1 EXT. KAY'S FLAT MANSION BLOCK - LONDON - DAWN

CLOSE SHOT on A WINDOW in an imposing EDWARDIAN TOWER BLOCK. A WOMAN is there in PYJAMAS nursing a MUG of TEA -Kay - 31 years old, She passes a shabby YELLOW DOOR - a sign - WEST END INTRODUCTION AGENCY -

INT. WAITING ROOM INTRODUCTION AGENCY - LONDON DAY 1947

6

7

6

- A threadbare waiting room Mismatched sofa and chairs, outdated READERS DIGESTS. SEVERAL PEOPLE sit waiting. A YOUNG MAN in a DE-MOB suit with only one arm, ANOTHER, pallid and haunted, smoking a ROLL UP. A COIFFURED WOMAN thirties - sliding them dismayed looks.

A GIRL behind a desk. VIV - 27 years old, a splash of red lipstick, matching nails. Her somewhat pin-up appearance masks an inner disappointment she can't yet acknowledge.

BRYANT (O.S.) Too flighty. I had a belly full of that with the last girl -

INT. INTERVIEW ROOM/INTRODUCTION AGENCY - DAY 1947

7

A lack lustre room, shelves of FILES alphabetically marked, "MALE A - H." "FEMALE H - M". HELEN sits behind the desk -25 years old. Her blonde English Rose beauty masks a gnawing uncertainty about her - a girl who is still work in progress. A MAN sits opposite her - de-mob suit and Brylcreem hair. His name is BRYANT. He is leafing through Bheir PHOTOGRAPHS A FIRE-ESCAPE GANTRY outside the office window - Viv and Helen sit dangling stockinged feet, sharing a cigarette.

I'll bring my brother, he could do with a night out. (then)
And you can bring your chap. About time I got to meet him

A flicker in Helen's face - quickly camouflaged.

HELEN

Sounds like fun.

She swiftly clambers through the window. Viv sits a moment, cigarette in hand. O.S. the sound of a wolf whistle "Need some company up there, love?"

Viv, smiling, momentarily gratified: but the moment passes her smile fades - a strangely haunted look replaces it.

INT. JULIA'S STUDY/INTRODUCTION AGENCY- LONDON DAY 1947 9

A WOMAN hammers at a TYPEWRITER, cigarette in mouth, myopic focus there. 31 years old, an artisan Lauren Bacall look to her. This is JULIA. The TELEPHONE rings, she picks up.

JULIA (INTO PHONE)

Yep?

9

HELEN (INTO PHONE) - Just wanted to hear the sound of your voice. (then) As ever.

She disconnects. Julia's face - a thread of disquiet there. She resumes typing -

10 INT. PARLOUR/MUNDY'S HOUSE - WHITE CITY - EARLY EVE 1947 10

Locks of hair, dropping onto a mosaic carpet - beyond, dark furniture, flock wall paper, GAS LAMPS exuding flickering fish tail flames, memorabilia of George V1 -

> VIV Sit still, I'll have your ear off.

DUNCAN

Bossy boots.

Her brother sits in a chair, (aged 23) a tea cloth over his shoulder while she cuts his hair. Deceptively boyish, a sweet nature often tormented by disconcerting desires. Myriad CLOCKS start to CHIME one after another.

VIV

Don't they drive you mad?

DUNCAN

Barely notice them now.

The door opens, MR. MUNDY shuffles in bearing a plate of SANDWICHES. Late sixties, hollow features, thinning hair, a shrewd perspicacity to him

MUNDY Thought we'd treat ourselves to tea in the parlour this time. (to Vivian) Fish paste alright, dear?

She smiles weakly: he gives her the creeps. He exits.

VIV Helen and I are talking about going to the cinema one night. ...Helen from work? You should come along.

DUNCAN This isn't you trying to match make I hope? VIV She's already got a chap. We can have a bite after. Do you good to have some fun for once.

He doesn't respond. She snips on a moment.

VIV (CONT'D)

You're done.

He crosses to a mirror to check the cut. She watches him

VIV (CONT'D) You belong at home with Dad and me, Duncan. Not in this ...museum

He meets her eyes in the mirror.

DUNCAN Do you think if we keep having this conversation, it will come out the way you want?

VIV

Can you not even visit? Show your face once in a -

DUNCAN - I can't go back to that house! You bloody know why!

This is laced in panic. A thumping at the door breaks the moment. Duncan opens it. Mundy enters with a tea tray.

MUNDY

(to Viv) Mats and cosy, Duncan?

He sets down the tray. Duncan crosses to a SIDEBOARD. He pulls out two TEA COSIES, one shaped like A CAT the other A THATCHED COTTAGE. He displays them -

DUNCAN

Cat or cottage?

MUNDY

The cat, why not?

Viv, watching their interaction: it's hard to decipher her expression. They sit at the table: Mundy reaches out a hand, Duncan grasps it. Viv, a stab of disquiet - Duncan reaches for her hand, she realizes it's to say Grace.

MUNDY (CONT'D)

We thank for you the gift of the food, Ch Lord and we will keep in mind that lust and covertness are powerless in the face of your forgiveness. Amen. (then) Shall I be mother?

11

EXT. MUNDY'S HOUSE - WHITE CITY - - EARLY EVE 1947

11

Modest Victorian terrace, drably respectable. The front door opens, Duncan and Viv emerge. She briskly kisses him

> VIV See you next week.

She starts to go, then turns back -

VIV (CONT'D) - Even if you can't come home, Duncan, can you not at least find people your own age to live with? (sotto) I mean, it's not like you owe him anything. It's just not... healthy.

She goes. He uneasily watches her. Mundy joins him, rests a hand on his shoulder.

 12
 EXT. LANCASTER GATE - LONDON - EVENING 1947
 12

Falling light - Viv peering at her ref

Her gaze rests on the LOCKED GARAGE DOORS - sudden confliction in her face - paralysed by the memories it evokes.

They prove too much - she hastens away -

14 INT. LIVING ROOM - KAY'S FLAT - LONDON - EVENING 1947 14

Darkness - a key in the door. Kay enters, snaps on a light. She drops something on the table - *THE RADIO TIMES* -

15 INT. BATHROOM - JULIA'S FLAT - NIGHT - 1947 15

Julia, reading *THE RADIO TIMES* in the bath - sauna-like heat, tiles trickling with condensation. She and Helen are at opposites ends. Julia smokes a cigarette as she reads -

Helen lies watching her. Her gaze drifts down at their legs, entwined under the water.

HELEN ... Our legs are all mixed up. You can't tell which belongs to who.

Julia, intent on reading.

HELEN (CONT'D)

Can I see?

Julia passes the RADIO TIMES - Helen studies the PICTURE of her in it -

HELEN (CONT'D) You look so glamorous.

JULIA You're biased.

HELEN So I should hope.

She reaches for the soap - leans to massage Julia's breasts until they are covered in a froth of lather. Julia, arching in pleasure - Helen soaps her under her arms works down to massage her hands - finger by finger -

> HELEN (CONT'D) Do you think it's wrong, being so happy when there's been so much suffering in the world?

JULIA All the more reason not squander it.

A sensitized beat.

HELEN Do you think I do squander it?

Julia meets her eyes.

JULIA I think you feel you've forfeited the right to be happy, to atone for past sins.

Helen, this impacts. She opts for mischief to deflect: flicks water at her.

HELEN How about present sins?

She knows Julia finds such girlish antics irresistible. A brief tussle ensues -

JULI A

St op! Behave!

HELEN Not until you say it. You know I'll make you eventually.

JULIA I concede! ...I love you.

HELEN

You better.

Her lips hungrily seek Julia's -

16

6 EXT. HOTEL KITCHEN/BACK ENTRANCE - LONDON - DAY 1947 16

A BACK DOOR to a SHABBY HOTEL. A parked VAN parked nearby bearing an insignia "*LONDON LAUNDRY COMPANY*". Duncan, wearing a grubby KITCHEN APRON, is loading crates of DIRTY LINEN into it.

A YOUNG MAN approaches up the ALLEY beyond: checking doorways. An easy confidence about him, hair longer than is the fashion, an open necked shirt, tweed jacket - FRASER. He halts, seeing Duncan. A moment before he speaks -

FRASER

Duncan spins to face him - scalded in recognition -

DUNCAN

...Fraser.

Fraser crosses to grab his hand - pump it - punching his shoul der with his other hand.

9.

FRASER They said at front desk l'd find you here... You've not changed one iota! Not one bit!

Duncan, trying to gather himself -

DUNCAN ... How did you know where to -

- I went back

FRASER - My address, phone number. Call or drop round, what ever suits.

He hands Duncan the scrap of paper, replaces the PENCIL behind his ear. The familiarity of this impacts on Duncan -

FRASER (CONT'D) Don't leave it too long, okay?

He starts to go, turns back -

FRASER (CONT'D) Glad I found you, Duncan. You've been on my mind a lot. (then) Call me!

He goes. Duncan gazing after him, splintered hope in his face now.

17 EXT/INT. REGGIE'S CAR/RURAL ROADS - DAY 1947

- Sunlight splintering through trees - Viv gazing up at them as Reggie's sports car races down country roads -

She's striking in a floral cotton dress, a silk scarf tied beneath her chin. He puts his hand on her knee, slides it up her thigh. She playfully slaps it away, gazes back up at the awning of trees overhead -

18 EXT. FIELD - WOODS - BUCKINGAMSHIRE - DAY 1947

A vista of fields fringed by trees. Reggie chasing Viv over the field. He catches her - twirls her in his arms.

CUT TO

Reggie and Viv stretched out on a rug, a FLASK of TEA and SANDWICHES there. He is grazing her arm with a blade of grass. He looks up at the sky. A KESTREL circles there -

REGGIE See that? Kestrel. Bird of prey. He's seen a mouse or -

VIV He can see a mouse from up there?

REGGIE He can see everything.

He pulls over his KNAPSACK - pulls out a bottle of BEER.

18

17

REGGIE (CONT'D) The first place we ever went to together remember? When I was home on leave that time -

She doesn't respond.

REGGIE (CONT'D) ... You know it's coming up for six years for us?

He rests his hand on her knee -

REGGIE (CONT'D) When I first saw you on that train, it was like I'd been carrying your face in my head all my life. That I made you come to life, just by wishing it. (a different tone) I thought if I could make you real, maybe I could wish the crap in the rest of my life away too -

He reaches for her hand, spreads her fingers, kissing her palm - sudden cogency in him now.

REGGIE (CONT'D) You're my life raft, Viv. It's only you keeps me afloat. (then) If you hadn't forgiven me... If you'd walked out of my life... (beat) I'd have no life. Not one worth living.

She touched by this, but conflicted also. He kisses her:

REGGIE (CONT'D) My love, precious girl...

She, the urgency of his need touches her also -

REGGIE (CONT'D) God I forget how soft your skin is -

VIV Reggie - we can't - not out here -

REGGIE My dearest love - let me in please -

She, still conflicted. She slides a hand into his flies, starts to masturbate him

 $\begin{array}{c} {\sf REGGIE} \mbox{ (CONT'D)} \\ {\sf Ch} \mbox{ God}, \mbox{ oh } yes... \end{array}$

He, his arousal

20 EXT. LONDON STREET - EARLY EVE - 1947

Viv, skidding to a halt, scanning the street - inexplicable rising distress in her now - there's no sign of Kay - it's like she was never there.

CUT TO.

Reggie, in the car, fingers impatiently rippling on the steering wheel. Viv returns - still fighting emotion reaches for her BAG.

> VIV You go on. I'll get the tube from here.

He, trying to fathom what's going on with her. She starts to go - the tin of PEACHES is on the passenger seat -

REGGIE Don't forget your -

She, tears spilling now -

VIV

... Give them to your wife!

She spins off. His face -

21 INT. STAIRS/LANDING - PEARCE HOUSE - - EVENING 1947

A canopy of shadow. Viv, mounting the stairs of a modest semi detached. The door to her father's bedroom is ajar.

She looks within: he's in bed asleep, mouth agape, snoring.

22 INT. VIV'S BEDROOM - PEARCE HOUSE - EVENING - 1947 22

The tinkle of A MUSIC BOX as Viv opens it - her bedroom more that of a teenager: chintz and soft toys, posters of ELIZABETH TAYLOR and CARY GRANT.

- She pulls folded tissue paper from THE MUSIC BOX. A ring shaped like a SERPENT is inside it. She slides it onto her finger, rotates it so it looks like a wedding band - meets her mascara streaked eyes in the mirror -

23 INT/EXT. NANCY'S FLAT - LONDON - EVENING - 1947 23

Falling light - an EDWARDIAN BUILDING split into flats.

A WOMAN walks approaches - early thirties, a tumble of red hair: once a head turner but an unkempt abstraction about her now. This is NANCY.

20

21

She's about to mount the steps to the FLATS - halts. A FIGURE sits there - it's Kay - Nancy halts in recognition -

NANCY

Gory be. Finally.

KAY

... Better late than never.

A beat.

NANCY

Two years late. I swore, if you ignored my last letter, it would be the last l'd send. I'd give you up as a lost cause.

She steps forward, opens her arms -

NANCY (CONT'D)

Tardy bitch.

Kay concedes to the embrace - she is unused to human contact - but cannot help reciprocating -

24 INT. LIVING ROOM - NANCY'S FLAT - EVENING - 1947

24

- Chaotic clutter: dead fire in the grate, dying flowers where was once there was elegance is now a debris of OLD PAPERS, BOOKS, MAGAZINES, discarded piles of CLOTHES lying where they were dropped. Kay, her gaze drifting over it all, then resting on A CARDBOARD BOX in a corner, a stack of EMPTY LIQUOR BOTTLES in it.

Nancy is preparing GIN and TONICS. She's an expert: it's her choice of a velvet anaesthetic.

NANCY Remember those lethal Gin Slings Lauren used to make? After two shots you could barely see straight. Happy days, eh?

Kay's gaze drifts to a PHOTOGRAPH of a young RAF AIRWAN, then over to a box stacked with empty GIN BOTTLES.

Nancy carries the drinks over.

NANCY (CONT'D)

Chin, chin.

Kay mutely toasts her. Her hand holding the glass is shaking. Nancy catches this - their eyes meet.

KAY I look like hell, I know. Nancy wisely makes no comment on this.

NANCY ...So spill. What's been going on with you?

KAY

Not much.

Nancy waits for more..

KAY (CONT'D) - I got left some money - my aunt in Holland Park with the antique shop? ... So I'm what you call a lady of leisure. Until the well runs dry anyway.

NANCY You didn't fancy running the shop yourself?

Kay wordlessly dissents -

.

NANCY (CONT'D)

(curious)

What on earth do you do with yourself all day?

KAY

Walk mostly.

y INANOWN at'sottleft so2j8.1s6ce 0 T.01 loatest58 Tc-. (puzzled) ...Walk where?

KAY

Anywhere. Wherever.

She rises, admolesuttijs5 - 2mT02ha0y1672n1sTD-.0d28T.l2tlesits

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у

NANCY You were the bravest person I knew.

The simplicity of this disquiets Kay.

I think now it's easy to be brave in war time.

A moment before she speaks again -

KAY (CONT'D) (a different tone) I thought I was better than this, Nancy. Stronger than this. ...But everything always goes back to that night. I try to make things matter - other people matter - but I always end up back there -

NANCY The night you lost her - or the night you found her?

A beat.

KAY

Bot h.

Nancy, compassion there.

KAY (CONT'D) ... Most people you pass in the street have lost a heck of a lot more than me. They've lost a child or ... They're getting on with their lives, aren't they? They're getting over it. (harsh) "Getting over it" as if grief is like a bombed out house. You can pick your way through the rubble and come out the other side -

She halts - suddenly chagrined -

KAY (CONT'D) Listen to me - going on about loss to you of all people -

She reaches for her coat -

KAY (CONT'D) I'm not fit company for anyone but myself.

KAY

NANCY You dare run out on me now.

She rises, takes Kay's gin -

NANCY (CONT'D) You're human, Kay, join the bloody club. (then) Not enough Gin is the problem Must be losing my touch.

She goes to replenish it. Kay's gaze once more rests on the PHOTOGRAPH of she and Nancy in uniform, laughing into camera -

Bygone days.

EXT. HOTEL KITCHEN/BACK

FRASER I sort of lost my bearings. It was like I'd been plucked out of my own life into someone else's -I didn't know which way was up.

Duncan, this resonates with him

FRASER (CONT'D) - I had to get away - I did a stint up North for a refugee charity. Salving my conscience you might say. (then)

Jews mostly, from all over Europe... God, what those people went through. They told me terrible things, things you wouldn't believe human beings could do to each other. ... But they told me marvellous things too. The unexpected goodness of people... Their courage and -(beat) I started writing down their

stories, sent them off to newspapers. I struck lucky, West London Gazette took me on as a reporter.

Duncan, impressed by this - Fraser catches his expression.

FRASER (CONT'D) Nothing earth shattering - local stories mostly. Pieces on local industry, Britain getting back on her feet, the old Bulldog spirit, all that malarky. (then) Anyway, it's you I want to hear about. How's that sister of yours doing?

Duncan flashes him a look.

FRASER (CONT'D) I remember her from the prison visits. ...Viv, isn't it?

DUNCAN She works in Soho now, one of those introduction agencies. I forget the name.

Fraser, assimilating this.

FRASER You still live at home with she and your Dad?

DUNCAN (dissents) ...l'min digs just round the corner, off Wood Lane.

FRASER So near the Scrubs? God, half the reason I left London was to

get away from the stench of that bloody place. (beat) You should do the same, make a

fresh start somewhere. Nothing to keep you here is there?

Duncan makes no comment.

FRASER (CONT'D) (intrigued) Ah-hah, so there is someone to keep you here? You'll have to ask me back so I can meet them

Duncan, uneasy now. Fraser picks up on this -

FRASER (CONT'D) I'll wormit out of you eventually. Coaxing information out of people is my stock in trade now. I never take no for an answer. (beat) Top up?

He takes Duncan's glass, retreats to enter the pub.

Duncan, his unease escalating. He makes a decision, rises, heads for the exit.

Fraser, about to enter the pub is forced to step back out to allow AN INEBRIATED SOLDIER to emerge; he glances over, catching sight of Duncan's retreating figure -

27 EXT. STREET - PUB - SHEPHERD'S BUSH - - DAY 1947

27

- Duncan, sprinting down the road like the hounds of hell are after him Fraser emerging into the street beyond -

FRASER ... Duncan? Duncan!

He sets off after him -

28 EXT. WORMWOOD SCRUBS - LONDON - DAY 1947

The ominous contours of the PRISON capped with BARBED WIRE. Duncan running passed it.

Fraser rounds the corner after him -

29 EXT. MUNDY'S HOUSE - WHITE CITY - LONDON - DAY 1947 29

Duncan, running up the street, Fraser a breathless distance behind. Duncan swings inside Mundy's house.

Fraser halts to catch his breath - suddenly Mundy emerges from the house, to place milk bottles on the step.

Fraser - scalded in recognition -

30 EXT. INTRODUCTION AGENCY - SOHO - DAY 1947

The familiar yellow door of the INTRODUCTION AGENCY. Fraser is hovering outside it -

> HELEN (O.S.) How about this one? Twenty six years old, ex Commando, awarded the Victoria Cross -

31 INT. INTERVIEW ROOM/INTRODUCTIONS AGENCY - DAY 1947

30

A coiffured debutante type at the desk, stooped over MALE CLIENT DETAILS. Viv is at a filing cabinet. Beyond, the PHONE starts ringing in the reception office. The GIRL takes a closer look -

> GIRL CLIENT Is that a glas

28

REGGIE (INTO PHONE) (CONT'D) Listen, it has to be Thursday instead of tonight. I got roped into some damm cocktail do with the neighbours.

Fraser enters the WAITING ROOM Viv glances at him, gestures to take a seat.

VIV (INTO PHONE) (quickly: formal) What time Thursday, sir?

REGGIE (INTO PHONE) Seven o'clock, usual bench, Regents Park? I'm counting the minutes, my love.

Viv disconnects, picks up some FORMS, turns back to Fraser.

VIV You need to fill these in. As much detail as you can.

FRASER Actually I'm not here after a date. It's you I want. (then) Viv, isn't it?

Her face.

FRASER (CONT'D) It's true what they say, third

time is lucky. Given this is the third introduction agency l've tried...

She, waiting for him to get to the point -

FRASER (CONT'D) You don't remember me, do you? Robert Fraser? I shared a cell with your brother in the Scrubs -

She, threaded in disquiet now.

FRASER (CONT'D) I ran into him the other day. (then) I'm concerned about him As I'm sure you are.

She, still wary.

VIV A cafe, at the top of Poland Street. I finish in twenty minutes. I'll see you there. He meets her eyes, goes. She, disquiet escalating.

33 INT. CAFE - SOHO - LONDON - DAY - 1947

OI cloth table cloths, Bentwood chairs. A doting HUSBAND and WIFE at a table, spoon feeding A BABY.

Viv, nearby watching. The sight compels her. Fraser joins her with two TEAS. He sees the ring on her finger.

FRASER Duncan never said you were married.

VIV

I'm not.

His relief surprises him She rotates the ring, reveals THE SERPENT. He inspects it.

FRASER

... The Agnostics have a theory that the serpent isn't the purveyor of evil like the Bible says but knowledge. ... That's why people are so scared of it.

She's not sure what to make of this. They sit, the clatter of cutlery and chatter beyond.

FRASER (CONT'D) Look, I know it's queer, dropping into your life out of the blue like this -(then) But when I saw Duncan with Mundy the other night -

VIV - You went to their house?

He flicks her a look: ducks the question.

FRASER I mean, Mundy of all people! Didn't he get enough of himin prison? A boy like Duncan, it's just not right, is it?

VIV A "boy like him!" Why not just say what you mean?

He, surprised at her ant agonism

33

VIV (CONT'D) And why do you suddenly care so much about him? About who he lives with or -(realization dawns) Ch I see.

He meets her eyes.

FRASER

It's not like that. I'm not like that. Is that what you think?

VIV

... Maybe he went to Mundy's because he had nowhere else to go. He couldn't come home. "Never return to the scene of the crime" - isn't that what you cons say?

FRASER (gently) Why are you so angry?

She can't answer this. She just sits, twisting the ring.

FRASER (CONT'D) It can't be what you want, seeing him working in that dump of a hotel, living with Mundy in that peculiar way?

She's still wary of his motives: he senses this.

FRASER (CONT'D) Sharing a cell like we did... The truth is I wasn't always as kind to him as I should have been. (then) I want to do right by him now if I can. I need to do that.

She, conflicted again: he senses this.

FRASER (CONT'D) ...I used to watch you, in that visiting room When you walked in, it was like in the Wizard of Oz - you know - when it suddenly goes from black and white into Technicolour? (beat) Just for a few minutes, things didn't seem so utterly bloody bleak.

A charged look between them suddenly.

FRASER (CONT'D) I'd like to call you sometime. May I?

She, confliction there again. He senses this then realization dawns -

FRASER (CONT'D) There's someone else, of course.

He picks up her hand, looks at the RING.

FRASER (CONT'D) As if I'd ever get that Lucky.

He kisses her hand: their eyes lock again. He goes. She, unexpectedly bereft, looking at the RING again -

INT. SUBWAY TUNNEL -

A beat.

KAY You shoul dn't have gone to the trouble. ...l'd forgotten all about it.

VIV I'll never forget it. Or what you did for me.

This impacts on Kay. Their eyes briefly lock. Viv quickly kisses her.

VIV (CONT'D) God bless you!

She spins around, goes. Kay watches her - she looks down at the RING - emotion she had long since buried surfaces -

36 EXT. REGENT'S PARK - LONDON - EARLY EVE - 1947
 36 A marmal ade haze of twilight. Reggie is on a PARK BENCH He glances impatiently at his watch -

37 TELEPHONE BOX - REGENTS PARK/VI V'S HOUSE- EARLY EVE 1947 37

Reggie, pressing BUTTON A:

VIV (O.S. INTO PHONE) Streatham 212?

REGGIE (INTO PHONE) Where are you, love? I'm here waiting for you! -

Viv, in her HALL, phone in hand - turmoil there. She carefully replaces the receiver.

She glances into the sitting room her father is cleaning the SILVER. She reaches for her coat - quietly exits.

38 INT. KITCHEN/HELEN AND JULIA'S FLAT - - EVENING 1947 38

The table, set for dinner. Helen sitting there, smoking a cigarette, muted agitation there, foot jiggling. *TWENTY QUESTLONS* is playing on the radio -

She looks over at the clock: 9:15pm She crosses to the OVEN, pulls out a SHEPHERDS PIE. It's hotter than she thought, it scalds one of her hands. She plunges it under the tap.

26.

INT. JULIA'S STUDY - HELEN AND JULIA'S FLAT. EVENING 1947 39 39

Helen mooches in, crosses to Julia's desk, her injured hand wrapped in a dish cloth. An ASHTRAY laden with dog ends on the desk. Helen extracts one - Julia's lipstick is on it. She raises it, wipes the lipstick over her lips, savouring the taste of Julia on it.

She catches sight of JULIA'S DIARY - reaches for it - opens it on the current date. The word *URSULA* is written there. Her expression alters at the sight. She is about to replace the diary when she knocks over a MUG of coffee, drenching the typed pages of Julia's book.

HELEN

Ch no - please God no!

She tugs off the dishcloth - frantically mops the stained pages -

INT. STUDY/HELEN AND JULIA'S FLAT. EVENING - 1947 40

40

Helen, now asleep on the sofa. O.S. The sound of the front door: footsteps. A swish of a coat - Julia enters. She halts, looks down at Helen; it's hard to decipher her expression. Helen rouses, blinks awake.

> HELEN ... There you are. I waited supper for you.

She rouses, sits up -

JULI A I went to a concert.

She crosses to her desk, sees the debris of COFFEE SOAKED PAPERS there.

> JULIA (CONT'D) ... What the hell's happened here?

HELEN It was an accident... I'm so sorry. I'll retype it for you at the weekend, I will.

She watches helplessly as Julia uses blotting paper to sal vage the pages.

> JULIA God, what a mess -

Helen, culpability there - she deflects.

HELEN What was it - the concert?

Julia - without

HELEN ...I suppose there were others like her there.

JULIA You mean like us? Yes, as a matter of fact. (then) As it happens she invited you too. I told her you were unavailable.

Helen's face -

JULIA (CONT'D) Because you still can't cope with being around queers, can you? You just can't deal with it.

HELEN That is not true!

JULIA So why is it I never meet your friends? Or you never want to meet mine?

Helen can't answer this. Julia spoons COCOA into a mug -

JULIA (CONT'D)

When I do go out, do anything on my own - I have to come back to another of your inquisitions. Because apparently I'm so bloody irresistible that even if a girl isn't a raving lesbian when she meets me, she will be by the time I've got my hands on her.

HELEN

(quiet) You know why I do it. Because I'm afraid you no longer love me. (then) If you ever did. It wasn't just about revenge.

JULI A

(anger spilling) God, must it always come back to that?!

She flings a TEA SPOON into the sink - gathers herself.

JULIA (CONT'D) ...We can't go on like this, Helen. (MORE) Torturing each other, punishing each other over the past.

Helen, laced in dread.

JULIA (CONT'D) You need to find a place of your own. Sort out who you are, what it is you want.

She starts to go - Helen grabs her hand -

HELEN It's you I want!

Dropping to her knees -

HELEN (CONT'D) Remember when we met? You I of me then! I can be that person again - I can! I want to be that per son!

Julia, reluctant compassion there now. She gently pulls Helen to her feet, exits.

Helen sinks to the table, etched in self loathing. A CARVING KNIFE is there: vol canic despair engulfs her. She snatches up the KNIFE, places her scalded hand flat on the table, closes her eyes, plunges the knife straight down on it in defiant nihilism

She opens her eyes. The knife missed her hand, to cleave into the table between her fingers.

42 INT. KITCHEN - MUNDY'S HOUSE - LONDON - NIGHT 1947 42

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Duncan hesitates, complies.

MUNDY (CONT'D) How was your day?

DUNCAN

The usual.

MUNDYNothing more from Fraser?

Duncan di ssent s.

MUNDY (CONT'D) We're better off without him lad.

He hands over a YELLOW DUSTER -

MUNDY (CONT'D) Dial needs a bit of clean if you've a mind.

He means the CLOCK FACE - Duncan picks it up, rubs at it with the duster. He glances at Mundy, stooped over the disembowelled CLOCK - screw driver in hand -

Duncan, as if time has stopped for him also -

44 EXT. CINEMA - LONDON - EVENING - 1947

- A POSTER for *FOREVER AMBER* - a blur of people exiting from the cinema - Kay is among them -

She starts walking - O.S. AN AMBULANCE SIREN wails - she halts listening to it. It triggers something in her. She turns back to go the opposite way - she has a new direction in mind - a purpose to her gait now -

45 EXT. AMBULANCE STATION - LONDON EVENING - 1947 45

Lengthening shadows of the encroaching night. The PADLOCKED Ambulance station doors. O.S. the sound of footsteps.

Kay approaches. She halts by the padlocked doors, impotently rattles them - wipes dust from the window, peers inside.

She stands gazing at the locked doors as if they hold the answer to an unspoken question.

A KALEIDOSCOPE OF IMAGES as we REWIND back in time - Kay outside Nancy's flat - Duncan cleaning the clock dial -Helen fighting with Julia - Viv with Fraser in the cafe -

31.

44

THE PACE ACCELERATES - STACCATO FLASHING IMAGES - Kay walking the streets - Viv and Helen in the dating agency -HURTLING DEEPER INTO THE PAST - Kay at the wheel of an Ambulance - Kay and Nancy trying to extinguish incendiaries - Kay carried the dead body of a CHILD - Helen twirling in red silk Pyjamas - Duncan cowering in his prison cell -THE DIZZY ARRAY OF IMAGES screeches to a sudden halt -

46 EXT. AMBULANCE STATION - LONDON - NIGHT 1944

The familiar cobbled street - the doors of the Ambulance station - no longer neglected and padlocked but open and functional - A PARKED AMBULANCE outside - another pulls up -Kay alights in AMBULANCE CREW uniform - now aged 28 - a mane of swept up hair - Nancy is with her. She too looks different, in spite of the uniform, a coiffured elegance about her.

46

<u>CAPTION:</u> THREE YEARS EARLIER - 1944

47 INT. BASEMENT AMBULANCE STATION - LONDON NIGHT 1944 47

- The only illumination is naked light bulbs. This is a waiting area where the AMBULANCE CREW wait for orders. Rows of camp beds against a wall, a cooking area, a KAY

So much for a quiet night. I had in mind a couple of fractures, maybe a nice old lady with a broken ankle -

HUGHES

A nice young lady you mean.

Kay winks at Nancy, glances at the sock Hughes is mending.

KAY

Women's work, Harry. People will talk.

HUGHES

You'd know all about that.

KAY

(unruffled) Sticks and stones. I've heard it all, lived to tell the tale.

O Neil, stooped over her pattern, a stab of embarrassment there; an edgy undercurrent beneath their banter.

HUGHES Not if Hitler gets his way. He'd have you lot strung up by your tits -

KAY - Another reason to bash the Bosch.

NANCY Break it up you two.

KAY (light) He started it, Mummy.

A sudden explosion nearby silences them A mist of dust and plaster falls, cups and sauces rattle on shelves, the light flickers. Q.S a PHONE RING BINKIE (CONT'D) Don't get too comfortable, Langrish. Night's not over yet.

She bustles off. Kay, cigarette in hand - gazing up at the naked light bulb above her - O.S. the echo of disembodied voices -

48 INT. VISITING ROOM - WORMWOOD SCRUBS - DAY 1944 48

MR. PEARCE

Good on him

DUNCAN So there's no shame in the army making you into a murderer? So long as it's for King and Country it's ok to have blood on your bando hands -

VI V (sotto)

VIV - Not that safe. Pentonville got hit by an incendiary bomb the other week, didn't it?

Pearce, di squi et ed agai n:

VIV (CONT'D) I go this way, Dad.

Pearce, puzzled -

VIV (CONT'D) Dinner with Betty from work? I told you, remember? (quickly) - Don't wait up!

She swiftly kisses him, goes. He stands disconsolately, heads into the TUBE.

50 EXT. LONDON HOTEL - EVENING - 1944

A modest HOTEL: an illuminated VACANCY SIGN. The kind of place frequented by TRAVELLING SALESMEN before the war.

Viv checks the hotel name - veiled anticipation about her -

51 INT. HOTEL ROOM - LONDON - EVENING - 1944

Dank floral wallpaper. A single bed, a threadbare eiderdown, a wardrobe, a hand basin in the corner.

The sound of a key in the door: Viv enters. She stands, regarding the room, it wasn't what she was expecting -

52 INT. BAR - HOTEL - LONDON - NIGHT - 1944

A dimly lit bar, a few tables, a scattering of GUESTS. The shimmer of optic lights from the bar.

Viv, now in a devastating silk LILAC dress, coiffured and made up, at a table keeping a tense eye on the door, reading A NEWSPAPER - the headline "ALLIES LAND AT ANZIO"

Reggie enters, heart stoppingly handsome in his ARMY UNIFORM He crosses, orders a GIN and TONIC. A moment later he eases into a table near Viv.

REGGI E

Eveni ng.

He tugs out his CIGARETTE CASE, proffers it.

36.

50

51

52

VIV I don't, thank you. REGGIE Mnd if I do? She dissents, reverts to her paper. He glances round the bar, puffs on his cigarette: his gaze returns to her. REGGIE (CONT'D) Let's hope we get a break t oni ght, eh? She looks at him REGGIE (CONT'D) No air raids. She nods. She discards the paper, picks up her bag. REGGIE (CONT'D) ... Something I said? VIV I have an appointment. REGGI E Lucky chap. She briefly meets his eyes. VΙV Good night. She starts to go - she left her ROOM KEY on the table. **REGGIE** Oh Miss? He holds out the key. Their eyes briefly engage again. REGGIE (CONT'D) My lucky number. She takes the key, goes. Reggie scans the bar again, reaches for her discarded newspaper. INT. HOTEL ROOM - LONDON NIGHT - 1944

Viv, pacing agitatedly. She halts to check the seams of her stockings. There's a knock at the door. She composes herself, opens it. Reggie darts inside.

REGGIE Bloody chamber maid's on the prowl - had to play hide and seek to avoid her -

53

37.

53

He tugs her to him, starts to nuzzle and kiss her.

REGGIE (CONT'D) Ch my glorious girl -VIV (asmile) - "It's my lucky number." You always have to spice it up, don't you?

He wrenches off his jacket - glances around the room -

REGIE Jesus, what a dump! I should have come ahead, checked it out - I MALE GUEST (O.S.) Room for another in there!

REGGI E

lgnore it.

He's devouring her with his lips now - the bed continues to creak under them Mock sounds of a climactic orgasm from the next room "Aaahh - aaaahh!"

Viv, tensing at the sound of it.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

Bloody hell!

He thumps on the wall. An idea strikes Viv, she pulls the eiderdown from the bed, lays it on the floor. She kneels on it, her hand outstretched to Reggie. He joins her there. The breathless disrobing continues -

O.S. The wail of AN AIR RAID WARNING.

REGGIE (CONT'D) Please God not now!

VΙV

Ignore it.

Their eyes lock. They are consumed in erotic need again - he slides her hand into his open fly -

RECGIE For you, my love. I just wish to God I had more to give you.

She kisses him - their passion escalating - as he thrusts inside her, Viv catches sight of a DUST BALL under the bed -

- Nearby is the crushed DAISY from her hair -

54 EXT/INT. AMBULANCE - LONDON STREETS - NIGHT 1944

54

TWO AMBULANCES driving down an uncannily deserted street -O.S. the clatter of AK-AK GUNS - the ominous drone of ENEMY AIRCRAFT. Search lights sweep the sky.

Kay is at the wheel of the first ambulance, Nancy beside her. Nancy is navigating with a street map and a torch. Both wear helmets, their hair tucked inside them

> NANCY I booked us into the Grand at Brighton for his next leave - I'd say for a second honeymoon except we never got to have a first one -(flinching) Ch Jesus!

39.

A shower of INCENDIARY BOMBS descends ahead, detonating into fire bombs as they hit the ground. Kay swerves to avoid them - she slams on the brakes.

NANCY (CONT'D)

Come on, Kay - not again!

But Kay is already signalling to Hughes in the second ambulance to slow down.

KAY (shouting) Go on ahead - we'll catch you up!

She scrambles out of the ambulance - darts to a pile of SANDBAGS, drags one over - drops it onto a fizzing, frothing incendiary -

NANCY

(resigned) Hells bells!

She gets out - the two of them haul more sandbags to extinguish the shoal of smouldering incendiaries littering the street. RESIDENTS appear out of the dark to help, zigzagging around the street like crazy Whirling Dervishes -

55 INT. BASEMENT - AMBULANCE STATION - - NIGHT 1944 55

Light splaying from the NAKED LIGHT BULB - the blur of CREW MEMBERS beneath, playing chequers, knitting, reading.

Kay sits crossed legged on her bed rolling a CIGARETTE, she looks up to see Binkie planted there -

> BINKIE I hear you've been up to your heroics again, Langrish.

Beyond, Hughes listens to the exchange.

BINKIE (CONT'D) Putting out incendiaries? How many times, it's not our responsibility.

KAY So what, we just drive by, let an entire street get reduced to ashes?

BINKIE You know the procedure. Either stick to it or l'll put you on manning the damn telephone.

Kay looks over at Hughes.

KAY

Loose lips.

HUGHES

For your own good, Langrish. You'll pull that stunt once too often one of these nights -

BI NKI E

(to all) I need a mortuary run. Who's not done it this week?

The CREW exchange looks. Hughes puts up a hand, O Neill hesitantly follows.

POLICE MAN

Direct hit on an Anderson shelter. We think now it was four kiddies, more limbs than we can account for.

Hughes and Kay exchange a look -

58 EXT. REAR GARDEN - GEORGIAN HOUSE - NIGHT - 1944

A Bruegal night mare - shifting beams of TORCHES in an overgrown rear garden. A vast crater is all that remains of the ANDERSON SHELTER. Shards of CORRUGATED IRON and debris hang from bushes - A RAG DOLL amongst them POLICE, and ARP WARDENS search the undergrowth for REMAINS and BODY PARTS. A YOUNG POLICE RESERVE is vomiting by the fence.

Kay appears out of the darkness carrying the armless body of a CHILD. She takes it over to Hughes, who helps lower it onto a stretcher. On another stretcher is the bloodied dismembered torso of the MOTHER.

Kay trudges back down the garden, crossing a POLICE MAN carrying a bloodied sheet around several CHILDREN'S LIMBS -

59 EXT. WORMWOOD SCRUBS - LONDON - DAWN - 1944 59

Tendrils of marmalade light smearing the night sky - O.S. the fragile refrain of a dawn chorus -

60 INT. PRISON CELL - WORMWOOD SCRUBS - DAWN - 1944 60

The dawn chorus Q.S. Duncan, restlessly alert in the bottom bunk. Fraser is asleep in the bunk above him

Duncan tenses as suddenly Fraser's hand flops down, to hang inches from his face. Duncan gazes at it a moment, cautiously extends his own hand. He halts it an inch away from Fraser's finger tips in untouching contact.

The sound of footsteps halts him, he withdraws his hand, closes his eyes. The METAL OBSERVATION SLIT in the door

58

61 INT. KITCHEN/KAY'S FLAT/RATHBONE PLACE - LONDON - DAY 1944 61

Kay at the kitchen table nursing a Gin, a fatigue about her more than just physical. She raises the glass to her lips but her hand is shaking too much to drink.

CUT TO.

Kay in front of a mirror. She extends a shaking hand, focuses on it until it steadies. She picks up a pair of kitchen scissors, unpins her hair, letting it cascade around her shoulders.

She raises the scissors -

62 INT. BEDROOM - KAY'S FLAT - RATHBONE PLACE - DAY 1944 62

A glimmer of light through the BLACK OUT curtains. A FIGURE lies asleep in the bed. Kay enters, now naked. Her hair is cut short like a boys.

She slides into bed, takes off her wrist watch and SERPENT RING, places them on the bed table. The figure in the bed rouses - it's HELEN, now aged 22. She blinks awake, gazing at Kay's shorn hair -

> HELEN ...What on earth have you done to yourself?

Kay, just lying there: she's trembling again. Helen - compassion there now - folding her into her arms -

HELEN (CONT'D) Why do you have to out there every night? No-one would think the worse of you if you didn't.

KAY

I would.

They just lie, Helen holding her in comfort.

HELEN

You should get some sleep.

KAY

I'll sleep when I'm dead.

She draws Helen to her - kisses her - consumed not just by desire but the need for human contact -

43.

- The dappled surface of the LAKE. Kay and Helen on a BENCH by beside it in the PARK, sharing A FLASK and lunchtime SANDWICHES.

Kay - gazing at the lake - she looks up at the sunlight filtering through the trees above them -

KAY I feel like one of those animals who only come out in the dark. (then) The daylight scares them

HELEN Nothing scares you, Kay.

She says it simply, like a statement of fact.

KAY At night it doesn't. I'm someone else then. (beat) I sometimes think I only started Iiv -1 y -n. hy st..es them

64 EXT. PATH - PARK - LONDON DAY - 1944

- Julia, hair swept up in a turban, wearing dusty dungarees walking up the path. In spite of her attire, she still looks striking. She freezes, catching sight of Kay and Helen crossing the grass to join the path, laughing together -

Kay - her laughter draining as she too sees Julia.

JULIA Hello stranger.

KAY

...Julia.

Helen, curiously looking between them

KAY (CONT'D) You remember Julia? We bumped into her at that Red Cross do at Christmas?

HELEN Of course, yes. ... Hello.

An hiatus of mutual awkwardness. She and Kay fall into step with Julia walking along the path to the PARK ENTRANCE - Julia slides a look at Kay -

> JULIA Your hair is different.

Kay makes no comment.

JULIA (CONT'D)

l like it.

She becomes aware of Helen watching her -

JULIA (CONT'D) (to Helen) Do you work round here?

HELEN Town Hall, Housing Department, relocating bomb victims ... And you?

JULIA Helping survey bomb damaged buildings. Speed up reconstruction if and when this bloody war ever ends.

They all walk on a moment:

45.

JULIA (CONT'D) (to Kay) I suppose you're still doing your trusty Ambulance bit every night? (to Helen: light)

KAY It was a "misaffection" that's all.

Helen, puzzled.

KAY (CONT'D) What we felt for each other wasn't entirely ... equal. (then) That's how I know it's right with us.

She kisses her fingers, touches Helen's lips with themsets off in the opposite direction to Julia. A moment later she turns, her hand raised to wave at Helen: she's still halted, looking at something.

Kay follows her gaze: she is fixed on the distantly retreating figure of Julia.

Kay, a stab of unease there without knowing why.

65 INT. CORRIDOR/HOUSING DEPT - LONDON TOWN HALL DAY 1944 65

A FROSTED GLASS DOOR - HOUSING DEPARTMENT on it. A cacophony of TYPING and ringing PHONES beyond.

Helen approaches up the corridor, enters. Through the gap in the door see a familiar figure there busy typing - VIV; other TYPISTS at their desks behind her. AUNTIE VI What have we today, girls? Lobster Thermidor? Beef Wellington?

She catches sight of Duncan -

AUNTIE VI (CONT'D) Oh, it's little Miss Pearce! Shift up ladies, make room for her.

Duncan clenches in humiliation, walks on.

AUNTIE VI (CONT'D) Ch, I've just been cut, my dears! Cut to my very quick! (to Duncan) We girls are all law breakers, love. You're no better than the rest of us.

Duncan spots a vacant seat near Fraser, slides into it. Fraser is vigorously debating with other PRI SONERS.

> FRASER .. Give a man a decent job, a decent home, he'd get the point of pacifism soon enough -

PRISONER #1 - Or he'd want to fight to protect what he's got.

Duncan, gazes at Fraser, awed at his erudite argument and his sheer physical presence -

FRASER So explain why most conscientious objectors are professional middle class? ... My tribunal was stuffed with them Barely a working man among us.

He catches sight of Duncan, fixed on him -

FRASER (CONT'D) So where are you on pacifism, Pearce?

DUNCAN ...Not given it much thought.

FRASER

(to the others) There you are. The less we think about the war or question it, the more compliant we are. 48.

Mundy is appro

Fraser, flushed in sudden anger.

FRASER (tart) It's not me who's like him, Pearce.

Their eyes meet. Duncan's gaze shifts to Auntie Viv at her table across the aisle. She blows him a kiss - causing nearby prisoners to snigger -

Duncan, flushed in humiliation.

68 INT. PRISON CELL - WORMWOOD SCRUBS - DAY - 1944 68

- Duncan, entering his cell. He flings himself onto his bunk, fighting emotion, He grabs his pillow, buries his face in it -

O.S. Raucous voices singing Run Adolf, Run Adolf, Run, Run, Run! "

69 INT. LIVING ROOM - NANCY'S FLAT - EVENING 1944

69

- Pristine modest elegance - a far cry from the neglected state we saw it in last. The framed WEDDING PHOTOGRAPH of Nancy and her Crates of cigarettes, razor blades. Coffee -

NANCY - Those black market boys will steal anything not nailed down -

KAY

All's fair in love and war.

Lauren looks over at Helen, reaches to twist a lock of her hair in her fingers.

LAUREN

(to Kay) What a beauty she is. How did you ever get so lucky?

KAY Hands off, Lauren.

Helen, camouflaging unease again -

LAUREN (to Helen)

HELEN

Is it really rabbit?

JULIA My neighbour claims they're running wild all over London. (then) He says he saw one on a platform at Victoria station the other day. Apparently it was fearfully het up. Kept looking at its pocket watch, saying it was late.

Helen bursts out laughing - Julia glances at her, captivated by her.

JULIA (CONT'D) ...Things are going well for you and Kay, are they?

Helen flicks her a look, nods. Julia takes out her cigarettes - offers one to Helen who declines. TWO ATS OFFICERS pass by -

> JULIA (CONT'D) God, this passion everyone has now to parade around in uniform even off duty. As if war gives them a status they otherwise lack-

HELEN - They're just proud to wear them, surely?

Julia, rueful.

JULI A

I have a tendency towards cynicism ...It used to drive Kay mad. I should be more generous and well adjusted, like you.

HELEN Me, well adjusted? Hardly.

Julia slides her a look.

JULIA You seem to handle the whole grisly "L" business pretty well.

HELEN ...I'm still not used to it yet to be honest. ...I mean, I never

to be honest. ... I mean, I neve really thought about it before I met Kay. It just never ...occurred to me. (MORE) (beat) From the moment we met, she was so certain we were meant to be together. She said I was her destiny.

She's said more than she intended; Julia, intently watching her.

HELEN (CONT'D) I've enjoyed this - it's made a nice change.

A beat.

JULIA I'd forgotten, how underrated the word nice is.

Their eyes meet.

75 EXT. PARK - LONDON - DAY 1944 75

Julia and Helen reaching the park entrance.

INT. HALL - PEARCE

CHORUS: "We saw your twat, Chase! And it was as black as a hat!" "She can't answer, she's got her gob round Evan's knob!" "And Seymour is doing her from the rear!" "My turn after her, Chase!" "Suck my cock, Chase!"

Suddenly, a soaring soprano voice rises aboveck, Chase!"

81 INT. BEDROOM - KAY'S FLAT - LONDON - DAWN - 1944 Helen, asleep in bed: innocent child-like beauty KAY I must go, darling. We're short handed with Nancy out of action. (then) And promise me if there's a raid, you'll use the damm shelter? You know how demented with worry I get -

She pulls her into her arms again -

82

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - LONDON - EARLY EVE - 1944

82

Viv, pacing on a street corner: pallid dread about her. Reggie breathlessly approaches -

> REGGIE Sorry - damn tube's up the spout.

He pulls something from a pocket.

REGGIE (CONT'D) Before I forget.

It's a cheap GOLD RING he slides it on her finger.

VIV It's too big, Reggie!

REGGIE It's only for show, isn't it?

She, fighting trepidation. He takes her arm, steers her down the road, checking out house numbers. He halts at a door. A BRASS PLAQUE there - DENTAL SURGERY - he rings a bell. A moment later a spectacled, middle aged man opens the door, wearing a dental gown.

REGGIE (CONT'D) Mr and Mrs. Harrison?

Imrie steps aside, scans the street, quickly closes the door behind them

83 INT. DENTAL SURGERY - LONDON - EARLY EVE - 1944

83

Viv, nervously perched on the dentists chair. Through the rippled glass door, she can see the Reggie talking to Imrie in the waiting area.

She glances around the room trays of instruments, drills, bottles of GAS, pictures showing teeth and pink gums: she can see money change hands through the rippled glass.

Imrie enters.

I MRI E

DUNCAN (CONT'D) What's going to happen to me outside? - I can't go back home -not after what happened there. I have no job or... What will I do, where will I go?

Mundy rests a han

He'll call the police - we'll end up in bloody clink! Blood is now dripping onto the floor beside the bed -VIV - Please. Reggie - get help! Before the sirens start - please? He, gripped by terrible indecision -INT. LOBBY - LONDON HOTEL - NIGHT - 1944 A panic laced Reggie in a TELEPHONE KIOSK in the lobby. REGGIE (INTO PHONE) .. An ambulance, yes! Devon Hotel, Weston Street. Room 21. (then) For my wife. ... Hurry, please!

88

He disconnects: his hand holding t

88

lelelele li.200 **ģ**00M -

VIV At the hospital, if they send for the police? Don't tell them my real name! Tell them I'm Mrs. Harrison? KAY ... Why would they send for the police? VΙV Getting rid of the baby - they'll know it's an abortion, won't t hey? Kay's face - Viv grips her hand -VIV (CONT'D) - My father can't know! Not after what my brother did! He must never know! Kay, trying to keep up with all this -VIV (CONT'D) (pani cked) The ring! It's gone! (then) We have to find the ring! They'll know I'm not married without it! Kay's face -EXT/INT AMBULANCE - CASUALTY HOSPITAL - - NIGHT 1944 The AMBULANCE now out side the CASUALTY ENTRANCE - Kay, quickly folding Viv's coat onto the stretcher - she leans to whisper to Viv -KAY Vivian? We're at the hospital listen to me!

Viv tries to focus on her -

96

KAY (CONT'D) I've made a tear in your coat, put your ration book in it - they won't find it there ... You're Mrs. Harrison just like you said -

VI V

I have no ring!

Kay takes off her SERPENT RING, slides it on her finger, rotates it so the plain underside is visible.

65.

96

KAY ...Let me do the talking. Leave it to me, ok? -

Viv grips her hand. The doors swing open, an ORDERLY and NURSES are there -

ORDERLY What have we got tonight?

KAY Mrs. Harrison - miscarriage with complications. She's had a fall, lost a lot of blood. (to Viv) You're safe now.

Viv reluctantly releases her hand - her stretcher is hustled off. Kay - unexpectedly moved by her plight -

O.S. the desolate wail of an AIR RAID WARNING -

97 EXT. JULIA'S FLAT - LONDON STREET - NIGHT 1944

97

The drone of AIR RAID SIRENS dying into the night - the quivering beam of a torch, Helen hurtling along with it she casts the torch beam onto HOUSE NUMBERS, halts at one. She goes to the front door, beams the torch onto an array of BELLS.

The door opens, startling her. Julia is there, in a hat and coat - she too is startled seeing Helen there.

JULIA Is it Kay? Did something happen?

Helen dissents.

HELEN I'm taking you at your word - if I needed company?

Their eyes briefly meet.

JULIA I prefer to be out in the open when there's a raid. I can't breathe in that bloody shelter -

HELEN

- l'm the same.

She feels like she's on the edge of a precipice suddenly -Julia pulls the door closed, ignites her torch.

JULI A

Which way?

HELEN

You choose.

Julia scans the darkened street. They set off -

98

98

EXT. URBAN WASTELAND - LONDON - NIGHT - 1944

A star strewn night sky, the sweep of sea

HELEN It reminds us why we're fighting, doesn't it? -

Julia glances at her.

HELEN (CONT'D) - It's our history isn't it? ...Isn't that what we're defending?

JULIA And isn't that how Hitler justifies his actions too? To preserve their culture and the rest of it? We like to think altruism and love are what define human nature. But savagery and hatred are part of it too. In a war, that part JULIA (CONT'D) I remember the night Kay met you. It's like its scored into my HELEN (meeting her eyes) Not of the bombs.

Another explosion rocks the church - dust and debris cascade from the shattered roof -

HELEN (CONT'D)

Now I am

Julia laughs - grabs her hand - they run to shelter in a vaulted corner of the CHURCH - beyond the deafening rattle of ACK-ACK guns - the drone of ALRCRAFT -

They move together to kiss - passion escalating between them - Helen halts her -

HELEN (CONT'D) Tell me this isn't about punishing Kay for what she did to you? (beat) ...It's real?

Julia puts a finger over her lips - the question goes unanswered - they sink into the shadows - grappling inside each other's clothes -

> JULIA (sotto) Now we're invisible again.

102 INT. BASEMENT - AMBULANCE STATION - LONDON - NIGHT 1944 102

- Kay and Nancy entering from a shift. A scattering of the CREWS. Hughes and Binkie, huddled talking. At the sight of Kay, Hughes and Binkie abruptly halt talking -

KAY

...What?

BINKIE We just got word, Rathbone Place has been hit.

Kay's face -

HUGHES Section 58 are on their way. They'll keep us posted.

BINKIE Helen will be down in the shelter, won't she?

KAY She never uses the damn shelter! She swings round to Nancy -

KAY (CONT'D) Give me the keys!

Nancy looks at Binkie - who signals dissent -

HUGHES Section 58 will report back directly they -

KAY (urgent: to Nancy) I have to go her!

Nancy, briefly conflicted - she lobs the keys over. Hughes dives - catches them - Kay fixes on him -

KAY (CONT'D) Give them to me.

BINKIE

There's nothing you can do, Kay!

Kay launches herself at Hughes - suddenly they're rolling on the floor - she clawing at him for the keys - Nancy confliction there again as she watches -

> BINKIE (CONT'D) Stop, Kay! For God's sake!

HUGHES It's section 58's call. They'll deal with it -

Kay continues to grapple with him -

HUGHES (CONT'D) You know the drill - it's not our bloody call! You want to be thrown out of the service? Is she worth that?

Kay suddenly raises a fist - punches him - he releases the keys - she's scrambles to her feet - she's out of there -

103 EXT. WORMWOOD SCRUBS - LONDON - NIGHT - 1944 103

The sweep of searchlights - the battery of ACK ACK and bombs - the terror fuelled screams of PRISONERS within -

104 INT. PRISON CELL - WORMWOOD SCRUBS - NIGHT - 1944 104

Fraser, agit at edly peering out of the barred window -Duncan in his bunk. The desperate chorus of PRI SONERS beyond - "Mundy! Griggs! I'll get you for this!" "Unlock this bloody door!" "In God's name, have pity!" "Help us - someone help us - let us out!"

> FRASER I swear they're getting closer!

Duncan, tensely listening in his bunk. Fraser scrambles into his own bunk: puts his hands over his ears to block out the frantic screams from prisoners and detonating bombs-

> FRASER (CONT'D) - Me and my pacifism When it comes to it, l'mjust a bloody coward like anyone else! (then) Ch God - oh shit!

A deafening crash of a bomb nearby - he suddenly clambers from his bunk, gets into Duncan's. They lie huddled in the bunk, Duncan hold Kay is feverishly scrabbling in the wreckage also - she glimpses something - frantically flings aside debris - it's a torn shred of red silk from the PYJAMAS she gave Helen -

- She drops to her knees - scrabbling in the rubble - eventually stooping - as distress and despair engulf her -

- A shout alerts her - "Kay?" FIGURES are approaching through the mist - recognition splinters her distress -

KAY Oh thank God! Oh dear God!

She's weeping now - holding out her arms to Helen -

KAY (CONT'D) ..l thought you were gone! I thought I'd lost you!

She struggles through the rubble to clasp her. Then becomes aware of a figure in the mist beyond -

- It's Julia - glistening defiance in her expression -

Bafflement in Kay's face - giving way to brutal realization -

FREEZE on her face - A KALEIDOSCOPE OF IMAGES as we REWIND in time again - Julia and Helen kissing in the doorway -Helen in the r JULIA I was born at night, Kay, but not I ast night. (then) You volunteered again didn't you?

Kay's face is her answer.

JULIA (CONT'D) You just can't keep away from that damm place! No, wait, how obtuse of me! It's not the place, is it? It's you out there, doing your superhero bit-(beat) Uhless it's me you want to get away from?

Kay has finished sewing on the button: she puts away the sewing equipment -

KAY I'm not one of your fictional creations, Julia. I don't exist just to do your bidding.

JULIA Fine! Go save the world, do what you must.

She stubs out her cigarette, constraining emotion.

KAY I don't begrudge your writing do I? Why do you this for me?

JULIA (a different tone) I'mjust afraid one night you won't come back.

KAY I always do, don't I?

Kay picks up her HAT and GREATCOAT - crosses, drops a kiss on Julia's head -

KAY (CONT'D) I'm indestructible, don't you know that yet?

She heads for the door. Julia suddenly speaks again -

JULIA It's the war that's doing it. Pulling us apart like this. (beat) (MORE) We were alright before, weren't we?

Kay, a stab of unease in her face, quickly disguised.

KAY Check the black-out before you turn in.

She quickly goes. A moment later, the thud of the FRONT DOOR closing - Julia's face.

- O.S. the rattle of a train -

108 INT. TRAIN CORRIDOR - EN ROUTE TO LONDON - DAY 1941 108

Viv (now aged 21) approaching up the corridor. A bunch of RAF ALRMEN in the train corridor ogling her. She squeezes passed them, one offers her some chocolate -

AIRMAN Can I tempt you, Iove?

VIV Watching myWatching my

He smiles, proffers her a cigarette -

VIV (CONT'D) Try anything - I'll scream blue murder.

He crosses his heart. She takes a cigarette, he lights it. In spite of herself, she is intrigued by him

> VIV (CONT'D) ... Are you spending your leave in London?

REGGIE My wife just had a baby.

Her disappointment surprises her.

VIV ...Boy or girl?

reggi e

Girl. We already have a boy. You might say we've the set now.

They stand inches apart, swaying as the train clatters on - a strange nihilismin him now -

VIV (curious) Does it scare you, going to the front next week?

REGGI E

Maybe if I stop to think about it. The home front is no picnic either. Every time I go back, I dread it more. I know it'll end up like always. M nutes after stepping through the door, my wife and I will be arguing again. (then) My son barely knows who I am He's the reason we had to tie the knot in the first place - marry in haste, etc. (rueful) You think it's a line too, don't you? The misunderstood husband, all that.

His despair touches her. The train suddenly lurches, throwing them together. Viv, clutching him for support she recovers her poise, dunks her cigarette in the basin, she puts her hand out in awkward formality -

> VIV Good luck, at the front I mean.

He takes her hand - sudden cogency in him now.

REGGIE The memory of this will keep me going there. That just once, I got a break. I got to spend a few precious minutes with the most gorgeous girl who ever drew breath. (beat) I can die a happy man.

Viv, moved by this. He reaches for the door - on impulse she restrains him

VIV Maybe one more cigarette?

He scrambles to produce them - lights it for her - unable to believe his good fortune.

110 INT. KITCHEN - PEARCE HOUSE - NIGHT 1941

O.S. the drone of an AIR RAID WARNING. Duncan in his pyjamas, (now aged 17) unbolting the kitchen door: Alec enters - 19 years old, edgy, unkempt: more than a touch of mania about him -

> ALEC My papers came – this is it, Duncan!

Duncan's face.

ALEC (CONT'D) I'm to report to some training place in Salisbury.

DUNCAN M ne aren't through yet!

ALEC

They'll come soon enough. ...When I told my father I wasn't going, I thought he'd tear my bloody head off! He locked me in my room, I had to shin down the drain pipe to escape!

He starts to pace.

ALEC (CONT'D)

I said to him, they're bloody quick enough to send you to war they don't tell you about the gas Hitler uses to fry your brains do they? (MORE) 78.

110

- The SUICIDE NOTE now pinned on the bed head. The two of them lie side by side on it, they gulp the last of the whiskey. All coopens the razor - Duncan glances at it.

ALEC (CONT'D) We'll do it at dawn. First bird song we hear, that's the cue, ok? (then) I'll go first, directly l've done it, you take the razor, do it too. (beat) We must make a good job of it. Helping someone top themselves, they throw away the key.

Duncan's face - they lie a moment.

DUNCAN

... What do you suppose happens when you die, Alec?

ALEC There can't be a God or he'd have stopped the war, wouldn't he?

DUNCAN If there's no God then there's no heaven or hell...

ALEC If there is a place you go, we'll be there together, just like always. (sudden) Bugger this waiting lark - let's get on with it!

He clasps Duncan's hand.

ALEC (CONT'D) You're the best you are, Duncan!

He raises the razor - Duncan - frozen in disbelief -

The suicide note above the bed - a plume of $\ensuremath{\mathsf{BLCOD}}$ cascades over it -

113 INT. HALL - PEARCE HOUSE - LONDON - NIGHT - 1941 113

A distraught Viv, opening the front door. HUGHES and A FEMALE CREW MEMBER are there. Beyond, the strobe of POLICE LIGHTS.

She leads them to the stairs: glimpse Mr. Pearce sitting in the living room in his dressing gown, ashen and dazed - A UNIFORMED POLICE OFFICER is there -

114 INT. DUNCAN' S BEDROOM - PEARCE HOUSE - NIGHT 1941 114

A POLICE OFFICER opens the door to Viv, who enters with HUGHES and COLLEAGUE - they halt in the door way. The blood drenched corpse of Alec on the bed.

Duncan sits in a corner, he too is spattered in blood, rocking to and fro, moaning in anguish.

He meets Hughes' eyes - stricken in culpability -

115 INT. BASEMENT - AMBULANCE STATION - - NIGHT 1941 115

The empty station - most of the CREWS are out on calls. Kay and Nancy are on their beds, Nancy is painting her nails, Kay doing a crossword.

Binkie enters -

BINKIE

You're up, girls. Quest house in Jocelyn Street - half a dozen guests trapped inside -

Kay and Nancy haul themselves from their beds -

116 EXT. BOMBED GUEST HOUSE - LONDON - NIGHT 1941 116

O.S. the familiar clatter of ACK-ACK. The deathly drone AEROPLANE ENGINES. A melee of RESCUE WORKERS outside a bomb devastated HOUSE. Kay and Nancy at the rear of the AMBULANCE, getting out MEDICAL equipment and STRETCHERS.

117 INT. HALL/BOMBED GUEST HOUSE - LONDON - NIGHT 1941 117

Darkness, punctuated by the eerie luminous TORCH LIGHTS -RESCUE WORKERS and POLICE RESERVES in the partly demolished reception area - Nancy and Kay enter -

> NANCY Where do we start? KAY

I'll take the basement.

118 INT. BASEMENT - BOMBED GUEST HOUSE - NIGHT 1941

Darkness - a helmeted RESCUE WORKER picking through debris. Kay enters the basement, swings her torch over the wreckage of ceiling plaster and beams.

> KAY (to RESCUE WORKER) Anything?

He dissents: she clambers piles of rubble, halts, hearing a sound - shouts to the RESCUE WORKER - they feverishly tug aside debris to reveal Helen, wearing only a torn nightdress - deathly pale - covered in a film of plaster, buried to her waist in bricks and mortar. A BEAM is pinning her legs -

> KAY (CONT'D) (to RESCUE WORKER) We need help lifting it off her -

He goes.

KAY (CONT'D) (to Helen) Can you move your legs?

She pushes aside more rubble - she can see Helen's feet protruding from under the beam

KAY (CONT'D) Wriggle your feet for me?

Helen complies.

HELEN I could murder a cigarette.

KAY There might be gas.

She's taking Helen's pulse now - Helen blinks up at her -

HELEN

Are you a doctor?

KAY Just a dab hand at First Aid.

HELEN I went out with a doctor once. Well, nearly - he was a medical student. It didn't work out.

Her thinking is fragmented, dislocated -

118

83.

HELEN (CONT'D)

Why is it we can't love the people we ought?

The question resonates with Kay. A shower of dust cascades -Helen flinches in fear, grips Kay's hand.

KAY

Don't worry, I won't let anything happen to you. ...Just be brave a bit longer?

She holds a flask of water for Helen to sip.

HELEN

You're the one who's brave. Doing this job.

KAY It's easier being out in thick of things than cowering in some shelter. (beat) And at night where there's a raid onhno