

# THE ENGLISH PATIENT

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RED  
ORIGINAL

EXT. THE SAHARA DESERT. LATE 1942

SILENCE. THE DESERT seen from the air. An ocean of dunes for mile after mile. The late sun turns the sand every colour from crimson to black and makes the dunes look like bodies pressed against each other.

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

A woman's voice begins to sing - Szerelem, szerelem, she cries, in a haunting lament for her loved one.

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

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

Shocking bursts of GUNFIRE. Explosions rock the plane, which lurches violently. The fuel tank is punctured. It sprays out gasoline, then erupts in flame engulfing both figures in a fireball.

INT. TRAIN. ITALY 1944. BEFORE DAWN

AN ALLIED HOSPITAL TRAIN ploughs through the night carrying MILITARY WOUNDED back to Naples.

A young French-Canadian nurse, Hana, walks through a long carriage past rows of the injured. She stops at the bunk of A WOUNDED SOLDIER. Hana bends to the boy. He's had shrapnel in his legs and cheek. She speaks softly to him.

HANA

How are you?

BOY

Okay.

HANA

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

BOY

You're the prettiest girl I've ever seen.

CONTINUED

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

BOY  
Would you kiss me?

HANA  
No, I'll get you some tea.

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

HANA  
(tender, believing  
him)  
Would it?

She kisses him, very softly, on the lips.

BOY  
Thank you.

He closes his eyes. Hana smiles, continues along the  
compartment. TEASING VOICES CALL OUT after her.

#1 INJURED MAN  
Nurse - I can't sleep.

#2 INJURED MAN  
Would you kiss me?

#3 INJURED MAN  
You're so pretty!

HANA  
(good-naturedly waving  
away their joke)  
Very funny. Go to sleep now.

She opens the door of the next carriage and walks straight into  
the carnage left by an emergency operation. MARY, another  
nurse, is removing a blood-soaked bundle from the operating  
table. Mary grimaces.

MARY  
Don't ask.

EXT. THE DESERT. DAY

THE PILOT HAS BEEN RESCUED BY BEDOUIN TRIBESMEN. Behind them  
the wreckage of the plane, still smoking, the Arabs picking  
over it. A SILVER THIMBLE glints in the sun, is retrieved.

Another man comes across A LARGE LEATHER-BOUND BOOK and takes it over to where the Pilot is being tended to. The Book is full of letters and cards and paintings. They're scattering everywhere. The Pilot is terribly burned, barely alive, his face charred. One of the Bedouins covers his face with a makeshift mask made from plaited palm leaves.

EXT. THE DESERT. DUSK

The Pilot is being carried across the desert. The mask covers his face. His view of the world is through the slats of palm. He glimpses camels, fierce low sun, the men who carry him.

EXT. EMERGENCY FIELD HOSPITAL, 1944. LATE DAY

The EMERGENCY FIELD HOSPITAL is a cluster of tents practically ahead of the Front Line. SPORADIC GUNFIRE, increasingly near, sounds throughout. It's 1944 and the war in Italy is still intense.

INT. MAIN TRIAGE TENT. EMERGENCY FIELD HOSPITAL. NIGHT

Hana and her best friend, JAN, walk through the main TRIAGE TENT. It's packed with the ruined bodies of the injured, swaddled in bloody bandages.

INT. TRIAGE TENT, EMERGENCY FIELD HOSPITAL. EVENING

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

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

CANADIAN SOLDIER  
(whispering to Oliver)  
Is there anybody from Picton?

OLIVER  
Picton? I don't know.

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

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

HANA  
(to Oliver)  
Why Picton?

CONTINUED

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

The boy nods.

JAN  
(innocent)  
Hey, that's where your  
sweetie's from? Somewhere  
near there, isn't it?

HANA  
(to Oliver)  
Ask him what company he's  
with?

Oliver leans over, then turns to Hana.

OLIVER  
Third Canadian Fusiliers.

HANA  
Does he know a Captain  
McGann?

The boy hears this, whispers to Oliver.

CANADIAN SOLDIER  
He bought it. Yesterday. Shot  
to bits.

The shells are getting closer.

HANA  
What did he say?

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

A SHELL suddenly lands on top of the site, perhaps fifty yards  
from the tent. THE LIGHTS GO OUT. Then ANOTHER lands.

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

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

HANA  
He's gone, he's gone, he's  
gone.

OLIVER  
No. He's - no.

CONTINUED

HANA

Oh God. Oh God.

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

EXT. AN OASIS. NIGHT.

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

AN ARAB HEAD floats in darkness, shimmering from the light of a fire. The image develops to reveal a man carrying a large wooden yoke from which hang DOZENS OF SMALL GLASS BOTTLES, on different lengths of string and wire. He could be an angel.

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

The Merchant Doctor crouches in front of the curtain of bottles, then leans back to pluck, hardly looking, certain bottles which he uncorks and mixes. He uses this green-black paste to anoint the burned skin. All the while he is humming and chanting. The bottles continue to jingle.

EXT. BEACH FRONT, ITALY. LATE 1944. DAY

Wounded Soldiers walk with nurses along the beach

EXT. BEACH CABINS, ITALY. LATE 1944. DAY

THIS CONVALESCENCE HOSPITAL HAS BEEN FASHIONED FROM A LONG ROW OF BATHING CABINS ON THE COAST, complete with Campari Umbrellas and metal tables, at which are seated the bandaged and the dying and the comatose, staring out to sea or in slow, muted conversation. A BRITISH OFFICER makes notes. He is talking to a wounded PATIENT, whom we recognize as the burned Pilot.

OFFICER (O/S)

Name? Rank? Serial number?

THE PATIENT (O/S)

No. Sorry. I think I was a pilot. I was found near the wreckage of a plane at the beginning of the war.

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

CONTINUED

OFFICER

Can you remember where you were born?

THE PATIENT

Am I being interrogated? You should be trying to trick me. Or make me speak German, which I can, by the way.

OFFICER

Why? Are you German?

THE PATIENT

No.

OFFICER

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

THE PATIENT

Might I have a sip of water?

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

THE PATIENT

Thank you.

(he sips)

I remember lots of things. I remember a garden, plunging down to the sea - nothing between you and France.

OFFICER

This was your garden?

THE PATIENT

Or my wife's.

OFFICER

Then you were married?

THE PATIENT

I think so. Although I believe that to be true of a number of Germans. Look -

(makes a small gap with his fingers)

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

EXT. ITALIAN HILL ROAD. DAY

A CONVOY OF TWENTY TRUCKS - Red Cross vehicles and some supply vehicles - snakes along a bumpy hill road. The war in Italy is largely over and the Allies are moving up the country, the wounded and supply lines slowly following.

EXT. ITALIAN HILL ROAD. DAY

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

JAN

Hana! Hana! Hana! There's meant to be lace in the next village - the boys are going to take me.

(mischievously)

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

HANA

No!

JAN

Hana, I know you do. Come on. Oh, come on.

(to the soldiers)

She's a softy, she loves me.

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

JAN

(getting the money)

I love you.

The Jeep accelerates away. Hana sighs to the Patient.

Suddenly AN EXPLOSION shatters the calm as the jeep runs over a MINE. The jeep is THROWN into the air. The convoy halts and there's chaos as soldiers run back pulling people out of the vehicles. Hana runs the other way, toward the accident, until she is prevented from reaching Jan's mangled body by the consoling arms of Oliver.

EXT. ITALIAN HILL ROAD. LATER

- and there's still chaos as two SAPPERS (Bomb Disposal Squad) work on the road ahead. One of them, a SIKH, wears a turban.

EXT. ITALIAN HILL ROAD. DAY

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

KIP  
Hey! Hey! Stop! Hey!

Now Hardy is shouting for her to stop. Hana looks around.

HARDY  
Don't move. Stand ABSOLUTELY  
STILL!

Hana stops. Hardy gingerly follows her footsteps.

HARDY  
(as he approaches)  
Good, that's good, just stay  
still for me and then we'll be  
fine.

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

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

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

EXT. VILLAGE. DUSK

The CONVOY is threading through A RUINED VILLAGE, passing the souvenirs of war: an overturned vehicle now used as a game by some children, dejected refugees tramping along the side of the road.

INT. RED CROSS TRUCK. CONTINUOUS

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

EXT. CONVOY SITE, ITALY. DUSK

THE CONVOY is making a PIT STOP. The trucks are silhouetted in a line. Hana helps lift The Patient's stretcher onto the ground. She bends to him. Hana gets up to prepare a MORPHINE INJECTION from a small kit. Mary arrives. Touches Hana gently, conscious of her grief for Jan's death.

MARY

Are you okay? Oh god, Hana,  
you and Jan were inseparable.

HANA

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

MARY

(thrown)  
Do you mean leave him? We  
can't. We can hardly leave  
him.

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

HANA

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

The Patient laces her fingers into his crabbed hand.

EXT. THE MONASTERY. DAY

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

INT. THE MONASTERY LIBRARY. DAY

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

INT. THE MONASTERY CLOISTERS. DAY

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

INT. THE MONASTERY STAIRS. DAY

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

INT. THE PATIENT'S ROOM. DAY

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

EXT. CONVOY SITE, ITALY. DAY

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

HANA

When he dies I'll catch up.

OLIVER

It's not safe here. The whole country's crawling with Bandits and Germans and God knows what.

HANA

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

OLIVER

It's not over everywhere. I didn't mean literally. This is normal - it's shock. For all of us. Hana -

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

HANA

I need morphine. A lot. And a pistol.

OLIVER

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

Hana nods. A tiny smile. Oliver shrugs helplessly.

OLIVER

We're heading for Leghorn. Livorno the Italians call it. We'll expect you.

INT. THE PATIENT'S ROOM. DAY.

TWO SOLDIERS are helping Mary and Hana carry The Patient into what was the chapel. They lower The Patient onto the rusted bed. Hana turns to the SOLDIERS.

HANA

Thank you.

She shuts the door on them, leaving Mary staring aghast at the room, its faded frescoes, its mold, its starkness.

HANA

Good.

She goes to Mary and hugs her.

INT. THE MONASTERY, HANA'S ROOM. DAY

A smaller upstairs room, completely bare. As Hana tugs off her uniform, she looks out of the window to see the departing Convoy. A cotton dress goes on over her head and she emerges looking suddenly younger and rather fragile. Through the damaged floor of her room she has a view of the patient below her. She looks at him. Now she has scissors and starts to cut off her hair, not aggressively, but in a gesture of a new beginning.

INT. THE MONASTERY STAIRS. MORNING

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

INT. THE PATIENT'S ROOM. DAY

Hana enters.

THE PATIENT

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

HANA

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

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

THE PATIENT

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

CONTINUED

HANA

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

THE PATIENT

(reluctant)

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

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

HANA

Oh - I've found plums. We have  
plums in the orchard. We have  
an orchard!

THE PATIENT

Herodotus is the father of  
history, do you know that?

HANA

I don't know anything.

THE PATIENT

Thank you.

She has peeled a plum and now slips it into his mouth. His mouth works with the pleasure of the taste, a little juice escaping from his lips. Hana mops it up.

THE PATIENT

It's a very plum plum.

EXT. THE MONASTERY GARDENS. DAY

Hana sits in the water trough shivering as the cold water splashes her.

INT. THE PATIENT'S ROOM. DAY

Close on the HERODOTUS. The Patient opens its cover, held together by leather ties. Loose PAPERS, PHOTOGRAPHS, HAND-DRAWN MAPS AND SKETCHES are all collected between the charred pages. He claws at some papers, inspects a letter. Then he loses control of the papers and the whole parcel SPILLS to the floor with a crack.

EXT. BASE CAMP AT POTTERY HILL. DUSK

Count Laszlo de Almasy, Hungarian explorer, squats with an ancient Arab who draws in the sand, talking in some arcane dialect, scratching out a map. The old man stops speaking and scours the sky a beat or two before we or Almasy hear the faint noise of a PLANE. It's a bright yellow Steerman coming in to

CONTINUED

land. Almasý doesn't look up. The Arab continues to talk. The plane sweeps past the cluster of tents and camels and trucks which constitutes the Base Camp for a team of international explorers, led by Almasý and his colleague, Peter Madox.

EXT. BASE CAMP AT POTTERY HILL. DAY

The expedition team drives over to meet the arrivals. Almasý stays in the car as the others pile out and approach the plane as it taxis alongside an old, battered silver Tiger Moth.

A young couple emerge from the Steerman. They are GEOFFREY AND KATHARINE CLIFTON.

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

Madox makes all the introductions, introducing the rest of the team - an Italian, D'Agostino; a German, Bermann; and an Egyptian, FOUAD. Hands are shaken, hellos all round, as the couple disembark in their leather flying gear.

EXT. BASE CAMP AT POTTERY HILL. LATE DAY

The party is in the shade of the tents. Geoffrey Clifton produces a bottle of CHAMPAGNE and sets off the cork with a flourish. Almasý joins the group. Madox nods over to the Clifton plane.

CLIFTON

To the International Sand Club.

MADOX

Marvellous plane. Did you look?

ALMASY

Yes.

CLIFTON

(beaming at Almasý)  
Isn't it? Wedding present from Katharine's parents. We're calling it Rupert Bear. Hello. Geoffrey Clifton.

MADOX

We can finally consign my old bird to the scrap heap.

Almasý smiles and walks on towards the others.

D'AGOSTINO

Mrs. Clifton - Count Almasý.

CONTINUED

KATHARINE

(smiling, offering  
her hand)

Hello. Geoffrey gave me your  
monograph when I was reading  
up on the desert. Very  
impressive.

ALMASY

(stiff)

Thank you.

KATHARINE

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

ALMASY

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

CLIFTON

(joining them and  
joining in)

A broken car?

ALMASY

Still a car.

CLIFTON

(hands them champagne)

Not much use, though.

KATHARINE

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

CLIFTON

(hugging Katharine)

Uxoriousness - that's my  
favourite kind of love.  
Excessive love of one's wife.

ALMASY

(a dry smile)

Now there you have me.

EXT. BASE CAMP. MORNING

Almasy and Madox head for Madox's Tiger Moth. They turn the machine around like a toy, pointing it in the right direction for take-off. During this Almasy complains and Madox mediates - there's a suspicion that this is a familiar dynamic.

ALMASY

They're tourists.

MADOX

Absolute rot. They come highly recommended from the Royal Geographic. She's charming and has read everything, he's meant to be a ruddy good pilot.

ALMASY

We don't need another pilot.

MADOX

He can make aerial maps of the entire area.

ALMASY

You can't explore from the air, Madox. If you could explore from the air life would be very simple.  
(he primes the propellor)  
Contact.

Madox slips on his goggles and turns on the engine.

MADOX

Contact.

Almasy spins the propellor. It flashes into life.

EXT. GILF KEBIR PLATEAU. MORNING.

Both planes are scouting the Gilf Kebir region. Geoffrey flies up alongside Madox and wiggles his wings. Madox waves. They're flying over a distinctive group of GRANITE MASSIFS, Crater-shaped hills. The broken towers of the Gilf Kebir. Almasy is distracted by them. He turns to Madox and points down, indicating they should explore them.

Madox nods and brings the plane lower and they fly into the mouth of one of the huge craters. The Cliftons' plane follows them into the black ravines, pitted with signs of scrub.

Almasy gestures to the Cliftons to PHOTOGRAPH the Massifs. A THUMBS UP from Geoffrey, who pulls out his camera and begins shooting.

INT. THE PATIENT'S ROOM. MORNING.

Hana changes The Patient's bed. The light streams in from the open window. She looks up at the green hills rolling away from the Monastery, the village in the distance.

HANA

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

THE PATIENT

I can already see.

HANA

(bending down to his  
level)  
How? How can you see  
anything?

THE PATIENT

No, not the window - I can't  
bear the light anyway - no, I  
can see all the way to the  
desert. Before the war.  
Making maps.

HANA

I'm turning you.

THE PATIENT

Is there sand in my eyes. Are  
you cleaning sand from my  
ears?

HANA

No sand, that's your morphine  
speaking.

THE PATIENT

I can see my wife in that  
view.

HANA

Are you remembering more?

THE PATIENT

Could I have a cigarette?

HANA

Are you crazy?

CONTINUED

THE PATIENT

Why are you so determined to  
keep me alive?

HANA

Because I'm a nurse.

EXT. THE MONASTERY CLOISTERS. NIGHT

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

INT. THE PATIENT'S ROOM. NIGHT

Alone in his room The Patient listens to the erratic rhythm of Hana's hopscotch. It takes him back to the desert and the sound of Bedouin drums on a night shortly after the arrival of the Cliftons.

EXT. BASE CAMP. NIGHT

The group sits around the campfire at night, supper over, champagne drunk. They're using the empty bottle to play a game - Spin the Bottle. When the bottle points at you, you're required to perform a party piece. Clifton sings a version of 'Yes, We Have No Bananas,' then is required to translate it into a variety of languages - the others joining in raucously. D'Agostino offers a Puccini aria; Fouad dances, his shawl whirling, the Bedouin onlookers providing a percussive, improvised accompaniment.

INT. THE PATIENT'S ROOM. NIGHT

Later, and Hana is reading to The Patient from a story in his Herodotus. As she reads, he listens, eyes closed, still in the desert.

HANA

...the King insisted he would  
find some way to prove beyond  
dispute that his wife was  
fairest of all women. 'I will  
hide you in the room where we  
sleep', says Candaules -  
(correcting herself)  
- said Candaules.

She stumbles over the word. The Patient corrects her.

THE PATIENT

Candaules.

CONTINUED

HANA

Candaules.

EXT. BASE CAMP AT POTTERY HILL. NIGHT

Katharine has her turn at the fire. She is telling the same story. The Patient remembers her.

KATHARINE

Candaules tells Gyges that the queen has the same practice every night. She takes off her clothes and puts them on the chair by the door to her room...

HANA (O/S)

(continuing to read)  
...and from where you stand you will be able to gaze on her at your leisure...

KATHARINE

(her story continuing)  
And that evening it's exactly as the King has told him. She goes to the chair and removes her clothes one by one until she's standing naked in full view of Gyges, and indeed she was more lovely than he could have imagined. But then the Queen looked up and saw Gyges concealed in the shadows, and although she said nothing, she shuddered. And the next day she sent for Gyges and challenged him. And hearing his story, this is what she said -

CLIFTON

(clowning)  
Off with his head!

KATHARINE

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

Clifton makes a face of outrage. For Katharine the story has suddenly collapsed. She feels Almasy's eyes on her.

CONTINUED

KATHARINE

So Gyges kills the King and  
marries the Queen and becomes  
ruler of Lydia for twenty-  
eight years.

(an uncomfortable  
moment)

Shall I spin the bottle?

The others laugh. Madox beams at Clifton.

MADOX

So Geoffrey - let that be a  
lesson to you.

INT. THE PATIENT'S ROOM. NIGHT

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

HANA

Are you asleep?

THE PATIENT

(he isn't)

Yes. No. Dropping off.

And Hana closes the book, gets up, kisses him good night, and  
blows out the lamp.

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

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

EXT. THE MONASTERY, GRAVEYARD. MORNING

Hana appears from the cemetery, dragging A METAL CRUCIFIX. It's  
bigger than she is, and she drags it along towards her garden.  
A MAN WATCHES HER FROM A BICYCLE. He's approaching fifty,  
grizzled and attractive, and could be Italian. He wears a pair  
of grubby mittens. The man, CARAVAGGIO, chooses this moment to  
introduce himself. He drops the bicycle on the ground with a  
clatter.

CARAVAGGIO

(very cheerful)

Buon Giorno!

Hana turns, startled and suspicious.

CARAVAGGIO

Hana?

CONTINUED

HANA

What do you want?

CARAVAGGIO

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

HANA

(unravelling this information)

Bonjour.

He goes to her and hands her an egg, producing it from a pocket. He beams, as does Hana.

CARAVAGGIO

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

During this he attempts to conjure a second egg from Hana's ear. THE EGG DROPS TO THE GROUND. Cursing, he gets on his knees and starts to scoop it up, preserving it. There appears to be something wrong with his hands. He grimaces at Hana.

CARAVAGGIO

My stupid hands!

INT. THE MONASTERY KITCHEN. DAY

Hana has taken his eggs and put them into a bowl. She beats them with a knife, picking out the bits of shell. Caravaggio watches, takes in how little food there is otherwise. The table seems useful more as a sewing area than for cooking - it's strewn with altar cloths being sewn into drapes. On a tray on the table are TWO VIALS OF MORPHINE from The Patient's room. As Hana turns to the stove, Caravaggio's moved and covered them with his gloved hands a second later and he's juggled them into his pocket.

CARAVAGGIO

(of the eggs)

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

CONTINUED

HANA  
(intrigued)  
You were in Africa?

CARAVAGGIO  
Yes I was.

HANA  
So was my Patient.

CARAVAGGIO  
Look, I'd like to stay for a  
while. I have to do some work  
here - I speak the language.  
There are Partisans to be  
disarmed -  
(trying to paraphrase)  
- we embrace them and see if  
we can relieve them of their  
weapons, you know - while we  
hug. I was a thief, so the  
Army thought I'd be good at  
it.

HANA  
So you can shoot a pistol?

CARAVAGGIO  
(showing his hands)  
No.

HANA  
Do you have a problem with  
those?

CARAVAGGIO  
No.

HANA  
I should look at them before  
you go.

CARAVAGGIO  
Look, it's a big place. We  
needn't disturb each other.  
I'll sleep in the stable. It  
doesn't matter where I sleep.  
I don't sleep.

HANA  
I don't know what Mary told  
you about me, but I don't need  
company, I don't need to be  
looked after.

INT. THE PATIENT'S ROOM. DAY

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

HANA

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

THE PATIENT

Why? Can he lay eggs?

HANA

He's Canadian.

THE PATIENT

(brittle)

Why are people always so happy when they collide with someone from the same place? What happened in Montreal when you passed a man in the street - did you invite him to live with you?

HANA

He needn't disturb you.

THE PATIENT

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

HANA

(she cuts the omelette into tiny pieces)

There's a war. Where you come from becomes important.

THE PATIENT

Why? I hate that idea.

INT. THE MONASTERY STAIRS. DAY

Caravaggio is in shadows in the hallway. He listens.

INT. THE PATIENT'S ROOM. DAY

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

CARAVAGGIO

Can I help?

HANA

It's finished.

CONTINUED

THE PATIENT  
So you're our Canadian  
pickpocket?

CARAVAGGIO  
Thief, I think, is more  
accurate.

THE PATIENT  
I understand you were in  
Africa. Whereabouts?

CARAVAGGIO  
Oh, all over.

THE PATIENT  
All over? I kept trying to  
cover a very modest portion  
and still failed.  
(to Hana, who is  
heading out)  
Are you leaving us?

HANA  
Yes.

THE PATIENT  
Now's our opportunity to swap  
war wounds.

HANA  
Then I'm definitely going.

And she exits. The men consider her.

CARAVAGGIO  
Does she have war wounds?

INT. THE MONASTERY, HANA'S ROOM. DAY

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

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

CARAVAGGIO  
Are you planning to be the  
exception?

CONTINUED

THE PATIENT

Me? I think you've got the wrong end of the stick, old boy.

(a pause)

So, Caravaggio - Hana thinks you invented your name.

CARAVAGGIO

And you've forgotten yours.

THE PATIENT

I said that no one would ever invent such a preposterous name.

CARAVAGGIO

I said you can forget everything but you never forget your name. Count Almasy - that name mean anything to you? Or Katharine Clifton?

EXT. CAIRO MARKET. DAY

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

ALMASY

How much did you pay?

KATHARINE

(delighted)

Oh, Hello!

ALMASY

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

KATHARINE

Seven, eight pounds, I suppose.

ALMASY

Which stall?

KATHARINE

Why?

CONTINUED

ALMASY

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

KATHARINE

(bristling)

I don't want to take it back.

ALMASY

This is not worth eight pounds, Mrs. Clifton.

KATHARINE

It is to me.

ALMASY

Did you bargain?

KATHARINE

I don't care to bargain.

ALMASY

That insults them.

KATHARINE

(turning to face him)

I don't believe that. I think you are insulted by me, somehow.

ALMASY

(of the carpet)

I'd be very happy to obtain the correct price for this. I apologize if I appear abrupt. I am rusty at social graces.

(tart)

How do you find Cairo? Did you visit the Pyramids?

KATHARINE

Excuse me.

ALMASY

Or the Sphinx?

He stands as she continues, pushing past him, boiling.

INT. SHEPHEARD'S HOTEL, CAIRO. EVENING

THE LONG BAR. The Exploration Team drinking at a table. They are not entirely off-duty - Almasy and Madox, as ever, ponder the maps.

CONTINUED

MADOX

By car? Impossible. If we try and drive north of Kufra by car, we'll leave our bones in the desert.

ALMASY

Disagree.

MADOX

You're Hungarian, you always disagree.

Geoffrey Clifton appears.

CLIFTON

Good evening, Gentlemen!

He sits down. Madox hails the waiter.

D'AGOSTINO

How is your charming wife?

CLIFTON

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

(responding to their bewildered expressions)

Chaps Only in the Long Bar.

EXT. SHEPHEARD'S HOTEL TERRACE. NIGHT

The Explorers, embarrassed, march out onto the terrace. Katharine sits, reading, exquisite in her evening clothes. There is dancing inside, and couples walk to and from their tables. Madox approaches to collect her. Katharine manages to produce a dazzling smile which includes everyone except Almas.

MADOX

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

KATHARINE

Not at all. I was thoroughly enjoying my book.

CONTINUED

CLIFTON

The team is in mourning,  
darling.

KATHARINE

Oh really?

MADOX

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

KATHARINE

Oh. What will you do?

MADOX

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

CLIFTON

(astonished)  
Good heavens, are you  
married, Madox?

MADOX

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

He nods at Almasy. Clifton appears tremendously relieved.

CLIFTON

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

D'AGOSTINO

(toasting Katharine)  
And present ones.

KATHARINE

(toasting Almasy)  
And future ones.

INT. SHEPHEARD'S HOTEL. NIGHT

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

KATHARINE

(as they dance)  
Why did you follow me  
yesterday?

CONTINUED

ALMASY

What? I'm sorry?

KATHARINE

After the market, you followed me to the hotel.

ALMASY

I was concerned. A woman in that part of Cairo, a European woman, I felt obliged to.

KATHARINE

You felt obliged to.

ALMASY

As the wife of one of our party.

KATHARINE

(direct)

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

Almasy, by way of answer, bears down on her. They dance, fierce, oblivious to everything.

INT. THE PATIENT'S ROOM. NIGHT

Hana has fallen asleep on the bed, almost on top of the Patient. He touches her. He speaks as if each word burns him.

THE PATIENT

Could I ask you to move? I'm sorry -

HANA

(mortified, moving quickly)

I'm sorry, of course. I was dreaming. Awful.

THE PATIENT

It's just when you move -

HANA

How stupid of me.

THE PATIENT

I can't really bear the pressure.

Hana gets up, upset to have hurt him.

INT. THE MONASTERY KITCHEN. NIGHT

Hana comes to the table, carrying a jug of water and a bowl. She's still sad. She unbuttons her dress, pulling it off her shoulder, begins to pour the water to cool herself against the night's pressing heat. She's overwhelmed by memories, by the weight of her curse. Caravaggio comes into the kitchen to find her slumped at the table, her back naked, the jug of water in front of her. She's sobbing, her shoulders heaving. Caravaggio approaches tentatively.

CARAVAGGIO

Hana?

(he touches her  
shoulder)

Hana? Are you all right?

HANA

(without raising her  
head)

Don't touch me.

She pulls her dress up around her shoulders. Her face is red with weeping. Caravaggio pours a glass of water and walks to the open window.

CARAVAGGIO

You're in love with him,  
aren't you? Your poor  
patient. Do you think he's a  
saint because of the way he  
looks? I don't think he is.

HANA

I'm not in love with him. I'm  
in love with ghosts. So is he.  
He's in love with ghosts.

CARAVAGGIO

(he holds up his  
hands)

What if I told you he did this  
to me?

HANA

(stung)

How could he have? When?

CARAVAGGIO

I'm one of his ghosts and he  
wouldn't even know it.

HANA

I don't know what that means.

CONTINUED

CARAVAGGIO

(shrugs)

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

HANA

(furious)

Please don't creep around  
this house!

She leaves, slamming the door behind her. Caravaggio calls  
after her.

CARAVAGGIO

I don't think he's forgotten  
anything. I think he wants to  
forget.

INT. TENT, BASE CAMP AT POTTERY HILL. NIGHT

The group of expeditioners is around the fire. Clifton holds up  
a glass.

CLIFTON

Gentlemen, to Map-making!

ALL

Map-making!

MADDOX

And a special thank-you to  
Geoffrey and Katharine,  
without whose fund-raising  
heroics we'd still be kicking  
our heels.

CLIFTON

To arm-twisting.

MADDOX

(to Almas)

Did Katharine say? Geoffrey  
has to fly back to Cairo.

CLIFTON

Return the favour - take a few  
photographs of the army.

ALMASY

What kind of photographs?

CONTINUED

CLIFTON

Portraits. The Brigadier, the  
Brigadier's wife, the  
Brigadier's dogs, the  
Brigadier by the Pyramids,  
the Brigadier breathing. I  
shall of course be bereft,  
but finally able to explore  
the Cairo nightlife. I shall  
produce an authoritative  
guide to the Zinc Bars and - I  
want to say Harems - are we in  
the right country for Harems?

EXT. BASE CAMP AT POTTERY HILL. MORNING

As Clifton prepares to leave in the Steerman, Almasy  
approaches.

ALMASY

Clifton, safe journey.

CLIFTON

You too. Good luck!

ALMASY

Clifton - it's probably none  
of my business - but your  
wife, do you think it's  
appropriate to leave her?

CLIFTON

Appropriate?

ALMASY

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

CLIFTON

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

ALMASY

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

CONTINUED

CLIFTON

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

ALMASY

Very well.

CLIFTON

(laughing it off)

Why are you people so threatened by a woman?!

Almasy watches him walk toward the plane, then turns to see Katharine, a distant figure, watching. He doesn't move. She doesn't move.

INT. MONASTERY LIBRARY. DAY

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

INT. THE PATIENT'S ROOM. DAY

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

THE PATIENT

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

INT. MONASTERY LIBRARY. DAY

Hana plays. A GUNSHOT punctuates the music. Her hands falter, she looks up to see A SIKH SOLDIER running past the GAPING HOLE IN THE WALL, his rifle held aloft. He approaches the french doors, his face creased with anxiety, and raps on the shattered frame. It's KIP, the bomb disposal officer who had cleared the road on which Jan's jeep had exploded.

KIP

Stop playing! Please, Stop Playing!

CONTINUED

HANA  
(of the doors)  
I don't have the key to that  
door.

She watches him walk around from the locked doors and walk straight through the hole in the wall, oblivious to any irony, and up to the piano.

KIP  
The Germans were here. The  
Germans were all over this  
area. They left mines  
everywhere. And pianos were  
their favourite hiding  
places.

HANA  
I see. Sorry.  
(then mischievous)  
Then maybe you're safe as  
long as you only play Bach.  
He's German.

Kip is looking around the piano. Hana giggles.

KIP  
Is something funny?

HANA  
No, I'm sorry.

KIP  
I've met you before.

HANA  
I don't think so.

KIP  
Look. See. See.

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

KIP  
(of the piano)  
Move that, and no more Bach.

EXT. THE MONASTERY GARDEN. DUSK

Across from the terrace, KIP and his sergeant, HARDY, are putting up their tents. Caravaggio stands, chatting amiably to them, holding a haversack, smoking a cigarette.

INT. THE PATIENT'S ROOM. DUSK

Hana looks down from The Patient's room, watching the tent go up. Kip glances up at the window. Hana, suddenly shy, backs away.

HANA

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

THE PATIENT

No he's Sikh. If he wears a turban, he's Sikh.

HANA

I'll probably marry him.

THE PATIENT

Really? That's sudden.

HANA

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

She bathes The Patient.

HANA

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

THE PATIENT

(irked)  
Why? Is he staying?

HANA

With his Sergeant. A Mr. Hardy.

THE PATIENT

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

HANA

They have to clear all the roads of mines. That's a big job.

THE PATIENT

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

CONTINUED

HANA

No, we can't.

EXT. THE MONASTERY, HANA'S GARDEN. DAY

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

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

INT. THE PATIENT'S ROOM. DAY

The Patient lies in bed singing to himself in Arabic.

EXT. BASE CAMP AT POTTERY HILL

The THREE FORD CARS leave the campsite, loaded for a scouting expedition. The rest of the party, Bedouin, tents, camels, and Tiger Moth - is left behind.

INT. CAR EN ROUTE TO CAVE OF SWIMMERS. DAY

Almasy drives the second car, accompanied by Katharine and Al Auf, who sits on top of the cabin. Almasy sings as they drive. Katharine breaks the long silence between them.

KATHARINE

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

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

ALMASY

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

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

CONTINUED

KATHARINE  
Actually, you sing.

ALMASY  
What?

KATHARINE  
You sing. All the time.

ALMASY  
I do not.

KATHARINE  
Ask Al Auf.

In Arabic, Almasy asks Al Auf, who promptly laughs, nods and sings a snatch of what he thinks is the tune to 'The Darktown Strutter's Ball'. Katharine, delighted, joins in.

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

Al Auf nods and grins furiously, joins in, impersonating Almasy. Almasy makes a face.

EXT. NEAR THE BASE CAMP AT THE CAVE OF SWIMMERS. DUSK

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

The group winds around the rock. Almasy turns to offer a hand to Katharine behind him, pulling her up to the next rock slab.

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

AL AUF  
Allah Akbar, Allahu Akbar...

The Westerners wait respectfully. As the sun sets in glory, Almasy looks over at the range of rocks. One particular range seems to look exactly like A WOMAN'S BACK. He squints at the rocks, then pulls out his Herodotus to compare his sketch map with the terrain in front of him.

EXT. CAVE OF SWIMMERS. DUSK

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

INT. CAVE OF SWIMMERS. FLASHLIGHT

A FLASHLIGHT squirts into the cave. Almasy treads cautiously along the narrow winding passage. He comes to an open cavern and takes his flashlight up to a wall. Almasy is astonished by what he sees.

EXT. NEAR THE CAVE OF SWIMMERS. EVENING

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

ALMASY

Madox! Madox! Madox, come quickly! Bermann, D'Ag - I've found something.

INT. CAVE OF SWIMMERS. FLASHLIGHT

PAINTINGS EMERGE, figures, animals. Ancient pictures. A giraffe. Cattle. Fish. Men with bows and arrows. Almasy has led the whole party into the heart of the cave. Now Madox comes alongside him at the wall, his flashlight joining Almasy's and increasing the visibility of the paintings. A dark-skinned figure, apparently in the process of DIVING into water, comes clearly into view. Then others, supine, arms outstretched.

MADOX

(with audible excitement)

My God, they're swimming!  
They're swimming!

The others crowd around. Five excited faces in the green gloom of the cave.

INT. CAVE OF SWIMMERS. DAY

Katharine is painting. She copies the cave paintings with meticulous, almost scientific accuracy.

EXT. CAVE OF SWIMMERS. DAY

A hive of activity. The team has set up TRESTLES to catalogue the finds as the Bedouin come out with baskets of detritus, which they empty onto a growing heap as the Cave is cleared out. Almsy clambers inside carrying camera equipment.

INT. CAVE OF SWIMMERS. DAY

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

EXT. THE DESERT. DAY

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

INT. BERMANN'S CAR. DAY

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

BERMANN

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

ALMSY

(compassionate)

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

Bermann holds out another segment of the orange, and watches Kamal bend into view, opening his mouth to be fed another piece, then suddenly fall from the vehicle. THE CAR LURCHES SIDEWAYS AND TOPPLES OVER THE EDGE. D'Ag - following, Fouad beside him - brakes sharply, but can't stop his own car from being caught in the avalanche of sand, and IT PLUNGES DOWN THE DUNE AND INTO BERMANN'S UPTURNED CAR WITH AN OMINOUS CRUNCH, the radiator exploding. Only Madox, a little way behind, with Katharine beside him, manages to stay clear of trouble. He jumps out of the vehicle and slides down the dune to find pandemonium as the passengers stumble out of the cars, sand flying, smoke pouring from the upright vehicle, the wheels of the overturned car spinning wildly in the air, a puddle of oil spreading ominously.

EXT. THE DESERT. DAY

LATER and the group have cleaned up as best as possible. D'Ag, Bermann, and Fouad are a little worse for wear. Fouad's arm is in a sling, and D'Ag is sporting a bloody head bandage. Bermann has broken a finger and is being attended to by Madox. The luggage, water, and petrol have been stacked up and the men are loading the remaining car.

EXT. THE DESERT. DAY

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

MADOX

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

ALMASY

Try to get an additional radiator. We can store it between here and Pottery Hill. And a better jack. We planned badly.

MADOX

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

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

KAMAL

(in Arabic)  
May God make safety your companion.

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

The vehicle gets about twenty yards, Almasy watching, before it sinks forlornly into the soft sand. It's hopelessly overloaded with people. They all get out.

MADOX

(irascible)  
Now what?

KATHARINE

I'll stay behind, of course.

CONTINUED

MADDOX

Certainly not.

KATHARINE

No, I insist. There clearly isn't room for all of us, I'm the least able to dig, and I'm not one of the walking wounded. It's only one night! Besides, if I remain it's the most effective method of persuading my husband to abandon whatever he's doing and come and rescue us.

It's hard to argue with this logic. Almsy shrugs.

LATER - THE MADDOX CAR makes a more effective departure. Almsy watches it disappear then turns, uncomfortable, to see Katharine walk down the steep face of the dune toward the makeshift shelter.

INT. SHELTER. DAY

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

KATHARINE

I thought you might like to paste them into your book.

ALMSY

Well, we took photographs, there's no need.

KATHARINE

No really, I'd like you to have them.

ALMSY

(handing them back)  
Well, there is really no need. They're too good. This is just a scrapbook. I should feel obliged. Thank you.

KATHARINE

(exasperated)  
And that would be unconscionable, I suppose, wouldn't it, to feel any obligation? Yes. Of course it would.

CONTINUED

She's already turning, heading back up the slope, leaving the perimeter of the shelter.

EXT. THE DESERT. NIGHT.

Katharine sits alone on top of the Dune, smoking, surveying the landscape. Below her the camp - a fresh wind flicking at the tarpaulin, The deep tracks of Madox's car stretching off towards civilization. Almsy heads up towards her.

ALMASY

You should come into the shelter.

KATHARINE

I'm quite all right, thank you.

ALMASY

Look over there.

Katharine turns, scans the horizon.

KATHARINE

What am I looking at?

ALMASY

Do you see what's happening to them - the stars?

KATHARINE

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

ALMASY

No, no, over there. In a few minutes there will be no stars. The air is filling with sand.

On the distant dunes an ominous, boiling cloud.

EXT. VEHICLES. NIGHT

The team hurries around salvaging gasoline drums, water cans, bringing anything loose or light inside the vehicles. The WIND is whipping up. the air busy with sand. Chaos as they struggle in ever-worsening conditions, their heads wrapped in blankets, flashlights useless. They seek safety in two groups, the tribesmen to the cabin of the overturned car, Katharine and Almsy to the upright one.

INT. CAR. NIGHT

Inside the cabin, the sand swirling around them, Katharine and Almasi sit without speaking. He pours a little water so that they can wash out their eyes and noses and mouths. She takes her silk scarf, wets it, presses it to her face.

KATHARINE

This is not very good, is it?

ALMASI

No.

KATHARINE

Shall we be all right?

ALMASI

Yes. Yes. Absolutely.

KATHARINE

Yes is a comfort. Absolutely is not.

EXT. THE DESERT. NIGHT

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

ALMASI (O/S)

...let me tell you about winds. There is a whirlwind from Southern Morocco, the Aajej, against which the fellahin defend themselves with knives. And there is the Ghibli from Tunis which rolls and rolls and rolls and produces a rather strange nervous condition...

And we hear Katharine's laugh.

INT. CAR. NIGHT

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

ALMASI

...and then there is the Harmatton, a red wind which Mariners call the sea of darkness. Red sand from this wind has flown as far as the south coast of England apparently producing showers

CONTINUED

ALMASY (cont'd)  
so dense they were mistaken  
for blood...

KATHARINE  
Fiction. We have a house on  
that coast, and it has never,  
never rained blood.

ALMASY  
No, it's all true.  
(teasing her)  
Herodotus, your friend -

KATHARINE  
(laughs)  
My friend!

ALMASY  
- he writes about it and he  
writes about a wind, the  
Simoon, which a nation  
thought was so evil they  
declared war on it and  
marched out against it in  
full battle dress.

He's touching Katharine's hair, he can't help it. She is  
paralysed by his touch, then puts out her hand and traces  
across the window, now entirely silted up with sand.

INT. PATIENT'S ROOM. NIGHT.

The Patient remembers. He feels Katharine's fingers tracing  
across his face.

EXT. THE DESERT. DAY

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

INT. CAR. DAY.

Almasy is awoken by the sound of A DISTANT ENGINE. He jerks up,  
waking Katharine in the process, and heaves against the door.

ALMASY  
Quick. Katharine. Quick, wake  
up! I can hear a car. Let me  
out.

(he stumbles out of  
the car, up the dune,  
then stops and flies  
back to the car)

The flare!

CONTINUED

ALMASY (cont'd)  
(berating himself)  
Idiot! To fall asleep.  
Unforgiveable.

EXT. THE DESERT. DAY

MADOX'S CAR IS ROARING ALONG THE HORIZON. AlmasY runs back into the car, finds his flaregun, and SENDS A FLARE high into the sky. Katharine is with him now, and they watch, helplessly, as the car bounces away from them, Madox a man on a mission. Katharine panics, THE SAND HAS ERASED ALL TRACE OF THEM. Katharine waves her arms frantically.

KATHARINE  
Here! We're here! Stop!

ALMASY  
Madox! Madox!

KATHARINE  
Our tracks have disappeared.

ALMASY  
Madox will calculate how many miles; he'll soon turn around.

Katharine is frightened. He looks at her.

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

A car horn leaks into their conversation. AlmasY can't place it at first - he'd assumed it was Madox. Now he realises it's coming from the floor of the sand dune. He suddenly turns and charges away from Katharine.

ALMASY  
The others!

Katharine, horrified, follows him towards the mound of sand which has completely buried the other vehicle.

KATHARINE  
Awful. We must get them out!  
How awful.

AlmasY is preoccupied. He's gone back to their vehicle and returns with a shovel, STARTS TO DIG FRANTICALLY. Katharine kneels beside him and helps to shovel away the sand. During this:

CONTINUED

KATHARINE

Am I a terrible coward to ask  
how much water we have?

ALMASY

(shovelling hard)

We have a little in our can,  
we have water in the radiator  
which can be drunk. It's not  
cowardly at all, it's  
extremely practical.

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

Come on, come on!

(then back to  
Katharine)

There's also a plant - I  
believe you can cut a piece  
the size of a heart from this  
plant and the next morning it  
will be filled with a  
delicious liquid.

KATHARINE

Find that plant. Cut out its  
heart.

They hear NOISES, scrabbling, faint thumps. Almasv scrapes at the sand and they find the glass of the car. The angle of the cab, tilted up to the sky, has made it impossible for the trapped boys to lever it open. Their oxygen is rapidly deteriorating. Almasv pulls on the door and it cranks open. The boys, dazed, gulping in the fresh air, clamber out.

EXT. THE DESERT. DAY

Katharine sits in the car, putting her pictures into the Herodotus. It's full of ALMASV'S HANDWRITING, PHOTOGRAPHS, SOME PRESSED FLOWERS. She deciphers a page of his words and drawings. It's almost exclusively about her, the lines studded with Ks. She reads, astonished, then looks at him as he and two of the three Bedouin circle the area of the cars in ever-widening circles, like water-diviners, like Kip searching for mines. Almasv suddenly drops to his knees and begins to shovel into the sand. He pulls out A CAN OF WATER. Turns to Katharine and holds it triumphantly in the air.

INT. THE DESERT. NIGHT

A red umbrella of light as Almasv fires the last flare into the black night. Katharine comes up beside him. They wait in silence, hope fading with the flare.

CONTINUED

KATHARINE

(blank)

Geoffrey's not in Cairo.

(Almasy looks at her)

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

ALMASY

And the marriage - is that a  
fiction?

There's a beat. Katharine has a hundred answers.

KATHARINE

No, the marriage isn't a  
fiction.

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

KATHARINE

Thank God. Oh thank God.

There's excited shouting from the boys. Then a distant reply.  
Almasy laughs with relief.

ALMASY

It's Madox.

He turns to Katharine. She shudders.

KATHARINE

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

Almasy turns to her. He runs the blade of his arm across her  
neck.

INT. THE MONASTERY, UPSTAIRS LANDING. DAY

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

CONTINUED

KIP (O/S)

(reading)

"He sat, in defiance of  
municipal orders, astride the  
gun Zamzammah on her brick  
platform opposite the old  
Ajaib-Gher -"

(he breaks off)

I can't read these words.  
They stick in my throat.

THE PATIENT (O/S)

Because you're reading it too  
fast!

KIP (O/S)

Not at all.

THE PATIENT (O/S)

You have to read Kipling  
slowly! Your eye is too  
impatient - think about the  
speed of his pen.

(quoting Kipling to  
demonstrate)

What is it? "He sat" comma "in  
defiance of municipal orders"  
comma "astride the gun  
Zamzammah on her brick"...  
what is it?

INT. THE PATIENT'S ROOM. DAY

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

KIP

"Brick platform opposite the  
old Ajaib-Gher -"

THE PATIENT

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

KIP

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

THE PATIENT

So what is it you object to -  
the writer or what he's  
writing about?

KIP

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

(snatching up the  
empty can)

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

THE PATIENT

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

HANA

Arguing about books.

THE PATIENT

Condensed milk - one of the  
truly great inventions.

KIP

(grinning, leaving)  
I'll get another tin.

Hana and The Patient are alone.

HANA

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

THE PATIENT

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

HANA

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

THE PATIENT

I don't think it's  
indifference.

Rip comes bounding in with a fresh can.

CONTINUED

THE PATIENT

Hana was just telling me you  
were indifferent -

HANA

(appalled)

Hey! -

THE PATIENT

- to her cooking.

KIP

(oblivious)

Well, I'm indifferent to  
cooking, not Hana's cooking  
in particular.

(stabbing at the tin  
with a bayonet)

Have either of you ever tried  
condensed milk sandwiches?

EXT. CAIRO. DAY

ANOTHER WORLD as a honking TAXI containing Almasy and Katherine  
negotiates the pell-mell bustle of Cairo.

EXT. SHEPHEARD'S HOTEL. DAY

Almasy, still in the same clothes, and evidently weary, emerges  
from the cab, and pulls Katharine's belongings from the trunk,  
then holds open the door for her. As she walks toward the  
hotel, he hands her bag to a porter. Katharine is stung.

KATHARINE

Will you not come in?

ALMASY

No. I should go home.

KATHARINE

Will you please come in?

ALMASY

(a beat)

Mrs. Clifton -

Katharine turns, disgusted.

KATHARINE

Don't.

ALMASY

I believe you still have my  
book.

CONTINUED

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

INT. ALMASY'S ROOM. DAY

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

There's A KNOCK at the door. Almasy sleeps. Another. A third. He's roused from the dead.

It's Katharine. She's bathed, luminous, stands backlit by the afternoon sun - an angel in a cotton dress. He walks towards her and she slaps him shockingly hard. He KNEELS before her, head at her thighs. Katharine beats on his head and shoulders, violently, then stops, her face expressionless.

KATHARINE

You still have sand in your hair.

He pulls back, to look at her. She kneels and covers his face with kisses. He pulls blindly at her dress and it RIPS across her breasts.

INT. BATHROOM. DAY

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

KATHARINE

I'm impressed you can sew.

ALMASY

Good.

KATHARINE

You sew very badly.

ALMASY

You don't sew at all!

KATHARINE

A woman should never learn to sew, and if she can she shouldn't admit to it. Close your eyes.

CONTINUED

ALMASY  
(laughs)  
That makes it harder still.

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

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

ALMASY  
When were you most happy?

KATHARINE  
Now.

ALMASY  
When were you least happy?

KATHARINE  
(a beat)  
Now.

ALMASY  
What do you love?

KATHARINE  
What do I love?

ALMASY  
Say everything.

KATHARINE  
Let me see... I love water,  
the fish in it. Hedgehogs!  
I love hedgehogs.

She rinses his hair, then slips off the robe and CLIMBS IN BESIDE HIM, covering his neck and shoulders in kisses.

ALMASY  
And what else?

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

ALMASY  
(kissing her)  
Go on all day.

KATHARINE  
(a beat)  
My husband.

CONTINUED

Almasy looks away.

ALMASY

What do you hate most?

KATHARINE

A lie. What do you hate most?

ALMASY

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

She freezes, pushes him away, pulls herself out of the bath.

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

INT. THE PATIENT'S ROOM. DAY

Hana sits reading from the Herodotus. She pulls out a  
photograph of a small child.

HANA

Who is this?

THE PATIENT

Don't you recognize me?

HANA

(laughs)

Is it you? So fat!

Next she shows The Patient the page where a CHRISTMAS CRACKER  
WRAPPER covered in handwriting has been glued in.

THE PATIENT

That's a Christmas cracker.  
It was a Christmas cracker. A  
firecracker.

HANA

This isn't your handwriting,  
is it?

THE PATIENT

Yes, it is.

HANA

(she reads what he's  
written)

"December twenty-second -  
Betrayals in war are  
childlike compared with our  
betrayals during peace. New  
lovers are nervous and

CONTINUED

HANA (cont'd)  
tender, but smash everything  
- for the heart is an organ of  
fire...for the heart is an  
organ of fire..."

(she looks up)  
I love that, I believe that.  
(to him)  
K. Who is K?

THE PATIENT  
K is for Katharine.

EXT. AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE, DECEMBER 1938. DAY

A CHRISTMAS PARTY FOR THE TROOPS. The incongruous attempts to create a traditional Christmas in the dusty heat of Cairo. The Party is in the courtyard of the Moorish Palace, which serves as the private residence of the British Ambassador, SIR RONNIE HAMPTON. Lots of wives, including LADY HAMPTON and Katharine, help serve tea and cake to the SOLDIERS who sit at rudimentary tables with paper plates and paper hats. A man dressed as SANTA CLAUS is giving out presents - PENGUIN PAPERBACKS, CHOCOLATE. Christmas carols leak from a loudspeaker. Officers and Civilians walk the perimeter. One of these, arriving, is Almasy. He sits in the shade, catches Katharine's attention. Katharine brings him over a cup of tea and a plate with Christmas cake on it.

ALMASY  
Say you're sick.

KATHARINE  
What? No!

ALMASY  
Say you're feeling faint -  
the heat.

KATHARINE  
(but a frisson)  
No.

ALMASY  
I can't work. I can't sleep.

Lady Hampton calls impatiently.

LADY HAMPTON  
Katharine!

CONTINUED

KATHARINE

Coming.

(to Almasy)

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

ALMASY

I can still taste you.

KATHARINE

(waving at another woman who pushes a trolley with teapots)

Philippa, this is empty.

ALMASY

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

(as she leaves)

Swoon. I'll catch you.

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

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

LADY HAMPTON

Katharine!

KATHARINE

I'm fine. No, I'm fine. How silly.

OFFICER'S WIFE

(helping her to sit down)

It's the heat.

LADY HAMPTON

(to the others)

She's quite all right.

(solicitous)

Are you pregnant?

KATHARINE

I don't think so.

CONTINUED

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

KATHARINE  
Do you know, I think I might  
go inside and sit down for a  
few minutes.

LADY HAMPTON  
I'll come with you.

KATHARINE  
No, please. You stay. I shall  
be absolutely fine.

INT. STOREROOM. AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE. DAY

A small STOREROOM inside the Palace - Brooms, Mops, Cleaning  
Equipment. Outside, the party is visible as opaque shadows  
through the bevelled glass of the ornate window. The sound of  
carols sung by the enlisted men gives way to a version of  
"SILENT NIGHT" played on a solitary bagpipe. Inside, Almasy and  
Katharine make love in the darkness. It's as if the world has  
stopped and there's only their passion, overwhelming reason and  
logic and rules.

INT. CORRIDORS, AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE. DAY

A CORRIDOR. Almasy appears and almost immediately collides with  
the man dressed as SANTA CLAUS.

CLIFTON  
Have you seen Katharine?

ALMASY  
(taken aback)  
What?

CLIFTON  
(pulling down his  
beard)  
It's Clifton under here.

ALMASY  
Oh, no, I haven't, sorry.

INT. SIDE ROOM IN AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE. DAY

Geoffrey continues scouring the warren of tiny rooms that run  
off the central courtyard. He finds Katharine sitting in one,  
smoking, surrounded by oppressive and elaborate tiling. Clifton  
wonders briefly how Almasy had missed Katharine.

CONTINUED

CLIFTON

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

KATHARINE

I'm fine. I'm just hot.

CLIFTON

Lady H said she thought you might be pregnant.

KATHARINE

I'm not pregnant. I'm just hot. Too hot. Aren't you?

CLIFTON

I'm sweltering, actually.  
(taking off his hat  
and beard)  
Come on, I'll take you home.

KATHARINE

(close to tears)  
Can't we really go home? I can't breathe. Aren't you dying for green, anything green, or rain. It's Christmas and it's all - oh, I don't know - if you asked me I'd go home tomorrow. If you wanted.

CLIFTON

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

KATHARINE

(poking at his  
costume)  
Oh, Geoffrey, you do so love a disguise.

CLIFTON

I do so love you.  
(he kisses her head)  
What do you smell of?

KATHARINE

(horrified)  
What?

CLIFTON

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

INT. THE PATIENT'S ROOM. EVENING

The Patient lies alone in his room. Then something distracts him. Caravaggio is standing over him, staring, intense.

CARAVAGGIO

Is it you?

THE PATIENT

What?

CARAVAGGIO

If I said Moose.

THE PATIENT

Moose? Who the hell's Moose?

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

CARAVAGGIO

I look different, why shouldn't you?

THE PATIENT

I heard your breathing, I thought it was the rain. I'm dying for rain. I'm dying anyway, but I long for the rain on my face.

CARAVAGGIO

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

THE PATIENT

I don't know. Paper. Is it?  
(sharp, not wanting to  
think)  
I don't know. Paper.

INT. OFFICE, BRITISH HQ, CAIRO. DAY

A SMALL OFFICE, shared by two men, and a mountain of filing cabinets and paper. There are AERIAL MAPS all over the walls. Clifton is on the telephone, while his colleague, RUPERT DOUGLAS, works at the desk.

CLIFTON

(into the phone)  
Darling, it's me, I'm sorry,  
something's come up.

KATHARINE (O/S)

Oh no.

CONTINUED

CLIFTON

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

KATHARINE (O/S)

I'm going to sulk. I'm going  
to sit here and sulk until you  
get back.

CLIFTON

(pleased)

Good. Okay my sausage, I love  
you.

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

RUPERT

I didn't know you were going  
anywhere?

CLIFTON

I'm not. I'm going to  
surprise her. It's our  
anniversary. She's forgotten,  
of course. What's the symbol  
of your first anniversary? I  
should get something. Is it  
cotton or paper?

RUPERT

First anniversary? I thought  
you two had been married for  
donkey's years?

CLIFTON

We've been friends for  
donkey's years. Best friends.  
She was always crying on my  
shoulder about somebody -  
until I persuaded her to  
settle for my shoulder.  
Stroke of genius.

(he calls through the  
partition into the  
next office)

Moose, you there? First  
anniversary - is that cotton?

A man walks into the office, his code name is MOOSE. We know him  
as CARAVAGGIO. He has fewer grey hairs, AND THUMBS.

CARAVAGGIO

Is what cotton?

CONTINUED

CLIFTON  
First wedding anniversary.

CARAVAGGIO  
Your first anniversary is  
Paper.

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

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

The car ahead of them SCREECHES TO A HALT as a WOMAN hurries across the street. The driver honks his horn angrily. The woman puts up a hand in apology as she skips across the street to another taxi. IT'S KATHARINE - she asks the driver for an address in the old town.

Geoffrey, at first excited, is troubled by Katharine's expression. Then he sees her skip and his whole being punctures.

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

CLIFTON  
Stop! Stop here.

CABBIE  
Please? Yessir.

Geoffrey sits in the cab. Fifty yards short of the hotel. The world rushes by.

INT. ALMASY'S ROOMS. LATE DAY

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

KATHARINE  
This is - what is this?

ALMASY  
It's a folk song.

KATHARINE  
Arabic?

ALMASY  
No, no, it's Hungarian. My  
daijka sang it to me when I  
was a child in Budapest.

CONTINUED

KATHARINE  
(as they listen)  
It's beautiful. What's it  
about?

ALMASY  
(as if interpreting)  
Szerelem means love...and the  
story - there's this  
Hungarian count, he's a  
wanderer, a fool. For years  
he's on some kind of a quest,  
for - who knows what? And then  
one day he falls under the  
spell of a mysterious English  
woman - a harpy - who beats  
him and hits him and he  
becomes her slave and sews  
her clothes and worships the  
hem of her-

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

ALMASY  
(laughing)  
Ouch! See - you're always  
beating me...!

KATHARINE  
You bastard, I was believing  
you! You should be my slave.

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

ALMASY  
I claim this shoulder blade -  
no, wait - I want - turn over  
- I want this!

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

ALMASY  
This place, I love this  
place, what's it called -  
this is mine!  
(Katharine doesn't  
know)  
I'm going to ask the King  
permission to call it the  
Almasy Bosphorous.

CONTINUED

KATHARINE

(teasing)

I thought we were against  
ownership?

(Almasy acknowledges  
the irony)

I can stay tonight.

The luxury of this makes them both sad. The duplicity. Almasy  
rolls away onto his back.

ALMASY

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

KATHARINE

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

ALMASY

Yes. Here you are a different  
wife.

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

The CAB DRIVER is asleep. In the back of the car Geoffrey has  
opened the champagne. He lets it overflow, then takes a swig.  
He fusses with the tissue paper from the bottle, unravelling  
it, revealing a chain of hearts.

EXT. ALMASY'S HOUSE, OLD CAIRO. DAWN

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

EXT. SPICE MARKET, CAIRO. DAWN

The MORNING PRAYERS rise out from the city's three Minarets.  
They stop at a stall, which is just preparing to open for the  
day. Katharine examines the collection of silver thimbles,  
picks one up.

KATHARINE

These are darling. What are  
they, thimbles?

CONTINUED

ALMASY

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

He points it out to the merchant who gives him a price. Without comment, Almasy produces the money and, beaming, hands the thimble to Katharine.

ALMASY

I don't care to bargain.

KATHARINE

That day, had you followed me  
to the market?

ALMASY

Yes, of course.

KATHARINE

(loving him, but  
frightened)  
Shall we be all right?

ALMASY

Yes. Yes.  
(shrugs)  
Absolutely.

EXT. CAIRO STREET. DAWN

Katharine takes leave of Almasy on the street corner away from the hotel entrance. They don't kiss. There's a moment when their hands brush, linger, then she leaves him at the top of the stairs and disappears.

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

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

INT. THE PATIENT'S ROOM. MORNING

"Cheek to Cheek" leaks into the room from a GRAMOPHONE that Caravaggio stands over proudly. The Patient opens his eyes - is confused, dislocated - stares blankly at Caravaggio.

CARAVAGGIO

(grinning)  
Thought you'd never wake up!

CONTINUED

THE PATIENT

What?

Hana comes in, sleepily, frowns at the gramophone.

HANA

Where did you find that?

CARAVAGGIO

I liberated it.

HANA

I think that's called  
looting.

CARAVAGGIO

(relaxed)

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

THE PATIENT

Irving Berlin.

CARAVAGGIO

For?

THE PATIENT

Top Hat.

CARAVAGGIO

Is there a song you don't  
know?

HANA

(speaking for him)

No. He sings all the time.

She goes over to The Patient and kisses him gently.

HANA

Good morning.

(of his singing)

Did you know that? You're  
always singing.

THE PATIENT

I've been told before.

HANA

Kip's another one.

She goes to the window, looks over to where the tents are  
pitched, sees Hardy shaving and Kip in the process of washing  
his hair, his turban hanging like a ribbon between two trees to  
dry. He's perched a bowl and is dipping his long coal-black

CONTINUED

hair into it. As Hana watches Kip, Caravaggio changes the record. The Patient identifies it immediately.

ALMASY  
"Wang Wang Blues."

CARAVAGGIO  
You're incredible!

EXT. MONASTERY GARDEN. MORNING.

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

HARDY  
Good morning, miss.

HANA  
Hello. You saved my life. I haven't forgotten.  
(Hardy waves that away)  
I thought you were very very tall. You seemed so big and - a giant! - and I felt like a child who can't keep her balance.

HARDY  
(does a little mime)  
A toddler.

HANA  
(smiles)  
A toddler.

She goes on outside, and tentatively approaches Kip, who's still working at his hair.

HANA  
My hair was long. At some point. I've forgotten what a nuisance it is to wash.

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

HANA  
Try this. I found a great jar of it. Olive oil.

KIP  
Thank you.

She stands for a second, just wanting to be close, then shyly walks away. Kip examines the oil, calls after her.

CONTINUED

KIP  
Is this for my hair?

HANA  
(turning, smiling)  
Yes, for your hair.

INT. THE PATIENT'S ROOM. EVENING.

Caravaggio is with The Patient. They sit lost in the jazz they're listening to. The Patient regards Caravaggio.

THE PATIENT  
There was a general who wore a  
patch over a perfectly good  
eye. The men fought harder  
for him. Sometimes I think I  
could get up and dance.

Caravaggio doesn't respond.

THE PATIENT  
What's under your mittens?  
(still nothing from  
Caravaggio)  
What's under your mittens?

Caravaggio stands, goes to him, removing his mittens.

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

Caravaggio, thumbs intact and wearing a crumpled linen suit, walks through the mangled corridors of British HQ. Smoke is rising from buildings, the ominous scream of Stuka dive-bombers in the distance as the harbour is pounded, the steady thud of explosions. TOBRUK IS UNDER SIEGE. BHQ is a place in the throes of dismantling itself. SECRETARIES are visiting braziers manned by ARAB BOYS who stoke the fires as boxes of restricted papers are fed into them. ASHES hover in the air.

INT. BHQ. TOBRUK DAY.

Caravaggio walks through a large room crowded with desks. From one of them, a young woman, AICHA, frowning at the chaos and the shelling, approaches him. AICHA is Caravaggio's sometime lover.

AICHA  
He's waiting for you. I'll  
see you tonight?

INT. CORRIDOR OF BRITISH HEADQUARTERS, TOBRUK. DAY

Fenelon-Barnes and Caravaggio make their way down the stairs and to the entrance. Aicha passes them on the stairs, looks anxiously at Caravaggio.

CONTINUED

FENELON-BARNES

Look, Moose, we need you to stay in Tobruk. I know it's a bit of a short straw but the thinking is we'll be back - I mean, we will, we will be back - but we need eyes and ears on the ground. Jerry's got our maps, you know. Swine. Before the war we helped them run about the desert making maps - and now they're getting spies into Cairo using our maps, they'll get Rommel into Cairo using our maps. The whole of the desert's like a bloody bus route and we gave it to them. Any foreigner who turned up - "Welcome to the Royal Geographic, take our maps." Old Madox went mad, you know - did you know Peter Madox? - magnificent explorer - after he found out he'd been betrayed by Almasy, his best friend. Absolutely destroyed the poor sod. I'd love to get that bastard Almasy. Settle the score.

EXT. TOBRUK. DAY

The Germans invade Tobruk. They drop to the ground in cluster of parachutes. The harbour rocks with explosions.

EXT. TOBRUK DOCKSIDE. DAY

A GERMAN TROOP CARRIER rumbles forward passing a line of BEDRAGGLED BRITISH POWS as they're marched along the side of the harbour; passing a dock in which the mangled carcasses of boats send up plumes of ugly smoke.

EXT. TOBRUK SQUARE. DAY

A crowd of Tobruk CIVILIANS - French and Italians among the MOSTLY ARAB FACES. Their papers are being thoroughly checked by officers sitting at open desks. In a line, wearing his shabby suit, is CARAVAGGIO. AN ARAB WOMAN in front of him is arguing over the identity of her ominous CAUCASIAN-LOOKING BABY. An INTERPRETER mediates. The OFFICER doesn't believe the woman. She's getting frantic at the possibility of losing her child.

Suddenly there's a disturbance as a WOMAN is dragged along the line by her hair. She's bloodied, and has been tortured, and it's hard to recognize her as the pretty AICHA. She is forced to consider some horrified members of the line, shakes her

CONTINUED

head, moans, falls to her feet. Caravaggio doesn't look, stares straight ahead. An officer watches him as he turns briefly and helplessly out of concern for her. Their eyes catch for an instant and the officer sees it.

Caravaggio slowly walks away from the line. A soldier shouts to halt, the crowd ducks for cover. Caravaggio puts up his arms in surrender.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM, TOBRUK. DAY

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

MULLER

David Caravaggio.

CARAVAGGIO

No.

MULLER

(of the photographs)

This was taken in Cairo at British Headquarters - July '41. And so was this - August '41. And this - February '42.

CARAVAGGIO

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

MULLER

You are a Canadian spy working for the Allies. Code name Moose.

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

CARAVAGGIO

Could you get me a doctor? I'm sick, I'm leaking blood.

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

CONTINUED

CLERK  
(in German)  
He's asking for a doctor.

MULLER  
(to Caravaggio)  
You want a doctor?

CARAVAGGIO  
I've been asking for weeks,  
months, I don't know -

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

CARAVAGGIO  
(taken aback)  
A nurse? Well, sure, great. A  
nurse would be great. A  
nurse? Great.

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

MULLER  
(in German)  
Leave it and get the nurse!

The Clerk exits.

MULLER  
(turns to Caravaggio)  
Look - give me something. A  
name. A code. So we can all  
get out of this room.  
(wiping his face)  
I'm sick of this heat. It's  
too hot.

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

The NURSE comes in. She is Arab, unbearably young, pure. Her  
head is covered.

MULLER  
I'll tell you what I'm going  
to do. This is your nurse, by  
the way. She's Moslem, so  
she'll understand all of  
this. What's the punishment  
for adultery? Let's leave it

CONTINUED

MULLER (cont'd)  
at that. You're married and  
you were fucking another  
woman, so that's - is it the  
hands that are cut off? Or is  
that for stealing? Does  
anyone know?

There's a silence. Muller turns to Caravaggio.

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

CARAVAGGIO  
Don't cut me.

MULLER  
Or was it Toronto?

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

MULLER  
Ten fingers. How about this?  
You give me a name for every  
finger - doesn't matter who.  
I get something, you keep  
something. I'm trying to be  
reasonable.

CARAVAGGIO  
(ashen)  
Don't cut me. Come on.

MULLER  
(pauses, suddenly  
puzzled)  
Are thumbs fingers?  
(in GERMAN to the  
others)  
Is a thumb a finger?

No response. Muller opens his palms to Caravaggio.

MULLER  
I get no help from these  
people.

Muller slams down the telephone receiver. An AIR RAID SIREN is  
going off somewhere, and now the faint sound of explosions is  
also discernable, but all muffled in this room along with the  
steady tap-tap of the STENOGRAPHER. At that moment, Muller  
suddenly becomes aware of what is happening. He turns on the  
Stenographer.

CONTINUED

MULLER  
(in German)  
What are you doing?

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

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

MULLER  
The Geneva Convention! Ach!

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

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

MULLER  
Go! Hey! Go!

Caravaggio is in terror.

CARAVAGGIO  
I'll give you names. I'll  
give you names. What names  
did you say? I've forgotten  
the names. Tell me the names  
and I'll agree.

The guards come away from the door and press down on Caravaggio's shoulders to prevent him from moving. The Nurse, grim-faced, approaches, kneels at the table, takes the blade from Muller, takes gentle hold of Caravaggio's hand.

CARAVAGGIO  
(as she prepares to  
cut)  
Please - please - oh please -  
oh please - I promise. What  
name did you say? I knew them!

MULLER  
(jabbing at the Nurse)  
Come on!

And then Caravaggio SCREAMS AND SCREAMS. The AIR RAID is continuing outside, the PHONE IS RINGING. Muller watches as Caravaggio is mutilated, his cries continuing, his whimpers horrible.

INT. THE PATIENT'S ROOM. NIGHT.

Caravaggio, his hands revealed, thumbless, advances on The Patient, his cries still ringing in the room.

CARAVAGGIO

The man who took my thumbs, I found him eventually - I killed him. The man who took my photograph, I found him too - that took me a year. He's dead. Another man helped get that man across the desert to Cairo. I've been looking for him.

INT. LIBRARY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF EGYPTOLOGY. DAY

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

MADOX

(pushing away his charts)

You can't get through there.

ALMASY

I was looking again at Bell's maps. If we can find a way to cross the wadi we can drive straight up into Cairo...

(he points at a map)

- and this whole spur is a real possibility...

MADOX

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

Almasy is surprised by Madox's anger.

MADOX

And where are the Expedition Maps?

ALMASY

In my room.

MADOX

Those maps belong to His Majesty's Government. They shouldn't be left lying

CONTINUED

MADOX (cont'd)  
around for any Tom, Dick or  
Harry to have sight of.

ALMASY  
What on earth's the matter  
with you?

MADOX  
Don't be so bloody naive. You  
know there's a war breaking  
out.

(he tosses a slip of  
paper onto the map,  
recites its message)  
This arrived this morning. By  
order of the British  
Government - all  
International Expeditions to  
be aborted by May 1939.

EXT. CAIRO SOUK. LATE AFTERNOON

Almasy and Madox walk through the souk, the bars filling up as  
the stalls are closing. Both of them are sombre.

ALMASY  
What do they care about our  
maps?

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

ALMASY  
(contemptuous)  
Own the desert.

Almasy hesitates at a junction, clearly about to take his leave  
of Madox.

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

Madox looks at him.

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

INT. OPEN-AIR CINEMA, CAIRO. EVENING

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

PATHE NEWS BEGINS and we date the event to April 1939. Stories of imminent war jostle with images of Merrie England. Village greens, sporting victories, record sunshine on the Isle of Wight. Alone among the necking couples - mostly soldiers with their Egyptian girlfriends - sits Katharine. She's waiting for Almasy. Katharine is wretched. She sits, head down, hardly watching the screen, marooned in her despair about duplicity, sordid assignations.

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

ALMASY

Sorry.

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

KATHARINE

I can't do this, I can't do this anymore.

INT. OPEN-AIR CINEMA, CAIRO. EVENING

LATER and Katharine and Almasy sit stiffly under the bleachers while the main feature - a Busby Berkeley revue - plays in the background. Finally, Katharine gets up.

KATHARINE

I'd better go now. Say goodbye here.

ALMASY

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

They stand, awkward. Katharine rehearses her position.

KATHARINE

Any minute now, he'll find out, we'll barge into someone - it will kill him.

ALMASY

Don't go over it again, please.

He takes her hands, lays his cheeks into them. She pulls her hand away as she makes for the exit. He calls after her.

CONTINUED

ALMASY

Katharine -

He looks toward her, his smile awful.

ALMASY

I just wanted you to know. I'm  
not missing you yet.

She nods, can't find this funny.

KATHARINE

You will. You will.

She turns sharply from him and BANGS her head against the  
bleacher support, staggers at the shock of it, then hurries  
away.

INT. THE PATIENT'S ROOM. NIGHT

The patient's stertorous breathing, each intake accompanied by  
a small noise, a note, suddenly stops. Then it steadies again.  
He appears to be alone. Caravaggio lies under his bed, smoking,  
a vigil.

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

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

ALMASY

I believe I'm rather late.

MADOX

(ignoring the drama of  
this entrance)

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

THE OTHERS

The International Sand Club!

ALMASY

(raising his glass)  
The International Sand Club!  
Misfits, buggers, fascists,  
and fools. God bless us,  
everyone.

CONTINUED

The others drink, trying to ignore his mood.

ALMASY

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

CLIFTON

Sorry, what's your point?

ALMASY

(not responding)  
And the people here don't  
want us. You must be joking.  
The Egyptians are desperate  
to get rid of the  
Colonials...

(to an embarrassed  
Fouad)

Isn't that right, Fouad? Some  
of their best people down on  
their hands and knees begging  
to be spared a knighthood...

(to his host, Sir  
Hampton)

Isn't that right? Isn't that  
right, Sir Ronnie?

Ronnie Hampton shrugs. They're all very uncomfortable. Almasv  
turns to Clifton.

ALMASY

What's my point?  
(standing up)  
Oh! I've invented a new dance  
- anybody up for it - it's  
called - it's called - the  
Bosphorus Hug. Madox?  
Bermann? You'll dance with  
me... D'Ag? Come on D'Aggers.

D'AGOSTINO

Let's eat first. Sit down.

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

ALMASY

'... We'll bathe at Brighton,  
the fish you'll frighten when  
you're in - your bathing suit  
so thin, will make the  
shellfish grin, fin to fin.'  
They're playing it far too

CONTINUED

ALMASY (cont'd)  
slowly, but these were the  
words, actually, before they  
were cleaned up. Might be a  
song for you, Mrs. Clif -

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

MADOX  
(whispering sharply)  
Look, either shut up, or go  
home. You're completely  
plastered! Now sit down.

ALMASY  
(loudly)  
Absolutely right, shut up,  
shut up. Sorry. I'm so sorry.  
I can't think what came over  
me. Lashings of apologies -  
all round.

EXT. AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE. NIGHT

Later, and now MOST OF THE GROUP ARE DANCING. We see Katharine dancing with Rupert Douglas, enjoying herself. Bermann is there and even Madox - jogging and grinning foolishly. Clifton looks at Katharine who, as the dance ends, excuses herself to go to the cloakroom. Almasy hovers in the shadows, unseen.

INT. AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE. NIGHT

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

ALMASY  
Why were you holding his  
collar?

KATHARINE  
What?

ALMASY  
(mimicking her  
inflection)  
What? That boy, that little  
boy, you were holding his  
collar, you were gripping his  
collar, what for? Is he next?  
You going to drag him into  
your little room? Where is  
it? Is this it?

KATHARINE  
Don't do this.

CONTINUED

ALMASY  
(pressing her against  
the wall)  
I've watched you - I've  
watched you at garden  
parties, on verandahs, at the  
Races - how can you stand  
there? How can you ever  
smile? As if your life hadn't  
capsized?

KATHARINE  
You know why. You know why.

He tries to hold her. She resists. They're both in torment.

ALMASY  
Dance with me.

KATHARINE  
No.

ALMASY  
(tracing her shoulder  
blade)  
Dance with me. I want to touch  
you. I want the things which  
are mine. Which belong to me.

KATHARINE  
(sobbing)  
Do you think you're the only  
one who feels anything? Is  
that what you think?

INT. THE PATIENT'S ROOM. NIGHT

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

THE PATIENT  
Why don't you go? Get some  
sleep.

HANA  
Would you like me to?

He nods. She gets up from her sewing, then leaves.

INT. THE MONASTERY, LANDING AND STAIRS. NIGHT

Hana leaves the room, then turns and sees a tiny lamp on the  
floor. It's made from a snail shell filled with oil. She bends  
to it curiously, then sees a second lamp half-way down the  
stairs, then a third further down. She smiles in the light,  
then follows the trail.

EXT. THE MONASTERY CLOISTERS. NIGHT

In the cloisters the trail of shell lamps continues, like tiny cat's eyes. As they reach the hopscotch chalk marks, they outline the squares. Hana hopscotches and then follows the lights, disappearing around a corner.

INT. THE MONASTERY STABLES. NIGHT

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

KIP (o/s)

Hana

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

HANA

(happy)

Kip.

And he goes to her.

EXT. AREZZO. DUSK

Kip, Hana clinging onto him, steers the motorbike in the deserted PIAZZA. They dismount and walk up to the doors of the CHURCH.

INT. CHURCH. DUSK

They enter the Church. It's in almost total darkness. Kip circles Hana with the rope, MAKING A SLING across her waist and shoulder. He lights a small flare and hands it to her before disappearing into the gloom.

Hana stands holding the flare.

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

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

Now Kip, on the ground, still holding the rope, walks forward and causes Hana to SWING to the right. She lets out a giddy laugh, exhilarated and nervous, and she flies, illuminating - en passant - faces, bodies, angels. Kip guides the rope as if they were making love, which in a way they are.

CONTINUED

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

INT. KIP'S TENT. NIGHT

Hana lies over Kip in the stable, a naked white body plaited into a brown one.

HANA

If one night I didn't come to see you, what would you do?

KIP

I try not to expect you.

HANA

Yes, but if it got late and I hadn't shown up?

KIP

Then I'd think there must be a reason.

HANA

You wouldn't come to find me?

(Kip shrugs)

That makes me never want to come here.

(Kip still won't respond)

Then I tell myself he spends all day searching, in the night he wants to be found.

Then Kip turns, rolling over to face her.

KIP

I do. I do want you to find me. I do want to be found.  
I do.

EXT. THE MONASTERY STABLES. EARLY MORNING

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

HARDY

Ah, I was looking for Lieutenant Singh.

HANA

He's sleeping.

HARDY

Only we've got to go to work.

CONTINUED

HANA

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

HARDY

It's a bomb. Up by the Viaduct.

She closes the door, then reappears.

HANA

Does he have to go?

HARDY

Pardon me?

HANA

What if you couldn't find him...?

(Hardy's bewildered)  
Sergeant, not today, please.  
Not this morning.

Kip comes to the door, winding his turban.

KIP

What's happening? Am I needed?

HARDY

I'm afraid so, sir.

Kip hurries to his tent. Hana follows him.

HANA

Don't go. I'm frightened.

KIP

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

EXT. A VIADUCT NORTH OF THE MONASTERY. DAY

Kip is lowered by a pulley into the shaft the sappers have made around the bomb. Hardy supervises. The bomb's huge - 2,000 pounds - and protrudes ostrich-like from the pit, its nose sunk into a pool of sludge at the base of the viaduct.

Kip steps off and sinks knee-deep in mud, grunting in disgust. Warily, he touches his huge opponent, feeling the condition of the case. He wipes the metal. Reveals a serial number, calls it out to Hardy, who's perched on the bank.

CONTINUED

KIP  
Serial number - KK-IP2600.

Kip stares at the number. A bomb with his name on it.

HARDY  
(noting it down)  
KK-IP2600 Sir! I'll get the  
oxygen.

EXT. ROAD APPROACHING VIADUCT. DAY

Hana cycles along on Caravaggio's bicycle. A TANK comes roaring up behind her, then a second and third, loaded up with people - citizens and soldiers, and children - waving flags and gesticulating. She lets the metal circus go by.

INT. BOMB SHAFT. DAY

Back in the shaft, Kip works away, his fingers shaking with the cold from the oxygen he's using to freeze the fuse. Suddenly there's a VIOLENT TREMOR. The ground is SHUDDERING, and Kip's tools are falling into the sludge.

KIP  
Hardy! What's happening?!

EXT. VIADUCT. DAY

The TANKS are rumbling towards the Viaduct. HORNS start sounding. Hardy, below, bellows at his men above for explanation.

HARDY  
Corporal!?

DADE  
(leaning over the  
parapet of the  
viaduct)  
Tanks, sir. Don't know what  
it's about.

HARDY  
(incredulous)  
Stop them!

KIP  
Hardy!

HARDY  
What is this - a bloody  
carnival? Stop them!

KIP  
The fuse has snapped!

CONTINUED

Two Sappers run across the bridge towards the oncoming procession. They wave their orange flags, the tanks wave back with their flags - Stars and Stripes, Union Jacks. Now SHOTS are ringing out. In the shaft, oblivious, Kip slides out from under the bomb, the oxygen spurting everywhere, all over his clothes, hissing on the surface of the water. Hardy bends into the shaft, heedless of his own safety.

HARDY

You've got to cut, sir, that frost won't last.

KIP

Go away.

HARDY

Yessir.

KIP

This is making me incredibly angry.

HARDY

I know, sir.

Kip rubs his hands to warm them up, locates his needle pliers, and slips them through the tiny gap. His hand touches the casing and the freeze BURNS his hand. He jerks back, DROPPING THE PLIERS into the watery sludge, cursing.

Above them the tanks are rumbling over the bridge, sending drizzles of dust onto them from the fragile structure. The cheering continues, oblivious to the crisis below.

Now Kip's on his hands and knees in the sludge, trying frantically to find the pliers. Hardy looks at his watch, he can't help. The seconds run out as Kip grovels in the mud.

HARDY

Can you feel them?

Then, suddenly Kip emerges with the pliers, soaked, shuddering. He doesn't know where to cut.

HARDY

Cut it sir, you've got to cut it!

He goes straight to an exposed loop, no finesse, and cuts. There's a snip. Then nothing.

EXT. VIADUCT. DAY

Kip and Hardy emerge from their ordeal to join what appears to be a party. There are wine bottles and embraces. They're bewildered.

CONTINUED

HARDY  
Get a blanket!  
(not getting  
attention)  
Spalding - get a blanket for  
the Lieutenant!

DADE  
It's over, Sir! It's over.  
Jerry's surrendered.  
(to Kip)  
Well done, well done, Sir!

And now they're all shaking hands and slapping backs, and the SOLDIERS FROM THE TANKS are there and the victory celebrations begin. Kip's blank, drained, not taking anything in, as Dade wraps a blanket around his shoulders.

Hana arrives on the bicycle and she and Kip embrace privately amidst the celebrations. A different kind of victory for them.

INT. THE PATIENT'S ROOM. NIGHT

Thunder breaks over the Monastery. Hana suddenly comes to the door of the room. She looks mischievous.

HANA  
It's raining.

And then she bursts out laughing.

EXT. THE MONASTERY CLOISTERS. MORNING

A whoop precedes THE HEADLONG RUSH OF KIP, HARDY, and CARAVAGGIO as they cart The Patient across the Cloisters like manic stretcher-bearers. Hana is with them, checking on The Patient who bounces uncomfortably. He is nervous, a little giddy, but laughing. He tries to say something.

CARAVAGGIO  
What's he saying?

HANA  
He's saying it's wonderful.

The rain buckets down as they circle the pond, Hana's umbrella threatening to lift her into the air.

INT. THE PATIENT'S ROOM. NIGHT

A VICTORY CELEBRATION PARTY.

The gramophone plays. Kip sits in the window, the shutter open, the village lit up behind his head, nodding to the music, sucking out of his condensed milk. Elsewhere there is an open

CONTINUED

bottle of cognac, some wine. The Patient has a beaker of wine. Caravaggio is dancing with Hana.

HANA  
Kip - come and dance with us.

KIP  
(a sly wobble of the  
head)  
Later.

HANA  
Oh, come on.

The Patient watches, his head nodding to the music.

THE PATIENT  
Yeah!

EXT. VILLAGE SQUARE. NIGHT

A tiny PIAZZA where the Sappers and the Villagers are having their own, more raucous, Victory Feste. There are accordions, there's dancing, and there's HARDY, stripped to some exotic underpants, clambering up the STATUE OF A FIRST - WORLD - WAR SOLDIER IN THE MIDDLE OF THE FOUNTAIN. It's currently sporting a German Helmet and Hardy has a British replacement in his hands. He also has a UNION JACK FLAG between his teeth. He's extremely drunk and extremely happy.

The rest of the Bomb Squad and the other party-goers roar their approval.

INT. THE PATIENT'S ROOM. NIGHT

Hana and Caravaggio are still dancing.

There's a muffled thud in the distance. Kip's ears prick up. He glances for an instant out of the window.

HANA  
(anxious, of the  
noise)  
What was that?

She is spinning with Caravaggio. When she comes around again, Kip has gone.

EXT. VILLAGE SQUARE, ITALY 1945. NIGHT

Kip's motorbike skids into the tiny PIAZZA.

A MILITARY AMBULANCE IS ALREADY THERE. The shattered fountain, the sluiced flagstones, shining wet and slick, give some clues as to what's happened, as do the elderly standing in the shadows, the distressed girls, arm in arm. ONE GIRL, young and

CONTINUED

quite striking, is particularly inconsolable, her grief sobbed out at the doors of the ambulance.

SPALDING salutes Kip, who waves his salute away, just wanting to know what happened.

SPALDING

Booby trap. Sergeant Hardy was running up the Union Jack, sir, up off that statue - it just went off, sir.

DADE

Sergeant Hardy climbed up, sir, just for a lark. Should have been me, it was my idea.

Kip goes to the ambulance. Spalding tries to stop him.

SPALDING

Sir - you don't want to look.

Kip steps into the back of the ambulance, bends over both bodies, does look, then comes out, past the weeping girl.

KIP

Who's that girl?

DADE

His fiancée, sir.

KIP

(confused)  
Hardy's?

DADE

He kept it a bit dark.

EXT. THE STABLES. LATE DAY

Hana approaches. Kip is inside the stable, the door latched. He sits, impassively, still shocked, as Hana tries to make contact.

HANA

Kip. Kip. It's me. I'm so sorry about what happened.  
(no response)  
Can I talk to you?  
(no response)  
Why won't you talk to me?  
I don't understand. Let me come in.

She kicks at the door in her frustration. Kip doesn't move, doesn't appear to hear.

CONTINUED

HANA  
Please, Kip, please!

Kip doesn't respond. Hana is at a loss.

INT. PATIENT'S ROOM. EVENING

The Patient listens as Hana comes back into the monastery, climbs the stone steps to her room. He doesn't know what's happening. Feels desperately isolated.

THE PATIENT  
Hana? Hana?

INT. HANA'S ROOM. EVENING

Later, and Hana sits in her room, despondent, lost in her thoughts. Then she is distracted by conversation in The Patient's room below.

INT. THE PATIENT'S ROOM. NIGHT

The Patient's eyes open to see Caravaggio at the morphine.

THE PATIENT  
Hana tells me you're leaving.

CARAVAGGIO  
(preparing the  
injection)  
There's going to be trials,  
they want me to interpret,  
don't they know I'm allergic  
to courtrooms?

He delivers the injection into The Patient's arm. The Patient sighs. Caravaggio takes off his jacket. A pistol is stuck in his waistband, and he places it ominously on the altar. The Patient sees it.

CARAVAGGIO  
So, I come across the  
Hospital Convoy -  
(holds up the syringe)  
- I'm looking for this stuff,  
and this nurse, Mary, tells  
me about you and Hana, hiding  
in some monastery, in -  
retreat -  
(he administers his  
own injection, using  
his teeth to grip the  
sleeve)  
- how you came out of the  
Desert and you were burned  
and you didn't remember your

CONTINUED

CARAVAGGIO (cont'd)  
name but you knew the words to every song that ever was and you had one possession - a copy of Herodotus - and it was filled with letters and cuttings and then I knew it was you.

(he glares at The Patient)

I saw you writing in that book. At the Embassy in Cairo, when I had thumbs and you had a face and a name.

THE PATIENT

I see.

Upstairs, sitting on her bed, Hana listens with increasing concern.

CARAVAGGIO

Before you went over to the Germans, before you got Rommel's spy across the desert and inside British Headquarters. He took some pretty good photographs - I saw mine in that torture room in Tobruk, so - they made an impression.

THE PATIENT

I had to get back to the desert. I made a promise. The rest meant nothing to me.

CARAVAGGIO

What did you say?

THE PATIENT

The rest meant nothing to me.

CARAVAGGIO

There was a result to what you did. It wasn't just another expedition.

(holds up hands)

It did this. If the British hadn't unearthed that photographer, thousands of people could have died.

THE PATIENT

Thousands of people did die, just different people.

CONTINUED

CARAVAGGIO

Yes, like Madox?

THE PATIENT

What?!

CARAVAGGIO

You know he shot himself -  
your best friend? When he  
found out you were a spy.

THE PATIENT

(appalled)

No. Madox thought I was a spy?  
No. No. I was never a spy.

EXT. BASE CAMP AT THE CAVE OF SWIMMERS. 1939. DAY

The Expedition Team is packing up the Base Camp. Madox and Almasy are walking together towards the plateau where FOUAD, AL AUF, and others work at the cars.

MADOX

It's ghastly, it's like a  
witch hunt - anybody remotely  
foreign is suddenly a spy, so  
watch out.

ALMASY

Right.

MADOX

We didn't care about  
countries. Did we? Brits,  
Arabs, Hungarians, Germans.  
None of that mattered, did  
it? It was something finer  
than that.

ALMASY

Yes. It was.

MADOX

When's Clifton picking you  
up?

ALMASY

Tomorrow afternoon. Don't  
worry, I'll be ready.

MADOX

I'll leave the plane in Kufra  
Oasis. So if you need  
it...hard to know how long  
one's talking about. We might  
all be back in a month or two.

CONTINUED

Madox kneels and takes A HANDFUL OF SAND, puts it into his pocket. Almasy puts out a hand. This is a moment of great emotional weight for them both, conducted as if nothing were happening.

MADOX

I have to teach myself not to  
read too much into everything.  
Comes of too long having to  
read so much into hardly  
anything at all.

ALMASY

Goodbye, my friend.

They shake hands.

MADOX

(in Arabic)

May God make safety your  
companion.

ALMASY

(a tradition)

There is no God.

(smiles)

But I hope someone looks  
after you.

Madox clambers up the hill, then remembers something, jabs at his throat.

MADOX

In case you're still  
wondering - this is called  
the suprasternal notch.

Almasy nods.

MADOX

Come and visit us in Dorset.  
When all this nonsense is  
over.

(then shrugs, thick  
with feeling)

You'll never come to Dorset.

Almasy watches Madox leave.

INT. PATIENT'S ROOM. DAY

The Patient is still digesting the news of Madox's suicide.  
Caravaggio is a little surprised at his response.

CONTINUED

CARAVAGGIO

You didn't know Madox killed himself? And you didn't kill the Cliftons?

THE PATIENT

No. No.  
(now he is overwhelmed by the pain of his memory)  
She...she ...  
(then suddenly he's clear)  
Well, maybe I did. Maybe I did.

Unseen to either of them Hana listens, full of emotion, as the story unfolds.

EXT. BASE CAMP AT THE CAVE OF SWIMMERS. 1939. DAY

Almasy sits on a ridge transferring map information from his Herodotus onto a sheet of paper. He looks up at the sound of Clifton's approaching Steerman. It passes fast and horribly close to his head.

THE PATIENT (O/S)

I was packing up the Base Camp at the Cave of Swimmers. Clifton had arranged to fly down from Cairo to collect me. He flew like a madman, so I didn't take much notice...

Clifton is flying towards the landing strip. From the air it's possible to make out Almasy scrambling down from the ridge towards where stones indicate a landing area, carrying the last of the materials from the Cave of Swimmers.

EXT. BASE CAMP AT THE CAVE OF SWIMMERS. DAY

Almasy watches as the plane drops toward him, shielding his eyes against the sun. He stoops to gather up his luggage.

Almasy looks up to see the plane swerve, now suddenly HEADING STRAIGHT TOWARDS HIM. He's completely vulnerable, nowhere to run. He dives at the ground. THE PLANE SMASHES AGAINST AN INVISIBLE RIDGE AND TURNS OVER AND OVER, the wings snapping off like twigs as it hurtles past the prostrate Almasy. He gets to his feet and starts to run towards the wreckage.

A blue line of smoke is uncoiling from the plane, but no fire. Almasy pulls away the debris to find GEOFFREY - SLUMPED, NECK BROKEN, BLOODY. He tries to move him, and in the process reveals, to his ABSOLUTE horror, KATHARINE, STARING GRIMLY AHEAD, UNABLE TO MOVE. He's frantic.

CONTINUED

ALMASY  
Katharine! Oh dear God,  
Katharine - what are you  
doing here?

KATHARINE  
(eyes rolling, an  
incredible weariness)  
I can't get out. I can't move.

Almasy starts to pull at the wreck around her. DURING THIS -

KATHARINE  
'A surprise' he said.  
(she can hardly talk)  
Poor Geoffrey. He knew. He  
must have known all the time.  
He was shouting - "I love you,  
Katharine, I love you so  
much." Is he badly hurt?

ALMASY  
I have to get you out.

Almasy puts his arms around Katharine to try and pull her  
clear. She can't stand the pain.

KATHARINE  
Please don't move me.

ALMASY  
I have to get you out.

KATHARINE  
It hurts too much.

ALMASY  
(can't bear to hurt  
her)  
I know, darling, I'm sorry.

He pulls - hard - the pain from which causes Katharine to gasp,  
then pass out. He lifts her gently into his arms and carries  
her from the danger of the place.

EXT. THE CAVE OF SWIMMERS. DAY

Almasy has WRAPPED KATHARINE IN THE SILK FOLDS OF HER PARACHUTE  
and emerges from near the familiar cleft in the rock,  
struggling with the exertion of the climb as they approach the  
Cave of Swimmers. He has a large water bottle slung around his  
neck and a haversack, and is loaded like a pack horse.  
Katharine opens her eyes.

CONTINUED

KATHARINE  
(whispering)  
Why did you hate me?

ALMASY  
What?

KATHARINE  
Don't you know you drove  
everybody mad?

ALMASY  
Shhhh. Don't talk.

KATHARINE  
(gasping)  
You speak so many bloody  
languages and you never want  
to talk.

They stagger on. He suddenly notices a stain of gold at her neck. It's saffron, leaking from a silver THIMBLE which hangs from a black ribbon.

ALMASY  
(overwhelmed)  
You're wearing the thimble.

KATHARINE  
Of course. You idiot. I  
always wear it. I've always  
worn it. I've always loved  
you.

Almasy CRIES as he walks - huge sobs, no words - convulsed with the pain of it. They approach the Cave.

INT. CAVE OF SWIMMERS. DAY

Almasy comes through in shadows, carrying Katharine, blocking out the light that pours into the entrance of the cave. Once inside, he sets her down incredibly gently, makes a bed of blankets and the parachute. He turns on his flashlight.

KATHARINE  
It's so cold.

ALMASY  
I know. I'm sorry. I'll make a  
fire.

INT. CAVE OF SWIMMERS. TORCHLIGHT

As he makes the fire, the light sends his shadow flitting across the walls.

CONTINUED

KATHARINE

Did you get Geoffrey from the plane?

ALMASY

(reluctant)

Yes.

KATHARINE

Thank you.

ALMASY

(as he works)

Listen to me, Katharine. You've broken your ankle and I'm going to have to try and bind it. I think you've also broken your wrist - and maybe some ribs, which is why it's hurting you to breathe. I'm going to have to walk to El Taj. Although given all the traffic in the desert these days I'm bound to bump into one army or another. And then I'll be back and you'll be fine.

The fire is lit and he comes over to her, kneels beside her.

KATHARINE

Do you promise? I wouldn't want to die here. I don't want to die in the desert. I've always had rather an elaborate funeral in mind, with particular hymns. Very English. And I know exactly where I want to be buried. In our garden. Where I grew up. With a view of the sea. So promise me you'll come back for me.

ALMASY

I promise I'll come back. I promise I'll never leave you. Now, you have plenty of water and food.

He kisses her tenderly. Pulls out his HERODOTUS and lays it beside her. Then he puts down the FLASHLIGHT.

CONTINUED

ALMASY  
And a good read.  
(of the flashlight  
battery)  
Don't waste this.

KATHARINE  
Thank you.  
(clouds over)  
Will you bury Geoffrey? I  
know he's dead.

ALMASY  
I'm sorry, Katharine.

KATHARINE  
I know.

He's tearing strips from the parachute with his knife.

ALMASY  
Every night I cut out my heart  
but in the morning it was full  
again.

He leans over her, desperately worried for her. She smiles.

KATHARINE  
Darling. My darling.

EXT. THE DESERT. DAWN

Almasy's walking. He's singing to keep awake. Darktown  
Strutter's Ball. - 'I'll be down to get you in the taxi,  
honey...'

EXT. THE DESERT. NIGHT

Almasy trudges on.

THE PATIENT (O/S)  
I stopped at noon and at  
twilight. 'Three days there',  
I told her, 'then three hours  
back by car. Don't go  
anywhere. I'll be back.  
I'll be back'.

EXT. THE DESERT. DUSK

Almasy continues, his journey taking him through miles of  
undulating dunes.

EXT. EL TAJ. DAY

Finally Almasy arrives at the outskirts of El Taj. He staggers

CONTINUED

towards this ancient Trading Post. A British Sentry watches his approach with interest.

EXT. SQUARE AT EL TAJ. DAY.

The Sentry, a CORPORAL, brings Almasy into a square. A young OFFICER sits at a table in the shadows of his office. His STAFF CAR is parked in the shade.

OFFICER

Good morning!

(the Corporal has a  
water bottle, hands it  
to Almasy)

So, golly, where have you  
come from?

ALMASY

(gulping the water,  
trying to summon his  
thoughts)

There's been an accident. I  
need a doctor - to come with  
me. And I need to borrow this  
car. I'll pay, of course, and  
I need, I need morphine and -

OFFICER

May I see your papers, sir?

ALMASY

What?

OFFICER

If I could just see some form  
of identification?

ALMASY

(brain racing)

I'm sorry, I'm not making  
sense, forgive me, I've been  
walking, I've - there's a  
woman badly injured at  
Gulf Kebir, in the Cave of  
Swimmers. I am a member of the  
Royal Geographical Society.

OFFICER

Right. Now, if I could just  
take your name.

ALMASY

(trying to control his  
feelings)

Count Laszlo de Almasy.

CONTINUED

The Officer is writing this down. A glance at his Corporal.

OFFICER

Almasy - would you mind  
spelling that? What  
nationality would that be?

ALMASY

Look, listen to me. A woman is  
dying - my wife! - is dying. I  
have been walking for three  
days! I do not want to spell  
my name, I want you to give me  
this car!

OFFICER

(writing)

I understand you are agitated  
- perhaps if you'd like to  
sit down I could radio back to  
HQ - ?

ALMASY

(snapping)

No! No! Don't radio anybody,  
just, just give me the  
fucking car!

Almasy sets on the Officer, hauling him by the lapels, but then immediately loses his balance. As he stumbles up he gets the stock of the Corporal's RIFLE Across his head, KNOCKING HIM TO THE GROUND.

INT. CAVE OF SWIMMERS. TORCHLIGHT

Katharine has been writing in the Herodotus. The torchlight FLICKERS as it illuminates some words - 'Drag myself outside' is legible, then 'We die, we die' - She shakes the torch. It FLICKERS again. Then goes out. Absolute BLACKNESS. The sound of her trembling breath, of her terror.

EXT. EL TAJ STREET. DAY

Almasy, head pounding, is in the back of the jeep, chained to the tailgate. He's desperate. The Corporal is driving.

ALMASY

(shouting, hoarse)

Stop the car. Please. A woman  
is dying!

CORPORAL

Listen, Fritz, if I have to  
listen to another word from  
you I'm going to give you a  
fucking good hiding.

CONTINUED

ALMASY

Fritz? What are you talking about? Fritz?

CORPORAL

That's your name innit? Count Fucking Arsehole Von Bismarck? What's that supposed to be then, Irish?

Almasy, berserk, starts to yank at his chains, screaming.

ALMASY

Please! You have to listen! please, listen to me - Katharine! Katharine!

EXT. A TRAIN, THE DESERT. DUSK

A TRAIN scuttles through the desert.

INT. TRAIN, THE DESERT. DUSK

Almasy is HANDCUFFED to the metal grille of the goods compartment. He's lying down among a bunch of other prisoners and their little bundles of possessions in this makeshift cell - some Arabs, some Italians.

A SERGEANT pushes a lavatory-bound prisoner along the corridor, leaving behind A YOUNG PRIVATE who sits on a packing case, with a rifle across his lap, reading a Penguin edition of Gullivers Travels. Almasy is in complete despair to be on the train. He tries to move, but he's locked tight to the grille. He rattles the cuffs against the metal.

ALMASY

Excuse me.  
(the Soldier looks up)  
I also need to use the lavatory.

SOLDIER

You'll have to wait.

ALMASY

It's urgent.

SOLDIER

(calls up the corridor)  
Sarge! Jerry wants to use the lav - says it's urgent.

ALMASY

Where are we going, please?

CONTINUED

SOLDIER

Up North, to the coast.  
Benghazi. Soon be there. Get  
you a boat back home.

Almasy can't bear this news. The SERGEANT returns, considers  
the request.

SERGEANT

Go on then - you take him.  
I've been up and down this  
bloody train all day.

INT. TRAIN CORRIDOR, THE DESERT. DAY

The Soldier pushes Almasy along the corridor. They arrive  
outside the lavatory. The Soldier is distracted for a split  
second. Enough for Almasy to ELBOW HIM savagely in the stomach,  
winding him, before battering his with his fists. He wraps his  
cuffs around the Soldier's neck and - yanking them together and  
twisting - proceeds to strangle the young soldier.

INT. TRAIN, THE DESERT. EVENING

Almasy clammers over the guardrail and leaps off, tumbling into  
the desert sunset.

EXT. RAILWAY TRACK, THE DESERT. EVENING

Almasy, silhouetted against the evening sky, hobbles back down  
the track, THREE HUNDRED MILES AWAY from the dying Katharine  
Clifton, no way now of saving her. He is a tiny speck in the  
vast desert. His heart broken. He sinks to his knees in  
despair.

INT. THE PATIENT'S ROOM. NIGHT

The Patient is exhausted. He has said aloud what has tortured  
him. His failure to save Katharine. He looks at Caravaggio.

THE PATIENT

So yes. She died because of  
me. Because I loved her.  
Because I had the wrong name.

CARAVAGGIO

And you never got back to the  
cave?

EXT. KUFRA OASIS. DAY

Almasy is uncovering the tarpaulin which has been protecting  
Madox's TIGER MOTH. Around him are German soldiers, two of whom  
are bringing cans of gasoline towards the plane.

CONTINUED

THE PATIENT (O/S)

I did get back. I kept my promise. I was assisted by the Germans. I had our expedition maps. And after the British made me their enemy, I gave their enemy our maps.

Almasy carries a mapcase and hands it over to the German officer, who salutes him and walks toward his car. Almasy turns to the plane, rips off a sign Madox has pinned to a wing. It reads SEE YOU IN DORSET.

THE PATIENT (O/S)

So I got back to the desert and to Katharine in Madox's English plane with German gasoline. When I arrived in Italy, on my medical chart, they wrote 'English Patient' Isn't that funny, after all that I became English.

INT. THE PATIENT'S ROOM. DAY

Caravaggio is looking out the window, his mind racing, his resolve evaporating.

CARAVAGGIO

You get to the morning and the poison leaks away, doesn't it? Black nights. I thought I would kill you.

THE PATIENT

You can't kill me. I died years ago.

CARAVAGGIO

No, I can't kill you now.

Above them, in her room, Hana stands, having heard it all, the whole story; the whole puzzle finally in place.

EXT. THE MONASTERY. APPROACHING DAWN

Kip has pulled out all of Hardy's gear. Now he starts on the tent, kicking at the pegs, collapsing it. Hana comes out into the garden, to join him. She says nothing.

KIP

We've been posted. North of Florence.

CONTINUED

Now he's trying to fold a shirt. Hana takes it from him. She folds it.

KIP

I was thinking yesterday - yesterday! - the Patient, and Hardy: they're everything that's good about England. I couldn't even say what that was. We didn't exchange two personal words, and we've been together through some terrible things, some terrible things.

(still incredulous)

He was engaged to a girl in the village! - I mean -

(looks at Hana)

- and us - he never once... He didn't ask me if I could spin the ball at cricket or the Kama Sutra or - I don't even know what I'm talking about.

HANA

You loved him.

EXT. (NEAR THE) BASE CAMP AT THE CAVE OF SWIMMERS. 1942. DAY

The familiar cleft in the rocks. The Tiger Moth lands.

INT. CAVE OF SWIMMERS. TORCHLIGHT

A flashlight flickers in the cave. ALMASY APPEARS.

KATHARINE'S CORPSE lies where he left her - a ghost on a bed of silk and blankets. The chill of the cave has preserved her. She could be asleep.

ALMASY

Katharine.

He sobs, whispering to her. He's terribly cold, exhausted. He slips underneath the covers to be next to her, and closes his eyes.

INT. THE PATIENT'S ROOM. MORNING

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

CONTINUED

THE PATIENT

I'm still here.

HANA

You'd better be.

THE PATIENT

Don't depend on it. Will you? That little bit of air, in my lungs, each day gets less and less, which is all right, which is quite all right. I've been speaking to Caravaggio, my research assistant. He tells me there's a ghost in the cloisters. I can join him.

Hana is distracted by the sound of Kip's motorbike.

KIP (o/s)

(distant)

Hana.

THE PATIENT

It's the boy.

EXT. THE MONASTERY. DAY

Kip sits on the motorbike, waiting for Hana. She goes to him, stands, fastens the top button of his coat. You feel she might just climb on the seat behind him. But she doesn't. Neither of them can think what to say.

HANA

I'll always go back to that church. Look at my painting.

KIP

I'll always go back to that church.

HANA

So one day we'll meet.

He nods, winds up the throttle, and is gone. Hana walks back to the Patient's room.

INT. THE PATIENT'S ROOM. DAY

Hana picks up the hypodermic to prepare his injection. She takes a vial. The Patient is watching her. He reaches out and pushes two more vials toward her. Their eyes meet, then he shovels another, then all of them. She looks at him. It's a massive lethal dose.

CONTINUED

Hana decides, starts to prepare the injection, her eyes filling with tears. The Patient nods, smiles, whispers.

THE PATIENT

Thank you.

She holds the loaded syringe up to the light. She's sobbing violently. The Patient's expression is full of peace.

THE PATIENT

Read to me, will you? Read me to sleep.

INT. THE PATIENT'S ROOM. DAY

Hana lies beside The English Patient. She has the Herodotus and is reading to him from the passage Katharine had written as she waited for him in the Cave of Swimmers.

HANA

(reading)

'My darling, I'm waiting for you. How long is a day in the dark? or a week? The fire is gone now and I'm horribly cold.'

The reading continues, but sometimes it's Katharine's own voice that's heard.

HANA

'I really ought to drag myself outside - but then there would be the sun. I'm afraid I waste the light on the paintings and on writing these words. We die, we die rich with lovers and tribes, tastes we have swallowed... bodies we have entered and swum up like rivers, fears we have hidden in like this wretched cave...'

INT. THE CAVE OF SWIMMERS. TORCHLIGHT

Almasy smudges Katharine's pale face with saffron from the thimble. He presses his cheek to hers, smoothes her hair, with incredible tenderness.

KATHARINE (O/S)

...I want all this marked on my body. We are the real countries, not the boundaries drawn on maps with the names of powerful men...

CONTINUED

EXT. CAVE OF SWIMMERS. DAY

Almasy comes out of the cave, carrying the bundle of Katharine in his arms, wrapped in the silks of her parachute. He's shuddering in the throes of his grief, but there's no sound.

KATHARINE (O/S)

... I know you will come and carry me out into the palace of winds... That's all I've wanted - to walk in such a place with you, with friends, an earth without maps.

INT. THE PATIENT'S ROOM. DAY

The Patient is slipping away as Hana reads the last of Katharine's message.

HANA

'The lamp's gone out...and I'm writing in the darkness.'

She looks up from the book. His eyes roll, his breathing quiets, then stops.

EXT. LANE OUTSIDE THE MONASTERY GARDEN. DAY

Caravaggio is at the gate to the Monastery. A TRUCK is waiting with him. A family sits in the back of the truck. Caravaggio stands with a young woman. He shouts into the garden.

CARAVAGGIO

Hana!

INT. THE PATIENT'S ROOM. DAY

Hana lingers in the empty room. The mattress stripped bare. No sign of their stay.

CARAVAGGIO (O/S)

Hana, come on! Hana!

Hana makes to leave, then sees the Herodotus lying on the bedside cabinet, and scoops it up.

EXT. LANE OUTSIDE MONASTERY GARDEN. DAY

Hana comes out to the truck, carrying the small bundle of her belongings. Caravaggio makes some introductions, beginning with the woman driver, Gioia. She and Caravaggio smile like lovers.

CARAVAGGIO

Hana - this is Gioia.

Gioia smiles, shakes Hana's hand.

CONTINUED

HANA

Buon giorno.

CARAVAGGIO

She'll take you as far as  
Florence.

HANA

I can get in the back.

And she clammers up, sits down between the children. They exchange some small stiff, shy smiles, and then the truck bounces away. Hana takes one final look at the Monastery as it disappears around the bend and then turns and confronts the life insisting noisily in the truck.

INT. TIGER MOTH. DAY

INSIDE THE COCKPIT : THE COUPLE AS AT THE FRONT OF THE FILM. Almsy, obliterated by goggles and helmet, Katharine ahead of him, slumped forward as if sleeping.

The plane banks over the dark ravines of the Gilf Kebir, and then suddenly, the rocks have gone, giving way to the earth without maps - the desert - stretching out for mile after mile. Almsy, the English Patient, looks down on it.

THE END