

# DARKEST HOUR

A Screenplay

By

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## SHOOTING SCRIPT

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On BLACK SCREEN: Run CAPTIONS:

**MAY 9TH 1940: HITLER HAS INVADED CZECHOSLOVAKIA, POLAND,  
DENMARK, AND NORWAY. HE IS NOW POISED TO CONQUER THE REST OF  
EUROPE.**

**IN BRITAIN, PARLIAMENT HAS LOST FAITH IN ITS LEADER, NEVILLE  
CHAMBERLAIN.**

**THE SEARCH FOR A REPLACEMENT HAS ALREADY BEGUN..**

**FADE IN....**

**INT. HOUSE OF COMMONS CHAMBER - DAY**

...is in an uproar. The PRIME MINISTER, NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN (71), sits with the MAJORITY, RULING CONSERVATIVE PARTY on one side of the house...

...whilst the LEADER of the MINORITY, OPPOSITION LABOUR PARTY, CLEMENT ATTLEE (57) sits with the OPPOSITION PARTIES on the other side.

They face each other like two warring armies. Shouting. Accusations. Wild gesturing. Paper darts thrown. Mayhem.

CAPTION: **MAY 9, 1940**

ATTLEE rises to his feet, amid jeers and heckles, to denounce CHAMBERLAIN, directly opposite him across the aisle -

ATTLEE

Mr Speaker! Mr Speaker!

SPEAKER

The Honourable Leader of the  
Opposition, Clement Attlee!

ATTLEE

Mr Speaker--Mr Speaker--it seems I  
have not been clear enough. Then  
let me leave no doubt regarding my  
feelings about Mr Chamberlain's  
future as Prime Minister.

*(over boos and applause)*

Owing to his years of inactivity  
and incompetence -

*(cheers and boos)*

(MORE)

ATTLEE (CONT'D)

- we find him personally responsible, personally responsible for leaving our nation ruinously unprepared to face the present Nazi peril. We are at war, Mr Speaker. At war. And leaving aside whether he is fit to be a leader in peacetime he has proven himself incapable of leading us in wartime.

Cries of support to this -

Looking down from the LORDS GALLERY is - VISCOUNT HALIFAX (59), appalled by what he is seeing. He exchanges a look with the bereft CHAMBERLAIN.

ATTLEE (CONT'D)

Therefore, in the national interest, we the Opposition, are willing to enter into a Grand Coalition--with the "ruling" Conservative Party, so-called!...

An OPPOSITION MP stands and starts singing "**Rule Britannia**". Others soon begin to join in.

SPEAKER

Order! Order!

ATTLEE

...but not, and I stress this, never, under the leadership of Mr Chamberlain...

(angle on CHAMBERLAIN)

...who has lost the confidence of this House!

A REBEL CONSERVATIVE MEMBER rises and crosses the floor to stand with the OPPOSITION MPs, betraying Chamberlain.

ATTLEE (CONT'D)

(directly to CHAMBERLAIN)

In the country's interest man, resign! Step down! And let us find a new leader!

UPROAR, and many cry "HEAR-HEAR!" and "GO!"

SPEAKER

I said, ORDER!

The camera passes along the CONSERVATIVE benches to find ANTHONY EDEN (43), behind him sits KINGSLEY WOOD (59).

KINGSLEY WOOD

(into EDEN's ear)

Where's Winston?

On the bench beside EDEN, as if to reserve a space, is an old Royal Naval Yacht Club CAP.

EDEN  
Ensuring his fingerprints  
are not on the murder weapon.

The singing of "**Rule Britannia**" continues over -

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

NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN addresses the other CONSERVATIVE guests gathered around a circular dining table.

CHAMBERLAIN  
Accordingly--tomorrow--I will  
resign as Prime Minister.

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

CHAMBERLAIN (CONT'D)  
(*suppressing emotion*)  
As the Opposition refuse to join a  
government headed by me, we must  
select my successor.  
(*beat*)  
I will step down tomorrow but I  
wanted my own party, the gentlemen  
I most respect, to know first.

LORD LONDONDERRY.  
Halifax. There's no question!  
Our Foreign Secretary -

SIR JOHN SIMON  
No contest! HALIFAX

HALIFAX  
I appreciate your confidence but my  
time has yet to come. However, on  
whomever the task may fall, he  
shall be charged with the security  
of these islands and of our Empire,  
and shall be required to explore  
all avenues.

CHAMBERLAIN  
Including that of Diplomatic talks.

HALIFAX  
Indeed, towards the restoration of  
peace in Europe.

ALL  
Hear Hear!!!

CHAMBERLAIN

Gentlemen, I'm afraid there is only one candidate. Only, one man that the Opposition will accept?

ALL

Oh no.

SIR JOHN SIMON

Surely not...

**INT. CHARTWELL/ COUNTRY HOUSE OF WINSTON & CLEMENTINE  
CHURCHILL DAY**

**CAPTION: FRIDAY, MAY 10, 1940**

A plate of BACON & EGGS is set on a BREAKFAST TRAY. Then...a glass of WHITE WINE is poured by WINSTON's VALET, SAWYERS, and set beside the plate. A glass of SCOTCH and SODA is also prepared and set beside these on the tray. For Breakfast?

SAWYERS carries the TRAY through servants quarters towards the ENTRANCE HALL of the house, where -

- the TRAY passes by - WINSTON's PRIVATE SECRETARY, JOHN EVANS (35), as he schools the NEW YOUNG SECRETARY, ELIZABETH LAYTON. Evans, an immaculately-groomed rake, snobbishly thinks himself infinitely superior to the Elizabeth Laytons of the world.

JOHN EVANS

(to ELIZABETH)

...and if he stretches out his hand and says, "Gimme", you need to anticipate what he wants - black pen, red pen, paper, or "Clop", that's his hole punch.

EVANS and LAYTON walk past -

- SAWYERS-with-TRAY, as he waits for the COOK to iron a NEWSPAPER (DAILY EXPRESS) and as the SCULLERY MAIDS, over her shoulder, ANXIOUSLY read the headline:

**"CHAMBERLAIN TO RESIGN"**

SAWYERS

Don't smudge the ink.

MAID

How selfish to resign, time like this.

COOK

D'you think they'll take me to Downing Street?

SAWYERS

Not after the Spotted Dick you  
served last week.

The COOK then sets the PAPER on the TRAY, whereupon SAWYERS  
carries the TRAY up the stairs.

CUT TO:

EVANS and LAYTON approach a BEDROOM DOORWAY.

JOHN EVANS

...He mumbles, so it's almost  
impossible to catch everything.  
And be prepared to type fast -  
short bursts - and double-spaced,  
he hates single-spaced--hates it!  
Good luck.

EVANS knocks on the door, opens it and then pushes the now-  
quaking ELIZABETH LAYTON inside, closing the door again.

**INT. BEDROOM/ CHARTWELL - DAY**

Her POV of the dimly-lit room. And then, a MATCH is struck, a  
CIGAR lit. We can just make out a MAN in bed, as -

SAWYERS tugs open the CURTAINS, revealing -

- WINSTON CHURCHILL (65), in BED, with the BREAKFAST TRAY on  
his lap, in a pink silk dressing-gown (naked beneath). His  
dispatch box, piled high with telegrams, stands open by his  
bed. His marmalade cat, TANGO, sits at the end of the bed,  
as WINSTON reads a dispatch and dictates...

WINSTON

To the French Ambassador. Come on -

WINSTON looks up at ELIZABETH, to see if she is writing this  
down. She's not -

WINSTON (CONT'D)

- telegram!

ELIZABETH realises, to her horror, that the dictation has  
already begun, and she hurries to the TYPE-WRITER, which has  
already been loaded with a sheet...She begins to type FAST,  
in short bursts -

WINSTON (CONT'D)

(dictating)

With German forces crossing into  
Holland...Holland alone...request  
reassurance...that French forces  
will now move--move at once--to  
protect Belgium. Stop. Read!

ELIZABETH

*(nervously)*

*"To--to the French Ambassador.  
With German forces crossing  
into Holland...Holland alone...  
request reassurance that -*

WINSTON

*- immediate reassurance -*

ELIZABETH adjusts the typewriter's carriage and paten and types the word "IMMEDIATE" above the previous text...

ELIZABETH

*"- immediate - reassurance - "*

WINSTON

*" - that -" Go on - "- that "*

SAWYERS enters, as ELIZABETH struggles to re-set the carriage.

ELIZABETH

*" - that - "*

The BEDROOM TELEPHONE rings -

SAWYERS

French Ambassador sir -

WINSTON

Monsieur Ambassador!

*(pause)*

Ah. They've already invaded Belgium.

*(pause)*

I will convey your plea to the Prime Minister at once. Yes, the situation is still very confused. Goodbye.

WINSTON hangs up. A concerned pause, and then -

WINSTON (CONT'D)

Holland and Belgium.

ELIZABETH types this - tap,tap,tap,tap -

WINSTON (CONT'D)

No, no, no.

ELIZABETH

*(confused)*

Sir?

WINSTON

Scrap that. New telegram.

In a fluster, she pulls out the old PAGE from the TYPEWRITER CARRIAGE and quickly inserts a new page, as -

WINSTON (CONT'D)  
To General Ismay...

WINSTON grabs his WHISKEY and SODA, as - the PHONE rings again. SAWYERS re-appears.

WINSTON (CONT'D)  
Dammit Sawyers! What is it now?!

SAWYERS  
Your son.

WINSTON, his concentration broken, goes to the PHONE.

WINSTON  
(into Phone)  
Randolph, quickly -  
(listens)  
Last night they said I may be made  
Prime Minister today. But that was  
yesterday. Let's see what Neville  
does today. Thank--thank you my  
boy. Keep bugging on!

Puts down the phone. Turns to look at ELIZABETH.

WINSTON (CONT'D)  
Now...

Sips his SCOTCH. This calms him.

ELIZABETH LAYTON  
General Ismay...

Moving to the end of the bed -

WINSTON  
Ah, General Ismay.  
(to Sawyers)  
Sawyers - get rid of this will you?

Winston gestures to Sawyers to move his tray away and then swings his legs - indecorously! - out of bed. ELIZABETH quickly turns her face away! WINSTON then begins to pace -

WINSTON (CONT'D)  
In the light of today's events, the  
time is ripe for many preparations  
to be made...  
(beat)  
Are you striking those typewriter  
keys in a normal fashion? It's  
awfully loud, I can't think!  
(beat)  
Read it back.



ELIZABETH

Ahh--To General Ismay. In the light  
of today's events, the time is  
right for many prep -

WINSTON

RIPE! Not RIGHT! God's teeth girl!  
I said ripe, ripe, ripe - P-P-P!  
The last sentence...

ELIZABETH LAYTON

(*shaken*)

The--the time is ripe...

WINSTON

For! FOR!

ELIZABETH LAYTON

(*her nerve broken*)

...many...many...many...

WINSTON

How many "many"s did you write?!

One many!

(*sighs*)

"For...for *MANY* preparations--  
to be made..."

He walks up to her and looks over her chair, and is horrified  
to see -

WINSTON (CONT'D)

Single-spaced? What are you doing?!  
What are you doing?!

ELIZABETH

Someone set it on single-spaced  
and before I realised -

WINSTON

Then why did you persist?!

ELIZABETH

I -

As she starts to rush out -

WINSTON

Tell Evans to send me someone who  
can do it right the first time!  
RIGHT! T-T-T-T!

**INT. HALLWAY/ CHARTWELL - DAY**

ELIZABETH comes down the stairs, and stops, her face tear-  
stained.

CLEMENTINE CHURCHILL - WINSTON'S WIFE, 55 YEARS OLD - beautiful, elegant, highly-strung, is at that moment crossing the hall, with a HANDFUL of BROWN ENVELOPES. She sees ELIZABETH.

CLEMMIE

Ah. He shouted at you. Did he shout at you?

ELIZABETH

Yes, but I....

CLEMMIE

He can be an awful brute.

ELIZABETH

No! I made too many mistakes.

CLEMMIE

I think you were nervous. And he has a knack for drawing out the very worst in those trying to help him the most.

ELIZABETH

Oh it's not him. It's me. He's - he's -

CLEMMIE

He's just a man, like any other. Wait here.

CLEMMIE climbs the stairs.

# **INT. BEDROOM/ CHARTWELL - DAY**

CLEMMIE enters - WINSTON (on his knees) is looking for Tango the cat under his bed.

CLEMMIE

My Darling?

WINSTON

The War Cabinet has been called. The bloody cat is under the bed again.

CLEMMIE indicates that SAWYERS should go and moves around WINSTON tucking his shirt in.

CLEMMIE

Can I tell you something that I feel you ought to know?

He looks at her -

CLEMMIE (CONT'D)

I've noticed a recent deterioration in your manner. You're not so kind as you used to be. You've become rough, sarcastic, over-bearing and rude.

WINSTON

Is this about the new girl?

CLEMMIE

If the King asks you to become Prime Minister -

WINSTON

We don't know that -

CLEMMIE

I don't want you to be disliked.

WINSTON

More than I already am?

CLEMMIE

Darling, you may be on the brink, *the brink*--of having tremendous power, surpassed only by the King. With such power you really must try to be more kind and, if possible, calm. I want others to love and respect you as I do.

Clemmie falls back in the bed, shortly joined by Winston--they share a moment of fondness.

#### **EXT. CHARTWELL - DAY**

WIDE SHOT of Chartwell bathed in sunshine. ELIZABETH LAYTON, with hat and coat now on, is attempting to make a discreet escape from the house but is stopped by a MOTORCYCLE COURIER with a telegram to deliver. We do not hear what is said.

CLOSE-UP on the telegram turning in ELIZABETH'S hands as the COURIER rides away. ELIZABETH looks back to the house, makes her decision and re-enters the lair.

#### **INT. STAIRS / CHARTWELL - DAY**

ELIZABETH climbs the stairs holding a telegram, braced to once more enter the Lion's Den. She enters -

#### **INT. BEDROOM/ CHARTWELL - DAY**

- and finds WINSTON, CLEMMIE, JOHN EVANS, SAWYERS and a MAID - all listening with rapt attention to a RADIO BROADCAST.

BBC RADIO ANNOUNCER  
*"This is BBC Home Service. Here is  
 a short news bulletin. The German  
 army invaded Holland and Belgium  
 early this morning, by land, and  
 land parachutes--"*

ELIZABETH  
 There's a telegram.

JOHN EVANS  
 Sssshhh!

BBC RADIO ANNOUNCER  
*..."The Armies of the Low Countries  
 are resisting. An appeal for help  
 has been made to the Allied  
 governments and Brussels says the  
 Allied troops are moving to their  
 support..."*

ELIZABETH  
 It's from the Palace.

All eyes turn to look at her, as if an elephant has entered  
 the room. A silent beat in which no-one breathes.

WINSTON  
 Thank you, Miss...?

ELIZABETH  
 Layton.

**INT. STUDY/HALLWAY, CHARTWELL - DAY**

CLEMMIE hands WINSTON his watch, glasses, cigar case, matches  
 and a sugar cube.

CLEMMIE  
 You're shaking.

WINSTON  
 So are you!

It's true CLEMMIE is just as nervous -

CLEMMIE  
 You from excitement--I from terror.  
 You have been wanting this your  
 entire adult life.

WINSTON  
 No--since the nursery.

CLEMMIE laughs.

WINSTON (CONT'D)

But do the public want me?

CLEMMIE

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

WINSTON

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

CLEMMIE

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

WINSTON

...My poor judgement.

CLEMMIE

...Your lack of vanity.

WINSTON

...My iron will.

CLEMMIE

*(in playful rebuke)*  
...Your sense of humour.

WINSTON

Ho Ho Ho!

CLEMMIE

Now go.

WINSTON

Go?

CLEMMIE

Be.

WINSTON

Be?

She touches his face tenderly -

CLEMMIE

Yourself.

WINSTON

Which self?

CLEMMIE walks away. WINSTON turns to a wall on which are hung many HATS - (Royal Naval Yacht Club Cap, Admiral's hat with plume, aviator helmet with goggles, riding hat, pith helmet, French WW1 helmet, fez, Homburg, top hat, etc ) all on display like HUNTING TROPHIES.

WINSTON (CONT'D)  
*(to himself)*  
 Which self should I be today?

WINSTON surveys the collection, then plucks the TOP HAT from its hook -

WINSTON (CONT'D)  
 One should have had power when a young man. When wits were sharp, sinews strong. Oh well.

He returns to her -

WINSTON (CONT'D)  
 Lead on Macduff--  
 When youth departs--  
 may wisdom prove enough.

They kiss, and she gives him a silver BOX OF MATCHES, embossed with loving message from his children.

**EXT/INT. PRINCES STREET/ WINSTON'S CAR - DAY**

WINSTON, in the back seat, (with JOHN EVANS in front) looks out the window at the human traffic - seems like he's in a gold-fish bowl, disconnected. He watches as - MEN IN BOWLER HATS and YOUNG WOMEN in SUMMER DRESSES walk to work.

JOHN EVANS  
 Hardly seems like there's a war on at all.

THREE DELIVERY BOYS ride by on bicycles, notice him and wave excitedly.

WINSTON  
 How odd it is.

JOHN EVANS  
 Sir?

They stop, waiting behind a BUS.

WINSTON  
 You know--I have never ridden a bus. Never queued for bread. I believe I can boil an egg but only because I saw it done once.

**EXT. BUCKINGHAM PALACE - DAY**

WINSTON's car approaches the Palace gates, which are open.

The CAR drives up to the PALACE. WINSTON gets out and he and EVANS enter the PALACE -

**INT. PALACE ENTRANCE - DAY**

A grand hall.

Winston removing his hat and coat, hands his cane and gloves, then hat to a LIVERIED DOORMAN whilst a LIVERIED STAFF MEMBER waits nearby.

WINSTON

The only time I tried to ride the Underground was during the General Strike. Clemmie dropped me at South Kensington station. I went down-- but I got lost and came straight back up. Awful!

*(girding himself)*

Well, "Here we go"...

EVANS

Good luck sir.

WINSTON strides away, following the EQUERRY.

**INT. STATE CHAMBERS/ BUCKINGHAM PALACE - DAY**

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

CHAMBERLAIN watches the KING.

GEORGE VI

Why not Halifax? I favour Halifax.

CHAMBERLAIN

I wanted Halifax. The Lords wanted Halifax. Halifax wanted Halifax.

GEORGE VI

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

CHAMBERLAIN

Because he's the only member of our party who has the support of the Opposition.

GEORGE VI

His record is a litany of catastrophe. Gallipoli, 25,000 dead. The India Policy. Russian Civil War. The Gold Standard. The the the Abdication. And now this Norway 'adventure'. What, eighteen hundred men?

CHAMBERLAIN  
One aircraft carrier, two cruisers,  
seven destroyers and a submarine.

GEORGE VI  
Winston lacks judgement.

CHAMBERLAIN  
He was right about Hitler.

GEORGE VI  
Even a stopped clock is right  
twice a day.

EQUERRY enters.

EQUERRY  
First Lord of the Admiralty,  
Mr Winston Churchill!

GEORGE VI  
Early.

CHAMBERLAIN  
Keen.

GEORGE VI  
I accept your resignation--but I  
want you to know--how--cruelly I  
think you've been treated.

CHAMBERLAIN  
Thank you Your Majesty.

He and GEORGE shake hands.

EQUERRY  
This way, my Lord.

The KING waits - SIGHS deeply, until...

We hear footsteps approaching. WINSTON enters.

WINSTON  
Your Majesty.

GEORGE VI  
Mr Churchill.

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

WINSTON  
Sir, I simply can't imagine why.



GEORGE VI

It is my duty to-to-to invite you  
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.

WINSTON bows, and when the KING offers his hand, WINSTON  
kisses it. WINSTON rises.

GEORGE VI (CONT'D)

That was--quite easy.

WINSTON

Yes.

They stare at each other in uneasy silence.

WINSTON (CONT'D)

I believe we are to meet regularly.

GEORGE VI

Once a week, I'm afraid. How are  
you on--on--on Mondays?

WINSTON

I shall endeavour to be available  
on Mondays.

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! Mondays.

*(WINSTON bows)*

Your majesty.

GEORGE VI

Prime Minister.

When WINSTON backs out of the room, the KING anxiously lights a cigarette, and broods.

**EXT. 10 DOWNING STREET - DAY**

WINSTON pulls up in his PRIVATE CAR, alights, (followed by EVANS) waves at the PRESS, an effortless SELF-PUBLICIST, at total ease in the spotlight. Ever the showman - taps the NUMBER 10 on the famous front door with his walking stick for the amusement of the PHOTOGRAPHERS -

PHOTOGRAPHER  
Prime Minister? First order of  
business, sir?

WINSTON  
A glass of Pol Roger!

He enters the building, and -

**INT. HALLWAY/ 10 DOWNING STREET - DAY**

- is greeted by EDEN.

EDEN  
Prime Minister!

WINSTON  
Anthony.

EDEN  
How was the K-k-king?

WINSTON  
Anxious. Never forgiven me for  
supporting his brother's  
marriage to Wallis Simpson.

WINSTON and EDEN step into his office, with WINSTON closing the door on EVANS in the hallway.

**INT. OFFICE/ 10 DOWNING STREET - CONTINUOUS**

EDEN  
You only have to meet him once a  
week.

WINSTON  
That's like saying you only have to  
have your tooth pulled once a week.

EDEN takes out a pen, opens a notebook -

EDEN

Composition of your War Cabinet.  
Who should sit on it?

WINSTON

Chamberlain. And the Reverend "Holy  
Fox" -

EDEN

*(writes)*

Halifax. Keeping your enemies  
close?

WINSTON

More than that, without them the  
party will get rid of me.

*(beat)*

And that sheep in sheep's clothing,  
Attlee.

MARY, CHURCHILL's 18 year old daughter, appears in the  
doorway.

MARY CHURCHILL

Come on Daddy--everyone's waiting.

WINSTON

Be there in a jiffy, my love.

MARY exits.

EDEN

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

WINSTON

*(shakes head)*

I doubt that. Halifax would never  
turn it down. He's the fourth son  
of an Earl. Fourth sons turn  
nothing down.

EDEN

I only wish the position had come  
your way in better times, sir. You  
have an enormous task ahead of you.

WINSTON

I hope it's not too late. I am  
very much afraid it is. But we can  
only do our best.

**INT. LIVING ROOM/ 10 DOWNING STREET - DAY**

CLEMMIE and the CHURCHILL CHILDREN wear GAS-MASKS as they  
shout -

CHURCHILL CHILDREN  
HURRAY!

RANDOLPH CHURCHILL  
Hip Hip -

CHURCHILL CHILDREN  
HURRAY!

WINSTON enters - and stops, aghast, and stares at his family -

WINSTON  
Good lord, what a frightful sight!

CLEMMIE, SARAH CHURCHILL (26), DIANA CHURCHILL(31), RANDOLPH CHURCHILL (29) and his WIFE PAMELA (pregnant), and MARY CHURCHILL (18) all pull off their GAS MASKS, grab their glasses of CHAMPAGNE, then converge on him and kiss him.

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

CHURCHILL  
Thank you. Thank you.

PAMELA raises her glass -

PAMELA  
A toast! Come on!

DIANA  
Yes!

Mary makes her way to sit on a cushion on the floor next to Winston.

She looks proudly at WINSTON -

CLEMMIE  
My darling husband--Something you all might not know is that on the eve of our marriage I got "cold feet"--but as I'd already called off two engagements by the age of 21 I was in danger of gaining a reputation for being a 'bolter'--and it would've been poor form to call off a third!

LAUGHTER. WINSTON smiles.

RANDOLPH  
Hear hear.

DIANA  
Lucky for Daddy.

CLEMMIE

But the real reason for my wintry feet was because I knew, even then, that his priority would be public life. It worried a young girl greatly--this wretched thought of coming second, eternally. But so it has proven to be. And in due course (*Mary takes Winstons hand*) our children would also have to make their own peace with this same fact.

(*directly to Winston*)

We all did, you see, in our own ways. And now, today, we all receive our reward--proof that our small sacrifice was for a far, far greater good. I give you, your father, my beloved husband - the Prime Minister.

ALL

Prime Minister!

They raise their GLASSES in a toast -

CHURCHILL

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

FAMILY

Not bugging it up!

**EXT. BIG BEN / LONDON - DAY**

BIG BEN starts the WESTMINSTER CHIME -

**CAPTION: MONDAY, MAY 13, 1940**

**INT. WESTMINSTER HALL/ PARLIAMENT - DAY**

WINSTON approaches EDEN in the ancient hall and together they climb the steps beneath the great gothic WINDOW.

WINSTON

Belgium was a ploy. They just punched through the Ardennes into France and crossed the Meuse in under 24 hours!

EDEN

No-one can cross the Meuse River in 24 hours.

WINSTON

Apparently the Germans can.

**INT. CLOCK TOWER - DAY**

BIG BEN strikes the hour - 3 PM.

**INT. COMMONS/ PARLIAMENT - DAY**

To the sound of the distant BELLS, WINSTON enters, with EDEN, and small knuckle-knocking on woodwork, mainly from the LABOUR benches.

WINSTON looks around, not actually surprised at the contemptuous reception.

WINSTON  
(to EDEN)  
Contempt. Well, you have to  
start somewhere.

In the LORDS GALLERY, above, HALIFAX enters and looks down at proceedings, and on -

WINSTON, looking at his FOB-WATCH.

The HUBBUB dies down and WINSTON puts on his GLASSES.

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

WINSTON reaches into his waistcoat for his TYPED SPEECH, then delivers his MAIDEN SPEECH as PRIME MINISTER...

WINSTON  
Mr Speaker. On Friday evening last--  
I received His Majesty's commission  
to form a new administration...

ANGLE ON: CONSERVATIVE MP's, all looking worried.

WINSTON (CONT'D)  
...It was the evident wish and will  
of Parliament, and the Nation, that  
this should be conceived on the  
broadest possible basis, and that  
it should include all parties.

**INT. BEDROOM / 10 DOWNING STREET - DAY**

CLOSE ON: TYPED PAGE (with TEXT) being rapidly tugged from a TYPEWRITER CARRIAGE (to a LOUD explosive ratchet-whirr)!!!

CUT TO:

WINSTON (O.S.)  
A War Cabinet has been convened...

CLOSE ON: TYPE-WRITER keys typing..."A War Cabinet has been convened" -

WIDE: ELIZABETH TYPES, as WINSTON dictates -

WINSTON (CONT'D)  
Correction - "has been formed" -

ELIZABETH adjusts the PATEN, then types - "**formed**" above "**convened**" -

#### INT. COMMONS/ PARLIAMENT - DAY

WINSTON  
- has been formed--of five members -

#### INT. BEDROOM/ 10 DOWNING STREET - DAY

WINSTON  
...representing, with the  
Opposition parties, the unity of  
the Nation.

CUT TO:

CLOSE ON: A FRESHLY TYPED PAGE (ROUGH DRAFT) is set down on the desk by ELIZABETH's hand. The stationary bears the Prime Minister's monogram, and we see typed TEXT plus several phrases struck out (between parentheses).

The CAMERA moves in on the paragraph that reads...

"The three party Leaders have agreed to serve, either in the War Cabinet, or in (*positions of authority*\*) high executive office." (\* denotes struck through phrase)

ELIZABETH (O.S.)  
The three party Leaders have agreed  
to serve, either in the War Cabinet-

#### INT. COMMONS/ PARLIAMENT - DAY

ELIZABETH (O.S.)	WINSTON
- or in high executive office.	- or in high executive office.

WINSTON (CONT'D)  
The three fighting Services have  
been filled.

#### INT. HALLWAY/ 10 DOWNING STREET - DAY

OUTSIDE the BATHROOM DOOR - ELIZABETH LAYTON waits, with a PAD and PAPER, taking down his dictation...

WINSTON  
Sawyers is she there?

ELIZABETH  
Yes she is.. I mean, I am

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

SOUNDS of him taking a BATH, the SPONGE being squeezed over his head...She starts to move away, but is arrested by -

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

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

WINSTON (O.S.)  
"With this agreement, I now invite  
the House -  
*(water sounds)*  
- by the resolution which stands in  
my name, to record its approval,  
and to declare its confidence in  
the new government."

Sound of WINSTON getting out of the BATH.

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

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

#### **INT. COMMONS/ PARLIAMENT - DAY**

WINSTON  
I now invite the House by a  
resolution to declare its  
confidence in the new government.

ANGLE on the CONSERVATIVE PARTY - unimpressed.

KINGSLEY-WOOD advises A JUNIOR CONSERVATIVE, ERNLE HASTINGS.

KINGSLEY WOOD  
Look to Chamberlain's handkerchief.  
If he waves it at the end of  
Churchill's speech, we show  
approval, if not, keep quiet.

ERNLE HASTINGS looks over at CHAMBERLAIN.



CHAMBERLAIN, still on the front bench but not in the PM's chair, draws a WHITE HANDKERCHIEF out of his BREAST POCKET and folds it in his LAP.

ERNLE HASTINGS nods - understanding.

WINSTON

It must be remembered that we are  
in the preliminary stage of one of  
the greatest battles in history...

**INT. OFFICE/ 10 DOWNING STREET - NIGHT**

CLOSE ON: A HEAVILY MARKED-UP PAGE of TYPED SPEECH (ROUGH DRAFT) much worked-over, annotated, altered - with WINSTON's HAND just then adding the latest change in the margins...we see his HAND write (*in his tiny cursive scrawl*) -

**and that many (arrangements\*) preparations have to be made here at home.**

WINSTON (O.S.)

...and that many preparations have  
to be made here at home.

WIDE: WINSTON, alone in his OFFICE, hunkered at NIGHT, goes through the speech, meticulous, obsessive, a perfectionist.

WINSTON (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Sir, I take up my task with  
buoyancy and hope -

**INT. OFFICE/ 10 DOWNING STREET - DAY**

CLOSE ON: The TYPEWRITER hammers typing the CLEAN (FINAL) DRAFT of the speech, on SMALLER SHEETS of PAPER, the TEXT now set out like BLANK VERSE in a POEM, or in the BIBLE, each phrase spaced apart from the next -

**and say to the House, as I said to those who have joined the government -**

WINSTON (O.S.)

- and say to the House, as I said  
to those who have joined the  
government -

**INT/EXT. WINSTONS CAR, PARLIAMENT - DAY**

WINSTONS car is stationary in the internal courtyard at Parliament. WINSTON, in the back seat (with ELIZABETH LAYTON in the front, her TYPE-WRITER on her knee, typing away) dictates.

WINSTON

- I have nothing to offer but  
blood, toil--tears--and sweat.

EXTREME CLOSE ON: her keys typing: "sweat!"

CLOSE ON: The PAGE being tugged from the TYPEWRITER.

WINSTON alights the car, and ELIZABETH passes the PAGES of the SPEECH, which he grabs, then hurries away.

**INT. COMMONS/ PARLIAMENT - DAY**

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

ANGLE ON WINSTON: readying himself for the final assault!

WINSTON

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

ANGLE ON: HALIFAX, in the GALLERY - he shoots a look to CHAMBERLAIN.

WINSTON (CONT'D)

That is our policy. You ask, what is our aim? I can answer in one word. Victory - victory at all costs, victory in spite of terror, victory however long and hard the road may be. For without victory, there is no survival.

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

Small KNUCKLE-KNOCKING begins - but it is MUTED.

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

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

The TORIES sit back - NONE APPLAUD.

**EXT - ROSE GARDEN/ DOWNING STREET - DAY**

CHAMBERLAIN, attempting to catch his breath, sits on a bench looking across the rose in bloom so ripe they're almost rotten.

HALIFAX sees, then approaches CHAMBERLAIN.

HALIFAX

"Our policy is to wage war--At all costs--No survival". Winston is incapable of pronouncing the word peace, let alone engaging in peace talks.

He sits next to CHAMBERLAIN.

CHAMBERLAIN

Awful, the thought that I shall never see my country at peace again.

HALIFAX

Neville?

CHAMBERLAIN turns and faces HALIFAX - ashen faced.

CHAMBERLAIN

I have cancer.

HALIFAX

Oh Neville.

CHAMBERLAIN

Winston must be removed from office.

HALIFAX

How?

CHAMBERLAIN

A vote of "no confidence".

HALIFAX

If we can get him to declare that he refuses to consider a negotiated peace with Germany then perhaps you and I will have grounds to resign. The party wont stand for that, you're still the chairman for heavens sake, that will force a vote of "no confidence" in his leadership and he'll be finished.

CHAMBERLAIN

And would you agree to be Prime Minister?

HALIFAX

With Winston out of the way ... who can say, but the important thing, Neville, is that your policies, of peace and the protection of this nation, would be back on the table.

CHAMBERLAIN

On record.

HALIFAX

Pardon?

CHAMBERLAIN

He must declare on record his refusal to engage in peace talks, we must have it in writing.

HALIFAX's eyes glisten with renewed purpose.

#### **EXT. HM TREASURY - LONDON - DAY**

ELIZABETH LAYTON makes her way to work, but today it's a new location - the grand TREASURY BUILDING in WHITEHALL, crossing, through traffic, Horse Guards Road and entering through the pillared main doors...

#### **INT. TREASURY - CONTINUOUS**

ECU - Elizabeth's hand signs the Official Secrets Act which is duly stamped.

An elderly CIVIL SERVANT hands her a security pass.

JOHN EVANS meets ELIZABETH in the lobby and leads her down to an INCONSPICUOUS DOOR where a SOLDIER checks her security pass.

#### **INT. WAR ROOMS/ UNDERGROUND BUNKER - DAY**

EVANS leads ELIZABETH down a narrow staircase that leads to the SECRET WAR-ROOMS, the underground nerve centre of BRITISH HIGH COMMAND.

But the place is very humble, low ceiling and narrow hallways, the rooms small. No hint of luxury here. Austerity Britain.

JOHN EVANS

Follow me.

ELIZABETH

What goes on down here?

JOHN EVANS

That's a need to know. And you don't.

JOHN EVANS keeps walking at a brisk pace through the telephonists room.

ELIZABETH, clocking her surroundings, notices a door with a dial lock that reads "**VACANT**".

ELIZABETH

The lavatory?

EVANS

For the PM's use only.

EVANS leads her down the corridor, through a narrow room of bunk beds...John Evans gestures towards them.

EVANS (CONT'D)

Sleeping quarters, for when you miss the last train.

They pass the MAP ROOM -

JOHN EVANS

That's the Map Room. No women allowed.

ELIZABETH LAYTON

What department is this?

JOHN EVANS

Indiscretion in conversation, or any other form, within or without these rooms regarding what happens here is a statutory offense and punishable by up to two years imprisonment with hard labour. Clear?

ELIZABETH

Crystal.

JOHN EVANS

Good.

Elizabeth follows Evans as they stop at the War Cabinet Room.

JOHN EVANS (CONT'D)

That's the War Cabinet room--never! Don't mean to be rough on you but them's the rules.

They arrive at the TYPISTS POOL ROOM, full of NINE bust TYPISTS.

JOHN EVANS (CONT'D)  
This is the typists room, you are  
allowed in here.

TYPISTS  
(In Unison)  
Good Morning Sir.

And then indicates another Room - the door is ajar, its no bigger than a shoe-box!

JOHN EVANS  
And here's you.

ELIZABETH enters the tiny, windowless room not much bigger than a cupboard, containing only a desk and a chair.

CUT TO:

She arranges her effects - a BLACK PEN, a RED PEN and a HOLE PUNCH on her desk, and then sets carefully a PHOTOGRAPH of a HANDSOME SOLDIER.

#### **INT. MAP ROOM/ WAR ROOMS - NIGHT**

The CHIEFS OF STAFF brief WINSTON: IRONSIDE for the ARMY, DOWDING (a New Zealander) for the AIR FORCE, and a NAVAL ADMIRAL (DUDLEY POUND).

CHAMBERLAIN and HALIFAX are also present - as other OFFICERS all crowd in and look up at -

THREE LARGE OPERATIONS MAPS of EUROPE hang on three different walls, each full of pins and strings to show positions - ONE for the ARMY, ONE for the NAVY, ONE for the AIR-WAR.

Down the centre of the room runs a long table bearing MULTIPLE TELEPHONES of different colors which are always RINGING...and being answered by OFFICERS of the three services.

The BRIEFING begins in front of - the ARMY MAP - showing (with pins and colored string) how far WESTWARD the GERMAN LINE has advanced.

GENERAL IRONSIDE  
Belgium and Holland may fall any hour.

WINSTON  
The French?

GENERAL IRONSIDE

The entire French ninth army--some two hundred thousand men--have capitulated.

HALIFAX

All of them?!

GENERAL IRONSIDE

Capitulated. Surrendered. Deserted. It was a rout. All our land forces, roughly 300,000 men, are now in full retreat.

WINSTON

(to DOWDING)

Air-cover? For our troops?

AIR MARSHALL DOWDING

The Luftwaffe control the skies. We simply don't have enough planes to challenge them. In fact, I strongly recommend we stop sending our precious fighter-planes to be wasted in France--save them for our own defence.

WINSTON moves to the NAVAL MAP, showing WARSHIP DEPLOYMENTS...

WINSTON

And our navy--sits idle, neutralized, useless.

NAVAL ADMIRAL POUND

Our fleets no sooner come within their range than we come under blistering air attack.

WINSTON

Their speed is devastating.

WINSTON returns to the ARMY MAP -

GENERAL IRONSIDE

Panzer tanks. Plunging rapidly westward, through the centre.

WINSTON

But they will have to pause for fuel supplies.

IRONSIDE looks at GENERAL ISMAY.

GENERAL IRONSIDE

Ismay?

ISMAY

This is not the last war, Sir.  
Their tanks can stop for fuel at a  
petrol station.

WINSTON

Petrol station?

GENERAL IRONSIDE

The road to Paris now lies open.  
7 million refugees are on the move.  
Collectively we are looking at the  
collapse of Western Europe in a  
few days.

ISMAY

Should the public be told?

WINSTON

Not yet. First, we must rouse  
our old friends to an heroic  
resistance. France must be saved.

CAMERA moves in on the MAP...

Over this, we start to dissolve in -

- footage of a FLAMINGO PASSENGER PLANE in flight -
- as the MAP itself dissolves into -
- a real rural LANDSCAPE, as seen from above...

#### **EXT. AERIAL/ SKIES OVER FRANCE - DAY**

WINSTON's FLAMINGO PASSENGER PLANE flies over FRENCH FIELDS.  
The PLANE is soon joined by two SPITFIRE FIGHTER ESCORTS, one  
on each wing.

#### **INT. FLAMINGO/ CIVILIAN PASSENGER PLANE - DAY**

We see pilots in the cockpit looks down, a drink is poured  
and is taken to Winston as he looks down - His face goes  
grey as he sees - for the first time - CIVILIAN REFUGEES,  
long meandering columns of desperate humanity.

On BOARD with WINSTON - ISMAY, DOWDING and IRONSIDE.

The SHOCK of this plays on his face.

WINSTON's POV of: the vast tragedy. Amongst straggling  
vagabonds and columns of refugees. Signs of the GERMAN  
conquest - abandoned TANKS and ARTILLERY stand in flames.



CLOSE ON: A YOUNG REFUGEE BOY (his POV) looks up at WINSTON's PLANE. He holds his left hand up to his left eye to look at the plane.

UP WITH **CAPTION:**      **THURSDAY MAY 16**

WINSTON  
This can't go on. Must not.

**INT/EXT. FRENCH AIRCRAFT HANGER - DAY**

A LARGE DELEGATION of CIVILIANS and MILITARY await WINSTON, as WINSTON alights the PLANE and approaches down a long RED CARPET.

PRIME MINISTER REYNAUD steps forward and shakes WINSTON's hand.

WINSTON  
(to REYNAUD)  
Brace yourselves, I am about to  
add to your terrible suffering--  
by speaking French.

They sit at a long table in the hangar.

WINSTON (CONT'D)  
(in bad FRENCH)  
Bien que notre situation soit très  
grave ce n'est pas la première fois  
que nous faisons face à une crise,  
ensemble.

Subtitles:

*Although our plight is grave,  
this was not the first time we  
has been in a crisis together.*

REYNAUD  
Perhaps in English, Prime Minister.

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. Premier,  
you must!  
(MORE)

WINSTON (CONT'D)  
*(in ENGLISH)*  
 You must counter-attack!

Vous devez contrattaquer! Il le faut! 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.

REYNAUD  
 We sincerely appreciate your efforts and optimism, but--we have lost.

WINSTON seems unable/unwilling to process this -

WINSTON  
 As long as--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?

**EXT. FRENCH-AIRFIELD - DAY**

WINSTON's FLAMINGO takes off.

**INT. FRENCH STAFF-CAR/ FRENCH AIRFIELD - DAY**

REYNAUD and DALADIER, side by side in the car, watch WINSTON's FLAMINGO climbing into the sky -

REYNAUD  
*(in FRENCH, with SUBTITLES)*  
 Il Devine! Delusional! (He's delusional)

DALADIER  
 C'est Anglais (He's English.)

**INT. PARLIAMENTARY LIBRARY - DAY**

SIR JOHN SIMON and LORD LONDONDERRY walk and talk along the library gallery -

SIR JOHN SIMON  
He's an actor. In love with the  
sound of his own voice.

LONDONDERRY  
Oh I love to listen to him--but  
we must never take his advice. Has  
a hundred ideas a day. Four are  
good, the other 96 downright  
dangerous.

SIR JOHN SIMON  
His father was a great orator  
but...

LONDONDERRY  
Until he lost his mind to syphilis -

SIR JOHN SIMON  
How nations suffer for the sins of  
their fathers.

Across the AISLE, STANHOPE is also talking about CHURCHILL  
with SIR SAMUEL HOARE -

STANHOPE  
My opinion? At this critical  
juncture for the empire, we have a  
drunkard at the wheel.

SIR SAMUEL HOARE  
Wakes with a scotch, bottle of  
champagne at lunch, another at  
dinner, brandy and port till the  
wee hours...I wouldn't let him  
borrow my bicycle!

**INT. TREASURY TOILETS - DAY**

KINGSLEY WOOD is talking to a COLLEAGUE -

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

**INT. CHAPEL - DAY**

HALIFAX is sitting with KING GEORGE VI.

HALIFAX

We might have to replace him,  
Bertie.

KING GEORGE VI

Replace him?!

HALIFAX

We must strive for peace--for every  
son and daughter of this land so  
that we may emerge from this crisis  
with something recognisable as  
'home.'

KING GEORGE VI

Spoken like a true Prime Minister.

**INT. KITCHEN/ 10 DOWNING STREET - DAY**

YELLOW POWDERED EGGS are being MIXED with WATER, then fried  
then slopped onto a plate as SCRAMBLED EGGS. On a BREAKFAST  
TRAY (once more) are set - (in rapid cuts) BACON and POWDERED  
EGGS, SCOTCH and SODA, a GLASS of WINE...

CAPTION:     **SUNDAY, MAY 19, 1940**

**INT. DRESSING ROOM/BEDROOM/ 10 DOWNING STREET - DAY**

JOHN EVANS stands outside the LOO (whose door is closed),  
with a note-pad and pen, ready to record WINSTON's  
instructions.

JOHN EVANS

Sir, you need to reply to the Lord  
Privy Seal.

**INT. LOO/ 10 DOWNING STREET - DAY**

WINSTON sits on the TOILET, reading a French newspaper whose  
front page shows a picture of FRENCH SOLDIER with his arm  
around his FRENCH SWEETHEART, holding up his fingers in a V-  
FOR-VICTORY gesture (palm-outward). The headline is "**V POUR  
LA VICTOIRE**". Winston is sitting on the toilet.

WINSTON

The Privy Seal?

JOHN EVANS

Yes sir?

WINSTON  
*(reading)*  
*"V for Victory"*

WINSTON closes the newspaper, stands -

WINSTON (CONT'D)  
 Tell the Lord Privy Seal -

**INT. DRESSING ROOM/BEDROOM/ 10 DOWNING STREET - DAY**

WINSTON (O.S.)  
 - tell him I'm sealed in the  
 Privy -

We hear a flush and then WINSTON appears, wearing his pink silk dressing-gown.

WINSTON (CONT'D)  
 - and I can only deal with  
 one shit at a time!

He goes into the bedroom, followed by EVANS, where we find -

ELIZABETH LAYTON, typing at the nearby desk, and -

ANTHONY EDEN, seated in a chair beside the bed, reading  
 WINSTON'S TYPED SPEECH...

WINSTON (CONT'D)  
 Don't spare me, Anthony--be frank.

EDEN  
 Mmmmm.

As EDEN reads, WINSTON stares at him, awaiting his reaction.

WINSTON  
*(to EDEN)*  
 I think it's rather good. The  
 ending especially.

When EDEN says nothing the wait becomes agonizing. EDEN finishes reading the speech, turns over the last page to see if there is more on the back. There isn't.

WINSTON waits for the verdict. EDEN takes off his glasses slowly and looks up at a hopeful WINSTON -

EDEN  
 I don't think so.

WINSTON  
 You don't think so, what?

EDEN

You're suggesting we're--somehow--  
winning.

(beat)

We're not.

WINSTON

No but...it will inspire them.

WINSTON (CONT'D)

You don't understand -

EDEN

Winston, I know -

WINSTON

(stubbornly)

- no, no, no. I am going to imbue  
 them, Anthony, with a spirit of  
 feeling they don't yet know they  
 have!

Silence. Stalemate. EDEN looks gravely concerned.

EDEN

You asked my opinion. I caution  
 against it.

WINSTON stares at his trusted ally, his hopes fading, until -  
 he snaps his finger, pointing at EDEN -

WINSTON

Cicero!

He's on the move again - heading out of the bedroom, with  
 EVANS and LAYTON, and finally EDEN, forced to follow...

# **INT. HALLWAY/ 10 DOWNING STREET - DAY**

WINSTON

"Live as", "Live as brave men" -  
 da,da,da - "and if fortune is  
 adverse, something, something,  
 something"

He then enters the -

# **INT. LIBRARY/ 10 DOWNING STREET - DAY**

WINSTON

(shouting)

CLEMMIE!!! CAT!!! CLEMMIE!!!

As he looks for his book in the library he finds  
 CLEMMIE...STRESSED, struggling to cope, busily writing  
 CHEQUES.

WINSTON (CONT'D)

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

CLEMMIE

Did you hear what I said?!

WINSTON

What's that?

CLEMMIE

We're broke.

WINSTON

Everybody out! Get out!

He shoos JOHN EVANS, ELIZABETH and EDEN from the room as if they were cats.

CLEMMIE

I dare not write another cheque.

WINSTON

I'll economise - only four cigars a day!

CLEMMIE

You're insufferable!

*(beat)*

Was there something else? Anything?

WINSTON

Yes, my love for you.

CLEMMIE

How much have you had to drink this morning?

He goes to her, drawing up a chair, close -

WINSTON

I see you now as I first saw you in nineteen hundred and four across a crowded dance-floor. I simply stood-speechless.

CLEMMIE

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

WINSTON

Four years till we saw each other again.

CLEMMIE

They went by in an absolute flash.

WINSTON  
You didn't lack for admirers. Your  
*fidèle serviteur* in Sidney Peel.

CLEMMIE  
Brilliant man.

WINSTON  
Lionel Earle.

CLEMMIE  
Wonderful dancer.

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

CLEMMIE  
Pig. (*little snort*)

WINSTON  
The same.

They look at each other, their faces very close.

CLEMMIE  
Are we terribly old?

WINSTON  
Yes. I'm afraid you are.

She LAUGHS and pushes him away. Winston takes her hand.

WINSTON (CONT'D)  
Will you hear me read my speech for  
tonight's broadcast?

**EXT. 10 DOWNING STREET / TREASURY - DAY**

WINSTON emerges and is accosted by... the PRESS.

TERENCE BIRKEMP  
Prime Minister - the situation  
in France - Is it true we're  
in full retreat? Is France lost?

He fires the REPORTER a steely look of rebuke and then spins,  
faces their CAMERAS, 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).  
WINSTON crosses the road, practising a tongue-twister as he  
enters the TREASURY.



**INT. WINSTON'S OFFICE/ WAR ROOMS - NIGHT**

WINSTON sitting on his bed, is AGITATED, UNEASY, UNSURE now about the speech he is to deliver on RADIO.

ELIZABETH LAYTON sits at a desk in the corner holding files and paperwork.

Two MICROPHONES sit on a table. An ACTOR also stands by. The Producer guides Winston to his desk.

BBC PRODUCER

So--if you will sit here - at your desk

WINSTON

Mmmmm.

WINSTON sits, studying with CONCERN the SPEECH lying on the table in front of him, and taking out his PEN.

BBC PRODUCER

- and speak slowly and clearly.  
Into the microphone.

WINSTON starts to jot last-minute CHANGES to the SPEECH. Increasingly PRESSURISED, he CROSSES OUT the CHANGES he just made, and tries to write alternatives. He's clearly in a state.

BBC PRODUCER (CONT'D)

So--if you are ready--on the stroke of 9 the light will go red, and we shall go live to the nation. Nine O Clock. Red light. You begin. Yes?

But WINSTON isn't ready. He's too busy trying to rewrite his speech

The SWEEP SECOND HAND on the WALL CLOCK approaches 12.

The PRODUCER, and ELIZABETH, become very concerned now as the last seconds vanish -

BBC PRODUCER (CONT'D)

Prime Minister? Are we ready?

WINSTON

(to himself)

One moment, one moment -

BBC PRODUCER

We are going live. Prime -

WINSTON

(exploding)

I SAID ONE MOMENT, DAMN YOU!

This eruption stuns the PRODUCER and ELIZABETH.

WINSTON's hand, holding the PEN, shakes now with indecision as he fails to think of the right words in time -

BBC PRODUCER  
Four--three--two--one...

On the stroke of 9 pm, the light goes RED, bathing him in red light. They are LIVE.

SILENCE. TOTAL SILENCE. The PRODUCER is now in a panic. WINSTON seems frozen for a second, until -

WINSTON takes a breath and 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  
France and Flanders."

ELIZABETH sighs relief, then follows on her carbon copy, mouthing the words, many of which she knows by heart.

CAMERA follows the WIRES that lead out of the office, down the corridor, and into the TRANSMITTER ROOM. Reveal BBC Radio Recorder men.

#### **INT. BUCKINGHAM PALACE - NIGHT**

CLOSE ON: A RADIO.

PULL BACK to reveal: The KING, looking up from the PAPER, as he listens to WINSTON's speech on the radio, and studies his FRAMED FAMILY PHOTOS of his CHILDREN...Princesses ELIZABETH and MARGARET.

WINSTON (O.S.)  
*"The Germans...by a remarkable  
combination of air bombing and  
heavily armored tanks, have broken  
through the French defenses north  
of the Maginot Line, and strong  
columns of their armoured vehicles  
are ravaging the open country..."*

CLOSE ON: NEWSPAPER - the HEADLINE reads:

**IN CONTROL, SAY FRENCH Despite Nazi Raid**

**INT. FOREIGN OFFICE - NIGHT**

HALIFAX sits at the table, a minister standing behind him as they listen to Winston's radio address

WINSTON (O.S.)  
*"...which for the first day or two was without defenders...But!...I have invincible confidence in the French Army and its leaders. Only a very small part of that splendid Army has yet been heavily engaged; and only a very small part of France has yet been invaded...Side by side, the British and French peoples--have advanced..."*

HALIFAX is disgusted by this DISTORTION of the facts.

HALIFAX  
*"Advanced"?! How bloody dare he!*

**EXT. FRENCH BATTLEFIELD - EVENING**

AERIAL SHOT OF: the BRITISH and FRENCH armies in retreat - leaving behind SMOKING TRUCKS and ABANDONED ARTILLERY.

TRACKING OVER this ravaged landscape, we see-

CUT TO:

- the abstracted landscape of a human CORPSE...

WINSTON (O.S.)  
*"...the British and French peoples-- 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.*

...until an EYE is revealed in CLOSE-UP, staring into CAMERA.

**INT. WINSTON'S OFFICE/ WAR ROOMS - NIGHT**

CLOSE-UP ON: the RED RECORDING LIGHT.

WINSTON  
*"But now one bond unites us all - to wage war until victory is won, and never to surrender ourselves to servitude and shame, whatever the cost and the agony may be...Conquer we must, as conquer we shall."*

CLOSE-UP ON: WINSTON'S FACE...

ELIZABETH LAYTON  
Well done, sir.

WINSTON sits back - UNHAPPY.

CLOSE-UP ON: the RED RECORDING LIGHT goes off. The BROADCAST is over.

**INT. LIBRARY/ NUMBER 10 DOWNING STREET - NIGHT**

CLEMMIE turns off the RADIO, concerned.

**INT. CORRIDORS - WAR ROOMS - NIGHT**

WINSTON, UNHAPPY, walks up to a DOOR, enters it -

**INT. TUNNEL/ BENEATH 10 DOWNING STREET - NIGHT**

- then walks down the long tunnel (connecting the WAR ROOMS with DOWNING STREET) until, at its end, he enters an ELEVATOR-

**INT. ELEVATOR/ 10 DOWNING STREET - NIGHT**

- WINSTON rides the ELEVATOR upward -

**INT. MAIN HALLWAY/ 10 DOWNING STREET - NIGHT**

- WINSTON exits the ELEVATOR, and begins to climb the stairs -

**INT. LIVING ROOM/ 10 DOWNING STREET - NIGHT**

CLEMMIE  
You did marvelously.

WINSTON  
For the last ten years I was the only one who told them the truth. Until tonight. There's no advance. It's a shambles. We're in full retreat.

CLEMMIE  
Would you be serving them tonight by denying them sleep, terrifying their children?

WINSTON  
Even if the terror is coming?!

CLEMMIE  
Because it's coming! There is time enough for truth.

He nods, accepting this. He walks off, still anxious. She watches him go, worried.

**INT. KITCHEN/ WAR ROOM - DAY**

The front page of a newspaper: a PHOTO of WINSTON doing his V FOR VICTORY SIGN (palm inward).

ELIZABETH LAYTON, leaning by the door, reading the paper.

At her side stands another typist, SYBIL, reading another copy of the same PAPER -

ELIZABETH is giggling -

WINSTON passes the doorway in the corridor, then re-appears -

WINSTON  
What's so funny?

ELIZABETH  
Prime Minister sir -

WINSTON  
Go on. What is it?

**INT. CORRIDORS - WAR ROOMS - DAY**

ELIZABETH steps out into the corridor so they can have some privacy -

ELIZABETH  
Not sure if you know this but--  
the way you are doing your  
**V For Victory** sign--well, in  
the poorer quarters that gesture  
means--something else.

WINSTON  
What does it mean?

ELIZABETH  
Wouldn't like to say sir.

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

ELIZABETH  
Up yer' bum. Sir.

WINSTON  
Up yer' bum?

WINSTON roars with LAUGHTER - which sets ELIZABETH laughing -

ELIZABETH  
 The way you do it, sir. Yes sir.  
*(demonstrates)*  
 But if you turn it around -  
*(palm out)*  
 - that's fine.

WINSTON  
 I see.

ELIZABETH  
 Wouldn't like millions of people to  
 take it the wrong way.

WINSTON steps away, still chuckling -

WINSTON  
 Up yer' bum!

**INT. BUCKINGHAM PALACE / WINSTON'S OFFICE, WAR ROOMS - DAY**

KING GEORGE speaks into the TELEPHONE -

KING GEORGE VI  
 Don't wish to take too much of your  
 time.  
*(pause)*  
 I heard you--on the--wireless.

WINSTON  
 Was I comprehensible?

KING GEORGE VI  
 The public need to be led, not  
misled--not left to work it out  
 for them-themselves.

WINSTON  
 Right. Will that be all, your  
 majesty?

KING GEORGE VI  
 Yes. Good day Prime Minister.  
*(click)*

WINSTON puts down the PHONE and turns to EVANS.

WINSTON  
 I believe I've just recieved a  
 royal rap on the knuckles.

**INT. WAR CABINET ROOM/ WAR ROOMS - DAY**

CAPTION: **SATURDAY, MAY 25, 1940**

WAR CABINET MEETING 1

PRESENT: 17 PERSONS. The Main War Cabinet, minus WINSTON (CHAMBERLAIN, HALIFAX, GREENWOOD, ATLEE) and the FOLLOWING (ALEXANDER, SINCLAIR, COOPER, CADOGAN, ANDERSON, POUND, DOWDING, IRONSIDE, BRIDGES, ISMAY, NICHOLL, WILKINSON)

CABINET SECRETARY BRIDGES is helping to seat everyone as they move around the table looking for their placement card.

CABINET SECRETARY BRIDGES  
*(indicating to HALIFAX's seat)*  
 Foreign Minister?

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 ATTLEE and GREENWOOD, and nothing for CHAMBERLAIN and HALIFAX, who do not expect to have their hands shaken.

WINSTON  
 Tiny, good to see you.  
*(to ISMAY)*  
 Pug. Welcome to the War Cabinet, such as we are.  
*(to ALL)*  
 Please, sit.

He sits.

WINSTON (CONT'D)  
 War is usually a catalogue of blunders, and this one is proving no exception.  
*(beat)*  
 General - its all yours.

IRONSIDE  
 You have this morning's report in front of you -

WINSTON  
 Yes. General -

IRONSIDE  
 - if you turn to page 3 -  
 Ummm - so on page 3 - are we all Looking at page 3? - no, the other document - second paragraph down -

WINSTON, agitated, reeling from the royal reprimand, taps his wedding ring finger on the side of his chair impatiently -

GREENWOOD  
 Second?

IRONSIDE

Yes, the second--no, page -

WINSTON can stand it no longer -

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. What's going on?

IRONSIDE

Right. *(beat)* As of 2200 hours 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.

CHAMBERLAIN

How many of our men are trapped?

IRONSIDE

All of them.

*(pause)*

Our nation's entire professional  
soldiery. And...

*(pause)*

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

Silence -

WINSTON

General--are you telling  
me that we shall have lost the  
British army by the next few days?

IRONSIDE

That's correct.

ATTLEE

What are the French doing?

IRONSIDE

Premiere 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.

ATTLEE

Fifty miles! Good God!

GREENWOOD

For a German tank, two days.

WINSTON

They must not reach the sea! Not before we evacuate our men! 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 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)

General. 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

So? 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 west.

WINSTON

Well why didn't you say so?! How many men do we have there?

IRONSIDE

4,000. More or less.

WINSTON

Then have them go east--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.

ATTLEE

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 here, as WINSTON taps his SIGNET RING on the wooden arm of his chair.

WINSTON (CONT'D)

...tell--Nicholson--that it is of the greatest importance to this island that his garrison 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.

ATTLEE

It's suicide.

HALIFAX, emotions rising, 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  
 What 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  
 that maniac 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 before we get  
 our boys off that bloody beach!*"  
 (pause)  
 I take full responsibility.

HALIFAX  
 Really?

WINSTON  
 (temper exploding)  
 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  
 (frustrated)  
 What is this?!

HALIFAX

What is your mind on the principle of peace talks? Do we take it for example, that you preclude yourself from even considering engaging in such negotiations?

A TENSE SILENCE.

ANGLE ON: the TWO SECRETARIES, pencil's raised, waiting to record WINSTON's reply.

WINSTON, aware that history is listening, senses a TRAP -

WINSTON

I should like to speak to Viscount Halifax and Mr Chamberlain alone.

(to IRONSIDE)

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

(to BRIDGES)

Bridges! You too! Out! Hop it!

BRIDGES puts down his pencil. Consternation from those departing at this breach of protocol.

#### **INT. CORRIDOR - WAR ROOMS - DAY**

At the end of the line of unneeded WAR CABINET members filing out, comes the disgruntled BRIDGES with his TWO SECRETARIES.

#### **INT. WAR CABINET ROOM/ WAR ROOMS - DAY**

WINSTON lights his CIGAR, and takes his time, slowly approaching the HALIFAX seated at the back of the room.

HALIFAX

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

WINSTON

We are a sea-going nation. Have been since the Bronze Age. The Channel is ours--our moat--our battlement and the German doesn't recognise an expanse of water greater than a bloody lake! They have first to reach this island -

HALIFAX

- which will be full of terrified men, women and children, whom we have failed, despicably, in our duty of protection. Germany has won - we are entirely defenceless -

WINSTON

And who's fault is that ?!

CHAMBERLAIN averts his face.

HALIFAX

- facing the largest army the world has 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 Hitler then? Words? Words, Winston? Words alone?

(beat)

If you will not permit any talk of peace then I will be forced -

CHAMBERLAIN steps in, to stop Halifax from resigning.

CHAMBERLAIN

Might we not allow Edward simply to meet the Italian ambassador, Bastianini--discuss their possible role as mediators between us and Germany, and find out their price?

WINSTON is calmed by CHAMBERLAIN's manner -

WINSTON

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

WINSTON looks at HALIFAX, and sighs -

WINSTON (CONT'D)

I remain opposed to any negotiations -

CHAMBERLAIN

- of course -

WINSTON

- which might lead to a derogation of our rights and power.

HALIFAX

AS DO WE ALL! There is no question that our sovereignty is non-negotiable!

CHAMBERLAIN

Winston?

With nowhere left to turn - WINSTON gives a slow inclination of the head, and then - NODS.

CHAMBERLAIN (CONT'D)

Good. Thank you.

WINSTON

...but! No-one outside this room must ever know.

CHAMBERLAIN

Of course.

**INT. CORRIDOR - WAR ROOMS - NIGHT**

WINSTON walks through the corridors - then approaches and opens a SMALL LAVATORY DOOR. As he enters -

CLOSE ON: The door's lock, which slides from "VACANT" to "ENGAGED".

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

Inside, it's no LAVATORY. It is actually - a secret PRIVATE TELEPHONE SYSTEM, linking WINSTON with the ROOSEVELT WHITE HOUSE.

WINSTON, seated, holding the receiver, takes a few moments before he lifts the phone to his ear -

WINSTON

Mr President?

ROOSEVELT

Winston!

WINSTON

How are you Franklin?

ROOSEVELT

Fine. Fine. How are you Prime Minister?

WINSTON

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

ROOSEVELT

Ah! Yes!

WINSTON ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)  
- even 40 would - Well I -

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)  
- I did ask around, but just not possible I'm afraid. The Neutrality Act we signed last year has tied my hands. Just can't swing it. I tried.

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

ROOSEVELT  
*(wincing, hating not being able to help)*  
You got me there again. New law--preventing trans-shipment of military equipment.

WINSTON  
But we've paid for them--with the money we borrowed from you!

ROOSEVELT  
*(anguished)*  
So sorry, Winston.

WINSTON  
I need not impress upon you the trouble faced by the Western Hemisphere. Without your support, in some fashion...

Silence. A tense moment...

ROOSEVELT  
I know. I know. You are on my mind day and night.  
*(pause)*  
Look. We could--possibly...

But words fail the hampered ROOSEVELT and his voice trails off.

WINSTON  
Mr President--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, bunches his fist, swallows his RAGE, and then speaks again, as calmly as he can-

WINSTON

Anything you can do at this time would be welcome.

ROOSEVELT

Goodnight to you Winston.

(*feeling WINSTON's pain*)

It must be late there?

WINSTON

In more ways than you could possibly know.

He puts down the phone and sits back in his chair - stunned, fuming. But as he stews, he slowly - slowly - conceives an idea, a new IDEA!

#### **INT. MAP ROOM / WAR ROOMS - NIGHT**

WINSTON enters and strides past the staff, making for the LARGE MAP of EUROPE. He puts his finger on the FRENCH COAST, at DUNKIRK, encircled by RED THREAD. And then looks at ENGLAND, the COAST, and then taps DOVER on the map.

He turns, sees the DOZEN colorful TELEPHONES and addresses a NAVAL MAP-ROOM OFFICER -



WINSTON  
Get me Vice-Admiral Ramsay on one  
of these.

**EXT. DOVER CASTLE - PRE-SUNRISE (5 AM)**

HIGH AERIAL of the CASTLE atop the famous WHITE-CLIFFS.

**INT. ADMIRAL RAMSAY'S BEDROOM/ TUNNELS/ BENEATH DOVER CASTLE  
- NIGHT**

ADMIRAL RAMSAY is woken by a STAFFER.

STAFFER  
Admiral Ramsay?

RAMSAY  
Huh?

STAFFER  
It's the Prime Minister.

**INT. DYNAMO ROOM/ TUNNELS/ BENEATH 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 a PHONE, studies the COAST of ENGLAND.

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

RAMSAY  
Boats?

WINSTON

Yes. Civilian boats, as many as  
you can get your hands on.  
Country's full of boats--let's put  
'em to use. Bertie? You there?

RAMSAY

*(sceptical)*

Rrrr-ight.

WINSTON

- anyone with a pleasure craft  
bigger than 30 foot that can get to  
France. Longley's clipper,  
Fearnley's gin palace, any half-  
rotten fishing boat that'll float.

RAMSAY

Mmmm-hmmm.

WINSTON senses BERTIE's reticence...and makes a different  
appeal...

WINSTON

Help me stage this thing, Bertie.  
We must at least try to bring  
some of our boys home.

After a pause -

RAMSAY

I will have the BBC issue the  
order.

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

WINSTON

Oh-- Bertie--still there?

RAMSAY

Sir?

WINSTON

We need a name--for this Operation.

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

**INT. CORRIDOR/ WAR ROOMS - DAY**

**CAPTION: SUNDAY, MAY 26 1940**

WINSTON walks with EDEN, but then they pass an OFFICER's  
OFFICE, whose DOOR is open - and it's then that he hears, to  
his fury, the sound of a RADIO playing a SPEECH BY HITLER!  
WINSTON PULLS THE DOOR SHUT, silencing the dictator.

WINSTON and EDEN look at each other, then walk on, and stop before entering the WAR CABINET ROOM, (as if before taking the stage). WINSTON takes a deep breath and tries to shake off his worries. Only then does he enter, followed by EDEN -

**INT. WAR CABINET ROOM/ WAR ROOMS - DAY**

WAR CABINET MEETING 2.

PRESENT: 17 PERSONS. The Main War Cabinet (CHURCHILL, CHAMBERLAIN, HALIFAX, GREENWOOD, ATLEE) and the FOLLOWING (EDEN, ALEXANDER, SINCLAIR, CADOGAN, ANDERSON, POUND, DOWDING, IRONSIDE, BRIDGES, ISMAY, NICHOLL, WILKINSON)

A tense atmosphere - faces riven with doubt. The CABINET is standing, conferring anxiously with each other.....but then fall silent when WINSTON and ANTHONY EDEN enter.

WINSTON

Good day. I've asked the Minister for War to join us.

HALIFAX and CHAMBERLAIN share a look - this doesn't bode well.

All sit. WINSTON looks around the table - sees the fear and doubt and nervousness in his CABINET right away.

WINSTON starts to tap his SIGNET RING on his right hand on the wooden arm of his chair, until -

WINSTON (CONT'D)

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 -

CLOSE ON: the wooden arm of WINSTON's chair - the varnish has worn away from three weeks of such anxious tapping.

GREENWOOD

Prime Minister. You don't believe that.

ATLEE

France will fall.

GREENWOOD

Yes.

ATLEE

And invasion of this island will follow.

WINSTON changes the subject -

WINSTON

What news from Calais?

ATTLEE

What?

IRONSIDE

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

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

CHAMBERLAIN nods at HALIFAX -

HALIFAX

On 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 telegraphs our weakness.

CHURCHILL looks to EDEN for support -

EDEN

Agreed.

WINSTON

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 (CONT'D)

-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

Oh nonsense! Bastianini informed me-

WINSTON

The approach -

HALIFAX

- The only slippery slope -

WINSTON

WILL YOU STOP INTERRUPTING ME  
WHILE I AM INTERRUPTING YOU!?  
When I chose my War Cabinet I took  
great care to surround myself with  
old rivals. I may have overdone it.

Only GREENWOOD and ATTLEE and EDEN 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

THE DEADLY DANGER HERE IS THIS  
ROMANTIC FANTASY OF FIGHTING TO THE  
END!!! What is "the end" if not  
the destruction of all?  
There is nothing heroic in going  
down fighting if it can be avoided.  
Nothing even remotely patriotic in  
death or glory if the odds are on  
the former; nothing inglorious in  
trying to shorten a war that we are  
clearly losing.

WINSTON cannot bear this talk -

WINSTON

Europe is still -

HALIFAX (CONT'D)

Europe is lost!

HALIFAX (CONT'D)

And before our forces are wiped out  
completely this is the time to  
negotiate, in order to obtain the  
best conditions possible. It would  
not be in Hitler's interests to  
insist on outrageous terms. He will  
know his own weaknesses. He will be  
reasonable.

WINSTON cannot bear this talk -

WINSTON  
 When will the lesson be learned?  
 How many more dictators must be  
wooed, appeased--Good God, given  
immense privileges, before we  
 learn!--that you can't reason  
 with a tiger when your head is in  
 its mouth!

WINSTON rises and walks out. HALIFAX, escaping CHAMBERLAIN's grip on his forearm, alone chases WINSTON...into -

**INT. SMALL CORRIDOR TO TUNNEL/ WAR ROOMS - DAY**

HALIFAX pursues WINSTON into the vestibule-

HALIFAX  
 PRIME MINISTER -

WINSTON turns back to him - they are now enclosed in the vestibule.

HALIFAX (CONT'D)  
 Winston! Yesterday you gave  
 permission for -

WINSTON  
 What permission?

HALIFAX  
 - for me to meet -

HALIFAX (CONT'D)	WINSTON
- with Bastianini -	- I sanctioned -

WINSTON (CONT'D)  
 - the theoretical ex-

WINSTON (CONT'D)	HALIFAX
-ploration -	- <u>theoretical</u> ?! -

WINSTON  
 - of what price Italy would ask. No  
 more. I did not sanction-

HALIFAX  
 If you will not allow any further  
 exploration of a peace agreement,  
 then--you will have my resignation.

WINSTON  
 Don't be absurd. I need you  
 Edward. You know I do!

HALIFAX

I will not stand by to watch  
another generation of young men die  
at the bloody altar of your hubris!

WINSTON

And you would have us die as lambs!

HALIFAX

Was Gallipoli not enough for you?!

WINSTON

(angry)

How dare you?! Our troops were  
chewing barbed wire in Flanders! I  
saw it! Opening a second front,  
outflanking the Turks, was a  
serious military idea - and it  
could've damn-well worked if - the  
Admirals and First Sea Lord hadn't  
dithered away our element of  
surprise!

Silence. WINSTON realises he's gone too far. Totally lost his  
poise. He calms himself. But too late. HALIFAX, undaunted,  
fixes WINSTON with a cold judicial eye -

HALIFAX

The choice is yours. You have 24  
hours to enter into peace talks, or  
I resign.

HALIFAX walks back into the war rooms. WINSTON, regretful for  
his display of temper.

#### **INT. HALLWAY/ 10 DOWNING STREET - DAY**

WINSTON emerges from the ELEVATOR, to find -

- the YOUNG CONSERVATIVE MP, ERNLE HASTINGS, waiting for him  
at the bottom of the stairs.

ERNLE HASTINGS

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

WINSTON climbs the stairs, without saying a word.

#### **INT. TREASURY TOILETS - DAY**

HALIFAX, energized, and CHAMBERLAIN, looking unwell, confer  
as CHAMBERLAIN dampens a handkerchief and dabs his head with  
cold water...

HALIFAX

I told him. It shook him.

CHAMBERLAIN

Imagine it did.

HALIFAX

Gave him 24 hours--I don't expect him to agree, so I will resign first. You then join me. That's critical if we are to trigger a revolt in the chamber. I'll announce it. The King will back us.

HALIFAX nods. CHAMBERLAIN now mentors him, paternally -

CHAMBERLAIN

Be sure of your motives, Edward. Country first! Country First always. Career third, fourth-- after family, and church - and, in your case (*small smile*) - fox hunting. Come.

CHAMBERLAIN bravely leads an emotional HALIFAX out of the BATHROOM.

#### **EXT. WESTMINSTER/ LONDON - NIGHT**

HIGH-ANGLE WIDE-SHOT of LONDON - then PAN to reveal RADIO AERIALS, as we hear -

RADIO ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

*"Today, 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 -*

#### **INT. LIBRARY/ 10 DOWNING STREET - NIGHT**

WINSTON listens to the RADIO BROADCAST:

RADIO ANNOUNCER

*"- 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, 30th Infantry Brigade. Calais.

(MORE)



CHURCHILL (CONT'D)  
 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.  
 Your evacuation however--your  
 evacuation will not, repeat not,  
 take place.  
 Signed...

ELIZABETH LAYTON, has stopped typing.

CHURCHILL, looks up and sees tears in her eyes. He goes to  
 her, offering a handkerchief.

CHURCHILL (CONT'D)  
 Here.  
*(softening)*  
 What is it?

ELIZABETH LAYTON  
 May I be excused?

CHURCHILL  
 You may not. Tell me what this  
 is about.

ELIZABETH LAYTON  
 No-one tells us anything. It's all  
 classified and--we hear scraps and  
 it's worse than knowing nothing.

CHURCHILL  
 What would you like to know?

She stares into his eyes -

ELIZABETH LAYTON  
 How many men will survive?

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

CHURCHILL  
 Come with me. Come on.

**INT. TUNNEL/ BENEATH 10 DOWNING STREET - NIGHT**

WINSTON leads ELIZABETH down the long tunnel -

**INT. CORRIDOR/ WAR ROOMS - NIGHT**

- ELIZABETH follows WINSTON to the MAP-ROOM.

CHURCHILL  
 Come in.

ELIZABETH

No. I'm not allowed in the Map Room.

CHURCHILL

You are now.

**INT. MAP ROOM/ WAR-ROOMS - NIGHT**

She enters the MAP ROOM, which is manned with MALE personnel who look askance at ELIZABETH. WINSTON shows her the ARMY MAP of WESTERN EUROPE. The BRITISH FORCES are represented, surrounded by GERMAN troops at the seaside town of DUNKIRK.

WINSTON

The German army now controls every French port except Dunkirk, here--and Calais, here to the west, where a garrison is drawing fire and delaying the German advance on Dunkirk.

She nods.

WINSTON (CONT'D)

At both points our troops are encircled. We're still trying to clear Dunkirk harbour of wrecked ships so we can then land the boats we need to get our boys off those beaches, but enemy planes are attacking us constantly. Our only hope in Dunkirk is thick cloud cover to thwart these attacks, but--the skies remain clear. Even then I am told we will need a miracle to get even 10% of our men out.

She is shocked -

WINSTON (CONT'D)

Courage, Miss Layton--courage.

ELIZABETH

How long have they got if we don't rescue them?

WINSTON

One, maybe two days.

ISMAY enters -

WINSTON (CONT'D)

General?

ISMAY

News from Calais, the 30th  
Infantry, sir. They've retreated to  
the town's citadel...  
As a last and probably hopeless  
stand-the order "Everyman for  
himself' has been given.

WINSTON

(As he exits)

Good.

**EXT. CALAIS - NIGHT**

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.)

... as a last, and probably  
hopeless, stand. The order, 'every  
man for himself' has been given.

**INT. CITADEL/ CALAIS - NIGHT**

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...He looks up into  
the dark skies...

**EXT. GERMAN BOMBER - NIGHT**

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.

**INT. MAP ROOM/ WAR ROOMS - NIGHT**

ECU on: WINSTON's EYES, as if -while staring at the map- he  
is witness to this defeat...

**EXT. CALAIS - NIGHT**

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

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

ECU ON: A MILITARY DISPATCH, that reads:

**CALAIS FALLEN. NUMBERS OF DEAD OR CAPTURED UNCERTAIN.  
GENERAL GORT.**

Across the room, WINSTON is at his desk, immobile, nursing a glass of whiskey and soda, as, -

- CLEMMIE enters - and looks at him, with concern.

CLEMMIE  
(worried)  
Go to bed, Pig.

He gives no reply -

CLEMMIE (CONT'D)  
You must sleep.

WINSTON  
Leave me, Clemmie.

CLEMMIE  
The opportunity for doing so  
passed a long time ago.

She gets an idea, and exits urgently, leaving him alone.

**INT. OFFICE/ 10 DOWNING STREET - MORNING**

WINSTON, in his SILK ROBE, still sits at his desk. The curtains are drawn. It's MORNING. He walks to a TELEPHONE and dials - ADMIRAL RAMSAY.

WINSTON  
Bertie--what's 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 was an order!

In frustration, WINSTON slams down the PHONE, as -

- SAWYERS, the VALET, enters and draws the curtains. As LIGHT  
floods the room--

CAPTION: **MONDAY, MAY 27, 1940**

**EXT. 10 DOWNING STREET - DAY**

A CROWD of ON-LOOKERS are gathered there, as -

- WINSTON, emerges to get into a GOVERNMENT CAR. He is angst-  
ridden now, gives the (POLITE) **V-FOR-VICTORY** SIGN, (PALM-OUT)  
but his heart isn't in it. Hunch-backed, his eyes downcast,  
he gets in his GOVERNMENT CAR.

**INT. BUCKINGHAM PALACE - DAY**

WINSTON and the KING at lunch at a DINING TABLE. WINSTON eats  
heartily. The KING, with little appetite, smokes, watches  
WINSTON wash down the food with hearty gulp of champagne.

GEORGE VI

*(pours drinks)*

How do you manage drinking during  
the day?

WINSTON

Practice.

After another silence -

GEORGE VI

I have been asked--if plans should  
be drawn--to evacuate my f-family  
and I--to Canada. I wish to know  
the opinion of our prime minister.

WINSTON

My opinion? My opinion would be  
that you must do what you feel is  
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.

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. 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.

GEORGE VI

Lord Halifax is a close personal friend of mine!

WINSTON

I am unwanted. I've never been trusted since the Gallipoli campaign. Unwanted.

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.

WINSTON drops some meat into the mouth of a CORGIE waiting at WINSTON's feet for food.

WINSTON (CONT'D)

A wildness. In the blood. I share it with my father.

*(beat)*

Mother also. We lack the gift of-- temperance.

GEORGE VI  
Were you close--to your parents?

WINSTON  
My mother was glamorous--but  
perhaps too widely loved.

This draws an eye-brow rise from the King.

WINSTON (CONT'D)  
My father--to me was like God--  
busy elsewhere.

The KING smiles. He cannot help but like this man.

**INT. CORRIDOR/ WAR ROOMS - DAY**

WINSTON walks through the MEN and WOMEN en route to his OFFICE. 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 to...

ELIZABETH LAYTON  
To?

WINSTON  
3pm.

ELIZABETH LAYTON  
3pm, sir?

WINSTON  
Ask Bridges to summon the--the uh--  
the War Cabinet for 3pm. Thank you.

She watches him walk away -

- only for WINSTON to be stopped by JOHN EVANS with a COMMUNIQUE.

JOHN EVANS  
Sir!

WINSTON  
What is it?

JOHN EVANS  
Sir--from Lord Gort, in France.

WINSTON reads the message -- his EYES WIDEN.

WINSTON  
Belgium has fallen. They will  
surrender at midnight. France  
will soon follow suit.

REACTION WINSTON: Shock.

**INT. WAR CABINET ROOM/ WAR ROOMS - DAY**

WAR CABINET MEETING 3.

PRESENT: 9 PERSONS. The Main War Cabinet (CHURCHILL, CHAMBERLAIN, HALIFAX, GREENWOOD, ATLEE) and the FOLLOWING (EDEN, CADOGAN, IRONSIDE, BRIDGES.)

*A FILM REEL is projected onto a SCREEN. We see images of GERMAN SPEEDBOATS. We see the NAZI leadership, holding maps, pointing out to sea toward Britain...We see a giant LONG-RANGE SUPER CANNON being revealed by GERMAN soldiers. Over this, we hear -*

IRONSIDE  
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 a considerable force of the enemy could be landed at many points on the coast simultaneously with airborne raids inland. We do not feel 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 must prepare for the imminent invasion of our island.

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

BRIDGES opens a BOTTLE of WHISKEY and starts to pour into tumblers for the non-military personnel.

Silence, as IRONSIDE sits.



Silence. Lost looks. General state of high anxiety. They look to WINSTON for leadership - and he appears to be about to say something in response to this black news - BUT NO WORDS COME.

After this awkward silence - HALIFAX looks directly at WINSTON -

HALIFAX

Let the record state--that I have received word from the Italian Embassy in London that Italy is prepared to mediate a resolution between Britain, its Allies, and Germany.

The CABINET SECRETARY, records this statement for history.

WINSTON fumes that this has been put on the record and stares with anger at HALIFAX.

WINSTON has been totally put on the spot!

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.

HALIFAX throws his GLASSES on the table in DISBELIEF!

CHAMBERLAIN

Unsuccessful?!

HALIFAX

Then you leave me no other option -

CHAMBERLAIN

*(cutting him off)*

Winston--you are refusing to grasp the realities of how precarious our position is! Our entire army is about to be wiped out! *Terms! Must! Be struck!*

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

WINSTON looks finally to ANTHONY EDEN - his staunchest supporter.

WINSTON

Anthony?

EDEN's face is pained - as he retains a MEANINGFUL SILENCE.

CHURCHILL looks to each MAN around the room, and their faces proclaim their support of HALIFAX's view.

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 the path of negotiation.

CHAMBERLAIN and HALIFAX share an astonished look!

WINSTON (CONT'D)

If Hitler's peace terms are--  
overlordship of Central Europe and  
return of certain German colonies -

(*pause*)

- and if he will leave us our  
independence, then - then I would  
be thankful to get out of our  
present difficulties. It's quite  
unlikely that he will make any such  
offer, but...

WINSTON looks at the CABINET SECRETARY who records for posterity his every word -

WINSTON (CONT'D)

...if I were told what the German  
terms were, then--I would be--  
prepared---to--to consider them.

The SECRETARY notes down this historic concession, and WINSTON observes this.

HALIFAX

Thank you. Prime Minister.

CHAMBERLAIN nods at HALIFAX. They have prevailed.

HALIFAX (CONT'D)

(*triumphant*)

I shall prepare a draft memorandum  
at once.

Finally, WINSTON nods. CHAMBERLAIN and HALIFAX look at each other again - victory!

**EXT. TREASURY DRUM - DAY**

HIGH WIDE-SHOT as WINSTON walks through the TREASURY DRUM toward DOWNING STREET.

MILES ALDRIDGE, a lone photographer calls out -

MILES ALDRIDGE  
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). Winston walks on.

**INT. BATHROOM/ TREASURY - DAY**

CHAMBERLAIN, alone, steadies himself against a wall - his health is fading. He takes out his bottle of MORPHINE and drinks.

**INT/EXT. BUCKINGHAM PALACE - NIGHT**

KING GEORGE walks out on to a BALCONY and looks down the MALL in BLACKOUT, as his EQUERRY 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.

EQUERRY  
Canada. You must decide, sir. You  
could rule in exile.

GEORGE VI  
Truly? Is that my fate?  
(pause)  
You know what? I feel angry. In  
this moment I'm aware of feeling--  
bloody angry.

The EQUERRY studies him, as he studies the MALL.

**INT. ELIZABETH'S "SHOE-BOX" ROOM/ WAR ROOMS - NIGHT**

ELIZABETH LAYTON waits, her fingers at the ready. She sneaks a glance at the CLOCK on her DESK - it is 1.30!

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

WINSTON  
 I have...come to...to  
 wonder...in... recent  
 days...whether it was...my duty...

ECU of: the TYPEWRITER hammers typing "**duty**" -

WINSTON (CONT'D)  
 - to consider...

EVANS enters, carrying a TRAY holding a glass and a bottle.  
 Elizabeth yawns.

WINSTON (CONT'D)  
 ...consider...entering...

EVANS is standing there staring at WINSTON, waiting to knock  
 off for the night. WINSTON notices -

JOHN EVANS  
 Will that be all for tonight, sir?

WINSTON ignores him.

WINSTON  
 ...entering into negotiations  
 with...  
*(unable to speak the  
 dreaded name)*  
 ...that...corporal...no...

EVANS departs without an answer, as - WINSTON pours himself a  
 SCOTCH and mumbles to himself -

WINSTON (CONT'D)  
 ...gangster--no--tyrant...  
 ...monster of wickedness, no...

WINSTON, wanting more inspiration, turns over a NEWSPAPER and  
 on the COVER is - a LARGE PHOTO of ADOLPH HITLER. WINSTON  
 looks at HITLER'S FACE with LOATHING -

WINSTON (CONT'D)  
 ...butcher--no good--monstrous  
 savage?--bloodthirsty guttersnipe!--  
housepainter...  
*(throws newspaper on the  
 ground)*  
 HOUSEPAINTER!  
*(his head clears)*  
 Where were we? Where - ?

WINSTON, hearing no sound of typing, turns - and sees  
 ELIZABETH LAYTON staring at her TYPEWRITER, frozen -

WINSTON (CONT'D)  
 Well?

ELIZABETH  
(softly)  
I didn't understand you, sir.

He doesn't reply. She finally adds -

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)  
You were -

WINSTON  
Were?

ELIZABETH  
You were - mumbling.

WINSTON  
Mumbling.

ELIZABETH  
Yes sir.

WINSTON, crosses to the other side of her and sits down -he picks up a FRAMED PHOTO of A HANDSOME YOUNG SOLDIER from her desk.

WINSTON  
Your beau?

ELIZABETH maintains her composure with true grit during the following exchange -

ELIZABETH  
My brother.

WINSTON  
Where is he now?

ELIZABETH  
He was falling back on Dunkirk but  
he never made it.

This rocks WINSTON to the core. He studies ELIZABETH, stirred by the beauty of her sad face.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)  
What?

His eyes moisten - at all she represents, innocence and loss and courage and purity.

WINSTON  
I'm just looking at you.

She turns back to her TYPE-WRITER and sits there waiting, until - feeling awkward - she offers -

ELIZABETH  
Shall I read back what we have?

WINSTON

Please.

ELIZABETH

"I have come to wonder in recent days whether it was my duty to consider entering into negotiations - with..."

WINSTON ponders his next line - but again, NO WORDS COME.

WINSTON

With...

**EXT. ROOF TOP/ DEFENCE MINISTRY - NIGHT**

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

WINSTON (O.S.)

...with...

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.

The CAMERA rises up - up - into an AERIAL SHOT of -

- WINSTON on the ROOF until - WINSTON is no bigger than a TOY LEAD SOLDIER.

**INT. SPARE ROOM/ 10 DOWNING STREET - NIGHT**

CLEMMIE enters and sees - WINSTON, sitting on a large boat-shaped bed in the dark staring into space, amid UNPACKED BOXES. He's at a very low ebb.

CLEMMIE

Darling, Winston, Darling?

No answer. She goes to him. He's clearly in trouble -

WINSTON

I -

CLEMMIE

Shhh. Shhh. You've the full weight of the world on your shoulders. But these inner battles, darling -

WINSTON

I can't -

CLEMMIE

- I know, I know - but they have actually trained you for this moment. You are strong because you are imperfect. You are wise because you have doubts. From this uncertainty the wisest words will come. Now. I will let him in.

WINSTON

Who?

CLEMMIE

The King.

WINSTON

Which King? *Our* King?

CLEMMIE

Well if it isn't him, it's a wonderful impersonation.

CLEMMIE closes the door. WINSTON looks DISHEVELLED, his suit RUMPLED. A Mess. He makes a small effort to tuck in a shirt and buttons his waistcoat.

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 but your wife thought tonight would be a good time.

Winston is standing by the bed.

KING GEORGE VI (CONT'D)

Shall we sit?

The KING sits in an ARMCHAIR. Winston sits on the bed.

WINSTON makes a futile effort to put on his public face...

WINSTON

Something to drink? Er -

KING GEORGE VI

No, thank you.

WINSTON remains seated on the edge of the bed.

KING GEORGE VI (CONT'D)

I received a visit...

WINSTON

From?

KING GEORGE VI

Viscount Halifax.

*(beat)*

It appears--the prospect of a peace deal with Hitler--has increased dramatically.

WINSTON

Later today I will address The House. The war cabinet is drafting a letter to Mussolini, asking him to broker talks with Herr Hitler.

GEORGE VI

Then Halifax was correct.

WINSTON

I should like to know your mind.

GEORGE VI

It would be helpful to know yours first.

WINSTON

Mine? I should like to know it myself.

*(beat)*

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.

After a hard silence -

GEORGE VI

And the mood of parliament?

WINSTON

Fear. Panic.

GEORGE VI

And are you not afraid? At all?



WINSTON  
I am most terribly.

GEORGE VI scrutinizes him closely -

WINSTON (CONT'D)  
Our defeat in France is the most  
crushing in the history of the  
Empire. Support among my party for  
a campaign of resistance has  
collapsed.

Finally - GEORGE has heard what he has wanted to hear, and so  
makes his pledge - He moves to sit next to Winston on the bed

GEORGE VI  
You have my support.

WINSTON cannot believe his ears.

WINSTON  
Your Majesty?

GEORGE VI  
You have my support.  
(pause)  
I must confess, I had some  
reservations about you at-at first.  
And while some in this country  
might have dreaded your  
appointment, none dreaded it like-  
like Adolph Hitler.

WINSTON - speechless.

GEORGE VI (CONT'D)  
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.  
(passionate)  
Beat the buggers.

WINSTON  
I fear I may be defeated.

GEORGE VI  
You--you once gave me some advice.  
Perhaps I can give you some. Go to  
the people. Let them instruct you.  
Quite silently, they usually do.  
But tell them the truth.  
Unvarnished.

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

GEORGE VI  
 You warned us this day was coming.  
 We failed to listen to you. Lift us  
 up, Mr Churchill.

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

GEORGE VI  
 Perhaps now we have each other?

WINSTON  
 I no longer scare you?

GEORGE VI  
 Only a little. I can cope.

WINSTON  
 Yes you can. Your majesty.

They remain sitting there, side by side on the boat-shaped  
 bed, friends hereafter.

**INT. DYNAMO ROOM/ BENEATH DOVER CASTLE - MORNING**

CAPTION: **ENGLISH COAST, TUESDAY, MAY 28**

RAMSAY, dressed in UNIFORM, is on the phone to -

**INT. WINSTON'S BEDROOM/ 10 DOWNING STREET - MORNING**

- WINSTON, in bed, taking the call.

(INTERCUT, as necessary - )

RAMSAY  
 We are ready. More or less.

WINSTON  
 More or less what, Bertie?  
 Give me a number!

**INT. DYNAMO ROOM/ BENEATH DOVER CASTLE - MORNING**

RAMSAY opens the METAL FRENCH DOORS and steps out onto -

**EXT. BALCONY/ DYNAMO ROOM/ BENEATH DOVER CASTLE - MORNING**

RAMSAY'S POV OF: over 800 SMALL boats, the "LITTLE SHIPS",  
 ARRIVING or MOORED. NAVAL officers and VOLUNTEERS board them.  
 A RAG-TAG ARMADA.

RAMSAY

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

WINSTON

May God watch over them all.

The SHOT PULLS AWAY from RAMSAY on the BALCONY -

RAMSAY

Operation Dynamo waits upon your command...

- and we reveal - that the BALCONY of his BEDROOM is cut right into the cliff-face of THE WHITE CLIFFS OF DOVER!

WINSTON

Admiral--you may initiate Dynamo.

- CAMERA pulls back and back - until we see the ENTIRE ENGLISH COASTLINE, complete with the "DYNAMO" FLEET.

#### **EXT/INT. PRINCES STREET/ WINSTON'S CAR - DAY**

WIDE SHOT of - WINSTON'S CAR, moving slowly through the rainy street. WINSTON, in the back seat, looks out the window at the human traffic - seems like he's in a gold-fish bowl, disconnected. He watches as - MEN IN BOWLER HATS and YOUNG WOMEN in SUMMER DRESSES walk to work. As they rush through the rain shielding themselves with umbrellas and newspapers.

WINSTON, with an UNLIT CIGAR in his mouth, searches his pockets for a MATCH. But he can't find his matches.

When the CAR stops at a RED LIGHT -

- TOM LEONARD hears the car door slam. He turns, looks back, WINSTON has jumped out of his car. Tom Leonard opens his door and stands looking around for Winston, as crowds rush past in the pouring rain.

#### **INT. WAR CABINET ROOM/ WAR ROOMS - DAY**

BRIDGES puts down the TELEPHONE and turns to the ASSEMBLED WAR CABINET -

BRIDGES

We've lost the Prime Minister!

#### **INT. ST JAMES PARK UNDERGROUND - DAY**

The CROWD of COMMUTERS parts to reveal -

WINSTON, closely studying the UNDERGROUND MAP, trying to work it out, until 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 TEENAGE GIRL stands beside him. She looks at the MAP too.  
WINSTON notices her.

WINSTON  
Do you know how to use this thing?

TEENAGE GIRL  
Yes -  
(*recognising him, her eyes  
widen*)  
- yes sir.

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

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

WINSTON  
District Line. East. One stop.  
Doesn't sound so hard.

TEENAGE GIRL  
No, sir.

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 as a TRAIN arrives. The busy CHATTER dies down at once - as everyone recognizes WINSTON.

WINSTON  
So--this is the Underground!

He BOARDS.

**INT. DISTRICT LINE TRAIN - DAY**

He boards the TRAIN with an UNLIT CIGAR in his mouth. COMMUTERS look up and FALL SILENT at once, all RISING to their feet, as if a Lady has entered a room.

WINSTON tips his HAT to them.

WINSTON

What are you all staring at? Have you never seen a Prime Minister ride on the Underground before.

When he sits, the COMMUTERS follow suit.

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

EVERYBODY is doing their best to be well mannered and not stare, but all are failing! They immediately avert their eyes from WINSTON. WINSTON remembers his unlit CIGAR -

WINSTON (CONT'D)

Does anyone have a match?

Down the CARRIAGE an OLD MAN shakes a box of matches. WINSTON rises and goes to him. 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!

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

Madam, all babies look like me.

The causes widespread DELIGHT. Another woman steps up to shake his hand -

WOMAN WITH BABY

Mrs Jessie Sutton.

Everyone has got the hang of this now, and don't need to be spoken to. They step forward in close order -

YOUNG WOMAN

*(shaking WINSTON's hand)*

Abigail Walker.

WEST-INDIAN MAN

*(shaking WINSTON's hand)*

Marcus Peters.

YOUNG IRISH WOMAN

*(shaking WINSTON's hand)*

Agnes Dillon.

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!

(MORE)

WINSTON (CONT'D)

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?

YOUNG MAN

Very.

OLD MAN

Some people 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 the fascists!

OLD MAN

Fight them with whatever we can lay  
our hands on!

IRISH WOMAN

Broom handles if we must!

YOUNG WOMAN

Street by street!

WEST-INDIAN MAN

They'll never take Picadilly!

WINSTON

Ha!Ha! Never Picadilly indeed!

The public laugh. WINSTON SMILES, proud of these people -

WINSTON (CONT'D)

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?

ALL  
NEVER! NEVER!

A pause, and then -

ALL (CONT'D)  
NEVER! NEVER!

When SILENCE returns, one (young) voice chimes in, late -

YOUNG GIRL  
Never!

WINSTON turns to look for the source of the voice and he sees, and moves toward, one YOUNG GIRL...

WINSTON  
Will you never give up?

YOUNG GIRL  
Never.

Touched, he crosses and sits down opposite the child -

WINSTON  
(to YOUNG GIRL)  
*"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 - "*

WEST INDIAN MAN  
*"- for the ashes of his fathers  
And the temples of his gods."*

Everyone is moved. WINSTON, himself, has tears in his eyes. He wipes his eyes with a handkerchief.

YOUNG GIRL  
Are you crying?

WINSTON  
I blub a lot. You'll have  
to get used to it.

The TRAIN stops.

WINSTON (CONT'D)  
What stop is this?

MIDDLE AGED WOMAN  
Westminster.

WINSTON  
That's my stop.



Before stepping off the TRAIN he stops to look into the faces of the good, brave, true people. Emboldened by their simple courage, he exits.

#### **INT. WAR CABINET ROOM/ WAR ROOMS - DAY**

WAR CABINET MEETING 4.

PRESENT: 17 PERSONS. The Main War Cabinet, minus WINSTON (WINSTON's CHAIR remains empty): (CHAMBERLAIN, HALIFAX, GREENWOOD, ATLEE) and the FOLLOWING (EDEN, ALEXANDER, SINCLAIR, COOPER, CADOGAN, ANDERSON, POUND, DOWDING, IRONSIDE, BRIDGES, ISMAY, NICHOLL, WILKINSON.)

All are actively discussing the wording of a PEACE OFFER.

HALIFAX, leading the formulation of the offer, looks very pleased with the current situation.

HALIFAX

The Memorandum--titled "Suggested Approaches to Italy"--is as follows...

CADOGAN

*"If Signor Mussolini will co-operate with us in securing a settlement of all European questions which safeguard the independence and security of the allies..."*

CAMERA moves in on: WINSTON's SILVER BOX OF MATCHES.

#### **EXT HOUSE OF COMMONS - DAY**

WINSTON comes up from WESTMINSTER TUBE STATION and crosses to PARLIAMENT.

CADOGAN (O.S.)

*"...and could be the basis of a just and durable peace for Europe, we will undertake at once to discuss, with the desire to find solutions, the matters in which Signor Mussolini is primarily interested..."*

#### **INT. HOUSE OF COMMONS - WESTMINISTER HALL - DAY**

Deep in anxious thought, WINSTON stalks in to the House of Commons and walks down a long hallway....

CADOGAN ((O.S.)  
*.."We understand that he desires  
 the solution of certain  
 Mediterranean questions: and if he  
 will state in secrecy what these  
 are, France and Great Britain will  
 at once do their best to meet those  
 wishes".*

**INT. STAIRS AND CORRIDORS/ PARLIAMENT - DAY**

To the first floor and is met by a relieved JOHN EVANS -

JOHN EVANS  
 Sir! The War Cabinet is waiting!

WINSTON  
 I am due to address the Outer  
 Cabinet. I haven't spoken to them  
 since the formation of the new  
 government.

Moving up the HALLWAY, WINSTON and EVANS pass huddled groups  
 of YOUNGER MP's -

WINSTON STOPS, thinks, and then turns back to them.

WINSTON (CONT'D)  
 Good day.  
 (pause)  
 I am--about to speak to my Outer  
 Cabinet in my rooms and--I extend  
 the invitation to any of you who  
 would care to join them.

WINSTON forces a SMILE, then departs.

After a moment, the MP's rise, look at each other, murmur,  
 rise and follow him.

**INT. COMMITTEE ROOM/ PARLIAMENT - DAY**

The ROOM is now FULL with 40 MEN - CABINET MEMBERS and YOUNG  
 BACK-BENCHERS.

WINSTON enters, with JOHN EVANS - shakes the hand of YOUNG  
 CONSERVATIVE MP (ERNLE HASTINGS).

The DOORS are CLOSED.

WINSTON stands in front of the GATHERING.

They wait for him to speak.

At first no words come from WINSTON, and then -

WINSTON

Later today--I will address the House on the matter of our nation's security.

*(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 lacky, Signor Mussolini.

*(pause)*

I have thought carefully in these last days--whether -

*(pause)*

-whether it was part of my duty--to consider entering into negotiations with -

*(beat)*

- that Man.

He puts on his GLASSES and takes out a MATCH-BOOK - on which is written the names of the people he met in the Underground.

WINSTON (CONT'D)

But then I spoke--with Oliver Wilson -

*(starts to read names from his matchbook)*

- Mrs Jessie Sutton, 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)

...Marcus Peters, Agnes Dillon, 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.

ERNLE HASTINGS

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)*

Perhaps 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 1

Never!

WINSTON

So I come to you--to learn your minds in this grave hour.

The FACES of the MP's are RESOLUTE, MOVED, READY TO FIGHT.

WINSTON (CONT'D)

You see, we do still have immense reserves and advantages...

A NOISE begins to build in the room, mumbling, turning into shouts, over which WINSTON must shout -

WINSTON (CONT'D)

...and it was pointed out to me -

*(holding up list of names  
from Underground)*

- by my new friends--that you might even rise up and tear me down were I 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)

Were they wrong?

ALL

NO! NO!

WINSTON

Then...then...then -

The DIN dies down. When silence returns...

WINSTON (CONT'D)

- then--it appears to be your will  
also, that if this long island  
story of ours is to end at last,  
then it should only be -

(pause, then powerfully -)

- when each one of us lies choking  
in his own blood upon the ground!

A GIANT HOORAY goes up and the YOUNG MPs RUSH UP to WINSTON,  
who is soon SWAMPED by MPs shaking his HAND, PATTING HIM on  
the back - a MASSIVE SIGN OF SUPPORT.

# **INT. WAR CABINET ROOM/ WAR ROOMS - DAY**

WINSTON somberly 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 must now address parliament, and  
I'm yet to write a word of my  
speech.

WINSTON grabs his SILVER BOX OF MATCHES left earlier on the  
table -

WINSTON (CONT'D)

There's the buggers.

- then walks out, passing the tall IRONSIDE, and clapping him on  
the shoulder.

WINSTON (CONT'D)

"Tiny".

GENERAL IRONSIDE - having his war at last - smiles.

IRONSIDE

Sir.

EDEN happily follows his LEADER now.

REACTION: HALIFAX. BETRAYAL.

CHAMBERLAIN avoids HALIFAX's eyes.

ATTLEE and GREENWOOD smile.

**INT. CORRIDOR - WAR ROOMS / ELIZABETH'S ROOM - DAY**

WINSTON walks toward ELIZABETH LAYTON's "Shoe-Box" room, knocks, opens the door, remains in the doorway -

WINSTON

Miss Layton?

ELIZABETH looks up from her work -

ELIZABETH

Sir?

WINSTON

I'm in need of you.

**INT. WAR CABINET ROOM - DAY**

HALIFAX detains CHAMBERLAIN as the CABINET leaves the meeting -

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. And speak after the Prime Minister's address.

CHAMBERLAIN takes his coat and leaves HALIFAX worried.

**INT. BEDROOM/ 10 DOWNING STREET - DAY**

CLEMMIE is getting dressed, and then turns to look at herself in the mirror, and reveal -

- that she is in UNIFORM (Red Cross).

CLEMMIE  
 (to her reflection)  
 Here lies a woman, who is always  
 tired--for she lived in a world  
 where too much was required.

**EXT. PARLIAMENT - DAY**

CAMERA moves in on WINSTON'S PARKED CAR, and we gradually hear the sound of - TYPING.

Through the WINDOW of the CAR we finally see -

WINSTON, dictating to ELIZABETH LAYTON, her TYPE-WRITER on her knee going clack, clack, clack. (WINSTON gesticulates as he composes the crucial words.)

**INT. COMMONS/ PARLIAMENT - DAY**

WINSTON addresses a PACKED HOUSE of COMMONS. A CROWD of some FIVE HUNDRED listen, with more in the GALLERY. Among the GALLERY crowd, JOHN EVANS.

ELIZABETH LAYTON arrives late, and leans over the hand-rail, looking down anxiously at -

WINSTON, as he launches his final assault -

WINSTON  
 Turning once again--to the question  
 of invasion--I would observe that  
 there has never been a period in  
 all these long centuries of which  
 we boast, when an absolute  
 guarantee against invasion could  
 have been given to our people.

ANGLE ON: HALIFAX, in the GALLERY, keenly watching.

WINSTON (CONT'D)  
 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 -

**INT. LIVING ROOM/ DOWNING STREET - DAY**

CLEMMIE, in her UNIFORM, listens to WINSTON'S broadcast on the RADIO, as she has her portrait photographed by CECIL BEATON. She is awkward in front of the camera.

**INT. BUCKINGHAM PALACE - DAY**

The KING smokes as he listens to the same broadcast.

**INT. HOUSE OF COMMONS CHAMBER - DAY**

WINSTON

- if necessary for years, if necessary alone. 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.

ANGLE ON: ELIZABETH, who is "mouthing" these words, some of which she already knows by heart -

WINSTON (CONT'D)

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; 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 begin to wave their papers in the air and call their approval, (it is against Parliamentary etiquette to ever clap in the House of Commons).

WINSTON'S children bang their hands on the woodwork.

WINSTON'S CONSERVATIVE colleagues all look to CHAMBERLAIN.

CLOSE ON: HALIFAX, looking down from the GALLERY at CHAMBERLAIN, closes his eyes, knowing what is coming next -

- CHAMBERLAIN TAKES OUT HIS WHITE HANDKERCHIEF, and tamps his forehead with it. It's enough. The CONSERVATIVE FACTION, ignited, rises to their feet in THUNDEROUS SUPPORT of WINSTON.

REACTION HALIFAX: Defeat.

WINSTON turns to ANTHONY EDEN, registering surprise at the strength of support, and winks -

EDEN grins and SHAKES his FRIEND'S HAND.

EDEN  
Changed your mind?

WINSTON  
Those who never change their mind  
never change anything.

The UPROAR in the HOUSE continues, those in the gallery begin to throw their parliamentary papers into the air which then rain down into the chamber.

STANHOPE  
What just happened?

HALIFAX  
He just mobilized the English  
language--and sent it into battle.

Every man is on his feet waving their parliamentary papers and throwing them into the air, shouting and stamping.

Smiling with due deference WINSTON takes up his things and walks down the central aisle of the house as papers continue to rain down from the gallery like ticker tape or confetti.

As the GREAT DOORS of the COMMONS close behind him - the screen becomes BLACK.

Up with END CAPTIONS:

ALMOST ALL OF THE 300,000 TROOPS AT DUNKIRK  
WERE CARRIED HOME BY WINSTON'S CIVILIAN FLEET

NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN DIED SIX MONTHS LATER

VISCOUNT HALIFAX WAS SOON REMOVED BY WINSTON  
FROM THE WAR CABINET AND SENT TO WASHINGTON

ON MAY 8, FIVE YEARS LATER,  
BRITAIN AND ITS ALLIES WOULD DECLARE VICTORY

WITHIN WEEKS OF VICTORY, CHURCHILL AND HIS PARTY WERE  
VOTED OUT OF OFFICE BY THE BRITISH PEOPLE.

"SUCCESS IS NOT FINAL, FAILURE IS NOT FATAL: IT IS THE  
COURAGE TO CONTINUE THAT COUNTS."

WINSTON CHURCHILL

Roll End Credits.