a giant that still needs conquering (Wilder, 1957). Contrastingly, it is the agenda of *All Hail the Hoodlums* to embrace the rough-edged parts of society and sin nature for the purpose of illuminating hope, joy, and faith when presenting the Gospel message.

Using Film as an Effective Evangelism Tool

The core of spreading the Gospel through art derives from the spiritual discipline of evangelism. Broken down, evangelism is the effective communication of the Gospel to those who have not heard the Good News of Jesus Christ the Savior (Scrivener, 2018). The act of evangelism fulfills the great commission, which is a core value of all Christians and can be found at the end of Matthew chapter 28 (Hahn, 2020). Other core scriptures that promote evangelism are found in all of the gospels, along with many others, indicating the importance of the practice. Scriptures like Mark 16:15, Luke 24:46-47, John 20:21, and Acts 1:8 show that evangelism is necessary for the Christian life. While evangelism is expected of all believers, the act of spreading the Good News varies in scope, style, and tone (Whitley 120). As Whitley continues, it is evident that evangelism is necessary for both the believer as a spiritual discipline and the unbeliever for revealed truth, but there are compelling and preferred ways to preach the Good News (1991). These preferred methods of evangelism usually avoid the use of extreme or angry speech, soup boxes, flying saliva, and flaring arms. Instead, Christians often look to the alternative method of evangelism (Whitley, 1991).

Instead, Christians often use a more personal method of getting to know individuals so that a trustworthy relationship forms through time and the Holy Spirit (Hahn, 2020). By creating trust-filled personal relationships that embody Christ's essential characteristics, Christians can ostensibly communicate the Gospel effectively and ensure that new believers are taken care of in their lives. This same process of evangelism is possible through film because of the power that film holds within society's hearts (Davidson, 2017). With film there is a place, genre, style, and avenue for everyone to connect; again, film holds incredible power among society (Doberenz, 2020). In the modern-day, not only is film powerful, but it is also seemingly visible everywhere in the world (Fresco, 2019).

No matter how an audience member views a film, the art form is an accessible one (Fresco 2019). Whether through tiny screens with streaming services to movie cinemas in third world countries to billboards prompting the next blockbuster, film appears to be present among all societies, and it has seemingly become a universal language. Paul Jenkins speaks about the vital role film plays in society and why the masses love film and television. Jenkin writes, “But the reason why I think film is so important to society is that it gives us a chance to reflect on our own lives and the lives of others who are different and can offer us a new perspective on life” (Jenkins, 2022). Indeed, film holds a powerful place in our hearts because there is a place, magical moments, and a message for everyone just as there is a place for everyone who believes in the Kingdom (Acts 16:31).

Just as evangelism has changed over the centuries, so has film, yet both elements of faith and film leave individuals different from how they were before (Doberenz, 2020). In 1878, the first moving picture was invented by Eadweard Muybridge after he found favor with his gifted photography by a California Governor (Heckman, 2022). Heckman writes that later famous films like *A Trip to the Moon* (1902) by George Méliès and *The Great Train Robbery* (1903) by Edwin S. Porter were coined as the first movies because of the merging between story and moving picture (2022). After this point in history, film developed and seemingly become a lifestyle, art form, and craft for many. However, film as an evangelism tool is still finding its sweet spot between a balance Christian message, a soap box, and a relevant story to a broad audience (McNutt 233).

The Ideal and Idea of a Balanced Christian Film.

The ideal of any film is to create a piece of art that moves audience members effectively, communicates a message, and further inspires transformation in individuals’ lives (Pannu and

Chopra, 2020). Christianity seemingly fits into this basic mold, but one could also argue that Christianity inspired such a system. An ideal Christian film would share the gospel or elements of faith throughout the duration while exhibiting understanding and execution of masterful craft (Mauck, 2014). Together, these elements could appear to reach a broader audience, introduce unbelievers to the Gospel message, and create a watching experience for believers to go deeper in their faith. Through this process, transformation could also potentially occur in the unbeliever and believers' lives through the divine work of the Holy Spirit (Anderson and Mount, 2015). De Gruchy speaks on the transformation that happens when theology, the study of God, engages different art forms with the acknowledgment that it is a natural tendency. Often, art and theology go hand and hand, as explained in *Christianity, Art, and Transformation*:

Theologians, as Rahner tells us, need to make the visual arts intrinsic to their task. This means developing an informed knowledge in the same way as we do of the humanities and social sciences, and some of the natural sciences as well. This has important implications for theological education and the development of curricula. It also means engaging in dialogue with artists and exploring issues of mutual concern both for themselves and for the wider society. Theologians and artists may well recognize that their roles are not dissimilar, but often mutually reinforcing, especially as agents of prophetic critique and healing (De Gruchy, 2020).

In understanding the ideal of creating an excellent and balanced Christian screenplay, there is also transformation in the film industry, which could seemingly progress the system from infancy to adolescence, which is an exciting place for writers and filmmakers.

The idea behind writing a balanced Christian film stemmed from the significant lack of showcasing what it is like to live as a Christian in society. In short, while there are films that

show Christians living through trials and tribulations, it appears that there are significantly less films that show Christians accomplishing the great commission in a normal society (Blizek, Desmarais, & Burke, 2011). Currently, films either share the gospel or they do not (Marsh 2007). With this idea in mind, there are however, many films with deep connections to the Bible (Oussayfi, 2018). In fact, as Christians believe that God's word is living and breathing word the works of the Holy Spirit can be seen in all elements of life (Doberenz, 2020). However, it currently appears that there are not many films that display the impact of the Message and the impact the messenger can make in a sinful and broken society.

This dichotomy and the overall lack of a balanced Christian film hints that something must be done within the industry to accomplish this mission from the Word of God (Pybus, 2021). While a few films and television series showcase the masterful merge, they are ostensibly not the majority. The films *Unbroken*, written by Richard LaGravenese, William Nicholson, and the Coen brothers, and *Silence*, written by Jay Cocks and Martin Scorsese are incredible examples of having a central and bold Christian message while producing an incredible work of art. In the same way, the Netflix series *The Crown*, written by principal writer Peter Morgan also appears to depict moments of faith and spiritual disciplines through the five seasons. This paper will attempt to further discuss the significance of these films and television series in later pages to further reference the importance of providing a balanced Christian film that could inspire Christ-like transformation with audience members.

Currently, it appears that there are two main categories of "Christian films" with a bonus category that has messages of faith for audience members to discover. These three supposed categories are unique in themselves, and they do not appear to intertwine with the other categories. The first category of Christian films are Biblical stories that have turned into films

(Oussayfi, 2018). The degree of excellence varies, but there are incredible films that capture the actual Biblical story as depicted in the Bible while giving correct historical context. The second category often covers “faith-bases films” that are uplifting and generally for the family (Robinson, 2019). While these films have an inspiration and Gospel message, they can lack in quality and ineffectively reaching broad audiences (Austin, 2012). The last bonus film category can be mainstream films with Christian undertones and subtexts (Marsh, 2020). While these films knock the ball out of the park with beautiful cinematography, storytelling, and acting, the Gospel message does not appear to reside at the surface. In this category, it is often only the Christians who can pull out these undertones as they are the ones who are familiar with the original Gospel text (Wilder, 1957). Indeed, these categories stand on their own; however, they do not appear to provide a balanced film that shares Gospel-centered message while forging an innovative path for other films.

With the ideal and the idea behind the importance of providing a balanced Christian film presented above, the level of importance goes up even more as the world is hurting, appears to be lost, and in need of a Savior (John 3:17). God, the creator of the heavens, earth, and especially creativity cannot be separated from gifts of art, storytelling, and craft (Doberenz, 2020). In *Exodus 35*, Scripture reminds the believer that God is connected to these forms of expression, and The God Head, Three in One, inspires through all forms of art and craft by saying “and he has filled him with the Spirit of God, with wisdom, with understanding, with knowledge and with all kinds of skills to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver and bronze, to cut and set stones, to work in wood and to engage in all kinds of artistic crafts” (Exodus 35:31-33, ESV) . Indeed, God connects to both the art maker and the viewer, so the Holy Spirit’s influence continues and never runs dry (Ecclesiastes 3:11, ESV).

Evidently, Christianity and faith in film are still finding how to execute the right amount of faith while producing a top-notch film or television series for broad audiences to enjoy (Wilkinson, 2016). In his discussion of how art and Christianity are ubiquitous, Vorontzov speaks about the merging of the two elements and how they are still in the process of becoming seamless. The writer later shares his thoughts on why writers should not shy away from the Christian message but instead let it be known while implementing taste and tack (Vorontzov, 2021). Vorontzov writes, “The simplest way is to create a screenplay based on religious storytelling, without any disguise. We can find plenty of examples throughout the entire film history, from the inception of cinema to our time, when religious films became massive blockbusters or cinema classics—or both” (2021). As the basic rule goes according to the Gospel, Christ’s followers should not be ashamed of the Gospel and to speak the name of Jesus loudly for all to hear (Romans 1:6).

How *All Hail the Hoodlums* Provides a Balanced Christian Message.

In the creative screenplay, *All Hail the Hoodlums*, the idea of providing a balanced Christian message and showcasing the role Christians play in society is at the centerfold of the manuscript. *All Hail the Hoodlums* honors the craft of both traditional and innovative screenplays by following a typical narrative/story arc yet adding twists and turns along the way. This screenplay also knows the important role characters play in creating a realistic story (Trottier 216). The screenplay embraces strong characters who surround the protagonist and support her transformation and heroism, which is also necessary for making audience members connect personally to the characters in the story (Trottier 193). Providing a balanced Christian message and elements of faith are mainly established through the protagonist Lonnie Carmichael. Like many other believers, Lonnie knows the power of the Lord, thus hanging onto

Him in all circumstances. Lonnie also practices spiritual disciplines daily, steadying her throughout her days playing her undercover war role. Though Lonnie never utters that she is a Christian during the film, the differentiation between her and the characters surrounding her is evident through her thought process, moral code, and willingness to love even the most complicated characters. While Lonnie is the main avenue of how a balanced Christian message comes through on the screen, many other faith-based elements are woven into the screenplay and the structure of the screenplay.

From the beginning, the goal of this manuscript is to capture the crowd immediately. When the audience members lean forward in their chairs as the first action sequence unfolds, there is a complete encapsulation of fear, hardships, and many of the same emotions the people who lived through this terrible war would have felt. With this as the opening, anticipation is present even when the foundation is laid for the rest of the film. Shortly after the first action-packed and intense scene, the audience is introduced to the protagonist. Lonnie Carmichael is a young volunteer nurse who retired from acting in Hollywood when the war broke out. The protagonist is steady, kind, and selfless, which is showcased by her uplifting attitude, care for others, and the daily practice of spiritual disciplines.

Furthermore, with the World War II era as a fundamental backdrop, audience members will see the hints of goodness and the light of the Lord like a beacon of hope amid the depressing state of the world. In a time when all hope seems lost and whole countries cross moral boundaries, a deficit of all things good makes ample room for love and faith on the screen. With the setting established, this screenplay also follows the lives of the people who lived through the war. Though many of the characters have different roles, they all do their part in aiding the war efforts. When the screenplay reaches the climax, a moral dilemma is settled, a call to action for

the other characters to follow the protagonist's morals is presented, and a spiritual victory is achieved which directly relays to Christ. This victory brings the resolution that the film needs, and the core characters in this screenplay accomplish their mission. Notably, the resolution also follows historical events yet adds surprises that provide different points of view on the war. While many of the elements presented in this thesis are supposedly new, the formula for prose and screenplay is steady, established, and tested, which displays success repeatedly (Trottier 5).

All Hail the Hoodlums also follows the rule of thumb for all writers in that showing over-telling is best practice (Biederman, 2012). This fundamental practice is not only implemented into the words on the page but also in providing the idea of a balanced Christian message to inspire transformation that make audience members want to change and lean in closer to God. With this practice in mind, while this film does not shy away from the element of faith and Christianity, it will also not dwell and overshare these principles. Instead, the difference that faith can make during hard times, or the mundane life is shown as artfully as possible. This manuscript, though still just words on a page, emphasizes emotions, reality and goodness so that broader audience members may see the need for God and inspire inner transformation to grow closer to the Creator. Overall, *All Hail the Hoodlums* is also a thank you to the many creators who established creative screenplays and an invitation for others to inspire through faith, craft, and art.

Comparable Films

After the 2016 release of *Silence*, Christianity in film seemingly forever shifted. *Silence*, directed by Martin Scorsese, is a beautiful example of executing a balanced film that showcases dedication to religion masterfully and dramatically (Deweese-Boyd, 2017). From the mindful storytelling to the beauty presented on the screen to the actors making the audience

believe that they are real, this film appears to know the history of Christianity and the need for religion on the big screen incredibly well. Joel Mayward writes in his article that both the believer and non-believer will be shocked after watching this film as it displays an in-depth depiction of heritage and persecution (2019). Mayward writes, “Religious audiences may have been uneasy about the film’s doctrinal ambiguities and disturbing violence, while non-believing audiences perhaps could not believe in the religious traditions and tribulations (especially why stepping on the fumi-e would be a such big deal to a priest). *Silence* appeared too pious for non-believers and too sacrilegious for believers” (2019). While *Silence* is far from a feel-good, family-friendly film, it uses a religious message to promote transformation, spiritual disciplines and dedication.

In 2014, the film *Unbroken* hit the big screens, and its central message was one of redemption. The film tells the real-life event of Louis Zamperini, a young Italian American with the gift of speed. With excellent videography and writing, the film shows Zamperini being drafted into the second world war after running in the Olympics to then crashing into the middle of the sea (Crawford, 2016). Zamperini was soon captured and taken to a prisoner camp, where he was abused and tormented by the horrific leaders of the Japanese army. Beat down, but never broken remains a crucial factor through actions and subtext of this film. While Zamperini was eventually released from the prisoner-of-war camp, many of his troubles followed him home. The soldier turned to drink to escape his PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder). Again, while the runner was beaten down by life, he could not stay down. That is when Louis stumbles into Billy Graham’s Crusade, where he finds reconciliation and justification (Tallerico, 2014). Throughout the film, faith is not only powerfully named but also the saving grace of God and transformation that Lord gifts freely.

Lastly, in the five-season Netflix series, *The Crown*, the series follows the royal family from the time that Queen Elizabeth II becomes Queen of The British Empire and the Commonwealth to the late 90s. The series captured the world's attention with its riveting storytelling, sequences lining up with history, and unmatched acting (Evans, 2022). As the Queen rules throughout her reign, one thing remains: her faith. Her Majesty holds onto faith in the everyday and the hardest of times while leading The Church of England as the Sovereign. Not once did the show shy away from showcasing the many hardships, heartbreaks, and utter nonsense that Queen Elizabeth II had to face, but the writers also did not shy away from the deep elements of faith that the Queen relied on (Gehrz, 2019). Though the world continued to change, and man's sinful nature was on full display in this series, the simple elements of faith steadied Her Majesty and set her apart from the other members of the family. In a valiant success, the Netflix series showed the many spiritual disciplines Queen Elizabeth II routinely practices making it evident that the strength of the Lord was with this powerful ruler throughout her long and triumphant reign (McCracken, 2020).

Comparable Text

One of the most inspiring and well-informative literary texts that showcase the craft of creative screenwriting and how it transforms lives is *The Screenwriter's Bible* by David Trottier. The textbook and guide cover the core elements of formatting and how to write an industry-standard screenplay. Not only does this textbook go above and beyond to provide writing and selling advice, but it also uses many famous screenplays as examples of the concepts. The textbook also provides the basic rules of screenwriting and how to break the rules properly if necessary. For example, Trottier says this when describing what should be written for the screen:

Memories, thoughts, insights, knowledge, and realization cannot visually appear on the movie screen, but you can describe actions, facial expressions, gestures, and reactions that suggest them. As a general rule, only describe what the audience can actually see on the movie screen and hear on the soundtrack, such as sound (Trottier, 116).

Through specific examples, Trottier provides the basis of screenwriting and inspires new writers through these rules and guidelines. Trottier also offers mentorship and extends a hand of partnership to preserve the precious craft. In a later section about the distinct difference between screenwriting and prose, Trottier writes, “Screenplay descriptions should direct the mind’s eyes, not the director’s camera. They should help the reader see in her mind and feel in her heart” (117). Through this textbook the author shows that there are many ways to produce a quality creative screenplay, but he also writes the textbook as a call to action. David Trottier understands that inspiration, creativity, and craft can transform individuals’ lives. This textbook remains as a placeholder among the industry making it comparable to all screenplays and especially the idea of how a balanced Christian film can inspire Christ-like transformation to those who are hungry to change.

Literary Tradition

As literary tradition considers both the heritage of past creative screenplays and emphasizes the goal of continuing the art form’s evolution, there is ample room for something even grander to transform onto the page. As previously mentioned in this paper, films began as motion pictures in the late nineteenth century (Heckman, 2022). From there, the art form transformed by leaps and bounds from the short black-and-white films to where the industry is currently.

Now the art form and craft of creative screenwriting has a standard of good writing and opportunities to learn from professionals and institutions across the globe (Baker, 2013). In his introduction to a series of articles, Dallas J. Baker, creator of *The Chosen*, speaks about the many opportunities that creative screenwriting presents (2013). However, Baker also acknowledges the many works that will never be seen on the screen. Baker writes, “Despite the clear scholarly value of a creative and critical artifact at all the stages of its existence, the unproduced script is relegated to the margins of both film scholarship and writing scholarship. It is a textual other, the exiled abject of mainstream film and theatre discourse” (2013). There is seemingly much room for growth and transformation within creative screenwriting while holding onto the things that make this art form unique and extravagant.

In the same way, as screenwriting continues to evolve while holding fast to the traditions of the old, the basis of literary tradition reflects how humanity operates as well (Davies, 2012). Throughout society there also appears to be a deep desire to hold onto the security presented in tradition. However, there will always be a desire for transformational growth from individuals (Whitley 97). More often than not, a person’s want for growth and transformation is often sparked through inspirational avenues like art and craft (Cattrysse, 2021). With this fact presented, writers and artists must understand the power their art and craft carry. While the reason art and craft inspire transformation varies from individual to individual, there should seemingly be a purpose behind the work, whether it is looking back to tradition or casting a new innovative vision.

While providing a balanced Christian message and sparking Christ-like transformation still appears to be relatively new in establishing a foundation, there is also endless room to experiment with new genres, styles, ways to influence, and means to communicate faith

elements. With every new thing, there are elements of risk and reward; however, because of literary tradition and Christian tradition, a core to fall back on remains with this idea (Batty, 2015). With the correlation of literary tradition, screenwriting, and providing a balanced Christian message there is an ostensibly nod of honor to creativity and tradition. Lastly, with literary tradition as a centerpiece to craft and art, there is a beautiful invitation extended to audience members to also learn art forms and crafts to continue the tradition and create new works that inspire others.

The Craft of Creative Screenwriting

Creative Screenplay as a craft and art form requires immense skill and precision (Cattrysse, 2021). Not only do screenwriters require a deep understanding of creative writing, but they must also execute the writing style necessary for the craft (Batty, 2015). Screenwriting requires exactness and effectiveness to communicate a good story through elements of showing, not telling, writing what can be seen on the screen, and writing through mainly actions and dialogue (Myers, 2022). Screenwriting also takes extra effort and intentionality to cut down lengthiness so that the words that remain on the page act as ammunition (Trottier, 95). Again, as screenwriting is still being defined every day, the elements of practicing and keeping up with the industry standard is essential in the screenwriting craft, as explained by Craig Batty:

All of this is to say that in the pursuit of a research activity that is outward facing and practice-based,³ we could benefit from reconfiguring what we mean by screenwriting studies to set it apart from ‘straight’ screen studies. Screenwriting studies – or *screenwriting practice research* – could be thought of as being concerned with the act of writing and with creative processes. Screenwriting is an activity⁴ and so it becomes important to conduct research not just *about* practice, but also *for* practice. In this way,

new knowledge is generated alongside and/or to influence new methods of practice, resulting in not just an *understanding* of the topic, but also *practical insights* about the topic that the screenwriter (or industry professional) can apply (Batty, 2016).

Another core factor in executing craft in creative screenwriting is the ability to display reality within the story and through the characters. Chris Dent discusses the need for screenplay writers to utilize realistic discourse when writing for the screen. Dent writes, “Stories, whether on the screen or the page, work because the characters are in some way active and engage with their environment and, usually, other characters” (2021). The author continues about the reflective nature that audience members must experience to attach to the film by saying, “This mirrors how the viewers experience their own lives. One thing that unites all audiences, regardless of the film genre, age, gender, or ethnicity of the individuals watching the movies, is the fact that they are alive” (Dent 2021). Of course, there are fawns, hobbits, and robots in society’s favorite stories; however, for audience members to connect to these characters, there must be elements that individuals can see within themselves (Marsh, 2020).

Screenwriting, as a craft and unique art form, appears to hold a different kind of power than other crafts as it revolves around the message and the transformation in the characters’ lives. For example, in the critically acclaimed trilogy, *The Lord of the Rings*, there is an overarching message that good will always defeat evil (Mambrol, 2021). However, the audience must go on the journey of loss, hardships, and trials to see the resolution. While the message is entwined in the subtext of the entire trilogy, a great and inspiring victory is showcased at the end of the last film, solidifying the message once and for all. Similarly, the protagonist Frodo Baggins starts as a character who has yet to establish himself and the strength from within him. Over the trilogy,

Frodo transforms into the savior of Middle Earth by letting go of his selfishness and relying on others to help him along the way.

With the many examples to display creative screenwriting as a craft and art form, it is apparent through the films and writers of the past that the promise of a bright future for screenplays will continue to inspire audience members. Through messages and inspirational transformation, there is inevitably a deep desire to reflect the true meaning of life and spark growth in audience members (De Gruchy, 2020). While seemingly screenwriting is forever evolving and improving, there appears to be much space to incorporate new practices of implementing a balanced Christian message and showing the Christian faith to broader audiences.

Conclusion

In conclusion, though many faith-based films are written and produced each year, creating films that are balanced in the Word and in the world simultaneously presents an opportunity to spark transformation that is grounded in God to large audiences. While believers read of the great stories in the Word of God, the average Christian life is very different from slaying giants, parting the seas in half, and turning into pillars of salt. Instead, the Christian life today looks like taking up the Cross daily, practicing spiritual disciplines, living above reproach, and spreading the Gospel message. With this in mind, the creative screenplay, *All Hail the Hoodlums* showcases these elements consistently throughout the manuscript. It is apparent that the world needs God, and His followers are ready to share, motivate, and inspire Christ-like transformation through any means, especially through creative screenwriting. Through the significant findings of the research and the many truths of Scripture, it is evident that when paired with the Creator, the creation will be blessed.

Creative Manuscript

ALL HAIL THE HOODLUMS

Written by
Makayla Jacobs

FADE IN:

EXT. THE TRAINING CAMP - DUSK

Thick black smoke rises against the dreary grey sky.

Out of the smoke, SOLDIERS carry their dead brothers into mass graves. Lines of soldiers unload artillery and supplies.

Chaos is concentrated, overflowing at the Training Camp.

As soon as OFFICER HARRINGS, 19, jumps down from the truck, his face twists in fear as a soldier with his legs blown off is carried on a stretcher in front of him. He stumbles back.

PRIVATE NELLS, 28, catches Officer Harrings' from bolting from the scene.

PRIVATE NELLS

Steady on, lad; we need your help.

Private Nells trudges through the thick mud. Officer Harrings trails behind the private. They stop at a truck filled with supplies.

OFFICER HARRINGS

Sir. I-I don't understand. We were only an hour behind them. How has this happened?

Nells shoves a crate into Harrings' chest. Grabs a crate for himself. Heads toward the tents; only some are all the way set up.

Harrings trails behind. The crate in Harrings' hands READS: Medical Supplies. He walks over to the med tent.

PRIVATE NELLS

What you are seeing, son, is the devil mixing his playtime with his revenge on God. This is the result.

Harrings halts. There are more dead than alive. Body lay on the floor with their souls abandoned.

INT. THE MED TENT - DUSK

Officer Harrings sets down the box. DOCTORS and soldiers swarm him. The crate is empty in seconds.

OFFICER DOLAND, 19, lies on a cot, coughing and breathing shallowly. He reaches for Officer Harrings. Harrings sits beside him.

Officer Doland chokes on the fluid imposing on his lungs. His nose and ears drip with streams of blood.

Unsure what to do, Harrings looks for someone to help him. He locks eyes with the man next to him.

COLONEL BONPOIR, 45, rubs the legs of another dying soldier. His uniform jacket lays on top of the soldier's torso.

COLONEL BONPOIR

Say something to him, son. He will not last long.

Officer Doland GASPS for air. Officer Harrings places his hand on Doland's chest, pressing down lightly.

COLONEL BONPOIR (O.S.)

(To his soldier)

Just hang on, son. We are going to get you home. Okay?

OFFICER HARRINGS

(To himself)

Home.

Harrings smiles--Turns his face to Officer Doland--They lock eyes.

OFFICER HARRINGS

Did you hear that? You will be home soon.

Harrings spots a small cross necklace around Doland's neck. He taps it with his finger.

OFFICER HARRINGS

No matter which home you go to, you will have peace, and it will be good.

A tear streams down Officer Doland face, leaving a clean line on his cheek. Happiness appears on his face.

OFFICER DOLAND

Home.

Officer Doland's eyes flutter shut. He gently slips into an eternal sleep.

Harring's arranges Doland's hands across his chest.

LIEUTENANT ARCHNER, 35, enters the med tent.

LIEUTENANT ARCHNER
Colonel!

Lieutenant Archner rushes to Colonel Bonpoir.

Bonpoir watches Archner approach him.

LIEUTENANT ARCHNER
Colonel, we got through. We must send correspondence immediately.

The colonel looks back down. The soldier he was tending to is now dead.

LIEUTENANT ARCHNER
Colonel?

COLONEL BONPOIR
...I'll be right behind you, Lieutenant.

Lieutenant Archner clicks his heels together and bows before leaving.

The colonel stands up. Looks down at the dead soldiers--then around the tent. He firmly grasps the collar of his uniform jacket. He can't remove it from the body.

INT. THE CORRESPONDENT TENT - NIGHT

Colonel Bonpoir snaps open the flap of the correspondent tent. Soldiers stand at attention.

Lieutenant Archner hands the colonel the proposed correspondence.

The colonel takes a pencil. Crosses out 300. Writes down "302." Hands the correspondence back to the lieutenant.

THE COLONEL
Send it.

LIEUTENANT ARCHNER
Yes, sir.

Lieutenant Archner sits at the telegraph system. The MORSE CODE CLICKS go through the system.

INT. THE LONDON CORRESPONDENT SECTION - NIGHT

The SWITCHBOARD ATTENDANT, 60, plugs the wire connections--Pencils jot down important messages--Rows of WORKERS keep the efficient pace.

MR. KINGSTON, 55, head of correspondence, receives the morse code message. He writes, "Training camp attacked," "Forest of Finland," and "302 dead."

Taken aback, Mr.Kingston takes off his headphones and glasses. Rubs his brow.

INT. THE LONDON ARMY HEADQUARTERS HALLWAYS - NIGHT

Mr. Kingston tramps through the hallways. His legs are brisk but hold back a run.

CLARENCE CARMICHAEL, 50, walks down the hall. He MUMBLES in German with a pad of paper and pen in hand.

Clarence sees Mr. Kingston go down the hall in haste. His downcast HMMM furrows his brow. Creasing his forehead.

INT. MAJOR KLINE'S DESK - NIGHT

Mr. Kingston hands the message to MAJOR KLINE, 40. The status of his rank reflects through the decoration of his uniform.

Major Kline reads the message. Eyes darting above the page. He stops reading.

INT. THE MAIN WAR ROOM - NIGHT

MEN surround the battlefield table. Watching as GENERAL GALLASTINE, 55, explains a complicated strategy.

GENERAL GALLASTINE

This is where we will advance--

The door flies open.

MAJOR KLINE

--Sir, urgent message from Colonel Bonpoir.

Major Kline surrenders the message. General Gallastine reads the message. Stoned-faced. Anger soon appears, crushing the message with his fist.

INT. THE HEADQUARTERS CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT

Major Kline and CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY, 27, argue with each other. Their voices FADE IN.

General Gallastine lifts his whiskey glass to his lips. He sits up as Major Kline SLAPS his hand on the table.

Kline and Theiry glare at each other. Fire and ice spew from their eyes.

MAJOR KLINE

This is not child's play, Captain! Lives are at stake, and people are dying.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

That is precisely why I am re-propose this operation...We have known for months that our plans and strategies have fallen into the wrong hands--sold to the enemy! Yet we did nothing to act. And now, Western Union is sending out 300 K.I.C. telegrams to mothers and fathers.

Everyone in the room is still.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

They weren't even killed in combat. It was a training camp--positioned in the deep forest of Finland for the sole purpose of being undetected. Major, there wasn't a soldier over 20 on the training roster. We cannot let this repeat.

Major Kline turns to the general.

MAJOR KLINE

General, not only is the War House operation destined to fail, but it is also impractical and expensive. Spending extra money on frivolous things is a luxury we do not have or will have in the foreseeable future.

Brooks looks over at the exhausted general. His face softens.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

Then let us do what we originally proposed and be innovative with the resource we have. You have my word, Major; once the war is over, we will put it all back. We

have a chance to get back to the days when death counts, bombings, and hate weren't normal.

MAJOR KLINE

You are filled with greed.

Brooks squares his shoulders. Tightens his chest.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

Yes, yes, I am. I want this war to end more than anyone in this room. I am tired, and I am weary, and right now, I question if there is any good left. But...I am not finished working, and I will not keep my mouth shut any longer. We have to at least--

GENERAL GALLASTINE

--I've heard enough, Captain.

Brooks looks to the generals. Hopeful.

MAJOR KLINE

(to Brooks)

There are more courses of action to take other than this one.

GENERAL GALLASTINE

Many. With undoubtedly better strategy, better use of resources, and better men.

Major Kline lifts his head in triumph.

GENERAL GALLASTINE

But...that is why this is the route we must take. I believe it is the only way to extinguish these matters in private, to rid all of the weeds in the dead of night so there will be no suspicions raised. This is a chance for us to keep the odds in our favor.

MAJOR KLINE

General, I must protest.

Gallastine moves closer to Brooks, passing Major Kline.

GENERAL GALLASTINE

Can you promise me flawless execution while keeping to our country's integrity?

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

Yes, General. I swear it.

GENERAL GALLASTINE

And your men?

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

They are ready, sir.

GENERAL GALLASTINE

Ready for what?

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

Justice, sir.

General Gallastine prods Brooks with a raised eyebrow.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

And perhaps a bit of revenge.

General Gallastine's smile turns toward the heavens.

GENERAL GALLASTINE

Good. Then get some rest, Captain. Your preparation begins tomorrow.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

Yes, sir.

GENERAL GALLASTINE

Meeting adjured...and may the Lord be with our king, country, and brothers.

The men in the room stand at attention. General Gallastine and his PRIVATE SECRETARY, 40, exit the conference room.

The door swings shut on the men in the room congratulate Brooks and shake his hand.

INT. THE HEADQUARTERS HALLWAYS - NIGHT

General Gallastine's pace is controlled yet quick. His secretary follows.

PRIVATE SECRETARY

You're sure about this, General?

GENERAL GALLASTINE

I shouldn't be, yet I am. Sometimes, one must think above their position and trust the gut...and the heart. I am well aware of Captain Theiry and his men's reputation. He is,

without a doubt, unhinged, perhaps even a lunatic. But, one may argue that that is exactly what we are up against. So why not make the playing fields--

PRIVATE SECRETARY

--Equal. It is risky, sir, and when Major Kline referenced the operation as child's play, I couldn't help but see the resemblance. Costumes, characters, scripts, and props. They are essentially contorting reality into a school pageant. I can't help but wonder if we are making the right decision, sir.

The general halts, startled by the secretary's honesty.

GENERAL GALLASTINE

I don't need you to wonder; I need you to hope...and pray.

Gallastine pushes open the doors into the main offices.

INT. LONDON HEADQUARTER OFFICE'S - NIGHT

LUCY, 25, hands General Gallastine his coat, hat, and briefcase.

GENERAL GALLASTINE

Thank you, Lucy. Captain Theiry won't be much longer, and I'll see to it a car can take you home. (To Clarence Carmichael) You too, Carmichael.

Clarence looks up from translations.

CLARENCE CARMICHAEL

Ah, yes-yes, General.

Brooks enters the offices. Spots the general.

GENERAL GALLASTINE

Ah, there he is now.

The general saunters toward the exit.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

(to Lucy)

Hi, honey.

Lucy flutters her eyelashes. Flirtatiously.

LUCY

Captain.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

--I'll get you out of here as quick as I can.--Can you call this list of people and tell them the operation is a go and-and to be at the site by noon.--Thanks, honey.

Brooks runs after the general.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

General, may I have a word with you?

GENERAL GALLASTINE

(Whispers to brooks)

Two steps behind.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

Yes, sir.

The general's looks behind him as Brooks's eyes trail the floor.

GENERAL GALLASTINE

Don't sulk like a child. You don't want nepotism attached to your name.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

You don't have to go to such extreme lengths. I have five godfather's

GENERAL GALLASTINE

Yes, it's the very English thing to do. Now, hurry up and tell me what it is you have to say. You have until my car arrives.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

I just wanted to say--

General Gallastine stops in his tracks. Looks sternly at Brooks.

GENERAL GALLASTINE

--You don't get to thank me, Captain. Don't you dare!

Brooks pulls back. Hurt.

Two SOLDIERS walk by, eyeing the duo.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

(whispers)

I just wanted to acknowledge your leadership, sir.

GENERAL GALLASTINE

Leadership? Would you have thanked me for my leadership if I didn't give your idea the all-clear? Do not thank me for my leadership until it works and until I know that I didn't send you and your men to their graves.

Both men's faces show the weight of the general's words.

GENERAL GALLASTINE

I want a substantial report in three days' time.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

Yes, sir.

The general begins walking away, then stops again.

GENERAL GALLASTINE

And don't do anything stupid, and everything you think of doing something stupid, I want you to think of your mother. Crying, distressed, dressed in black, not sure what to do next. And then I want you to think of me, there to comfort her and take her mind off things.

The general smiles devilishly.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

You're disgusting.

GENERAL GALLASTINE

Goodnight, Captain.

Brooks lights a cigarette.

General pushes open the double doors. Theatrically. Rain pours down outside. A CHAFFIER opens the car door and closes it.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

(To himself)

Goodnight, sir.

Brooks blows out a huge puff of smoke.

EXT. THE WAR HOUSE DRIVEWAY - AFTERNOON

Smoke from MR. JIM'S, 55, cigarette billows out. He leans up against a large crate.

GRETCHEN, 50, marches out of the front door, shielding her face from the bright country sun.

She spots Mr. Jim. Slacking.

GRETCHEN

Excuse me, sir! I told you to get all these crates in the manor an hour ago.

Gretchen swipes the cigarette from the worker's mouth. Flicks it to the ground.

GRETCHEN

You get a break when I say you do.

Mr. Jim grabs the dolly.

MR. JIM

Give us all some slack, sweetheart; us men's 'ave been workin' since before the suns was up.

Gretchen smiles cheekily.

GRETCHEN

And I've been working since before my bosoms arrived. Life's a--

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

--Gretchen!

Gretchen twirls around.

GRETCHEN

Captain! When did you arrive?

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

Just now, oh, you look wonderful.

The two embrace, kissing each other's cheeks.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

How is everything looking?

GRETCHEN

Just fine, sir. We are only slightly behind.

Gretchen SLAPS her hands together twice.

GRETCHEN

(to Mr. Jim)

To the dining room, if you please, sir!

Mr. Jim scurries under the eyes of the captain.

MR. JIM

Yes, ma'am!

Gretchen links her arm with Brooks as they walk around the grounds.

GRETCHEN

It's so good to be here all together again.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

It is, and for once, everything is working in our favor. I'm going to make a grounds list. Will you take my things to my room?

GRETCHEN

Of course, sir.

Brooks pulls out a pad of paper and pencil, dotting the pencil on the tip of his tongue. He walks the grounds.

Gretchen CALLS for workers to take Brooks's things to his room.

INT. THE WAR HOUSE FOYER - DAY

Gretchen enters the War House. Climbs up the first flight of stairs, CLAPPING her hands together.

GRETCHEN

May I have your attention, please?

THE COMPANY halts their work.

GRETCHEN

In a matter of hours, the final preparations will be complete. As you all know, this operation was a mere thought on a corner of a newspaper, and now it is well organized military operation that will hopefully aid in ending this war.

HAMISH, 35, IRA, 28, and PERCY, 32, look on with proud chins.

GRETCHEN

In a few short days, many of us will leave this place. We will, once again, return to our normal lives in this

unusual time. Remember this place by day, and pray for it by night. Though many of us, in one way or another, are deemed unfit for the frontlines of battle, be proud to know that you were on the frontline of innovation, which plays a vital role in every victory. Every crate moved, every room painted, and every costume stitched was for the gain of this great empire. Friends, thank you for your service.

(looks on proudly)

Now, back to work.

Gretchen descends the staircase. THE CREW approaches.

IRA

That speech was truly touching, Gretch.

GRETCHEN

Don't bath me in butter. Now, the captain has just arrived; he'll be lookin' for you.

PERCY

Indeed, he will be. Just one more moment of peace...until--

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

--Until the war's over, fool.

The crew turns toward Brooks, standing in the doorway. They quickly stand a little straighter.

HAMISH

Captain.

Brooks begins to walk toward the crew then passed them.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

Hello old boys. Are we ready to rehearse, or do we need another moment?

PERCY

I never got the first!

Percy closes in on Brooks. Inches from his face. After a moment, they clap each other shoulders and embrace in brotherly jovial.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

I've missed you, brother.

Hamish wraps his arms around both of them with a celebratory YELL.

IRA

It's going to be a long day.

INT. THE WAR HOUSE LOUNGE - MIDNIGHT

The clock STRIKES twelve.

IRA
(To himself)
Midnight.

Brooks massages his tired eyelids.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY
Run it again.

PERCY
Capt, no matter how many times we run it or how convincing we make it, we will still come to the same conclusion. The same one we came to a year ago. You should have told Gallastine this before you signed us all up!

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY
We will figure it out. We have to.

HAMISH
Drinking, gambling, and having a good time with the lads will only get us to the point of a good time.

IRA
They will surely get bored before we ever get their confessions. We need to up the ante and get something...out of this world that slides their confessions right out of their disgusting mouths.

Brooks stands up to pace the room.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY
...No, we just need one thing that's a little different.

IRA
Capt, we are all a little different from the next.

Ira eye's Percy as he messes with some mechanisms within a trick doll. The doll's head POPS off.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY
(To himself)

That's it. (To the crew) That's just it. A group of men.
We're all men. What if we got a girl?

The crew moves forward in their seats.

IRA

What?

HAMISH

A centerpiece.

PERCY

And a pretty one too!

HAMISH

And one that is made out of sheer iron nerves.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

A final act.

PERCY

What we need is a professional. A real actress!

IRA

Oh, yeah, I'll get right on that, Perc. Who shall I call first? Shirley Temple? Judy Garland? Oh, I know! Minnie Mouse? Capt, what you're asking is an impossible task. Stars are all booked...they are the faces of our escape.

HAMISH

Not to mention that if we get a professional, they would be known and recognized by their profession.

Brooks faces the crew. His face says it all. He knows what to do.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

Not if they've grown up...Excuse me.

Brooks strides out of the room, leaving the crew behind.

PERCY

What the hell was that?

IRA

Who knows? And I don't care right now because I am going to bed.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY (O.S.)

Run it again.

INT. BROOKS'S ROOM - NIGHT

Brooks pushes open the large wooden door of his room. Rain PATTERS on the window.

Brooks shuffles across the room, then through his collection of records. Halfway through, he finds what he's looking for: "The Chateau" movie score.

The record sleeve has all the characters on the front, including a young girl in the middle of the sleeve.

Rain PELTS against the glass. Thunder RUMBLES in the distance.

INT. MILITARY INFIRMARY IN HASTINGS - MORNING

Rain continues. No sun shines through the hospital windows.

DOCTORS and NURSES try to keep up with the chaos inside Hastings Hospital. The hospital is overwhelmed. There is no space. Supplies are low.

INT. POST SURGERY WARD - MORNING

LONNIE CARMICHAEL, 20, tends to the MEN in the post-surgery ward. She makes her rounds--takes temperatures--adjusts IV drips.

Lonnie straightens up as PRIVATE PINESON, 32, begins to wake up from the anesthetics. She makes hast to his bedside.

Pineson begins to PANT and panic.

PRIVATE PINESON

Where-where am I?

Lonnie sits on the side of Private Pinesons bed. Grabs his hand, patting it in assurance.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

There there, Private, it's alright. You're at the Hastings Infirmary; you've just woken up from surgery.

Lonnie brings a cup of water to Pinesons lips.

PRIVATE PINESON

I'm alright?

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

Yes, your surgery went well, sir, but you must try to rest now.

PRIVATE PINESON

(breathlessly)

I've seen your face before. Where have I seen you?

Lonnie looks away as she tucks Pineson under the covers.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

Perhaps in a dream, sir. Now, close your eyes and think of nice things.

Pineson submits to his exhaustion.

Lonnie looks at the man. Just for a second.

EXT. DOWNTOWN HASTINGS - AFTERNOON

Lonnie walks home through the desecrated and empty streets of Downtown Hastings.

There, at the town's center, a familiar building: Lonnie's father's corner shop and candy emporium.

Lonnie struggles to open the stubborn door with the key. Twisting, turning, shoving until, finally, it opens.

INT. THE CARMICHAEL'S SHOP/HOME - AFTERNOON

Once in the spotless store, Lonnie relaxes. The open sign takes its place in the window, yet no one roams the streets.

Lonnie dashes through the other store door, leading into her attached home. Unsnapping her nurse uniform, she changes into something plain, warm, and dry.

Lonnie catches her reflection in the mirror. Pale. Downcast. Withdrawn. She watches closely, then pinches her cheeks roughly and plasters determination and pride on her face.

MONTAGE - CLEANING THE SHOP

--Lonnie ties her apron around her waist.

--Lonnie wipes the counters. Moves every piece of merchandise. No dust spec is left.

--She hangs new stockings and admires them.

--Lonnie swipes her finger on a shelf. Examines her finger. Unsatisfied. Water and soap scrub every surface.

--The floor is swept. Dust collects in the dustpan. Lonnie opens the front door to dump the dust. She halts, looking at the state of the street.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

I shan't forgive myself for adding to this mess.

--The dust goes in the bin.

END MONTAGE

Lonnie catches her reflection once more. No change detected. She gulps. Hard. Every muscle in her neck tenses.

Lonnie walks to the center of the room. She is the only thing that fills the empty space.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

Papa, should I put the kettle on?

When there is no answer, Lonnie shuts her eyes. Tears fall.

INT. POST SURGERY WARD - MORNING

Private Pineson opens his eyes.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

Good morning, sir.

PRIVATE PINESON

You, again.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

Me, again. Try to relax, and I shall bring you something, alright?

The hospital is QUIET. Lonnie grabs a tray from the breakfast cart.

HEAD NURSE POLLY

Miss Carmichael?

Lonnie looks up at HEAD NURSE POLLY, 40.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL
Yes, Ma'am?

HEAD NURSE POLLY
A word, please?

Lonnie places the tray back in the cart with care.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL
Is anything a matter?

HEAD NURSE POLLY
No, no, but you and all the other volunteer staff are being
sent home immediately.

(pause)
There is another round of evacuations. Your transport is
leaving at 04:00 hours.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL
I cannot leave Hastings. I have a duty here, even if it is
only serving at our small hospital. Besides, where would I
go?

HEAD NURSE POLLY
--Katherine, I'm not asking you to consider it.

Lonnie looks long and hard at her supervisor.

HEAD NURSE POLLY
I've enjoyed our time together, but I do not wish to see
you until the war is over.

Lonnie nods once.

HEAD NURSE POLLY
Goodbye, my dear--

LONNIE CARMICHAEL
--I'll see you tomorrow, ma'am.

Lonnie turns on her heel. She exits the hospital, just at the wrong
time.

EXT. STREETS OF HASTINGS - AFTERNOON

On the streets--soldiers run--vehicles plow through the streets--
Lonnie stops--Looks to the sky--Realizes. Bombers are coming.

Lonnie straps on her civilian Brodie helmet around her chin. Tight
and runs.

The BOMBING SIREN goes off. Their haunting WAILS push everything and
everyone closer to the city's center.

The rain and mud are thick. Lonnie struggles to run.

The first bomb drops. BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

Lonnie hides in an alley. Her home in sight, but first, she has to
maneuver through the wide open space of the city center.

CRASH!

LONNIE CARMICHAEL
(to herself)
3, 2, 1, go.

Lonnie dashes through the city center. BOOM! The rumble of the
explosion knocks Lonnie off her feet.

Back on her feet, Lonnie finally makes it to the corner shop, but
once again, she struggles to open the front door.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL
Oh, please, don't be stubborn today.

Lonnie jerks the handle anxiously.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL
(cries)
Please, let me in!

Another bomb releases. The door opens, and the bomb hits, shoving
Lonnie inside. She crawls under the counter for cover. CRIES for her
father louder than war zone outside.

INT. CORNER SHOP - AFTERNOON

Hours pass. Lonnie rests her head against the counter. The ALL CLEAR
ANNOUNCEMENT plays on the speakers.

Powdered with soot, Lonnie rises slowly puts the open sign in the window. The hairs on the back of her neck stand tall. She whips around but finds no one in sight.

Lonnie stares into the eyes of the toy on the shelves. Her smile wobbles.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL
(to the toys in the shop)
Good afternoon Lady Lydia, Lady Beatrice...

Lonnie curtsies to the dollies.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL
You are both looking lovely today. Oh dear, Mr. Theodore, do try to not look so grim; the scary part is over. Any day now, someone will walk through our doors to adopt you and send you to a lonely child. Just you wait and see.

Lonnie fixes the teddy bear's bow tie.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL
...And in the meantime, am I such terrible company?

Lonnie repeats the same routine as the day before.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DUSK

Lonnie cracks open the connecting door. EARL, Lonnie's grey British shorthair cat, immediately greets her. He circles and tickles her ankles.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL
Oh, hello, baby.

Lonnie picks Earl up and presses a kiss onto his little head.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL
Do you need a cuddle as much as I do today, Earl? I'm sorry I didn't come for you earlier. There was much to do again.

Lonnie flips on the radio. Airing the CURRENT BROADCAST.

BROADCAST SPEAKER (V.O.)
When it came to it, it was a mere small area that the Germans had to overtake. Perhaps if the weather had been kinder, the united forces would have known the Germans were waiting for them. According to our information, the

Germans, once again, had in-depth details of our strategic formation. I hate to say it, folks, but let us not continue to count our chickens until after they've hatched. May God continue to...

Lonnie SHUTS off the radio, sliding a record on instead. The needle hits the record, and a SWEET OVERTURE of "The Chateau" plays.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

How's about we light a fire, then? Hmm?

Lonnie STRIKES a match and throws it in the fire. Earl curls up in his bed next to the fire. She sits and takes a nail file to her fingertips.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

Don't leave your cot Earl; I want my polish free from your fur for once.

Lonnie lifts her nail supply tin, and there, lays a telegram, nestled under the tin from Western Union.

Lonnie shakily reaches for the telegram.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

Oh dear Lord, don't let it be so. Please.

Lonnie examines the telegram. Turning it over. Printed on the front READS: "Miss Lonnie Carmichael."

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

(whispers)

Lonnie?

Lonnie takes the nail filing tool to the telegram. She looks over her shoulder. Paranoid. The telegram lists movie titles and the main character. Her movies and characters.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

(to Earl)

What a strange telegram.

A JINGLE comes from the store door. Lonnie peaks through the crack in the door, hesitating to go into the store.

INT. CORNER SHOP - AFTERNOON

A well-statured and well-dressed man stands in the middle of the Carmichael's shop. It's Captain Brooks Theiry. He catches Lonnie peaking through the door.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

You're the eldest Carmichael daughter, correct?

Lonnie stays quiet but walks through the connecting door. Intimidation wears down her shoulder and face.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

Am I correct in making this assumption?

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

...Yes, sir. I'm--

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

--Yes, your Lonnie. You received my message, I see; I'd like to discuss its contents further with you.

Brooks removes the open sign from the window. Locks the front door and looks back at Lonnie.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

Now is a good time, I presume?

Brooks only waits for a second for Lonnie to reply, but when she doesn't--

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

--Good. My name is Captain Brooks Theiry; I work for a private intelligence sector for the British Empire. How do you do?

Lonnie fidgets under Brooks's intense glare instead of answering. Brooks butts in once again.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

(tries to smile)

I do not need much of an introduction from you; I know all about you, and I must give praise to your previous performances.

Lonnie dashes her eyes up and right back down.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

I must admit, I am quite the film aficionado, especially yours. It is a privilege to be speaking to you right now.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL
...I was only a child.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY
You could have fooled me.

The two lock eyes. Lonnie folds under Brook's gaze.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL
Excuse me, I'm sorry, but what, ummm, what are you doing here, sir? I-I am terribly confused. Am I being arrested?

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY
Goodness, no, Miss Carmichael. All will come to light in time. However, what I am about to tell you is highly confidential to the utmost degree. Failure to comply with these orders will result in your arrest. Do you solemnly swear to never repeat the information I am about to bestow upon you?

She nods her head once. Bewildered.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY
This matter requires a verbal response.

Lonnie gulps up some courage.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL
Yes, sir; you have my word.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY
Good--now--I think you and I can both agree that this war has gone on long enough. Our troops are doing their part on the front lines, but the state of the war still seems...unmovable.

Brooks lights a cigarette. Inhales the smoke.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY
And now we know why.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL
...because they know when we are coming.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY
Yes, along with intricate details of our strategies, all of which are highly confidential. This, of course, raised the question of whether it was indeed our own bequeathing the information into the hands of our enemies.

Brooks pulls out his briefcase onto the counter. It POPS open.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

We quickly learned our suspicions were true.

Brooks pulls out a dozen pictures of British military officials, along with documents marked with "CONFIDENTIAL" in unmistakable red.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

These are some of the said bastards...

Lonnie looks up at him. Shocked at his choice of language.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

I beg your pardon, Miss; these are some of the men that continue to betray our country.

Lonnie looks over the pictures. She halts.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

I'm sorry, sir, but why are you showing this to me? I don't understand what I have to do with all of this?

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

Well, my dear, this has nothing to do with you personally and everything to do with how you can help us.

Worry clouds Lonnie's face.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

How can I help you?

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

(Smiles)

By acting.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

Acting?

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

Yes, acting. My department and I have comprised a plan... a theory, really, that through acting and performance, we will be able to stop these men in their tracks. Now, picture this, the rural countryside manor is our set, and there is a script and costume for everyone. The only difference from a real movie set is there are no cameras. I'd to offer you the leading role.

Lonnie stumbles back. Away from Brooks.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

What? I can't do that. I-I--

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

--Miss Carmichael, please.

Brooks takes steps forward that Lonnie took back.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

You know how to act; better than anyone whom we have access to. And because of your status and talent, we are willing to pay triple your earnings from your last film, which I understand was a triumph in the box office and--

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

--Stop! Captain Theiry, I am very sorry, but you will have to find someone else; I am entirely the wrong girl for this role you propose.

Lonnie turns to leave the shop.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

...Your father didn't think so.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

How do you know my father?

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

He is our senior translator at the London headquarters. He speaks very highly of you...and of your courage. He says you left home to work on sets when you were only four years old to help provide for your family. He told me you never complained once about the hard work, but only about how much you missed him when you were away.

Tears begin to gather in Lonnie's eyes.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

And now he's been away for quite some time, hasn't he?

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

Lonnie, I, nor your father, want to put you in any danger, but we know you are the only person who can get the job done.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

You don't know who I am. Look at me. Sir, I am not who you think I am anymore. My name is Catherine, and I am a volunteer nurse. That is what I do now; that is who I am.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

That is not all you are, and that is not all you can become. Being a nurse is a noble role, a vital role, but... being one of the reasons the enemy falls, now that is something worth fighting for. And if I need to further convince you, it would bring your family back together again. Your days are not done.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

I'm very sorry, but I must refuse. I trust you can see yourself out.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

Miss Carmichael...they are sending your father to--

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

--To where?

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

To many places to help the negotiate in Poland, Germany, and France.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

You're lying. This cannot be. He-he cannot go.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

I am very sorry, but indeed, this is the plan intended for your father.

Lonnie places her hand over her mouth. Her body sinks lower, weighed down by her sinking heart.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

...But should you agree to accept this role, General Gallastine gives you his word that your father will remain where he is, at the London Headquarters. The choice is yours. A car will be here in the morning. I hope, for your family's sake, you get in.

The front door SLAMS shut. Lonnie stands still, staring at the door.

INT. THE CARMICHAEL HOME - EVENING

Lonnie walks and admires her home. She snatches Earl from his cot. The two ascend the staircase.

INT. LONNIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Lonnie slips into her nightgown and dressing gown. She kneels to pray, yet her eyes do not close. There, on her bedside table, is a photograph of her father and sister. Their picture almost comes alive.

Lonnie springs to her feet to grab her suitcase. She stuffs it with her belonging and SNAPS it shut.

EXT. THE WAR HOUSE - MORNING

THE DRIVER, 30, SNAPS opens the trunk of the car. He unloads Lonnie's suitcase and Earl's crate.

DRIIVER
Here you are, miss.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL
Thank you.

Lonnie looks at the open country, the War House towering behind her.

INT. THE WAR HOUSE FOYER - MORNING

Lonnie steps inside the bustling house, but no one notices her.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL
Excuse me? Madame?

Gretchen stops in her tracks and examines Lonnie up and down.

GRETCHEN
Yes, who are you?

LONNIE CARMICHAEL
My name is Catherine-I mean Lonnie Carmichael. Captain
They summoned me here.

GRETCHEN
Your orders, please?

Lonnie hands the telegram to Gretchen. Gretchen examines the orders.

GRETCHEN
Follow me.

Gretchen takes long strides, leading Lonnie through the massive estate.

GRETCHEN

I'm Gretchen, the head housekeeper, and I will also do your costuming.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

How do you do?

Gretchen stops again, eyeing her up and down.

Many twists and turns lead them to Brooks's office.

INT. BROOKS'S OFFICE - MORNING

Gretchen swings open the door.

GRETCHEN

A Miss Carmichael for you, sir.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

Show her in, please, Gretch.

Gretchen motions for Lonnie to enter the room.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

You're here; good. Gretchen, please take Miss Carmichael's things to her room.

Lonnie hands Gretchen her suitcase and Earl.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

I trust you had a pleasant journey?

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

Y-Yes, sir, I did, thank you.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

Allow me to introduce you to a few of our core team members. Up first, we have our SOE Hamish Grooms.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

How do you do?

Hamish shakes Lonnie's hand a little too hard. Ira raises his eyebrows at Brooks.

HAMISH

Glad you turned up on your own. Your father gave us written permission to kidnap you.

Everyone goes still.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

Ah, ha. He's only joking; you'll have to get used to his humor. Next, we have our technician and weaponry specialist, Percival Holden.

Lonnie reaches her hand out. Percy grabs. Twist. And kisses her hand.

Brooks's cheeks flush with regret.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

And finally, our strategic manager and my right-hand man, Ira Reginald.

Ira stares at Lonnie intensely.

IRA

It is a pleasure and honor to meet you, Miss Carmichael.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

(awkwardly)

Oh, how kind of you to say.

Brooks clasps Ira's shoulders to move him away from Lonnie.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

They will serve as our supporting roles, to help us to entertain and arrest the...

Lonnie looks down at the mention of the unthinkable.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

...men. Well, we have much to do, and I am sure you'd like to freshen up and unpack.

Lonnie perks up at the mention of leaving.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

Thank you.

Brooks presses a button. Gretchen re-enters the room.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

Miss Carmichael, your first dress rehearsal will be at 15:00 hours.

Lonnie nods and follows Gretchen out of the room.

INT. THE WAR HOUSE HALLWAYS - DAY

The two women walk at a normal pace.

GRETCHEN

(breaks silence)

It is good of you to come and help the captain.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

I consider it an honor to further help my country.

Gretchen stops, detecting Lonnie's lie.

GRETCHEN

Indeed...Well, this will be your room for personal use and set.

Lonnie gazes in amazement at the large luxurious room.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

I say, this is a pretty room; thank you, Gretchen.

GRETCHEN

Glad you like it. I will back in an hour so we can begin costuming you.

Lonnie strokes the silk pillowcase as Gretchen exits. Lonnie sits on the bed. Hugging the pillow tightly. Burying her face in it.

INT. THE WAR HOUSE HALLWAY - DAY

Outside the door, many of the other household staff listen at the door. Gretchen SOOSHES them away.

INT. THE WAR HOUSE LOUNGE - AFTERNOON

In the lounge, Lonnie and Hamish practice their lines at the center of the room. Brooks and the rest of the crew watch on.

Brooks admires the paper invitation for the Warmen.

PERCY

How do you spell Gerristoine again?

IRA

You know, once we send these out, we can not turn back.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

Deadlines always fill the air with excitement and determination. Send them. Tonight, if possible.

Brooks lights a cigarette.

IRA

Don't you think it's a bit soon? This is the first time we've seen her in action, and frankly...

Brooks takes a long drag from his cigarette.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

Frankly, you'll be a fool forever with that attitude.

Brooks rises from his seat. Script in hand.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

(to Lonnie)

Let's try out act two.

IRA

(to Percy)

Do as he says.

Ira shoots a shot of liquor. Gets out of his seat to join the practice.

INT. DINING ROOM - EVENING

The Company file into the dining room. Beautiful food lines the table.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

Let's begin.

Papers SHUFFLE. Pens SCRATCHES the papers. And small HUSHED CHATTER scatters around the table.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

The day after tomorrow, Captain Harrison Flanagan, age 42, will arrive on-site. Level of danger...is a two.

Everyone in the room SNICKERS.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

He will arrive at 19:00 hours, and expect him to be prompt. He is the son of a wealthy baronet. Typical upper-class upbringing, well-educated, entitlement issues, the standard. He has served in the military for fifteen years...after his father required him to do so. Hamish?

Hamish pops to his feet. Eager to speak.

HAMISH

Flanagan is suspected to be in direct correspondence with S.S. Officials and is said to be greatly benefiting from their generosity. However, we have not been able to track any large wire transfers, which brings us to believe that he is not after money.

Eyebrows around the table rise. Pens halt.

HAMISH

However, after much surveillance, we believe he is after the same thing we are all after. Normal. Comfort. Just to greater extents. This is why we will pull out all the stops, and even though this is our first performance, there can be no mistakes. The dress rehearsal today went successfully, and we'd like to thank you all for your dedication to this operation.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

Thank you, Hamish. Any questions?

A split-second passes. Then--

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

--Good. Enjoy your meal.

Brooks leaves, and the eating begins--Silverware CLANKS--Happy CHATTER continues. Lonnie looks over her shoulder at Brooks's exit. Perplexed, she goes after him.

INT. BROOKS'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Brooks paces the room. Script in hand until he notices--

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

--Miss Carmichael?

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

I don't eat before performances, either.

Brooks blows out a laugh through his nose.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

Do you have a moment? I was hoping I could have a brief word with you before you read through your character description for tonight.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

Certainly.

Brooks invites her to sit--they both do.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

I have some notes about how we would like you to portray of role for this particular man. Now, this information is--

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

--Highly confidential, yes, I know.

Brooks smiles. Pleased with her teasing.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

Yes, indeed. Miss Carmichael, the day we first met, I used a choice word to describe the men we are dealing with; I don't recant my words. During our surveillance, we discovered Flanagan like girls...much, much younger girls. So we'd like you to spin the character in a younger direction.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

How young?

Brooks's chest is still. He takes no breaths.

Lonnie's eyes dart from place to place. The dots connect. And then--

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

--You want me to portray a child?

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

No, I want you to portray someone ignorant of the war, and who is childlike.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

Oh, Captain, I-I can't do that.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

Miss Carmichael, please don't bother me with your can't's while people are dying on the front lines, innocent children are being slaughtered in camps, and the good of humanity is at risk. We have must protect such things and do all we can to help stop this war.

Brooks's harsh tone takes Lonnie by surprise, but then, he breathes out his frustration.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

I beg your pardon...I'm not asking you to commit any crimes; I'm just asking you to grow up and for your character to grow down. That's it. Remember, this isn't real. You are in control. So here's my advice, don't become what he wants you to become. Okay?

Tension fades from Lonnie's body.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

And don't make me question my decision to hire you again.

Brooks eyes connect with Lonnie. A trickle of fun flashes on his face.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

Or else I'll tell your dad you're a big fat coward...and I'll tell the press you're a diva, and you'll never get a job in this town again.

Lonnie's smile slides up. Brooks places a hand on her shoulder. Squeezes it.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

You can do this, I know you can, but I need to be ready.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

For what?

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

Action!

INT. THE WAR HOUSE DRESSING ROOM - DUSK

The War House bustles. Curling irons SINGE hair. Make-up touch everyone's face. Napkins stuff into costume collars.

Percy slicks back his hair. Admires himself in his reflection.

IRA

Alright, people, sixty minutes 'til drop; sixty minutes!

Gretchen slides on Lonnie's wig. Lonnie quickly disrobes.

GRETCHEN

It's perfect! Let's get the captain's approval.

Brooks sits in a chair. A MAKE-UP ARTIST brushes gray paints through his hair and beard.

GRETCHEN

Captain?

Brooks stands. Looks Lonnie up and down.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

(as he uses his curled finger to move Lonnie's head from side to side)

Good. Let's add some freckles and remove the earrings, I think. Oh, and no stockings, just socks.

GRETCHEN

No stockings?

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

No stockings?

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

No stockings.

Gretchen clutches her cross necklace and kisses it. Lonnie hesitantly slips off her stockings.

Brooks grins. Satisfied.

INT. THE WAR HOUSE FOYER - EVENING

The double doors open for Brooks. Transformed into his character for the night.

The company stands in two straight lines. Ready for action.

Brooks locks his watch into place. Checks the time.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

ETA?

IRA REGINALD
They're half a mile out.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY
Right on time. Alright, everyone, places. And oh, break a leg.

END ACT I

ACT II

FADE IN:

INT. THE FOYER - EVENING

The company is tense. Sweat drips from Hamish's temple. Percy gulps down the lump in his throat.

EXT. THE WAR HOUSE DRIVEWAY - EVENING

A driver pulls open the car door. CAPTAIN HARRISON FLANAGAN'S, 42, feet hit the ground, crushing the driveway gravel.

Ira welcomes Captain Flanagan, sporting a faux mustache.

IRA
Welcome, to Wildfordshire Manor, Captain Flanagan. James Blanks, at your service, sir. Allow me to show you inside.

Flanagan looks up at the grand manor. Mystified as dark rain clouds gather in the sky. A storm heads toward the War House.

INT. THE WAR HOUSE FOYER - EVENING

IRA
Captain Flanagan, may I proudly introduce our host, Sir Wilfordshire.

CAPTAIN FLANAGAN
It is a pleasure to meet you, sir. And allow me to extend my personal gratitude for your invitation to your home and generous contribution to the war effort.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

That is kind of you to say, Captain. It is the least I can do after the old polo injury keeps me off the field.

With his walking cane prop, Brooks TAPS his left leg. LOUDLY.

INT. THE WAR HOUSE FOYER/HALLWAY - EVENING

Lonnie straightens her costume. She hears the signal. Takes her position in the corner.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY (O.S.)

Now...allow me to introduce you to some of my colleagues. You've already met Mr. Blanks, then we have Doctor William Fisher.

Flanagan barely grabs Percy's hand like he is royalty. The introductions continue.

Boredom flashes Flanagan's face--until he spots Lonnie peeking out of the corner with a mischievous twinkle in her eye.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

And lastly, we have--

CAPTAIN FLANAGAN

--umm, who is that?

Brooks peers up, "noticing" Lonnie behind the corner.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

Charlotte. Come here, please.

Lonnie stands straight. Clicks into her role. She hangs her head in shame until she stands before Brooks.

Brooks grabs Lonnie by the shoulders. Pushing her back against his stomach. Rough.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

Captain, this is my daughter. You'll have to excuse her behavior; she has certainly forgotten her place.

Flanagan's eyes do not move from Lonnie.

CAPTAIN FLANAGAN

Indeed. How do you do, Miss Charlotte?

Brooks jolts Lonnie's body when she does not answer.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

I believe someone asked you a question, young lady.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

Fine, thank you, sir.

HEAD COOK

Dinner is served.

Flanagan stays in place. Fixated on Lonnie.

CAPTAIN FLANAGAN

I'm pleased to hear, child. Now, be a good girl and show me to my seat, will you?

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

I may attend the dinner party? Can I really, papa?

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

If you are on your best behavior, you may.

Lonnie's eyes flash with joyful opportunity as Flanagan links arms with her. They lead the charge into the dining room.

INSERT - BROOKS'S FINGERS

Brooks taps his cane three times, signaling the crew to move on to the next phase.

INT. THE DINING ROOM - EVENING

The company SLIDE out the chairs for those sitting at the table.

IRA

Captain, may I interest you in something from Wilfordshire's fine liquor collection?

Distracted by Lonnie, Flanagan trips on a chair leg.

IRA

Captain?

CAPTAIN FLANAGAN

...uh brandy. Triple.

IRA

Yes, sir.

Six glasses of ice and brandy HIT the table. Lonnie reaches for a glass; Brooks swipes it from her. Flanagan glues his attention to Lonnie until--

Hamish takes a deep whiff of the fine liquor. Blissfully. Flanagan eyebrow rises at Hamish's behavior.

HAMISH

Uh-ha, you'll have to excuse me, Captain. My grandfather had quite the taste for fine brandy such as this; the smell reminds me of the old boy.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

Aye, your granddaddy was a real gentleman.

The company serves soup into bowls. Brooks places a roll on Lonnie's plate. Flanagan fusses at the serves, batting away their hands.

HAMISH

Ah, yes, indeed he was. He had the most impeccable charm and was quick with his wit, and most importantly, he always had a pretty little thing taking care of his...well...beg your pardon, sir.

Brooks shoots the rest of his brandy. The crew SNICKERS. Lightly. Not too politely.

IRA

Do tell us, Captain, how are our troops holding on the lines?

Flanagan swirls his brandy cup, apparently disinterested and annoyed.

CAPTAIN FLANAGAN

As good as we can expect, considering we are up against the most elite and unified army the world has ever seen.

Flanagan shoots all of his brandy in one go, then begins on the dinner wine. Lonnie's interest shoots up.

The crew try to keep an unbothered front. Collected. In character.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

Then indeed, I will continue to make contributions for the sake of our boys!

HAMISH

Hear, hear! All hail the king!

Flanagan raises his glass to his lips instead of to the king.

Dinner moves along. Slowly. Lonnie swings her feet. SCRAPS the cutlery. BANGS on the china. Brooks follows each antic with a murderous scowl of a real father.

HAMISH (O.S.)

Oh, he is, indeed, a scoundrel, but his passion for this country is unmatched, not to mention his unique strategy that--

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

--Papa, may I please have a glass of wine too?

BROOKS THEIRY

Charlotte! You interrupted our guest; apologize immediately.

Lonnie pauses, almost choking on her unsure tongue. Panic sets in. She's forgotten Hamish's stage name. It's written on her face.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

I'm umm, I'm sorry for interrupting you...sir.

HAMISH

That is quite alright, my dear. Us Thompson's do not come up for air often.

Lonnie, grateful to Hamish, nods her head in thanks.

CAPTAIN FLANAGAN

How 'bout it then, Willfordshire? Let the girl have a drink with us. After all, we are all friends here, right?

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

(to Lonnie)

Darling, I don't think you'll like it. How about a cup of hot chocolate instead? Hmm?

CAPTAIN FLANAGAN

Nonsense, she's a big girl who can think and decide what she likes all by herself. Isn't that right, Lottie?

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

I don't--

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

Papa doesn't think so, I'm afraid, Captain. He thinks I am too young to choose what I like or form an opinion.

Flanagan looks at Brooks and TISKS, shaking his head in disapproval.

CAPTAIN FLANAGAN

I see; well, sometimes papas have a hard time watching their little girls grow up, but that is okay; that is why young ladies like you must have good friends that they can talk to.

Gretchen POURS Lonnie a glass of red wine.

Brooks swipes his wine off the tables. Takes an aggressive stab at his dinner. His distaste fuels Flanagan's power itch.

Flanagan sets his gaze on someone else: Brooks.

HAMISH

Perhaps let us speak of something more age-appropriate. This is a night of celebration to honor our troops!

Brooks pushes a single pea off his plate's side. It's time for phase three!

CAPTAIN FLANAGAN

Ah, I do suppose you're right. After all, we do not want to soil such innocence and goodness just yet, do we?

Captain Flanagan cocks his head. Pouts his lip.

CAPTAIN FLANAGAN

(to Lonnie)

Especially this little one.

Lonnie POPS out of her seat. Throws her napkin to the ground. Innocent rage colors her face.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

Why does everyone keep treating me like a child?

Lonnie stands tall and still. She looks at Brooks. Then to everyone else. A second passes, and she bursts out of the room.

Brooks shoots up from his seat, almost knocking over the glassware.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

Charlotte. Charlotte!

Lonnie SLAMS the door behind her.

Brooks slides back down into his chair, placing his head in his hands.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

Captain Flanagan, I find myself apologizing once more. You've caught us in a trying time. I'm afraid my daughter has taken the...the absence of her mother strongly.

CAPTAIN FLANAGAN

Naturally.

Flanagan fiddles with his cuff links then stands over Brooks.

CAPTAIN FLANAGAN

And what of you?

Brooks looks up from his hands, gazing up at the captain.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

What of me?

CAPTAIN FLANAGAN

Dear boy, you are falling to pieces. When was the last time you had a little bit of fun?

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

You know as well as I do there hasn't been time for such things. Tonight was supposed to be--

CAPTAIN FLANAGAN

--Exactly! Fun; riveting, rousing fun! Give yourself one bloody night where you don't have steady your chin.

Flanagan closes in on Brooks as if he was the devil waiting to deal out the cards.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

I should really check on--

The captain CLASPS Brooks's shoulders. SLAPS his back like they have been friends for years.

CAPTAIN FLANAGAN

--Just for one night! There is nothing in between you and a good time. Not a damn war--an adulteress wife--and certainly not children who will turn out just fine given a little time and space.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

How-how did you know about my wife?

CAPTAIN FLANAGAN

Dear boy, it's written all over your face. I'm surprised these fine chaps haven't said anything sooner--you need to loosen up!

PERCY

We've tried. Trust us.

Brooks stands from his seat. Attempts to get "loose."

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

Maybe, you're right. I have felt a little uptight lately. Perhaps I just need a little...amusement!

Brooks rotates his neck. He releases a GROWL of alleviation and exhilaration.

CAPTAIN FLANAGAN

Exactly! Bring out the liquor. Bring out the dice! Tonight we celebrate!

Brooks and the crew IRRUPT in masculine gladness. They charge the billiards room, leaving behind Flanagan.

Flanagan glares at his reflection in the dining room mirror. He raises his glass to himself. In the reflection, his face contorts with mischief.

INT. THE HALLWAY - NIGHT

Brooks, Percy, and Flanagan stroll into the billiards room in high spirits. Ira and Hamish hang back from the group.

HAMISH

(aggressively whispers)
Gretchen?

IRA

Where is that bloody woman? We can't pull this off without the fake liquor.

Gretchen WHACKS the tapestry from behind where she is hiding.

GRETCHEN

Quit your squawking. I said I'd be here, didn't I?

Gretchen hands Hamish one bottle of the fake liquor. Shoves the other into Ira's stomach.

GRETCHEN

This one's the Brandy, and that's the Gin.

IRA

You don't say.

GRETCHEN

Oh, hush! Now get it there and make it look good; I'll be watching.

INT. BILLIARD ROOM - NIGHT

Ira and Hamish enter the billiards room. The men eagerly await the booze.

HAMISH

We brought the reserves, Captain!

CAPTAIN FLANAGAN

Excellent. Now we can begin!

MONTAGE - BILLIARD ROOM PARTY

--MUSIC PLAYS LOUDLY. Percy SHUFFLES and deals out the cards.

--Ira pours the first round of shots, messily missing the glasses. Flanagan gets the real liquor.

--The men rip off their ties, bowties, and evening jackets, casting them aside with no care.

--Percy masterfully hand rolls cigarettes, licking the paper. No tobacco is lost.

--Ira pours more shots. Flanagan begins to feel the alcohol.

--The men LAUGH as Brooks wins the giant poker pot against Hamish.

--Flanagan plays with his poker chips like an accordion.

--The men continue to bet, drink, and CACKLE uncontrollably.

--Brooks wins a game. Champagne POPS, spilling onto the floor.

--The room gets LOUDER! The men act crazier and beyond besot.

--Slowly, the crew and Brooks throw themselves onto the furniture. They act like they are one sip away from complete blackout.

--Flanagan changes the record for something SOFTER. Almost a LULLABY. The men shut their eyes.

END MONTAGE

Flanagan tiptoes out of the room, stumbling on the way out.

INT. THE HALLWAYS - NIGHT

Flanagan lights a cigarette. Slumps against a wall. His eyes dilate bigger, then smaller. He stumbles onto his hands and knees. GROANS in frustration.

Flanagan stands back up, unbalanced on the still floor. He slunks through the dark hallways. Paranoid of being caught, he peeks around every corner.

Flanagan looks up the twisted staircase, making his head spin. He sways back. Almost falls but catches the rail.

CAPTAIN FLANAGAN

Now, I wonder where you lead?

Flanagan hobbles to the top of the staircase, where doors line the long hallway. Only one door glows with beams of electric light from under it.

INT. THE NURSERY/THE HALLWAY - NIGHT

Lonnie presses her ear up against the door. Switches off the light when she hear Flanagan's FOOTSTEPS.

Darkness surrounds Flanagan in the hallway.

Back in the nursery, Lonnie slips under the covers.

The heavy storm blows trees against the house. Lightning flashes through the oculus, outlining Flanagan's dark silhouette as he creeps through the hallway. He approaches nursery door.

Flanagan waits. Pushes the door open until it CREAKS.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

Papa?

Flanagan freezes. Lonnie slumps her head back onto her pillow, freezing as well. But then--A low RUMBLE of thunder vibrates the War House. Lightning follows. Lonnie YELPS.

INT. THE NURSERY - NIGHT

Flanagan pushes open the door. Enters.

CAPTAIN FLANAGAN

--Charlotte? Are you alright, dear one? I heard your voice from my room.

Flanagan moves closer to Lonnie. He flips on the table lamp.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

Oh, Captain Flanagan...yes, I am all right; we were just a little startled by the storm.

CAPTAIN FLANAGAN

Awe, poor pets. Do not be frightened by a bit of thunder and lightning.

Flanagan plops himself down on the side of Lonnie's bed.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

It is not always thunder and lightning, though, is it, Captain?

CAPTAIN FLANAGAN

No, I suppose you're right, but you live deep in the country; no one will bother you much out here.

Lonnie nods, lowering the covers from her chest. Flanagan gazes, sharply breathing in.

CAPTAIN FLANAGAN

...Is-is that all that's keeping you up?

Flanagan leans in. Tucks a loose strain of hair behind her ear.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

I suppose not. I am sorry for how I acted at dinner; truly, I am. I wanted to make such a good impression. Sometimes I just--

CAPTAIN FLANAGAN

--Just what?

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

It's nothing, sir; I do not wish to burden you with my thoughts.

CAPTAIN FLANAGAN

Well, if you do not care to share with me, then perhaps it is time for little girls to be getting back to bed. What do we think of that, Hmm?

Flanagan pushes Lonnie closer to lying down.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

Wait; tell me more about war?

Lonnie sits back up.

CAPTAIN FLANAGAN

Whatever for? To put you to sleep?

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

No, silly. I just can't get what you said out of my head. Are we really at a disadvantage, Captain?

Flanagan massages his mustache in contemplation.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

I only know one side of the one side, but I know that there is much more complexity to the current state of the world.

CAPTAIN FLANAGAN

You are a very smart girl. You have your dear papa tricked, don't you?

Lonnie grabs one of Flanagan's hand with both of hers, clutching them tightly.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

Oh, please, Captain Flanagan, please tell me more, now that it is just us.

Flanagan takes the opportunity. He strokes the side of Lonnie's face with his free hand.

CAPTAIN FLANAGAN

Alright, pet, but it will be our little secret, yes?

INT. THE WAR HOUSE LOUNGE - NIGHT

Brooks and the Crew change out of their formal costumes into their tactical gear.

PERCY

I don't like just waiting for something to happen.

Percy deftly throws a spare blade into the face of a wooden cherub whittled into the desk Brooks is sitting at. Brooks doesn't flinch.

HAMISH

Aye, the poor little thing could be in over her head for all we know.

Brooks rises from his seat.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

Oh, hush, the lot of you. I don't question your abilities to snap necks or hit the target. I hired her for a reason, she is capable of handling the job. She'll alert us when she has the bastard.

Ira's shoulders square in opposition to Brooks's stance.

IRA

You hired an actress, not a soldier. I do not understand how you are not more concerned, number one, for her well-being and, number two, for our mission that we've spent an entire year planning to get just right.

Brooks scrubs off his stage makeup. Unconcerned.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

And it is just right because she is the key.

IRA

But how can you be sure?

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

Because I hired a woman. A damn good one, too.

Brooks SNAPS a towel on Ira's backside.

Ira YELPS at the sudden attack on his behind.

IRA

That's a rhetorical statement.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

Well, perhaps if you lads spent a little more time around women, you'd realize that given the right circumstances...No matter their innocent and unassuming disposition, they can switch like that...

Brooks SNAPS his fingers together.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

...Into the most tyrannical gangster and master manipulator, ready to drive a tent stake into any wrongdoers skull.

The crew looks at Brooks, staying still in their seats.

PERCY

Mate...you've really gotta stop going to the docks to find a date.

The Crew's CHORTLE.

Gretchen carries a crate full of trick items into the room.

GRETCHEN

While you all wait, can work on wiring these last few items?

PERCY

Give 'em here, Gretch.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

Gretchen, I am not trying to be difficult or a diva, but could we find something a little less itchy for my--

PERCY

--Capt!

Everyone in the room dashes around to look at Percy. There, in Percy's hand, is the actual trick doll.

HAMISH

Oh dear, God.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

Percy, what the hell is that?

Percy's hands shake around the doll.

PERCY

I...I, I must have gotten them mixed up.

Brooks launches his body forward, snatching the trick doll from Percy.

PERCY

Why do we have more than one bloody doll in this house?

IRA

You imbecile! How could you mix them up?

PERCY

WHY DO WE HAVE TWO DOLLS?!

Brooks clears the table with his arm. Pulls out the emergency blueprint of the house.

IRA

(to Percy)

You are in charge of the props!

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

This is how we'll do it; Percy will go through the tunnel entering from the secret East nursery entrance.

HAMISH

That's the South entrance.

BROOKS THEIRY

It's the East!

IRA

Are you mad? He'll see you!

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

Not if we distract him.

IRA

(to Percy)

You're one mess-up away from going back to the trenches!

PERCY

HA! I can't; I am too much of a liability on the field, remember? That's why I am here wearing all this damn makeup on and taking orders from a s--

GRETCHEN

--Soldiers!

Gretchen grips her hands together like a choir singer, gathering her composure.

GRETCHEN
I will handle this.

Gretchen swipes the trick doll from Brooks.

INT. THE WAR HOUSE HALLWAY - NIGHT

Gretchen peaks around the corner. The Crew and Brooks poke out their heads, fanning out of the corner one by one.

IRA
So what's your plan to distract him?

Gretchen HUSHES him as she repeatedly beats him.

GRETCHEN
I am not going to distract him.

PERCY
What?

IRA
What?

Brooks SHUSHES the men.

GRETCHEN
I am simply going to go in there.

IRA
--Capt, you gotta do something--Order her to stop!

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY
No, this might just work.

Brooks gives Gretchen the all-clear. Gretchen begins.

A loud CRACK of thunder rumbles the house, making Gretchen turn back toward the Crew. Brooks nods for Gretchen to keep going.

Gretchen breathes in a deep huff of courage. She STOMPS toward the nursery door.

INT. THE NURSERY - NIGHT

Flanagan and Lonnie sit together on the bed. Flanagan wraps his arm around Lonnie's shoulders.

CAPTAIN FLANAGAN

You see, and that is why some of our friends have such strong opinions about certain people because they are--

Lonnie sits up, hearing the LOUD FOOTSTEPS.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

--Someone's coming.

Gretchen POUNDS on the door from the other side.

GRETCHEN (O.S.)

Charlotte? Why are you still awake?

Lonnie bolts up from the bed in a panic.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

It-it is our housekeeper.

CAPTAIN FLANAGAN

Tell her to go away.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

You don't understand; she won't listen! Quickly, hide behind the curtains, or she'll see you.

CAPTAIN FLANAGAN

Don't be ridiculous.

Lonnie places her hand on Flanagan's thigh, gently squeezing it until his body softens.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

Please, Captain Flanagan, I have so many more questions.

GRETCHEN (O.S.)

Charlotte!

Flanagan grunts, hurrying behind the floor-length curtains.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

Go away, Estelle.

Gretchen barges in through the nursery door. Hands on hips.

GRETCHEN

I'm sorry, I thought I heard a little girl giving me sass?

Lonnie looks to Gretchen for answers. Gretchen pats the other trick doll, silently answering her question

LONNIE CARMICHAEL
... 'm-I'm sorry.

GRETCHEN
Darling, I know you have a hard day, but that doesn't give you permission to stay up until all hours of the night. Let alone disrespect me and leave your room in an absolute state!

Gretchen grabs the trick doll from the bed.

GRETCHEN
Ugh! It is an absolute pigsty in here. You better rest up; you can pick up this mess tomorrow. Remember, your father pays me as the housekeeper, not the binman. And as your housekeeper, it is my duty to keep the house in order, and I intend to keep everything and everyone in this house in order.

Lonnie curls her lips in, trying not to laugh.

Gretchen places the blonde dolly on the bed. Pats it for emphasis. Gretchen puts the brown-haired dolly in the toy chest.

GRETCHEN
Now, to sleep, Miss Charlotte. Goodnight.

Gretchen nods promptly with a HMPH, before leaving the nursery.

Lonnie fluffs her hair. Wipes away the makeup under her eyes.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL
You can come out now. I don't hear her anymore.

Flanagan reveals himself from behind the curtain.

CAPTAIN FLANAGAN
I have to say, I am disappointed in you.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL
Not you too?

Lonnie leans back on the bedpost, folding her arms with a pout.

Flanagan moves closer to the bed, dauntingly standing over Lonnie.

CAPTAIN FLANAGAN

Spunk and grit aren't easily fleeting attributes.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

Meaning?

Flanagan leans in. Their noses almost kiss.

CAPTAIN FLANAGAN

Meaning, you have none, little one.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

Then teach me how to get some.

CAPTAIN FLANAGAN

Some things cannot be taught; they are established.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

Then put some pressure on my soul and establish it.

Flanagan raises his eyebrow, snatching the trick doll from the bed. Clasps its neck. Squeezes it tight.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

Wait, no!

Lonnie reaches for her only lifeline. Flanagan pulls the doll away. Teases Lonnie's protest, TSKING in response.

CAPTAIN FLANAGAN

That's what I thought.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

It's...it's just...

CAPTAIN FLANAGAN

(manically)

Yes? What is it?

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

It was my mother's doll...when she was a little girl.

CAPTAIN FLANAGAN

Oh, you mean, the mother that left you here alone to go be someone else's mummy?

Lonnie grabs the trick doll from Flanagan's grasp. She hops on the window seal seat, yanking open the window. The wind ROARS in her face, and the rain splatters into the room.

With faith, Lonnie beheads the doll. Chucks the body out of the window. The doll's dress catches the wind, parachuting her face down into the mud. She looks down at the head of the doll. Surprised.

Lonnie turns to face Flanagan. Chin steady. Brow fixed.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

Let's begin, shall we? Tell me about the master race.

Captain Flanagan smirks. Lonnie hops down from the window.

Lonnie doesn't skip a beat. Her hands reach for Flanagan's top uniform button. Unbuttons it.

Flanagan HUFFS out. He kissed Lonnie's neck passionately.

Lonnie looks at the vanity. Stares straight at her reflection.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

You won't tell papa that I
am a-a...

CAPTAIN FLANAGAN

A traitor?

Lust bubbles up in Flanagan's chest. Lonnie looks at Flanagan with doe eyes. Bits her lip seductively.

CAPTAIN FLANAGAN

As long as you don't tell him I am one too.

Flanagan roughly presses his lips into Lonnie's. Pushes himself on top of her. Lonnie blinks quickly, keeping the tears at bay.

INT. THE WAR ROOM - NIGHT

Percy sprawls out on the furniture. Brooks stands, stretching out of his back.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

Time?

Hamish rubs his eyes. Lift his watch.

HAMISH

Just passed 0200 hours, sir.

Ira pours hot espresso out of an Italian Moka pot.

IRA

It feels like we've been up for days.

HAMISH

Oh dear, boy's 'es gone soft on us. On the field--

IRA

This isn't the field!

Ira sticks his picky out from his espresso cup, SLURPING obnoxiously.

Ira hands Brooks his espresso. A bubble releases from the coffee.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

...Call the general.

HAMISH

Beg your pardon, sir?

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

General Galla--

HAMISH

--I know to whom you are referring, Capt, but why on earth would we call him? We don't even have his confession yet.

Brooks faces Ira, grinning madly.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

Yes, we do. She got it.

PERCY

How can you tell?

CAPTAIN FLANAGAN

I can feel it...inside of me. We are so close.

HAMISH

Yes, Capt, close, but not quite there yet. Just have a little bit more--

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

--Patience?

Brooks looks at the Crew. Disappointed yet defiant.

IRA

I concur, Capt. Just because we bought ourselves a box of crackerjacks doesn't mean we've reached the prize...at least not yet, sir, but do not lose hope.

PERCY

And remember, she'll use the doll to notify us when she's gotten his confession.

Brooks walks over to the phone. He picks it up and dials the number.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

What the hell is a crackerjack?

Hamish shakes his head with disapproval.

PHONE OPERATOR (O.S.)

Western Union, go ahead, please.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

Yes, connect me to General Thomas Gallastine, please.

PHONE OPERATOR (O.S.)

One moment, please.

As the OPERATOR connects the phone, the chandelier in the war room shakes ever so slightly.

The Crew looks up in amazement at the JINGLING chandelier crystals. Brooks smirks at his Crew.

INT. GENERAL GALLASTINE'S QUARTERS/THE WAR ROOM - NIGHT

The phone RINGS. GALLASTINE rolls over. GRUMBLING before speaking into it.

PHONE OPERATOR (O.S.)

Go ahead, please.

INTERCUT - PHONE CONVERSATION

GENERAL GALLASTINE

Theiry?

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY (O.S.)

Yes, sir.

GENERAL GALLASTINE

...Status report, Captain.

Brooks squares his shoulders and lifts his chin proudly.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY (O.S.)

We got 'em, sir.

GENERAL GALLASTINE

...Damn.

General Gallastine rubs his chin, letting out a single HUFF of disbelief.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

It's the girl, sir. I knew she could do it. She was already a star... but now she's our...

GENERAL GALLASTIEN (O.S.)

...Savior? Don't you go falling for that pretty thing, Theiry. You're pushing forty, right?

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

Something like that, sir.

GENERAL GALLASTIEN (O.S.)

Ha! You dirty dog.

Brooks draws the phone closer to his mouth and ear.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

Can I say it now?

General Gallastien closes his eyes.

GENERAL GALLASTIEN

You can tell me in person.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY (O.S.)

You're coming? To the War House?

GENERAL GALLASTINE

It's our first victory in a while. I want to be there. Plus, I want to meet this little star of yours. I'll see you soon, Captain.

INTERCUT-PHONE CONVERSATION ENDS

INT. GENERAL GALLASTIEN'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

General Gallastien hangs up his phone. Snatches an almost empty bottle of liquor. Flicks it open.

GENERAL GALLASTIEN
Cheers... to Heaven being on our side.

Gallastein shoots the liquor, smashing the bottle as he swallows.

GENERAL GALLASTIEN
And to hell with the Nazis!

Gallastein swings open his quarter's door. Stomps through the threshold and into the shared barracks.

INT. BARRACKS - NIGHT

GENERAL GALLASTIEN
Alright, you lazy fat cows, get a move on. We ride in half an hour's time.

Soldiers jump out of their bunks. Uniforms fling on. Weapons clasp into place.

Cadet Geraldine pulls up his uniform trouser halfway.

CADET GERALDINE
Where are we off to, general?

General Gallastien turns to face the soldier, smiling devilishly.

GENERAL GALLASTIEN
To fetch.

SMALL TROOP
(uproar)
To fetch!

GENERAL GALLASTIEN
To hang.

SMALL TROOP
To hang!

GENERAL GALLASTIEN
The pig that gave his life in vain.

The small troop of soldiers cheer, roar, and rattle objects against their metal bunk beds.

GENERAL GALLASTIEN
(to himself)
Such a shame.

INT. THE NURSERY - NIGHT

Flanagan undoes his belt. Lonnie squirms under him, trying to get free.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL
It's almost time to go, Captain.

CAPTAIN FLANAGAN
What? Hush.

Flanagan readies himself to make his final move. He reaches his hand under Lonnie's nightgown. Lonnie rolls out from under him.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL
We have to go before papa wakes up!

Flanagan grabs Lonnie's waist. Hauls her back onto the bed.

CAPTAIN FLANAGAN
We don't need to worry about him for a long while. Lie still.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL
No, you don't understand. I want to leave with you. To Germany...

Flanagan halts his movements. Still sloppily drunk.

CAPTAIN FLANAGAN
Germany? What are you talking about?

Lonnie jumps up, dashing to the other side of the room.

CAPTAIN FLANAGAN
Ah-ha, I see what is happening. Darling, there's no need to be scared. You and I are just going to get cozy and go to sleep now, okay? Nothing else, now grab your dolly and come lie down.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL
Will you keep telling me about all the nice things in Germany?

Flanagan extends his hand out for Lonnie to grab.

CAPTAIN FLANAGAN

Yes, baby. Now come.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

Yes, sir, but do mind if I put on a little music? It always makes me feel a little braver to do what I truly want to do.

Flanagan, back in the game, leans back on the bed. Sprawled. Ready.

CAPTAIN FLANAGAN

Play something sweet for me, my darling girl.

Lonnie gathers her nightdress, showing her elegant figure. Her hips sway as she walks over to the record player.

Flanagan's body shudders with frustration. He cannot look away from Lonnie's mischievous allure.

Lonnie drops a record. It begins to play SOFT MUSIC but hidden inside the record player sits a magneto-phone, recording every sound and word.

Lonnie settles into a straddle on Flanagan's lap.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

Tell me about the perfume again.

CAPTAIN FLANAGAN

The finest you've ever smelled. The stuff of a true king.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

And the paintings?

CAPTAIN FLANAGAN

Like you can feel the warm summer breeze on your skin. But darling girl, why do you think things are still in Germany?

Flanagan takes Lonnie's hair in his hand.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

Where else would they be?

CAPTAIN FLANAGAN

Why, they are in my home, of course.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

But how did you get such things?

CAPTAIN FLANAGAN

They were gifts.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

Those sound nicer than birthday gifts.

CAPTAIN FLANAGAN

Mmm, they were indeed. You see, when you believe in a cause and you pledge your devotion to such things, you will be rewarded. And as long as you are willing to do what must be done you will become great.

Flanagan relishes in his own glory. Lonnie's energy doesn't match Flanagans.

CAPTAIN FLANAGAN

You're unimpressed?

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

No, I just wanted a story.

Lonnie lowers her nightdress off her shoulder. Flanagan's finger traces her bare skin. Their bodies become even closer.

CAPTAIN FLANAGAN

Is that how nice little girls ask for things?

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

Please.

CAPTAIN FLANAGAN

Hmm, you want to know how I got all of these things? I sold--

Flanagan's words become MUTED and HUMMED.

Lonnie's knuckles turn white from grasping sheets so tightly. The room swirls. She lets go of the sheets and reaches for the doll, squeezing it with all her might.

INT. THE WAR HOUSE WAR ROOM - NIGHT

The room glows with the red alert.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

Read the code!

Ira runs to the switcher electrical board.

IRA
TD-01-BL?

PERCY
Trick doll, number one, blonde! Wait?

Ira slams his paperwork and clipboard onto the table.

IRA
You idiot! She had the correct doll the whole time!

Percy admires the red light glowing in victory.

PERCY
It works!

IRA
Final positions, everyone.

Hamish shoves a long-coiled whip into Percy's chest. Percy regains his swagger as he slicks his hair back in place. He pinches the whip between his fingers. CRACKS the whip against the floor.

PERCY
Let me have 'em first.

Percy leads the men into the secret tunnel in the walls.

INT. THE NURSERY - NIGHT

CAPTAIN FLANAGAN
Impressed, little one?

LONNIE CARMICHAEL
Indeed, Captain.

CAPTAIN FLANAGAN
Good. Now that I've trusted you with something, I think you should trust me with something...finally.

Flanagan hooks Lonnie's nightgown with his finger. Pushes it down even further.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL
...but you shouldn't have trusted me, Captain.

The lights in the nursery flicker. Lonnie smirks. Raises her chin, switching out of her character.

CAPTAIN FLANAGAN

No more games, little Charlotte; I want to make you mine.

Lonnie leaves Flanagan's lap. Stands. Slips into her dressing gown.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

Hmm, I'm sure you do. But no amount of trickery or secret selling can buy me. You think you're so smart, trying to deceive the world, but not quite clever enough to wonder if the exact same thing was happening to you.

CAPTAIN FLANAGAN

Oh, is that so, little pet?

Lonnie walks over to the side table with the record player.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

Mhmm!

Lonnie yanks the side table door open, revealing the rolling machine inside.

CAPTAIN FLANAGAN

Oh ho! A recorder; clever indeed, darling girl.

Flanagan stands to face Lonnie. He LAUGHS through his nose.

CAPTAIN FLANAGAN

But baby, did you honestly think you'd get away with your little plan?

Flanagan pokes Lonnie's stomach with a handgun.

CAPTAIN FLANAGAN

Rule number one to trickery, never reveal all of your cards.

Lonnie looks up at the madman in front of her. He is the only one with fear in his eyes.

CAPTAIN FLANAGAN

Did you honestly think anyone would believe you over me? An honorary captain over a snobbish, spoiled little brat who does nothing but give her father problems over peace. And whose own mother doesn't want to tend to her. I watched you tonight. You walk without a care, and you know nothing

of the world. You do not stand a chance against me, little girl.

Flanagan brushes Lonnie's face with his hand. Moves the gun to under her chin.

CAPTAIN FLANAGAN

So innocent, so pure, so stupid. I'll tell you what we are going to do now, alright, pet? We are going to forget this ever happened; you give me the recording, I let you live and for the rest of your days, you will listen to every word I say and do everything I tell you to do. And if you ever disobey me, then you will surely find out how powerful I am. I can have every part of your existence singed into ash, and the memory of you will float away with the wind. Do we have any understanding?

Lonnie nods as much as she can. Her eyes burn hotter than the furnace Flanagan refers to.

CAPTAIN FLANAGAN

Now, get on that bed.

Flanagan shoves Lonnie toward the bed. Lonnie doesn't take another step toward the bed. Flanagan turns to face her.

CAPTAIN FLANAGAN

Did I need to repeat myself?

Flanagan unlocks the safety of his gun. Turns to face her, but when he does, he sees more than just Lonnie.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

Nope, we got it. That's a wrap, everyone!

There in the doorway of the secret tunnel are the crew and Brooks.

Ira wear headphones and holds a boom mic. Hamish twirls the handcuff on his finger, WHISTLING a happy tune. Percy bunches and undoes his whip.

Disbelief hits Flanagan like a train. He stumbles back, tripping on toys and his own words.

CAPTAIN FLANAGAN

Sir Wilfordshire, I-I, can explain, it-it was your daughter, she's-she's, a-a--

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

--Not my daughter and Theiry's the name, Captain Brooks Theiry of the King's royal guard, good sir. And may I introduce you to the star of this evening's performance? This is Lonnie Carmichael, Hollywood Star and...volunteer nurse, no photographs if you please. You're under arrest, sir, and I hear by dishonorably discharge you. Hamish?

Hamish takes an intimidating step forward. The handcuffs CLICK open.

Flanagan raises his gun. His hand wobbles to and fro.

CAPTAIN FLANAGAN

Stand back, your overgrown ogre; I'm warning you!

Percy launches in front of Hamish. His whip CRACKS the gun out of Flanagan's hand.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

(to herself)

Wow!

CAPTAIN FLANAGAN

AH! Don't you come near me! I am protected in 40 countries, and my father is a very, very pow--

Hamish digs his elbow into Flanagan's nose. Flanagan drops to his knees.

PERCY

--Ugh, you're skipping lines, Flanagan! I'm supposed to say "Now we can do this the easy way or the hard way," first and then you can go into your ridiculous rant. We know your pops too! Fun fact, he gave us some extra dough to bring you here to avoid a family scandal.

Percy ties off Flanagan's hands with the whip. Hamish grabs the back his thick, sweaty neck.

CAPTAIN FLANAGAN

But he couldn't...

Out of the corner of Flanagan's eye, he spots Lonnie. Now, anger shakes his whole body.

CAPTAIN FLANAGAN

You. You slut!

Flanagan tries to free himself from Hamish's iron grasp. He can't get free, so it spits in Lonnie's direction.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

Get 'em out of here.

HAMISH (O.S.)

You have the right to remain silent, what every you say--

Percy and Hamish lead Flanagan into the dark secret tunnel. A camera FLASH illuminates the tunnel.

CAPTAIN FLANAGAN

AHHH! You worthless, putrid, ungodly SLUT! You'll pay for this! You'll see!

Gretchen comes from behind, placing a blanket over Lonnie's shoulders.

Brooks looks over to an exhausted Lonnie. He grips her shoulders.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

Well done, Miss Carmichael. We'll handle everything from here, alright? Get some rest, and we'll debrief in the morning.

Brooks, lets go of Lonnie. Heads toward the tunnel.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

Good!

Lonnie's face becomes more and more speckled with mischief.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

We need to work on your screenwriting skills.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

Is that so?

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

Yes, I could only pull off half of those lines because I'm...well, like you said--

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

--A star--

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

--A professional.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

I look forward to your critiques, Miss Carmichael.

The weariness of the night lifts Lonnie's eyelashes in a subtle flirt.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

I look forward to our meeting, Captain. Good night.

Brooks shuts the secret tunnel, but not before looking back at Lonnie.

Gretchen watches over Lonnie's shoulder. When Lonnie turns, she cannot escape the peak of Gretchen's eyebrow nor her piqued interest.

GRETCHEN

What in the world was that?

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

Nothing.

GRETCHEN

If you say so. Now, how does a bath sound?

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

Wonderful. I need to cleanse all the way to my soul.

GRETCHEN

I'll run it right away.

Gretchen leaves the nursery.

Lonnie's eyes lock on herself through her reflection. She tucks a piece of hair behind her ear--then--snaps out of it. She slumps onto the bed. Her lip wobbles uncontrollably. She sucks in her sob. Then drops to her knees, kneeling by the bed.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

I'm sorry. Oh, Father, help me get through this.

EXT. THE WAR HOUSE DRIVEWAY - DAY

Gallastine looks over the scribe's notes.

GENERAL GALLASTINE

Uh, does he have no shame?

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

He has no brains, that is for sure. He crawled into every trap we laid for him; Lonnie didn't...

Brooks halts his words. Gallastine glances up from his reading.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY
...Miss Carmichael, didn't even veer that much off the script.

GENERAL GALLASTINE
They won't all be like that, Captain.

Hamish shoves a handcuffed Flanagan into a car.

GENERAL GALLASTINE
Now, where is this Miss Carmichael? I'd like to meet her. Plus, I need her to sign a few things.

The general and Theiry climb the steps of the War House.

INT. THE WAR HOUSE FOYER - MORNING

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY
She's probably at breakfast with the others. I could have had those papers ready for you, sir.

GENERAL GALLASTINE
No, you couldn't have. You're not her superior; I am.

Brooks halts.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY
What? Why? All the other men are contracted under me.

Gallastine holds back a smile.

GENERAL GALLASTINE
They are, indeed. But she is not one of your men, is she, Brooksy?

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY
Wait, you're not trying to play wingman, are you, at your age?

GENERAL GALLASTINE
Not at all.

Gallastine scurries away. Brooks chases the general into the dining room.

INT. THE DINING ROOM - MORNING

GENERAL GALLASTINE

Ahh, Miss Carmichael. How do you do, my dear? I'm General Gallastine.

Flanagan takes Lonnie's hand. Presses a small, tender kiss on top.

Lonnie lunges into a deep curtsy. Stands up with admiration.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

I am quite well, General; thank you.

GENERAL GALLASTINE

You've done a brave thing, my dear; we all think so. In fact, I know so, and one of my translators seems to also agree with me.

Gallastine pulls out a thick letter from his uniform jacket. It is addressed to Lonnie. He places it into Lonnie's hands.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

(whispers)

Papa.

She climbs up on her tiptoes. Kisses the general's cheek.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

Thank you, sir. For everything.

GENERAL GALLASTINE

Don't go on thanking me; go and read that thing.

A breath exits Lonnie's body, in between a laugh and a sob of excitement. She dashes off.

Gallastine raises his eyebrow at Brooks with an MHMMM. Shoves the paperwork in his hand into Brooks's chest.

GENERAL GALLASTINE

Walk me out, Theiry.

INT. LONNIE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Lonnie sits on her bed, happy as a child at her letters. She MUMBLES reading some of the letters OUT-LOUD to herself. Earl enjoys the cuddles.

CLARENCE CARMICHAEL (V.O.)

Things are always bustling around here, which makes the days go fast, but the promise of seeing you and your sister again makes the days fly by.

ELIZABETH CARMICHAEL (V.O.)

And there was poor Mrs. Griddle, face as red as her mistakenly dyed knickers.

Lonnie LAUGHS out loud. She turns to the next page.

CLARENCE CARMICHAEL (V.O.)

I miss you so, my darling--

ELIZABETH CARMICHAEL (V.O.)

--but I know that God will see us through these trials. Give Earl a kiss for me. Love you lots, your sister--

CLARENCE CARMICHAEL (V.O.)

...Papa.

Lonnie brings the letters up to her lips for a kiss. But then, another one falls onto her lap.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

(to Earl)

Who's this one from, hmmm?

Perplexed, Lonnie flips to the last page of the mysterious letter. There, in the bottom corner, READS: Love Mummy...and Davie.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

Mother.

Lonnie's breath begins to shake. Her chest rises and falls at a rapid pace. But then--KNOCK KNOCK--comes from the door.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

...Come-come in.

Brooks enters with his eyes on the paperwork Gallastine left for Lonnie to sign.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

Would you mind signing these? General--

Brooks finally looks up at Lonnie. His brow reaches his nose in concern.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

--What is the matter?

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

Oh, gosh, nothing. I was just reading some letters.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

Nothing bad, I hope?

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

No, no, nothing like that, I just wasn't expecting; never-mind, sir. I would be more than happy to look over and sign these papers.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

Wasn't expecting what, Miss Carmichael?

Brooks leans in to catch Lonnie's eyes, that she casts to the floor. She glances up. See's him searching for her. He sits on the bed.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

It's nothing, really; I just wasn't expecting a letter from my mother is all.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

Oh, I didn't mean pry. I'm sorry, I assumed your mother was...no longer with us.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

Oh no, she is very much alive and very much still her usual self, it seems; no illness to report. Just desperate for more money. We just haven't spoken much, since-since the war began. She was angry when I went to be with my father and sister. She wanted me to stay and work. I sometimes think I should have listened to her.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

Why? You followed your heart to be with your family.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

Yes, yes, I did. And then my father was summoned to London, and my sister was sent to the countryside...and I've been alone ever since.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

But...not anymore. We aren't a family here, that's too cliché for any of us to handle, but we do look after one

another for the time being until we can be back with our families.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

Families don't blackmail each other either into taking jobs, Captain.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

You needed an extra push, and I had my level of negotiation. That's not blackmail.

Lonnie gets up from the bed. Places the letters on the tea table.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

Yes, it is. But I shan't hold it against you; for all you knew, I was playing the role of depressed and desperate dame extremely well.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

I don't think you're that good of an actress, Miss volunteer nurse.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

Well, Captain, you have to find out for yourself. Who will I play next? Another cheeky teenager?

Brooks rises from his seat. Grins.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

Not quite.

INT. THE DRESSING ROOM - AFTERNOON

In front of the mirror, Lonnie glares at herself in her new costume. A run-down but attractive maid's costume.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

You've got to be joking.

Lonnie reads over her script.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

What? You look great! And get use to this character; we will use her a lot. Picture this! You're the only daughter of a poor farmer; your mother's dead, and you have seven younger brothers at home that need supporting. You want a different life, a luxurious life, one that you would do anything to get.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

I look like Sarah Crewe.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

Don't kid yourself, Miss Carmichael; you never stood a chance against Miss Temple for that role. Besides, you'll look much more like Becky when Gretchen is done with you. Now I need you to breath and think like a poor scully maid, ready to take any opportunity that jumps out at her.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

Tell me about him again?

INT. THE DINING ROOM/THE KITCHEN/HALLWAYS - NIGHT

The staff and crew prepares for the next war man. The staff polishes silverware. Gretchen steams costumes. The staff makes the beds around the house.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY (V.O.)

Lieutenant-Colonel Michael Anders. Level of danger, a four, but he receives a challenge level of an eight because he does not consume alcohol or any other substances, which I think we can all agree was a factor in our success with Flanagan. Anders is our main suspect for who we believe was responsible for releasing the coordinates of our medical brigade to the Germans last year. 340 soldiers and civilians dead.

INT. THE DINING ROOM - NIGHT

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

He will arrive tomorrow at 16:00 hours, and his mission from headquarters is to gain us all as benefactors, so expect him to be kiss-up and complimentary, but don't let him fool you. Take 'em out.

Brooks stands from the table. Everyone at the table rises. Brooks leaves the room. The company finishes eating dinner. Lonnie follows Brooks again.

INT. BROOKS'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Brooks leans up against his desk. CLICKS open his lighter. The flame ignites. Disappears. Lonnie is now in the place where the flame was.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

Yes, Miss Carmichael. What would you like to discuss this time?

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

Actually, I would like your permission to do something a little different.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

What did you have in mind?

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

Expedite the process and make it excellent.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

That's vague. But...

Lonnie walks closer to Brooks.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

But?

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

But I do trust you...Miss Carmichael.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

Lonnie. You may call me by that name now.

Lonnie begins to walk out of the room.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

Is there something you would prefer?

Lonnie looks over her shoulder. Quick. Holds in her smirk.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

Not yet...Captain.

Lonnie exits the room.

Brooks smiles around a cigar. Lights it. Puffs out the smoke. He looks down at his script. Writes some notes.

INT. THE WAR HOUSE FOYER - AFTERNOON

Ira holds his clipboard. Checks his watch. Breaths in a short breath.

IRA

Alright, everyone! Get out! First position places; we need this room clear.

Ira circles himself, flaring his arms to get everyone out.

IRA

And where is the captain?

HAMISH

Two minutes out.

IRA

Oh, my soul. You're going to have to stall him, the captain nowhere to be found.

Brooks enters the foyer.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

Found him.

Lonnie tries to run out, but Brooks catches her hand.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

Good luck tonight.

Lonnie tries to contain the thrill of hope on her face.

IRA

To your position, Miss Carmichael!

Ira closes in on Brooks.

IRA

What the hell were you doing?

HAMISH

(to Ira)

Anders is on site.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

Calm down; I was expediting the process.

IRA

I swear--

Gretchen enters the foyer in her glamorous costume.

Ira tries to protest once more, then dashes when a knock at the door comes.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

(to Gretchen)

My my, mother Wilfordshire, you look divine.

Brooks kisses Gretchen cheek.

GRETCHEN

Oh, hush.

Hamish swings one side of the door open. Bows slightly.

HAMISH

Lieutenant-Colonel Anders, welcome to Wilfordshire Manor.

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL MICHAEL ANDERS, 40, enters the war house in his daytime uniform.

HAMISH

May I introduce you to our host this evening, Sir Isaac Wilfordshire?

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL ANDERS

How do you do, sir?

Anders places his hand on his heart. Bows his head.

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL ANDERS

What a lovely home you have here, sir.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

That is truly kind of you to say, but I have heard tales of your estate, sir. There is nothing grander, I am sure. Lieutenant-Colonel, you remember my mother?

Anders's eyes flash with panic.

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL ANDERS

...yes, of course. How could I forget such a regal-looking woman? How are you, Mrs. Wilfordshire?

GRETCHEN

Surely, I am blushing at words, Lieutenant-Colonel.

Anders gulps hard.

GRETCHEN

I am sure you want to freshen up and change for the party.
Andrew, take the lieutenant-colonels bags upstairs.

Hamish grabs Anders's bags.

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL ANDERS
What wonderful service you have ma'am.

GRETCHEN
I will send the maid up promptly.

Anders kisses Gretchen's hands.

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL ANDERS
Thank you again for your generosity.

Hamish and Anders exit the foyer.

GRETCHEN
Eh, like you said, kiss-ass.

INT. THE GUEST ROOM - EVENING

Hamish sets Anders's things down in the room as Anders inspects the room's cleanliness.

HAMISH
Anything else I can do for you, sir?

Anders doesn't turn around. Flips his hand to dismiss Hamish.

The door SHUTS close. Anders unbuttons his uniform jacket, leaving him in his undershirt and suspenders.

A SMALL KNOCK at the door comes. Anders licks his hand, slicking his hair back with his hand. Sits in an armchair, sprawling himself on the furniture.

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL ANDERS
Enter.

Lonnie pushes the door open.

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL ANDERS
Hello there.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL
Hello, sir.

Lonnie curtsies to the floor in front of Anders. Bows her head in respect.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

May I make up a fire for you, sir? Or shine your shoes? I do a fair job, sir.

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL ANDERS

Go on, then.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

Thank you, sir.

Lonnie gets to work on the fire.

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL ANDERS

You are very well-spoken for a maid, I must say.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

That is kind of you to say, sir. I owe everything to Mrs. Wilfordshire. She made me all that I am.

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL ANDERS

Good God, I dare say, if you washed your face and hands once in a while, you could have any gentleman you wished. What is your name, girl?

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

Freya, sir.

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL ANDERS

Ah, the goddess of beauty and love, I believe, yes?

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

Yes, sir... as well as death and war.

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL ANDERS

(breathless)

Is that so?

Lonnie stops her work to look at Anders. Hope loosens her hands. The ashes from the fireplace fall into her lap.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

Oh-oh dear, I beg your pardon, Lieutenant-Colonel. I'm such a disaster; Mrs. Wilforshire will surely tan my hide.

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL ANDERS

Oh dear, girl; that is a shame. Come, we haven't a moment to lose! I have a bath in my washroom.

Anders lifts Lonnie up to her feet. Guides her to the washroom.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

I must protest, sir; it would be most improper.

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL ANDERS

If you are such a lady, you know that refusing my and Mrs. Wilfordshire's generosity would be even more improper.

INT. THE GUEST BATHROOM - EVENING

Anders pushes Lonnie through the washroom door. Lonnie turns to face him.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

I-I don't understand, sir. Why are you helping me?

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL ANDERS

You will understand soon enough and thank me. Now, go and get cleaned, and I'll order us tea.

Anders shuts the door in front of Lonnie's face. Lonnie rolls her eyes.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

Too easy.

Lonnie starts the bath. Steam fills the room. Lonnie scrubs her hands and face. She flips her hair into the hot water.

Finished, Lonnie flips her damp hair into a towel. Wraps it up.

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL ANDERS (O.S.)

Freya, tea is ready. And don't you dare put on the dirty uniform back on; I have something else for you to put on.

INT. THE GUEST ROOM - NIGHT

Lonnie walks into the guest bedroom in nothing but a bath towel around her body.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

What would you like me to put on, sir?

Anders becomes a deer in headlines.

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL ANDERS

Umm, nevermind. Go-and-go umm and make us our tea, and then come over so I may inspect you.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

Yes, sir.

Lonnie sways over to where the tea is set.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

Milk and sugar, sir.

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL ANDERS

Yes.

Lonnie's eye's flash with mischief. She drops two sugar cubes into Anders tea, along with milk and a mysterious sugar like powder that she pulls out from under her towel. She stirs the tea. Turns to face Anders. Before she walks over to him, she FLIPS on the infamous "record player."

Lonnie hands Anders his tea. He takes a long drink.

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL ANDERS

Let me see your fingernails.

Lonnie hold out her hands. Anders grabs her hand. Pulls her closer.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

Lieutenant-Colonel Anders, tell me about your position.

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL ANDERS

Hmmm, as you can see, I am very important and quite good at what I do.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

Which is?

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL ANDERS

Mainly negations; you know, getting the upper-hand on all things.

Lonnie wraps a free finger around Anders suspenders. Tugs at it.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

Tell me more, sir?

INT. THE DINING ROOM - NIGHT

The staff set the table. The Crew are dressed in their tuxedo's.

IRA

Thirty minutes 'til dinner, everyone.

Brooks walks through the dining room, with his collar undone.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

Gretch, can you help a poor fellow out.

The Crew gathers around Brooks and Gretchen.

IRA

Care to enlighten us on this new plan of yours?

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

It's not a plan; Lonnie is simply tightening up the performance.

IRA

What Miss Carmichael fails to see is that the process is tight. What she is doing is rushing the process; cutting any corners will not result in a confession. Get those flowers on the table.

The signal light flashes red in the dining room.

IRA

What is that? Percy?

PERCY

It's the all clear signal.

IRA

That isn't possible.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

To your positions!

The Crew races to the guest room.

IRA

Theiry!

Brooks turns back to an aggravated Ira.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

We will enter with caution. Now come on, it'll be nice to have the night off.

Brooks puts his arm around Ira's shoulders, but Ira halts. Faces Brooks.

IRA

Do not let your enjoyment of this operation or the people on it distract you from what we are up against. Even if we arrest every one of our suspects, there will still be a war outside waiting for us.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

One in which we will reign victorious.

IRA

One in which we have to clean up after. And deal with the repercussions. Do you honestly think your little movie star will be able to fix everything?

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

Where is this coming from?

IRA

It is coming from the realization that hairspray and pins will not hold together the heart of those whose loved ones were slaughtered in the camps or clear the minds of our soldiers and all they've seen? Wake up!

Ira stomps away from Brooks, leaving him in a dark-door way. Brooks breathes in. Sharp. Looks around the War House.

INT. THE WAR HOUSE HALLWAY - NIGHT

The Crew and Gretchen stand at the edge of the hallway by the guest room. Brooks appears from behind them.

HAMISH

I can still hear voices.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

Gretchen, you will make a hospitality call to make sure everything is in order. You'll give us the all-clear when you are sure.

GRETCHEN

Aye, Captain.

Gretchen walks over to the door, knocking with haste.

GRETCHEN

Lieutenant-Colonel? I was just seeing how you were getting along.

The door swings open. Lonnie greets Gretchen with a grin.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

Come on in, Gretch.

Gretchen's eyes swell with disbelief. She motions for the Crew to fall in after her.

INT. THE GUEST ROOM - NIGHT

Anders sits in a chair. Hands and body tied with rope. Tears stream down his face as he bumbles uncontrollably.

HAMISH

Dear God, what's the matter with him?

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

Too much guilt and filth inside. He couldn't take it any longer.

Lonnie fixes herself a cup of tea.

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL ANDERS

WOE IS ME! LET THE DEVIL COME UPON--

IRA

(to Lonnie)

--You got his confession?

Lonnie brings the teacup to her lips.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

Mhmm.

INT. THE WAR HOUSE HALLWAY

Lonnie slips out of the guest room. Brooks is just outside the door. She looks at him. He looks away, entering the room without a second glance at Lonnie.

Lonnie tightens the towel around her frame. A sharp turn of her chin directs her away from the scene.

INT. THE WAR HOUSE WAR ROOM - NIGHT

The Crew sits, listening to the recording. Lonnie stands in the corner. Her hands fidget, but her body is still and poised.

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL ANDERS (V.O.)

It was a beautiful thing to behold. So much power. So much glory.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL (V.O.)

I should like to meet such a god-like man one day.

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL ANDERS (V.O.)

Who says you aren't in the presence of one right now?

LONNIE CARMICHAEL (V.O.)

You?

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL ANDERS (V.O.)

Yes, yes, it was me; now, relish in my glory and get on your knees--

Hamish CLICKS off the recording. The Crew turns to face Lonnie.

PERCY

I don't understand; he sounds completely unbothered. He gave you everything you asked for, as if he had to as if you bewitched him.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

I slipped him a relaxer.

HAMISH

What is a relaxer?

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

Just something we use in the industry; it helps us to be able to cry all day if we have to.

PERCY

Diabolical. I love it! You're a real hoodlum, like the rest of us.

Ira looks at Brooks with daggers. Brooks looks down at his feet.

Hamish picks up a canteen.

HAMISH

All hail the hoodlums!

PERCY

Mazel tov!

IRA

The transport with here in an hour to take Anders away.

HAMISH

And it's only nine O'clock! This calls for a round of pinochle.

Brooks slips out of the war room. Lonnie notices. She follows him.

INT. THE WAR HOUSE HALLWAY - NIGHT

Brooks looks over his shoulder at Lonnie.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

Go enjoy your evening, Miss Carmichael.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

Why are you agitated with me...sir?

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

Young ladies should not be so forward.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

You said you trusted me. Was I not supposed to take your word?

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

You did not tell me you were going to drug him.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

Drug him? It's magnesium and lavender with a touch of--

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

--Deceit. We were supposed to uphold--

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

--It's all deceit! But with this plan, at least there were no boundaries crossed, no morals disregarded--

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

--There were plenty of--

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

--My boundaries, my morals. I didn't have to sit and toe the line. Did you ever think about me--

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

--You? The woman who, despite everything, rose to the top of the Hollywood charts, as if by chance. To hell with your momentary morals, I hired you to work, not avoid your duty.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

I got the job done more honorably than before, and I stand by my choice.

Lonnie begins to walk away.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

Go to your quarters.

Lonnie turns back to Brooks.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

I beg your pardon, sir.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

Now.

The pair look at each other with disdain.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

After everything, back to square one.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

No, square one was filled with hope and admiration. I see you for what you are now; a spoiled, selfish actress who will cut corners to get what she wants and deceive along the way.

Lonnie lifts her chin. False claims do not weigh her down. She turns. Stiffly walks away.

INT. LONNIE'S BEDROOM/BROOKS BEDROOM - NIGHT

Lonnie and Brooks SLAM their doors. One after the other.

Brooks lights a cigarette.

Earl hides under the bed as Lonnie paces the floor. Lonnie stops. Tears well up in her eyes. Her jaw goes crooked from trying not to cry.

Brooks throws the lighter across the room, CLANKING off the bookshelf.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY
Damn fool of a woman.

Lonnie sits on her bed. Closes her eyes as she breathes in and out slowly. Earl jumps up on the bed next to her. She pats his small head.

Lonnie switches off the light.

EXT. THE WAR HOUSE GROUNDS - DAWN

Mist covers the ground. The estate animals wake and walk the property. Single beams of sunshine peak through the thick morning clouds.

INT. BROOKS ROOM/THE LONDON HEADQUARTERS - DAWN

The telephone RINGS. Brooks slugs his body upright from the bed. Reaches for the phone.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY
Theiry.

MAJOR KLINE (O.S.)
Captain, this is Major Kline. I just wanted to inform you we received the prisoner along with the reports and recordings and--

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY
--Sir, I can explain; we--

MAJOR KLINE
--I loved it; I thought it was... brilliant.

Brooks sits up a little bit more.

MAJOR KLINE (O.S.)
But it seems whatever you slipped Anders lasted until about an hour ago, and well...

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

He kept talking?

MAJOR KLINE (O.S.)

Yes, and revealed some details of the end of an empire...our Empire.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

I don't follow, sir.

MAJOR KLINE

It seems we have a war within the war, with our own.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

The commonwealth?

MAJOR KLINE (O.S.)

Yes. Precisely. Promises of freedom, independence, and power--

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

--To over 50 countries. We cannot be divided, not now. What can be done?

MAJOR KLINE

I see no logical solution. Which is why I am calling you. I want you to throw a party, like one you've never seen before. Champagne, glamour, every commonwealth ambassador; a marketing dream.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY (O.S.)

I don't know if it'll work--

MAJOR KLINE

It'll work, Theiry, and not because you're a genius, but because--

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY (O.S.)

It has to?

MAJOR KLINE

Yes. How long do you need?

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY (O.S.)

At least a week.

MAJOR KLINE

You have three days, Captain; make it work.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

Major, what is the name of the gang I am looking for?

MAJOR KLINE (O.S.)

It's not a gang, just one man. A Mr. Howson.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

No title?

MAJOR KLINE (O.S.)

We'll title him a radical. That's all a man needs to make a name for himself nowadays, as we've seen. That is why there can be no mistakes, and everything has to be methodical. Good luck, Theiry.

Major Kline hangs up the phone.

INT. LONNIE'S BEDROOM - MORNING

A sunbeam shines through the bedroom window onto Lonnie's pleasant sleeping face. Earl hops onto her chest.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

Mmmm, good morning, baby.

Lonnie scratches Earl behind the ears. Opens her eyes. Sits up. Stretches.

INT. LONNIE'S BEDROOM/BROOKS'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Lonnie slips her feet into her slippers. Ties her dressing gown into place. Brooks pulls up his suspenders.

Lonnie parachutes her sheets into the air. Brooks pulls his sheets down onto the bed. In a military style folds his sheets and coverlet onto the bed.

Brooks goes down to his knees, transitioning into a plank position to begin his push-ups. Lonnie kneels down on both of her knees to pray.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

1, 2, 3.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

And Lord, bless Gretchen, Percy, and Hamish.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

45, 46, 47.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

Please be with Captain Flanagan and Lieutenant-Colonel Anders; make yourself known to them Father.

Lonnie's eyes flash open.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

(whispers)

And the rest of the Axis army...even their leader. May they turn from their evil ways.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

88, 89, 90.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

Bless my family, Jesus, and let us all be reunited according to your will.

Lonnie opens her eyes once again, glancing over her shoulder.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

And Father, bless the captain. Let his trust in me again and find restoration in only you, Lord.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

100.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

Amen.

Brooks and Lonnie rise to their feet. They reach for their door knobs. Open the doors.

INT. THE WAR HOUSE HALLWAY - MORNING

Lonnie and Brooks stand in the doorways of their rooms. Facing opposite of each other.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

Good morning, Captain.

Brooks blinks once as his body remembers the stiff exchange. He walks away from Lonnie's joyful gaze.

INT. THE DINING ROOM - MORNING

The dining room bustles with the company fixing their breakfast. Everyone stands at attention when Brooks enters the dining room. Lonnie arrives shortly after.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY
Company, please be seated.

The company takes their seats. Chairs SCOOT in.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY
I have news from London. We will be halting all original War House operations until further notices.

The company becomes unsettled. Lonnie stands straight in worry.

HAMISH
They are shutting us down?

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY
No. We are just shifting our focus on a different war at hand.

MONTAGE-THE BALLROOM/KITCHEN/GROUNDS

--Staff shine champagne glasses.

--Staff opens crates of household reserves.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY (V.O.)
In a matter of 72 hours, we will host the socialite event of the year. Ambassadors of the commonwealth, large benefactors, and all the statesmen and women we can spare will walk through our doors. We must have precision to execute our mission of retaining those we need to...and eliminating those who we do not.

Brooks's eyes connect with Lonnie's. He looks away, downcast toward his papers.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY (O.S.)
This place, our home away from home, will be transformed into a place of wonder and mischief, so while our friends play, we can work without detection.

INT. MR. HOWSON'S HOUSE - DAY

--MR. HOWSON, 35, lifts his invitation. Smiles.

MR. HOWSON

(whisper)

Fools.

INT. THE DINING ROOM - DAY

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

We must win. Now, please finish your meal; we will not have much time to rest in the upcoming days.

Brooks rises from his seat. The company follows, then sit back down.

Lonnie watches Brooks for a moment.

HAMISH

Don't follow him, lass. Come; share a meal with us.

Hamish brings his arm around Lonnie. Percy pulls out a chair for her to sit in.

PERCY

M'lady.

Lonnie looks at Brooks's empty seat. Then at Ira, but catches a rare small smile on his face. He raises a glass to Lonnie.

IRA

...To the hoodlums.

Lonnie's spirits lift as the glasses CLINK together.

INT. BROOKS OFFICE - DAY

Brooks sits down at his typewriter. Letters CRUNCH the paper at the speed of light. DINGS and SLIDES of the typewriter are like a ferocious melody of determination.

Day turns to night. Brooks whips the last script out from the typewriter. Places it in the large stack.

A knock at the door comes. Ira peaks into the office.

IRA

How's it coming?

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

Just finished.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

Will you hand these out to the company?

Ira grabs the stack of scripts. Turns to exit the office.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

That's all of them, and tell the Crew to follow the script.

Ira nods after a moment. Exits.

INT. LONNIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Gretchen and Lonnie sit at the tea table, mending costumes. Ira comes around the open door.

IRA

Knock-knock.

GRETCHEN

Ah, you've arrived. Come, I want to see Lonnie's script so I can make a start on her costume tonight.

IRA

Gretch, this script is for you.

GRETCHEN

Oh, I thought he would have hers done first.

IRA

I don't believe Miss Carmichael will perform with us on the night of the party.

Lonnie looks down at her mending.

GRETCHEN

How can that be?

IRA

It's all my fault; if-if I hadn't become so-so anxious--

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

--Oh, don't fuss, Ira. To truly be a good performer, one must be the understudy sometimes. There is a lesson in this for all of us; I'm sure of it.

Lonnie nods with zeal. Ira nods back with respect.

INT. MR. HOWSON'S OFFICE - DAY

The day progresses as Mr. Howson hand-writes letters. He sits and writes. Gets up and paces the room.

MR. HOWSON

(Reading to himself)

Dear Mr. Hallowsburg-- Dear Mr. Abara-- Dear. Mrs. Boumal--
Dear Mr. Gizaro, I look forward to seeing you tomorrow at
the Wilfordshire party. It has come to my attention that
the Pilgrim's Rest case has most recently been
overturned...may I express my deepest regret, but I look
forward to hearing your conclusion, so I may be better
informed on the situation...and-and?

Howson takes his pen to the page.

MR. HOWSON

Further align myself for...the good of the people. Warmth
Regards, Mr. Howson.

Howson looks at his wall of portraits of powerful men and women. The King, Hitler, General Gallastine, Winston Churchill, Stalin, Nancy Wake, and many others.

MR. HOWSON

It is time for you all to become our equals. I will be the
one to do it, just you watch.

EXT. OUTSIDE MR. HOWSON'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The harvest moon glows. It's almost full.

EXT. THE WAR HOUSE DRIVEWAY - NIGHT/NEXT DAY

The full moon shines. So do the War House party lights. The PARTY GUESTS drive up to the War House, entering the bustling house with gladness.

Lonnie looks down at the arriving guest through her bedroom window.

Ira welcomes guests as they enter the house.

INT. THE WAR HOUSE FOYER/BALLROOM - NIGHT

Brooks and Hamish welcome guests at the door.

A BRITISH FOLK SONG PLAYS. In sync with each other, guests cavort away the anxiety of the war, just for the night.

Mr. Howson enters the War House. Brooks and Hamish stand even taller. Brooks reaches out his hand to Howson.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

How do you do, Mr. Howson?

MR. HOWSON

How do you do, Lord Wilfordshire? Thank you for the gracious innovation.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

It is my honor, sir, and what a privilege it is to have you here tonight. Lieutenant-Colonel Anders said you and I have much in common.

Mr. Howson's face goes pale, then flush with opportunity.

MR. HOWSON

Will the Lieutenant-Colonel be joining us tonight?

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

I'm afraid not; he's been called away to Vienna. Too bad, I should have liked to discuss matters that perhaps he was privy to. Or perhaps, I could just ask you, dear Mr. Howson.

Gretchen walks up from behind. Places a hand on Howson's shoulder.

GRETCHEN

Good evening, sir. You wouldn't happen to be Mr. Howson, would you be?

MR. HOWSON

I am, ma'am.

GRETCHEN

We are due for the next dance, sir.

Gretchen shows Howson her dance card.

MR. HOWSON

How lucky am I, Miss.?

GRETCHEN

Ashton. I'll be waiting for you by the door, Mr. Howson.

Gretchen promenades away from the small group, grabbing more champagne as she walks away.

MR. HOWSON
(to Hamish)
Good God, that was--

HAMISH
--Aye, the wealthiest and most eligible woman in the room...if you don't mind her age.

MR. HOWSON
To hell with her age; there is nothing more distinguished than a woman who doesn't settle for anything less than...entertaining.

Howson walks away. Fixated on Gretchen. Brooks swipes his nose, giving Percy the go signal.

Percy taps the conductor to strike up the band once again.

INT. LONNIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Lonnie sits at the window seal, watching the last guests enter the party. Stroking Earl's coat. HUMMING LIGHTLY to the song playing downstairs.

EXT. THE WAR HOUSE GROUNDS - NIGHT

SHEPARD, 35, lurks in the dark. He begins to pour the gasoline around the perimeter of The War House.

INT. LONNIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Lonnie spots Shepherd. Earl HISSES at the man outside.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL
Oh, c'mon; at least add a little bit of pizzazz.

Lonnie paces as she MUMBLES about what to do. She rushes to the wardrobe. Pulls out the drawers. Petticoats, dresses, and stockings fly out.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL
Milk-maid, Librarian, Child...where is the maid costume?

Lonnie flings open the doors of the wardrobe. There, with glory and glamor, hangs a red party gown.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL
(whispers)
Oh...Gretchen.

Lonnie snatches the gown from the closet.

EXT. THE WAR HOUSE GROUNDS - NIGHT

Shepard flips through his note pad. Counting cars. He crosses out the name on his pad.

INT. THE WAR HOUSE BALLROOM - NIGHT

Howson and Gretchen glide across the Ballroom floor.

MR. HOWSON
Mademoiselle, I dare say you are the most superior dancer in the room and your elegance reigns over the rooms glmaour!

GRETCHEN
You flatter me, Mr. Howson, but I dare say you conjured up that compliment ahead of our meeting.

MR. HOWSON
On the contrary, Miss Ashton. I had no idea you would be joining us tonight, but what a delight it has been to make your acquaintance.

GRETCHEN
Who were you hoping to meet tonight, sir? I must show you off to everyone in the room.

MR. HOWSON
There were a few. Mr. Gizaro and Mr. Hallowsburg, especially.

GRETCHEN
Especially...you're up to something. Oh, how exciting, Mr. Howson. Come, I'll be your accomplice tonight.

Gretchen and Howson halts their dance.

Gretchen introduced Howson to MR. HALLOWSBURG, 50, and MR. GIZARO, 48. Mr. Howson gets to work. The men hang on to every word Howson says. Soon there is a small crowd around Howson.

The DANCING MUSIC continues to play as the guest twirl in large and small circles.

INT. THE WAR HOUSE FOYER - NIGHT

Lonnie discreetly enters the party. She grabs two champagne glasses, but when she turns, Brooks is behind her. Without a beat, Lonnie spills both glasses onto Brooks.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

Oh, sir! I am terribly sorry; let me get you cleaned up.

Lonnie pushes Brooks into a corner.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

What are you doing down here? You've got to get back upstairs.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

(quietly)

Shut up; I have to tell you something--

Brooks grabs Lonnie by the shoulders, stopping her movement.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

--Lonnie. You have to get out of here; we've been compromised.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

What?

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

The big four...they're all present. I don't know who they're after? Howson or something else? You need to get up stairs and go through the tunnels. Get the emergency kit, and get the hell out of here.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

I'm-I'm not leaving! And there's--there's--

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

--That's an order.

Lonnie grips Brooks's jacket. Brooks looks down.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

I'm-I'm sorry...for everything; you didn't deserve any of this.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

Brooks, please.

Brooks tucks a piece of Lonnie's hair out of her face. Then steps back from Lonnie to face the crowd.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

(for everyone to hear)

Watch the hell where you're going next time!

Brooks heads to the Ballroom.

The room swirls as Lonnie at Percy, Hamish, and Ira. She spots the men that want to hurt her friends. Germans, Italians, Russians, and Japanese all armed and ready to create havoc.

Lonnie breathes in deeply. A lightbulb goes off in Lonnie's mind. Her face says it all; she has a plan, and she will accomplish it.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

He's not my superior, after all.

EXT. THE WAR HOUSE GROUNDS - NIGHT

Shepard loads bullets into his gun. CLICK, CLICK, CLICK.

Lonnie sneaks around from behind one of the vehicles. Shepard shoots up in his stance.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

Oh, excuse me, sir?! Are you the valet; I am terribly late for the party.

Lonnie comes closer to Shepherd.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

My-my-my, I think I'm mistaken. You are much too attractive to be the valet.

SHEPHERD

And who are you, Mademoiselle?

Shepherd takes Lonnie's hand. Kisses it.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

I'm the entertainment.

Lonnie takes off Shepherd's newsboy cap. Shepherd steps into Lonnie's sphere.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

You don't, by chance, have a light on you, do you?

SHEPHERD

I'm afraid not. And it'd be an awful shame if I did.

Lonnie smiles devilishly at him.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

It would be a shame if I didn't.

Lonnie takes out a light. Sparks it. Throws it away from her. Shepherd launches himself to catch the lighter before it hits the ground. He catches it just in time, but when he turns, he is met a candlestick to the temple.

EXT. THE WAR HOUSE DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

Lonnie marches up the War House stairs with a dazed Shepherd marching behind her. His hands bound. Lonnie leads Shepherd with a rope that is tied around his neck.

Once more, she sparks the light. It hits the floor. Ignites the driveway in ablaze. Lonnie shoves both of the doors to the War House entrance open.

INT. THE WAR HOUSE FOYER - NIGHT

The crowd does SILENT. Lonnie's clean steps and Shepherd's drags echo in the great house. Lonnie stands with her chin clenched. Anger is hotter on her face than the flames roaring behind her.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

Anyone lose something?

Lonnie circles as the crowd watches her.

Brooks frees his gun from the back of his pants.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

No? I can't blame you for not wanting to confess; quite embarrassing to lose a man. But to make you all a little bit more comfortable, I'm going to confess my little secret.

Lonnie yanks the rope around Shepherd's neck.

HAMISH

(to himself)

Dear God, what is she doing?

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

Ladies and gentleman, I am afraid you were all brought here under false pretenses. You see, this is not party, well, not a real party, that is; it's a controlled environment to ensure that this man (points to Shepherd) and this man (points to Howson) were unable to do what they set out to do, to divide you, in a time where the world needs us all to remain united. I cannot blame you for listening, power, freedom, and independence have a nice ring to them, but when thinking of only ourselves, how easy is it to drift into the danger of self-centeredness. A danger in which you not only put your countries in, but also yourselves.

Mr. Howson becomes red in the face. He moves toward the center of the crowd.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

You have been blind, ladies and gentlemen. You've not only walked yourself into this trap, but you've also left the door open, and now the serpents are roaming freely around your feet.

Lonnie locks eye's with Howson.

MR. HOWSON

I have heard enough of this, Tory! What is this nonsensical talk of fake parties and unity? We have never been united! We have been forced into an institution that only cares about one thing! Are you slandering my name because I propose that we all become equal?

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

No, I am proposing that until we truly become equals, we fight together for those who cannot fight for themselves. Men, women, children, the elderly, the weak, the disabled...the innocent. Then, we will truly be able to start again.

MR. GIZARO

Hear, hear!

Mr. Hallowsburg begins to CLAP; the crowd follows his CLAPS. Mr. Howson begins to circle himself. Hope drains from his face.

MR. HOWSON

(to himself)

No. No!

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

What do you say, Mr. Howson? And I suggest you answer quickly before the wolves devour you.

MR. HOWSON

Who are you?

Lonnie looks at Brooks. She's grins.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

My name is Katherine Carmichael, I'm a volunteer nurse at Hastings Hospital, and I'm an actress...and I'm stalling.

Howson eye's grow wide. He whips out his handgun. Points it at Lonnie. Fixed on killing her.

MR. HOWSON

You little--

SMASH! SPLASH! Mr. Howson falls onto the floor after Gretchen hits him over the head with a champagne bottle.

GRETCHEN

Mazel Tov.

Brooks, Percy, Hamish, and Ira enter the center of the crowd. They pull their guns to the men pointing their guns at Lonnie.

GERMAN ASSASSIN

Feuer!

ITALIAN ASSASSIN

Fuoco!

JAPANESE ASSASSIN

火事だ!

Just as the ASSASSINS pull their guns on The Crew, The Company pulls their guns on the assassins.

PERCY

This is the greatest moment of my life!

EXT. THE WAR HOUSE DRIVEWAY - DAWN

Gallastine's small troop loads Mr. Howson and the assassins into a military truck. Some soldiers put out the flames around the War House.

Lonnie sits on the steps as she watches the prisoner drive away. General Gallastine wraps a blanket around Lonnie's shoulders. He sits beside her. The sun peaks through the smoke.

GENERAL GALLASTINE

Were the flames really necessary?

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

They were the climatic effect, general. Every good story needs it.

General Gallastine smiles at Lonnie fondly.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

I am sorry, though.

GENERAL GALLASTINE

What on earth for?

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

For destroying the property...and for blowing our cover.

GENERAL GALLASTINE

My dear girl, you did a heroic thing, and just because this War House is out of commission for a little while doesn't mean the operation is dead.

Gallastine pulls out an envelope from his uniform jacket. He hands it to Lonnie.

GENERAL GALLASTINE

You have done more than enough to fulfill your contract, but I was hoping you'd consider another opportunity...with us at headquarters.

Lonnie's eyes widen as she looks at Gallastine. Gallastine rises. Lonnie quickly follows.

GENERAL GALLASTINE

Hmmm, I knew I liked you. Say your goodbye, Miss Carmichael; our car is waiting.

Gallastine walks away.

Gretchen walks up to Lonnie. Embraces her.

GRETCHEN
I'm going with you!

LONNIE CARMICHAEL
What?

GRETCHEN
The General offered me a secretary position at headquarters.

The women embrace once again. The Crew approach.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL
Oh, Gretchen, that is simply wonderful news, and you'll get to meet my father! And what of you, gentleman?

HAMISH
We've received orders too.

PERCY
We're going to France, baby! To head up the War House there!

The Crew embraces Lonnie and Gretchen.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL
Promise me you'll write.

IRA
As often as possible.

Lonnie spots Brooks as the team breaks up from the group hug.

GRETCHEN
Well, no time to doddle, c'mon fellas; let's put our things in the car.

Percy hugs Lonnie one more time, then dashes away. Gretchen and the Crew leave Brooks and Lonnie to be alone.

Brooks approaches Lonnie slowly.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

You received new orders, I see.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

Yes. Will you be going to France too? You would make such a wonderful director there, too, I'm sure.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

You're very kind, but no. They need me...elsewhere.

Worry drops Lonnie's perky shoulders.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

Oh.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

I don't suppose we meet again...at least for quite some time, so I just wanted to again say that I'm sorr--

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

--I'm sorry.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

What? What are you sorry for? You were-you were a perfect--

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

--Diva.

Lonnie and Brooks huff out a laugh.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

You do forgive me, don't you? For being such a...

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

Shhh. Don't say anything.

Lonnie cups the side of Brooks's face. Brooks places his hand on top of hers. Their eyes soften. Glistening with the trustiest form of love, founded in friendship, established in trust.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

And don't say goodbye.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

I'm not brave enough to.

Brooks kisses the side of her hand.

Gallastine approaches the duo. The two let go of each other.

GENERAL GALLASTINE

It's time to go.

Brooks looks once more at Lonnie as if it'll be his last look at goodness.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

Miss Carmichael. General.

Brooks shakes hands with Gallastine.

GENERAL GALLASTINE

Captain. May God protect you, my son.

CAPTAIN BROOKS THEIRY

Thank you, sir.

Gallastine looks on with fondness as he watches his godson trots down the staircase.

Brooks gets into his private car. He drives away.

GENERAL GALLASTINE

Are you ready, my dear?

Lonnie watches the car. Then nods and follows Gallastine.

Hamish, Percy, and Ira salute the general, Lonnie, and Gretchen as they enter the car.

The car door SHUTS. The tires whirl away. Gretchen turns around and waves her handkerchief back at the Crew.

Lonnie watches as the War House become smaller as the car pulls away.

Gretchen and Lonnie settle in their seats. Gallastine pets Earl in his lap.

The women grasp each other's hands firmly as they pull into the London Headquarters.

INT. THE HEADQUARTERS HALLWAYS - DAY

Gretchen and Lonnie walk behind the general through the busy hallways of headquarters.

There, at the end of the hallway, is Clarence Carmichael. Lonnie does not run to him. She cannot. She bursts into tears when Clarence approaches. He wraps his arms around her.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

(sobs)

Pa-papa.

CLARENCE CARMICHAEL

Oh, my darling. It's alright now; it's alright.

INT. THE HEADQUARTERS CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

TWO YEARS LATER:

Lonnie sits in front of a recording machine. Telephone in hand.

Major Kline nods to her to begin. Clarence paces the room.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

(into the phone)

Did you really kill him, George dear?

GEORGE DEAR (O.S.)

Yes, I did it for you, my sweet, and for the rest of my brethren.

Major Kline cues Lonnie to end the call.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

I must go now, my love.

GEORGE DEAR (O.S.)

Yes, I guess you must...Hail Hitler.

Lonnie HANGS UP the phone.

MAJOR KLINE

Well done, ol' girl. Ten-minute break, everyone!

Gladness CHIMES in the CHATTER around Headquarters.

INT. THE HEADQUARTERS HALLWAYS - DAY

Lonnie walks out of the room. She sees General Gallastine without the same joy on his face as everyone around them.

Gallastine slides four yellow notes in his uniform jacket. Gallastine turns. Sees Lonnie. She knows.

INT. THE CARMICHAEL HOME - NIGHT

Lonnie sits wrapped in a blanket as Clarence pours them a cup of tea. CHEERS come from outside. Red and blue lights flash through the window from the celebration fireworks.

CLARENCE CARMICHAEL

I got word; your sister will arrive the day after the next.

Lonnie smiles at the news.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

It'll be so good to have her back.

CLARENCE CARMICHAEL

I think it'll help...get your mind off of things.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

I'm fine, Papa. We all lost people we loved in the war; I am not exempt.

CLARENCE CARMICHAEL

I got four stars for the window. I thought we could hang them in honor of your friends. For Hamish, Percy, Ira, and for...

LONNIE CARMICHAEL

Don't say their names. They're not dead. Just missing. Don't hang them, Papa.

Clarence stands.

CLARENCE CARMICHAEL

Alright. Goodnight, darling.

Clarence kisses Lonnie's cheek. He leaves her alone.

Lonnie gets up from her seat to watch the crowds in the streets celebrating. A small smile of victory appears on her lips.

CROWD

ALL HAIL THE KING! ALL HAIL THE KING! ALL HAIL THE KING.

Lonnie looks at the side table with the four M.I.O. telegram. She looks back out of the window. She stands tall with pride.

LONNIE CARMICHAEL
And all hail the Hoodlums.

INT. THE CARMICHAEL'S STORE - DAY

RADIO ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
Well, folks, the clean-up of the war has began six months
after we declared victory.

Lonnie hands a CUSTOMER her bag of groceries with a smile. And a
child her new teddy bear.

Clarence brings a small crate into their home. Shutting the door
behind him.

Lonnie CLINKS the change into the cash register. She turns to put the
top on the licorice container but goes still.

Lonnie gets the chills. She touches the back of her neck. Before she
can turn around, the doorbell JINGLE.

FADE OUT:

THE END

Annotated Bibliography

The English Standard Holy Bible. Zondervan, general editor. Zondervan, 2011.

The authoritative Word of God. It consists of 66 books and two sections: The Old Testament and The New Testament.

Anderson, Troy and Mount, Anne. "Hollywood, Jesus, & The Holy Spirit." *Charisma*, Apr. 2015. <https://charismamag.com/culture/hollywood-jesus-the-holy-spirit/>

Anderson and Mount discuss the major comeback of Christ in art. As of late, stories of Jesus are found on the big screen and in the lives of After Death (A.D) Christians. Thorough examinations of 21st-century films and television series solidify the author's points and argument.

Austin, Ron. "Christians in Hollywood: A Treatment, by Mission Impossible Writer, Ron Austin." *Two Handed Warriors*, 25 Apr. 2012. <https://garydavidstratton.com/2012/04/25/christians-in-hollywood-a-treatment-by-mission-impossible-writer-ron-austin/>

In this article, Ron Austin speaks of the transformation and incorporation of the Gospel in the 20th and 21st centuries. The author highlights the importance of screenwriting form and how these themes could reflect God's relationship with believers or those who come to find God. Austin celebrates the efforts of artists who submit to the Lord's will and who allude to His divinity.

Baker, Dallas. "Scriptwriting as creative writing research: a preface. *TEXT: Journal of writing and writing courses*, special issue 19." *Text Journal*, Oct. 2013, p.1-8.

<http://www.textjournal.com.au/speciss/issue19/content.htm>

Creator Dallas Baker, Director of *The Chosen*, discusses the truth that most written screenplays will never hit the big screen. The author discusses the importance of screenplays, even though some may argue that they are of little necessity because they only act as a blueprint for a big-picture project. Baker concludes with the importance of screenplays as a foundation and a blueprint that inspires all parts of a project.

Batty, Craig. "A screenwriter's journey into theme, and how creative writing research might help us to define screen production research, Studies in Australasian Cinema." *New Writing*, Aug. 2015, p. 110-121. DOI: [10.1080/17503175.2015.1059991](https://doi.org/10.1080/17503175.2015.1059991)

This section of Batty's book discusses the distinct difference between academic writing and creative screenwriting that brings pictures to life. The author debates that creating a screenplay takes more research and has less of a success rate than complex research ever sees the light of day. The author concludes that there is difficulty in pressing into the art and craft of creative screenwriting.

Batty, Craig. "Screenwriting studies, screenwriting practice and the screenwriting manual." *New Writing*, Jan. 2016, p. 59-70. DOI: [10.1080/14790726.2015.1134579](https://doi.org/10.1080/14790726.2015.1134579)

In this abstract, Batty contributes to the idea that screenwriting takes immense effort in balancing research and practice. He debates that practicing is to become a professional as it acts as devotion to the industry. With this in mind, the author achieves an influence that authors, artists, and craftsmen are workers to create and research.

Biederman, Roseann. "Showing Vs. Telling in Your Writing." *Writer's Digest*, Jun. 2012.

<https://www.writersdigest.com/whats-new/showing-vs-telling-in-your-writing>

In this article, author Roseann Biederma showcases some of the basic rules of writing good stories. The author declares that one of the fundamental rules of writing is the practice of showing over telling. Next, the author presents examples to solidify the importance of transporting a reader or watcher into a different universe through the power of words.

Blizek, William L., Desmarais, Michele Marie, and Burke, Ronald, R. "Religion and Film Studies." *Taylor and Francis Online*, Sept. 2011, p. 471-485.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/0048721X.2011.590698>

In this article, the three authors discuss the distinct display of Christianity and religion in film. Together, the authors showcase how films can show believers' everyday lives and fulfill the great commission. The article concludes with an exciting look at the future of filmmaking and incorporating Christianity into film.

Carr-Chellman, David. "The Spiritual Disciplines as Practices of Transformation."

ResearchGate, Jan. 2017, p. 23-35.

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/315475412_The_Spiritual_Disciplines_as_Practices_of_Transformation

In this exert, Carr-Chellman displays an acute awareness of discipline and how it strengthens a person. Later, the author discusses the importance of Christians dedicating themselves to spiritual disciplines such as prayer, fasting, and giving. Finally, the author showcases the vitality to practice and strengthen spiritual disciplines to remain in the presence of the Lord, resist sin, and become sanctified.

Cattrysse, Patrick. "Screenwriting: Between Art and Craft." *Palabra - Clave*, vol. 24, no. 2, 2021, pp. 1-20. *ProQuest*,
<https://go.openathens.net/redirector/liberty.edu?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/screenwriting-between-art-craft/docview/2575918456/se-2>,
 doi:<https://doi.org/10.5294/pacla.2021.24.2.5>.

In this distinct article, author Patrick Cattrysse discusses the difference, stereotypes, and importance of the topic of creative screenwriting. The article showcases how imagination in art and craft ignite inspiration for many but discusses in depth the roots and differences of art and craftsmanship. The article concludes with an inspirational call to action to balance following the rules of good writing while pushing the limits of being a great storyteller.

Crawford, Scott, A. G. M. "Unbroken dir. By Angelina Jolie (Review)." *Journal of Sports History*, 2016, p. 217-218. <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/626179/pdf>

In this article, the 2014 film *Unbroken* is discussed and summarized to showcase some of its core Biblical truths and craftsmanship in creating the film. The author also carefully looks at the stages and processes director Angelina Jolie took to create the film. Finally, the article concludes with the author's appreciation of how the director embodied one of the movie's themes: never give up despite challenges and hardships.

Davidson, Elijah. "Hollywood at prayer: how movies express the spiritual longings of their makers (and watchers)." *Christianity Today*, Aug. 2017, p. 85-101. *Gale In Context: Biography*,

link.gale.com/apps/doc/A503309668/BIC?u=vic_liberty&sid=summon&xid=50d37ddf.

Accessed 8 Nov. 2022.

In this article, Davidson discusses the supernatural ability of the Holy Spirit as part of the Holy Trinity. The author discusses how the Holy Spirit speaks to individuals and inspires them to create so that more people may see the Lord. Finally, Davidson displaces his thoughts on how incorporating faith in the film is one of the most significant ways to fulfill the Great Commission.

Davies, Stephen. "Art and human evolution." *Oxford University Press*, Nov. 2012.

<https://blog.oup.com/2012/11/art-and-human-evolution/>

In this article, author Stephen Davies discusses the natural trends human beings create. The author uncovers explicitly the urge to create art in all shapes, forms, and needs. The article concludes that while art has evolved, the desire to create art will never fade.

De Gruchy, J. W. "Christianity, Art and Transformation." *Acta Theologica*, Nov. 2020, p. 2.

<https://dx.doi.org/10.18820/23099089/actat.sup29.1>

Author J. W. De Gruchy discusses the commitment to studying theology and perfecting art and craft. The author displays examples of how theology and art have developed over centuries, yet desire for artists and theologians to be more present in each-others works. Finally, the author concludes his thoughts through scripture and calls for all Christians to put Christ at the center of all things.

Dent, Chris. "'Narrative Life' in Film and the Role of Screenwriting Practices." *Journal of Film and Video*, vol. 73, no. 3, Fall 2021, p. 47-61.

<https://go.openathens.net/redirector/liberty.edu?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/narrative-life-film-role-screenwriting-practices/docview/2619746239/se-2>.

Throughout Dent's article, the author stresses the importance of careful consideration of humanity and dedication to practicing capturing its beauty and wickedness. The author carefully considers films that magnify on humanistic traits of man at large yet create stories that inspire or draw-in audience members.

Deweese-Boyd, Ian. "Scorsese's *Silence*: Film as Practical Theodicy." *Journal of Religion & Film*, Sept. 2017.

<https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1924&context=jrf>

In this article, author Ian Boyd-Deweese observes the film *Silence* and its deep religious themes. The author celebrates the creators in their efforts to create an artful depiction of sacrifice and persecution of the Early Church. The author concludes that film must embody the shocking nature of humans to make stories as believable as possible, even if the concept or themes of the film are abstract.

Doberenz, Jake. "God Speaks Through Everything: Finding Faith in Creative Media."

Theophany Media, 2020. <https://theophanymedia.com/god-speaks-everything-faith-in-creative-media/>

Author Jake Deberenz makes a distinct connection between the inspiration of the Holy Spirit to art and creative media in his 2020 article. The author analyzes scripture in both the Old and New Testaments and concludes that God is an unstoppable and personable voice. The author concludes that creative media in the 21st century is a vital and creative tool that can spread the Good News to broad audiences worldwide.

Evans, Elinor. "Netflix's *The Crown*: the real history behind the royal drama." *History Extra*, Oct. 2022. [https://www.historyextra.com/period/20th-century/real-history-netflix-the-](https://www.historyextra.com/period/20th-century/real-history-netflix-the-crown-series-queen-elizabeth-prince-philip-charles-camilla-what-really-happened/)

[crown-series-queen-elizabeth-prince-philip-charles-camilla-what-really-happened/](https://www.historyextra.com/period/20th-century/real-history-netflix-the-crown-series-queen-elizabeth-prince-philip-charles-camilla-what-really-happened/)

Through the Netflix series, *The Crown*, author, and commentator Elinor Evan analyzed the validity of the series' accuracy to actual events of History. Her Royal Majesty's faith is a central topic of Evans's argument that while the series dramatized moments of History, the directors did not leave stones unturned.

Fresco, Pablo-Romero. "The Accessible Filmmaker and the Global Film." *Theory of Practice*, Jan. 2019, p. 381-417. <https://doi.org/10.6035/MonTI.2020.12.13>

In his 2019 article, author Pablo-Romero Fresco analyses film's global impact. The author shares statistics of first and third-world countries as they pertain to the global box office. With the undouble success of film of the last century, the author includes the importance of sharing moral messages and hope as film is more accessible than ever.

Gehrz, Chris. "Religion in Season 3 of *The Crown*." *The Pietist Schoolman*, Dec. 2019.

<https://pietistschoolman.com/2019/12/16/religion-in-season-3-of-the-crown/>

Chris Gehrz discusses the depth of Her Majesty the Queen's relationship with God in his 2019 article showcased in Netflix's, *The Crown*. The author looks specifically at season three, when Her Majesty faces moral and Christian dilemmas as she seeks counsel from others such as Billy Graham. The article concludes with a profound reflection on faith for the series on how faith resides in all if only allowed.

Guite, Malcolm. *Faith, Hope and Poetry: Theology and the Poetic Imagination*. Cambridge, Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2010, p. 196.

In the book *Faith, Hope, and Poetry: Theology and the Poetic Imagination*, author Guite expands upon the deep cranial process of thought and imagination as primary cognitive functions. The author analyzes the creator of such complicated things: God. The author theorizes that if God gives humans such things as creativity and imagination, that is for no other reason than to bring Glory to the creator and to bring individuals close to Him.

Hahn, Lance. "The Power of Faithfulness in Relational Evangelism: Great Commission Research Journal-Fall 2020." *ResearchGate*, Nov. 2020.

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/347270405_The_Power_of_Faithfulness_in_Relational_Evangelism_-_Great_Commission_Research_Journal_-_Fall_2020

In his article, author Lance Hahn discusses the process and holds to faith when practicing spiritual disciplines such as evangelism. Hahn analyses the Great Commission in Matthew 28 and how it pertains to the Christian life. The author concludes that Christians must hold onto love even when difficult because it is an actual test of faith.

Heckman, Chris. "What Was the First Movie Ever Made-Film History Explained." *Studio*

Binder, Jul. 2022. <https://www.studiobinder.com/blog/what-was-the-first-movie-ever-made/>

In a dynamic analysis of film history, Heckman showcases the art of making a picture come to life and how it was made possible. The author observes and dissects some of the first films of the 20th century, dating back to 1901. The author makes it apparent that while there were moving pictures before the 20th century, story and pictures create a film.

Jenkins, Paul. "Why is Film Important in Society." *Brilliantio*, Mar. 2022.

<https://brilliantio.com/why-is-film-important-to-society/>

In this 2022 article, Paul Jenkins reflects on films' stamp on society and their success rate over the past century. The author theorizes that the film has made an impact because it closely follows humanity's behavior, emotions, fantasies, and hopes. At the same time, the author believes that film is of such high value to society because of its true nature to take pictures and make thoughts come to life, so there is an inspiration.

Krauth, Charles P. "The Bible: A Perfect Book [Journal Article]." *Lutheran Library Publishing Ministry*, 2019. <https://www.lutheranlibrary.org/s38-krauth-bible-a-perfect-book/>

In his 2019 book, Charles P. Krauth discusses the Biblical authority of the perfect Word of God. Krauth analysis the current trend to degrade the Bible because it was written in the past and in the context of a different culture. Through Scripture, the author concludes that the word of God is living, breathing, and unchanging text that was inspired by God and written by God's chosen people.

Laughlin, Cheryl. "Faith-Based Screenwriting Roadmap (a.k.a. Writing Without the F-Bomb)."

Script Magazine, Dec. 2016. <https://scriptmag.com/features/faith-based-screenwriting-roadmap-k-writing-without-f-bomb>

Cheryl Laughlin's article about writing and faith analyzes the process of digging deeper and finding creative ways to keep an intense emotion instead of using language that does not always bring glory to God. Through her statistics, interviews, and personal commentary, Laughlin observes that when writing a message, there should be minimal roadblocks for an audience member to see what the creator is saying. The author calls

creators to action to refrain from overusing content that could distract audience members from enjoying a film or television series.

Mambrol, Nasrullah. "Analysis of The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring." *Literary Theory and Criticism*, Feb. 2021. <https://literariness.org/2021/02/18/analysis-of-the-lord-of-the-rings-the-fellowship-of-the-ring/>

In the 2021 article, author Nasrullah Mambrol discusses and defines the literary theory and how it is showcased through Peter Jackson's The Lord of the Ring Trilogy. In his writings, the author pulls out many of the deeper meanings meant for audience members to ponder further. Finally, the author concludes that the film's message is not far beyond fairytales but for everyday people on the daily.

Marsh, Clive. "Theology and the Practice of Meaning-Making." *The Expository Times*, Nov. 2007, p. 67–73. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.1177/0014524607084086>

In his expository article, Clive Marsh expounds upon the idea of making theology a practice of thought and lifestyle. The author argues that while knowledge of the Word of God is vital, living out the Scripture's contents is what makes a difference in the world. Marsh concludes that Christians are not called to be lukewarm but on fire for the Lord, our God, creator of the Heavens and earth.

Marsh, Clive. "Theology in practice, in an age of wizards, hobbits and vampires." *Practical Theology*, Mar. 2020, p. 48-59, DOI: [10.1080/1756073X.2020.1735717](https://doi.org/10.1080/1756073X.2020.1735717)

Clive Marsh observes the blending of theology and faith in the film industry in the last 25 years. Marsh reflects on how creators fill some empty spaces of the film with deeply rooted Biblical themes to overflow the spaces with the goodness of God. The author analyzes The Lord of the Rings trilogy and Hobbit trilogy to solidify his thoughts that by adding The Message to a film's message, the story goes beyond the screen and brings glory to God.

Mauck, Kimberly. "INSIDE STORY: Hollywood seeks-and needs-Christian screenwriters." *The Christian Chronicle*, Jul. 2014. <https://christianchronicle.org/hollywood-seeks-and-needs-christian-screenwriters/>

In her brief 2014 article, Kimberly Mauck's writing acts as a call to action for believers to learn the craft of screenwriting to spread the Gospel through art. However, the author goes beyond this idea by reflecting on how believers should acknowledge culture so that normal/unlabeled Christian films and faith can blend regularly.

Mayward, Joel. "Religious Cinema for Non-Believers: Martin Scorsese's 'Silence' | BW/DR." *Bright Wall/Dark Room*, Apr. 2019, <https://www.brightwalldarkroom.com/2019/04/10/martin-scorsese-silence-2016/>

Joel Mayward takes a stab at uncovering the religious themes of the film *Silence* and attempts to discover how a non-believer might interpret such drastic lengths the characters of the film go in the name of religion. Persecution, devotions, and intense spiritual disciplines of the priest are some themes examined. The article concludes with the importance of imagination and how film can ignite such inspiration.

McCracken, Brett. “‘The Crown’ Episode that Finds Faith in a Secular Age.” *The Gospel Coalition*, Jan. 2020. <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/the-crown-episode-that-finds-faith-in-a-secular-age/>

During his analysis of a vital episode of Netflix's *The Crown*, Brett McCracken writes on the battle that members of the Royal family had to fight to remain under the laws of The Church of England, a Christian institution. McCracken notes that only The Queen of England truly embodied faith and spiritual discipline; many of the other members still abided by the law, God's law, in the show. The author concludes that it is essential for all filmmakers not to hide from the story's truths but to illuminate them instead.

McNutt, David. “Film & Religion: An Introduction – By Paul V.M. Flesher and Robert Torry; The Routledge Companion to Religion and Film – Edited by John Lyden; *Theology Goes to the Movies: An Introduction to Critical Christian Thinking* – By Clive Marsh; The Religion and Film Reader – Edited by Jolyon Mitchell and S. Brent Plate.” *International Journal of Systematic Theology*, Mar. 2012. <https://onlinelibrary-wiley-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/doi/full/10.1111/j.1468-2400.2010.00518.x>

In this article, the author compares film and theology, showcasing the importance of blending one with the other. McNutt emphasizes the importance of spreading the Good News as it is commanded by the Great Commission and how there are more effective ways to evangelize to non-believers. The author concluded with examples of well-made and critically acclaimed films that blend this theory well and pave the way for other films to do the same.

Oussayfi, Taieb. “The representation of religion in American motion pictures during the 20th

Century.” *Medium*, Jul. 2018. <https://medium.com/@taieboussayfi/the-development-of-the-representation-of-religion-in-american-motion-pictures-during-the-20th-651f9c8855d8>

Taied Oussayfi discusses the mass indulgence of film in the United States and how it serves as one of the primary forms of entertainment. The author acknowledges that because film reflects and copies humanity, there is nothing off limits from making it to large audiences; Oussayfi highlights politics, horror, mental health, and the Gospel. The author concludes with his thoughts and hopes that there will be more blending of faith and film despite the spiritual closed-mindedness.

Pannu, Parveen and Chopra, Getta. “Themes and Messages Encoded in Films: A Case Study.”

ResearchGate, Dec. 2020.

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/347950823_Themes_and_Messages_Encoded_in_Films_A_Case_Study

In this 2020 case study, authors Parveen Pannu and Getta Chopra discuss the importance of a clear and concise message of good morals. The authors discuss the statistics that showcase this theory and how having no message or message that is rooted in things such as selfishness can cause trauma to audience members. The article concludes with some of the success rates of films with truth and goodness in the subtext and plot.

Pybus, Kenneth. “The Chosen’ producers give God credit for phenomenal success.” *The*

Christian Chronicle, Dec. 2021. <https://christianchronicle.org/the-chosen-producers-give-god-credit-for-phenomenal-success/>

Author Kenneth Pybus reports the words of the creators of *The Chosen*. In his short article, he analyzes the need for Christian films in the industry and the need to rely on The Holy Spirit for the message to work with audience members. The author concludes with a quote about how the creators desire to keep moving mountains in film for the good of the Kingdom.

Robinson, Heather. "Why religious movies like 'Breakthrough' are attracting non-believers."

New York Post, May. 2019. <https://nypost.com/2019/05/18/why-religious-movies-like-breakthrough-are-attracting-non-believers/>

In her 2019 article, Heather Robinson analyzes the boom of Christian films and Christian themes within classic films that are becoming popular and finding great success. The author focuses on hope and how there is only one trustworthy source of hope which is attractive to all. Robinson concludes that though there will always be divisions on religion, race, and gender, there is a simple yearning for goodness and hope which can be found in Christ Jesus.

Scrivener, Glen. "Evangelism Made Simple: The Key to Overcoming Your Fear." *desiringGod*,

Jan. 2018. <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/evangelism-made-simple>

In his informative article, Glen Scrivener unpacks the foundation of evangelism and how believers are called to use it as a tool for the advancement of The Great Commission. The author discusses the spiritual discipline's styles, themes, and old practices. The author concludes with a thought that showcases God's glory, which can make evangelism easier and the duty of a believer.

Tallerico, Brian. "Unbroken movie review & film summary." *Roger Ebert.com*, Dec. 2014.

<https://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/unbroken-2014>

In Brian Tallerico's article, he expounds on and summarizes the 2014 film *Unbroken*. The author breaks down sections and scenes of the film and compares them to the actual events of history and the life of Louis Zamperini. Tallerico concludes his article by acknowledging the mastery of showcasing the Gospel while creating beautiful cinematography.

Towns, Elmer L. "Martin Luther on Sanctification." *Liberty University Scholars Crossing*, 1969, p. 115-122.

https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1013&context=towns_articles

In his article dissecting Martin Luther's view and theology of sanctification, Towns compared Luther's theology with John Wesley, a famous 18th-century theologian who views grace above all. The author discusses the deep meaning and often misunderstood theology of Luther, which is more complex compared to Wesley's "grace above all." The author ends with comments on the validity of the Lutheran theology of sanctification.

Trottier, David. *The Screenwriters Bible: A Complete Guide to Writing, Formatting, and Selling Your Script- 7th Edition Expanded and Updated*. Los Angeles, Silman-James Press, 2016, p. 5, 95, 116-117, 192-193, 216.

In Trottier's books, the author dedicates himself to teaching writers the basic of screenwriting format, industry standards, and how to perfect and sell a screenplay. The author also showcases how to write good dialogue and how to write for the screen for that words on the page can come to life on the screen. Overall, this book acts as an encyclopedia for screenwriters.

Vorontzov, Dimitri. "The Cultural Foundations of Screenwriting: Abrahamism, Part 2." *Script Magazine*, Jan. 2021. <https://scriptmag.com/screenplays/the-cultural-foundations-of-screenwriting-abrahamism-part-2>

In his article, author Dimitri Vorontzov writes on the influx of film in Western Cultures and how it pertains to religion. The author celebrates that religion, specifically Christianity, floods into every nation and art form so that there are more profound meanings and messages at almost every corner. Vorontzov concludes his article with the argument that art and filmmaking would not be in the same space it is without Christianity.

Whitley, Donald S. *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*. Colorado Springs, Navpress, 1991, p. 4, 6.

In Donald Whitley's book, the author tackles the overall topic of spiritual disciplines and how it is best practice for Christians to exercise holiness and faithfulness. Whitley breaks down the eleven main spiritual disciplines through chapters where he also cites scripture. The book ends with an understanding that Christians will live in faith and grow closer to God through being spiritually fit.

Wilder, Amos N. "Christianity and the Arts: The Historic Divorce and the Contemporary Situation." *The Christian Scholar*, Dec. 1957, p. 261–68. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41177036>. Accessed 5 Nov. 2022.

Amos Wilder writes about the theory of art history and Christianity, reflecting on how one cannot be separate from the other because God inspired early art and creation. However, the author discusses that over history, the organic evidence and relationship

between art and faith fade more with time. The author concludes and calls for a reformation like one of the days of old that protest like the separation.

Wilkinson, Alissa. "Christian Movies: Why Faith-Based Films Hurt Religion." *Thrillist*, Mar. 2016. <https://www.thrillist.com/entertainment/nation/christian-movies-why-gods-not-dead-and-faith-based-films-hurt-religion>

In her 2016 article, Alissa Wilkinson laments her disdain for "Christian Movies." The author, though a Christian herself, discusses her desire to produce better quality films that are not labeled as "purely Christian" because it lessens the impact for non-believers. The author discusses the term "faith audience" and how Hollywood has since attached negative condemnations to audience members who have faith in Jesus. The author concludes with her excitement for the future of Christian filmmaking.

Willard, Dallas. "Spiritual Disciplines, Spiritual Formation, and the Restoration of the Soul." *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, p. 101-109. <https://doi.org/10.1177/009164719802600108>

Dallas Willard discusses the importance of practicing faith through spiritual disciplines and developing believers closer to Christ in this article. The author argues that practicing spiritual disciplines as an individual strengthens the world as a whole because individuals can spread the Gospel effectively, spiritually, and efficiently. Willard concludes his article with the reminder that through practicing spiritual disciplines, believers are seeing the justification and sanctification of Christ in their relationship with the Almighty.

Young, Scott H. "Do Hard Things." *Scott H. Young*, Jan. 2012, <https://www.scotthyoung.com/blog/2012/01/16/do-hard-things/>

In his 2012 article, Scott H. Young discusses the importance of working hard in all seasons of life, whether in the depths of despair or rose gardens. The author states that the best way to live life is by choosing the most complex options, which produces a stronger person and promotes constant growth. The author concludes the article by discussing the joy that comes with accomplishment,