

FAREWELL TO THE KING

From a novel by
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Screenplay by

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PART ONE: THE NORTHEASTERLY MONSOON

"The homeland of a man who is
free to choose is where the
biggest clouds accumulate."

Andre Malraux
(The Walnut Trees of Altenberg)

my

PROLOGUE

May 12th, 1942 -- Six days following the surrender of Corregidor. The Philippines have fallen. Singapore is gone. The power of Imperial Japan reigns triumphant in the Pacific...

TITLE - BORNEO

SKY - DAWN

leaden, turbulent. LIGHTNING CRACKLES blue, THUNDER detonates, wind gusts bring the smell of rain.

THE SEA - DAWN

mountainous, black, streaked with foam. Great plateaus lift and roll, the WIND HOWLING off their tops. A gigantic wave forms, ominous in its silence. It draws up what seems the whole sea in its inevitable onrush as it begins to turn concave across its endless wall. Suddenly a whale boat is drawn up its face, filled with MEN SCREAMING but barely heard over the ROAR OF THE WIND and the CRACK of the BREAKING CREST. The boat is helpless in its path. It towers, blotting out all horizons, drawing up like a great mountain with snow at its crest, then turns concave top to bottom. The boat and everything in it vanish in an endless white fury.

CUT TO:

BEACH -DAWN

in the darkness. The foam and water tear at a distant headland. A body rolls over on the sand in the f.g. Another pulls itself from the maelstrom.

A GROUP - DAWN

of broken men huddling at the edge of the sea that still tears at them. Their voices are indistinct, lost in the storm.

VOICE

To have come so far -- to this.

OTHER VOICE

Forget the dead -- there's nothing you can do.

ANOTHER VOICE

Lights -- I see lights. It's a village.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OTHER VOICE
Japanese!

VOICE
There is no choice.

OTHER VOICE
I've had enough. We're free now,
free to go our own ways.

A figure removes itself from the others. There is an argument lost on the wind.

VOICE
Deserter! You're a deserter!

CUT TO:

FOOTPRINTS - DAWN

leading away from the sea to a great dead tree, advance guard of a mighty forest behind. A man leans against the tree. He is young, gaunt, muscular, yet ravaged. He wears the torn and battered uniform of the U.S. Army -- He is a Sergeant. His name is Learoyd -- SERGEANT LEAROYD. His hair is red, even in the night. He listens to the wind -- a SHOT! ANOTHER! He dashes into the darkness of the jungle.

CUT TO:

A COASTAL VILLAGE

Malay -- several pirogues are drawn up on the beach. Lights come from a few huts. The sky rages above as the dawn breaks -- WIND AND SPARSE RAIN WHISTLE overhead. On the beach in the f.g. is a body, curled up in the sand like a sleeping child. A Japanese soldier stands over it, slinging his rifle after removing the bayonet. Behind him the others from the boat are lined up facing the angry sea. They are made to kneel in front of their captors. There is a short argument -- words are lost on the wind -- Geneva convention -- barbarous treatment -- consequences! Lost.

CUT TO:

PALM FOREST

A leaf is pulled aside. Learoyd looks out at the village several hundred yards away. There is SHOUTING in Japanese. A man emerges from a hut wearing ceremonial Japanese robes. He is followed by several officers.

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DIFFERENT ANGLE - GROUP

More soldiers gather about. One of the prisoners is bent forward. An officer hands his sword to the man in robes who draws it, raises it and neatly cuts the prisoner's head off.

CUT TO:

LEAROYD

gasps, his eyes see the sword rise again, again. The SOUND OF WEeping is carried on the wind but lost in the wailing ROAR OF THE SEA. Suddenly Learoyd pulls back -- looks up -- sees -- a man on horseback close to his right partially obscured by the palms. An officer -- a Colonel -- sits on a white horse staring serenely at the sea. He is magnificent. His sword at his side. His boots, his bearing impart the majesty of an ancient warlord -- perhaps a Shogun. He seems lost in a reverie -- sartorial grace watching the sea in its tumult.

CLOSE

Learoyd looks closer -- back at the execution which is over now -- back at the splendid horseman. He fumbles for his automatic pistol -- cocks it, brings it up shaking and points it raggedly at the Colonel. He can't pull the trigger -- returns it to himself and slinks away into the night, retreating into the darkness of the jungle. The wind rages.

FADE IN:

TITLE: APRIL 1945

CLOUDS - DAY

Clouds pass by to the DRONE OF POWERFUL ENGINES. They are dark and angry, building bank upon bank into a towering barrier -- the monsoon. Below, the sea gleams in the light of dusk; beyond lies a rugged coastline. As it draws closer, darkness overcomes us. The jungle passes by below, an impenetrable carpet of green and dark. A rain squall breaks ahead.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Borneo. For most of you Borneo doesn't exist -- an imaginary name on a map like Tibet or Tierra del Fuego. The ends of the earth. But I know the island exists.

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Great mountain ranges loom up; plateaus of tangled growth pass by below. Rain, dark and thick spatters on the plexiglass.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

(continuing)

I was there -- in my youth during my war. I was a botanist before. I've been a botanist ever since. That's why they chose me I suppose. Special Forces knew I'd been there before. I discovered a new variety of Nepenthes, sometimes erroneously called a carnivorous orchid. So much for that. What I really want to tell you of is the last king of Borneo. It's all right now -- the wind has swept away the stench of the corpses and all that we remember is the flare of our youth.

CUT TO:

DARKNESS

A door opens and the jungle rushes by. A canister is pushed out, then a man jumps, then motion hurtling towards the ground. Two parachutes blossom below. More falling -- rushing headlong into the chutes but stopped short by a snap, then gliding lazily towards the dense green canopy below. The NOISE OF ENGINES is quickly GONE.

JUNGLE

The jungle is dense with ferns on the ground, a triple canopy above surrounded by darkness and gray. Rain drips through in a million little rivulets. Suddenly the canister, heavy and foreign, crashes through in the distance quickly followed by two men. One ricochets off the trees and SPLATS unceremoniously into a muddy stream. The other crashes through in the f.g., his shroud lines catching him by the feet and hanging him upside down. This is our narrator, the BOTANIST, now a temporary captain attached to Force 316 Combined Operations Pacific. He swings quietly back and forth surveying his surroundings.

BOTANIST

Anderson! Anderson -- you all right?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Anderson is a small Australian sergeant who now looks like a Borneo mudman with a Thompson sub-machine gun.

ANDERSON

Yes, sir, don't appear to have broken anything, sir. Yourself, sir?

Anderson is trying to get the mud off his face so he can see.

BOTANIST

I'm upside down.

ANDERSON

Sir?

He sees and stumbles over, kicking mud in every direction. He fumbles with the shrouds.

BOTANIST

Use your knife, man!

ANDERSON

Yes, sir.

He cuts quickly, releasing the Botanist who falls face first into the ferns and rolls downhill, CLATTERING equipment and weapons.

ANDERSON

(continuing)

Sorry about that.

The Botanist looks up.

BOTANIST

Never mind. Look.

Anderson follows his gaze.

A LITTLE MAN

almost naked, stands on a mound leaning nonchalantly on his spear like a Greek warrior.

BOTANIST.

watches for a moment. The little Man has a lithe, muscular body and the rain accentuates the bronze of his skin, polished smooth as a pebble. On his side he wears a headhunter's sword.

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CONTINUED:

The two white men stumble towards him CLANKING with equipment. He doesn't move, just gazes, seemingly through them.

BOTANIST
Japanese? Nippons? Nippons?

MAN
Bah!

Anderson lights a cigarette and hands it to him, which he gratefully accepts, shielding it from the rain.

BOTANIST
Murut?

He points at him.

BOTANIST
(continuing)
Muruts? Muruts?

MAN
Bah!

He draws on the cigarette.

MAN
(continuing)
Comanche!

The Botanist and Anderson look at one another.

MAN
(continuing;
laughing)
Comanches -- Comanches --

ANDERSON
He's a Comanche, sir. He says
he's a Comanche.

Suddenly all around them more small men, warriors, materialize silently as if out of rain. The first one is obviously the HEADMAN. He lets the cigarette dangle from his lips. On his belt are long black fringes resembling scalps. He runs these through his fingers like worry beads.

HEADMAN
You come with me now.

ANDERSON
He speaks English, sir. By god he
speaks English!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HEADMAN

I am Comanche.

ANDERSON

See, sir -- I told you.

HEADMAN

I take you now. You come with me now.

He smiles and indicates the way.

CUT TO:

FEET - DAY

barefoot, moving easily up a steep incline followed by boots tripping clumsily. Anderson and the Botanist struggle through the ferns and creepers as the Comanches seemingly glide along. The rain is incessant. Anderson checks his compass.

ANDERSON

South -- Southeast, sir.

BOTANIST

Towards the center and up. To the middle of Borneo! No man's been to the middle of Borneo, Anderson. No white man.

CUT TO:

JUNGLE - NIGHT

All around are tremendous trees. Everything drips. Anderson is slinging a regulation hammock between two trees. The Headman shrugs and walks away. All the Murut eyes watch, wait.

BOTANIST

I'll take the first watch.

ANDERSON

Yes, sir.

CUT TO:

CLOSE - BOTANIST - DAWN

Sleeping like a log, snug and warm, the Botanist is trussed up in his hammock unable to move a muscle.

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED:

Anderson gives a yelp and lets out a string of fine Australian shearers' curses. He too is immobilized. The Botanist comes awake instantly, struggling as he is raised up, slung under a bamboo pole, carried by two Muruts. The procession starts off again carrying the two white men. The Headman carries the Thompson. He points it at Anderson.

HEADMAN

Tamagan, very good Tamagan.

He smiles and sets off.

DISSOLVE TO:

MONTAGE - BOTANIST - DAY AND NIGHT

being carried endlessly upward over rock precipices, through rivers, but always under the canopy of gray-green endless forest. It begins to rain -- a deluge ensues. Night -- no let up.

THE FOREST - DAWN

The forest gives way; suddenly the sky is visible. The stars faintly fade as the first pink softness of dawn pervades revealing stormy clouds. The Botanist stretches trying to get a better view and sees --

THE LONGHOUSE

majestic in the distance, set against the craggy peaks of rock beyond. Mists cling to the ground. The rain has stopped. The longhouse is enormous, the largest he has ever seen. Hundreds of Muruts come forward as the two white men are brought forth. Children run alongside poking at them and laughing. Women prod them with figures and sticks; young girls, bare-breasted and beautiful, giggle and smile. They are carried to the great longhouse itself and stop before a huge log and earth proscenium. They are dropped in the mud at its base. The Botanist's nose and mouth are forced into the filth. He jerks onto his back to avoid suffocation. He coughs and sneezes mud from his nostrils, then looks up in rage.

A GREAT THRONE - DAY

covered with bird feathers and rich animal skins. On the throne sits the King, a white man with long, red hair and grey eyes. Learoyd!

CLOSE - THE KING - DAY

His eyes are the gray-green that is devoid of emotion except perhaps for madness or love. His hair hangs about his shoulders matted from the rain. His frame is muscular and athletic but gaunt. He wears nothing but a loincloth. On his chest is a great tattoo of an eagle sweeping down upon a dragon.

CLOSE - THE BOTANIST - DAY

He stares at the King, furious at having been frightened and made a fool of, covered with mud, soaking, weak.

BOTANIST

(a whisper, rising)

I'm -- a British serving officer! ---
Why have you done this?

LEAROYD

Learoyd. I am Learoyd.

He picks up the Botanist's carbine, looks it over, admiring how small it is comparing it to his men. He pulls back the bolt ejecting a shiny golden round into the mud. A warrior gracefully fetches it. The Muruts draw closer into a massive semicircle surrounding the throne. Learoyd doesn't look at the Botanist or Anderson. He is totally preoccupied with the gun, removing and reinserting the clip. He FIRES the gun into the air. The Comanches howl and cheer. Anderson twists his head around to the Botanist.

ANDERSON

He's off his rock, sir -- He's 'round the bend.

They quiet down.

LEAROYD

This is my home ground. I am master here.

He retires with the carbine.

CUT TO:

JUNGLE -- DAY

dark, swirling in the wind of an oncoming storm. The Botanist and Anderson sit under a veranda of the huge longhouse. They face the jungle. A guard sits nearby with a blowpipe and sword. Children scamper by.

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CLOSE - BOTANIST - DAY

He stares into the jungle, his head in his hands.

ANDERSON

Thinking, sir -- How the devil we
got into this -- times like this
you realize you haven't got a
prayer.

BOTANIST

I'm looking at the forest -- You
know I can actually see it grow --
Anderson -- everything around us
is screwing, lying or bursting
forth -- So much power in life.

JUNGLE - THE BOTANIST - NIGHT

Night has fallen but with it rain. A sheet of water
hangs in front of the two men.

A figure approaches. The figure steps through the
screen of water, drenched. It is Learoyd. He stands
before them.

LEAROYD

(stumbling)

I was in your war once -- not in
your army. I'm -- I'm an American
-- Sergeant Learoyd. Some of us
made a break for it when
Corregidor fell. I ended up here
-- I knew you'd come.

BOTANIST

As I said, I'm a British serving
officer. This is Sergeant
Anderson, my radio man. I'm with
Force 316, Combined Operations.

LEAROYD

Commandos.

BOTANIST

Special Forces. The Japanese are
losing the war, as well as the
Germans.

LEAROYD

The Japanese -- lost --

BOTANIST

Our side is winning. General
MacArthur is back in the
Philippines.

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LEAROYD

MacArthur -- he came back? He
left us -- He came back?

BOTANIST

We'll be here soon. Australians
will be landing shortly to
recapture, I mean liberate this
country. I have the task of
organizing resistance among the
tribes.

Learoyd seems to ponder all this very deeply, squatting
down on his haunches in the manner of his Muruts. He
ponders. The Botanist leans close.

BOTANIST

(continuing)

The wind has veered to the west
again. The British will be back
and everything will revert to
normal.

Learoyd looks up at him.

LEAROYD

The wind will never come from the
west again. You lie... Tomorrow.
I cannot -- talk -- yet.

He goes back into the rain.

CUT TO:

DAY (MORNING)

Anderson sits up and looks out at the early light.
Children play and scamper about before them. The
Botanist lies in the f.g. thinking. A multitude of
dark eyes peer through gaps in the bamboo.

ANDERSON

(to children)

Good morning, sir. Good morning,
sir.

The children laugh.

CUT TO:

STREAM - SUNLIGHT - DAY

The two white men wash.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

They look very pale compared to the young Murut girls who wash nearby. Some of them are quite attractive. Children sit on rocks or dash about them.

ANDERSON

(looking at girls)

You know, sir, this place is not half bad when the sun's out. Old Learoyd might know what he's up to, sir. Not half bad.

BOTANIST

Watch it, Sergeant -- Don't let this life seduce you. You're British.

ANDERSON

No, sir -- I'm an Aussie, sir -- I'm a barbarian. You are British, sir.

Children run by.

CHILDREN

Gud -- mahling -- sah.

CUT TO:

CLOSE - LEAROYD - DAY

He sits at what seems to be a throne inside a great longhouse. Sunlight filters through. Learoyd's eyes are closed as in a trance. Richly adorned Muruts sit around him at what is revealed to be the head of an enormous low table. The table is round. The two white men are instructed to sit next to him. Learoyd speaks with difficulty at first, tasting the words.

CLOSER - LEAROYD

LEAROYD

When I arrived at this house they wanted to sell my head to the Japanese, but I didn't know about it. I had to learn their language like a child. They know a little English -- they learned it originally from the Rajah Brooke -- it's sacred -- religious -- like we would use Latin -- only the brightest, the learned know it -- and they won't speak to you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He breathes, gathering himself.

LEAROYD

(continuing)

I ought to explain we are in the spirit country. My people are the sons of the First Man, living by the law of the Ancients. There's a saying that applies to the whole territory.

He recites it in Murut, then looks up at Anderson.

LEAROYD

(continuing)

Forest of the Spirits -- man beware of the law. Forest for Hunting -- man beware of the law. Forest of Growing Rice -- man is free. I have a special relationship with the spirits because -- because when I came here I used to howl at night. They believed my twin souls were fighting the demons. I wasn't fighting demons. Bah!

He leans over, almost grabs the Botanist.

LEAROYD

(continuing)

No! I was fighting the jungle. Have you ever been in the jungle at night? All alone? I have.

He seems at a loss for words.

LEAROYD

(continuing)

It's too late now. If you'd come for me then it would have been different. I died once, you know.

He looks up.

LEAROYD

(continuing)

Dying is nothing. No, I'm not frightened of death anymore -- nor of pain. I'm frightened of myself.

His gaze seems far away.

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LEAROYD

(continuing)

I hadn't meant to tell you -- but
I'm going to -- I'm a deserter --
more than you can -- know.

DISSOLVE TO:

FLASHBACK - BEACH - 1942 - NIGHT

Learoyd standing in the surf yelling at us.

LEAROYD

I've had enough -- Bataan --
Corregidor -- I listened to you
and you were wrong. My friends
are all dead. I've seen enough of
your orders!

He turns.

VOICE

You can't!

LEAROYD

(turning back)

I'm free now -- free.

He leaves walking up towards the distant dark forest.

VOICE

Deserter!

DISSOLVE TO:

PRESENT - THE LONGHOUSE

Learoyd strains as if forcing up some deep nightmare
long forgotten. A hideous guilt.

LEAROYD

Free -- hah -- what is freedom?
Freedom from others but never from
yourself.

DISSOLVE TO:

FLASHBACK - BEACH 1942

Learoyd stares at the horrible scene of execution in
the shadowy distance of the village.

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LEAROYD (V.O.)

I thought they were dead, but I was wrong. I couldn't leave them -- I went back -- but it was too late. The men I had hated became the closest friends I'd ever loved. And -- I watched them die.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - THE COLONEL

Magnificent -- surreal in a slowed reality. The white horse's tail waving gracefully in the maelstrom. The Colonel's hand reaching up to steady his hat. His sword scabbard glinting in the blue dawn.

LEAROYD (V.O.)

And I deserted them -- again.

FLASHBACK - CLOSE - LEAROYD

His hand shaking as he holds the .45 out -- unable to shoot.

LEAROYD (V.O.)

It was just the beginning.

He fades back into the darkness and runs.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - JUNGLE - DAY

Dark and thick, a tangle of shapes, BUZZING AND CRACKLING with noises of growth, death and beasts.

LEAROYD (V.O.)

Then I came to where the real jungle begins.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - JUNGLE - NIGHT

Learoyd sits and listens. Suddenly a huge beetle jumps onto his face. He gasps, flicks it away almost screaming, panting. Something CRASHES through the undergrowth. He whirls about. The beetle jumps back onto his hand.

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CONTINUED:

He swats it off again screaming, draws his heavy pistol and shoves the barrel at it. He FIRES, blowing the insect and dirt into the night. Beasts SCREECH with the SHOT. He gasps.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - JUNGLE - NIGHT

Learoyd staggering through the vines, meeting more and more resistance, finally trying to fall and just-being-held there crying.

LEAROYD (V.O.)

I was suffocated by the trees. I longed for the sky.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - A MOUNTAINTOP - NIGHT

Above the clouds, the forest. More mountains lie beyond. Learoyd crouches, shivering on the rock peak.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - JUNGLE - NIGHT

Learoyd is digging frantically with his nails. He digs a hole and curls up inside it like an animal.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - JUNGLE - DAWN

He lies like a dead beast, his back in the f.g. He stirs, senses something is wrong. He shakes and whirls over, facing us. His face is covered with leeches, worms, ants. He screams and claws at his eyes, rolling about on the ground in a frenzy of anguish.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - JUNGLE - LEAROYD - DAY

staggering through the ferns, his face swollen and bleeding, his eyes mad. He stops, pulls out his pistol, holds it to his head and tries to pull the trigger. He can't. He throws the weapon into a sea of ferns and tangled growth. He staggers on.

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CONTINUED:

LEAROYD (V.O.)
I threw my pistol away.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - LEAROYD - DAY

on hands and knees in the ferns, laughing maniacally and whimpering. His clothes are now reduced to rags. He is searching the ground below the ferns.

LEAROYD (V.O.)
Then I spent days trying to find it. I would have shot myself...

LEAROYD
Please -- please, God.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - LEAROYD - NIGHT

sitting against a banyan tree, howling. Later, losing his energy, he screams less loudly.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - LEAROYD - NIGHT

He crawls, his face covered with mud. He rolls over on his back starting to gasp.

LEAROYD
God, oh God, I've done more than my share. Now it's up to you!

He gasps and rolls over crying pitifully and howling. In the f.g. a face looms up, bronze, tattooed. It is GWAI.

CUT TO:

PRESENT - THE LONGHOUSE - LEAROYD, BOTANIST & ANDERSON

It is late in the day. Learoyd has been speaking for some time. The verandas of the longhouse are thrown open and a soft misting rain falls outside.

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LEAROYD

They brought me here, tied to the same place where I had you two brought. Of course, when they first saw me, it was quite different. Only the old ones had ever seen white men. They themselves have only legends of the British, and the language passed down in the epic poems of the days of high adventure. But nothing since. Here --

He motions and young women bring Chinese jars and dragons on their sides. The dragon jars are quickly taken and gracefully drunk by all.

LEAROYD

(continuing)

Ayak -- it's good, but drink it slowly.

Anderson drinks, seems to like it. Learoyd drinks.

LEAROYD

(continuing)

I screamed and howled every night. They thought I was possessed of a demon, so they didn't kill me.

DISSOLVE TO:

FLASHBACK - CLOSE SHOT - LEAROYD - DAY

Learoyd screams his lungs out. He looks horrible. His eyes are completely mad, his face battered and dreadfully thin. He is tied by the neck to an upright piling. Around him gather the Muruts -- men, women and children. They keep their distance.

LEAROYD (V.O.)

They thought I was fighting this dragon tattooed on my chest. Perhaps it saved me.

A lean dangerous-looking man stands before the others speaking Murut, waving his sword and almost dancing before Learoyd.

LEAROYD (V.O.)

(continuing)

Lian the Magnificent, was all for handing my head over to the Japanese.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LIAN waves his sword before Learoyd, but behind him are the dark liquid eyes of the women, several of whom lash at him with tongues and sticks.

LEAROYD (V.O.)

(continuing)

It was the women who stopped him.
They were fascinated by my eyes.

FLASHBACK - CLOSE - LEAROYD

LEAROYD (V.O.)

They said my eyes were like the
sea. They have never seen the
sea, but the sea means salt. And
here -- salt is life.

He looks straight ahead, mad or trying to be. Before him a beautiful girl slides up to him... She is taller than the rest and her black, shiny hair falls across her perfect breast and the tender curve of her stomach. She carries herself with a confidence and grace that denotes nobility. She kneels before him and looks into his eyes.

FLASHBACK - CLOSE - HER EYES

Dark pools of hidden dreams, passions, ambitions.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - VILLAGE - DAY

Children cry and run. A woman screams as she is held kicking by a burly Murut thug. Other thugs enter a hut while Lian stands outside, hands across his chest. A girl is dragged out -- her father rushes after her, brandishing a machete-like sword. He swings at Lian who parries the blow with a CLANG and chops off his arm. The old man falls, his life ebbing from him in the dust. Then the thugs start marching out, bashing and pushing villagers around, and grabbing sacks of rice.

LEAROYD (V.O.)

Then -- came the day -- It was
like yesterday. The day of the
rice tax imposed by the Japanese.
Lian and his followers were called
the Man-Shield -- they vied for
power with the headman -- they
were thugs -- but they were strong.

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CLOSE - A LITTLE GIRL

crying as her older sister is dragged away.

LEAROYD (V.O.)

They took women and rice and gave them to the Japanese. In their foolishness they thought the Japanese would give them power -- Bah!

Women are lined up crying to be marched off while their husbands, fathers, brothers are beaten or threatened. CHILDREN can be heard CRYING, old WOMEN WAILING. And everywhere, the downward dog-gaze of beaten men.

LEAROYD (V.O.)

(continuing)

I still find it amazing what people will tolerate -- will accept -- how -- how they will let themselves fall.

Lian and his thugs advance to the outside of the long-house, towards where Learoyd is tied to a pole. Suddenly Gwai and several hunter-warriors stand in his way. And with them the tall beautiful girl with the strong eyes. Lian stops.

LEAROYD (V.O.)

(continuing)

Her name was Yoo -- she is Gwai's sister but more --

She steps forward ahead of Gwai and his men, facing Lian who mutter a few words in Murut and finally steps back. An uneasy tension prevails.

LEAROYD (V.O.)

(continuing)

She descended from Paang, the hero who tamed fire in ancient times. It was said from when she was a child --

CLOSE - YOO

Those eyes!

LEAROYD (V.O.)

-- that she was born to rule.

FLASHBACK - CLOSE - LIAN - DAY

After taking a few steps backwards, suddenly Lian turns towards the gathered villagers and hurls a challenge to everyone in Murut.

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CONTINUED:

LIAN

(subtitled)

If you will not let me kill him,
who will take him and his dragon
and bring whatever comes by it?
Bah! None will do this!

Yoo takes a few more steps forward. All eyes fall on her.

YOO

(subtitled)

I will take him.

There is much chatter and hushed whispers.

LEAROYD (V.O.)

One of them would have to die.

Lian turns and stalks away with his followers.

DISSOLVE TO:

FLASHBACK - CLOSE - LEAROYD - NIGHT

He sits in a closed off area of the longhouse. The walls covered with tapas prevent him from seeing anyone. But he hears every noise from the other side -- the BUZZING OF THE JUNGLE -- the heavy breathing of lovers -- the WHISPERS OF MOTHERS to children -- a distant CRY -- a COUGH -- Suddenly he hears FOOTSTEPS heavy and distant at the far side of the house. The feet are trying to be stealthy but the BAMBOO CREAKS underneath. Learoyd's eyes flash with the terror of a deer in the grip of a tiger.

Suddenly a tapa is thrown back. Gwai and Yoo grab Learoyd and pull him away -- the steps get closer. Another man and woman haul in the carcass of a boar and cover it with a cloth, then disappear.

DIFFERENT ANGLE

The outside bamboo mat is thrown open and dark figures hack at the carcass with heavy swords, grunting and snarling. Thick blood splatters the figures crouched and awkward. They retreat as quickly as they came.

CUT TO:

mc

FLASHBACK - A HUT - DAY

The hut is made of straw and bamboo, built in the jungle. Learoyd is tied to a tree growing in the center of the structure.

LEAROYD (V.O.)

She took me back into the forest
where no one knew.

Yoo brings him rice and pork. She feeds him tentatively while her girlfriends look on. These women are graceful and strong, their breasts firm and upright, their thighs smooth like polished stone.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - DARKNESS - DUSK

The last rays of light filter through the trees. Learoyd is alone. He begins to howl and cry. A hideous mournful wail, made more so by a new note of total despair. His sobbing and screaming reaches a hysterical pitch like that of a child, an abandoned child. He wails into the coming night -- a cry of need, pain and lonely fear. Suddenly he stops and gasps for breath.

FLASHBACK - THE JUNGLE

In the distance a figure emerges from the forest. It is Yoo. She glides silently towards him and kneels by his side. His head falls forward sobbing. She places a shell of food at his side and strokes his head and neck. He sobs and moans like a dog.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - LEAROYD - DAWN

He sleeps with his head in her lap like a child. She sleeps fitfully, her eyes open, looking around.

CUT TO:

LEAROYD

eating like a wolf, shoving food into his mouth as fast as he can. Yoo and several other women laugh and pass more food.

(CONTINUED)

ms

CONTINUED:

LEAROYD (V.O.)

It was the women who saved me.
They taught me to eat and walk
again, like a child.

He walks about his compound feeling good.

LEAROYD AND YOO

speaking slowly in Murut.

FLASHBACK - JUNGLE - DAY

Learoyd stalks through the jungle with a blowpipe
accompanied by Yoo. He is healthy again, his body
beginning to fill out, his skin bronze.

FLASHBACK - MONTAGE

Learoyd with birds and animals dead from his hand. He
learns to use the blowpipe, spear, traps and axe. He
cuts trees, drinks from raging torrents, feels the rain
wash away his sweat. His hair grows long, his body
hardens and grows muscular. Everything he does is with
ferocious intensity -- full speed, brutal movements of
strength and will.

LEAROYD (V.O.)

I began to live as an animal. For
the first time in my life I felt
freedom.

FLASHBACK - CLOSE - LEAROYD

He runs headlong through the jungle leaping over rocks
under branches. Nothing stops him -- animal will and
ferocity. His eyes glint bestially like those of a
wolf.

LEAROYD (V.O.)

Freedom -- to be -- what -- I --
was meant to be.

NIGHT

Learoyd howling again and Yoo comforting him, the two
sleeping in each other's arms. Finally the two make
love by the light of a small fire. Yoo gasps and comes
to orgasm, then only their breathing is heard above the
jungle.

mt

CLOSE - LEAROYD

gazing at Yoo's face, her eyes closed in passion and pleasure, her mouth open, breathing.

LEAROYD (V.O.)

I've learned from women -- theirs
is grace and flow like a river.

FLASHBACK - CLOSE LEAROYD - NIGHT

He parts some leaves and peers out at the village. He sees:

FLASHBACK - THE LONGHOUSE - MEN

sitting around the fires of the longhouse, drinking ayak from the dragon jars. They listen to tales as Learoyd watches them from afar.

LEAROYD (V.O.)

The men here dream of gods and strike noble attitudes. They want to rival the heroes of the past. The time of Rajah Brooke, and the days of high adventure. There was nothing to be had from them.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - LEAROYD AND YOO - DAY

-- sit and eat. Learoyd practices speaking. She corrects him again and again. He tries to speak English -- she shakes her head and corrects him in Murut.

LEAROYD (V.O.)

We prepared a speech -- It had to be perfect. She would not speak English to me even though she could. I had to become Murut first -- It had to be perfect.

She smiles. He tries to kiss her. She makes him continue.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - NIGHT

Lian stands up before the assembled warriors and head-men. He begins haranguing them, waving his sword.

LEAROYD (V.O.)

For them, it is a man that counts

mt

FLASHBACK - LONGHOUSE

The men -- the old nobles -- sit about in heroic attitudes listening to some storyteller recount the poetic songs of their history. Women bring ayak and stay in the shadows.

LEAROYD (V.O.)

Then one night, it was time.

Into this council stride Learoyd and Gwai followed by Yoo and Gwai's henchmen. They are all dressed in sarongs and colorful turbans. The storytelling stops; all the men turn to face the delegation. The hands of some fondle their swords. There is silence as most sit. Ayak is passed, everyone drinks. Then Learoyd starts, staring into the fire and concentrating.

LEAROYD

(in Murut)

If Lian the Magnificent wants my head, he must come and get it.

Lian's eyes flash, nostrils flare. He sits up, hand at the hilt of his weapon.

LEAROYD

(continuing)

If he wants to slice it off --

He runs his finger across his neck.

LEAROYD

(continuing)

-- with a headhunter's sword, then I shall defend myself with a headhunter's sword. This is only fair.

His eyes turn slowly to Lian, gray eyes with no emotion.

LEAROYD

(continuing)

If he is a warrior, I too am a warrior. If he is noble, how does he know that I too am not noble? Lian the Magnificent and I drink the same water, live off the same forest. We have the same rights.

He bows his head, silence. The HEADMAN, an old warlord, looks around slowly. Lian's eyes flash with hatred. Yoo's flash too, with love or ambition?

HEADMAN

This is only fair.

CUT TO:

PRESENT - LONGHOUSE - LEAROYD, BOTANIST & ANDERSON_____

The three men still sitting around the fire. Fire gleams in Learoyd's eyes as the other two lean close. He seems wonderfully mad.

LEAROYD

I'm an American -- but I'm Irish -- you know what that means -- Ha! I'm a rebel twice over to you. But you the British gave me two great things -- first, the legend of Arthur the King and the Round Table and how he rallied the dukes and knights to the crown, to a nation -- a quest. And second -- Ha! In advanced Infantry school, they taught us English bayonet fighting!

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - LIAN - NIGHT

Lian swings his sword screaming in a mad charge. It clangs off the steel of Learoyd's with a spark. Learoyd parries the blow holding his blade with two hands, one on the back to shorten the stroke. He ducks under Lian's charge and brutally slashes his ribs as he goes by.

FLASHBACK - LEAROYD

His eyes cold. Both men hack at each other. Learoyd gets it in the side and back but he stabs Lian in the lower abdomen. They pull apart screaming. Lian chops into Learoyd's thigh while Learoyd butt strokes him across the face with the handle. Both fall. They rise and charge again drenched in each other's blood. Sparks fly as blades meet, then more thrusting and slashing. Neither can make a killing blow but each attack severs flesh!

LEAROYD (V.O.)

Lian the Magnificent wounded me seven times -- when suddenly he fell.

Lian falls, his face ashen. He tries to regain his feet, but his legs are wobbly and he goes down again. He kicks and spits. Blood pours from his side like a river.

LIAN

(subtitles; crying out)

I am dying. The red man with the gray eyes has killed me.

mt

FLASHBACK - CLOSE - LEAROYD

He drops his sword, turns and staggers off into the night.

FLASHBACK - STREAM

Learoyd bathes his wounds, bleeding hideously. Yoo helps bind him. A crowd gathers around holding torches. Gwai rushes up.

GWAI

He is dead. Lian the Magnificent is dead.

Learoyd gets up, bleeding. They follow.

FLASHBACK - CLOSE - LONGHOUSE

where the battle took place, crowds gather around the fallen Lian. Learoyd staggers up, red staining his newly-wrapped bandages. The crowd parts. He picks up a sword, goes to the body, hacks off the head. There is much stirring. He picks up the head, silence. He hands it to Yoo by the hair and walks back to the river. She follows.

FLASHBACK - DANCERS - DAY

Murut girls dressed in their ceremonial finery dance before huge steaming pots of buffalo and jars of ayak. It is a wedding feast. Tribes from nearby areas have come to the great longhouse. It is a time of goodness, a time to look at life in the sunlight. The men of the great council are pleased too. They hear the ceremonial songs and take solace in the traditional joyous sound of flute and drum. They revel in the grace of the dancers, for a wedding is an affirmation. It is Learoyd who is being married, and he stands with his new brother, Gwai, and his knights, resplendent in colorful turbans and feathers. Learoyd wears the ceremonial loincloth of the newly married and is bedecked in flowers.

LEAROYD (V.O.)

I married --

Yoo is brought forth; she dances before him and towards him. Her hips sway seductively, her thighs glisten, her motions are fluid like wind in long grass. She dances closer and closer to him. He smiles, perhaps even a little in his eyes.

CUT TO:

mc

FLASHBACK - CLOSE - LEAROYD - DUSK

He moves through the jungle with a combination of stealth and violence. He has painted himself brown and camouflaged himself with leaves and mud. Yoo follows behind -- carrying weapons -- sword -- spear -- blowpipe.

LEAROYD (V.O.)

I had won my freedom -- but they had not. It was time again for the rice tax and the Japanese would be waiting.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - CLOSE - LEAROYD - DUSK

Profiled almost indiscernible in the leaves -- he waits -- his head turns ever so slightly -- his eyes lead into:

FLASHBACK - LONG SHOT - A CLEARING - JAPANESE

A delegation of Japanese have come to the edge of the jungle to collect the tribute which they have come to expect. They laugh quietly and joke amongst each other.

DISSOLVE TO:

FLASHBACK - LEAROYD

The light has changed -- an hour has gone by -- maybe more. A slight PLOP-PLOP OF RAINDROPS starts.

FLASHBACK - THE JAPANESE

The RAINDROPS INCREASE into a sudden fierce DRUMMING and then a ROAR. The Japanese get up -- open thatched parasols which they make their native bearers carry. They confer and drift back down a jungle path, leaving two soldiers to wait.

FLASHBACK - CLOSE - THE TWO JAPANESE SOLDIERS

They stand under a tree but the rain pours down like a river. Behind them -- a flicker of movement -- an eye in the shadows. Suddenly Learoyd jumps out. The two Japanese hear -- turn to confront the wild red-bearded man covered with leaves. No one moves. Suddenly Learoyd thrusts forward with a spear -- impaling the nearest one who lets out a sharp cry and goes still but doesn't fall. The other runs -- Learoyd chases.

mt

FLASHBACK - ANGLE

They splash through the mud and rain. A flash of the sword. They disappear into the leaves. Only the ROARING RAIN is heard. Learoyd emerges.

FLASHBACK - BACK ON THE FIRST SOLDIER

Held up by the spear -- holding his rifle. He can't hold it up -- it shakily points at Yoo who stands before him with a blowpipe. Learoyd rushes up.

FLASHBACK - CLOSE - JAPANESE SOLDIER

He is young -- a boy almost. His eyes are wide with desperation.

LEAROYD (V.O.)

His eyes -- were innocent --

FLASHBACK - CLOSE - YOO

Her eyes wild with fear -- her nostrils flared. Learoyd's face comes INTO FRAME -- the rifle.

LEAROYD (V.O.)

Mine were not.

He fires.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - JUNGLE

Learoyd carries one rifle in his hands the other slung over his shoulder. Yoo follows.

LEAROYD (V.O.)

I had weapons from both worlds. I deserted because I wanted peace, but now I was at war. I felt like a white man again. You cannot run away from your nature. A white man is drawn to war like a moth to a flame.

DISSOLVE TO:

mk

FLASHBACK - COUNCIL - DAY

Learoyd scrawls crude marks on blocks of wood as somebody speaks. Yoo looms over his shoulder. It is a dark day, a storm is brewing.

LEAROYD (V.O.)

Nothing happened -- time passed and I grew complacent. I was happy to be 'the one who listens' -- Yoo was pregnant with my son. I had almost forgotten your world -- forgotten Sergeant Learoyd -- the Japanese.

Suddenly the storyteller stops. He senses something. The others sense it too. Learoyd is almost the last, he looks up from his block of wood -- NOISE -- a DISTANT RUMBLE OF ENGINES -- AIRPLANES!

He leaps to his feet, the others are slower. Suddenly, over the trees appear two Japanese Betty bombers. Learoyd stands transfixed like everyone else. They clip gracefully over the jungle, gliding around in front of the mist-covered mountains and bear down on us.

LEAROYD

My God! They're coming here! Run!
Run! Get away from here!

He grabs Yoo and bolts toward the jungle, but everyone else just stares at him. The planes draw closer and MACHINE GUN FIRE is heard. The ground kicks up all around. Men, women and children scream, some fall. Finally, the people run, but it's almost too late. BULLETS tear into them and the PLANES ROAR over. The earth convulses and ERUPTS into four huge geysers taking part of the longhouse. Everywhere is screaming and chaos.

FLASHBACK - CLOSE - LEAROYD - DAY

He glares at the planes, helpless, impotent, but as quickly as they came they are gone. Smoke and mist drift together; CHILDREN CRY.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - A BODY

wrapped in finery and being placed in a buried hole standing up.

LEAROYD (V.O.)

The Headman, Gwai's uncle, was dead. There were many others but he had been a great headman.

FLASHBACK - WOMEN

crying and carrying fruits, weapons, flowers.

LEAROYD (V.O.)

Many came -- from the black lands,
from the red lands where spirits
have fled. Six buffalos were
slaughtered and eaten. For three
days it went on.

FLASHBACK - COUNCIL

sitting, listening to the shamans. Their hearts are
heavy.

LEAROYD

And on the third day I spoke.

He stands before them, quiet, contained, concentrating.

LEAROYD

(continuing; subtitles)

Learoyd am I. Let no man call me
a stranger.

He looks out.

LEAROYD

(continuing; subtitles)

You are weak people! You are no
longer great and free. You will
say this happened because you did
not pay the rice tax. This
happened to you because you let it.
The law of a thousand generations
says that no stranger may enter the
forest of the spirits -- yet a
stranger walks upon your land. He
takes your rice -- he takes your
women.

He points to the damaged longhouse.

LEAROYD

(continuing; subtitles)

He kills your children -- where
are the heads of these strangers?
-- I see none hanging in the
sacred places. I see none.

The men listen -- some look down in shame.

(CONTINUED)

mk

CONTINUED:

LEAROYD

(continuing; subtitles)

You wait for time to make you great again. You talk of the past -- that it will return. The past never returns. The passing days will only make you weaker. Time is the enemy of great men. Great men have too much to do!

He has their total attention.

LEAROYD

(continuing; subtitles)

It is time to wait no more! Each village must raise an army. All these armies must put away feuds, differences, blood. They must obey a single headman and train in warfare! Then we shall once again be the great and free people we once were.

FLASHBACK - LEAROYD

Fires burn behind him, his eyes are lit by a blue flame. THUNDER RUMBLES and lightning flashes off his face.

LEAROYD

(subtitles)

Let drums and war gongs sound, our enemies will think it's only thunder. Let weapons gleam in the moonlight -- our enemies will say it's a distant lightning. Let spears and arrows make them think it's wind. When they realize their mistake, it will be too late! Wait no more!

He thrusts his hands into the night, howls. A solitary WIND, the wind before a great storm, WHISTLES through his fingers, tears at the fires. Gwai stands up, giving a war cry. They all stand, issuing a resounding cheering cry, a cry of fierce dignity and hope, a cry of resistance and rebirth. Sparks fly through the wind.

LEAROYD (V.O.)

I told you men dream of gods, but you must find the words to fire the dream. I had spent a whole year learning the words.

DISSOLVE TO:

THE MOON

Clouds pass by, the trees wave in a gentle breeze.

PRESENT - CLOSE - DRAGON JAR - NIGHT

on its side, empty; others rest nearby. Learoyd and the other two sit silently staring into the night; the fires have burned low. Bare breasted young girls sit smoking pipes.

Some of the warriors have passed out, others are helped away. The ayak has gone to everyone's heads. LAUGHTER and hoarse CRIES OF PASSION occasionally rise above the constant SOFT MURMURS OF VOICES AND WIND. The BAMBOO CREAKS like the rigging of an old vessel.

LEAROYD

Yoo silently materializes as if out of the mist behind him. With her is a young toddler, a boy maybe two but with unmistakable gray-green eyes. He leans against his father who stares ahead, lost in an unfathomable past.

LEAROYD

My son. He will rule when I am dead -- a regular Comanche.

ANDERSON

Comanche, sir? Your Highness.

Learoyd looks slowly over at him.

BOTANIST

You call them Comanches?

LEAROYD

Yes.

He catches himself, laughs.

LEAROYD

(continuing)

Yes, before the war when I was a kid in Nebraska, I saw movies like every kid -- there was one -- "The White Comanche." A kid like me, kidnapped by the Indians who becomes a Comanche chief. The ending was bad. He fell in love with a white girl and she made him tow the line and become a cowboy like everyone else -- But what of it.

BOTANIST

Go on --

me

FLASHBACK - JUNGLE

deep, seemingly impenetrable but men move through it silently, expectantly: Japanese. It is a small seven-teen-man patrol, a rifle squad with a machine gun team.

LEAROYD (V.O.)

The Japanese came --

The Japanese emerge onto a hillside and look out over the forest. In the distance they see a huge pillar of smoke.

LEAROYD (V.O.)

(continuing)

They burned down old Senghir's longhouse. Perhaps they'd heard about me. I'd never know.

FLASHBACK - JUNGLE - NIGHT

The Japanese move through a sea of ferns under a moonlit canopy.

FLASHBACK - CLOSE - THE SQUAD LEADER

hears something and stops, listens, nostrils sensing something as would an animal. He hears a CHOPPING, WET SOUND. He turns; the man directly behind him has no head. The body falls away into the ferns. The squad leader's eyes widen. There is a WHISTLING SOUND like the wind, then a WET CHOP. The eyes go blank.

LEAROYD (V.O.)

The whole patrol -- in one night
-- It just vanished.

FLASHBACK - JUNGLE - NIGHT

A breeze blows the fern in the moonlight. In the foreground the Muruts stare at a polished Arisaka rifle, a Nambu light machine gun and belts of ammunition. Learoyd is in the background.

LEAROYD (V.O.)

I gave one rifle to each headman
-- one for each great family.
That was start of the Comanches.

CUT TO:

me

FLASHBACK - VILLAGE - DAY

Learoyd walks into a village similar to his own, with longhouse, huts hacked out of a savage, tangled jungle. Learoyd is now accompanied by his household bodyguard -- savagely painted warriors carrying hideous swords and pikes as well as the Nambu.

LEAROYD (V.O.)

Of course, I kept the machine gun.

Learoyd speaks slowly as Gwai translates, yelling in Murut. Several of the nobles come forward and stick their swords in the ground before Learoyd. Others stare at him with indifference. Learoyd hoists the machine gun, points it at a banana tree and, with a devastating BLAST, cuts the tree to salad.

FLASHBACK - CLOSE - DAY

Swords being stuck in the ground with the others.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - WOMEN - DAY

Old and young, beautiful, ugly, they speak in rapid succession, chattering like monkeys. Finally, we see Yoo, distant and cool. She swaps a few words, her eyes flash, other voices agree.

LEAROYD (V.O.)

Then, of course, there was the matter of old Senghir's people who lived by the Lower Srai River. They'd had a blood feud with Gwai's ancestors since the time of God. No one knew what started it. It was the women again who aided me.

FLASHBACK - OLD SENGHIR

smoking a crude cheroot on the steps of his burned longhouse. He looks down upon a young girl -- demure, coy, embarrassed.

LEAROYD (V.O.)

An incident took place that became useful to me. There was a girl from Senghir's own family -- and a boy from our village...

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FLASHBACK - A BOY - DAY

A teenager, trying to look cool, scuffing the ground the way punk teenagers always do, in front of Gwai.

FLASHBACK - THE LOVERS - DAY

running through the dark forest, playing naked in a waterfall, copulating vigorously in the grass.

LEAROYD (V.O.)

They met in solitude like Romeo and Juliet -- only she got pregnant.

FLASHBACK - CLOSE - GIRL - DAY

She looks mooningly at the boy. He shrugs.

LEAROYD (V.O.)

It happens.

FLASHBACK - MEN - DAY

sharpening swords, treuing up blowpipes, dipping arrows in poison.

LEAROYD (V.O.)

The men, well, they wanted war, of course -- vengeance, blood! But I spoke to the women.

The women glare at the men as they walk by.

FLASHBACK - LONGHOUSE - NIGHT

The men sit on the edge of the longhouse and stare into the night drinking ayak. They look back at the women who sleep together, away from them. The men hold up their hands to each other in futility, wondering what this means. Never in their long and honored manly history has such a thing happened.

LEAROYD (V.O.)

I gave them some bad ideas, but it was something they'd wanted to do to the men for a long time anyway.

Learoyd sits and watches the men from afar. A delegation approaches him. A YOUNG WARRIOR, a noble, speaks quickly in Murut.

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CONTINUED:

LEAROYD

English!

WARRIOR

We can no go on like this.

LEAROYD

It's war or sex. I've always
thought war should be chaste and
pure, anyway.

WARRIOR

I have never seen woman do this.

LEAROYD

A curse brought by the Japanese --
sleep well even if alone.

Learoyd curls up, smiling.

FLASHBACK - WEDDING - DAY

The boy and girl look sheepish, like a bride and-groom
anywhere. Learoyd presides over the rites.

LEAROYD (V.O.)

The men soon saw the folly of
their ways and I -- well, I guess
I had become a king.

CLOSE - LEAROYD

His eyes sparkle as the two, nobles from both clans,
bow and stand before him, bedecked in flowers and
finery.

LEAROYD

Let this marriage be a marriage of
two great and free peoples, and
from this let all things grow.

FLASHBACK - LONGHOUSE - NIGHT

A great table of hard wood has been constructed -- a
round table. At this sit all the nobles -- earls,
dukes, knights -- their swords placed in the center of
the table so that no man conceals his weapons. Learoyd
sits at his great throne bedecked in feathers and
shells. Yoo is at his side. They all hum a tune sol-
emnly. It is "The Wearing of the Green."

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CONTINUED:

LEAROYD (V.O.)

I brought them the fellowship of song and the Round Table, where each knight is equal in the eyes of his king. The Japs had temporarily left the forest -- too much trouble -- they were content with the coast. And now for the first time in ages, in several centuries perhaps, the old quarrels had been settled. I had forged a nation!

CUT TO:

PRESENT - LEAROYD - DAWN

sitting against a dragon jar on the veranda of the longhouse. The dawn is coming up and the forest is filled with mist. Only a few women are stirring. The men have been drinking all night. The Botanist and Anderson lean against the slats; their eyes are red. It has been an epic tale, an epic telling. It has been a long night.

The jungle begins to come to life. BIRDS CRY and ECHO through the mist.

ANDERSON

It's an epic tale, sir... An epic tale.

BOTANIST

(shaking his head)
An epic telling.

LEAROYD

It doesn't matter what you do... I'm king here... I'll never go back. And you... they threw you into this jungle like a rock... and if there's no response...

He shrugs.

BOTANIST

. They'll throw another rock.

Slowly the Botanist looks up and stares at Learoyd.

BOTANIST

(continuing)
And another after that.

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED:

LEAROYD

What do you want?

BOTANIST

In the north the Americans are arming the Sulu pirates. In the south other teams like mine are organizing the Dayaks of Sarawak. There'll soon be general hostilities in Borneo. The Australians are going to land.

CUT TO:

A MOUNTAIN PATH

spiralling upward through mist, rain and wind. Several Comanches lead our group. Learoyd wears a loincloth, glistening with mud and rain while the other two look like drowned rats with their fatigues soaked and plastered to them.

BOTANIST

No one has ever controlled Borneo from within. The Japanese like everyone else have only inhabited the rim, but when we invade, they will be driven to the center.

They climb higher and higher. Learoyd flicks leeches from his thighs with a switch. Behind Anderson several Comanches carry the transmitter.

BOTANIST

(continuing)

They do not fear the jungle. God knows they can live in it. What will your kingdom be worth then? You can no longer avoid history!

Learoyd finally surmounts a crest and looks out upon the vast sheet of gray before him. The Botanist stops at his side, winded. Learoyd looks out, breathing.

ANDERSON

It's a real hangover morning, eh, sir?

He doesn't answer; watches Learoyd.

LEAROYD

Here.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He walks to the edge and points out over a curly black pelt of jungle that disappears behind a rampart of rain. It is dismal as death.

LEAROYD

(continuing)

This is the Forest of the Spirits.
Beautiful, isn't it -- It's been
like this forever.

There is nothing. Wind, rain, nothing. The Comanches busy themselves with Anderson setting up a small, well-camouflaged hut to put the transmitter in. Suddenly, the rain stops and almost as suddenly the crest is bathed in scorching sunlight. The Botanist moves to the edge. The clouds break away before them, leaving an emerald jungle and great craggy islands of rock in the distance. The sinister landscape is transformed into a sea of greens, the clouds breaking like white crested waves against a distant blue mountain.

LEAROYD

(continuing)

The Great Mountain of the Dead.
Beyond is the Plain of Elephants
and after that -- the sea.
They'll have to leave us a way
to the sea.

BOTANIST

The Japanese?

LEAROYD

No -- the others. The rest of the
world. After the war. We need
salt from the sea.

He smiles.

LEAROYD

(continuing)

What is life without a little salt?

ANDERSON

I've got them, sir, loud and clear.

They rush over and cluster around the radio.

CUT TO:

CLOSE - BOTANIST

He speaks into the radio, a grin on his face.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOTANIST

That's right, sir, an American who thinks he's an Irishman, who thinks he is a king... No, sir, I landed upside down, sir, but not really on my head... no, sir...

He looks up at Learoyd.

BOTANIST

(continuing)

But, sir, he is king.

(pause)

Me, sir? Well, I guess I'm Britain's ambassador to -- His Majesty -- !

CLOSE - BOTANIST

He looks up at Learoyd, a smile in his eyes. Learoyd looks back returning the warmth. A bond is struck.

BOTANIST

No, sir, I'm quite all right. Yes, sir. Well, sir, he hasn't agreed to anything yet.

He pauses.

BOTANIST

(continuing; to Learoyd)

They want to know what you want. What do you want anyway?

LEAROYD

Freedom. Real freedom -- but that's later. For now ask them for what we agreed on.

BOTANIST

He -- he wants a treaty, sir. I repeat -- a treaty like other nations. Do you copy? Sir?

Anderson walks over to Learoyd.

ANDERSON

I think they're going to have a go at it, sir -- uh, sire.

Learoyd stares out at his kingdom.

(CONTINUED)

774

CONTINUED:

LEAROYD

Perhaps I should have asked for
your heads. Now it's too late.

ANDERSON

Aw, sir -- sire, they'd just send
two other blokes.

LEAROYD

I suppose so. But I'll never know
-- Life, Aussie.

He winks.

CUT TO:

AN OPEN CLEARING

marked by torches in the gathering dusk. At one end
are hundreds of Muruts with spears, swords, and other
regalia. Learoyd stands with his machine gun over his
shoulder, the Botanist next to him. Anderson is ex-
plaining to a short Murut what is about to happen,
making gestures and airplane noises. The Murut quickly
explains to others who make choruses of ahhhhs.

BOTANIST

How can he understand that,
Anderson? They've rarely ever
seen an aircraft.

ANDERSON

Big Belly Button -- he's very
high up, sir -- a shaman of the
first water. No, sir, there's
nothing in the world that would
surprise him.

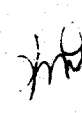
Suddenly the ROAR OF ENGINES is heard.

BOTANIST

I hope they don't run away.

From the far end of the valley three B-24 Liberators
appear through the clouds and ROAR over. The Muruts
stir apprehensively, grasp spears; some of the women
scream and run. The huge planes pass overhead silhou-
etted against a darkening sky. Objects tumble out;
the crowd gasps.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

Suddenly the dark objects sprout bright canopies -- parachutes -- drifting lazily, silently towards them. There are ten or so, five of them with men.

CUT TO:

PARACHUTES

As they drift down the men beneath them FIRE weapons. Bright arcs of tracers zip across the clouds. The NOISE seems small and HOLLOW on the wind. The crowd makes approving SOUNDS. One of the men actually descends into the crowd, laughing and bellowing as he comes down. The Muruts surround him like children as the silken parachutes lazily drift over them all.

CROWD

carrying off the soldiers and equipment. The men, Australian Special Forces, are huge compared to the Muruts but all of a jovial good nature. They laugh and frolic with the people as if it's all part of a great athletic event and they are the home team. They are borne along with torches and singing. The Muruts mouth the words to "The Rising of the Moon." Words they don't understand but know it to be their anthem. The Aussies are glad to participate in any anti-English song, so they, of course, know the words.

CROWD

"For the pikes must be together
By the rising of the moon."

Learoyd leads them towards the longhouse, Gwai, in his usual silence, at his side.

ANDERSON

Well, what'd he think? Knocked
'em in the aisles, eh, Your
Majesty?

Gwai doesn't seem particularly emotional. Learoyd and he speak in Murut.

LEAROYD

They were promised an arrival from
the sky -- they have seen it --
they are content.

Learoyd's little son is dashing about from one Aussie to the next, babbling in Murut. He asks his father something.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LEAROYD

(continuing)

He wants to touch them -- to be sure they're not ghosts.

Learoyd picks him up and holds him up to a bearded SOLDIER. He pinches his nose. The Soldier laughs and gives him a kiss on the cheek.

LEAROYD

(continuing)

Learoyd am I. This is my son.

SOLDIER

Dave Corbett, Demolition, "Dynamite Dave" -- I'm an American, sir, like you -- OSS.

LEAROYD

Where're you from, Dave?

DYNAMITE DAVE

Ventura, California, sir -- Little town north of Los Angeles -- lots of orange trees.

LEAROYD

California must be nice -- Ever been to Hollywood? I always wanted to see Hollywood... Must be something.

DYNAMITE DAVE

It sure is, sir -- I mean, Your Majesty.

CUT TO:

THE ADVISORS - NIGHT

sitting around the fire at the longhouse drinking ayak, leering at the women, eating the pork. Any trace of Western civilization they jumped in with is already eroding.

BOTANIST

I asked for first rate NCO's as advisors so that your personal authority might gradually replace Learoyd's power. This will be one of your objectives.

A TALL MAN looks up.

(CONTINUED)

hit

CONTINUED:

TALL MAN

You mean the king, sir? He seems
a good bloke. Is he really a king?

BOTANIST

For now he is a king. Your name,
Sergeant?

TALL MAN

I'm Conklin, sir -- Team Sergeant,
and this is Armstrong, sir --

He points to a MAN with a handlebar mustache.

CONKLIN

-- Heavy Weapons, and Lewis -- we
call him Bren -- Light Weapons, and
Dynamite Dave you've already met.

They nod.

BOTANIST

I want to stress from the start
that we represent Britain here, the
civilized world and all that it
entails. We're bringing modern
warfare to these savages and that
is a heavy responsibility.

DYNAMITE DAVE

Sir?

BOTANIST

Yes?

DYNAMITE DAVE

What's the deal on the women? We,
eh -- free?

The Botanist looks exasperated. He can see he's losing
control.

CUT TO:

LEAROYD

standing before the council, the soldiers in battle-
dress before him, the fires burning brightly. The
entire Comanche army and their attendant women, chil-
dren and dogs are present. Parachutes are draped
everywhere; there is a fever in the air.

(CONTINUED)

mt

CONTINUED:

LEAROYD

The ancients say only two things cannot be known -- the track of a snake on a rock and the heart of a stranger. But these men have good hearts. They will defend these forests -- they will live as you -- they will eat as you.

CLOSE - ADVISORS

The Botanist and Anderson try to translate.

ANDERSON

You eat their food.

The men look apprehensive.

LEAROYD (O.S.)

They will sleep with our women.

ANDERSON

We can sleep with the women!

Beaming smiles and good cheer.

LEAROYD (O.S.)

And if we must, we will die together.

ANDERSON

We will die together.

Everyone frowns, shrugs -- so what.

CLOSE - LEAROYD

LEAROYD

Drink ayak, amuse yourselves, for tomorrow we shall fight. If you sleep with a girl, it's all right, for tomorrow we shall fight.

He raises his hands.

LEAROYD

(continuing)

Comanche!

They shout it into the heavens, the Aussies most of all.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EVERYONE
Comanches!

CLOSE - THE MEN - NIGHT

They raise their hands into the air with the others cheering, screaming.

BOTANIST
(to Anderson)
I've lost them. The old outlaw blood... They're already the King's bodyguards.

ANDERSON
Don't feel bad, sir -- He had the women on his side!

CLOSE - LEAROYD

Smiling, laughing.

CUT TO:

BOTANIST - NIGHT

reading a transcribed message in the shadows. Anderson stands next to him.

BOTANIST
The reply from Darwin -- arms, ammunitions, even gold!
(he laughs)
Gold! I'm getting some gold.
They thought it might be useful.

ANDERSON
Prob'ly comes in a leather trunk.

BOTANIST
What good's a kingdom without gold, and I am proconsul for a territory as large as Wales. "As far as your mad American Irishman, make use of him as necessary but arrange earliest possible evacuation." I could expect that, eh, Anderson?

(CONTINUED)

mt

CONTINUED:

ANDERSON

Yes, sir, can't have any kings
save His Britannic Majesty. No,
sir.

Suddenly, they see Yoo. She has been watching them for
a while and glides away into the shadows.

ANDERSON

(continuing)

You think she understood us, sir?

BOTANIST

Yes, maybe not the words, but she
understood.

She comes into the light near her husband who is revel-
ing in kingly glory. She looks back, her dark liquid
eyes mysterious but with a flash of apprehension. She
joins her husband. He smokes a cheroot sitting at his
round table, his knights before him, while all manner
of festivity goes on about them. Twenty or so dogs
leap upon the table, running into everything, trying to
steal scraps. The king's new bodyguard, late of
Australian Special Forces, try to clear the proceedings
with much commotion. Learoyd laughs and confers his
royal will with a ham bone.

CLOSE - BOTANIST

He watches from the shadows. Old Senghir sneaks up to
him, watching Learoyd, and speaks softly.

SENGHIR

He is one of God's.

BOTANIST

God? What God?

SENGHIR

A dark sky -- never clears without
a storm.

He moves back into the shadows.

CUT TO:

MONTAGE - FLARES IN THE DARK - DAY AND NIGHT

in the dark, RUMBLING B-24's, and parachutes drifting
out of the moonlit sky. Containers stacked up and
opened displaying their gleaming contents -- carbines,
tommy guns, Brens, mortars, ammunition.

(CONTINUED)

muc

CONTINUED:

Faces -- Gwai the Sphinx, Anderson, Dynamite Dave, Yoo, Conklin, the young prince. Swords glint in the morning light. Women, naked save a winding of red fabric, stand in the river -- statues of incredible sensuality.

BREN GUNS - DAY

FIRING in short controlled bursts manned by Comanches. Bren (Lewis) and Conklin supervise the tribesmen who, like any and all male children, love firing automatic weapons. They take delight in watching the trees shatter and dust kick up around the distant targets. A group of Comanches run through the forest, flop down in the mud and FIRE their CARBINES as a machine gun team sets up the Bren. Armstrong shouts over the firing.

ARMSTRONG

Easy -- easy. Don't waste it -- squeeze.

The Bren GUN STARTS FIRING.

ARMSTRONG

(continuing)

All right, first and second squads -- flanking to the left.

None of this means anything to the Muruts. When they're done firing, they're done. They turn and look at him. He blows a whistle.

ARMSTRONG

(continuing)

Follow me! Follow me!

He leads them splashing through the forest like a scoutmaster.

CLOSE - CONKLIN - DAY

fitting a mortar tube to a base plate. A group of Murut elders and nobles watch with interest, but hardly the rapt attention of recruits. Anderson unpacks a mortar bomb. The Botanist strides up.

BOTANIST

Artillery -- well, that is something. Do you think they can grasp it?

(CONTINUED)

mf

CONTINUED:

CONKLIN

Oh, yes, sir, it's all quite simple, like their crossbows, only bigger.

Anderson drops the SHELL in, a CHUNK, and it WHISTLES up above the trees. Everyone waits; after a MUFFLED EXPLOSION off in the forest, a huge tree falls. Everyone is very satisfied.

BOTANIST

You teach them that and they won't be savages any longer, will they?

CONKLIN

I believe it was T.E. Lawrence, sir, who said -- 'give them artillery and they become a nation.'

BOTANIST

He was wrong -- At least I hope so.

He walks off.

CUT TO:

OLD SENGHIR'S SECOND LONGHOUSE BY THE LOWER SRAI RIVER -
A GREAT TREE - DAY

Learoyd sits under it wearing a red turban. The afternoon has grown overcast. The sky presses down like a leaden lid, and the people sitting around the feet of their king seem to embody the pressure. The mood has changed. Hatred and cruelty seem to prowl in the shadows. Wise men palaver with Learoyd. He listens patiently.

CONKLIN

Can you make any of this out?

BOTANIST

Not a thing. I don't see how he can either. I don't know what we came down here for.

Learoyd listens, then holds up his hands. He leans over to them.

LEAROYD

Two buffaloes calved, one in each village. One has disappeared -- eaten by some beast or the like. Of course, both villages claim the survivor.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He looks out at them.

LEAROYD

(continuing)

They are willing to kill each other for the sake of this calf, for the sake of honor -- and probably for the pleasure. This could be bad.

BOTANIST

Then perhaps I should shoot the calf and they'd have to deal with me -- Then we could get back up, where the air is not so thick.

LEAROYD

You step in the way? It could be... unpleasant... for you.

They look at each other.

LEAROYD

(continuing)

Is it worth it for King and Country?

A genuine warmth seems to come over the Botanist uncontrollably.

BOTANIST

For this King -- for this country.

(pause)

Yes.

Learoyd gives quick orders and the two female buffaloes are brought up. The little calf, which had lain down to eat, now springs to its feet. It looks startled and gazes about for some time, shaking its ears to chase away the flies. It then ambles toward the upstream people and sniffs at the hindquarters of its indifferent mother. There is a ROAR OF LAUGHTER and a few seconds later the storm breaks with a CLAP OF THUNDER and a gust of wind. The rain begins to fall as though washing away the powers of evil and acknowledging their defeat.

BOTANIST

(continuing)

I've seen you do all manner of things -- But now -- by God -- now I can say I've seen you -- King.

DISSOLVE TO:

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SENGHIR'S LONGHOUSE - VERANDA - NIGHT

Learoyd sits like Rodin's Thinker staring off into the night. Slowly a young Murut girl approaches -- she starts rubbing his back -- he moves a bit but doesn't seem to notice her. He is lost in thoughts.

CONKLIN - BOTANIST

watch from some distance away.

CONKLIN

Doesn't he ever get in trouble with the wife, sir?

BOTANIST

They console him and rub his back so that he will not miss her so much. They would sleep with him but he doesn't let them.

CONKLIN

What's the point of being king if you can't have the girls?

He looks.

CONKLIN

(continuing)

You believe him, sir?

BOTANIST

He says he loves his wife and in that -- I believe him.

CONKLIN

A man is a man.

BOTANIST

But he's not a man like you or I -- You know as well as I know him, somehow I feel he's hiding something from us.

CONKLIN

Hiding? What's there to hide, sir?

BOTANIST

I don't know -- gold maybe -- I hear there's a sluice up near the Pass of the Clouds.

CONKLIN

Never been up that high -- but well, sir -- what would he need with gold? There's nothing to buy and he's got everything he wants.

mc

CONTINUED:

BOTANIST

There has to be something.

Learoyd gets up and walks toward them. They hear something behind and turn. There is a SOFT GIGGLING as several young girls step out of the longhouse. They are joined by others. Obviously, Learoyd's activities have given them courage enough to overcome their shyness. One speaks softly in Murut.

CONKLIN

What have we here now?

BOTANIST

She says -- it's a soft night -- wouldn't you care to join her?

CONKLIN

She really say that?

The girl pulls up her sarong and runs her hands over her thighs. She speaks again. Learoyd stands behind.

LEAROYD

She says you would enjoy the luster of her thighs and the velvet texture of her belly. That is, if you're not too tired.

CONKLIN

She's twisting my arm, sir.

He gets up and goes with her. The others stare at the Botanist but somehow his countenance makes them embarrassed. Learoyd walks out from the shadows with his girl. He sits next to the Botanist, the girl rubs his back.

LEAROYD

You should go with one. There's no greater pleasure than a woman's love.

BOTANIST

No, as you once said, 'War should be chaste, the warrior pure.' If I give in there's no end to it.

LEAROYD

I don't trust a man who can turn away from hips and thighs fashioned by the Spirits.

BOTANIST

But you do... Why?

(CONTINUED)

W.C.

CONTINUED:

LEAROYD

Maybe it's the old morality, or maybe I love my wife... Seems silly out here... but that's why it seems to matter even more... But I still don't trust a man who has no woman.

BOTANIST

But you trust me.

LEAROYD

I do... because I want to. Friendship is a luxury, perhaps the only one we have. If I have the choice of good or bad in a man... well, I want to believe in the good.

BOTANIST

A warrior King?

LEAROYD

You're the warrior -- I'm just a King.

The Botanist looks up slowly into the sky.

BOTANIST

A clear sky. The rain washed it clean.

He looks with his binoculars.

LEAROYD

What do you see?

BOTANIST

Altair -- Orion.

LEAROYD

Names. On a night like this there are no names. Life, friendship, death pass by. 'A tale told by an idiot full of -- '

BOTANIST

. If you trust me, then I must trust you.

LEAROYD

Don't you?

(CONTINUED)

my

CONTINUED:

BOTANIST

There's something here, something
you're not showing me. Gold,
jewels, magic -- something.

LEAROYD

'Sound and fury signifying nothing.'
I'll show you -- in time.

He leans his head back and stares at the heavens.

DAWN

The jungle steams with mist, BIRDS CHIRP. It stretches
out from a rock outcropping and seems to extend forever
to the sea. On the rocks several Comanches, Learoyd and
the others look off. Learoyd scans the horizon with bi-
noculars.

LEAROYD

There -- it's a long way.

They look out but can see nothing. Learoyd hands the
binoculars to the Botanist.

BOTANIST

We must see them. Morotai demands
it and how will I know they're
really out there?

CONKLIN

Oh they're out there alright.

POV - GLASSES - DAY

The smallest whiff of smoke in the far distant horizon.

CLOSE - THE GROUP - DAY

They start down the rock.

LEAROYD

You'll have to go without your
boots. If the Japs should see
those prints, they'd bomb us
again for sure.

CONKLIN

No shoes!

BOTANIST

Of course.

(CONTINUED)

nt

CONTINUED:

He immediately starts unlacing his boots.

CUT TO:

JUNGLE TRACK - DAY

The Comanches lead the way, cutting with their swords. The heat and insects are hideously oppressive. Learoyd follows; he stops to swat leeches from his legs. Soon the two others catch up. Their feet are torn and mangled, they can barely walk. Learoyd speaks quickly in Murut, then two Comanches grab Conklin's legs and lift him up on their shoulders. Two others approach the Botanist.

BOTANIST

No, I can -- go on. I'm not going to be carried.

LEAROYD

Damn British stoicism! You'll die here if they don't.

He speaks, they grab him.

LEAROYD

(continuing)

They'd bring you upside down on a pole if I wanted it. Press on.

A RIVER - DAY

placid in the stifling afternoon heat. A small outpost on the bank with the Rising Sun flying over it. From the jungled bluff opposite Learoyd watches. He motions and the Botanist and Conklin are brought forward.

LEAROYD

There -- there's your Nip.

The Botanist feverishly fumbles for his glasses.

POV - GLASSES - DAY

A short, pudgy sentry ambles along the river carrying a long rifle with a long bayonet.

CLOSE - BOTANIST - DAY

He is excited.

(CONTINUED)

mc

CONTINUED:

BOTANIST

(whispering)

A Jap, by God! I've never seen one before. He's got a rifle, too, with a long bayonet -- nasty! Have a good look, Conklin.

Conklin shakes his head.

CONKLIN

(whispering)

No thank you, sir. I've seen quite enough of them before.

POV - GLASSES - DAY

The Soldier stops and relieves himself in the river.

BOTANIST (O.S.)

Look at that -- pissing in the river!

CLOSE - BOTANIST - DAY

He puts the glasses down.

BOTANIST

Just like any one of us. The vaunted, fanatical Jap. He's just like any one of us.

LEAROYD

He'll die like anyone, too. He's just a man.

The Botanist grabs a carbine from one of the Comanches.

BOTANIST

I could do it now -- right now. We could get away. Why not?

Conklin looks at him strangely.

CONKLIN

You'll get your chance, sir -- plenty of it. All good things in time, sir.

Learoyd looks at the Botanist who is now surprised at his violence and puts the rifle down. They withdraw.

DISSOLVE TO:

me

CLOSE - BOTANIST - DAY

He walks along, sweat drenching him, INSECTS BUZZING about his head. He stares straight ahead.

THE GROUP - DAY

entering the jungle, the Botanist being carried by Comanches.

A RICE PADDY - DAY

The group crosses, the Botanist carried on a pole.

CUT TO:

A YOUNG GIRL - DAY

Her face sweet and mysterious. She leans down and smiles handing forth a bamboo ladle dripping fresh water. Behind her children peer over intently.

BOTANIST - DAY

He shakes his head and drinks the water, he looks around. He is in the home longhouse. Anderson sits squatting behind him smiling. He stirs, looks around again.

BOTANIST

Anderson? How long have I --

ANDERSON

Three days, sir. Malaria. You haven't been taking your quinine, sir. Very bad.

He sits up.

BOTANIST

What's happened? I can feel it.

ANDERSON

Well, it's started, sir.

BOTANIST

What? What's started?

ANDERSON

The war. They landed at Tarakan -- an Aussie brigade.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANDERSON (CONT'D)

It's just a beachhead but it'll grow, sir. Stirred up a hornet's nest, they did, sir. Refugees from the coastal plain've been fleeing into the jungle. The Comanches found a Chinese doctor. We're havin' 'im brought here, sir, for you.

BOTANIST

Have they been asking for me, Fergusson -- Darwin, Morotai?

ANDERSON

Colonel Fergusson's in Morotai, sir. He's been informed of your condition and, well, if you made it, which you have, they'd like to see you.

BOTANIST

Learoyd -- Where's Learoyd?

ANDERSON

I saw him this morning by the river with his wife. He likes to be alone with her now. He doesn't talk to anyone.

CUT TO:

LEAROYD AND YOO

by a shaded calm in the river. Learoyd squats and looks for fish with a long spear. They move slowly almost in a ritual. It might well be a hundred thousand years ago. Learoyd sees a reflection in the water. Yoo has already looked up and they see the Botanist standing there.

LEAROYD

Soon it'll all end --

BOTANIST

Sir?

LEAROYD

You're going back to them, aren't you?

BOTANIST

I'll get you what you want -- you -- you believe me?

LEAROYD

She doesn't.

Yoo looks at him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOTANIST

Why not?

LEAROYD

Because you're white --

BOTANIST

So are you.

LEAROYD

When I came here, I wanted to
remake the world. No officers --
no business -- no war or guns --
and I did. I remade my world.
But I can't remake yours.

He looks up at the Botanist with a deep need.

LEAROYD

You're -- you're the only one I
can trust.

BOTANIST

I know.

CUT TO:

A LYSANDER AIRCRAFT - DAY

on the clearing that had been used as a drop zone. It
is painted in the camouflaged scheme of the Australian
Air Force. The Botanist walks out towards it, followed
by many women and children. He is bedecked in flowers
and red winding cloth. A beautiful little girl holds a
silver necklace up. He leans down to take it and puts
it over his head. She says something but cannot be
heard in the PROP WASH. Gwai shakes his hand.

BOTANIST

What did she say?

GWAI

She say -- this your home now.
This --

He points at the necklace.

GWAI

(continuing)
-- will bring you back -- always.

BOTANIST

Sooner than you know.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He holds Gwai's hand.

BOTANIST

Life.

GWAI

Life, English.

BOTANIST

Don't start the war without me.

He gets in the plane. It taxis and takes off.

CLOSE - BOTANIST - DAY

He turns around in the seat as they pass over the Mountain of the Dead. He looks out at the distant coastline. There are fires and smoke in the distance.

THE LYSANDER - DAY

It DRONES on over the jungled ridges.

CUT TO:

A C-47 - DAY

DRONING over the sea. Australian markings.

INT. AIRCRAFT - DAY

Stretcher cases are packed into the shaking, vibrating cabin. BOTTLES of plasma JANGLE precariously. There is the stench of ether, alcohol, blood. Every so often a MAN MOANS or SCREAMS hideously. Doctors and a few nurses scramble about trying to keep plasma going or stop hemorrhages. The Botanist sits cramped against the wall with another officer, a thick British MAJOR with handlebar mustache and alcoholic red nose.

MAJOR

Are you with the 9th Division?

BOTANIST

No, sir, no, I'm not.

A MAN MOANS and calls for help.

MAJOR

Who are you with then?

BOTANIST

Force 315 -- Combined Operations.
We're working in the hills.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAJOR

With the natives -- headhunters.
I understand -- cannibals.

BOTANIST

No, sir, not cannibals.

MAJOR

Umm, yes -- in the hills. A lot
of derring-do, I suppose.

BOTANIST

No, sir, our war hasn't really
started yet.

MAJOR

Well, it's over for these poor
wretches. They've been bleeding a
long time. Were you at Tobruk?

BOTANIST

No, sir.

MAJOR

Alamein?

At that moment a BOY suddenly lurches upright with an
unearthly cry. His plasma BOTTLE CRASHES to the floor.
An orderly quickly moves towards him.

BOY

Leave me alone.

He stares out blankly, clenching his fists. The
orderly draws back in alarm. The Boy sways backwards
and forwards for some time. The seal of death spreads
over every feature except his eyes. He finally gives a
strange gurgle and falls like a great tree. The
Botanist stands up. The Boy's lower body twitches
several times and then -- nothing.

MAJOR

It's no use, no damn use.
Somewhere in the Celebes Sea, 1532
hours. June 14, 1945. What a
long way from home.

THE C-47 - DAY

DRONES on over an azure sea.

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TITLE

Combined Special Operations
Advanced Headquarters -- Morotai

A FACE - DAY

looms large in an afternoon-lit briefing room. It is the face of COLONEL FERGUSSON, Commanding Special Operations. He has a weathered, fatherly appearance, strangely combined with an intense streak of classic British adventurism. The eyes could belong to Gordon of Khartoum or Clive or T.E. Lawrence. He speaks in a kindly personal manner.

FERGUSSON

Hitler's dead -- Germany has --
capitulated -- The war -- the war
in Europe is -- over. It seems so
long ago, doesn't it?

The Botanist just looks up at him from a large rattan chair, like a trusting child.

FERGUSSON

(continuing)

How do you feel?

BOTANIST

Indifferent -- It leaves me
strangely --

FERGUSSON

No -- how do you feel?

BOTANIST

I'm alright, I suppose.

Fergusson looks at him -- gets up -- starts pacing.

FERGUSSON

If your American believes he's a
king, then he's mad -- And if you
believe in his fantasy, then
you're mad.

BOTANIST

Worse things have happened, sir.

FERGUSSON

Yes, -- Yes -- they have. You know
in this war there are so many who
have lost everything -- their
friends, worldly goods, their
honor, dignity -- not to mention
their lives.

(MORE)

CONTINUED:

FERGUSSON (CONT'D)

It'll never be the same, mind you. The world will never be sure of itself again -- never. There just won't be any room for your romantic fantasies. It won't be tolerated.

BOTANIST

Was it ever?

FERGUSSON

Don't try and argue with me. You're like a son to me. Do you know how many sons I've trained and dropped into some Godforsaken jungle -- never to come back -- Show me that respect, or at least pretend to.

Silence.

BOTANIST

They -- they fight of their own free will -- there are roughly six hundred of them -- depending on their mood.

FERGUSSON

Mood?

BOTANIST

Sometimes an entire militia will just march off in a fit of nostalgia -- to visit an ancient valley. It makes perfect sense if you're there. Very hard to understand otherwise.

FERGUSSON

Yes -- yes, I see so.

BOTANIST

An army -- after my own heart, sir.

Fergusson moves around to face him. He is quiet, almost sympathetic.

FERGUSSON

Oh stop it -- Can't you see -- one fine day you'll have to betray them.

The Botanist looks up at him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FERGUSSON

(continuing)

You -- you can build them roads
and bridges -- bring them law,
justice, morality. You --

He looks down -- away..

FERGUSSON

(continuing)

You can love their women -- sire
children, even. You can learn
from them -- by God -- you can
learn -- But you've got to stay
British. It's not contempt, it's
-- it's a line of conduct. You'll
never be one of them.

He pauses, lights his cigar.

FERGUSSON

(continuing)

You're no longer one of us,
either. People never see you the
same again -- a dead leaf.

BOTANIST

It happened to you, didn't it,
sir?

A pause.

FERGUSSON

I can tell you from personal
experience: You've got to stay
British.

CUT TO:

THE BEACH - DUSK

A heavy SURF POUNDS relentlessly. Fergusson and the
Botanist stand staring at it in swimming trunks.

FERGUSSON

Shall we have a swim?

BOTANIST

It's too strong for me, sir. I'll
wait here.

FERGUSSON

Very well.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He walks calmly into the ripping shorebreak, expertly dives through a wave and is gone.

CLOSE - BOTANIST

He sits staring at the immensity of the raging Pacific. The sun sets.

DARKNESS - THE BOTANIST - NIGHT

He waits on the beach, lit by the glare of the Jeep's headlights. Finally Fergusson emerges into the light.

FERGUSSON

I washed up here almost half a mile down there.

He sits in the Jeep.

BOTANIST

Why do you go so far, Sir?

FERGUSSON

I suppose I try to make it difficult to get back.

BOTANIST

There's an end to that, Sir -- one day you won't.

FERGUSSON

Yes -- I know.

He dries himself.

BOTANIST

What was it, Sir?

FERGUSSON

For me it was only a girl -- but I saw India through her. I saw what few white men, or any men for that matter, will ever see.

He looks out at the sea.

FERGUSSON

(continuing)

I loved the East. I was never the same again -- but it was only a girl -- I was no king.

He turns back.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FERGUSSON
(continuing)
Tell him to come back.

BOTANIST
He won't.

FERGUSSON
And you?

The Botanist doesn't answer.

FERGUSSON
Then, we'll have to put it to MacArthur.

BOTANIST
MacArthur? He's here?

FERGUSSON
He's going to observe the landing at Brunei. I'll put it to him. I don't want it on my hands.

CUT TO:

AN OUTER OFFICE - DAY

A door opens. An American COLONEL and an American GENERAL step out to talk to Fergusson and the Botanist.

COLONEL
This is General Sutherland -- Colonel Fergusson, Combined Operations.

GEN. SUTHERLAND
I'm sorry, Colonel, but I just don't think the General has time right now for kings and treaties with mythical empires. It's certainly entertaining, but really now.

Suddenly the door opens and there he is -- GENERAL DOUGLAS MACARTHUR -- pipe, four stars, etc.

MACARTHUR
You the fellas who've got the king?

FERGUSSON
Yes, sir, we do.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MacARTHUR

What does he want?

BOTANIST

Well, sir, he wants freedom.

MacARTHUR

That's what we all want, isn't it?

BOTANIST

Freedom for his people -- a guarantee that they can remain as they are. He wants the Allied promise to protect that right, sir.

MacARTHUR

Any papers? There're always papers.

The Botanist fumbles with his musetta bag.

BOTANIST

Yes, sir, right here, sir. I have the treaties drawn up.

GEN. SUTHERLAND

I'm sorry, sir. You don't have to listen to any more of this nonsense.

MacARTHUR

Nonsense -- this isn't nonsense, Dick, this is history. History is written by unusual men. Some who even become kings and some who make no more mark than that of a stone thrown into an ocean. What we have here, well, we just don't know, do we? But, young Captain, if you say he's a king, then I'll go along with it. I'll sign those treaties as Supreme Allied Commander, Pacific Forces, and if your king were here, I'd kneel to him and offer my sword. If I had one!

He takes the treaty, hands it to Sutherland.

MacARTHUR

(continuing)

Have copies made.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MacARTHUR (CONT'D)

Handle this as you would dealings with any other sovereign. Your copies will be returned in the morning, Captain.

BOTANIST

Thank you, sir. Thank you very much, sir.

MacARTHUR

Nothing. Please give my personal regards to His Majesty. Good night, gentlemen -- and good luck.

He goes back in, followed by the others.

BOTANIST

I don't believe it.

FERGUSSON

He's just a man like any other.

They walk down a long corridor. Soldiers snap to attention as they pass into the shadows.

FERGUSSON

(continuing)

It will never be done. But he'll never have to think of it again. History will wash his hands, but not yours.

DISSOLVE TO:

A C-47 - DAY

Below the steely glinting Celebes Sea, and beyond, Borneo, the citadel of a free people, of Learoyd.

GWAI AND ANDERSON - DAY

watching from the edge of the drop zone as the parachutes float lazily earthward.

CUT TO:

BOTANIST - DAY

and Anderson followed by Gwai and the others carrying their parachutes and equipment toward the longhouse.

(CONTINUED)

my

CONTINUED:

As they pass people, men or women, they smile and beam at the Botanist, greeting him profusely in Murut. A small band of children and dogs soon follows.

ANDERSON

You jumped into an uproar, Sir --
You'll see -- How does it feel,
sir?

The Botanist looks at him.

ANDERSON

(continuing)
To be back?

BOTANIST

Like coming home, Anderson -- like
coming home.

A Comanche warrior stands guard over the old bachelors quarters of the longhouse.

GUARD

(smiling)
Life, English.

BOTANIST

Life.

He looks out at the horde of pitiful refugees, mostly Chinese and Malays, men, women and children.

ANDERSON

More come every day. There's an
uprising on the coast. The Nips
have been quite brutal. It was
all right, of course, till they
arrived.

He points to two Catholic priests attending to people and walking around under the veranda. One, the younger, looks up at the Botanist with wide, mournful eyes. The other is much older and just goes about his business.

BOTANIST

Where is he?

CUT TO:

LEAROYD - DAY

seated alone on his throne, the Round Table empty, shadows falling. The Botanist sits next to him. Ayak is poured.

CONTINUED:

LEAROYD

I won't have my people bullied by priests. I know what the Papists are like. They're dirty-minded bastards. They see flesh and the devil everywhere. I was raised Irish Catholic, you know.

Armstrong and Dynamite Dave sit down with them.

LEAROYD

(continuing)

If I let them, they'll have the girls wearing bras and panties. I won't have it.

DYNAMITE DAVE

He's right. Let's have their heads.

LEAROYD

Spoken like a free man.

The Botanist stands up.

BOTANIST

It won't do -- that won't do! I told you long ago that you could no longer avoid history. Now you're acting like school children.

LEAROYD

What do priests matter? They signed the treaty.

BOTANIST

MacArthur signed it.

LEAROYD

I'll take MacArthur if he's on my side, so is God. Off with their heads.

BOTANIST

These refugees are Christians. They believe in their God. You can't cut priests' heads off!

LEAROYD

My ancestors did it to calm the sea. Besides, "God is on the side of the heavy divisions" -- Napoleon -- and right now that's me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOTANIST

I implore you, use your wisdom.
Be a King.

Learoyd looks down, grumpy.

LEAROYD

Assemble the council.

THE COUNCIL - NIGHT

Rain pours down, damping some of the torches. Learoyd, his bodyguard and the assembled knights and lords sit at the Round Table. Women are pressed in everywhere. Yoo sits at Learoyd's side holding his hand. There is silence as the two Priests, looking like pathetic, drowned black rats, are brought to the table. The young one stares at Learoyd for a long while.

YOUNG PRIEST

Our Lord be with you.

LEAROYD

Your Lord and my Lord are different.

YOUNG PRIEST

Are you afraid of the Word of God?

LEAROYD

None of that. My people have their spirits and they are happy. They don't need your God or your devil.

There is silence. The Young Priest looks down; the old one stares at Learoyd.

OLD PRIEST

Pride!

He looks first at Learoyd and then at the Young Priest.

OLD PRIEST

(continuing)

Pride!

He shakes his head. His word sticks. Learoyd looks down, fumbles with his sword.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LEAROYD

You can go. I'll have you escorted to the Dayaks to the north, or you can stay and live as we do. The choice is yours.

YOUNG PRIEST

God has set before every man a doorway that none can close.

LEAROYD

Well, I'm closing it now. God out! And you, too!

He looks at the old man.

LEAROYD

What about you, old man.

OLD PRIEST

I'm fond of life. I expect nothing from death except God's mercy. I'll stay.

LEAROYD

Then it is done.

He looks to everyone slowly.

LEAROYD

Eat buffalo, drink the ayak, for tomorrow we fight. Take your pleasure, enjoy love, for tomorrow is war. If your loins are hot, satisfy them, for tomorrow death runs with us --

Some of the Comanches translate for others -- but most understand.

BOTANIST

You're a good talker. That was a fine speech.

Learoyd smiles, quite amazed at himself.

CUT TO:

THE LONGHOUSE, - NIGHT

The Botanist's quarters. It is late at night. There is a slight partition, but others can be seen moving about in the distance.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The Botanist in his trousers leans his Tommy gun up next to his pillow and stretches out on his mat, pulling a parachute over himself. He is about to blow out his candle when Learoyd materializes out of the darkness. Yoo is at his side; she pulls at him. He whispers to her and she retreats into the shadows. He has the treaty in his hand. The Botanist leans up; they look at each other a moment.

LEAROYD

Well, I did good tonight, eh?

BOTANIST

You drove out God if that's what you mean.

He holds out the papers.

LEAROYD

I guess I owe you more than I can say.

BOTANIST

Don't be fooled. It's still only a paper. They've broken a treaty or two before.

LEAROYD

No, it's you. You did this for me, not MacArthur, not Special Forces, not the Allies or your whole damned Empire. For me.

BOTANIST

For King and Country. Go to sleep.

Learoyd smiles, then edges back into the darkness.

LEAROYD

Life, English.

BOTANIST

Life, Your Majesty.

He turns over, content.

CUT TO:

CLOUDS - DAY

Breaking up over the steep mountains. They are pushed by new winds; the monsoon is changing.

FEET - DAY

of Learoyd, the Botanist, Dynamite Dave. They struggle up a rocky escarpment. Sunlight comes and goes. Below are jungle-covered crags and swirling clouds. They stop to rest. Before them is a steeply ridged pass, a narrow slot between two great walls of jungled limestone. Beyond, light filters back in cathedral shafts.

BOTANIST

The Pass of the Clouds.

LEAROYD

Oh, we're far above that. No, this is something else. I promised I'd show you someday.

BOTANIST

Gold? Jewels?

LEAROYD

A treasure beyond all that crap.
Come on.

He moves on through the dark passageway.

THE PASS - DAY

breaks out onto a rocky rim. Light, pure sunlight, spills over them. Learoyd moves forward stealthily, looks over, motioning the Botanist and Dynamite Dave to join him.

THE VALLEY - DAY

that stretches before them is ethereal, dreamlike. Strange mists cling to rocky spires. A beautiful lake sparkles in the distance. Orange-colored waterfowl circle overhead and set their wings. Everywhere is the SOUND OF BIRDS AND RUNNING WATER. In the distance are some very crude thatched huts. The SOUND OF CHILDREN PLAYING AND LAUGHING is heard. Naked figures, bronze and shining in the sunlight, dash about.

CLOSE - LEAROYD - DAY

He motions for the Botanist to look. He raises his binoculars.

BINOCULARS' POV

He sees beautiful, naked people -- men, women, children.

(CONTINUED)

my

CONTINUED:

They move about their crude Stone Age dwellings like playful animals, even birds. They are small and lightly built and have none of the Asiatic features of the Muruts.

BOTANIST (V.O.)

Who are they? What a beautiful place.

LEAROYD (V.O.)

The Valley of the Children.

CLOSE - LEAROYD - DAY

He looks down, almost talking to himself.

LEAROYD

It's in all their legends. That's how I found it. They would have never shown me -- even me.

The Botanist and Dynamite Dave look through their glasses.

GLASSES' POV - DAY

The woman stands up in the f.g. She has beautiful big eyes and holds a little girl with an equally innocent beauty.

BOTANIST (V.O.)

I think they see us.

LEAROYD (V.O.)

It doesn't matter. I just don't like to scare them.

LEAROYD, BOTANIST, DYNAMITE DAVE - DAY

stare down from the rim. Learoyd stands up. The strange little people see them and rush up toward them, laughing and shouting.

BOTANIST

It's incredible. Stone Age -- untouched by time.

LEAROYD

Or man. They don't know of possession. They have all they want. They don't have a word for jealousy, greed or war.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOTANIST
It's utterly amazing.

DYNAMITE DAVE
It's the fucking Garden of Eden!

The people swirl about them, touching them, giggling, laughing. Learoyd laughs, too. The people are small, perfectly formed. They barely come up to the white men's chests.

LEAROYD
. Leprechauns -- fairies -- elves!

He laughs and laughs.

CUT TO:

A FIRE - DAY

on which the men roast pork. They eat while the little people stand about and watch.

LEAROYD
(eating)
This is why I fight. You think I'd bring war to the Forest of the Spirits? You think I care about you or the Japs? I'll never leave here. This -- this must never be touched. If it takes our blood in the ground, so be it.

DYNAMITE DAVE
Why'd you show us? No one'd ever know.

LEAROYD
I showed you because I had to trust someone, and I trust both of you. Besides, I want you to rig the pass with explosives. If something happens, we'll blow it.

BOTANIST
So no one will get in -- ever?

LEAROYD
So it'll be here, for all of us.

BOTANIST
Even the worst of us.

(CONTINUED)

77A.

CONTINUED:

LEAROYD

The worst of us most of all.

He hands a ham to the little people. They take it,
making soft sounds and nodding their heads.

FADE OUT.

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PART TWO: THE SOUTHWESTERLY TRADE WINDS

The killer awoke before dawn
He put his boots on
He took a face from the ancient
gallery
And he walked on down the hall

-- Jim Morrison
"The End"

ms

FADE IN:

MONTAGE - DAWN

The vast sweep of the Forest of the Spirits covered in the mists of dawn. Great mountains rising up black from the drifting fogs. The sky turns pink and orange as the sun rises, burning off the mists and revealing a splendid, steaming sea of emeralds.

BOTANIST (V.O.)

The death agony of the Japanese Army in Borneo was as sad as the sinking of a great ship. Bullets, explosives, poisoned arrows, men stumbling through the night mumbling incoherently. Hunger -- men eating weeds, leeches, insects, and -- each other.

CLOSER - THE JUNGLE - DAY

In detail, the tall trees of the outer canopy bright green and fresh from the rains. The thick, rich growth always wet and dismal; the sea of ferns, a dark cavern of gray and purple. Through all this is the faint but increasing SOUND OF BOOTS MARCHING, SLOSHING, not in cadence but at random. The SOUND GROWS LOUDER -- the MOANS of fatigue, the CLINK OF WEAPONS, the CRYING of desperation. Finally, feet splash through, then more of them -- hundreds, thousands -- an endless column of doomed men. Only their weapons are still operational; their minds and spirits have fled.

BOTANIST (V.O.)

Despair --

The column moves away. Deeper and deeper off the track the jungle is still and waiting, dark and silent.

BOTANIST (V.O.)

(continuing)

For me, for us, the same period was as thrilling as a cavalry charge. May God forgive us!

CONTINUED:

An EXPLOSION! Pieces rain down -- of what?

CUT TO:

DARKNESS - NIGHT

A DRUM POUNDS out the ancient rhythms. A CHANT fills the ears. A Murut face FILLS THE FRAME painted in a grotesque combination of tribal tradition and camouflage. The man sings out.

MURUT

(subtitles)

Oh, men of dust and blood
Oh, trackers, poison makers, head
hunters.

Men of the rain and wind.
The time of evil is at hand.
The hunt is on.

Kill! Kill! Kill!

CUT TO:

MOONLIT NIGHT

A river, smooth, glassy like a lake. The jungled shoreline exotic with palms and banyans. A pirogue, then another and another glide by silently. They are filled with armed Comanches. The jungle itself is silent, the only SOUND being a DISTANT THUNDEROUS SHELLING. Heavy EXPLOSIONS occasionally light the horizon. The sleek wooden crafts glide by without seemingly rippling the water. A SHOT RINGS OUT in the distance, then a SHORT BURST OF MACHINE-GUN FIRE, then silence.

THE BANK

Thick palm groves clear at the bases. The pirogues put in here. The men leap out and are instantly in the trees. They move silently except for the occasional PLINK OF A WEAPON or the SLAP OF BELTED AMMUNITION. The Botanist moves with them, breathless. He dashes from tree to tree, awkwardly tripping on roots, etc. Finally he grabs the shoulder of the Comanche in front of him who guides him to a hastily-made dugout bunker of coconut logs. He slips inside. A Bren-gun crew and the dark figure of Conklin are present. A DISTANT SHOT RINGS OUT.

CONKLIN

Welcome, sir. Sounds like you're
just in time.

mid

CONTINUED:

Suddenly two figures scramble into the bunker. The Bren gunner has to make room. The second figure is dragging a spool of wire. The first man turns around and can barely be discerned as Dynamite Dave. The second is his Comanche assistant.

DYNAMITE DAVE

They're here!

CONKLIN

How many?

DYNAMITE DAVE

A platoon maybe, but there'll be more. I don't know how the hell they got through. You hear those two bangs?

BOTANIST

Yes.

DYNAMITE DAVE

Probably got ten. They were right on the money.

Another CRY.

DYNAMITE DAVE

(continuing)

It's like quail hunting, sir. You find the covey, scatter it, then they start calling to each other and you get the singles.

He listens. More MONKEY CRIES. He connects his detonator and turns the handle. A ripping EXPLOSION bursts across a hundred meter stretch of jungle. It starts burning, silhouetting them. There are SCREAMS.

BOTANIST

How'd you know?

DYNAMITE DAVE

Human nature. They go where I've prepared it. You just have to think like they would. Everyone's the same. Any human problems can be solved with high explosives.

Several figures run darkly across the dying fires. The Bren gunner opens up in a SHORT BURST, but it's not certain whether he got them as they disappear into darkness.

CLOSE - THE MEN

They stare out waiting for the fires to die.

CONKLIN

We'll have the Comanches clean it up. Then we'll pull out.

He speaks sharply in Murut. The simple few words he's learned are enough.

DISSOLVE TO:

THE SKY - DAWN

just barely beginning to lighten. It is still dark under the canopy of growth. It is an arena of death -- unseen, almost unknown. The Botanist stares intently as they hear the Comanches do their work. A CRY in the dark, a SOUND like meat being CHOPPED on a block, figures, flitting shadows moving without sound. A SOLITARY SHOT RINGS OUT, then a GRENADE GOES OFF.

DISSOLVE TO:

THE PIROGUES - DAWN

by the river. The dawn is just beginning to show. Seventeen shiny Arisaka rifles are piled into the boats. Another Comanche carries a sack of what appears to be melons. The sack is stained crimson.

BOTANIST

What's he got there?

CONKLIN

What do you think?

CLOSE - BOTANIST

He's horrified yet fascinated.

BOTANIST

It's a regression -- it's barbaric.

CONKLIN

It's also an accurate way to keep count.

BOTANIST

It's still a regression.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

They get in the boats and push off, gliding silently away. Suddenly they round a bend and a group of Comanches wave. They pull over and the Botanist and Conklin scramble out. On the bank the Comanches have found a wounded Japanese. The man is curled up like a sleeping child and his face already shows the mask of death. The Botanist asks the Comanches a few questions. They nod and mumble.

BOTANIST

(continuing)

He's still alive, but he's going to die.

He looks at the man.

CONKLIN

There's nothing you can do, sir. He's too far gone for a prisoner, sir. He won't last long, poor devil.

The Japanese somehow instinctively seems to know they are talking about him. Slowly, shaking, he turns his head towards them. His eyes are wide and white with fear. He seems to ask for some sort of pity, mercy -- end. He slowly looks back down at the moist ground into which his blood seeps.

CONKLIN

I'll do it.

He takes out his colt .45 and racks the slide, chambering a round. The man still looks down. Dynamite Dave walks up.

DYNAMITE DAVE

What's the matter?

He sees. Conklin walks forward and the man turns his head up towards him. Again his eyes are wide, but this time they are filled with more. They are filled with an unspeakable will to live. Conklin cannot face him and thrusts the Colt at him, pulling the trigger. The hammer falls on an empty chamber; the magazine has not been fully seated. A ludicrous, empty CLICK. The wounded man utters a fearful, pleading cry -- the will to live, the cruel will to live. He stretches out his hands. Conklin turns away and walks several steps. Dynamite Dave looks at the man, unslings his Thompson, but can't do it either. The Botanist looks from one to the other.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DYNAMITE DAVE

(continuing)

Leave him.

BOTANIST

He'll die in misery.

DYNAMITE DAVE

He'll live 'til then.

He goes. The Botanist is left alone with the wounded man. He hesitates, the eyes look up at him. He can't look back; he turns and goes.

PIROGUES - DAY

They get in without a word and push off silently. The river takes them.

THE DUGOUT

being taken by the current down the shining glade of a peaceful but dark river. The SOUNDS OF DISTANT GUN-FIRE, of war, meld into the timeless SOUNDS OF THE JUNGLE.

CUT TO:

WAR - JUNGLED HILLS - DAY

Bren (Lewis) FIRES his heavy machine gun, the Muruts FIRE their CARBINES from a dug-in jungle trench. From trees and teeming thickets hundreds of men FIRE as though at once. They FIRE at a column on a trail which dissolves and breaks up like ants. Some of the figures, distant and indistinct as insects, stay still on the trail, others writhe about, others crawl into the jungle and are gone.

BREN

Cease fire -- cease fire.

He starts up, waving his hands. The Muruts FIRE until their weapons are empty, then raggedly stop. The SOUND OF MEN SCREECHING like monkeys is heard.

BREN

(continuing)

Withdraw! Withdraw! Let's get out of here.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The Botanist and Conklin yell the order in Murut and the line dissolves instantly into the jungle as the first CRACKS OF RETURN FIRE are heard.

CUT TO:

A BRIDGE - DAY

across a stinking, fetid swamp-like river. It is a footbridge of some complexity and ancient, to be sure, but a bridge nonetheless. It teeters with Japanese troops. It BLOWS UP suddenly, its support toppling the men into the river where they flop about in confusion. MACHINE GUN FIRE rakes them and is gone.

CLOSE - JAPANESE SOLDIER - DAY

pathetic, ragged, staggering along under a load of equipment and mounting despair. He and his comrades are wretchedly thin, their eyes already dead. They look up at the dark canopy of green over their heads where only a flicker of light is seen.

A MURUT - DAY

His face etched into the darkness of the shadow forest. He raises his blowpipe, whistles a dart into the dark void. A SCREAM -- SHOTS -- he slowly fades into darkness.

CUT TO:

ROCKS - DAY

overlooking the Plain of Elephants. In the f.g. sit the Botanist, Learoyd, Conklin and Anderson. In the distance smoke curls up from the jungle. Far away an airplane is attacking. It circles like a vulture.

LEAROYD

They seem to be going someplace.

ANDERSON

Morotai believes they have a plan, sir, to gather somewhere and hold out. We'll know soon enough. Then there's the business about the phantom column.

BOTANIST

What column?

CONTINUED:

LEAROYD

Yes, I know, I've heard stories.

CONKLIN

The ones with that colonel?

ANDERSON

Yes, that's it. There's a column out there that's slipped all our patrols, sir. Slipped through the Aussies. The Air Force never sees 'em. They never leave the bush.

BOTANIST

How many men? Why haven't I been told?

ANDERSON

Anywhere from a hundred to a thousand depending on who's telling the story.

BOTANIST

Why didn't you put it in my reports? Why didn't you notify me?

ANDERSON

Well, sir, it was all wild talk at first. We didn't know what to believe. We still don't.

LEAROYD

It's true -- all of it. I know. I know these things.

DISSOLVE TO:

The FACE OF YOO - NIGHT

Beautiful in the firelight. She gazes down mysteriously from her private chambers at the end of the long-house. Her body glows bronze and copper in the flicker of many fires. She is queen of all, her form a timeless symbol of feline sensuality. Behind her, Learoyd sits and thinks. In the distance are MUTED SOUNDS OF MURUT MUSIC and occasional LAUGHTER.

YOO

It is the time of fear. The southwesterly wind brings death. It is the wind of the flies.

LEAROYD

Who says that?

me

CONTINUED:

YOO

Senghir. He says that it will end
when the northeasterly wind
returns. Everything ends.

LEAROYD

Even me.

She looks at him.

LEAROYD

(continuing)

Everything ends, especially old
Senghir, but he'd like to see me
go first.

She looks at him with a loving but fearful dread.

LEAROYD

(continuing)

What is it, little thing? You
have fear in your eyes.

YOO

Don't let this wind come here --
to us -- to our child. Forget
this war. This war is different.
It is the business of evil men.

She kneels to him, leans her back against his chest,
takes his hands and cups them over her breasts.

YOO

(continuing)

Send these others on. Let them
have the wind of the flies.

LEAROYD

It is too strong. Trees cannot
stand in this wind. I must hold
them up. It is one of the only
good things that men can do.

She looks down on the distant figures in the longhouse,
throws her head back. He kisses her neck.

YOO

Men dream.

He bites her, she kisses him. They are lost in their
love.

7/12

THE BOTANIST - NIGHT

walks up towards the end of the longhouse to get Learoyd. He sees the two lovers, shadows against the wall. He stops. Suddenly the Old Priest takes his shoulder.

OLD PRIEST

Were you going to see him?

BOTANIST

Yes. We have plans.

OLD PRIEST

Let them wait. There is so little time for -- love.

BOTANIST

For sin. Have you forgotten sin?

OLD PRIEST

Let people have what they need.

He turns and leaves. The Botanist watches the shadows for awhile.

BOTANIST (V.O.)

Love?

He turns and leaves.

CUT TO:

THE ROUND TABLE - NIGHT

lit by a few torches. On the table is a huge map of northern Borneo (Sarawak and Sabah). On it are marked the invasion sites at Tarakan, Brunei and Victoria Harbor. The Australians, the Botanist, Gwai and Learoyd are present.

CONKLIN

From the beginning the Nip has moved with a purpose as if he were converging on something. Now we know.

He points to red lines drawn on the map indicating the path of Japanese units.

CONKLIN

(continuing)

Here from Tarakan -- across here from Brunei -- up this gorge in the Crocker Range -- They're going here.

me

CONTINUED:

He points.

ARMSTRONG

What is it?

CONKLIN

The Sapong plantation -- the only way in is the cleft made by the River Padas.

BOTANIST

What will they do there?

CONKLIN

Die -- and take a lot of our mates in the 9th Division with them. But that's not our concern. Our concern is more immediate.

BOTANIST

Go on.

He points to a dotted line turning south through the Crocker range to the Mountains of the Dead.

DYNAMITE DAVE

The phantom column -- the phantom colonel?

CONKLIN

That's right. These have not chosen to die -- they fight like Genghis Khan, they destroy everything in their path. They still wear full uniforms, weapons. They even seem well fed. They move as fast as we do.

BOTANIST

How?

CONKLIN

I don't know -- but we'll find out soon enough. They're coming our way. They say the Colonel -- the phantom Colonel rides a horse.

LEAROYD

A horse! -- A white horse?

BOTANIST

"And behold Death who rides a pale horse."

(CONTINUED)

me

CONTINUED:

LEAROYD

Shut up! -- A white horse?

CONKLIN

I don't know, sir --

He traces a line up a valley to a mountain pass.

CONKLIN

(continuing)

They seem to be coming from there... to... What's this pass called?

LEAROYD

The Pass of the Clouds.

THE COMANCHE ARMY - DUSK

moving out in column. WEAPONS JANGLING, dust and NOISE, the NOISE of EDGY LAUGHTER among warriors, of WOMEN CRYING, the SHRILL SOUND OF CHILDREN CHEERING and CALLING to their departing fathers. It is a scene repeated wherever men go off to a desperate battle. Old Senghir stands apart watching, the Botanist at his side.

SENGHIR

It will be hard to reform the madness of the young.

BOTANIST

But you'll be there to try.

SENGHIR

He has let the dogs go. Now they'll be at our throats. He is a stranger. He is not one of us.

BOTANIST

Yes, a stranger, as salt is to rice, but what is rice without a little salt?

SENGHIR

Easy for you to say, English.

The Botanist slings his Thompson over his shoulder, turns and joins the column.

BOTANIST

Life, old man.

Senghir says nothing.

my

LEAROYD - YOO

by the ladder to the longhouse, the column marching off behind. Learoyd is dressed for war with headhunter sword, hat of leaves, Tommy gun, loincloth. In his own way he looks like Henry V. A warrior waits holding his small horse for him. Learoyd kneels down to look into the eyes of the little prince who is crying profusely. He wipes away the tears. The little boy says something in Murut between his sobs.

LEAROYD

What did he say?

YOO

He says he wants to be just like you.

LEAROYD

No.

Tears come to his eyes.

LEAROYD

(continuing; crying)

No, you must not be like me. You must be -- much more.

He throws his arms around the little boy, tears rolling down his cheeks.

LEAROYD

(continuing)

Not, not like me.

He gets up not wanting to look anymore and mounts his horse, wheeling it around, and gallops to the head of the column. Yoo and the little green-eyed prince watch them go as women and children have since the beginning of war.

CUT TO:

DARKNESS - A CLEARING - NIGHT

in the forest. A runner dashes across the clearing silently but for the sound of his breath. He runs up to Learoyd and the Botanist mounted on their horse. Behind stretches a thin column of warriors. Gwai rides up and talks quickly to the runner.

GWAI

There is a village ahead. They were here but there is no one.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LEAROYD

No one.

GWAI

(listening)

No one alive or dead. They are gone. There is blood, some houses burned, but there is no one.

CUT TO:

VILLAGE - NIGHT

spooky in the dark, lit by a burning structure. The column moves through. Conklin, Bren, Armstrong and Dynamite Dave's crew await them with their Murut recon squads. These are all mounted on scrawny ponies weighed down with weapons and gleaming belts of ammunition. The Botanist and Learoyd ride up.

CONKLIN

They're an hour ahead.

LEAROYD

They killed everyone here, didn't they?

CONKLIN

There's a lot of blood in the houses, but no bodies. There was a bad fight. Are you thinking, sir, what I am?

LEAROYD

I hope not.

BOTANIST

What?

CONKLIN

There's a reason why, sir.

Suddenly Anderson bursts in with a small group. He looks shaken and disheveled. He sits down; they dismount and gather round. He throws his bayonet in the dirt, picks it up, throws it again.

ANDERSON

(quiet)

We know where they are, sir.

BOTANIST

Who?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANDERSON

Your Nips, sir, and the others --
what there is of them.

BOTANIST

What do you mean?

ANDERSON

Found bones, sir -- not much more
than bones.

BOTANIST

What're you saying?

LEAROYD

They've become cannibals! That's
what he's saying. That's how
they're living. That's what
they're after. Do you want him
to make you a picture?

The Botanist recoils in horror.

BOTANIST

The whole battalion, the whole
column?

DYNAMITE DAVE

They're eating the dead. They
ain't starving.

BOTANIST

We -- we must destroy them, every
last one -- my God, every one.

CLOSE - BOTANIST

BOTANIST

No quarter asked or given.

CUT TO:

JUNGLE - NIGHT

The Botanist moves forward crawling, pushing his gun in
front of him. Behind him three hundred warriors are
dispersed in the tree line. The Botanist pushes up to
Armstrong, who mans a Bren gun. Armstrong motions
toward a clearing, a classic ambush site in the moon-
light. They wait, listen.

7/14

THE CLEARING

A soldier in helmet appears, then another, then more. They move methodically and silently across the clearing. More come out of the jungle.

THE BOTANIST

stares over his sights. Suddenly he feels something -- a drop of rain, then another, a pat-pat-pat increasing slowly but steadily. The Japanese are still visible in the moonlight but can barely be heard.

THE SKY

A huge rain cloud covers the moon. The rain turns into a drumming sound on the leaves.

THE CLEARING

is obscured in darkness and the noise of the rain which now becomes a roar.

CLOSE - CONKLIN

He looks desperately around.

CLOSE - LEAROYD

looking up at the sky, rain pouring down his face.

CLOSE - BOTANIST

frustrated, afraid, panicked.

BOTANIST

Fire!

He FIRES.

CLOSE - DYNAMITE DAVE

He turns his hideous little handles, then ripping EXPLOSIONS and the blasting FIRE of the Muruts is heard over the roaring RAIN.

MONTAGE - MURUTS

They FIRE their weapons into the darkness belching huge muzzle flashes. They see the Japanese against the explosions falling, running, crouching, FIRING back with muzzle flashes in the darkness.

my

MONTAGE - JAPANESE

They fall back into squad fire teams, protecting each other's flanks and fixing bayonets.

A Murut charges in with blowpipe or spear and is blasted down. Another drops out of a tree, hacks a man to death and is quickly stitched with machine gun FIRE.

These troops are good, superb. They fall back and regroup throwing grenades. Everywhere is confusion, death and torrential rain.

CLOSE - LEAROYD

HE FIRES selectively with his Thompson, blasting a silhouette here, silencing muzzle flashes there. He catches a brief glimpse of an officer on horseback. Suddenly the horse goes down. The Murut next to Learoyd is shot through the neck and thrashes his life away with gurgling screams. Another is hit in the head by a piece of shrapnel and falls across Learoyd, kicking.

CLOSE - BOTANIST

He is firing when suddenly they are overrun. Japanese are over them thrusting with their bayonets. He rolls over, blasts down three but others run by. He fumbles with a magazine change and hears a SCREAM. He turns to see two Japanese bayoneting Armstrong to death. He FIRES until his magazine is empty, blowing them into the darkness. Then he sees:

JAPANESE OFFICER

struggling, silhouetted against a fireball. A Murut attacks him with a spear. The officer draws his sword and easily parries the thrust and hacks him down, then is lost in darkness. Suddenly everything is dark; the RAIN drowns out all but a few SHOTS and SCREAMS.

CUT TO:

THE BATTLEFIELD - DAWN

Smoke and mists cling to the battle field sometimes revealing burned trees and corpses. Through this walks the Botanist, dazed and afraid. In the distance a MOAN and an occasional SHOT is heard.

BOTANIST

They're gone! They're gone!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Suddenly he is confronted with Learoyd, gaunt, eyes wide.

LEAROYD

They've broken through. I can feel it! I know it!

Suddenly Dynamite Dave appears, burdened with spools of wire and satchels of plastique.

DYNAMITE DAVE

Everyone's dead. They killed everyone -- my whole crew.

LEAROYD

The Pass -- the Pass of the Clouds. They'll be there by noon!

BOTANIST

But they can march faster than we can. Let's put what's left of the army between them and the longhouse.

Learoyd doesn't even hear him.

LEAROYD

The pass -- we've got to blow the pass. The horses!

CUT TO:

HORSES - DAY

slashing, tripping and galloping through the jungle, whipped to a lather.

CLOSE - LEAROYD

He rides like a maniac crashing through vines, ducking under limbs, fear and terror in his eyes. Behind him follow the Botanist, Dynamite Dave and a handful of Muruts.

THE PASS OF THE CLOUDS

They gallop up the steep trail. A rifle, an Arisaka, rises in the f.g. and FIRES. Learoyd's horse goes down, then more FIRING. The Botanist pulls him onto his horse. BULLETS SMACK and WHINE around them. They scramble for the pass. Muruts fall, horses scream and tumble off the trail and down the mountainside.

THE DEFILE

Finally they make the defile. Learoyd falls from the horse, scrambling to his feet, and pulls a Bren gun from Dynamite Dave's horse. Dynamite Dave spurs his mount on into the defile behind them. Several Muruts rush to their side. BULLETS WHINE and ECHO off the canyon walls. The Botanist rushes back to Learoyd with a satchel full of Bren magazines.

Below them at the bottom of the steep approach are the Japanese, screaming orders and rushing about like well-disciplined insects. Learoyd braces the bi-pod and FIRES in steady three and four shot bursts. The Japanese fall and tumble down the mountain. In no time the slope is cleared. The Botanist changes magazines. A BULLET THUDS into a Murut; he pitches forward and slides down the rocks. Sniper's FIRE erupts from the heights across the path. The Botanist points, Learoyd FIRES. A deadly, echoing duel ensues.

CUT TO:

DYNAMITE DAVE - DAY

and two Muruts. BULLETS SPANG around them as they frantically string wires to the charges that Dave has previously drilled into the mountain.

CLOSE - DYNAMITE DAVE

He frantically wires two connections together, then jumps down the rock face. His Murut assistant reels out the wire with him. Dave grabs his detonator box and sticks the wires in.

OPPOSITE PEAK

A Japanese machine gun crew scramble up the rock as two squads of infantry begin an assault up the face. They leapfrog carefully allowing the rear men to lay down accurate covering fire. Learoyd has to lean out to shoot them. He does taking out five or six but is pinned down quickly by the riflemen. The machine gun crew now begins to smash up the rocks, BULLETS RICOCHETING everywhere. They blast away at Learoyd's and Dynamite Dave's positions.

CLOSE - LEAROYD

He leans, FIRES and drops back as the return BLASTS kick up rock and dirt all around him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The Botanist makes his way back from the dead horse crawling and pushing a sack of grenades. Learoyd helps him and they quickly get to the edge, pull the pins and roll them over as fast as they can. They go off at random, but a few Japanese scream and tumble down the cliff. The MACHINE GUN pins them down again; the infantry are getting closer.

CLOSE - DYNAMITE DAVE

He is scrambling out of the defile when he sees shadows in the other end.

BOTANIST (O.S.)

Dave! What the devil -- come on, man!

He looks back and sees several of the little people at the edge of the rocks.

CLOSE - LITTLE PEOPLE

They smile and chatter to each other like children, oblivious to the BULLETS that WHINE through the defile.

DYNAMITE DAVE

Get out of here, damn it! Get going.

He grabs his Thompson and stitches the ground in front of them. They jump up and down giggling.

DYNAMITE DAVE

(continuing)

Jesus!

He reaches down, picks up a rock and makes a threatening gesture. They crouch; he throws. They leap back out of the way. He grabs another, hurls it and another. They clamber back out of the defile.

CLOSE - MACHINE GUNNER

He sees Dave silhouetted, throwing rocks. He FIRES; Dave is lost in the spray of stone and dirt.

CLOSE - DAVE

shot up badly, bleeding profusely, on hands and knees.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Another burst rips around him shattering his left hand. The Murut tries to fire back and is hit all over the chest and head. He falls, broken, into the rock.

BOTANIST

Dave! Dave!

Dave crawls to the detonator box. Learoyd engages the machine gun with his Bren.

JAPANESE

getting closer on the slope. One pulls a grenade, smashes the end and prepares to throw.

DAVE

has the box, grabs the handle and pulls it to him. He turns and locks up the defile. The little people have fled.

DYNAMITE DAVE

(to himself)

The worst of us -- most of all.

He turns the handle.

LEAROYD - BOTANIST

They see the first BLASTS and drop behind the rocks.

THE SLOPE - THE DEFILE

The whole thing goes up in a series of ROARING BLASTS belching smoke and boulders over the edge. The defile seems to come apart. The Japanese on the slope are taken like insects by the landslide of rocks and dirt. The stone avalanche rumbles down the trail and finally stops. The pass is sealed for all time.

CLOSE - LEAROYD - BOTANIST

They pull themselves up coughing and covered with dust. They hear the Japanese calling to each other below and look over the edge to see the assault troops falling back to the main column which is disappearing down the jungle pass that leads to the home longhouse.

LEAROYD

They're going toward the longhouse!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He stands up to fire. The Jap machine gun is still in place. It sends a BURST that RICOCHETS all around him. He drops, his arm bleeding from rock splinters.

LEAROYD

(continuing)

We've got to get there!

BULLETS ZING around.

BOTANIST

There's nothing you can do. We'll have to wait for dark. That guy certainly will.

Learoyd starts to stand up.

LEAROYD

I'm going!

BOTANIST

No!

He grabs and pulls him down as the MACHINE GUN FIRES again.

BOTANIST

What good is it to die here?
That's all you'll do!

Learoyd struggles again, pulling the Botanist with him.

LEAROYD

No! No! Let me go!

The Botanist hits him with a grenade on the back of the head. Learoyd is momentarily dazed. The Botanist clenches the grenade in his fist and hits him as hard as he can in the jaw. Learoyd crumples like a rag doll. The Botanist falls over him; BULLETS RIP by.

CUT TO:

JAPANESE MACHINE GUN - DAY

A crew of three are left to hold this place. They FIRE short bursts into the rocks where Learoyd and the Botanist hide. Suddenly one of them screams, grabbing his neck, a blow-gun dart stitching through. Another gets one through the cheek. More darts and arrows stitch into the men. They grab at them pulling at them like insect stingers. More take their place. They scream and writhe, grabbing at themselves.

BOTANIST

Hearing the screams, he gets up, letting go of Learoyd. He looks up and Learoyd staggers after him.

MACHINE GUN

A Murut stands on the precipice yelling a war cry, holding up a head. Others are helping themselves to the remaining trophies. The Botanist stares in the f.g.

LEAROYD

Come on -- we've lost time!

CUT TO:

LEAROYD - DAY

thrashing through the jungle, hacking at impediments with his headhunter's sword, oblivious to noise or stealth. He is near total exhaustion. Behind him are others, Muruts, but none can keep up with him. He hacks his way to a rock outcropping and looks down at the jungle that stretches away from him. Smoke curls up in the distance.

CLOSE - LEAROYD

He staggers over a ledge; his face goes ashen. He drops the sword, looks down and sees:

THE LONGHOUSE

burning slowly at one end. Everywhere are bodies and blood spattered on the sides of every building. Dead Japanese and Muruts lie in tangled embrace, dead women, children.

In the distance the river gleams in the evening light and the Japanese rear guard can be seen crossing it. Learoyd stands motionless for a minute. The smell of recent gunfire is heavy in the air along with the thick tension that preceeds rain. As Learoyd stands, other Muruts and what's left of Conklin's section emerge from the jungle. Bren and Conklin rush forward with their machine-gun teams and set up their guns.

CLOSE - LEAROYD

He stands transfixed by horror. Suddenly a Bren GUN OPENS UP on the orderly retreat of the rear guard.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Learoyd's head flinches spasmodically at the blast. He turns slowly to see the Japanese scattered in the river as spouts of water rise up like rows of corn. He doesn't see them; his eyes show no emotion. The guns stop; a terrifying silence descends. Learoyd runs, racing down across the burned-out vegetable patches toward the house. The Botanist follows and stops. He knows what he's going to find.

LONGHOUSE

Learoyd runs inside. It is silent save the infernal BUZZING of FLIES. The oppressive silence grows, seemingly encompassing everything. The Muruts move down around the house through the vegetables. They look up into the house. Suddenly the tension is broken by an unutterable cry of anguish. A wail of despair starting in sharp pain then descending to the depth of the soul. Only one cry and then the wind is heard. A wild, silent storm passes through the trees; the MONKEYS CRY OUT. The wind passes like a ripple on the sea down to the river.

CLOSE - THE BOTANIST

He sees something in the grass by the river. A Japanese soldier staggers towards the water carrying a bloody sack. He disappears in the grass. The Botanist and a Murut advance. The Murut raises his carbine, standing as motionless as a pointer. The wind ripples everything. He FIRES three times without moving. The wind ripples again. He lowers his weapon. The Botanist lowers his; a shudder runs through him.

CUT TO:

LONGHOUSE - NIGHT

All around the outside stand the Comanche army, magnificent, even in their sorrow, their horror, their loss. They gleam in the light of torches, fierce and savage, bristling with weapons. Their resolute air has something fearsome and sad about it. They wait. The RADIO CRACKLES. Conklin and his recon squads report to Anderson. It is lost on the light breeze. All is quiet again. Learoyd walks out of the longhouse. No one has gone in; it is as though he were seeing for all of them. He looks down at them holding out his hand. A warrior rushes up to hand him a torch. He walks back inside.

CLOSEUP - LEAROYD

Flames leap up around him. His face for once is broken with emotion, his eyes swollen like a child's. He perhaps thinks of joining the flames as they rise around him, but then his expression slowly hardens.

LONGHOUSE

burning fiercely in the night. Learoyd walks out and down to the Botanist. He doesn't look at him; he seems to be looking far away.

LEAROYD

Where are they?

BOTANIST

Conklin's got them pinned down in the gorge of the Srai by Falcon's Peak. We can hold them there and in the morning call in the Air Force.

LEAROYD

Let's go.

THE WAR GONGS

SOUND. One after another the flying squads of blow-pipes cross the Srai and plunge into the jungle. The infantry follow, the last to leave are Bren and his mortar teams.

CLOSE - LEAROYD

staring ahead as he marches through the night. He sings to himself.

LEAROYD

So now tell me, Sean O'Farrel
where the meeting is to be
At the old place by the river
right well known to you and me.
I've got orders from the Captain
Whistle up the marching tune
For the pikes must be together by
the rising moon.

The Muruts join in. They have long been taught the song. The whole column sings, not understanding a word.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

COMANCHES

By the rising of the moon
By the rising of the moon
We'll strike a blow for freedom
By the rising of the moon.

CUT TO:

THE GORGE - NIGHT

Crouched in the moonlight are the Japanese, their weapons gleaming. Cliffs tower over them. All around they hear voices singing "By the Rising of the Moon." They look around -- it comes from every side. They fix bayonets.

CLIFF

Figures appear on the cliffs, hundreds of them singing their war song which now sounds eerie and primitive, perhaps as it was always meant to.

SINGING VOICES

For the pikes must be together by
the rising of the moon.

CLOSE - LEAROYD

He stands looking down, puts a new sword in his belt, and stuffs Thompson magazines into his web gear. The Botanist comes up beside him.

BOTANIST

Please, don't do it. The Air
Force will be here in the morning.
Don't spend your lives in
vengeance. Vengeance is futile --
it never ends -- you taught me
that. It's not man that counts,
it's life! Life, Learoyd.

Learoyd turns. For a second the Botanist thinks he understands, then he sees his eyes.

LEAROYD

Blood must be answered in blood.

He holds up his sword.

LEAROYD

(continuing)

Kill! Kill! Kill! Learoyd am I!

1/25

CLOSE - MORTARS

They FIRE -- clunk, clunk, whine.

THE GORGE

Sharp, violent BURSTS OF FIRE, WHISTLING splinters of rock and SCREAMS are heard.

CLOSE - MURUTS - FLYING SQUADS

They crouch among the rocks with their blowpipes, whistling darts into the night that stick with a wet SLAP.

LEAROYD

and the others howl and descend FIRING, waving swords and screaming like banshees.

LEAROYD

Learoyd am I! Learoyd am I!

EXPLOSIONS, MACHINE GUN FIRE, darkness.

DISSOLVE TO:

DAWN

breaking the clouds up, shafts of light spilling through. A million vultures circle, the SOUND of FLIES predominates.

THE GORGE

A mist hangs over it sparing the sight of carnage. Only indistinct shapes can be seen among the blood-stained rocks. The sound of the Srai is clear and clean as always. A few Muruts stagger about in the rocks; there are more down by the river. A dead hand reaches up to the sky in the f.g.

THE BOTANIST

Flies cling to his legs and boots which are covered in blood. He walks into the river to wash them off and stands there feeling the water rush around his legs.

He sees Learoyd sitting on a rock and wades over. Learoyd is covered in bloodstains -- his face, hair, chest. He is gashed and wounded.

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CONTINUED:

His eyes are hollow. As he sits there Murut wounded are brought up and their red-stained dressings shown to him. They seem dazed and lacking their warrior spirit.

BOTANIST

Why are they doing that?

LEAROYD

Showing me their bravery, their valor, suffering.

He looks at the Botanist; his eyes are filled with tears.

LEAROYD

(continuing)

But I've seen enough.

His voice trembles.

LEAROYD

(continuing)

It's all gone -- all I had in this world. None of it will bring them back. They're -- they're gone for tomorrow, the day after. Gone forever.

He looks up at the Botanist.

LEAROYD

(continuing)

What day is it?

BOTANIST

August 6th.

LEAROYD

What year?

BOTANIST

August 6th, 1945. It's around eight o'clock.

LEAROYD

From this day, this time on, I'll never raise my hand against another man.

He takes out his bloody sword and throws it in the river. Then he sits like Rodin's thinker, tears rolling down his cheeks. The Botanist walks away.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOTANIST (V.O.)

That was the last time I saw him among his people -- as a King. I went on to pursue the Japanese colonel who, like the phantom he was, had escaped. I was the warrior. He was as he said only a King.

DISSOLVE TO:

FEET - DAY

marching, the Botanist's booted, the Comanche's bare. The jungle passes by, omnipresent in the heat, watching. The group stops in a clearing.

BOTANIST (V.O.)

That afternoon the radio crackled. An announcement of historical importance -- perhaps the war was over.

he stops; the Comanche with the radio brings it forward.

RADIO

-- all Allied Armed Forces Pacific Theater, all Allied Forces China, Burma, India -- the President of the United States --

A pause -- STATIC.

RADIO (HARRY TRUMAN)

Today at eight o'clock Japanese time a lone aircraft dropped one bomb on the city of Hiroshima, Japan. This bomb, an atomic bomb, used the energy of the universe itself to create a devastation heretofore unknown to mankind. It is our hope that the Japanese leaders will see the terrible consequences of this weapon and bring a swift end to this protracted tragedy. It is our hope that no more blood need be shed, that this terrible weapon need never be used again. The fate of the Japanese people and of mankind itself hangs in the balance --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The Botanist reaches down toward something -- an orchid.

BOTANIST (V.O.)

It was then that I made my contribution to history. I discovered a new variety of Nepenthes that was to bear my name.

He plucks the orchid, puts it carefully in his pocket and reaches down to get another. Just then there is a SOUND like flies whizzing by, followed by the sharp crack of MUZZLE BLAST. The Murut with the radio stands up dripping blood, the radio shatters, dust kicks up. The other Muruts grab themselves, screaming and falling as they are raked by a murderously efficient CROSSFIRE. The Botanist wheels his Thompson up but it is blown from his hands and he, too, is blown off his feet and sent sprawling into the dirt.

CLOSE - BOTANIST

He crawls frantically for the jungle, BULLETS RIPPING over him, thudding into the Muruts who barely have a chance to scream.

THE JUNGLE

dark and tangled. Suddenly the FIRING STOPS. The Botanist crawls frantically, gets up, goes a few steps and suddenly runs right into a Japanese soldier. The soldier has a rifle with a bayonet which he plunges into the Botanist's side. The Botanist gasps in pain but raises his Colt .45. He FIRES three shots into the man from point-blank range. The dead man with his rifle and bayonet fall away. The Botanist holds his side and thrashes on. The FIRING BEGINS again, a GRENADE GOES OFF, high-pitched YELLS in Japanese, then a SCREAM of agony cut short by a second grenade. Then silence.

DARKNESS

The Botanist lies in some rotting growth. Feet go by, yelling in Japanese, back and forth. He lies motionless in terror. Soon the Japanese pass dragging a body. Their VOICES recede.

DISSOLVE TO:

CLOSE - BOTANIST - DUSK

He shivers but dares not move. Darkness begins to cloak everything. There is no sound.

BOTANIST - NIGHT

The Botanist lies there, his face contorted by fear, by rising panic. The jungle is alive with a million SOUNDS: CRICKETS, BEETLES, SNAKES, PREDATORS. Bugs crawl over the Botanist's face; he can't move. A beetle crawls onto his neck. It begins to rain. . . .

BOTANIST

Learoyd.

A whimper at first.

BOTANIST

(continuing)

Learoyd -- Learoyd!

(screaming)

Learoyd!

CUT TO:

HOSPITAL TENT - DAY

A pretty British NURSE leans over, much like the Murut girl so long ago. She, too, holds a ladle of water.

THE BOTANIST

He blinks, coming slowly to his senses.

BOTANIST

I'm awake.

NURSE

Yes, you're quite awake.

BOTANIST

Have I been awake before?

NURSE

Yes. Every day for a little while.

BOTANIST

But I don't remember it.

The girl looks down at him. She has dark hair and light green eyes -- like Learoyd's.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NURSE

One day you finally do remember it. Then you're really awake -- you've come back.

BOTANIST

Your eyes -- they're the color of the sea, the Celebes Sea. They're -- beautiful.

NURSE

Thank you. I've never been told it quite that way before.

BOTANIST

What's happened? How long have I been here.

NURSE

You've been here almost three weeks. I talked to you every day, but I think you hear me now.

BOTANIST

The war -- what about the --

NURSE

The war is over.

CUT TO:

FERGUSSON - DAY

sitting in a wicker chair. The Botanist sits in a wheelchair opposite him. Behind them are the bungalows of a hospital.

FERGUSSON

They surrendered. There's still some up there. Some will never come down, but that's not our concern. He's our concern.

BOTANIST

He won't come down -- he won't toe the line.

FERGUSSON

He will, poor devil, one way or the other, he will. No one moves very far out of line, you know. When you're young you think you're blazing a trail.

(MORE)

ME

CONTINUED:

FERGUSSON (CONT'D)

You don't notice it's a beaten track -- different -- unique. Often it's a woman who brings you back or life itself. Life.

Fergusson looks at him deeply.

FERGUSSON

(continuing)

In a month's time, the Northeasterly monsoon will be back. What can we do?

BOTANIST

Nothing. I hear he has the Japanese colonel with him, that Conklin's still up there, that he told you "leave us alone and we'll leave you alone." Great stuff -- the days of high adventure.

Fergusson takes out a map.

BOTANIST

That's my map!

FERGUSSON

That's right. What's at "The Pass of the Clouds?"

BOTANIST

Nothing. It's just a pass -- why?

FERGUSSON

The Yank died up there, didn't he? Strange place to make a stand -- no strategic importance; however, if we dropped an airborne blocking force in there, they'd be all bottled up, wouldn't they?

The Botanist looks at him, then down at the map.

FERGUSSON

(continuing)

It would be easy.

BOTANIST

You don't have to.

FERGUSSON

No? Why?

(CONTINUED)

my

CONTINUED:

Salt. BOTANIST

Yes. FERGUSSON

BOTANIST
They need salt. They get it from the sea. Cut off their supply and the revolt dies in a month. What is life without a little salt?

FERGUSSON
Yes -- yes, of course. That's it then. Salt. So simple.

He puts his hand on the Botanist's shoulder.

FERGUSSON
(continuing)
You feel bad, don't you?

BOTANIST
Did Judas feel bad?

FERGUSSON
It had to be -- it always ends this way. At least there'll be no bloodshed.

The Nurse walks over. She looks beautiful in the sunlight, a girl from a more innocent time.

NURSE
He's probably worn out by now, Colonel. He does need his rest.

FERGUSSON
Certainly, and he shall have it.

NURSE
I'll give you two more minutes and that's all.

She goes back and tends to things in the bungalow. They watch her.

FERGUSSON
Now there -- she's beautiful.

BOTANIST
I know -- I'm in love with her.

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED:

FERGUSSON

Take her back to England, marry her and live a good life. Forget this -- war -- these people. Bring it out some day for your grandchildren. That's where it belongs. You'll be a retired major with the D.S.O. You'll make easy stages on the trip home. Take her with you, take something good and decent from this wretched war. Somebody ought to. What's her name.

BOTANIST

Vivian. It means life.

CUT TO:

PART III: EPILOGUE

THE RETURN OF THE NORTHEASTERLY MONSOON

"And now the whole Round Table is dissolved
Which was an image of the mighty world
And I the last go forth companionless
And the world darkens round me
Among new men, strange face
-- other minds"

Tennyson

-ms

MOUNTAINS - DAY

The great banks of clouds darken the sky. They pile up on the mountains; a dark wind brings rain.

CUT TO:

TITLE

Headquarters 9th Division
Australian Occupational Command

A REMOTE OUTPOST - DAY

of whitewashed bungalows cut out of the jungle on a great river. The guards come out as a group of pirogues draw close and put in. Men rush out of the buildings with rifles and machine guns.

GUARD

Hold it, mate --

Old Senghir stands up.

SENGHIR

We are the Mountain people. We come in peace.

They hold up hands to show no weapons. Even so, the Australians cover them with everything they've got. The Muruts pull in and take three men bound to poles out of the pirogues. They then carry them to the feet of the soldiers and drop them in the mud. It is Learoyd, Conklin and a Japanese colonel. Ballang Gwai stands looking at them, then looks up at the Aussies.

AUSSIE SERGEANT

And who might you be, fella?

GWAI

We are an old people. We are worn out, we want peace and salt. This man here is my brother, the King, and the other two have been our swords. Our King is the red flame that has set the whole forest on fire. But we are an old people, we are worn out, we want peace and salt.

Then they turn and leave.

CUT TO:

BARRACKS - DAY

Learoyd and the other two are cut from their poles.
Their legs are stiff and they cannot walk.

AUSSIE SERGEANT

Take the Jap and the other one
inside.

They do. .

CONKLIN

Don't you lay a hand on him, you
bastard.

AUSSIE SERGEANT

Shut up.

He butt strokes him and then throws him inside. They
prop Learoyd up.

AUSSIE SERGEANT

(continuing)

So you're the King, eh? You don't
look like a King. You're the King
of the Cunts -- that's what you
are.

He kicks him brutally to the ground.

AUSSIE SERGEANT

(continuing)

You need a crown, Cunt King --
Your Majesty.

He slams a helmet on his head and smashes down on it
with a rifle butt.

AUSSIE SERGEANT

(continuing)

Stinkin' deserter. Thought you
were really somethin', didn't you?

He kicks him in the groin.

LEAROYD - DAY

tied to a pole in the rain. A group approaches.
Learoyd looks awful, near death. The group rushes
forward; among them is Fergusson.

FERGUSSON

Outrageous! Who did this? Who
knocked him around like that?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FERGUSON (CONT'D)

(turns on the
soldiers)

Outrageous! You did this, didn't
you?

AUSSIE SERGEANT

He refused to speak, sir, like
now. The men gave him a bit of
pasting. After all, sir, he is a
deserter. Just last week his
bloody savages were shootin' at us
on the track, sir.

Fergusson hits him with his riding crop.

FERGUSON

You had no right. You're a
disgrace to the army. You'll be
stripped! Outrageous!

he looks down at Learoyd. Learoyd stares straight
ahead.

FERGUSON

(continuing)

I didn't want it to be this way,
but it always is. A wasted
renegade -- it ends up shabbily --
it always does.

CUT TO:

THE BOTANIST - PRISON - DAY

The Botanist walks down a corridor of crude cells -- a
colonial prison. He stops and looks out a window.
There's a gallows. A CORPORAL looks over the
Botanist's shoulder.

CORPORAL

They gonna hang that Nip Colonel
on it, Major, tomorrow morning --
right out there.

BOTANIST

I know.

CELL

The Botanist walks in. The Japanese Colonel is at a
desk writing. Food is laid out before him, lots of
it. A Sergeant closes the cell, snaps to attention.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

COL. MITAMURA

Ah, Major, I've been waiting for you. Sit down.

BOTANIST

Thank you, sir.

Colonel Mitamura has a wonderful face full of kindness and nobility. He offers food.

COL. MITAMURA

There's plenty here. I never thought I would see such a feast, even if it's my last. The King told me much about you. He loves you very much.

BOTANIST

Why do you think I came here?

COL. MITAMURA

It was you who told them about the salt, wasn't it?

The Botanist nods yes.

COL. MITAMURA

(continuing)

An honest man -- very few at the end of a war.

BOTANIST

Will you answer me honestly?

COL. MITAMURA

Sure, I've nothing earthly to hide, and I'm unrepentant. Cigar?

He hands him a Manila.

BOTANIST

No, thank you.

COL. MITAMURA

You don't mind if I do.

He lights up.

BOTANIST

Why? Why did you do the things you did?

He puffs, looks right at him.

(CONTINUED)

my

CONTINUED:

COL. MITAMURA

It was my duty to survive, to fight and stay alive and fight again. As simple as that.

BOTANIST

Cannibalism -- a whole unit eating, living on -- and the violence of the attack on the longhouse.

COL. MITAMURA

We sank as deep into horror as human nature will allow. But I'll tell you -- it's not thirsting after evil that makes men damned. It's hungering after bread or rice.

(he reflects)

I was a professor of Fine Arts before the war. In your country I studied philosophy and painting at the University of Chicago. My life was dedicated to grace and beauty, and this is how it ends. Do I look like a war criminal? No, I don't make a good one. I'm just a man -- like you.

(he puffs)

I did what men have to do in war. I survived. My men never went hungry. We fought well and never surrendered.

BOTANIST

But you joined the King --

COL. MITAMURA

He came to us as only a King can -- without weapons, with open hand. He ended our war and let me see the sky again. You have no idea what it was to see the night sky -- the stars -- to breathe free air. For this alone I serve him to my death.

BOTANIST

He was a good man, when all is said and done.

COL. MITAMURA

You know, the test of us is never what we think.

(MORE)

my

CONTINUED:

COL. MITAMURA (CONT'D)

Never glory or achievement, never blind courage on the battlefield, good looks or fortune. The test is always alone -- when your peers aren't there to influence you, when you can do whatever you want. That's freedom -- everybody faces it before they die, some only once, some every day. It's when you find out what a man really is.

BOTANIST

And the results. How do you know? How do you judge?

COL. MITAMURA

Regrets -- you know inside. The King has no regrets. You have a few but will forget them. And I have but one.

BOTANIST

Yes.

COL. MITAMURA

That I cannot see my wife's face and naked body before I die. But I can remember. I can remember.

CUT TO:

THE SEA - NIGHT

A ship, a cargo vessel, plows through the warm tropical waters. Its ENGINE chugs inconsistently. Small islands lay off to either side.

BOTANIST (V.O.)

Easy stages. I went with Learoyd -- he in the prison hold, while I had a room to myself. Vivian was to follow. A Major with the D.S.O. Easy stages and then somewhere near the Straits of Malacca --

CLOSE - BOTANIST

He is on deck smelling the fragrance of the Bashee isles, the scent of gardenias.

(CONTINUED)

me

CONTINUED:

The ENGINE is CHUGGING along and then suddenly IT STOPS. There is some commotion; several men rush by swearing to themselves.

BOTANIST

What is it, sailor?

SAILOR

Bloody thing just stopped, sir.
Does that, you know.

He's gone; there is yelling down the deck.

VOICE (O.S.)

Come forward -- forward.

Suddenly the Botanist runs to a ladder and plunges into the darkened ship.

CORRIDOR - DAY

dimly lit. The ship's generators are failing. Several men come the other way.

BOTANIST

Go forward. I've been told to go forward. We may have had a collision. Who's below?

The lights go out.

MAN

Just the deserter, sir.

DARKNESS

Just SOUNDS, vague shapes. The NOISE of CHAINS. A match lights.

BOTANIST (O.S.)

Where are the keys, prisoner?

LEAROYD (O.S.)

Right on the desk. Did something happen?

BOTANIST (O.S.)

You'll have to come with me.

The SOUND of a CELL DOOR BEING OPENED. STEPS.

ANOTHER CORRIDOR

The figures rush by. Another figure goes up a cross-ladder.

FIGURE

What's going on?

BOTANIST

Get forward. It's all I know.

Suddenly they burst out into the night sky bright with moon and stars. Learoyd looks at the Botanist.

LEAROYD

The voice! I thought it was you.

BOTANIST

Quick! Give me those.

He grabs his manacles and fumbles with the keys. He looks over the side.

BOTANIST

(continuing)

How well do you swim?

LEAROYD

Well enough. They'll take away your D.S.O.

BOTANIST

They've already given it to me. Besides, with luck they'll never know.

He throws the manacles over. Learoyd straddles the rail, looks back.

LEAROYD

Why?

BOTANIST

For King and Country -- get going.

LEAROYD

Life, English.

He jumps.

BOTANIST

Life, Your Majesty.

He splashes.

VOICE

What's that?

CONTINUED:

ANOTHER VOICE
Somebody's over --

VOICE
I don't see. No, you're out of
your mind.

Just then the ENGINE RUMBLES TO LIFE. The boat starts
moving slowly.

DISSOLVE TO:

CLOSE - BOTANIST - NIGHT

On the stern in the moonlight. He looks out at a spit
of sand and coral passing close by. The moon is low
and its silvery patch silhouettes a man standing under
a palm on the coral point. The figure walks up the
beach toward the jungle, stops.

BOTANIST (V.O.)
I'll always know that he's out
there -- a free man. I hope he
found his valley --

The Botanist waves. The figure raises his hand
slowly --

BOTANIST
Farewell, my King. Farewell.

-- and is gone.

THE END

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