

FADE IN...

INT. HOUSE OF COMMONS CHAMBER - DAY

...is in an uproar. The NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN-led conservatives (on their side of the house) trade angry barbs with the factions of the LIBERAL and LABOUR PARTIES (on the other side.) Shouting. Accusations. Wild gesturing. Paper darts thrown. Mayhem.

The CAMERA picks out PRIME MINISTER NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN, sitting quietly, saying nothing, seeming world-weary and defeated amid the shrill invective, much of which is aimed at him. Beside him sits JOHN SIMON, leading his side's defence of his tarnished leader. CAMERA also pauses briefly on...LADY ASTOR, the only woman MP in the house.

The CAMERA then picks out on the OPPOSITION benches...CLEMENT ATLEE (the LABOUR LEADER), sitting directly opposite CHAMBERLAIN. Beside him ARTHUR GREENWOOD, as vociferous as JOHN SIMON, pointing at CHAMBERLAIN accusingly!

ATLEE rises to his feet.

ATLEE

Mr Speaker!

SPEAKER

The Honourable Leader of the
Opposition, Clement Atlee!

ATLEE

Mr Speaker, it seems I have not
been clear enough. Let me leave
no doubt about my feelings about
Mr Chamberlain's future as prime
minister.

(over boos and applause)

In the present climate, and in
the national interest, we, the
Labour Party might enter into a
Grand Coalition, with our fellow
opposition Liberal Party...

*(angle on the LIBERAL PARTY
benches)*

...and even with the so-called
"ruling" Conservative Party...

*(angle on the CONSERVATIVE
benches)*

...but not, never, under the
leadership of Mr Chamberlain...

(angle on CHAMBERLAIN)

(MORE)

ATLEE (CONT'D)
 ...who must bear responsibility
 for the crisis in Europe in
 general, and in Belgium, Holland
 and France in particular, the
 result of years, years of
 inactivity and appeasement in
 the face of the growing Nazi
 danger.

UPROAR greets this, as ATLEE sits.

Back on the CONSERVATIVE side, we pass over debonair, young
 SIR ANTHONY EDEN (on the front bench) to rest on...

...a CAP - (an old Royal Naval Yacht Club CAP) sitting on the
 bench beside EDEN, as if to reserve a space. WINSTON's CAP.

BACK-BENCHER 1
(into EDEN's ear)
 Where's Winston?

EDEN
 Oh. Ensuring his fingerprints
 are not on the murder weapon.

EXT. VISCOUNT JOHN SIMON'S COUNTRY HOUSE - DAY

INSERT CARD: **THURSDAY, MAY 9, 1940**

CARS arrive and SENIOR POLITICIANS alight, one after another,
 entering the house...CHAMBERLAIN, LORD LONDONDERRY, VISCOUNT
 SAMUEL HOARE, LORD STANHOPE, LORD KINGSLEY WOOD, LORD
 CHATFIELD, and VISCOUNT LORD HALIFAX, the cream of
 ARISTOCRATIC ENGLAND (hereafter identified as '**THE TORY
 PLOTTERS**')

INT. DOWNSTAIRS/ KITCHENS/ JOHN SIMON'S COUNTRY HOUSE - DAY

TWENTY SERVANTS and VALETS are at full-stretch, getting
 everything ready for DINNER...LAVISH FOOD is
 prepared...silverware, crystal glasses, fine wine and
 champagne are selected.

INT. DINING ROOM/ VISCOUNT JOHN SIMON'S COUNTRY HOUSE - NIGHT

At the home of the CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (FINANCE
 MINISTER) JOHN SIMON, many of the key CONSERVATIVE
 POLITICIANS of the day are gathered for DINNER.

As the MEAL is being served by LIVERIED STAFF the
 CONVERSATION is HUSHED and SOMBRE.

INT. BILLIARD ROOM/ VISCOUNT JOHN SIMON'S COUNTRY HOUSE - NIGHT

The aging, tall, soft-spoken PRIME MINISTER addresses the other guests from the fire-side...

CHAMBERLAIN

Accordingly--tomorrow I will
resign as Prime Minister.

A loud reaction. "NO!"

CHAMBERLAIN (CONT'D)

Our entire army is now in full
retreat in Western Europe.
If we were to lose every
professional soldier we have--
unthinkable until now--then the
German invasion will come...

GREAT FEAR in the faces of the NOBLES. CUT BETWEEN their
FACES, during the following -

CHAMBERLAIN (CONT'D)

...in all its might and terror.
The blitzkrieg will visit this
house and all like it--panzers
rolling over these lawns as they
roll now across France and
Belgium.

(the shock registers)

Were the British people to know
exactly how bleak our situation,
we would have panic in the
streets--so for now, for
tonight, it is enough for you to
know. And for you to act on this
knowledge.

(heavy silence)

Friends--while we are still able
to meet in freedom, let me tell
you this: in the face of
hopeless odds--the only rational
course for this nation, if we
are to preserve our traditions
at all--and our people--*is--*
peace. Peace talks. At once!

'Hear, hear.'

CHAMBERLAIN (CONT'D)

Peace talks! Before it is too
late.

HALIFAX

But this will require immediate
agreement across all parties.

CHAMBERLAIN

Now, now--as Liberal and Labour
refuse to join a government
headed by me, I will step down
tomorrow. I wanted my own party,
the gentlemen I most respect, to
know first.

(pause)

John, I thank you for providing
the occasion, and the cigars.

SIR JOHN SIMON, the host, bows his head.

Everyone in the room is moved, almost tearful...

LORD HOARE

And who?--Who, on our side,
would the Liberals and Labour
support as Prime Minister?

The murmur 'HALIFAX' starts low and then becomes a chant:
"HALIFAX! HALIFAX!" They bang their whiskey glasses in
unison... but LORD HALIFAX raises a hand and shakes his head,
'No.'

SIR JOHN SIMON

Surely!

HALIFAX

It seems my hour has not yet
come.

CHAMBERLAIN

Viscount Halifax is not their
choice. Soon enough he shall be
their choice--

(firmly instructing them)

--patience, patience--

Once people realise that Edward
(Halifax) is the only man who
can lead us out of our troubles.
But. But tonight, they have
asked that we elect another.

Stunned silence -

LONDONDERRY

(to CHAMBERLAIN)

Then who? Who? Who will they
accept? Who? Tell us.

CHAMBERLAIN turns to HALIFAX - who shall say the name?

TITLE CARDS (SUPERED) - OVER:

INT. WINSTON APARTMENTS/ WHITEHALL - DAY

INSERT CARD: **FRIDAY, MAY 10, 1940**

A plate of BACON & EGGS is set on a BREAKFAST TRAY. Then...a glass of WHITE WINE is poured by a BUTLER and set beside the plate. A glass of SCOTCH and SODA is then prepared and set beside these on the tray. For Breakfast?

A newspaper is ironed whose headline reads:

"CHAMBERLAIN RESIGNS! LORD HALIFAX TIPPED TO TAKE OVER!"

The TRAY is carried through rooms, down a hallway, toward a BEDROOM outside which -

- WINSTON's VALET, FRANK SAUNDERS waits. He takes the TRAY.

INT. BEDROOM/ WINSTON APARTMENTS/ WHITEHALL - DAY

The doors open. The VALET enters and approaches the bed on whose CORNER POST hangs the SAILING CAP we saw in the first scene....

In bed, propped up on pillows, sits WINSTON, (65 y.o.) just then lighting his morning cigar. As the VALET sets the tray on WINSTON's lap -

- a young TYPIST, ELIZABETH LAYTON, types a WINSTON SPEECH.

NOTE: The scene should convey WINSTON, the tired old man, turning himself, slowly, into WINSTON the ICON. It's as if an actor is preparing for a role, slowly inhabiting a 'character' who is not himself.

WINSTON
(dictating)
If it be the will--no, the *evident*
will of Parliament--and the nation--
that a new government be formed--
then this should be formed--should
be conceived--conceived on the
broadest possible basis and should--
include all parties, Conservative,
Liberal and Labour, in grand
coalition. Stop.

The TYPIST is struggling to understand WINSTON's mumbles over the RUSTLING of the newspaper.

WINSTON (CONT'D)
But--
(*his eyes mist with passion,
digging deep*)
--we are in the preliminary
phase of one of the greatest
battles in history...

INT. HALLWAY/ WINSTON'S APARTMENTS/ WHITEHALL - DAY

OUTSIDE the BATHROOM DOOR - the TYPIST waits, with a PAD and PAPER. She COUGHS.

WINSTON (O.S.)
Don't come in!

SOUNDS of him taking a BATH, the SPONGE being squeezed over the head...

WINSTON (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Don't go away!

ELIZABETH LAYTON
No, no--I'm still here.

Sound of WINSTON getting out of the BATH.

WINSTON (O.S.)
Miss? I'm coming out in a state of nature!

The TYPIST flees, as the DOOR opens and as WINSTON (naked) looks up and down the HALLWAY to see where his TYPIST has gone.

INT. STUDY / WINSTON'S APARTMENTS/ WHITEHALL - DAY

His OFFICE. He is being DRESSED by his VALET, as - the TYPIST TYPES his words.

WINSTON
(dictating)
We are in action at many other points--in Norway, Belgium, Holland--and we have to be prepared in the Mediterranean. The air battle is continuing, and the time--is ripe for many preparations to be made here at home.
(to VALET)
Have a car waiting.

VALET
It's waiting already, sir.

WINSTON
(trying to concentrate)
Oh. Then--then--ummm...

VALET
- to take you to the Palace.

WINSTON
(his flow broken)
 Sshhh!!! Out! Out!

The VALET nods and retires.

WINSTON (CONT'D)
(annoyed)
 Read me the last sentence!

TYPIST
 The air battle is continuing, and
 the time is RIGHT for many -

WINSTON
 RIPE! Not RIGHT! God's teeth girl!
 Can't you even do it right the
 second time? I said ripe, ripe,
 ripe - P-P-P! The last sentence...

TYPIST
(shaken)
 The--the time is ripe...

WINSTON
 For! FOR!

TYPIST
(her nerve broken)
 ...many...many...many...

WINSTON
 How many many's did you write?!
One many! Nincompoop! "For *MANY*
 preparations to be made here at
 home!" We'll continue later.
 It's no good. Bugger that
 Saunders! Every morning throwing
 the switches on my locomotive of
 thought! If you want nothing
 done at all, Saunders is the man
 for the job.

ELIZABETH LAYTON
 May I go sir?

WINSTON
 Are you new?

ELIZABETH LAYTON
 Yes sir.

WINSTON
 Name?

ELIZABETH LAYTON
 Elizabeth Layton, sir.

WINSTON

Do you know where I'm going right now?

ELIZABETH LAYTON

The palace, sir?

WINSTON

You are quite right. And do you know what the King is about to command me to do?

ELIZABETH LAYTON

No sir.

WINSTON

I think he is going to ask me--to be your next prime minister. Yours, Elizabeth Layton. What do you think of that?

ELIZABETH LAYTON

Great news sir.

WINSTON

Is it? Do you think that will be the general reaction?

ELIZABETH LAYTON

I don't know sir.

Enter CLEM - WINSTON's WIFE, 44 YEARS OLD, full of spirits.

ELIZABETH LAYTON (CONT'D)

May I go?

WINSTON

Thank you Elizabeth Layton.

WINSTON tries to do his own BOW-TIE - it's hopeless. He notices his HANDS are shaking.

ELIZABETH leaves, with her typewriter.

CLEM comes to WINSTON's AID, finishes his BOW-TIE for him.

WINSTON (CONT'D)

I'm shaking. Look at that.

CLEM

From excitement.

WINSTON

From terror.

CLEM

You have been wanting this your entire adult life.

WINSTON

Since infancy.
Since Papa first gave me lead
soldiers.
But--do the public want me?

CLEM

It's your own Party to whom you
must prove yourself.

WINSTON

I'm getting the job only because
the ship is sinking. It's not a
gift, it's revenge.

CLEM

Let them see your true
qualities. Your courage...

WINSTON

...My poor judgement.

CLEM

...Your lack of vanity.

WINSTON

...My iron will.

CLEM

...Your sense of humour.
Now go. Be...

WINSTON

Be--what?

CLEM

And let me get on. Another house
to pack up! What a life!

EXIT CLEM. WINSTON turns back to the mirror, to regard
himself, as -

- as the VALET, enters, carrying a GAS MASK.

WINSTON

(to himself)

Be? Who am I supposed to be
today?

VALET

Be, sir?

WINSTON

Be.

(pause)

I am old. One should have had
power when a young man. When
wits were sharp, sinews strong.

(MORE)

WINSTON (CONT'D)

Oh well.
Lead on McDuff--
When youth departs--
may wisdom prove enough.

**EXT. THAMES RIVER/ WESTMINSTER/ BIG BEN/ HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT
/BUCKINGHAM PALACE - DAY**

A SWEEPING AERIAL ending on BUCKINGHAM PALACE

INT. CAR - DAY

WINSTON, checks his FOB watch, as he is driven to the PALACE.
His window is down.

The DRIVER checks on WINSTON in the rear-view.

WINSTON reads the PAPER. Another HEADLINE reads: **ARE WE REALLY
AT WAR?**

WINSTON looks out the window - sees people lounging, relaxed in
FOLDING CHAIRS in Hyde Park. No sign of emergency.

At a STOP SIGN, a COMMONER rushes up to the CAR, excited to see
WINSTON in the flesh.

WINSTON hastily winds up the window. The COMMONER grins his
support and waves his HAT in respect.

WINSTON flutters a hand.

DRIVER

Best to keep it wound up, Sir.

As other members of the PUBLIC begin to converge on the CAR,
WINSTON becomes concerned...

WINSTON

Drive on. Drive on!

Even though the lights are RED, The CAR drives through the
intersection, leaving the SMILING PUBLIC, still delighted to
have seen the GREAT MAN.

INT. PRIVATE CHAMBERS/ BUCKINGHAM PALACE - DAY

The new KING GEORGE VI (*agitated, troubled*) speaks with the ill,
weak, outgoing PRIME-MINISTER NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN.

CHAMBERLAIN watches the KING as he paces.

GEORGE VI

Why not Halifax? I favour Halifax.

CHAMBERLAIN

I wanted Halifax. The Lords wanted Halifax. You wanted Halifax. And Halifax wanted Halifax.

GEORGE VI

Then--then why have I been forced to send for Churchill?

CHAMBERLAIN

Because Halifax refused the job. He doesn't think he could be captain of the ship with Churchill on board.

GEORGE VI

Churchill! How can he c-c-captain a war? He has an un-unparalleled record of l-losing everything he has put his his his hand to.

(pause)

I accept your resignation--but I want you to know--how grossly, unfairly I think you've been treated.

(pause)

I heard your health - It's -

CHAMBERLAIN

Cancer.

GEORGE VI

What a time. What a time.

EQUERRY enters.

EQUERRY

First Lord of the Admiralty, Mr Winston Churchill!

GEORGE VI

Early.

CHAMBERLAIN

Keen.

GEORGE VI

Thankyou, Mr Chamberlain.

CHAMBERLAIN

Your majesty.

He and GEORGE shake hands.

EQUERRY

This way, my Lord.

As one EQUERRY shows CHAMBERLAIN out a SIDE-DOOR, GEORGE nods at another EQUERRY to open the main door.

The KING waits - SIGHS deeply, until...

WINSTON enters.

WINSTON
Your Royal Highness.

GEORGE VI
Mr Churchill.

The KING reservedly shakes WINSTON's hand.

GEORGE VI (CONT'D)
I believe you will know why I--I I
have asked you here today.

WINSTON
I believe so, yes sir.

GEORGE VI
It is my duty to to to offer you
the seal of office to take up
the position of of Prime
Minister of this United Kingdom.
Will you form a government?

WINSTON
I will.

GEORGE VI
Very well.

GEORGE presents WINSTON with the SEAL of OFFICE.

GEORGE VI (CONT'D)
That was--relatively easy.

WINSTON
Yes.

GEORGE VI
Well--congratulations. That's
it.

WINSTON
I believe we are to meet
regularly.

GEORGE VI
Once a week, I'm afraid. How are
you on--on--on Tuesdays?

WINSTON
I shall endeavour to be
available on Tuesdays.

GEORGE VI
Four o'clock?

WINSTON
(*resolutely*)
I nap at 4.

GEORGE VI
Is that permissible?

WINSTON
No. But necessary. I work late.

GEORGE VI
Then perhaps lunch?

WINSTON
Lunch. Tuesdays.
(*WINSTON bows*)
Your majesty.

GEORGE VI
Prime-Minister.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

WINSTON and SIR ANTHONY EDEN (the WAR SECRETARY) are driven through London. CUT BETWEEN them, and -

- WINSTON'S POV of the CAPITAL, as it drifts by his window.

WINSTON
He disapproves of me.
(*pause*)
Never forgiven me for supporting
his brother's marriage to
Wallace Simpson.

EDEN
You only have to meet him once a
week.

WINSTON
That's like saying you only have
to have one tooth pulled every
seven days.

EDEN
I heard that before you were asked,
they offered it to Halifax.

WINSTON
(*shakes head*)
I doubt that. Halifax would never
turn it down. He's the fourth son
of an Earl. Fourth son's turn
nothing down.

Out the window PEOPLE are WAVING AT HIM. The car then SLOWS near a VERY YOUNG NEWSPAPER BOY, with a SANDWICH BOARD that reads: **"NEWS FROM EUROPE POSITIVE"**

WINSTON (CONT'D)
Look at them. Poor devils. They're in the dark. No idea that their fate hangs in the balance.

EDEN
We must discuss composition of your War Cabinet. Who should sit on it?

WINSTON
My enemies. Let's have 'em where I can see 'em. Chamberlain. Halifax.
(EDEN registers surprise, as he makes notes)
Atlee of course.

NEXT: WINSTON'S POV of: A FAMILY waving at him, THRILLED to have seen him pass by.

WINSTON (CONT'D)
How odd it is.

EDEN
What is?

WINSTON
They see me as one of them, a man of the people, the embodiment of a bulldog breed--when in fact I came of age when the empire was at flood tide--a man whose valet warmed his brandy with the flame of a neatly trimmed candle, who seldom put on his own trousers unassisted.

They PASS by a TUBE STATION, outside which a BUS disgorges CITIZENS. The CAR slows to a STOP.

WINSTON (CONT'D)
You know--I have never ridden a bus. I have never queued for bread. The only time I tried to ride the Underground was during the General Strike--Clem dropped me at South Kensington. I went down--but I got lost and came straight back up. Awful.

EDEN
(chuckles)

WINSTON

I believe I can boil an egg but
only because I've seen it done.

(pause)

Can a leader be such a stranger
to ordinary life?

EDEN stares at WINSTON, concerned.

EXT. PARLIAMENT - DAY

WINSTON and EDEN enter WESTMINSTER.

INT. LOBBY/ PARLIAMENT - DAY

The conversations of other POLITICIANS are suspended as
WINSTON and EDEN pass by - all eyes on WINSTON - unfriendly
eyes they are too.

They pass by the DEPUTY JUNIOR WHIP, who is RECORDING the
arrival of REPRESENTATIVES.

DEPUTY

The Prime Minister, the
Honourable Winston Churchill!...
good day...And War Secretary, Mr
Anthony Eden!

INT. COMMONS/ PARLIAMENT - DAY

Outgoing Prime Minister, NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN enters the COMMONS -
a HUGE and sustained OVATION greets him. He is very moved. He
walks to his seat, raises his hat and sits.

And then WINSTON enters -

- a small APPLAUSE, mainly from the LABOUR BENCHES, greets this.
WINSTON looks around, not actually surprised at the contemptuous
reception.

WINSTON

(to EDEN)

Contempt. Well, you have to start
somewhere.

ANGLE ON: SIMON and HOARE, watching WINSTON, then looking at
CHAMBERLAIN.

SIR JOHN SIMON

(to SIR SAMUEL HOARE)

The wrong man has been shot.

CUT TO:

The HUBBUB dies down as WINSTON puts on his GLASSES, reaches into his waistcoat for his speech notes, a trademark gesture, and delivers his FIRST SPEECH as PRIME-MINISTER.

SIR SAMUEL HOARE
(*whispered, to SIMON*)
Here we go.

WINSTON
On Friday evening last--I
received from His Majesty the
mission to form a new
administration...

ANGLE ON: One after another MP's switch off, disrespectfully, rubs their brow, or simply looks worried.

WINSTON (CONT'D)
...It was the evident will of
Parliament and the nation that this
should be conceived on the broadest
possible basis and that it should
include all parties. With this
agreement in place, I now invite
the House by a resolution to
declare its confidence in the new
government.

ANGLE on the TORIES - unimpressed.

A SENIOR TORY advises a JUNIOR TORY.

SENIOR TORY
Look to Chamberlain's handkerchief.
If he waves it at the end of
Churchill's speech, we applaud, if
not, sit on your hands.

The JUNIOR TORY looks over at CHAMBERLAIN, as

CHAMBERLAIN draws a WHITE HANDKERCHIEF out of his BREAST POCKET and folds it in his LAP.

The JUNIOR TORY nods - understanding.

ANGLE on the LIBERALS - slight warmer reaction.

ANGLE on LABOUR - nodding.

WINSTON
But--in Europe--we are in the
preliminary phase of one of the
greatest battles in history--and
the time is ripe for preparations
to be made here at home.

ANGLE ON: the JUNIOR TORY, unable to take his eyes off CHAMBERLAIN, waiting for the HANDKERCHIEF to be waved.

WINSTON (CONT'D)

I say to the House as I said to ministers who have joined this government, I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears, and sweat.

(rising to his theme now)

We have before us an ordeal of the most grievous kind. We have before us many, many months of struggle and suffering. You ask, what is our policy? I say it is to wage war by land, sea, and air. War with all our might and with all the strength God has given us, and to wage war against a monstrous tyranny never surpassed in the dark and lamentable catalogue of human crime. That is our policy. You ask, what is our aim? I can answer in one word. It is victory.

WINSTON feels he must have won them over, but his confident smile fades as he realises he stands alone.

Small applause begins - but it is MUTED.

SIMON and HOARE and the other TORY PLOTTERS all look to CHAMBERLAIN, as he -

- puts his WHITE HANDKERCHIEF back in his BREAST POCKET!!!

The TORIES sit back - NONE APPLAUD.

HALIFAX and CHAMBERLAIN barely clap.

ANGLE ON: CHIEF TORY PLOTTERS, SIR SAMUEL HOARE and SIR JOHN SIMON -

SIR SAMUEL HOARE

Same old wind-bag rhetoric.

SIR JOHN SIMON

Still spoiling for a fight.

INT. LIBRARY/ NUMBER 10 DOWNING STREET - DAY

HALIFAX is looking around the room - As CHAMBERLAIN puts his own PAPERS in a WHITE MOVING BOX. There is EVIDENCE in the room of the RAPID TRANSFER OF POWER, CHAMBERLAIN moving out, (HIS WHITE BOXES) and WINSTON moving in (BROWN BOXES, marked: "CHURCHILL")

CHAMBERLAIN

Patience.

HALIFAX

Have we made a mistake? You are stepping down to make possible a peace deal--only to be replaced by a man incapable of *speaking* the word "peace!"

CHAMBERLAIN

Therein lies the problem...

HALIFAX

Indeed.

CHAMBERLAIN

(suggesting a master-plan)
...and possibly our solution.
The path now is clear. Churchill will give us ample cause to resign within a matter of days. With our departure, a No-Confidence vote in him will consign him to history, and Labour and the Liberals will have no choice but to accept your nomination at last.

HALIFAX lifts the OPEN FLAP on a "CHURCHILL" BOX - takes out a BOOK (**MARLBOROUGH: His Life and Times**), reads the TITLE PAGE:

CHAMBERLAIN (CONT'D)

You will be elected Prime Minister before...

CLOSE ON: **"MARLBOROUGH: His Life and Times by WINSTON. S. CHURCHILL."**

CHAMBERLAIN (CONT'D)

...before he has had time to unpack his books.

HALIFAX

The damage he can do before then? Untold.

CHAMBERLAIN

Peace with Hitler. That is our sole object. Come. Let Winston move in here, smoke up this famous house for a few days, before a sounder government emerges, with a proper leader.

They exit together, CHAMBERLAIN guiding HALIFAX out.

EXT. 10 DOWNING STREET - DAY

WINSTON exits a CAB, waves at the PRESS, and - ever the showman - taps the NUMBER 10 on the famous front door with his walking stick for the amusement of the PHOTOGRAPHERS, and then enters.

INT. 10 DOWNING STREET - DAY

WINSTON enters the MAIN LIVING ROOM, to be SURPRISED by his ENTIRE FAMILY...

...CLEM, SARAH CHURCHILL (26), DIANA CHURCHILL(31) and RANDOLPH CHURCHILL (29) and RANDOLPH'S WIFE (pregnant), and MARY CHURCHILL (18)...a LOUD "HURRARRR!" They all hold CHAMPAGNE, as they converge on him and kiss him.

He stares at them, a SMILE FORMING AT LAST, deeply touched, actually. At last he is presented with a glass of champagne.

CHURCHILL

Thank you. Thank you. You know--
(*the family wait for the inevitable speech*)

--when asked recently about this damn war, I shocked quite a few people by saying that "we are not simply fighting to save France, we are fighting to save Champagne." Created an outcry-- seems a perfectly respectable answer to me.

Last to congratulate him is his WIFE.

CLEM

Congratulations, *Prime Minister*.

MARY

Oh we don't have to address him as that, do we?

CHURCHILL

You shall address me as always-- as Dear Beloved Dashing Brave Papa.

MARY

(*kissing him on cheek*)
Well done Dear Beloved Dashing Brave Papa.

CLEM

Prime Minister. At last.

Raises his GLASS in a toast -

CHURCHILL
Here's to--(*thinks*) not
buggering it up.

FAMILY
Not buggering it up!

CLEM
You'll do.

WINSTON now kisses her on the cheek.

WINSTON
(*worried*)
I had better.

INT. WAR ROOMS/ UNDERGROUND BUNKER - DAY

The CAMERA passes through the VARIOUS departments -
SECRETARIAL, CRUDE SLEEPING QUARTERS, TELEPHONE SWITCHBOARD,
MILITARY PERSONNEL ...en route to...

INT. MAP ROOM/ WAR ROOMS - NIGHT

The CHIEFS OF STAFF brief WINSTON: GENERAL IRONSIDE , for the
ARMY; AIR CHIEF MARSHALL DOWDING, for the AIR FORCE. Other
OFFICERS all crowd in and lean over -

- a LARGE (DYNAMIC) TABLE-MOUNTED MAP of WESTERN EUROPE, showing
(with pins and colored string) how far WESTWARD the GERMAN LINE
has advanced.

WINSTON
On Land? General Ironside?

GENERAL IRONSIDE
Because of the German offensive in
Belgium, Holland, and in France,
all our land forces, roughly
300,000 men, are now in full
retreat. Belgium and Holland may
fall any day.

WINSTON
The French?

GENERAL IRONSIDE
The entire French ninth army--some
two hundred thousand men--deserted.

WINSTON
Deserted?

GENERAL IRONSIDE
Married men. They went back to
their *nos petit boulots*.

WINSTON

At sea? Well, I can tell you -
our fleets no sooner come within
their range than they come under
blistering air attack, and if
not being sunk, are neutralised.
We need air superiority. Air
Marshall Dowding?

AIR MARSHALL DOWDING

The Luftwaffe rules the skies
over our retreating forces. We
simply don't have enough planes.
In fact, sir, I strongly
recommend we stop sending our
precious fighter planes to be
wasted in France.

WINSTON

Give up on the defence of
Europe? Is that it? Is that what
we have come to?

REGARDING the MAP - WINSTON, in angry frustration...

WINSTON (CONT'D)

How can all this have happened so
soon?

GENERAL IRONSIDE

Panzer tanks. Plunging rapidly
westward, through the centre. The
road to Paris now lies open.

WINSTON

But they will have to pause for
fuel supplies.

IRONSIDE looks at GENERAL ISMAY.

ISMAY

This is not the last war. The tanks
can stop for fuel at France's
petrol stations.

GENERAL IRONSIDE

This German advance--cannot be
stopped. We are powerless.

A grim silence. WINSTON stares at the map.

ISMAY

Should the public be told?

WINSTON

No! Not yet. Let the burden lie
with us a moment longer.
Take me to France.

EXT. SKIES OVER FRANCE - DAY

INSERT CARD: **WEDNESDAY, MAY 15**

WINSTON's FLAMINGO PASSENGER PLANE flies into shot, FRANCE below. The PLANE is soon joined by two SPITFIRE FIGHTER ESCORTS, one on each wing.

INT. FLAMINGO/ CIVILIAN PASSENGER PLANE - DAY

From the AIR, WINSTON looks down. His face goes grey as he sees - for the first time - CIVILIAN REFUGEES.

On BOARD with WINSTON - ISMAY, IRONSIDE and three CHIEFS OF STAFF.

WINSTON
How many refugees are there?

GENERAL ISMAY
They say over 7 million.

The SHOCK of this plays on his face.

EXT. FRENCH ROADS - DAY

Abandoned BRITISH TANKS and ARTILLERY stand in flames, and here and there among straggling vagabonds and refugees, lie corpses of children and the very old.

A BAGPIPER plays a sorrowful tune.

A wounded UNKNOWN SOLDIER (BRITISH), among HUNDREDS of BRITISH and FRENCH TROOPS also in full retreat, looks up, as -
- WINSTON's 'FLAMINGO' flies overhead.

EXT. QUAI D'ORSAY - DAY

A FRENCH MILITARY BAND plays a FANFARE.

WINSTON and ISMAY advance toward FRENCH PREMIERE REYNAUD, who is surrounded by his DELEGATION.

As WINSTON and the REYNAUD shake hands, the PRESS take their PHOTOS.

Posing for the PHOTOGRAPHERS, WINSTON nods, SERIOUS, but REYNAUD upstages him by giving the **V for VICTORY** sign (PALM - OUTWARD.)

WINSTON takes note, studies RAYNAUD and this NEW GESTURE. His eyes are fixed on the **V**.

ISMAY
*(noticing CHURCHILL's
 interest)*
 It's the new thing over here. V -
 for Victoire.

INT. QUAI D'ORSAY - DAY

In a LARGE ROOM overlooking a gorgeous garden - WINSTON and his DELEGATION meet the FRENCH DELEGATION - REYNAUD, DALADIER and GAMELIN.

As they speak - visible out the window - OLD MEN carry WHEEL-BARROWS of documents and burn them on an OPEN FIRE.

WINSTON
 Brace yourselves, I am about to
 add to your terrible suffering--
 by speaking French.
(in bad FRENCH)
*Although our plight is grave, this
 was not the first time we have been
 in a crisis together.*

REYNAUD
 Perhaps in English, Mr
 Churchill.

WINSTON
(after a moment's offence)
 We have--we have survived crises
 before, and I am confident we
 will survive this one. Tell me
 how you plan to counter-attack.

REYNAUD
 There is no plan.

Silence - then...

WINSTON
(in FRENCH)
You must counter-attack. You must!
(in ENGLISH)
 You must counter-attack! Gentlemen--
 I do not believe this Panzer
 breakthrough is a real invasion.

REYNAUD
 Not a real invasion?

Stupefied looks from the FRENCH and ISMAY alike.

DALADIER
(in FRENCH)
 Tell this to the families of the
 dead perhaps.

WINSTON

As long as their tanks are not supported by infantry units they are merely little flags, stuck on the map, because the tank crews are unable to support themselves. No, I refuse to see in this spectacular raid of the German tanks a real invasion.

Silence to this. Is WINSTON losing his mind?

ISMAY

(to REYNAUD)

Is there talk here of a treaty with Germany?

REYNAUD

I would not sign one. There are others who would. Britain? Would you sign such a treaty?

ISMAY

We are prepared -

WINSTON

We are not prepared - to give in on any account. We would rather go down fighting than be enslaved.

EXT. HYDE PARK - DAY

STANHOPE and CHAMBERLAIN walking...

STANHOPE

He's delusional. Dangerously delusional! Neville, I understand the choice of Winston was imposed on you by our opponents, but he was 10 years in the political wilderness for a reason. When he had real power during the Great War, how many did he send to their death at Gallipoli?

CHAMBERLAIN

190,000 I believe.

STANHOPE

190,000 men! And that's the leader we have?

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

HANKEY and HOARE...

HANKEY

He's a Conservative, who defects to the Liberals - lobs grenades at us for 10 years - and then flops Conservative again, as it suits him! He stands for one thing: himself!

HOARE

He was right about Hitler though. Stood alone in that. And to be hated by Hitler now is reason for many to love him.

EXT. EMBANKMENT / THAMES - DAY

Watching ROWERS on the THAMES...CHATFIELD and KINGSLEY-WOOD...

CHATFIELD

I'll tell you what Churchill is. A half-breed American, well equipped to prepare us for the last war.

INT. JOHN SIMON'S OFFICE - DAY

SIR JOHN SIMON

(into TELEPHONE)

He's an actor. In love with the sound of his own voice. A pantomime character, laying it on with a trowel, imagining the public will fall for his hammy theatrics!

INT. LONDONDERRY'S OFFICE - DAY

LONDONDERRY

(into TELEPHONE)

We can credit the public with more sophistication than that!

INT. CARLTON PRIVATE CLUB - DAY

All the PLOTTERS present, as - STANHOPE puts down a copy of WINSTON's book...

STANHOPE

He's a very good historian, give him that. This four-volume history of his, of The Great War -

CHATFIELD

- Then let him be this age's Seneca, but not its Caesar!

HANKEY

Is he a good writer? Those baroque speeches of his! I mean--Who can stomach them?

LONDONDERRY

He sounds drunk!

HANKEY

Because he is drunk.

HOARE

Poor Britain--a stuttering King and a drunken PM with a LISP! What message does that send our enemies?

LONDONDERRY

N-n-not an ETH-ETH-ETHSPETHIALLY good one, *hic!* (*hiccough*)

The TORIES laugh.

EXT. WESTMINSTER BRIDGE - DAY

BIG BEN and PARLIAMENT in B/G...SIMON and HOARE walking...

SIR JOHN SIMON

Now is the time to strike for good terms from Hitler, while he over-estimates our strength.

SIR SAMUEL HOARE

If we give him Europe he will leave us largely alone.

SIR JOHN SIMON

Without a peace deal we will be defeated--imagine our future then, our way of life, our traditions, the great houses of England -

SIR SAMUEL HOARE

- under Lord Himmler! Viscount Goebbels of Melbourne! Duke Goring of Westminster!

SIMON and HOARE stop and stare at WESTMINSTER.

INT. COCKTAIL PARTY / CONSERVATIVE PARTY HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT

All PLOTTERS present... watch CHURCHILL, who drunkenly works the room - making his listeners LAUGH LOUDLY; a GIFTED ENTERTAINER.

HOARE

Either he accepts this peace deal or we drive him out.

ANGLE ON: LADY NANCY ASTOR, chatting with SIMON and HANKEY and STANHOPE and EDEN, as WINSTON approaches -

LADY ASTOR

The mark of a true politician is the ability to foretell what is going to happen tomorrow, next week, next month, next year -

WINSTON

- and to have the ability afterwards to explain why it didn't happen...

While the OTHERS find this funny, LADY ASTOR does not.

WINSTON (CONT'D)

... as you well know, Lady Astor?

WINSTON spills CHAMPAGNE whilst trying to take a flute off a WAITERS tray...

WINSTON (CONT'D)

Bugger.

LADY ASTOR

You sir, are drunk.

CHURCHILL

Yes madam. But you are ugly. And in the morning I will be sober.

SHOCKED, she snorts, and WALKS away toward CHAMBERLAIN and HALIFAX, SIMON and HOARE - WINSTON's enemies in his parties.

HALIFAX grimly whispers to - SIMON, HOARE, CHATFIELD, HANKEY and LONDONDERRY.

HALIFAX

I will try to convince Churchill of the wisdom of peace talks. But not for the preservation of titles and ancestral seats. I will do it for every son and daughter of this land so that we might emerge from this crisis with something recognisable as 'home.'

SIR JOHN SIMON
Spoken like a Prime Minister.

ANGLE ON -

A DRUNKEN CHURCHILL, looking very UN-PRIME-MINISTERIAL, as he amuses the crowds.

INT. KITCHEN/ 10 DOWNING STREET - DAY

On a BREAKFAST TRAY (once more) are set - (in rapid cuts)
BACON and EGGS, SCOTCH and SODA, a GLASS of WINE...

INSERT CARD: (**SUNDAY MAY 19**)

INT. LIBRARY/ NUMBER 10 DOWNING STREET - DAY

WINSTON, is now brimming with inspiring energy as TWO PRIVATE SECRETARIES and ELIZABETH LAYTON attend the DYNAMIC and now largely SOBER leader.

WINSTON
Next! Next! Come, come, come,
come -

PRIVATE SECRETARY 1
Lord Simon wishes to see you. He
says it's urgent.

WINSTON
How many times do I have to
flush before he goes away? Next.

PRIVATE SECRETARY 2
Lord Caldecote, same request,
same urgency...

WINSTON
Same answer. Next.

ELIZABETH LAYTON
Paintings from the National
Gallery.

WINSTON
What about them?

ELIZABETH LAYTON
Should they be sent to Canada?
For safe keeping?

WINSTON
No. They should be hidden in our
cellars and caves-- we are going
to win this thing.

ELIZABETH LAYTON

Very good.

PRIVATE SECRETARY 1

You need to reply to the Privy Seal.

WINSTON

Dear Sir...

The TYPIST starts to TYPE.

WINSTON (CONT'D)

...You have all the virtues I dislike-- and none of the vices I admire...

(losing interest)

Make up the rest-- rubbish, rubbish, rubbish-- Yours, WC. Is that all?

ELIZABETH LAYTON

You've been invited to first night of a play by Mr George Bernard Shaw. He says "Bring a friend, if you have one."

WINSTON

Tell him, tell him: "Cannot possibly attend first night; will attend second, if there is one."

(shouting)

CLEM!!! CAT!!! CLEMMIE!!!

Enter CLEMENTINE WINSTON, his WIFE.

CLEM

Pig?

WINSTON

Cat--my copy of Cicero. Did you shelve it?

CLEM

Let Cicero rest in peace.

WINSTON

You saw it?

CLEM

Of course not. I don't believe I've ever been in this room yet.

WINSTON

Everybody! Out! Get out! It becomes increasingly difficult to reconcile the point of having staff at all!

As his PRIVATE SECRETARIES and TYPIST exit - he puts on a RECORD. MUSIC starts.

CLEM

Was there something else?

He kisses her gently, holds her, as the STAFF move around them, invisible to both of them, making ready to depart.

WINSTON

Yes. My love for you.

CLEM

How much have you had to drink today?

WINSTON

I see you now, here, as I saw you in 1904, across a crowded dance-floor. I simply stood, rooted to the spot, not saying a word...

CLEM

How very beautiful I must have been to have achieved that miraculous effect.

He starts to dance with her.

WINSTON

Four years till we saw each other again.

CLEM

They went by in an absolute flash.

WINSTON

Yes. You didn't lack for admirers. Your *fidele serviteur* with Sidney Peel.

CLEM

Brilliant man.

WINSTON

Lionel Earle.

CLEM

Wonderful dancer.

WINSTON

And then--at Lady St Hellier's dinner party--who should show up?

CLEM

Pig.

WINSTON

Just the same. Invited only to
avoid an unlucky 13.

CLEM

My lucky 14.

WINSTON

And side by side we sat-- and sit
still.

CLEM

I wonder where Sidney Peel is now?

WINSTON

You are wicked to Winston.

CLEM

He deserves it.

(Starts to go)

Oh. I've closed down Chartwell,
till the war ends. All the
servants let go. Very sad.

WINSTON

I'll go there.

CLEM

No need.

WINSTON

I need to feed the swans.

CLEM

The swans? You need to write
your radio speech for your
address to the nation.

He nods.

CLEM (CONT'D)

(at the door)

I have a meeting with the Red
Cross. Those poor boys in France.

CLEM exits. WINSTON listens, alone, to the MUSIC, and then goes
to his SCOTCH DECANter and pours himself another SCOTCH and SODA
as -

- the PHONE rings.

WINSTON

Yes. What do you mean you can't
place a call to Paris? All the
lines? God's teeth! Keep trying. I
need to speak with Premiere
Reynaud.

He hangs up, then KICKS the WASTE-BASKET across the room.

EXT. 10 DOWNING STREET - DAY

WINSTON emerges and is about to step into the WAITING CAR, when he is accosted by... the PRESS.

REPORTER
Prime Minister - the situation
in France -

He spins, faces their CAMERA's, takes his CIGAR out of his mouth with INDEX and SECOND finger and makes, for the CAMERAS, his first-ever **V-FOR-VICTORY SIGN** (but PALM-INWARD, the RUDE VERSION), then jumps into the CAR.

INT. BBC STUDIO/ LONDON - NIGHT

WINSTON prepares to deliver his speech on RADIO. He is nervous - and this manifests as irritability.

Two MICROPHONES sit on a table. An ACTOR also stands by - and WINSTON glares at this effete THESPIAN.

BBC PRODUCER
So-- we need you to sit here,
and read slowly and clearly. We
also have an actor here, Mr
Charles Rutlidge, of the Royal
Shakespeare company...

RUTLIDGE bows...

BBC PRODUCER (CONT'D)
...who is happy to give advice
on projection if -

WINSTON
Projection?! Projection?!

BBC PRODUCER
Only if you -

WINSTON
(projecting well)
I have been a public speaker
since the nursery! The nerve!
(looking at his notes)
How dare you...

BBC PRODUCER
Of course. So-- shall-- shall--
shall we just do a um-- test?
Small test? When the light goes
green, you can begin. Green
light.

WINSTON prepares, and then the light goes GREEN. He begins -

WINSTON

"I speak to you for the first time as Prime Minister in a solemn hour for the life of our country, of our empire, of our allies, and, above all, of the cause of Freedom. A tremendous battle is raging in - "

The LIGHT goes RED. The PRODUCER steps forward. WINSTON has been PANNING his HEAD from left to right and right to left as he speaks. It's no good.

BBC PRODUCER

Umm-- thankyou, sorry, but umm-- may I ask-- why you are moving your head from side to side?

WINSTON

Was I? Oh--oh--Forty years in the House Of Commons-- I expect. Should I not?

BBC PRODUCER

If you were to direct your voice straight into the microphone. Shall we try again?

Light goes GREEN.

WINSTON

(trying again)

"I speak to you for the first time as Prime Minister in a solemn hour for the life of our country, of our empire - "

The light goes RED again. He stops. WINSTON had started to move his head again. The PRODUCER steps forward again, smiles weakly, nervously...

WINSTON (CONT'D)

I'm doing it again. How long do we have?

BBC PRODUCER

May I-- perhaps may I make a small suggestion, sir?

WINSTON stares at the PRODUCER, as if "it better be a good one"...

CUT TO:

The BROADCAST. As WINSTON delivers his speech into the MIRCROPHONE, the ACTOR, RUTLIDGE, stands behind WINSTON and holds (gently) BOTH OF WINSTON'S EARS, keeping WINSTON'S head still... It WORKS.

WINSTON

I speak to you for the first time as Prime Minister in a solemn hour for the life of our country, of our Empire, of our Allies, and above all of the cause of Freedom. A tremendous battle is raging in France and Flanders.

The BBC producer nods, pleased -

INT. BUCKINGHAM PALACE - NIGHT

The KING looks at the front page of THE EVENING STANDARD, where WINSTON gives the **V FOR VICTORY** sign, as he and the QUEEN, and then the arriving children (who sit on their laps) listen to the broadcast -

WINSTON (O.S.)

The Germans... have broken through the French defenses north of the Maginot Line, and strong columns of their armored vehicles are ravaging the open country...

INT. LORD HALIFAX'S ROOMS/ WESTMINSTER - NIGHT

HALIFAX listens to his RADIO, as -

WINSTON (O.S.)

.... which for the first day or two was without defenders... But!... side by side, the British and French armies --have advanced...

He turns the RADIO off, disgusted by this DISTORTION of the facts.

HALIFAX

Utter lies! How dare he!
"Advanced"?

EXT. FRENCH BATTLEFIELD - DAY

The BRITISH and FRENCH armies retreat - leaving behind SMOKING TRUCKS and ABANDONED ARTILLERY.

WINSTON (O.S.)
*...the British and French armies--
 have advanced--to rescue not
 only Europe, but mankind from
 the foulest and most soul-
 destroying tyranny which has
 ever darkened and stained the
 pages of history.*

INT. BBC STUDIO/ LONDON - NIGHT

The RECORDING light goes RED. The BROADCAST is over.

BBC PRODUCER
 Well done, sir.

WINSTON sits back - UNHAPPY, a moment of PRIVATE REMORSE at his exaggeration of the facts.

INT. WINSTON'S CAR - NIGHT

The EVENING STANDARD in on the PASSENGER SEAT. The DRIVER looks in the REAR-VIEW... sees WINSTON looking thoughtful.

DRIVER
 Mr Churchill sir -

WINSTON
 Shhhh.
 (pause)
 Damn it. What is it?

DRIVER
 Don't mean to interrupt.

WINSTON
 Well you have. What is it, man?

DRIVER
 Oh, it's just, in the paper,
 this picture of you, doing a **V**
for Victory with your fingers.
 Not sure if you know this but--
 the way you did it-- well,
 around the working classes that
 gesture means something else.

WINSTON
 What does it mean?

DRIVER
 Wouldn't like to say sir.

WINSTON

I was captured by the Boer. I spent time in a South African prison.

DRIVER

Up your bum, sir.

WINSTON

Up your bum?

DRIVER

The way you did it, sir. Yes sir.

(demonstrates)

But if you turn it around -

(palm out)

- that's fine.

WINSTON

I see.

DRIVER

Wouldn't like million's 'a people to take it the wrong way.

WINSTON

(grateful)

Thank you. What's your name?

DRIVER

Leonard, sir. Tom Leonard. At your service.

WINSTON secretly practices, in his lap, both versions of the **V sign**, PALM IN, then PALM OUT...

INT. WAR CABINET/ 10 DOWNING STREET - DAY

INSERT CARD: **SATURDAY, MAY 25**

WAR CABINET MEETING 1. PRESENT: FIELD MARSHAL IRONSIDE, GENERAL ISMAY, and the FIVE MEMBERS - CHAMBERLAIN, HALIFAX, ATLEE and GREENWOOD. One (MALE) SECRETARY. They are waiting for WINSTON.

A NEW MAP shows the NEW POSITIONS of BRITISH TROOPS. SURROUNDED at DUNKIRK.

Finally, WINSTON enters, shakes the hands of IRONSIDE and ISMAY first, but has less enthusiasm for ATLEE and GREENWOOD, and nothing for CHAMBERLAIN and HALIFAX, who do not expect to have their hands shaken.

WINSTON

Field Marshall, good to see you.

Pug *(Ismay)*.

(MORE)

WINSTON (CONT'D)

Welcome to the War Cabinet--such as we are. Please, sit.

He sits.

WINSTON (CONT'D)

War is usually a catalogue of blunders, and this one is proving no exception. Field Marshall - you have some news for us I believe.

IRONSIDE

I do.

WINSTON

Let's hear it.

IRONSIDE

You have a report in front of you-- if you turn to page 3 -

WINSTON doesn't like BIG REPORTS, and grows irritated, but bites his TONGUE a moment longer -

IRONSIDE (CONT'D)

Ummm - so on page 3 - are we all on page 3? - second paragraph down -

GREENWOOD

Second?

IRONSIDE

Yes, the second-- no, page -

WINSTON

(his patience snapping)

Edmund!--why don't you just tell us-- please--in your own words-- what kind of mess we are looking at here. I am not usually accused, even by my friends, of a modest or retiring disposition, so please be blunt. What's going on?

IRONSIDE

Right. *(beat)* As of last night-- the Germans have encircled sixty British, Belgian and French divisions. On our part all our forces under Lord Gort have now withdrawn, or are trying to withdraw, to the French coast, to Dunkirk, where we cannot reach them. Ships sunk by the Nazis block the harbour entrance and the Luftwaffe control the skies above.

WINSTON

How many of our men are trapped?

IRONSIDE

All of them.

(*pause*)

Our nation's entire professional soldiery. 300,000 men. And...

(*pause*)

...we can see no clear way to rescue them.

Silence -

WINSTON

Field Marshall--
are you telling me that we shall have lost all our trained soldiers and all our weapons and heavy armour by the next few days?

IRONSIDE

Unless a miracle occurs.

WINSTON

The French?

IRONSIDE

They have been routed. Their end is at hand. Raynaud sent a radio message. He expects the defence of Paris will soon fail.

WINSTON

We must counter-attack. Anyone?

(*silence*)

Surely -

IRONSIDE

The German forces are superior in every regard and are only fifty miles from the coast. They are pushing us into the sea.

ATLEE

Fifty miles! Good God!

GREENWOOD

For a German tank, two days.

WINSTON

They must not reach the sea! Not before we evacuate the British Expeditionary Forces! General Ismay? What have you got for us?

Everyone looks at ISMAY.

ISMAY

As it stands--I cannot see that we have much hope of getting any of our British Forces out in time.

A gasp in the cabinet. WINSTON takes this news badly.

WINSTON

Not a man? We cannot be so totally at their mercy!

REACTION HALIFAX: Only just holding his tongue. He looks at CHAMBERLAIN, who does not maintain the look.

WINSTON (CONT'D)

Field Marshall. Back to you. What are we to do about all this? What is our next step?

IRONSIDE

I'm not sure--sir--that we have one.

Silence. A pall settles. ISMAY looks at IRONSIDE, who says nothing. CHAMBERLAIN and HALIFAX also exchange a look.

WINSTON

I see. So where are we to look for salvation?

(*silence*)

Anyone? Come on! Speak!

IRONSIDE

We still have a Garrison at Calais. 25 miles to the south.

WINSTON

How many men do we have there?

IRONSIDE

4,000.

WINSTON

Why didn't you say so?! Then have them go north--engage with the German columns moving on Dunkirk. Buy us some time. Draw the Nazi focus away from Dunkirk whilst we execute a maritime evacuation of our forces. Ironside--is that possible?

IRONSIDE

It would mean a huge sacrifice.

ATLEE

Four thousand young men!

WINSTON
 To save 300,000!
(pause)
 Under whose command is the
 Calais Garrison?

ISMAY
 Brigadier Nicholson.

Silence. The burden falls on Winston...

WINSTON
 Very well--tell--
(a hint of uncertainty)
 --tell--Nicholson--that it is of
 the greatest importance to this
 island that Calais draw the enemy's
 tanks and artillery and bombers
 away from Dunkirk--invite their
 wrath--and to--to fight on if needs
 be until--until the destruction of
 his command.

A PALL settles over the room. Almost a GASP.

IRONSIDE
 A suicide mission.

HALIFAX can stay silent no longer.

HALIFAX
 Prime Minister! I have
 reservations...

WINSTON
 Who is free of reservations?

HALIFAX
 ...about such a fateful course when
 we have the option of a peace
 offer.

WINSTON
 Peace offer...

HALIFAX
 The Italians have offered to
 mediate between ourselves and
 Germany. And I indicated that
 provided our liberty and
independence were assured, we
 would consider any proposal.

WINSTON
 With Hitler holding the whip
 hand do you really think he
 would honour our liberty and
 independence?

HALIFAX

It would be in his interest to do so. He -

WINSTON

The only thing to do is to show him that he cannot conquer this country, and for that we need an army. General, tell Brigadier Nicholson, "*The Germans must not reach the sea! Not till we get some of the British Expeditionary Force out.*"

(pause)

I take full responsibility.

HALIFAX

Really?

WINSTON

REALLY! YES! It is the reason I sit in this chair!

HALIFAX

Surely--before we send 4,000 men to their graves, we must explore--

WINSTON

- I should like to speak with Viscount Halifax and Lord Chamberlain alone, if you would be so kind...

WINSTON rises and starts to walk out -

WINSTON (CONT'D)

(to IRONSIDE)

Issue the order to the Calais Garrison. Confirm it has been done.

EXT. TERRACE - DAY

WINSTON lights his CIGAR at an outdoor table overlooking the private garden, as -

HALIFAX

Winston! We are facing certain defeat on land--the annihilation of our army--and imminent invasion! Be rational!

WINSTON

We are a sea-going nation. Have been since the Bronze Age. The German doesn't recognise an expanse of water greater than a lake.

(MORE)

WINSTON (CONT'D)

The Channel is ours--our moat--our battlement. She has first to reach this island -

HALIFAX

- which will be full of frightened unarmed civilians!

(fuming)

For the last time!--we stand alone, defenceless, facing the largest army the world has ever seen. Furthermore, once France falls, Germany can concentrate on aircraft production and they will then have the French fleet as well! What is to stop him then? Words? Words Winston? Words alone?

Tense silence. WINSTON suppresses his emotions. He looks into the faces of CHAMBERLAIN and HALIFAX.

CHAMBERLAIN

(calmly)

For the love of God let Halifax speak with the Italian ambassador, Bastianini, discuss a mediation between the Allies and Germany for a peace conference.

WINSTON

Bastianini? Ha! A man about whom we might say there is less to him than meets the eye.

HALIFAX refuses the offer of a CIGAR.

WINSTON (CONT'D)

I remain opposed to any negotiations which might lead to a derogation of our rights and power.

HALIFAX

As we all are! Our sovereignty is not negotiable! On that we are agreed!

With nowhere left to turn -

WINSTON

Very well--very well...

CHAMBERLAIN

(sighing with relief)

Good.

WINSTON

...but we ought not to begin
this moment down this path, not
until we first learn the fate of
France.

HALIFAX

Every day our position grows
weaker-

WINSTON

Let us first learn the fate of
France.

WINSTON walks away, leaving a hopeful HALIFAX and
CHAMBERLAIN.

HALIFAX

He's stalling.

CHAMBERLAIN

Why else do you think he's Prime
Minister?

(pause)

Go and see Bastianini. At once.

INT. ITALIAN EMBASSY - DAY

HALIFAX in talks with BASTIANINI. A photo of MUSSOLINI looms
behind them.

HALIFAX

While I cannot give you our offer
right now, I believe you can expect
one by 5 pm tomorrow.

BASTIANINI

And Mr Churchill?

HALIFAX

He is--a realist. He wishes to
preserve lives, at all costs. As do
we all.

BASTIANINI

May I show you something more?

BASTIANINI opens a copy of *The Evening Standard*. Inside is a
CARTOON - of a CRUEL EVIL HITLER in a charabanc, looking across
the CHANNEL, and written on the side of the MACHINE is a list of
CAPITAL CITIES and DATES already TICKED, with the last "LONDON"
waiting its tick. (By DAVID LOW)

BASTIANINI (CONT'D)

If peace talks are to be a reality,
you might ask your newspapers not
to insult those who will sit on the
other side of the peace table from
you.

HALIFAX reads the CARTOON.

HALIFAX

A cartoon? It's--a cartoon.

BASTIANINI

Yes.

HALIFAX

We have a free press in this
country -

BASTIANINI

So I see.

INT. TRANS-ATLANTIC TELEPHONE ROOM/ WAR ROOMS - NIGHT

WINSTON

Is the scrambler on?

OPERATOR

It's always on, sir.

WINSTON

Get me President Roosevelt.

(INTERCUT as necessary, with -)

INT. WHITEHOUSE / WASHINGTON - DAY

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT talks on a SPECIAL TELEPHONE - his
HOTLINE to LONDON.

WINSTON (O.S.)

Good to speak with you sir.

ROOSEVELT

And you! How are you?

INT. TRANS-ATLANTIC TELEPHONE ROOM/ WAR ROOMS - NIGHT

WINSTON

I am phoning you about your Navy
Destroyers. If you were to loan
us just 50 Destroyers I feel
sure -

ROOSEVELT

Not possible, I'm afraid. The Neutrality Act we signed last year has tied my hands.

WINSTON

Then--can I--do I have your permission to send an aircraft carrier to pick up the P-40 fighter planes we purchased?

ROOSEVELT

(wincing, hating this)

We have a new law preventing trans-shipment of military equipment.

(anguished)

I am sorry, Winston.

WINSTON

Sir--I need not enlarge upon the trouble faced by the Western Hemisphere. Without your support, in some fashion...

Silence. A tense moment...

ROOSEVELT

Hands are tied.

(pause)

We could--possibly...

WINSTON

Mr Roosevelt--we are facing the gravest odds!

ROOSEVELT

...we could take your planes to about a mile from the Canadian border--and then if you send across a team of horses from Canada--nothing motorized--then you could pull 'em over the border yourself. How does that sound?

WINSTON

Horses? You said "a team of horses"?

ROOSEVELT

I guess you could push 'em yourself. The damn things have wheels. Up to you.

WINSTON is speechless -

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)
 We could do that.
(silence)
 Prime Minister?

WINSTON covers the PHONE, slams his FIST down on the table, swallows his RAGE, and then speaks again, as calmly as he can-

WINSTON
 Anything you can do at this time
 would be appreciated.

ROOSEVELT
 Goodnight to you Winston.
(feeling WINSTON's pain)
 It must be late there.

WINSTON
 In more ways than you could
 possibly know, sir.

Silence between the great men.

WINSTON (CONT'D)
 Mr President.
(puts down the phone)

WINSTON alone, in his little booth...

WINSTON (CONT'D)
 Bloody Yankees!

INT. 10 DOWNING STREET - NIGHT

The tired VALET, SAUNDERS, adjusts his fob-watch by the HALLWAY clock - it is 3 AM - and then KNOCKS and enters WINSTON's office.

INT. OFFICE/ 10 DOWNING STREET - NIGHT

VALET
 Will that be all for tonight,
 sir?

WINSTON is smoking a CIGAR, deep in thought.

INT. PRIVATE THEATRE / 10 DOWNING STREET - NIGHT

The VALET, struggling to KEEP HIS EYES OPEN, sits beside the FLICKERING FILM PROJECTOR, as -

- WINSTON sits alone in the DARK, deeply moved, watching his FAVOURITE MOVIE, "THAT HAMILTON WOMAN "...

ON SCREEN: - LAURENCE OLIVIER playing LORD NELSON, kisses
VIVIEN LEIGH playing LADY HAMILTON....

LADY HAMILTON
What are those bells?

NELSON
*Have you forgotten what night
this is? The last of 1799 -
eight bells for the old year and
eight for the new. Happy New
Year darling.*

LADY HAMILTON
Happy New Year.

NELSON
The dawn of a new century.

LADY HAMILTON
1800 - how strange it sounds.

NELSON
*What a century it's been.
Marlborough rode to war. And
Washington crossed the Delaware.
Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette.
The last of the Stewarts, Peter
the Great, Voltaire, Clive of
India, Bonaparte...*

LADY HAMILTON
...Nelson.

ON SCREEN - They kiss...

ANGLE ON PROJECTIONIST: Yawns, looks at his watch, bored.

ANGLE ON WINSTON: Rapt attention, spellbound.

ON SCREEN - NELSON now addresses the ADMIRALTY, passionately.

NELSON
*You cannot make peace with
dictators, you have to destroy
them, wipe them out! Gentlemen,
I implore you, speak to the
Prime Minister before it is too
late - do not ratify this peace!*

INT. HALLWAY/ 10 DOWNING STREET - NIGHT

WINSTON exits the THEATRE energetically, INSPIRED, as - the
VALET emerges.

VALET
Sir? Will you want to see the
end of the film?

WINSTON doesn't reply as he returns to his office.

VALET (CONT'D)
(to himself)
Never gets to the end.

INT. WAR ROOMS - NIGHT

WINSTON walks the empty hallways, puffing on his CIGAR, deep in thought. He finds all the rooms empty. He enters -

INT. THE MAP ROOM / WAR ROOMS - NIGHT

He looks at DUNKIRK, encircled by RED THREAD. And then looks at ENGLAND, the COAST, and then taps DOVER on the map. He then sees ELIZABETH LAYTON through the glass window, arriving at work - the first to do so.

INT. SECRETARY'S ROOM/ WAR ROOMS - NIGHT

ELIZABETH LAYTON is taking off her coat. WINSTON enters.

WINSTON
Good morning Miss Layton.

LAYTON
Sir.

WINSTON
Do you know how to work these
phones?

INT. ADMIRAL RAMSAY'S BEDROOM/ CELLARS/ DOVER CASTLE - NIGHT

ADMIRAL RAMSAY is woken by a STAFFER.

STAFFER
Admiral Ramsay?

RAMSAY
Huh?

STAFFER
It's the Prime Minister.

INT. DYNAMO ROOM/ CELLARS/ DOVER CASTLE - NIGHT

RAMSAY, on the PHONE with WINSTON.

WINSTON (O.S.)
 Bertie? I hope I didn't wake
 you.

RAMSAY
 Of course not. I was just
 reading the Bible.

(INTERCUT, as necessary with -)

INT. MAP ROOM/ WAR ROOMS - NIGHT

WINSTON, on the PHONE, studies the COAST of ENGLAND.

WINSTON
 Exodus--perhaps?
(pause)
 We need to evacuate our boys,
 Bertie. The Navy is saying that
 with one cruiser and six
 destroyers we'll be lucky to get
 10% out, with the Luftwaffe
 controlling the skies above. I
 want you to order--to order an
 assembly of boats.

RAMSAY
 Boats?

WINSTON
 Brave little civilian vessels,
 as many as you can get your
 hands on--in readiness to
 proceed to ports and inlets on
 the French coast--anyone with a
 pleasure craft bigger than 30
 foot. Longley's clipper,
 Fearnley's gin palace, any darn
 fishing vessel that'll float.
 Help me stage this thing, Bertie--
 and sorry for dragging you out
 of retirement for one last
 hurrah, but we must at least try
 to bring some of our boys home.

RAMSAY
 I will issue the order on the
 BBC tomorrow.

WINSTON starts to put the phone down, and then remembers
 something -

WINSTON
 Oh-- Bertie--still there?

RAMSAY
 Yes.

WINSTON
We need a name--for this
Operation.

RAMSAY looks around him - a blazon on a generator says
"DYNAMO" -

INT. PRINTING ROOM/ SUNDAY EXPRESS - DAY

INSERT CARD: **SUNDAY, MAY 26**

The "**MAY 26 1940**" LATE EDITION of the SUNDAY EXPRESS comes
off the presses. The HEADLINE: "**NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER**"

INT. WESTMINSTER ABBEY - DAY

WINSTON and CLEM stand for the first HYMN. WINSTON notes how
full the Church is.

WINSTON
Church attendance is up.

The KING and QUEEN enter the FULL CHURCH. They carry GAS-
MASKS.

WINSTON and CLEM observe this fact.

CUT TO:

The RECTOR preaches.

RECTOR
Today is a national day of
prayer--and the sole object of
our prayers are our entrapped
military men and women-- those
thousands whose survival remains
perilously in doubt at this very
moment.

The entire CONGREGATION follow the RECTOR's lead - and bow
their heads, in fearful silent prayer. WINSTON looks around
him, sees the FEAR and WORRY.

RECTOR (CONT'D)
"Blessed are the peacemakers"
For? "For they shall be called
Sons of God."

The CAMERA moves in on WINSTON - and then on the RECTOR, as
though it's a one-on-one conversation...

RECTOR (CONT'D)
 And so we call the Lord, "The
 Prince Of Peace." And how
 greatly we need Princes of Peace
 today.

WINSTON nudges CLEM.

WINSTON
 ...Time to go.

CLEM
 Shhhh.

She makes him stay and he squirms in his seat, DEEPLY
 IRRITATED.

RECTOR
 Sons. Of God, scripture calls
 them. And how many other sons of
 God are in harm's way, praying
 for reasonable dialogue between
 reasonable men?

WINSTON glares at the RECTOR, who glares back at him.

EXT. WESTMINSTER ABBEY - DAY

The KING comes out of the church, shakes hands with others,
 then approaches WINSTON and CLEM.

KING GEORGE VI
 Mrs Churchill.

CLEM
 Your Majesty.

KING GEORGE VI
 (to WINSTON)
 I heard you--on the--radio.

WINSTON
 Was I comprehensible?

KING GEORGE VI
 I am concerned only--that the
 correct facts be--be--presented--
 to--the--the British p--people.
 A retreat is not the same thing
 as an advance.

The KING walks away. WINSTON has just had his knuckles rapped
 and he is stunned.

CLEM
 What fun your Tuesdays are going
 to be.

CLEM drags WINSTON away.

INT. DRAWING ROOM / 10 DOWNING STREET - DAY

SARAH CHURCHILL (26) gives her mother, CLEM, a GAS-MASK. DIANA CHURCHILL in Uniform (31) and RANDOLPH CHURCHILL in Uniform (29), and MARY CHURCHILL (18) watch.

SARAH
Pull the straps over your head -

CLEM
- It's not the first time I've worn a gas mask.

CLEM pulls it over her head, as WINSTON enters.

WINSTON
Why are you all here?

SARAH
Papa. I was shocked to see Mummy hasn't been provided with a gas mask.

WINSTON approaches, looks at CLEM (in distress) wearing the MASK. SARAH and DIANA and MARY kiss their father on the cheek.

But WINSTON just stares at CLEM -

CLEM
(muffled)
You said we must all prepare ourselves.

WINSTON
Clem! Come back to us!

CLEM takes it off.

WINSTON (CONT'D)
A family meeting? Or an ambush?

DIANA
We are trying to work out what to do.

MARY
People are afraid. We're afraid.

RANDOLPH
Everyone is in a panic. In some respects I wish the Germans would invade and get it over with.

WINSTON
An appalling sentiment.

RANDOLPH
Not everyone loves war as you
do, father.

WINSTON
I don't love it.

RANDOLPH
"Nothing in life is so
exhilarating -

RANDOLPH (CONT'D)
- as to be shot at without
result."

DIANA
- as to be shot at without
result."

WINSTON
And I was right.

MARY
Can you stay for lunch?

WINSTON
Cold beans and dry bread awaits
me at the War Rooms. We are
preparing ourselves for
austerity there too.

SARAH
Papa--we're not all going to
come out of this one, are we?

This stark truth, further arrests WINSTON. He takes the GAS
MASK away from CLEM.

DIANA
(*holding newspaper*)
No one is telling us the truth.
Certainly not the papers.

WINSTON looks at CLEM - who nods at him.

WINSTON
If they invade tomorrow, we
should be hard pressed.

REACTION MARY: Her face crumples. TEARS fall from her eyes.
DIANA comforts her.

RANDOLPH
There are rumours of peace
talks.

CLEM - rises, crosses the room.

CLEM

I want to show you something.

She picks up a HOME-GUARD jacket and puts it on.

WINSTON

What on earth are you doing?

CLEM

I have joined the Home Guard.

WINSTON

As? As what?

CLEM

A patron. But if I am called upon, I believe I could fire a gun.

SARAH

I came to tell you I've just joined the WAAF's.

WINSTON turns to young MARY -

MARY

The Red Cross.

WINSTON turns to RANDOLPH -

RANDOLPH

The Officers are all talking about cyanide capsules. They are being passed around. I confiscate them.

WINSTON stares at his now militarised family.

WINSTON

I wish you all to know--that I have never been more proud of my family.

He walks out.

INT. HYDE PARK - DAY

The primary TORY PLOTTERS, JOHN SIMON and SAMUEL HOARE, walk through the park full of CHURCH-GOERS.

As they pass down the walkways, an AIR-RAID SIREN is being mounted on a LAMP-POST.

SIR SAMUEL HOARE

If Hitler will confirm, via the Italians, that he will enter a treaty with us, and if Churchill still refuses to engage in honest peace talks with him, then I have been told that Chamberlain and Halifax will resign at once.

SIR JOHN SIMON

Both of them, resign?

SIR SAMUEL HOARE

Churchill would face a no-confidence vote in Parliament within hours, which he would lose. With Churchill gone, Halifax, as Prime Minister!-- completes the treaty talks. Peace.

SIR JOHN SIMON

(*nodding*)

Hitler would deal better with Halifax. He loathes Churchill. The terms he would offer Churchill would be especially bad, out of spite.

SIR SAMUEL HOARE

Remember this day. Remember this day.

They have stopped at ALBERT MEMORIAL, where workers hang from ropes, at work on the EFFIGY.

SIR JOHN SIMON

What are they doing?

SIR SAMUEL HOARE

Removing the gold leaf. Too shining a target.

EXT. FRANCE - DAY

A LONE GERMAN TANK reaches the top of a HILL. The TANK stops. The TOP HATCH opens. A YOUNG GERMAN TANK COMMANDER appears out of it. He looks ahead - at...

...THE SEA!

The GERMAN TANK COMMANDER raises his FIELD-GLASSES and looks out, beyond the EMPTY BEACH... toward ENGLAND.

INT. MAP ROOM/ WAR ROOMS - DAY

The GERMAN front line - as marked by RED THREAD spanning PINS on a MAP - encircles DUNKIRK. Every FRENCH PORT is shown to be in GERMAN hands.

INT. ANTE-ROOM/ WAR CABINET - DAY

WINSTON - his face etched with WORRY, stops before entering the WAR CABINET, (as if before taking the stage) and ASSUMES a CONFIDENT, EBULLIENT AIR. Only then does he enter -

INT. WAR CABINET/ 10 DOWNING STREET - DAY

WAR CABINET - MEETING 2.

A tense atmosphere - faces riven with doubt. The CABINET is standing, conferring anxiously with each other.

SECRETARY

Settle down everybody. The Prime Minister is here.

WINSTON enters - and he can see the fear and doubt and nervousness in his CABINET right away.

WINSTON

(trying to be optimistic)
Obviously, we are in a dangerous situation. But I am assured by the French Premiere that while some German tank units have reached the sea, the situation generally seems to be well in hand.

No-one looks at all convinced by this -

ATLEE

Prime Minister. You don't believe that.

HALIFAX

France will fall.

GREENWOOD

Yes.

ATLEE

France will fall. And invasion of this island will follow.

WINSTON changes the subject -

WINSTON

What news from Calais?

IRONSIDE

The Garrison attacked, but was forced back and is now surrounded on all sides. They are being shelled and bombed mercilessly. Casualties are very heavy.

The CABINET all shake their heads - all look to have lost FAITH in WINSTON.

CHAMBERLAIN nods at HALIFAX -

HALIFAX

The question of peace talks -

WINSTON

- We must hold our nerve. Signal only that we are going to fight it out to the end. A peace offer signals our weakness.

(pause)

And even if we were beaten--we should be no worse off than we should be if we were now to abandon the struggle. Let us therefore avoid being dragged down the slippery slope with talk of a negotiated peace.

HALIFAX

Slippery slope? The only -

WINSTON

HALIFAX

-I suspect Germany and Italy - -the only slippery slope -

WINSTON

-want to get us so deeply involved in negotiations that we should be unable to turn back!

HALIFAX

Nonsense! Bastianini informed me-

WINSTON

The approach -

HALIFAX

- The only slippery slope -

WINSTON

DO STOP INTERRUPTING ME WHILE I AM INTERRUPTING YOU!

Silence. But then, a small smile on WINSTON's face -

WINSTON (CONT'D)
 When I chose my War Cabinet I
 took great care to surround
 myself with old rivals. I see I
 may have overdone it.

Only GREENWOOD and ATLEE smile. HALIFAX and CHAMBERLAIN look exasperated.

WINSTON (CONT'D)
 Viscount Halifax--the approach you
 proposed is not only futile, but
 involves us in a deadly danger.

HALIFAX
 Deadly danger...

WINSTON
 Yes!

HALIFAX
 THE DEADLY DANGER HERE, SIR, IS
 THIS ROMANTIC FANTASY OF
 FIGHTING TO THE END!!!

A GHASTLY silence in the ROOM.

HALIFAX (CONT'D)
 "The end." What is "the end" if
 not the destruction of all?

The tension is enormous in the room. The only sound is the faint scratching of the SECRETARIES PEN.

WINSTON
 You have such faith in the
 decency of dictators. When will
 the lesson be learned? When? How
 many more dictators must be
 tolerated, wooed, appeased,
 given immense privileges?!

Silence. WINSTON rises and walks out. HALIFAX alone chases WINSTON...

INT. HALLWAY / 10 DOWNING STREET - DAY

HALIFAX catches up with WINSTON.

HALIFAX
 Winston!
 (pause)
 If you will not allow any
 exploration of a peace deal, you
 will have my resignation.

WINSTON

Don't be absurd. I need you to stay. You know I do.

HALIFAX

You find me a coward. I am no coward. But you, sir, I am shocked at your readiness to sentence another generation of young men to death.

WINSTON

How dare you.

HALIFAX

Was Gallipoli not enough for you?

This hits WINSTON in the solar plexus. Words do not come to his rescue this time. His mouth hangs open...

HALIFAX (CONT'D)

Are these men now dying at Calais not enough for you? Was every alternative explored?

(pause)

The choice is yours, Winston. The hope of peace. Or the promise of ruin.

HALIFAX walks away, defiant - leaving WINSTON, devastated and trapped.

WINSTON is APPROACHED by - the YOUNG TORY MP -

YOUNG TORY MP

Prime Minister. I wonder if we might schedule you to address the Outer Cabinet?

WINSTON walks away, without saying a word.

INT. 10 DOWNING STREET - DAY

HALIFAX meets CHAMBERLAIN in the hall, coming out of the CABINET ROOM.

INT. BATHROOM/ 10 DOWNING ST - DAY

HALIFAX and CHAMBERLAIN confer, conspiratorially, as CHAMBERLAIN shaves with soap and razor.

HALIFAX

I told him. It shook him.

CHAMBERLAIN

I imagine it did.

HALIFAX

I need to know, Neville, that if I resign, you will also. That is critical if we are to trigger a revolt in the chamber. The King will back us. Are you with me?

CHAMBERLAIN doesn't look well, but his frustration bursts out.

CHAMBERLAIN

Good God!--Our troops are dying in the field! Is this the moment to think of resignations?

HALIFAX

Yes! It is! That man is a reckless adventurer--with no plan except mass suicide. Are you with me?

CHAMBERLAIN

I have always been prepared to do the right thing.

(pause)

What a day.

(sadly)

I think the most terrible in our history.

CHAMBERLAIN walks off.

HALIFAX is joined by SIR JOHN SIMON - they WATCH CHAMBERLAIN go...

SIR JOHN SIMON

Will he support you?

HALIFAX

He'll step up.

SIR JOHN SIMON

He is a critical piece in this.

HALIFAX

He's ill.

SIR JOHN SIMON

Is it terminal?

HALIFAX

Isn't it always? Share a car.

HALIFAX and CALDECOTE leave together.

INT. LIBRARY/ NUMBER 10 DOWNING STREET - NIGHT

WINSTON listens to the RADIO BROADCAST:

RADIO ANNOUNCER

"The Admiralty have made an Order requesting all owners of self-propelled pleasure craft, between 30' and 100' in length, to send all particulars to the Admiralty immediately if they have not already been offered or requisitioned"

WINSTON turns off the RADIO, turns to face ELIZABETH LAYTON who sits at her type-writer, waiting. They look at each other.

CHURCHILL

(dictating)

To Brigadier Nicholson, Calais.
Every hour you continue to exist
is of the greatest help to our
forces at Dunkirk. Have the
greatest possible admiration for
your splendid stand.

(swallowing hard)

Your evacuation however--

(faltering, emotional)

--your evacuation will not,
repeat not, take place.

Signed...

ELIZABETH LAYTON types this, her eyes TEARFUL, as -

- CHURCHILL, shaken by his own decision, puts a RECORD on the turn-table..."**KEEP RIGHT ON TILL THE END OF THE ROAD**" by SIR HARRY LAUDER.

CHURCHILL (CONT'D)

(singing to the record)

*Every road through life is a
long long road/ filled with joys
and sorrows too/ And we journey
on, how your heart may yearn for
the things most dear to you/
With wealth and love tis so/ but
onward we must go/ Keep right on
to the end of the road/ keep
right on to the end..."*

He turns back to Ms. LAYTON, only to see her TEARS.

CHURCHILL (CONT'D)

Is my singing that bad? What's
the matter?

(hands his handkerchief)

Here, woman.

(MORE)

CHURCHILL (CONT'D)
(softening)
 What on earth is it?

ELIZABETH LAYTON
 May I go sir?

CHURCHILL
 You may not. Tell what this is about.

She is about to speak her mind, but then changes the subject...

ELIZABETH LAYTON
 It's just--we've heard nothing from France for weeks. No one is allowed to tell us anything.

CHURCHILL
 What would you like to know?

She stares into his eyes -

ELIZABETH LAYTON
 How man men will survive?

He stares at her - it's the great PUBLIC QUESTION. It deserves an answer.

CHURCHILL
 Come with me.

CHURCHILL takes a KEY, unlocks a DOOR. He leads her into the darkness of a mystery passage.

INT. STAIRWELL/ ANNEX/ 10 DOWNING STREET - NIGHT

ELIZABETH descends the concrete steps, into -

INT. WAR ROOMS/ BELOW THE ANNEX - NIGHT

ELIZABETH enters the BUNKER, and sees CHURCHILL, distantly, in the MAP-ROOM. She approaches.

CHURCHILL
(calls)
 Come in.

ELIZABETH LAYTON
 I'm not allowed in the Map Room.

CHURCHILL
 Now you are.

INT. MAP ROOM/ WAR-ROOMS - NIGHT

She enters the MAP ROOM, as WINSTON inspects a table-mounted map of WESTERN EUROPE. The BRITISH FORCES are represented, surrounded by GERMAN troops at the seaside town of DUNKIRK.

CHURCHILL

The German army now controls every French port except Dunkirk here, and Calais here to the south, where the situation is very bad. At both points our troops are encircled. We are still trying to clear Dunkirk harbour of wrecked ships; to gain access to the beachheads and port to effect a rescue operation, but we are being attacked viciously from the air.

ELIZABETH LAYTON

How long before our men can be rescued?

CHURCHILL

Our only hope in Dunkirk is thick cloud cover but--the skies remain clear. Even then I am told we will need a miracle to get even 10% of the men out.

ELIZABETH gasps. Her eyes FLOOD again.

CHURCHILL (CONT'D)

Courage, Miss Layton. Courage.

ELIZABETH LAYTON

How long can--can they last if we don't rescue them?

CHURCHILL

I fear--one day or two.

REACTION, ELIZABETH: Shock. Enter ISMAY. He observes the scene. He and WINSTON exchange looks.

CHURCHILL (CONT'D)

General.

(to ELIZABETH)

That will be all, Miss Layton.

ELIZABETH leaves.

CHURCHILL (CONT'D)

Calais. What news?

ISMAY

Bravely, they are making a last,
and I fear hopeless, stand. They
have retreated to the town's
citadel...

EXT. CALAIS - DAY

The CITADEL rises, ancient and proud above the town, as -
- a GERMAN RECONNAISSANCE PLANE flies a circle over the
CITADEL and lays a CIRCLE OF WHITE SMOKE.

ISMAY (O.S.)

...but are being shelled by the
10th Panzer Division and
artillery. The order, '*every man
for himself*' has been given, but
none can avail themselves of
freedom. Those not already dead,
will soon be captured.

INT. CITADEL/ CALAIS - DAY

BRIGADIER NICHOLSON, surrounded by the DEAD and WOUNDED,
reads the dispatch from CHURCHILL - grim reading. He lowers
it, stricken, afraid, as he hears...the DRONE of 50 GERMAN
BOMBERS rising...coming closer...closer...

EXT. GERMAN BOMBER - DAY

From the POV of a GERMAN bomber, at high altitude -
- the CIRCLE OF SMOKE comes beneath it, and in the middle of
the circle, perfectly targeted far below, the CITADEL.
Into the CIRCLE of SMOKE the BOMBER drops its PAYLOAD.

EXT. CALAIS - DAY

The BOMBS fall on the town, and at last the CITADEL itself
takes a DIRECT HIT. It crumbles, and falls...

INT. TELEPHONE ROOM/ WAR ROOMS - DAY

WINSTON - on the PHONE to ADMIRAL RAMSAY.

WINSTON

Bertie--what has been the
response?

EXT. BATTLEMENTS/ DOVER CASTLE - DAY

ANGLE ON: 5 SMALL CRAFT, arriving at DOVER - a packet boat, a yacht, a fishing boat, a skiff...

ANGLE ON: RAMSAY, talking into a FIELD TELEPHONE, watching from atop DOVER CASTLE.

ADMIRAL RAMSAY

It will take time. It's too soon to judge.

WINSTON

How many boats so far?

ADMIRAL RAMSAY

It will take time.

WINSTON

The request for civilian boats was not a request, Bertie. It's an order!

In frustration, he slams down the PHONE.

EXT. WAR ROOMS - NIGHT

WINSTON emerges, in his coat, reading the NEWS FROM CALAIS.

TIGHT ON: CALAIS FALLEN. NUMBERS OF DEAD OR CAPTURED UNCERTAIN. GENERAL GORT.

He puts the DISPATCH in his POCKET.

A CROWD of ON-LOOKERS are gathered there.

WINSTON, angst-ridden now, gives the (POLITE) **V-FOR-VICTORY** SIGN, (PALM-OUT) but his heart isn't in it. He then walks off, an isolated figure, hunch-backed, his eyes downcast.

EXT. STREETS/ WHITEHALL - NIGHT

WINSTON walks, stops, thinks, smokes, broods - the "BLACK DOG" of his DEPRESSION.

He stops and watches, as - GAS MASKS are DISTRIBUTED FREELY to the PUBLIC. An EMOTIONAL SCENE for him to observe.

INT. LIBRARY/ 10 DOWNING STREET - NIGHT

CLEM, in her DRESSING GOWN, comes looking for WINSTON. She stops by a GRANDFATHER CLOCK - it is chiming **TEN O'CLOCK**.

INT. WINSTON'S STUDY / 10 DOWNING STREET - NIGHT

WINSTON is setting his FOB watch by his MANTLE CLOCK, as she walks in.

CLEM
(worried)
Come to bed.

WINSTON
Cannot.

CLEM
Come.

She turns to exit, but stops when he says -

WINSTON
Perhaps I'm not the right man for
the job?

He is looking at her, FRIGHTENED. She is momentarily lost for words, is WORRIED TOO, and then -

CLEM
Nonsense. Come on. Chin up.
God made you in a very peculiar
way, Winston--and all parts,
even your faults, suit you to
this moment.

He turns away from her, unconsolated - picks up a scotch, and looks out the window.

WINSTON
Leave me, Clemmie.

DEEPLY CONCERNED, she crosses to him - he is standing at a distant window. She takes him by the arm, and turns him.

We see that his EYES are WET with TEARS.

CLEM
Oh no. Come now dearest. To bed
at once. Get some rest. You are
coming with me.

She prizes the CIGAR out of his hand. Puts it in an ash-tray.

WINSTON
Who can sleep--at such a time?
Who could sleep ever again,
while bedless men in hostile
lands clasp empty guns--or
torpedoes rip the bellies of
half-awakened ships.
(MORE)

WINSTON (CONT'D)

Sleep is a crime, leaving undone one act that might avert a disaster even if the aversion be impossible. T'would be a sin the size of a country. All civilisations end, but dear Clem, dear wife, dear Cat, let ours be not like this.

CLEM

Save your words for the morning, when there is a secretary here.

WINSTON

I'll forget them by the morning.

She takes the BRANDY out of his other hand.

CLEM

Nonsense. You never forget a good line, never have, never will.

She has cheered him a little.

WINSTON

Do you remember what I told Nancy Astor?

CLEM

Nancy Astor does.

WINSTON

Quothe she: "If I were married to you, I'd put poison in your coffee."

CLEM

To which you replied?

WINSTON

"If I were married to you, Lady Astor, I'd drink it."

He snorts with LAUGHTER.

WINSTON (CONT'D)

Showed her.

CLEM

And I remember what she said to you.

WINSTON

What?

CLEM

"Shuttup you fat old fool."

She leads him out -

INT. CLEM'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

CLEM is already asleep, as WINSTON slips into her SINGLE BED, and lies there, his eyes OPEN, his back to her, UNABLE to SLEEP, as she puts one arm around him.

EXT. BUCKINGHAM PALACE - DAY

INSERT TITLE: **MONDAY, MAY 27**

Into the PALACE GATES turns a BLACK SHINY CAR. When it stops WINSTON gets out of it.

INT. BUCKINGHAM PALACE - DAY

WINSTON is lead by an EQUERRY through the gilded rooms.

INT. BUCKINGHAM PALACE - DAY

WINSTON and the KING.

GEORGE VI
A scotch and soda?

WINSTON
Never at this hour.

The KING nods, and goes to his drinks TROLLEY anyway.

GEORGE VI
A single, or a double?

WINSTON
Double.

The KING's children, ELIZABETH (14) and MARGARET (10) crash through the room, chasing a DOG, laughing.

GEORGE VI
Girls! Out--of here! At--at once!

(pours drinks)
How do you manage drinking during the day?

WINSTON
Practice.

GEORGE VI
I could never function.

WINSTON

I believe I have taken more out of alcohol than alcohol has ever taken out of me.

GEORGE VI

Thankyou. For coming.
I know we are scheduled to-to-to meet...

WINSTON

- tomorrow -

GEORGE VI

...but--there is something r-r-rather pressing I should like to discuss with you.

(pause)

I have been asked--if plans should be drawn--to evacuate my f-family and I--to Canada. I wish to know your opinion.

WINSTON

My opinion? My opinion would be that you must do what you felt was right for yourself, your family, and for the country. Your survival is paramount. Prime Ministers--we seem to come and go at an astonishing rate--and I should expect, if bombs are to rain down on us, for that rate to only increase.

KING GEORGE VI

So you would stay? Even if the bombardment becomes intense?

WINSTON

I would.

GEORGE nods - realising that therefore he should follow this lead. WINSTON sees this, and tries to make it easier on the KING -

WINSTON (CONT'D)

But you see, I have eager replacements in the wings. Very eager. Where as you, sire, you stand alone.

GEORGE VI

Your--p-position in parliament, I hear, is not strong.

WINSTON

My party resents how Chamberlain was pushed aside. And many others doubt me. You might say I was not a popular choice.

The KING nods - he himself resented WINSTON - and he turns away briefly, in embarrassment.

WINSTON (CONT'D)

They want Halifax still. But why get rid of the organ grinder and replace him with the monkey?

The KING's eyes widen - such audacity.

GEORGE VI

Viscount Halifax is a close personal friend of mine.

WINSTON retreats -

WINSTON

I am unwanted. Unappreciated.

GEORGE VI

Perhaps--it is because--you scare people.

WINSTON

Who?!

GEORGE VI

You scare me.

WINSTON

(scarily)

What?! What nonsense!
What could be scary about me?

GEORGE VI

One never knows what is going to come out of your mouth next. Something that w-will flatter--or wound.

WINSTON

My emotions are unbridled.

GEORGE VI

And your judgements.

WINSTON

(stunned)

Are you--telling me off, sire?

GEORGE VI

I think perhaps--I am.

They stare at each other.

WINSTON

My father was the last to speak
to me in this fashion.

(beat)

Perhaps Mother.

(beat)

And Halifax of course.

GEORGE VI

Were you close--to your parents?

WINSTON

My mother was glamorous, but
distant. My father--ill-
tempered.

GEORGE VI

How f-familiar that sounds.

WINSTON

I had a speech impediment too,
you know?

GEORGE VI

I envy your use of--the past
tense.

WINSTON

I have never been forgiven the
Gallipoli campaign. They fear I
am repeating the same mistake.

KING GEORGE VI

That was another war, another
time.

WINSTON

Same commander. And now you can
add the dead of Calais. My
decision. My fault.

GEORGE VI

Stop this. Really. It's quite
unseemly. We must look f-
forward. Yes?

WINSTON

Your majesty.

They have bonded. WINSTON exits. The KING goes to the window,
looks up into the sky, searching it for enemy planes.

INT. CORRIDOR/ WAR ROOMS - DAY

WINSTON is in a BLACK MOOD. He walks through the MEN and WOMEN barking orders, en route to his OFFICE, but he looks HAUNTED now, has lost his earlier ZEST. He stops before ELIZABETH LAYTON - looks into her eyes. She can see the DOUBT, the SADNESS, the PAIN.

WINSTON
Miss Layton.

ELIZABETH LAYTON
Sir.

WINSTON
Reach--I need to reach--speak with--
Ramsay.

ELIZABETH LAYTON
Ramsay, sir?

WINSTON
Admiral Ramsay. Dover. And--and
summon the--the uh--the War
Cabinet for 10.30. Thank you.

She watches him WALK off, a LONELY ISOLATED figure.

A MESSENGER rushes by her, pursuing WINSTON with a COMMUNIQUE. He salutes. WINSTON salutes back.

MESSENGER
Sir!

WINSTON
What is it?

MESSANGER
Sir-from Lord Gort, in France.

WINSTON reads the message -- his EYES WIDEN.

WINSTON
God's teeth...

He checks his FOB-WATCH, rises and walks away.

INT. CORRIDOR/ WAR ROOMS - DAY

WINSTON and ISMAY talk as they walk down the CORRIDOR, past the SWITCHBOARD OPERATORS, past the SECRETARIES, past the POWER STATION -

ISMAY
Belgium has fallen. They will
surrender at midnight.

WINSTON

Then the French will soon follow suit.

ISMAY

Also. The German offensive on Dunkirk now has their long-range guns shelling any of our ships attempting to reach our men. The Luftwaffe rules the sky over the beaches, filling all with fear.

INT. MAP ROOM/ WAR ROOMS - CONTINUOUS

PRESENT: HALIFAX and ATLEE the CHIEFS OF STAFF examine the map, but look up as WINSTON and ISMAY enter.

ATLEE

(to WINSTON)

Can we not send up more of our planes to protect the men on the beaches?

WINSTON

The Air Staff feel we need to keep our planes safe for a future defence of this country. I agree.

A bitter silence -

HALIFAX

Sir--I do not think we can delay another hour our approach to Mussolini on the subject of a negotiated settlement.

WINSTON

Surrender. Say the word! Not settlement, negotiated surrender!

(IGNORING THIS)

Dunkirk Harbour? Field Marshall?

IRONSIDE

We are clearing the harbour entrance but are suffering losses. We are engaged in heavy fighting to hold the German advance but again, heavy losses.

HALIFAX is impatient - anxious to return to the subject of peace talks.

They all stare at the map.

IRONSIDE (CONT'D)

I believe we must prepare for the
imminent invasion of our islands.

WINSTON snaps a look of distress at IRONSIDE and the FIELD
MARSHALL hands him a REPORT.

REACTION: HALIFAX, his eyes widen, his chin rises - the moment
is at hand.

INT. BUCKINGHAM PALACE - DAY

WINSTON tells KING GEORGE VI. The KING turns away - looks
out the window. WINSTON somberly watches the reaction of the
KING.

WINSTON

I therefore must inform you that
it is highly probable that
Germany is now setting the stage
for delivering a full scale
attack on Britain.
The Joint Chiefs are not
satisfied, from the military
point of view, that in the face
of this danger the country has
been sufficiently warned, or
adequately organised, to meet
the threat on which the fate of
our land, and Empire, may
depend.

Silence from the TROUBLED KING. WINSTON exits.

INT. CONSERVATIVE PARTY HEADQUARTERS - DAY

HALIFAX and the PLOTTERS.

SIR JOHN SIMON

This is the moment. You must
draw agreement from him today.

HALIFAX

I will. He has nowhere left to
run--no good news behind which
he can hide.

SIR JOHN SIMON

We have him!

HALIFAX

The War Cabinet is behind me on
this. Excuse me, we meet again in
twenty minutes.

SIR JOHN SIMON
Today, Edward. Grasp it today.

HALIFAX nods and exits.

INT. WAR CABINET/ 10 DOWNING STREET - DAY

WAR CABINET - MEETING 3

PRESENT: The WAR CABINET plus IRONSIDE, ISMAY, CODOGAN and EDEN.

ANGLE ON: HALIFAX, his gaze fixed hotly on WINSTON, as -

IRONSIDE
(to ADJUTANT)
Lights.

The ADJUTANT turns off the lights.

ON FILM: a FILM REEL is projected onto a SCREEN.

We see images of GERMAN SPEED BOATS.

We see the NAZI leadership, holding maps, pointing out to sea toward Britain...

We see a giant LONG-RANGE SUPER CANON being revealed by GERMAN soldiers. Over this -

IRONSIDE (CONT'D)
We have received reports that the most probable method of attack, which Germany might employ against this country, is a large fleet of fast motor boats, possibly up to 200, carrying 100 men apiece to carry out a seaborne raid on a large scale. By this means we consider that a considerable force of the enemy could be landed at many points on the coast simultaneously with air-borne raids inland.

LIGHTS back on -

IRONSIDE (CONT'D)
We do not consider that by naval or air action we could prevent such a landing.

HALIFAX
Could you repeat that?

HALIFAX turns to look hard at WINSTON.

IRONSIDE

We do not consider that by naval or
air action we could prevent
such a landing.

The shock registers on all the faces. Hold on ANTHONY EDEN, as
he lowers his HEAD.

IRONSIDE (CONT'D)

We recommend that the country
should be warned and roused to the
imminent danger, and that all
labour facilities required to put
the beaches on the Yorkshire Coast,
in East Anglia, on the South East
and South coast, as far as
Newhaven, in a state of defence
should be mobilised without a
moment's delay.

Silence, as IRONSIDE sits.

WINSTON

Thank you--Field Marshall. Let all
preparations be made.

Silence. Lost looks. General state of high anxiety.

HALIFAX

I have some better news. The
Foreign Office--has received word
from the Italian Embassy in London
that Italy is prepared to mediate a
resolution between Britain, its
Allies, and Germany.

WINSTON

(sunk by the news)
Perhaps--then--

The CABINET waits on the final INEVITABLE words -

WINSTON (CONT'D)

--the time for such an offer
from us is -

HALIFAX nods at CHAMBERLAIN - success, surely! But WINSTON still
can't speak the words they ache to hear.

WINSTON (CONT'D)

- is when Germany has made an
unsuccessful attempt to invade this
country.

IRONSIDE

Unsuccessful?

HALIFAX

You sir are failing to grasp the realities of how precarious our position is! Terms must be struck now--while we are at least perceived to be a threat. Our weakness becomes more obvious to them by the hour.

Silence. WINSTON has no room left in which to move. ALL FACES examine his.

WINSTON looks finally to ANTHONY EDEN - his staunchest supporter.

EDEN

I agree with Viscount Halifax.

WINSTON

Even you?

UTTERLY ISOLATED - WINSTON has no choice now.

WINSTON (CONT'D)

Then...

(*pause*)

Then it seems...

(*pause*)

...we have no choice but to at least consider this path.

(*pause*)

I would not join France in asking for terms, but... if I were told what the terms were, then I would be prepared to consider them.

HALIFAX

Thankyou. Prime Minister.

CHAMBERLAIN nods at HALIFAX. They have prevailed.

HALIFAX (CONT'D)

The Foreign Office shall prepare a draft memorandum at once. We can present it to you within the hour.

WINSTON

In the meantime--I have a pre-arranged meeting of great import.

WINSTON rises and escapes again, leaving HALIFAX and CHAMBERLAIN stunned.

CHAMBERLAIN

I take it the meeting has been adjourned?

HALIFAX rises and goes after WINSTON.

EXT. HALLWAY/ WAR CABINET/ 10 DOWNING STREET - DAY

HALIFAX catches up with WINSTON.

HALIFAX

Winston!

WINSTON turns, holding in emotion.

HALIFAX is proud of himself, and of WINSTON - he's humming with pride.

HALIFAX (CONT'D)

You're not going to regret this.

WINSTON

The public cannot find out. Just imagine if our peace offer is rejected? Where will we be then?

HALIFAX

I look forward to a wonderful working relationship with you from here forward.

WINSTON

(bitterly)

The aristocrats panicked.

No concession from HALIFAX on this point.

WINSTON (CONT'D)

When I sign this--if I sign this--the world falls under Nazi rule.

HALIFAX

You're going to be well supported now. By the whole party.

WINSTON

I fear--at what cost.

WINSTON exits, in a TERRIBLE MOOD.

HALIFAX is joined by CHAMBERLAIN.

HALIFAX

How long before we get a response from Hitler?

CHAMBERLAIN

I would expect Mussolini to pass on our offer to Berlin immediately, once wording has been ratified.

(brooding)

(MORE)

CHAMBERLAIN (CONT'D)

Then--by this decision, Hitler
has won. He has won the war.
Evil has triumphed.

HALIFAX

Hitler will make his demands--there
will be painful concessions, we
know not how many--but our towns
will have been saved--our way of
life left intact--our people not
shunted in their tens of thousands
to the slaughterhouse!

HALIFAX, full of moral certainty, exits.

EXT. 10 DOWNING STREET - DAY

WINSTON emerges on to the street, where a lone PHOTOGRAPHER
calls out -

PHOTOGRAPHER

Mr Churchill! One picture, one
picture, come on sir, one
picture! How about a smile,
Prime Minister?

WINSTON steps toward him, and then DELIBERATELY gives the
RUDE VERSION of the **V-FOR-VICTORY** sign (PALM-INWARD). He then
gets into his CAR, and is driven away.

INT. BATHROOM/ 10 DOWNING ST - DAY

CHAMBERLAIN, alone, steadies himself against a wall - his health
is fading. He takes out a PILL and swallows it, taking water
from the TAP and looking at himself in the mirror.

EXT. THE US EMBASSY/ LONDON - DAY

The US FLAG flies over the embassy, as WINSTON arrives by CAR.

INT. US EMBASSY/ LONDON - DAY

WINSTON crosses the LOBBY.

INT. AMBASSADOR'S OFFICE/ US EMBASSY/ LONDON - DAY

AMBASSADOR JOSEPH KENNEDY is listening to the BBC NEWS on a
RADIO that sits on an EARLY TV (not switched on). The radio
report is a wildly inaccurate one - suggesting France and
Belgium are repelling the German invaders. Clearly the British
public have not been told the full truth and are many days
behind actual events. It ends with a brief RECORDING of HITLER,
in full dictator mode, ranting to his massed troops.

A MAJOR DOMO enters, ahead of WINSTON.

MAJOR DOMO
Prime Minister Churchill!

WINSTON enters, but it doesn't get much reaction from KENNEDY, who seems more interested in the RADIO REPORT.

KENNEDY
Mr Churchill--uh--welcome--have a seat.

WINSTON waits for KENNEDY's attention, as KENNEDY turns off the RADIO SET. Finally KENNEDY turns and smiles -

KENNEDY (CONT'D)
And may I say, on behalf of myself, and President Roosevelt, and the American people, congratulations on your elevation to the premiere-ship.

KENNEDY shakes WINSTON's hand.

WINSTON
How-how are your stocks doing?

KENNEDY
Oh--Oh--ha!ha!--I'm out of the market, for the present. It's turned bear. The key to the stock market is knowing when to be in, and when to be out. I'm out. And staying out.

WINSTON nods - detecting his not-so hidden meaning.

WINSTON
But you are famous, are you not, for making money on a falling market? Weren't you once dubbed the Great Bear of Wall Street?

KENNEDY
I learned my lessons.
How's your luck at the gaming tables?

WINSTON
I gamble now with armies--it would seem.

KENNEDY
So--Mr Churchill, I doubt the stock market is really the reason you've come to see me.

WINSTON

The stock of your ally.

KENNEDY

Ahh-- well.

(pause)

The BBC news--they seem to think events in Europe are swinging your way. Wonderful if true.

WINSTON

There is considerable reason for optimism. Much bravery is being demonstrated.

KENNEDY

What a relief. Because the military reports I saw this morning paint a different picture.

WINSTON

We are in constant contact with -

KENNEDY

Belgium?

(pause)

Your forces cornered at Dunkirk?

(pause)

How can the United States help you, Mr Churchill?

WINSTON

We are not asking for help.

KENNEDY

I understand. However--

(he paces)

--Nazi Germany is militarily invincible. France is about to be transformed from ally against Hitler into a launching point for the Luftwaffe and Wehrmacht. The Third Reich will unleash cruel bombardment on the English population centers, followed by an invasion. Your armies in France are in tatters. Democracy?--we have to be frank--it's finished here.

(pause)

And something even you may not know yet. Our Ambassador in Rome says the Italian entry into the war, on the side of the fascists, is now a certainty.

WINSTON tries not to react to his latest blow.

KENNEDY (CONT'D)

Correct me if I have any of this wrong.

WINSTON

I want to know if you would stand by and watch us fall?

(no response from KENNEDY)

If democracy is finished here, then your democracy will be next.

(no response from KENNEDY)

You know, you folks owe me. My mother's American.

(no response)

And in 1931, one of your New York taxi cabs ran me over, almost killed me. I never prosecuted.

KENNEDY

That's some credit you have. But forget planes. Ships. Troops. The President wants a third term and there's no stomach in the American people for another war.

WINSTON

We want nothing for ourselves. We are fighting in the defence of world liberty against -

KENNEDY

That's bunk. "Fighting in the defence of world liberty"? You're fighting for survival.

My advice? Prepare your people.

(pause)

Perhaps even alert the BBC.

(pause)

I'm sorry. I cannot couch things with your sensitivity for language.

WINSTON rises to go - appalled.

WINSTON

When do you fly out? I'm sure London will soon be too dangerous for you.

KENNEDY

No, I'm staying, but obviously not in London. The countryside.

WINSTON is less than impressed with this announcement.

KENNEDY (CONT'D)
 We're with you in spirit. But I
 guess, in the end, Fascism and
 Germany has gotta be preferable to
 Communism and Russia, right?

WINSTON glares at KENNEDY.

WINSTON
 You were always an appeaser--happy
 to feed the crocodile, hoping it
 will eat you last.

KENNEDY
 I believe History will be kind to
 you.

WINSTON
 Yes it will--for I intend to write
 it.

WINSTON glares and exits.

INT. CAR - DAY

WINSTON gets inside, outside the US EMBASSY.

DRIVER
 Sir?
(silence)
 Sir?

WINSTON
 Home. To Chartwell.

INT. CHARTWELL (WINSTON'S COUNTRY HOME) - DAY

The COUNTRY FURNITURE is covered in SHEETS. CLEM crosses the
 ROOMS, taking stock of his ABANDONED LIFE. Then she hears
 WINSTON'S VOICE, outside, shouting: "Away!"

She rushes to the WINDOW...

EXT. POND/ CHARTWELL (WINSTON COUNTRY HOME) - DAY

WINSTON'S shadow crosses the LAWN, as he slowly approaches
 the POND...but then he raises his WALKING STICK and starts to
 RUN, to RUN, toward -

...two FOXES, bent over something on the BANKS of the LAKE.

WINSTON
(charging into battle)
 AAAhhHHHHHHHH!!!!!!!

The FOXES bolt away.

WINSTON arrives, puffing, at the water's edge to find -

- SIX DEAD BLACK SWANS. Bloodied and mangled...

He stands, looking down at them, and then crouches, and picks up one of the broken-necked creatures...

...his EYES FILL WITH TEARS.

And then - ONE BLACK SWAN swims into VIEW. A SURVIVOR. The LAST BLACK SWAN.

He looks at it, and fumbling in his pocket for feed, starts to throw bread to the SWAN.

WINSTON (CONT'D)

There you are--there you are,
beautiful--one left--one left...

CLEM

Winston?

CLEM crosses the lawn toward him.

WINSTON

The swans.

CLEM

What happened?

WINSTON

Foxes.

CLEM

Oh no.

WINSTON picks up a SINGLE BLACK FEATHER, then heads up to the SHUTTERED HOUSE with CLEM, arm in arm.

INT. BUCKINGHAM PALACE - NIGHT

KING GEORGE appears on the BALCONY, and looks down the MALL, as STREET LIGHTS are one by one turned off. The QUEEN joins him.

GEORGE VI

I was--ju--just imagining never
standing--here again. Perhaps
because I am no longer alive, or--
or because the palace itself--
is gone.

(shakes his head)

An unbroken royal line back to
the Middle Ages.

QUEEN

Canada. We must decide. You
could rule in exile.

GEORGE VI

Really? Is that our fate?

(pause)

Look. They're turning off the
lights.

(pause)

You know what? I feel angry. In
this moment I have j-just
realised--I feel bloody angry.

The QUEEN studies him, as he studies the MALL.

INT. WINSTON'S OFFICE / WAR ROOMS - NIGHT

A SUBSTITUTE TYPIST (NOT ELIZABETH LAYTON) waits, her fingers at
the ready. She sneaks a glance at her WATCH - it is 1.30!

WINSTON is in a BLACK MOOD. He struggles to DICTATE a SPEECH...

WINSTON

I have...come to...to wonder...
...whether it was part of my
duty...to consider entering into
negotiations with...

*(unable to speak the
dreaded name)*

...That Man...

*(pours himself a SCOTCH,
and mumbles to himself)*

...that gangster--no, tyrant--
that monster of wickedness, that
butcher--monstrous savage!--that
that bloodthirsty guttersnipe--
no, no, that housepainter!!!
House-painter. That's good.
Where were we?

The SUBSTITUTE TYPIST is in a PANIC, she didn't understand what
he has just said.

WINSTON, hearing no sound of typing, turns -

WINSTON (CONT'D)

Well? Don't just sit there looking
like an envelope without any
address on it. Type!

SUBSTITUTE TYPIST

I did not understand you, sir.

WINSTON

Did not understand me? Why-ever
not? Are you an idiot?

SUBSTITUTE TYPIST

You were--

WINSTON

Were?

Pause.

SUBSTITUTE TYPIST

--mumbling.

WINSTON

Mumbling?!

He walks up to her - his eyes blazing.

WINSTON (CONT'D)

You said 'mumbling', girl?

(mumbling)

Mumbling...

(drinks)

It's no good. It's no good! It's no good.

(drinks)

They won't come. The words. Just when I have never needed them more.

SUBSTITUTE TYPIST

They will come sir.

He turns and looks at her.

SUBSTITUTE TYPIST (CONT'D)

No one can put words together like you. No one.

WINSTON

Where is Miss Layton?

SUBSTITUTE TYPIST

Oh. Miss Layton has been granted leave.

WINSTON

Why? She's unwell?

SUBSTITUTE TYPIST

No. It's her brother. She received word he was killed. At Dunkirk.

This rocks WINSTON.

SUBSTITUTE TYPIST (CONT'D)

Shall we continue, sir?

(no reply)

Sir?

LONG SILENCE, as WINSTON really struggles to recover from this sad news.

Finally -

SUBSTITUTE TYPIST (CONT'D)

*"Arm yourselves, and be ye men
of valour, and be in readiness
for the conflict; for it is
better for us to perish in
battle than to look upon the
outrage of our nation and our
altar."*

During this recitation, WINSTON slowly turns and faces her.

SUBSTITUTE TYPIST (CONT'D)

You recited it during your first
radio speech. My Dad's favourite
poem.

WINSTON

Thank you.
(pause)
Thank you, Elizabeth.

SUBSTITUTE TYPIST

Julia.

WINSTON

Where were we? Read back what
you have.

SUBSTITUTE TYPIST

"I have thought carefully in these
last days..."

WINSTON has been restored by her KIND WORDS, and his own words
now flow again.

SUBSTITUTE TYPIST (CONT'D)

"...whether it was my duty--to
consider entering into peace
negotiations with--that man?..."

WINSTON ponders his next line -

EXT. ROOF TOP/ DEFENCE MINISTRY - NIGHT

WINSTON emerges on to the ROOF-TOP of the building, and
proceeds to LIGHT UP a CIGAR as he takes in the CLEAR NIGHT
SKY above him.

He then hears a DRONE... it is a SINGLE SPITFIRE on NIGHT
PATROL. It comes into view, slowly crossing the sky.

WINSTON watches this GHOSTLY SIGHT come and go. The little plane looks very small in such a big expanse of sky...

His eyes are WET with TEARS, as he ANGRILY GRINDS OUT his CIGAR.

INT. LIBRARY/ NUMBER 10 DOWNING STREET - NIGHT

WINSTON re-enters the room by a SIDE-DOOR. He is in a state. He looks at the OIL PAINTING he was working on..

...he picks up his BRUSH and SMEARS the STILL WET OIL PAINT, thus SLOWLY, DELIBERATELY DESTROYING the image of the BLACK SWANS - as we hear -

- MUFFLED VOICES (off).

CLEM enters by the MAIN DOOR.

CLEM

Dear--there is someone to see you?

WINSTON

At this hour?

CLEM

They phoned. I said your days were so full that tonight might be a good time.

WINSTON

Tonight? Are you mad? If its one of your family I have no interest whatsoever in -

CLEM

It's the King. Ssshhhh.

WINSTON

(lowering voice)
Which King? Our King? The King?

CLEM

The very same.

WINSTON

The King? Here?

CLEM

If it isn't him, it's a wonderful impersonation.

WINSTON looks DISHEVELLED, his suit RUMPLED. A Mess. He makes a small effort to tuck in a shirt.

KING GEORGE VI enters - the most 'proper' man in Europe. The height of manners and decorum. Wears an IMPECCABLE SUIT.

KING GEORGE VI
Mr Churchill--I hope you can for-
-give the late hour b-but your
wife thought tonight would be an
good time.

WINSTON goes to him. They shake hands.

WINSTON
Well, I believe it is already
Tuesday. Perhaps this hour will
become customary.

KING GEORGE VI
Shall we sit?

They go toward the OPEN FIRE, and two FIRESIDE CHAIRS.

WINSTON
Something to drink?

KING GEORGE VI
A small brandy perhaps.

As WINSTON fixes it...

WINSTON
A good friend. It has warmed
when little else could.

KING GEORGE VI
I received a visit...

WINSTON
From?

KING GEORGE VI
Viscount Halifax.
(beat)
It appears--the a--p-prospect of
a--a peace deal with Hitler--has
increased dra-dra-dramatically.

WINSTON goes pale at the thought, but has no choice...

WINSTON
Later today I will to address
The House. I am obliged to think
we must sue for peace terms--but
I dread what these will be. The
war cabinet is drafting a letter
to Mussolini, asking him to
broker talks with Herr Hitler.

GEORGE VI rises, goes to WINSTON's OBLITERATED PAINTING, picks it up, inspects it - a BLACK MESS, a CHAOS.

GEORGE VI
Then Halifax was correct.

WINSTON
I should like to know your mind.

GEORGE VI
My mind. It would be helpful to know yours first.

GEORGE puts the PAINTING back down.

WINSTON
As a student of history, nations which go down fighting rise again, but those which surrender tamely are finished.

GEORGE VI
Belgium?

WINSTON
Collapsed.

GEORGE VI
Norway -

WINSTON
Holland. France any hour--our old friend has lost the will to fight.

After a hard silence (in which WINSTON puts down his BRANDY)

GEORGE VI
And the mood of parliament?

WINSTON
Fear. Panic. Especially among the Landed.

GEORGE VI
And how--how do you feel--in yourself?

WINSTON
Feel?

GEORGE VI
Yes. In yourself.

WINSTON

Well, I--your majesty... *(as if never asked such a question)*...I am conscious of a profound sense of-- relief.

The KING reacts with surprise.

GEORGE VI

Relief?

WINSTON

I feel like--I am walking with destiny, that all my past life had been but a preparation for this hour, and this trial.

The KING, impressed and intrigued by this speech, picks up WINSTON'S BRANDY and gives it back to him.

WINSTON (CONT'D)

Thank you.

GEORGE VI

And are you not afraid? At all?

WINSTON

Some say I relish war. I do not. But I relish the challenge of war. I will not deny it.

GEORGE VI, nods, even more IMPRESSED now - in AWE.

WINSTON (CONT'D)

Our defeat in France is the most crushing in the history of the Empire. I have no support in the War Cabinet for a campaign of resistance.

Finally - GEORGE has heard what he has wanted to hear, and so makes his pledge -

GEORGE VI

You have my support.

WINSTON cannot believe his ears -

WINSTON

Your support?

GEORGE VI

You have my support.

(pause)

I must confess, I had some reservations about you at-at first.

(MORE)

GEORGE VI (CONT'D)

And while some in this country might have dreaded your appointment, none dreaded it like Adolph Hitler. Were this all you had to offer, and it is by far not, it would be enough--for me.

WINSTON - speechless.

GEORGE VI (CONT'D)

For whoever can strike fear into that brute heart, is worthy of all our trust. We shall work together. You shall have my support. At any hour.

(smiles)

Beat the buggers.

WINSTON

Victory may be beyond us, but I wish to spare us defeat.

GEORGE VI

You--you once gave me advice. Perhaps I can g-give you some. Something I have learned to do, when I doubt myself--Go to the people. Speak to the people. Let them instruct you. Quite silently, they usually do.

WINSTON

And say what? What should I tell them?

GEORGE VI

The truth. Un--varnished. R-reveal the full scale of the darkness we all face. The stark odds. It must be--be their decision too. It is their houses--their sons and daughters--their futures. If this country is to fall, do not hide it from them now. If invasion is imminent, if our troops in France are lost, they must be prepared.

WINSTON

I will speak to parliament, but without support in my own party, I must sue for peace.

GEORGE VI
It's a pity I cannot command
everyone to support you. Blame
the Magna Carta.

WINSTON chuckles - touched further.

WINSTON
We should have need of such an
absolute monarch now.

GEORGE VI
Thank you.

They smile ANXIOUSLY, emotionally. The KING starts to put his
COAT back on, buttoning the many buttons.

GEORGE VI (CONT'D)
If the enemy comes, when will it
be?
(*pause*)
How will they come?

WINSTON
By sea. By air. The Chiefs of
Staff see no reasons why the
German High command would delay
taking such an invasion.

GEORGE VI
It could be any day?

WINSTON
Or hour.

GEORGE VI
Holy God.

WINSTON
Oh, I was asked again if I
thought you and your family
would wish to evacuate to
Canada. I said I did not think
you would wish to go.

GEORGE VI
You spoke correctly.

They shake hands.

GEORGE VI (CONT'D)
Five years ago, you warned us
this day was coming. We failed
to listen to you.
(*sad smile*)
Lift us up, Mr Churchill.

WINSTON's old eyes water -

WINSTON

On certain matters I have few
people with whom I can talk
frankly.

GEORGE VI

I-I know the feeling. *(pause)*
Perhaps we have each other?

WINSTON

I no longer scare you, I hope.

GEORGE VI

Only a little. I can cope.

WINSTON

Yes you can. Your majesty.

GEORGE VI

Mr Churchill.

(beat)

And your button is undone.

WINSTON

My - ?

GEORGE VI

Buttons. Plural.

WINSTON looks down. His fly is undone. He hastily buttons it.

WINSTON

You found me at home.

GEORGE VI

Indeed.

INT. HALLWAY/ 10 DOWNING STREET - NIGHT

CLEM shows the KING to the door.

KING GEORGE VI

I do apologise.

CLEM

He will have drawn strength from
your visit. He has no one.

The KING is touched by this.

KING GEORGE VI

Really?

(reflects)

Good night.

CLEM

Your majesty.

KING GEORGE VI
(opens door, stops-)
 Is it true he's never ridden the
 Underground?

CLEM
 Yes.

KING GEORGE VI
 He should. It's perfectly
 acceptable.

Exit the KING.

REACTION CLEM: as she turns to face her husband's study -
 Anxious.

She returns to WINSTON...

MONTAGE OF:

A) A LONE HOWITZER being prepared on the CLIFFS OF DOVER by
 a BRITISH SOLDIER. It looks insufficient to the task.

INSERT CARDS: **ENGLISH COAST TUESDAY, MAY 28**

B) TWO QUIET SOLDIERS unroll single coil of BARBED WIRE on
 an ENGLISH BEACH. Again, it looks insufficient.

C) NEW RECRUITS, not in UNIFORM, train with BROOM HANDLES
 instead of guns.

D) A BRITISH SOLDIER, with BINOCULARS, looks out over the sea
 toward FRANCE.

EXT. RAMSGATE HARBOUR - DAY

WINSTON and ADMIRAL RAMSAY inspect...

...over 800 SMALL boats, the "LITTLE SHIPS", ARRIVING or
 MOORED. NAVAL officers and VOLUNTEERS board them. A RAG-TAG
 ARMADA. WINSTON, on the DOCKS, observes the MAGNIFICENT
 ASSEMBLY of this FLOTILLA of SMALL CRAFT.

RAMSAY
 We are ready. More or less.

WINSTON smiles, proud, moved - he CLAPS RAMSAY on the back.

WINSTON
 Well done. How many, Bertie?

RAMSAY
 In total--860 vessels. The
 biggest civilian fleet ever
 assembled.

WINSTON
May God watch over them all.

RAMSAY
Operation Dynamo waits upon your
command...

INT. IRONSIDE'S OFFICE/ WAR ROOMS - DAY

IRONSIDE looks up as WINSTON enters -

WINSTON
How many fighter planes can we
spare in support of Dynamo?

IRONSIDE
None.

WINSTON's sharp look tells IRONSIDE this is going to change!

INT. OFFICE/ 10 DOWNING STREET - DAY

WINSTON enters via the DOOR down to the WAR-ROOMS. He finds CLEM listening to an ADDRESS by HITLER on the radio. She WRITES her translation down on a NOTEPAD.

WINSTON stands and watches her.

WINSTON
What's he saying now?

CLEM
He's praising you. *"Only Mr Churchill dares to speak the truth: that Britain's goal is the destruction of Germany, the extinction of the German people."*

WINSTON
He made the same speech in January. He's out of ammo.

CLEM
Any news?

WINSTON
Still trying to write my own speech for the House. On the state of the war. Can't do it. Head is empty. Words won't come.

CLEM

Re-use an old one.
You've made so many speeches, no-one will know if you pinch a bit from here, a bit from there.

WINSTON

This is different. I must speak on the subject of defeat. Of humiliation. Of supplication. Of surrender. Of slavery.

(beat)

I have no vocabulary at all for such subjects. The words go dead. I am unable to write anything without conviction.

CLEM

Not an ideal quality in a politician.

WINSTON drifts off into his own thoughts.

CLEM (CONT'D)

Winston!

WINSTON

Hmmmm?

CLEM

Make peace--If war will fail make peace. Weigh the facts. Be so very careful.

WINSTON stares at CLEM - FEAR showing for the first time.

WINSTON

Ohhh Clem--I don't know what to do.

CLEM

That's good.

(straightening his suit)

This is a suitable moment for doubt. Those who never change their minds never change anything. Remember?

INT. CAR - DAY

WINSTON is being driven through LONDON. He looks out at the ordinary citizens.

The CAR stops at an intersection.

DIRECTOR

Sir?

(pause)

Where to? Sir?

The DRIVER hears the car door slam. He turns, looks back, WINSTON has jumped out of his car.

EXT. CAR/ LONDON STREET - DAY

The DRIVER gets out and looks down the road.

His POV of WINSTON walking swiftly away.

EXT. LONDON STREETS - DAY

As WINSTON walks (his HAT lowered so as to be not RECOGNISED) his CAR follows at walking speed, a few yards behind him, until -

- WINSTON enters, by a PEDESTRIAN GATE, ST JAMES PARK, as the GATE itself is being removed and set on the back of a TRUCK full of GATES (STEEL commandeered for the war effort.)

EXT. ST JAMES PARK - DAY

WINSTON sits on a park bench - deep in thought. As seen from behind the iconic man, short, coated, wearing his hat, could be any old man.

WINSTON feels something in his pocket. He takes it out. It's the BLACK FEATHER. Looks at it, turns it in his fingers. He then takes off his hat and tucks the feather into the BAND on his HAT, so that it sticks up like a SOLDIER's PLUME.

He then LOOKS UP--searching the SKY for planes.

INT. 10 DOWNING STREET - DAY

PRIVATE SECRETARY 1

What do you mean "he walked away"?
The War Cabinet is waiting for him.

DIRECTOR

He entered St James Park.

PRIVATE SECRETARY 1

Then I suggest you return to St
James Park!

The DRIVER departs, as the PRIVATE SECRETARY 1 picks up a TELEPHONE.

PRIVATE SECRETARY 1 (CONT'D)
(into PHONE)
He's gone missing!

EXT. ST JAMES PARK UNDERGROUND - DAY

WINSTON stops outside the UNDERGROUND, gets an idea, and enters, goes down the steps.

INT. ST JAMES PARK UNDERGROUND - DAY

As WINSTON studies the UNDERGROUND MAP, trying to work it out, he is RECOGNISED for the FIRST TIME.

A great commotion starts, as people watch respectfully their PRIME MINISTER trying to work out how to use the TUBE.

ANGLE ON: WINSTON, studying the MAP, lighting a CIGAR, as -
- a YOUNG GIRL stands beside him. She looks at the MAP too.
WINSTON notices her.

WINSTON
Do you know how to use this thing?

YOUNG GIRL
Yes sir.

WINSTON
So--tell me--how do I get to
Westminster?

YOUNG GIRL
Westminster? Um, the District Line.
East. One stop.

WINSTON
District Line. East. One stop.
Doesn't sound so hard. Where is
the District Line?

YOUNG GIRL
That way, sir.

WINSTON
Thank you.

WINSTON stalks off, taking the steps down, down. Now everyone is stopping to let him go by - PEOPLE are STUNNED SPEECHLESS.

INT. PLATFORM/ DISTRICT LINE EASTBOUND/ ST JAMES PARK TUBE - DAY

WINSTON arrives on the PLATFORM. The busy CHATTER dies down at once - and an almost REVERENTIAL AIR takes over.

WINSTON catches the eye of a COUPLE standing, staring at him from a few feet away.

WINSTON
Good day.

They are too stunned to reply.

WINSTON (CONT'D)
So--this is the Underground.

The TRAIN now arrives and he BOARDS.

INT. DISTRICT LINE TRAIN - DAY

He boards the TRAIN. COMMUTERS look up and FALL SILENT at once.

WINSTON tips his HAT to them and doesn't at first meet their eyes.

He sits, sending out a SIGNAL that he doesn't want to be disturbed.

The TRAIN doesn't immediately start going. He waits. Then looks around him.

EVERYBODY is doing their best to be well mannered and not stare, but some are failing.

It's no good. WINSTON stands.

WINSTON
Is there a delay?

No answer. An awkward silence.

Out the windows of the TRAIN people look in at him.

WINSTON steps toward to an OLD MAN, and offers his HAND.

WINSTON (CONT'D)
Could I trouble you for a match?

The OLD MAN is so nervous he fumbles with his MATCHES, during this -

WINSTON looks around at all the STARING FACES...

WINSTON (CONT'D)
What are you all staring at? Have you never seen a Prime Minister ride the Underground before.

NERVOUS LAUGHTER to this, as -

- the OLD MAN strikes a match on the THIRD STRIKE. With a SHAKING HAND he lights WINSTON's CIGAR.

WINSTON (CONT'D)
Thank you.

WINSTON offers his hand...

WINSTON (CONT'D)
What is your name?

OLD MAN
Oliver Wilson, sir.

WINSTON
And what do you do Mr Wilson?

OLD MAN
Brick-layer, sir.

WINSTON
Good.
(loudly)
We shall have great need of brick-
layers soon! Business will be
looking up!

The GROUP laughs, as - the TRAIN lurches into MOTION.

WINSTON (CONT'D)
Progress! You see?

The mood of REVERENCE lightens now, as WINSTON goes to -
- a WOMAN WITH A BABY, touches its head.

WINSTON (CONT'D)
How old?

WOMAN WITH BABY
Eight months, sir. He looks like
you.

WINSTON
All babies look like me.

The causes widespread DELIGHT.

WINSTON (CONT'D)
And your name, Madam?

WOMAN WITH BABY
Mrs Jessie Sutton.

WINSTON
Mrs Sutton.

WINSTON touches the heads of the BABY. He then offers his hand
to -

- a YOUNG WOMAN - everyone has got the hang of this now, and doesn't need to be spoken to.

YOUNG WOMAN
(*shaking WINSTON's hand*)
Abigail. (*curtsies*) Abigail Walker.

INDIAN MAN
(*shaking WINSTON's hand*)
Absalom Peters.

YOUNG IRISH WOMAN
(*shaking WINSTON's hand*)
Agnes Dylan.

YOUNG MAN
(*shaking WINSTON's hand*)
Maurice Baker.

MIDDLE AGED WOMAN
(*shaking WINSTON's hand*)
Alice Simpson.

MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN
(*shaking WINSTON's hand*)
Miss Margaret Jerome.

WINSTON
My mother was a Jerome--I expect we are closely related.

Laughter.

He now switches into SPEECH MODE, switches on the inner lights -

WINSTON (CONT'D)
And how are you all bearing up?

A great hearty response.

WINSTON (CONT'D)
Of good spirits? Just as well!
(*laughter*)
We will need them! Now let me ask you all something--which has been weighing on my mind. Perhaps you can provide me with an answer.

A hushed SILENCE again - they wait. He studies their faces, reading their minute expressions -

WINSTON (CONT'D)
The British people. What is their mood? Is it confident?

Nervous NODS. Otherwise - silence.

WINSTON (CONT'D)
 Confident. How confident?

A range of RESPONSES, all positive:

YOUNG MAN
(afraid)
 Very.

IRISH WOMAN
(weakly)
 We are strong.

OLD MAN
 Some say it's a lost cause.

WINSTON
 Lost causes are the only ones
 worth fighting for. Now let me
 ask you this--if the worst came
 to pass, and the enemy were to
 appear on these streets, what
 would you do?

YOUNG MAN
 Fight.

MIDDLE AGED WOMAN
 Fight them!

OLD MAN
 Fight them with whatever we can lay
 our hands on!

IRISH WOMAN
 Broom handles if we must!

YOUNG WOMAN
 Street by street!

INDIAN MAN
 They'll never take Picadilly!

WINSTON
 Ha!Ha! Never Picadilly indeed!

OLD MAN
 The Battle of Trafalgar--Square!

WINSTON laughs.

WINSTON
 Very good--"The Battle of Trafalgar
 Square"! I may just steal that one!

The public laugh.

WOMAN WITH BABY
We'll never give up!

WINSTON to a YOUNG GIRL (9)

WINSTON
Will you never give up?

YOUNG GIRL
No. Never.

WINSTON
And what--what if I put it to you
all, that we might - if we ask
nicely - receive very favourable
terms from Mr Hitler if we enter
into a peace deal with him right
now? What would you say to that?

A pause, and then -

ALL
NEVER! NEVER!

WINSTON, nods, SMILES, PROUD of these people...and takes the
BLACK FEATHER out of his HAT, then puts his HAT on the OLD MAN's
head.

WINSTON
*"Then out spake brave Horatius,
The Captain of the gate:
To every man upon this earth
Death cometh soon or late.
And how can man die better
Than facing fearful odds..."*

YOUNG MAN
*For the ashes of his fathers...
...And the temples of his gods.*

WINSTON squeezes the shoulder of the YOUNG MAN. Silence.
Everyone is moved. He finally gives the BLACK FEATHER to the
YOUNG GIRL.

YOUNG GIRL
Why are you crying?

WINSTON
Am I? Then I am crying--for what I
have now to do, or permit to be
done, in your name. Forgive me.

The TRAIN stops as WESTMINSTER. He sees the SIGN out the window.

WINSTON (CONT'D)

Westminster? Here already. The seat of government, directly above us-- but I think today, running beneath it, in these caverns, lies a far deeper strain of feeling and judgement than you will find above. The country should be run from down here.

He exits the TRAIN - all watch him go. MOVED, as he makes for the WAY OUT.

INT. WAR CABINET/ 10 DOWNING STREET - DAY

WINSTON is silent at one end of the table, deeply TROUBLED, while -

- the other CABINET MINISTERS are gathered at the other end, actively discussing the wording of a PEACE OFFER.

WINSTON watches HALIFAX, leading the formulation of peace offer.

WINSTON is only half listening - the WORDS WASH OVER HIM as he LOOKS at his WATCH. CAMERA moves in on WINSTON, as -

HALIFAX

The points then are as follows. Britain wishes that she and France jointly ask for Italy's mediation in an offer of peace with Germany. We are prepared to fight to the end for the preservation of our independence, aided by the other nations of the world, but if fair and just peace terms can be found, in a spirit of candid partnership, then--we might find the basis of a just and durable peace for Europe. The French Prime Minister, whose situation is acute, has been told he can expect a reply from us by tomorrow.

WINSTON can listen to no more of this. His sense of RAGE has been growing. He rises from his seat and starts to exit.

WINSTON

Tomorrow?

ALL look at WINSTON.

WINSTON (CONT'D)
 Continue. My--25 of my junior
 parliamentary colleagues of the
 Outer Cabinet have reminded me I
 have owed them a speech since the
 formation of the new Government. I
 must keep them waiting no longer.

WINSTON exits. CHAMBERLAIN watches WINSTON go. HALIFAX is too
 taken up with the DRAFT PROPOSAL to give the exit thought.

INT. ANTE-ROOM - DAY

WINSTON'S SAILING HAT (Royal Naval Yacht Club CAP) sits on the
 COAT STAND. He takes it.

EXT. DOWNING STREET - DAY

WINSTON walks down the street, in his CAP - a FIGURE OF GREAT
 SERIOUSNESS.

INT. PARLIAMENT - DAY

WINSTON crosses the INNER HALL.

INT. HALLWAY/ BACK-BENCHERS LOUNGE - DAY

Walking up the HALLWAY he passes by the DOOR to the BACK-
 BENCHER'S LOUNGE wherein -

- young MP's are relaxing, jacket's off, playing BILLIARDS,
 having a drink, talking intently.

He STOPS, thinks, and then returns to the door to the B.B.
 LOUNGE...

INT. BACKBENCHERS' LOUNGE/ PARLIAMENT - CONTINUOUS

WINSTON appears in the doorway. He takes off his TOP HAT.

The BACKBENCHERS fall silent.

WINSTON
 Good day.
 (pause)
 I am--about to speak with my outer
 cabinet in my rooms and--I extend
 the invitation to any of you who
 would like to join them.

WINSTON forces a SMILE, then departs.

After a moment, the BACKBENCHERS look at each other, MURMUR, then put on their jackets and start to follow WINSTON.

INT. WINSTON'S ROOMS/ PARLIAMENT - DAY

The ROOM is now FULL with 40 MEN - CABINET MEMBERS and BACKBENCHERS.

WINSTON enters, with his SECRETARY (JOHN MARTIN) and finds...

... ELIZABETH LAYTON waiting there, with PAD and PEN.

He stops before her. Their silent look (of affection and admiration) lasts a long moment.

WINSTON
Miss Layton.

ELIZABETH LAYTON
(*smiling through tears*)
Prime Minister.

WINSTON
(*proud, tender look*)
Welcome back.

The DOORS are CLOSED.

WINSTON stands in front of the GATHERING.

They wait for him to speak.

ELIZABETH LAYTON, waits with PEN at the READY to take down WINSTON's words, nervous, anxious...

No words come from WINSTON.

WINSTON glances at ELIZABETH, then back at the CROWD.

He puts on his GLASSES and takes out a CARD - presumably his SPEECH NOTES.

WINSTON (CONT'D)
Later today--I will address the
House on the matter of our nation's
security.

CLOSE ON: These words being written down by ELIZABETH LAYTON.

WINSTON (CONT'D)
(*silence*)
At this very moment the War Cabinet
is drafting papers that lay out our
willingness to enter into peace
talks with Herr Hitler, via his
lackey, Signor Mussolini.
(*pause*)
(MORE)

WINSTON (CONT'D)

I have thought carefully in these last days--whether--

(pause)

--whether it was part of my duty-- to consider entering into negotiations with That Man. But then I spoke--with Oliver Wilson--- and Mrs Jessie Sutton--

(starts to read from his card)

Mrs Abigail Walker...

ANGLE ON: the CARD. The names of the TUBE COMMUTERS are all written there...

REACTION: MP's, slight confusion as they try to remember who these people are...

WINSTON (CONT'D)

...Absalom Peters, Agnes Dylan, Maurice Baker, Alice Simpson, and Miss Margaret Jerome--brave, good, true citizens of this kingdom--and they argued, strongly, that it was idle to think that, if we tried to make peace now, we should get better terms than if we fought it out. The Germans, Mr Baker felt, would demand - in the name of disarmament - our naval bases, and much else. And I think he's right. Jessie Sutton, speaking for many, believes we should then become a slave state, though a British Government - which would be Hitler's puppet- would be set up - under Mosley or some such person.

BACK-BENCHER 1

No!

WINSTON

And I join with them in asking a further question, a question I put to you: where should we be at the end of all that?

He SURVEYS their silent UNCERTAIN FACES.

WINSTON (CONT'D)

(silence)

Some might benefit--the powerful might be able to parlay good terms-- preserved in their country redoubts, out of sight of the Swastika flying on Buckingham Palace, over Windsor, draped on these very buildings -

BACK-BENCHER 2

Never!

ANGLE ON: The SECRETARY (JOHN MARTIN) too moved to NOTE DOWN what WINSTON is saying. His PAGE is almost empty - has only the OPENING REMARKS...whilst beside him we HEAR the sound of a MORE DILIGENT PEN...

ELIZABETH LAYTON's pen is flying, recording everything.

WINSTON

So I come to you--to learn your minds in this grave hour.

The FACES of the MP are RESOLUTE, MOVED, READY TO FIGHT.

WINSTON (CONT'D)

On the other side, we have immense reserves and advantages. And I am convinced that every one of you--every one--would rise up and tear me down from my place if I were for one moment to contemplate parley or surrender!

A spontaneous round of emotional applause. It surprises WINSTON. It surprises even those who are applauding.

WINSTON (CONT'D)

Good! I have heard you! I have heard you! Then...then...then...

The DIN dies down. When silence returns...

WINSTON (CONT'D)

Then--if this long island story of ours is to end at last, let it end only when each one of us lies choking in his own blood upon the ground.

TEARS come to the eyes of the MP's and WINSTON sees them.

A GIANT HOORAY goes up and before the MP's RUSH UP to HIM, WINSTON turns to his SECRETARY.

WINSTON (CONT'D)

(to SECRETARY, JOHN MARTIN)
Did you get it down?

SECRETARY

(he did not)
Ah--I ah....

ELIZABETH LAYTON

(she did)
Every word.

WINSTON smiles at her, as he is SWAMPED by MP's shaking his HAND, PATTING HIM on the back - a MASSIVE SIGN OF SUPPORT.

INT. WAR CABINET/ 10 DOWNING STREET - DAY

WINSTON addresses the WAR CABINET (plus ANTHONY EDEN)

WINSTON

And when I asked to know their minds there occurred a demonstration which, considering the character of the gathering, quite surprised me. There is no doubt that if we falter at all in the leading of the nation we should all be hurled out of office. I am sure now that every Minister on both sides of the house is ready to be killed quite soon, and have all his family and possessions destroyed, rather than give in. In this they represent almost all the people. It falls to me in these coming days and months to express their sentiments. There shall be no negotiated peace...

(to HALIFAX)

..and you must each do now as you see fit.

(beat)

I believe I am due in the house, to address the nation. I must not be late.

WINSTON walks out. EDEN - smiling - happily follows his LEADER now.

REACTION: HALIFAX. BETRAYAL.

CHAMBERLAIN avoids HALIFAX's eyes.

ATLEE and GREENWOOD smile.

EXT. WAR CABINET/ NUMBER 10 DOWNING STREET - DAY

HALIFAX detains CHAMBERLAIN as the CABINET leaves NUMBER 10.

HALIFAX

We must both now resign. Force a vote of no confidence. I have your word?

CHAMBERLAIN

Let us--let us go to the Commons first. Join our colleagues.

(MORE)

CHAMBERLAIN (CONT'D)
And speak after the Prime
Minister's address.

HALIFAX
I have your word?

CHAMBERLAIN takes his coat and leaves HALIFAX worried.

INT. COMMONS/ PARLIAMENT - DAY

WINSTON addresses a PACKED HOUSE of COMMONS. A CROWD of some FIVE HUNDRED listen.

WINSTON's TWO SECRETARIES and ELIZABETH LAYTON are present, in the GALLERY, but only ELIZABETH has pen at the ready. (A grumpy JOHN MARTIN would seem to have been demoted - his notebook is not even open.)

WINSTON
I have, myself, full confidence
that if all do their duty, if
nothing is neglected, and if the
best arrangements are made, as
they are being made, we shall
prove ourselves once more able
to defend our island home, to
ride out the storm of war, and
to outlive the menace of
tyranny, if necessary for years,
if necessary alone.

MONTAGE:

- A) WORKERS, listening to these WORDS on the RADIO...
- B) WINSTON, recording these words for the RADIO...
- C) The BRITISH and FRENCH TROOPS wait for RESCUE on the BEACHES of DUNKIRK...
- D) At DUNKIRK, the WOUNDED BRITISH SOLDIER turns his EYES from the now CLOUDED OVER skies toward...
...the HORIZON, upon which he can see something. He quickly gets something, his BINOCULARS...
- E) The lone GERMAN TANK COMMANDER, lowers his FIELD GLASSES, his eyes WIDE with SHOCK.
- F) CLEM, at the RED CROSS HQ, listening to the RADIO, dressed in her RED-CROSS uniform.
- G) A SPITFIRE FIGHTER ESCORT dips from ABOVE to BENEATH the CLOUDS...to reveal...

...the VAST RESCUING FLEET of NAVAL and CIVILIAN CRAFT from BRITAIN coming to the aid of the stranded TROOPS.

H) From the POV of the RESCUING FLEET of SMALL CIVILIAN CRAFT with their NAVAL escorts...they APPROACH the HORROR that is DUNKIRK. BOMBS start to explode all around the craft. Some are HIT (we should see losses here!)...but onwards they go...to the rescue of the stranded men...

I) On DUNKIRK BEACH, the SPITFIRE swoops low, CHASING a GERMAN STUKA DIVE BOMBER out to sea, where it SHOTS IT DOWN. The BRITISH and FRENCH TROOPS, watching this, CHEER.

WINSTON (O.S.)

At any rate, that is what we are going to try to do. That is the resolve of His Majesty's Government - every man of them. That is the will of Parliament and the nation. The British Empire and the French Republic, linked together in their cause and in their need, will defend to the death their native soil, aiding each other like good comrades to the utmost of their strength.

INT. COMMONS/ PARLIAMENT - DAY

WINSTON

Even though large tracts of Europe and many old and famous States have fallen or may fall into the grip of the Gestapo and all the odious apparatus of Nazi rule, we shall not flag or fail. We shall go on to the end. We shall fight in France, we shall fight on the seas and oceans, we shall fight with growing confidence and growing strength in the air, we shall defend our island, whatever the cost may be. We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills;

(MORE)

WINSTON (CONT'D)
 we shall never surrender, and if,
 which I do not for a moment
 believe, this island or a large
 part of it were subjugated and
 starving, then our Empire beyond
 the seas, armed and guarded by the
 British Fleet, would carry on the
 struggle, until, in God's good
 time, the New World, with all its
 power and might, steps forth to the
 rescue and the liberation of the
 old.

The LABOUR BENCHES start to CLAP.

WINSTON's CONSERVATIVE colleagues all look to CHAMBERLAIN...

CLOSE ON HALIFAX: He looks at CHAMBERLAIN, as -

- CHAMBERLAIN TAKES OUT HIS WHITE HANDKERCHIEF.

REACTION HALIFAX: He closes his eyes, in DEFEAT, knowing what is coming next...

CHAMBERLAIN waves the WHITE HANDKERCHIEF and the CONSERVATIVE FACTION rises to its feet in THUNDEROUS SUPPORT of WINSTON.

WINSTON turns to ANTHONY EDEN, registering surprise at the strength of support, and whispers -

WINSTON (CONT'D)
 And we'll fight them with the butt
 ends of broken beer bottles,
 because that's bloody well all
 we've got!

EDEN grins and SHAKES his FRIEND's HAND.

HALIFAX is slumped in his chair, forced to start CLAPPING or else seem marginalized.

SIR JOHN SIMON
 What just happened?

SIR SAMUEL HOARE
 He mobilized the English language--
 and sent it into battle.

The UPROAR in the HOUSE continues, the APPLAUSE UNABATED, as -

EXT. WESTMINSTER - DAY

WINSTON stalks out of PARLIAMENT and onto the STREET, not getting into the WAITING CAR...

EXT. LONDON STREETS - DAY

...WINSTON walks home, and not on the FOOTPATH, but -

- right up the centre of the TRAFFIC-FREE STREETS of WESTMINSTER.

He walks alone at first, raising his hat to the first PEOPLE who greet him, but soon, PEOPLE start to walk with him, at his side, then follow behind. He keeps walking.

The number of PEOPLE who stop, look and then spontaneously join him increases. Soon -

- it is a procession, and then a PARADE -

- with people starting to APPLAUD as they see the GREAT MAN and the COMMON PEOPLE walking toward them. It's a parade that soon draws in everyone, growing and growing...

Where are they going? They don't know - but they want to follow WINSTON where-ever he leads...as he lifts his HAT up on his CANE like a STANDARD for others to follow.

EXT. FISHING BOAT/ THAMES - DAY

A SALTY FISHERMAN, under motor, mans the TILLER of his fishing boat, as -

- the CAMERA pulls back, revealing -

- that his fishing boat is full of BRITISH TROOPS, many wounded, crammed in like sardines.

- PULL BACK FURTHER - to reveal that this little FISHING BOAT is just one of the DOZENS of RETURNING "LITTLE SHIPS", full of RESCUED TROOPS, making their way back up the THAMES.

- PAN with the FLEET - to reveal their destination - LONDON, TOWER BRIDGE, the HOUSES of PARLIAMENT in the distance.

INT. PRINTING ROOM/ THE EVENING STANDARD NEWSPAPER- DAY

MONTAGE OF FRONT-PAGES...coming hot off the BEAVERBROOK PRESSES:

A) **DUNKIRK - 320,000 BRITISH and FRENCH TROOPS SAFELY EVACUATED FROM FRANCE.**

B) **GERMANY FIGHTER-PLANES ATTACK ENGLAND.**

C) **BRITISH VICTORY IN BATTLE OF BRITAIN - HITLER FORCED TO POSTPONE INVASION PLANS.**

D) **HITLER INVADES RUSSIA**

- E) JAPAN attacks PEARL HARBOUR.
- F) UNITED STATES ENTERS THE WAR.
- G) ALLIED VICTORY at EL ALAMEIN - FIRST ALLIED VICTORY OF THE WAR.
- H) GERMANY DEFEATED AT STALINGRAD
- I) D DAY: The ALLIES INVADE FRANCE
- J) HITLER COMMITS SUICIDE

EXT. BALCONY/ MINISTRY OF HEALTH/ WHITEHALL - DAY

WINSTON speaks to the British People, (thousands of them) from the balcony of the Ministry of Health in Whitehall.

He waves, and gives the V for VICTORY sign (Palm out). Into a MICROPHONE he says...

WINSTON
This is your victory. Victory of
the cause of freedom.

The CROWD ROARS!

EXT. BALCONY/ BUCKINGHAM PALACE - DAY

WINSTON, the KING and QUEEN, young ELIZABETH and MARGARET, emerge to wave to the people.

The CROWD ROARS!

INT. WAR-ROOM - DAY

The WAR-ROOM is now EMPTY. As we move in on the TABLE MAP...

UP WITH TEXT....

Two months later Winton Churchill was voted out
of office by the British people in an overwhelming
victory for the Labour Party. ...ENDS

