# "In Love and War"

A screenplay

by

Anna Hamilton Phelan

based on the book

HEMINGWAY IN LOVE AND WAR

by

Henry S. Villard and James Nagel

Other contributing writers:

Allan Scott and Clancy Sigal

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3rd Shooting Script

May 22, 1996

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TV REPORTER
(into camera)
... winner of the Pulitzer Prize in 1952 and the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1954, Hemingway's works were read by millions around the world. His novel, "A Farewell to Arms", was translated into 30 languages...
(he continues)

FIRST YOUNG MAN
Read it in high school.

SECOND YOUNG MAN
Me too. It's about a bullfighter and --

FIRST YOUNG WOMAN
Not a chance. I saw the movie on TV. Ingrid Bergman and whatshisname. It's about the Spanish Civil War.

HARRY politely straightens them out.

HARRY
In point of fact it was set in Italy, Northern Italy, during the First World War. The Italians were fighting off an Austrian invasion...

2 EXT. MAIN STREET, NORTHERN ITALIAN TOWN - DAY 2

The rooftops of a small Italian town. A mountain range can be seen in the distance.

HARRY (V.O.)
... and the United States had entered the war in France the year before. But the first Americans to get to Italy were the Red Cross. I was there, actually. It was the summer of 1918...

We hear the SOUND of a small band, playing "Rosamunda" slightly off-key and pan down to see THE BAND coming towards us along a narrow colonnaded street.

THE BANDSMEN are all elderly men and adolescents. The sight is humorous, but endearing. Italian men between the ages of 17 and 40 are conspicuously absent from the welcoming crowd. Flowers are being thrown from windows and balconies.

(CONTINUED)

3 CONTINUED: 3

HARRY
Don't forget we have a date for ice cream.

AGNES
You know where I'll be.

ELSIE "MAC" MACDONALD (in her 30's, the oldest and most sensible of the nurses) emerges from the second ambulance.

MAC
(teasing HARRY and AGNES)
We're here to do a job, remember?

The area around the entrance of the hospital is a blur of confusion as THE ITALIAN HOSPITAL STAFF jockeys to line up according to importance.

THE ITALIAN STAFF consists of 3 FEMALE NURSING AIDES, TERESA, ANNA MARIA AND SONIA, (20's,), 1 FEMALE COOK (50's), 1 FEMALE KITCHEN MAID (late teens), 2 FEMALE CLEANING WOMEN (40's), 6 MALE PORTERS (50's).

The youngest of the Italian nursing aides, TERESA, is so excited about the arrival of the Americans that she appears close to tears.

Also waiting is Red Cross Head Nurse and Chief Administrator of the hospital, KATHERINE "GUMSHOE" DE LONG (50's). She's a wisp-of-a-woman whose compact size camouflages the steel force of a battleship.

Crowding in on AGNES is a 4 year old BOY on his GRANDFATHER'S shoulders. AGNES gives the BOY a big smile. He points to her nurses' cap.

AGNES
Hello there. Buon giorno.

BOY
(in Italian)
Are those your wings?

GRANDFATHER
(in stilted English)
He think you are angel from heaven.

AGNES
Tell him we're just nurses arrived from America.

GRANDFATHER
For us is the same.

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3 CONTINUED: 3

THE PORTLY TOWN MAYOR (60's), dressed in his best, is standing on a wooden chair and has already commenced a welcoming speech that can't be understood by any of the AMERICANS or heard by any of the ITALIANS over the SOUNDS of the band and the crowd. He's surrounded by LOCAL DIGNITARIES.

CLOSER ON AGNES - who leans over to the nurse next to her.

AGNES
(whispering)
Mac?

MAC
(her eyes on the Mayor)
Can't understand a word the old man's saying.

AGNES
(still whispering)
Mac, I have to find a bathroom.

AGNES disappears into the building. HARRY, obviously smitten, follows her with his eyes.

The burly ITALIAN PORTERS are taking the nurses' heavy duffel bags from THE AMERICAN DRIVERS, hoisting them onto their shoulders as if they're full of cotton.

As the MAYOR'S speech comes to an end, HARRY takes one last lingering look at the hospital doorway before he follows SKIP back to the vehicles.

4 INT. LOBBY A.R.C. HOSPITAL - DAY 4

MAC is giving the building the once over.

MAC
Hospital? Looks more like a nunnery to me.

Coming up behind her, on shoes with a loud SQUEAK, is KATHERINE DE LONG, who uses this early opportunity to establish herself as someone who knows all, sees all, hears all.

DE LONG
Very observant, Miss MacDonald. That's exactly what it was -- and exactly how it will stay. Now if you'll all follow me... Watch the paint. It's still wet.

As ten of the NURSES follow DE LONG up the wide staircase to the floor above, MAC hangs back, waiting for AGNES.

AGNES emerges from a door.

(CONTINUED)

4 CONTINUED: 4

AGNES
(highly amused)
Mac, you've no idea... you have to stand with your legs...

AGNES continues with her graphic description of Italian plumbing arrangements as she and MAC disappear up the stairs.

5 EXT. STREET, NORTHERN ITALIAN TOWN - EVENING 5

A column of ITALIAN SOLDIERS wearing the magnificent plumed hats of the Bersagliere Regiment is jogging toward the front.

Nearby, AGNES, MAC and ROSIE are taking a walk to familiarise themselves with the town. With them is ADELE "DOTTIE" BROWN.

ROSIE
(Turning to eye the soldiers)
They look great, don't they?

The others look too, then stroll on.

DOTTIE
(taking in their surroundings)
Look at it this way. We sure won't have to worry about spending our huge pay checks 'cause there's no place to spend 'em.

ROSIE
(looking longingly after the troops)
I thought we were going to be in some sort of bigger city. Looks like anyone under 50 is just passing through..

MAC
We go where we're sent, Rosie. I'm just glad we're close to the front.

AGNES
Not close enough for me.

MAC
If the Italians get pushed back again, Ag, you'll have your wish.

6 EXT. ANOTHER STREET, NORTHERN ITALIAN TOWN - EVENING 6

An ELDERLY ITALIAN MAN, taking an evening stroll, tips his hat to AGNES, MAC, ROSIE and DOTTIE.

ELDERLY MAN
(in Italian)
Good evening, ladies. Welcome to our town.

ROSIE
The language is definitely going to be a problem here.

DOTTIE
These "Eye"talian gents sure are gallant, aren't they? Even the old coots.

AGNES
You know what I read once? Italian men respect their wives, spoil their mistresses...

DOTTIE
Aggie!

AGNES
...but the only women they really love are their mammas.

Overriding the nurses' laughter is the blood-curdling SOUND of an Italian man screaming, "MAMMA, MAMMA."

7 EXT. MONTE GRAPPA - DAY 7

The SOUND of "Mamma, Mamma" is now mixed with the SOUND of men screaming and shells exploding. BOOM! BOOM!

A HEAVY-SET ITALIAN SOLDIER, covered with mud and blood, is staring, saucer-eyed, at what was once his arm. He looks at the mountain opposite - the source of this Austrian bombardment.

HEAVY-SET SOLDIER
(barely audible)
Mamma mia.

Stretching as far as the eye can see into the heart of Austria are the jagged peaks of the Dolomites. The highest and most distant are etched with snow. Austrian cannon and mortar are pounding the Italian stronghold of Monte Grappa.

On a distant slope, a wave of AUSTRIAN TROOPS emerges from a line of trees and begins to advance. Over the brow of a nearer slope, hundreds MORE AUSTRIANS appear. Then, shockingly, a first wave of TROOPS - unseen until now - suddenly erupts into foreground.

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED: 7

Fixed bayonets at the ready, they have survived machine gun and mortar, bullets and barbed wire to reach the Italian trenches. They engage the defending ITALIAN SOLDIERS, hand-to-hand, eyeball-to-eyeball, in a primitive and desperate fight to the death.

AUSTRIAN SOLDIERS collapse as they are shot at close range by the ITALIANS, some rolling down the mountain.

ITALIAN SOLDIERS materialise and dematerialise from the trench positions like phantoms from an eerie half-light of choking dust. Some crawl on all fours under clumsy iron shields, more like tortoises than warriors.

Amid the blood and the screams and the mayhem, ITALIAN MEDICS drag and carry WOUNDED ITALIANS to higher ground where they are loaded onto stretchers and rushed to the forward ambulance position on the other side of the summit.

8 EXT. MONTE GRAPPA, FORWARD AMBULANCE POSITION - DAY 8

A horse-drawn gun carriage canters towards us revealing as it passes ITALIAN STRETCHER BEARERS rushing wounded SOLDIERS to FIRST AID MEDICS and then to waiting Red Cross ambulances. Here in comparative safety, among the casualties, is the HEAVY SET SOLDIER with the missing arm.

HARRY and SKIP are frantically loading another ITALIAN SOLDIER into one of the ambulances. They stand out because the high collars of their tunics have red crosses stitched on them, and because the haunted looks on their faces show the death of their own naive innocence.

SKIP is holding his breath against the smell of seared flesh. Finally he can't control his own gag reflex any longer... walks a little way away and retches.

HARRY watches as ITALIAN MEDICS bandage a hunk of gauze over the HEAVY-SET SOLDIER'S wound in a rushed attempt to staunch the bleeding.

HARRY stares as blood rapidly soaks the gauze and a phalanx of flies leave another WOUNDED SOLDIER and settle one by one on the gauze over THE HEAVY-SET SOLDIER'S fresher wound.

HARRY angrily swats them away. They quickly return. He swats them away again... then removes his Red Cross cap and covers the wound before the flies can. He kneels by the stretcher.

HARRY
Skip, help me here! I can't lift him alone.

SKIP hurries over... helps slide the HEAVY-SET SOLDIER head first into Harry's ambulance.

9 EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY 9

The perfect bucolic setting.

The heat of the sun is cooled by a breeze that also has set the leafy trees that line the road to dance playfully.

Birds sing in the trees. They splash in a quiet pond in the adjacent field near a patch of wildflowers that is tempting a squadron of dipping and weaving butterflies.

We hear him before we see him. It's the clear singing voice of a glee club baritone.

ERNIE (O.S.)
(singing)
"Over hill, Over dale,
As we hit the dusty trail,
And the Caissons
Go rolling along

Bring the beer, bring the ale,
We will drink them on the trail
And the Caissons
Go rolling along

Then it's hi! hi! hee!,
In the field artillery,
Shout out your numbers loud and strong,
Two, three, four...
For where e'er you go,
You will always know,
That the Caissons
Go rolling along"

The young ERNEST "ERNIE" HEMINGWAY (18) bicycles into frame. He's as wholesome as the scenery that surrounds him.

Breathtakingly handsome and almost angelic in his youthful vitality, his apple-red cheeks give him a look that's as American as Oak Park, Illinois.

He wears a military-style uniform adapted to suit a Red Cross ambulance driver - brown shirt, black tie, jacket with bright metal buttons, overseas cap with Red Cross emblem. There are second lieutenant stripes on his sleeve.

Reaching a rise in the road, his strong, athletic legs put more push to the peddles.

Then he takes his hands from the handle bars, holds them out to the side in a "Look, Ma, no hands" gesture.

The sight of the Red Cross canteen up ahead spurs him to shift into finish-line mode.

(CONTINUED)

9 CONTINUED: 9

He crouches low over the bicycle frame, hands back on the handle bars, legs going into overtime push, transporting him to his destination at a high rate of speed.

10 EXT. RED CROSS CANTEEN - DAY 10

ERNIE parks the bike against a small country building that's decorated with stars and stripes and Red Cross posters. He grins at the exhausted ITALIAN SOLDIERS slumped at trestle tables in the sunshine. He enters the building.

11 INT. RED CROSS CANTEEN - DAY 11

ERNIE looks around the room.

In the crowd we spot JIM MCBRIDE (20's), a tall, freckle-faced boy with carrot-red hair. He is wearing an apron over his Red Cross uniform and is patiently offering mugs of coffee to weary ITALIAN SOLDIERS.

ERNIE crosses to him, takes him by the elbow, steers him off to one side. MCBRIDE puts up with all this in his customary cheerful, good natured way.

ERNIE
Jimmy, which one is Burnside?

MCBRIDE
(nodding O.S.)
Over there, but...

Across the room, deep in discussion with a dignified ITALIAN OFFICER is TOM BURNSIDE (40's) a pompous Red Cross Official.

ERNIE doesn't wait for his friend to finish. Grabbing MCBRIDE by the arm, he moves towards BURNSIDE, dragging MCBRIDE along.

ERNIE
I didn't come all this way to stand around like a fancy soda jerk.

ERNIE has been steering his friend through the crowd, causing him to spill scalding coffee from the pot he's holding onto his hand.

MCBRIDE
Jeez... watch it, Ernie.

ERNIE
That's not what I signed up for. Don't know about you.

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MCBRIDE
(shaking coffee from his hand)
Oh, I don't know. Always play the hand you're dealt. That's my motto.

ERNIE
Remind me to look you up next time I want a good game of 'Old Maid'.

By now they have reached BURNSIDE. ERNIE snaps off a salute.

ERNIE
(interrupting Burnside's conversation)
Sir, Lieutenant Ernest Hemingway requesting a change of assignment.

BURNSIDE turns, giving ERNIE a frosty look as the ITALIAN OFFICER takes his leave.

BURNSIDE
I wasn't aware that Lieutenant Hemingway had reported for duty, yet.

Another snappy salute.

ERNIE
Sir. Lieutenant Hemingway reporting for duty and requesting a change of assignment.

BURNSIDE
The answer is no. Now, young man, if I were you I would put on an apron and start serving the coffee.

And with that he turns and walks away. MCBRIDE grins at ERNIE as if to say, "I told you so." ERNIE glares at his friend and starts after BURNSIDE, still keeping MCBRIDE in tow.

ERNIE
(catching up with the older man)
Sir, you can't do this to me. I've come all the way from the States and d'you know what they're saying in the papers? This is the war to end all wars. If I don't see any action now, it'll be too late. This is my last chance!

(CONTINUED)

11 CONTINUED: 11

BURNSIDE
(no sympathy)
Hemingway, let me explain something to you. If the American Red Cross was interested in you as a fighting man they would have issued you a rifle. Is that not so?

ERNIE
Yessir, but -

BURNSIDE
But they didn't do that, did they?

ERNIE
No sir, but -

BURNSIDE
(launching into a sermonette)
And your job is to help the morale of our weary Italian allies. A simple cup of coffee. A cigarette. A candy bar. A few words of encouragement --

ERNIE
(at his most charming)
Yessir, I understand. You're dead right, sir. A simple cup of coffee, some candy, a pack of smokes... I see now they're symbols of support and encouragement that carry the spirit of America to our war weary allies in Italy. And<u>where</u> are our comrades the<u>most</u> weary?
(not giving Burnside a chance to answer)
In the front lines. Right, sir? In the trenches. Right, sir?

MCBRIDE has been listening to this, open mouthed. Somewhere, in the back of BURNSIDE's mind there is a dim suspicion that he is being flummoxed, but it is slow to surface and before it can:

ERNIE
(in an audible aside to MCBRIDE)
You were wrong, Jimmy. Mr Burnside's not at all the horse's ass you said he was.

And, having diverted BURNSIDE'S attention to MCBRIDE, HEMINGWAY gets out of there fast.

12 EXT. ROAD LEADING TO THE FRONT - EVENING 12

ERNIE rides his bicycle along the increasingly rutted road.

He's replaced his cap with a steel "Tin Lid." A knapsack is over his shoulder filled with cigarettes, candy bars, packets of ground coffee.

A star-shell explodes high in the air, puncturing the silence and throwing an eerie, flat light over a battle-scarred river bank.

Mortars fire in the distance. THUNK. THUNK. THUNK.

ERNIE, sweating through his tunic, speeds up in the temporary light of the star-shell.

KAAWHUMP. KAAWHUMP. KAAWHUMP. The concussions of the mortar shells exploding in front of the trenches shake the ground. Then it's silent again.

ERNIE'S young face is flushed with fierce excitement in anticipation of what lies ahead.

13 EXT. FRONT LINE DRESSING STATION - EVENING 13

The SOUNDS of a barrage of artillery and mortars die away.

SEVERAL ITALIAN OFFICERS stand outside the small, wood and canvas dressing station and watch nonchalantly as ERNIE leans his bike against it and prepares to sprint to the trench line.

From his POV we see the trenches about 50 yards away on the bank of the River Piave.

As the light fades, ERNIE tucks his kit bag in the crook of his arm like a football... zig zags into the dusty gloom as he sprints the obstacle course of barbed wire and shell holes.

EXT. FRONT LINE - EVENING 14

Like a running back going for a touchdown ERNIE leaps a last crater. Another mortar explodes. Closer this time.

Five big strides and ERNIE dives into the nearest trench.

15 EXT. FRONT LINE TRENCH - NIGHT 15

ERNIE slides head first over the rear berm and into the trench. The 12 ITALIAN SOLDIERS (20's-30's) of the crack Arditi Regiment who man the section can hardly believe what they see... an apple-cheeked American who is quickly up on his feet, opening his knapsack, passing out cigarettes.

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED: 15

ERNIE
Bona seera...

SOLDIER
(in Italian)
What's the bleeding Red Cross doing in the Front Line?

ERNIE
Do... does... anyone...you know... speak Inglesi?

One of the soldiers, ENRICO, a sergeant in his 30's, nods.

ENRICO
Un poco.

ERNIE offers his hand for a shake.

ERNIE
Ernie Hemingway, newspaper reporter from the Kansas City Star.

ENRICO
(in heavily accented, broken English)
Enrico Biscaglia. I am waiter from Bordighera.

ERNIE loads ENRICO and his two companions up with cigarettes.

ERNIE
How long you boys been here?

ENRICO gestures to his two companions, FRANCESCO (20's) and ROBERTO, not much more than a boy.

ENRICO
Francesco, me, we two weeks... Roberto, tre mesi... three... months.

ERNIE
Please ask Roberto... can I see his rifle?

ENRICO
(to Roberto, in Italian)
Show the American reporter your gun. Go on. Show it to him.

ROBERTO hands his rifle to ERNIE... who looks over every inch of it... caresses the barrel, rubs the stock.

ERNIE
It's a peach.

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED: 15

ROBERTO and FRANCESCO look to ENRICO for a translation.

ENRICO
E una pesca.

His trench-mates look at him like he's not translating correctly.

ROBERTO
Una pesca?

ENRICO
(excitedly in Italian)
... That's what he said. It's a peach! Think I don't know the word for peach?

ROBERTO now addresses ERNIE directly, speaking very slowly as if to a small child.

ROBERTO
(in Italian)
This..is..not..a..peach.
It..is.. a... rifle. Get it?
Rifle.

ERNIE
(copying Roberto's Italian)
A rifle.

ERNIE moves to the side of the trench, peers over the top.

ERNIE
The Austrians, they're over there, right?

ENRICO
Si... Si...

ERNIE looks out across the river toward the enemy encampment on the opposite shore.

He aims the rifle, sighting carefully.

ERNIE
(quietly to himself)
Bam, bam, bam...

ERNIE slides back down the trench, hands the rifle to ROBERTO.

ERNIE
Grazie...

Then pointing to the insignia on ROBERTO'S shoulder.

ERNIE
You... Arditi. Right?

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED: 15

ROBERTO
(proudly)
Si, Arditi.

ENRICO
We are the best. Arditi is the best.

ERNIE produces a pencil and small notebook from his breast pocket. He starts to note the regiment. Just at that moment a star-shell lights the sky above them... floods the trench with eerie illumination. It's followed by mortar firing.

FRANCESCO pulls a flask of grappa from his tunic, toasts ERNIE.

FRANCESCO
Salute.

He passes the flask to ERNIE who takes two healthy slugs...downs them like water.

The three ITALIAN SOLDIERS exchange glances, nod in impressed approval. ENRICO and ROBERTO each take a pull from the flask in turn.

There's a flurry of activity in the background as some of the Arditi are ordered to another position further along the trench. ROBERTO and FRANCESCO prepare for their imminent commando attack across the river, checking daggers and hand grenades. ENRICO takes a rosary from his breast pocket.

ERNIE
(to Enrico)
What do you fellows think about while you're waiting?

ENRICO
(showing him)
I think of rosaries. How many I say... if God... let me live.

ERNIE scribbles the good quote in his notebook while ENRICO puts the same question to ROBERTO in Italian.

ROBERTO
(in Italian)
I think only about girls.

ENRICO
Roberto, he think of women... all the time... That is because he has not had one yet.

ERNIE
(to Roberto)
No kidding?... No damas?... No uno?

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED: 15

ROBERTO sighs, shakes his head.

ENRICO
And you, bambino Americano?

ERNIE
Me? Plenty. Mucho damas.. many women.

ENRICO
(In Italian)
The American is lying.

ALL THREE SOLDIERS laugh loudly.

Another mortar fires. This one close enough to spew chunks of dirt from above into the trench.

ERNIE and the ITALIANS hunker down close to the wall of earth.

Excitement dances in ERNIE'S eyes. He appears more thrilled than frightened by the danger. A strange look of ecstasy washes over his face as another mortar hits even closer.

ENRICO
Why you not fight in France?

ERNIE
I tried my damnest, but they wouldn't take me.

ENRICO
Too young?

ERNIE
Not that. I lied about my age. My left eye. Doesn't work too well. Boxing.

ENRICO
(to his trench-mates, in Italian)
The American army wouldn't take him because his left eye doesn't work.

ROBERTO
(in Italian)
Better his left eye than his left ball.

ENRICO
Roberto say better your left eye than your left ball.

They all have a hearty laugh, especially ERNIE.

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED: 15

The moment of levity is ended by - swush-swush-swush-SWUSH-SWUSH-SWUSH.

16 EXT. FRONT LINE TRENCH, MORTAR EXPLOSION - NIGHT 16

A brilliant FLASH of white light turns to red. A hurricane BLAST of furnace heat. An eardrum-ripping ROAR. The ground ERUPTS.

ERNIE'S breath is forced from his chest. He gasps for air. The breath will not come.

Silence.

ERNIE tries to move. Can't. Then, slowly, he forces himself up onto his hands and knees. The right leg of his trousers is ripped and both legs ooze blood. He stares at them blankly.

He hears groaning, muttering. It ricochets around him.

From ERNIE'S POV we see ENRICO. His helmet lies several feet from his head... filled with a mass of his own brain tissue. His rosary beads lie, blood spattered, next to him.

ERNIE sucks in a breath... starts to shake. Calms himself.

He crawls past FRANCESCO. Both his legs are missing at the thighs. Dead, he still stares into the black sky in shock.

Then ERNIE sees ROBERTO propped against a ladder, holding his mid-section.

ERNIE
Roberto!

ERNIE struggles to him, choking in the convulsed and steamy dust. He rises to his knees, pulls the soldier's arm across his back.

He looks into ROBERTO'S glazed eyes and bloody face. A hint of curiosity, even wonder materialise on ERNIE'S face.

He struggles to his feet. He bends to hoist ROBERTO across his back. His legs give way as consciousness fades.

He sinks to his knees. ROBERTO groans, but ERNIE does not let go of his hand.

He stands up again. He bends again, hoists the man on his back.

Painstakingly, using anything he can grab hold of, he pulls himself and his charge up the side of the trench.

Eyes, mouth, nose full of dirt, he reaches the crest, drags himself over.

17 EXT. FRONT LINE - NIGHT 17

Gasping for breath, ERNIE looks at ROBERTO lying next to him.

ROBERTO'S eyes roll, then focus on ERNIE. Contact.

Summoning fortitude from the very core of himself, ERNIE stands.

Another star-shell bursts its eerie light on the gruesome scene. ERNIE and the soldier, like a bloody, gray-dust-coated, hunch-backed apparition, totter away from the smoking crater left by the trench mortar.

Suddenly, machine gun fire erupts across the river. POK,POK, POK,POK,POK,POK.

A machine gun slug tears into ERNIE'S right knee, shooting out little spurts of flying blood as it goes.

ERNIE
Goddamn!

He falls as the light from the star-shell burns out.

He rises again in the dim light, still carrying ROBERTO. Both are covered in caked blood and dust.

He reaches the next line. ITALIAN ARDITI SOLDIERS take ROBERTO from his back and place ERNIE on a stretcher. His legs are covered with his own blood, his body with Roberto's. He loses consciousness.

In the smoky light we can see TWO ITALIAN STRETCHER BEARERS coming toward them, running low.

18 INT. FRONT LINE DRESSING STATION - NIGHT 18

ERNIE struggles to remain conscious.

He hears a ripping SOUND... looks down to see AN ITALIAN MEDICAL ORDERLY, a candle hooked to his uniform, tearing his (Ernie's) right pant leg up to his groin.

CLOSE ON Ernie's legs showing nothing but mud and blood.

A pair of wire cutters comes into frame as THE ORDERLY deftly cuts the leather of Ernie's right boot as if it were paper. The boot is pulled off the foot... a river of blood flows onto the floor.

A TRIAGE MEDIC comes into frame, quickly examines ERNIE and slaps a big label on his chest... then disappears.

ERNIE raises his head, looks at the label, sees the word, "SI."

(CONTINUED)

18 CONTINUED: 18

ERNIE
Is that yes I'm going to live, or yes I'm going to die?

No one understands him or pays attention as they busily pack gauze onto his legs.

He looks around... sees ROBERTO on the stretcher next to him, looking at him through fluttering eyelids.

ROBERTO
(barely audible)
Si... e... buono.

ERNIE sees the label pinned on ROBERTO. It reads, "NO."

ERNIE looks at the MEDIC.

ERNIE
I'm fine, I'm fine! Help him!

No one understands him or pays attention to him.

ROBERTO
(barely audible)
Grazie, bambino Americano.

ERNIE grabs the MEDIC by his arm and pulls him close.

ERNIE
... Listen, he's never even had a woman...

THE MEDIC moves back to working on Ernie's legs.

MEDIC
(heavy Italian accent)
Okay... okay.

In the background we see ANOTHER MEDIC preparing a syringe. He grabs hold of ERNIE's arm, plunges the needle in.

ERNIE
(shouting louder)
... You sons-a-bitches! Don't let him die! Don't let...

ERNIE'S stopped mid-sentence by the morphine taking hold.

19 INT. PATIENTS' WARD, A.R.C. HOSPITAL - DAWN 19

In the background we see the TWELVE AMERICAN NURSES and THREE ITALIAN NURSING AIDES waiting in anticipation as KATHERINE DE LONG hangs up the field telephone in the nurses' cubicle.

(CONTINUED)

19 CONTINUED: 19

DE LONG
Our first casualties arrive within the hour.

THE AMERICAN NURSES scatter while THE ITALIAN AIDES, not understanding English, stand bewildered.

AGNES takes TERESA by the hand... pulls her along behind her.

AGNES
You're with me.

20 INT. KITCHEN, A.R.C. HOSPITAL - DAY 20

MAC stands over the stove and stares into a huge pot of steaming hot water.

AGNES is measuring hypochlorus acid into a big demi-john. TERESA enters with another demi-john that is half her size. She looks around for a place to put it down.

AGNES
(in Italian)
Put it here, on the nuptial couch. ("Táloma").

TERESA
(in Italian)
Where? On the nuptial couch? You mean the table ("Távola")
(in English)
The table.

AGNES
(in Italian)
Oh yes, the table.
(in English)
Keep correcting me, Teresa. I want to learn.

MAC begins to ladle the steaming water into the demi-johns. AGNES quickly mixes a solution.

From outside comes the intrusive SOUND of military wheels rumbling on cobblestones.

21 EXT. A.R.C. HOSPITAL - DAY 21

The tail end of a procession of field guns disappears through the arch that leads to the Piave front.

Three stretchers are rushed from a Red Cross ambulance into the hospital's front entrance by SIX PORTERS.

(CONTINUED)

21 CONTINUED: 21

ERNIE lies on one of them. SKIP TALBOT follows close behind.

22 INT. PATIENTS' WARD, A.R.C. HOSPITAL - DAY 22

The doors open and three men, ERNIE, JOSEPH LARKIN and LOUIS BURTON, are carried into the ward. SKIP TALBOT reports to KATHERINE DE LONG.

SKIP
Three drivers, Ma'am... Larkin's ambulance went off the road near Bassano. Burton tried to unscrew a fuse cap as a souvenir.
(lowers his voice)
Doc at the field hospital said he'd probably be blind.

BURTON is carried past, his face covered with a gauze dressing.

SKIP
But Hemingway's the one the medics were really worried about. It's a bad leg wound.

DE LONG
In that case, we'll put him at the far end where it's quieter.
(to the porters in Italian)
The first one in bed nine, the second in bed ten. And this one in seventeen.

TWO PORTERS transfer ERNIE from the stretcher to one of the beds.

He is struggling desperately to remain conscious -- as if that, and that alone, would keep him alive.

As this is going on, AGNES approaches and in a business-like way begins soaking off the dressing.

Reacting to the pain, ERNIE gives an involuntary groan.

AGNES
(looks at his face)
Hi, kid.

ERNIE
Am I going to die?

AGNES
(busy examining the seriousness of the wound)
No. You're going to be fine.

(CONTINUED)

22 CONTINUED: 22

ERNIE
Are you lying?

She shakes her head.

ERNIE
Do you promise?

AGNES
(busy)
I promise.

ERNIE
(breathing a huge sigh of relief)
I love you. Will you marry me?

And he fades into unconsciousness.

ON AGNES - She continues to work on the wound, then looks up at the unconscious boy and smiles.

23 INT. PATIENTS' WARD, A.R.C. HOSPITAL - NIGHT 23

AGNES has come to change ERNIE'S dressing. He now wears a hospital night shirt.

ERNIE watches her, a frightened look on his face.

AGNES examines the wound. She sees something that worries her.

ERNIE
What's wrong?

AGNES
(thoughtfully)
Nothing.
(then calling out)
Mac? Can you come here for a moment?

ERNIE
(scared)
Something's the matter. What is it?

AGNES
I told you before, kid.
Nothing's wrong.

At that moment MAC appears at AGNES' side and examines the wound.

ERNIE
Well?

(CONTINUED)

23 CONTINUED: 23

The two nurses whisper together.

ERNIE
(panic)
Dammit, what's going on?!

AGNES and MAC ignore him and walk several steps away so they cannot be overheard.

AGNES
Gangrene?

MAC
Maybe.

AGNES
Can we get a doctor?

MAC
Not until tomorrow.

AGNES
By then it may be too late.

MAC
I can't help it. De Long says the only doctor the Italians can spare won't be here until tomorrow afternoon.

AGNES
You know as well as I do, the only thing to do is to irrigate the wound with hypochlorous.

MAC
(emphatic)
No. You can't do something like that without a doctor's order.

AGNES
This can't wait for a doctor's order.

MAC
Aggie, that could get you shipped back to the States.

AGNES
Fine. At least I could find a decent bathroom there.

And she walks away.

24 INT. PATIENT'S WARD A.R.C. HOSPITAL - DAY 24

TERESA opens shutters and the morning sun streams in through the french doors leading to the balcony. ANNA and ROSIE are bringing in bedpans.

AGNES is already monitoring the equipment necessary for irrigating Ernie's wound.

ERNIE
Isn't it working? What's wrong?

She continues her examination, not saying anything.

ERNIE
I can tell something's the matter!

AGNES
(busy)
I told you last night, nothing's wrong.

ERNIE
(angry)
Christ! I hope you're a better nurse than you are a liar.

She glances up at him, smiles in spite of herself; then quickly goes back to work again.

Further along the ward, blind BURTON is trying to locate LARKIN.

BURTON
Hey, Larkin. You there?

LARKIN
Over here.

BURTON
I think my ears are gone too. Guess what this nurse just asked me?

LARKIN
What kind of cocktail you wanted before dinner.

BURTON
How'd you know?

LARKIN
'Cause I just ordered a Rob Roy.

ROSIE
With two cherries yet.

25 INT. OPERATING THEATRE, A.R.C. HOSPITAL - DAY 25

AGNES is standing at an open glass-fronted cabinet which holds surgical instruments, inspecting them one by one.

She replaces a retractor and shuts the cabinet doors as DR DOMENICO CARACCIOLO enters, carrying Ernie's X-rays.

DOMENICO, who wears a white coat, is an attractive bearded man with classic Italian features in his early 40's. Flecks of grey have just begun to streak his dark hair at the temples.

AGNES
Good afternoon, doctor. I've been assigned as your surgical assistant.

DOMENICO
Major Caracciolo.

AGNES
(equally formal)
Agnes von Kurowsky.

DOMENICO switches on a light box and begins to study an X-ray of Ernie's knee. Because of his less than fluent command of English and his doctor-centric manner, he speaks in starts and stops.

DOMENICO
Shrapnel everywhere... some quite deep. Bullet behind the patella...
(to Agnes, still looking at the X-ray)
Did you notice any pieces of...
(he cannot think of the word in English, touches the lapel of his coat)

AGNES
Uniform.

DOMENICO
Yes. Uniform. Did you see any uniform in the wound?

AGNES
I'm afraid so.

DOMENICO
That means there is a real danger of gangrene. I will have to amputate.

Agnes is careful to look away to hide her disappointment. Domenico notices and studies her carefully.

(CONTINUED)

25 CONTINUED: 25

DOMENICO
(flirting with her)
You do not approve?

AGNES
I didn't say that, doctor.

DOMENICO
(insistent)
Yes. But you do not approve, I think?

AGNES
I never meant to imply...

DOMENICO
(cutting her off)
Young woman. Do you, or do you not think I should amputate?

There is a long beat of silence as he watches her very carefully. Finally:

AGNES
I think he is very young to lose his leg.

DOMENICO
(triumphant)
There! You see, I was right.
(enjoying himself)
And how do you propose that we shall not have to amputate this young boy's leg?

AGNES
(a deep breath)
Well, we have had some success in the treatment of gangrene at Johns Hopkins Hospital by aggressively irrigating wounds with...

DOMENICO
(impatient)
I know all about this notion of irrigating wounds.
(then:)
Who is this John Hopkins of the hospital? Is he a saint?

AGNES
It's Johns Hopkins and it isn't named after a saint.

(CONTINUED)

25 CONTINUED: 25

DOMENICO
(delighted)
Then it cannot be much of a hospital, can it?

Agnes is fully aware that she is being flirted with and she ducks her head.

DOMENICO
(still watching her carefully)
It is true what they say about American women.
(he waits as long as it takes for her to look up)
That they are sentimental fools
(smiling at her)
I will operate in the morning. Please have the patient ready at eight thirty. And nurse?

AGNES
Yes, doctor?

DOMENICO
Continue with your treatment.

Believing him to have left the operating theatre, AGNES continues to study Ernie's X-ray. DOMENICO stops in the doorway to look at her once more. He likes what he sees.

26 INT. PATIENTS' WARD, A.R.C. HOSPITAL - EVENING 26

AGNES, holding a martini, watches ERNIE wince in pain, then, aware of her presence, shift into cavalier mode.

ERNIE
Beautiful girl with martini...
Must've died and gone to heaven.

She hands the drink to him. He doesn't sniff or sip. It's down the hatch... including the glob of green at the bottom of the glass. He reacts with a yucking sound.

AGNES
Castor oil. Sorry about that.

He gives the empty glass back to her with a grimace... impetuously takes hold of her other hand.

AGNES watches as he turns her class ring, looks at the date.

(CONTINUED)

26 CONTINUED: 26

ERNIE
What'd 'ya know, we graduated the same year.

AGNES
Uh huh, me from nursing school, you from kindergarten.

She turns back the bedclothes to reveal his leg.

ERNIE
My mother said never to ask a lady about her age or her teeth.

AGNES
(without hesitation)
26 and they're all mine.

They both laugh. It's a warm, comfortable moment between them.

AGNES prepares to irrigate ERNIE'S wound.

ERNIE
What's going on?

AGNES
(patiently)
I'm still irrigating your wound.

He watches for a moment, then:

ERNIE
What are you doing now?

AGNES
(exasperated)
I'm breathing. You should try it. Relax.

There is a longer beat of silence from ERNIE this time, but he continues watching every move she makes. Then:

ERNIE
(quietly voicing his worst fear)
Gangrene?

AGNES is careful not to look at him.

AGNES
How do you know about gangrene?

ERNIE
My old man's a doctor.

AGNES continues talking to ERNIE to calm him down.

(CONTINUED)

26 CONTINUED: 26

AGNES
And as soon as this war's over, you're going to medical school.

ERNIE
Not a chance. I'm a reporter.

AGNES
A reporter? How old are you?

ERNIE
(lying)
Twenty two.

AGNES
(glances up at him)
Kid, I hope you're a better reporter than you are a liar.

He is forced to grin at her. She smiles back; then goes back to work.

ERNIE
(a beat, then)
What're you doing now?

AGNES
You've lost some circulation in your leg.

ERNIE
That's bad, isn't it?

AGNES
Well maybe... but...

ERNIE
I'm asking you... please!

AGNES
Well it might be. I'm not really permitted to say. You have to ask the surgeon.

ERNIE
(frightened)
Surgeon?

Her eyes tell him she understands.

ERNIE
If I end up being less than all of me, I'd rather be dead.

(CONTINUED)

26 CONTINUED: 26

AGNES
Listen, Kid. I'll do everything I can to help you keep your leg... but you have to work with me...

Trusting her, he nods.

AGNES
We're going to wash out this wound with hypochlorus acid every hour on the hour... we'll have you up and dancing in no time.

ERNIE
I'm not much of a dancer. Big feet. No rhythm.

AGNES
Well, I am. I love to dance. I'll teach you... get you ready for the girls back home.

Their eyes meet again. Another emotional charge ricochets between them.

27 INT. OPERATING THEATRE, A.R.C. HOSPITAL - DAY 27

An agitated ERNIE is being lifted from a gurney by TWO ITALIAN PORTERS and placed onto the operating table. The PORTERS leave.

ROSIE, who monitors the anaesthetic, comes into ERNIE'S view.

ERNIE
Don't put me under yet! Where's Agnes?

ROSIE
She'll be here.

ERNIE spots a brutal-looking bone saw on a metal instrument tray. The sight of it takes the wind out of him. AGNES enters the theatre, putting on her surgical mask.

He motions AGNES to come close to his face. She turns her ear to his mouth.

ERNIE
(whispering)
Jesus, I'm scared.

Her eyes tell him that she understands. She gently squeezes his shoulder.

(CONTINUED)

27 CONTINUED: 27

DOMENICO appears behind AGNES, motivating ERNIE to reassert his bravado.

DOMENICO
Good morning, young man.

ERNIE
Morning, Doc.
(takes a deep breath)
You gotta promise me one thing...
(pause)
Save the bullet for me, will you?

ROSIE clamps a huge rubber mask over ERNIE'S face... begins feeding cyclopropane into the attached tube.

28 INT. OPERATING THEATRE, A.R.C. HOSPITAL - DAY 28

LATER

The temperature in the room is hot, charged from the tension as well as the heat.

The SOUND of pieces of shrapnel being dropped from surgical tweezers onto a steel tray is heard.

DOMENICO moves the light closer... looks carefully into the injury site where the bullet is lodged. Then he steps back a pace, rethinking the alternatives.

DOMENICO
There may have been some improvement, but it would be safest to amputate now.
(to Agnes)
I'm sorry.

AGNES
I understand, doctor.

They begin to prepare for the amputation.

DOMENICO
(continuing; defensive)
As I'm sure you know, second operations are a great luxury in time of war.

AGNES
Yes, of course.

He looks at her. Unflinchingly she returns his gaze.

There is a long, tension filled beat. Finally:

(CONTINUED)

28 CONTINUED: 28

DOMENICO
On the other hand, what is life without its little luxuries?

He holds out a gloved hand.

DOMENICO
Forceps.

29 INT. OPERATING THEATRE, A.R.C. HOSPITAL - DAY 29

LATER

Surgery finished, THE ITALIAN NURSES' AIDES are getting the arena back in order. They swab surfaces, place the used linen in a sack.

AGNES and ROSIE are sterilising surgical instruments.

ROSIE
Holy cow, he's good looking.

AGNES
Yes, but young.

ROSIE
I meant Doc ---

For once even ROSIE is embarrassed as DOMENICO appears in the doorway just as she is about to utter his name. He has changed from his surgeon's gown into his Italian officer's uniform.

DOMENICO
Nurse Von Kurowsky?

ROSIE shoots AGNES a look that says she deserves what's coming. But, far from being cowed, Agnes again looks him straight in the eye.

DOMENICO
I should like to hear more about the American treatment for gangrene. Perhaps you would care to come for a drive one day when you are off duty?

Not waiting for an answer, he turns and leaves.

ROSIE
(good-naturedly to Agnes)
I think I hate you.

30 INT. PATIENTS' WARD, A.R.C. HOSPITAL - NIGHT 30

ERNIE sleeps quietly, his entire right leg and foot swathed in post-surgical wrapping.

We pull back to find AGNES standing against the closed curtain next to his bed. She's not attending to any task. She's just standing there... looking at him.

His brow is furrowed... his face muscles tight. He stirs, moans, reaches down to feel for his leg.

She goes to his bedside.

AGNES
Everything's fine. You're going to keep your leg. Sleep.

The fear releases from his face.

She waits a beat before she turns his hand upright. Very slowly, one by one, she opens his fingers. Now she lays the bullet into his hand, closes his fingers over it.

Her hand stays over his as his eyes open.

ERNIE
(slurry from anaesthetic)
I don't want to dance with the girls back home.

AGNES tries to make light of it, but can't. She doesn't remove her hand from his.

It's an emotional, intimate moment between this unlikely couple.

31 EXT. A.R.C. HOSPITAL - DAY 31

AGNES and MAC are taking a breather. They lean on a bridge over a stream outside the hospital, enjoying the sunshine. Beyond them a group of ITALIAN SOLDIERS in the plumed hats of the Bersagliere Regiment cycle towards the front.

MAC
Bed ten's an interesting case. I thought yesterday there might still be some peripheral vision in the left eye. It's still early, of course...

AGNES
Are they always just cases to you, Mac?

(CONTINUED)

31 CONTINUED: 31

MAC
It's the only way to cope. You should know that as well as I do.

AGNES
I know it with one part of my brain... but sometimes...

MAC
... sometimes they get to you. Especially when they're good looking boys with the charm of the devil...

AGNES draws breath to utter a denial but MAC stops her with a gesture.

MAC
... and you've broken all the rules to make sure they walk out of here on two legs. But just remember --

AGNES AND MAC
(in unison)
-- we're here to do a job.

Beyond AGNES and MAC, a Red Cross ambulance is pulling up outside the hospital. Before the DRIVER can turn off the engine, set the brake, ITALIAN PORTERS are unloading the first stretcher.

32 INT. PATIENTS' WARD, A.R.C. HOSPITAL - DAY 32

We hear the new arrivals being brought up to the 2nd floor.

The only movement on the ward is the sight of a baseball coming into view above the curtain around ERNIE'S bed...

then falling back down behind the curtain... then up into the air again.

FOUR NURSES, ANNA, VETA, RUTH and CHARLOTTE, come rushing onto the ward in preparation for the new arrivals. Ready to assist them are TERESA and the other TWO ITALIAN NURSES AIDES, ANNA MARIA and SONIA.

GEORGE FREDERICKS (20's) an American ambulance driver is reporting to KATHERINE DE LONG.

GEORGE
We're bringing in three patients, Miss De Long.

(CONTINUED)

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32 CONTINUED: 32

Three stretchers are carried in by THE PORTERS. KATHERINE DE LONG reads the names of the new arrivals from the ambulance chart... assigns them to beds with a snap of her finger.

DE LONG
Kenyon, Houston B, bed thirteen..... Villard, Henry S in number fifteen and --

The NURSES draw curtains around the beds of the new patients.

ERNIE (O.S.)
(drowning out the last name)
Harry Villard? Hey, you Harvard Yard bastard, how the hell are you?

DE LONG
Mister Hemingway! I will not tolerate language like that in my ward.

KATHERINE DE LONG yanks open Ernie's curtain. HARRY has been installed in the adjacent bed and his curtains drawn so that neither we nor ERNIE see him. ERNIE now has a plaster cast on his right leg. He wears a baseball glove. The makings of a sling-shot - Y-shaped piece of wood, elastic - are visible on Ernie's bedside table. So too are the beginnings of various collections - photographs, newspaper clippings, war souvenirs - which will grow in the weeks to come.

HARRY (O.S.)
If that's Ernest Hemingway, Ma'am, bad language is the least of your problems. He's got chronic diarrhoea of the mouth.

DE LONG
(on her way across the ward)
Mister Villard!

ERNIE
What're you in for, Harry?...

No response from the other side of the curtain.

ERNIE
... Whatever it is, these gals'll have you back in the pink in no time...

ERNIE leans perilously across and yanks back the intervening curtain to reveal HARRY, whose face, ears, neck, and hands are amazingly yellow -- a clear case of severe jaundice.

(CONTINUED)

32 CONTINUED: 32

ERNIE
Ah... well... Maybe not...

He laughs uproariously.

ERNIE
At least yellow's more becoming
than that pukey shade of green
you turned on the boat.

HARRY doesn't think it's humorous. He looks weakly at ERNIE... Even the whites of his eyes are yellow.

DE LONG emerges from the curtain around the bed opposite, leaving it partially open.

DE LONG
(to Ernie)
Jaundice is no laughing matter.

She makes for the door, her shoes squeaking loudly all the way.

DE LONG
(over shoulder)
...And if you bother Mr Villard,
I'll have you moved.

ERNIE
We call her Gumshoe.

HARRY
Is a nurse called Agnes still
here?

ERNIE
(reacting)
Agnes?... I'll let you down fast,
old sport. She's spoken for.

HARRY
I saw her first! I brought her
here.

ERNIE
For which we are truly thankful.
Anyway, she needs a real man.

HARRY
Which is precisely why she'd
never go for a conceited windbag
like you.

Suddenly there is a blood-curdling scream from the bed opposite. The ward grows deathly still except for a flurry of activity around the injured man. DE LONG hurries back to the bed.

(CONTINUED)

32 CONTINUED: 32

ERNIE and HARRY look across at the PATIENT. Gauze wraps every inch of his body except his face, which looks like it's been blow-torched.

He groans in agonizing pain every time he's touched by VETA and CHARLOTTE who are trying to lower his upper body by removing pillows.

ERNIE
Jesus, what happened to him?

HARRY
Hit by a phosphorus shell.
Handing out candy bars at the
Fossalta canteen.

ERNIE reacts.

ERNIE
Jesus Christ! Jimmy!

ERNIE is hastily transferring himself to a wheelchair next to his bed.

He lifts his cast-bound leg up onto the support board, then wheels across the ward.

From his POV we see a blistered and charred face sans lashes or brows... eyelids swollen shut.

Only scattered tufts of carrot-red hair on his burned scalp identify him as MCBRIDE, the boy ERNIE met at the canteen.

ERNIE
Hey, McBride, you spill some of
that canteen coffee on yourself
again?

MCBRIDE focuses on the voice... then his swollen lids part enough for him to make out ERNIE.

MCBRIDE
(a croaking sound)
Ernie?

ERNIE
Yeah. It's okay. You're gonna
be okay. Understand? You're
gonna' be alright. I promise.

MCBRIDE tries to nod, can't. Then we notice the tears in his eyes.

33 INT. CORRIDOR, NURSES' QUARTERS A.R.C. HOPITAL - EVENING 33

SONIA, the Italian nurses' aide, emerges from a door carrying a pile of mail. ERNIE, coming towards us in his wheelchair, sees SONIA. She gives him three letters from home.

ERNIE continues towards us, stopping at the open door. AGNES is sitting at a tiny desk in her room.

AGNES, who has received a whole batch of identical letters, quickly looks at each of the envelopes and dumps all of them in the waste basket without bothering to open a single one.

34 INT. AGNES' ROOM - EVENING 34

AGNES hears a noise, glances up, smiles at ERNIE in the doorway.

AGNES
Hi, kid.

ERNIE
(not taking offence)
Ernie. My name is Ernie.

AGNES
(having a good time)
Anything you say, kid.

Actually, they are both having a good time. He wheels into the room without asking her permission, leans over and retrieves the unopened letters from the waste basket.

AGNES
I suppose it never occurred to you that those might be personal.

ERNIE rifles through the letters.

ERNIE
(reading the return addresses)
Dr. Charles Paxton, Bellvue Hospital... Dr. Charles Paxton, Bellvue Hospital...Dr. Charles Paxton, Bellvue Hospital...Dr. Charles Paxton, Bellvue Hospital.

He drops them back into the waste basket, then leans back and takes a long, thoughtful look at her.

ERNIE
Last night a bunch of us were talking about why we came here. And I said I came because I was looking for something.
(more)

(CONTINUED)

34 CONTINUED: 34

ERNIE (Cont'd)
I'm not sure what it is, but I know it's here. Somewhere about six miles from here in the trenches, that's where it is. It never occurred to me until just now that it might be possible to come here looking to get away from something.

CLOSE ON AGNES -- She gives him a long, considered look -- the kind of look you give to a contemporary, not to a kid.

AGNES
Touché.

She starts to read the reports that are on her desk. He sits there watching her for a moment, then:

ERNIE
It's no use him writing you, you know.

Agnes pretends to concentrate on her work.

AGNES
Ummmmm.

ERNIE
Because you're in love with me.

Whatever AGNES was expecting to hear, this wasn't it. She looks up at him.

AGNES
I am, am I?

ERNIE
(grinning)
Yeah...
(with absolute confidence)
You just don't know it yet.

AGNES
(she wads up a piece of paper and throws it at him)
Kid, will you get out of here.

He blows her a kiss and, with unexpected agility, wheels out of her room and down the corridor. We HOLD ON AGNES who goes back to work. Then she glances up at the empty door and smiles.

35 EXT. BALCONY, A.R.C. HOSPITAL - DAY 35

HARRY, his jaundice beginning to respond to treatment, is looking down to the street below... a very disappointed expression on his face.

ERNIE curious about what HARRY'S seeing, pulls himself up from his wheel chair... hangs onto the balcony, looks down.

36 EXT. STREET, POV FROM HOSPITAL BALCONY - DAY 36

From HARRY and ERNIE'S POV we see a convertible vehicle pulling away from the curb. In the front seat are DOMENICO and AGNES.

In the back seat is DOMENICO's MILITARY ADJUTANT.

The car stops while two army supply trucks move across its path to the energetic direction of an ITALIAN MILITARY POLICEMAN.

The faint SOUND of an explosion is heard beyond the mountains.

37 EXT. BALCONY, A.R.C. HOSPITAL - DAY 37

HARRY and ERNIE exchange looks before ERNIE drops back down into his wheelchair.

HARRY
(depressed)
Look at him. He's a doctor. He's good looking. He's Italian. It's all over for us.

ERNIE
(confident)
It'll never work. Take another look. He's ancient. He must be close to forty.

HARRY
(hopefully)
Maybe more.

ERNIE
No wonder he wanted to chop off my leg... might not have stopped there.

ERNIE sees a flock of doves headed their way. He quickly whips his finished slingshot out of his robe pocket... starts shooting pebbles at the birds, who scatter for their lives.

38 EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - DAY 38

Domenico's car travels over a winding road. No sounds of battle, only birdsong.

39 EXT. PONTE VECCHIO BASSANO - EVENING 39

A beautiful image as AGNES and DOMENICO slowly stroll over an ancient foot bridge that arches over the River Brenta. The ADJUTANT walks exactly 12 paces behind.

DOMENICO
Von Kurowsky?

AGNES
My father's very proud of that 'von'. He comes from Konigsberg in Germany.

DOMENICO
So you are -- how you say -- first generation?

AGNES
On my father's side. My mother's American.

DOMENICO
And now you are nursing young Americans in Italy where the Austrians and the Germans are our enemies...

AGNES
The Red Cross doesn't take sides. That's one of the reasons I joined.

DOMENICO
And the others?

AGNES
(she laughs)
Someone else asked me that only yesterday.
(a beat, then)
I hoped to be assigned to one of the surgical teams operating on the front.

40 INT. PATIENTS' WARD, A.R.C. HOSPITAL - NIGHT 40

ERNIE is charming EMILIA, a maternal cleaning woman, into getting him some bottles of brandy.

(CONTINUED)

40 CONTINUED: 40

With HARRY, LARKIN, KENYON, and BURTON egging him on, he shows her an empty bottle... then smiles sweetly.

She shakes her head as she gathers used crockery from his bedside table.

Hands folded in begging mode, smile wide open to show as much tooth as possible, ERNIE brazenly flirts with her.

She chuckles, waves him away.

He's back again with more of it, full tilt manipulative little boy charm.

She smiles at him, wags an index finger at him, then walks away.

ERNIE
Got her!

41 INT. KITCHEN, A.R.C. HOSPITAL - NIGHT 41

It's a 1918 version of an American-Italian slumber party. Candles reflect light from the gleaming copper pots that hang from ceiling hooks.

MAC, ROSIE, DOTTIE and two of the other American nurses, RUTH and CHARLOTTE, together with nurses' aides, TERESA, ANNA MARIA and SONIA, have all descended upon the kitchen in their night clothes.

It's a cacophony of female voices speaking English, Italian, and combinations of both all at once. TERESA is at the stove, presiding over a pot of pasta sauce with MAC looking on at her elbow. The door opens and AGNES enters.

RUTH
Well?

AGNES
(trying to be nonchalant)
Well, what?

CHARLOTTE
What happened?

AGNES
Nothing happened. We took a drive.

All the NURSES look at one another, nod their heads solemnly.

RUTH
They took a drive.

(CONTINUED)

41 CONTINUED: 41

CHARLOTTE
They took a drive.

At the stove MAC is trying to stop TERESA putting more garlic in the sauce.

MAC
No, no, no... too much!

TERESA stands her ground and tosses another couple of cloves into the pot.

MAC
Dottie, you know more Italian than I do. Tell her not so much garlic.

DOTTIE
Me from Texas is going to tell her how to cook Italian in her own country? Anyway, I don't know the word for garlic.

ROSIE
(pointedly returning to the main topic)
And did anything happen during this drive?

AGNES
Rosie, aren't you supposed to be on duty?

RUTH
She's trying to change the subject.

CHARLOTTE
Something happened.

ROSIE
Something definitely happened.

ROSIE is smoking a cigarette.

AGNES
Nothing happened. We went for a drive in the country. We stopped at a restaurant in a small town and had lunch, then we went for a walk on a bridge, then we came back here. And we were chaperoned by his adjutant the whole time. Satisfied?

(CONTINUED)

41 CONTINUED: 41

MAC
(protectively)
He just took her to lunch.

ROSIE
(shaking her head)
Not good.

RUTH
And what exactly did you have for lunch?

AGNES
I don't remember.

RUTH
What about wine?

AGNES
(has to think)
Yes. We had wine.

CHARLOTTE
Red or white?

AGNES
I don't remember.
(then quickly before they tease her some more)
Red! It was definitely red.

CHARLOTTE
I can see it all now. There is Agnes, sitting at a table with the handsome doctor.

MAC
And his adjutant.

ROSIE
(picking up the narrative)
The waiter approaches. He leans across, pours two glasses of wine.

RUTH
A violinist begins to play.

AGNES
I'm leaving this instant. And for your information, Dr Caracciolo was a perfect gentleman.

Eyes roll all around the kitchen.

(CONTINUED)

41 CONTINUED: 41

RUTH
Whoopee.

ROSIE
Gentlemanly is fine up to a point, then... yawn.

CHARLOTTE
If I could find a handsome doctor like that, I'd want to discuss honeymoon destinations.

The nurses serve themselves from pots on the stove.

ROSIE
Who wants marriage, anyway? I'd rather travel, have fun, break all the rules. Speaking of which, what do you think of Larkin?

They all react with mock horror.

AGNES
Rosie, you're not!

ROSIE grins like a Cheshire cat, blows a perfect smoke ring.

ROSIE
What if I am?...

MAC
It's girls like you who give nurses a bad reputation.

42 EXT. BALCONY, A.R.C. HOSPITAL - NIGHT 42

Three brandy bottles - two empty, one half full - now reside on the parapet.

ERNIE, KENYON, BURTON and LARKIN are very drunk... reclined on chairs. HARRY, stone cold sober, is sitting on the balcony, his legs over the side.

LARKIN
Come on, Harry, you know what they say about nurses.

HARRY
Why don't you shut up, you bunch of drunks?

(CONTINUED)

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42 CONTINUED: 42

LARKIN
They're always seeing us naked... washing our private parts for us. It's bound to affect them...

KENYON
Especially my private part

ERNIE
You're way out of line, Kenyon.

Blind BURTON holds his glass out for another refill.

BURTON
I don't know if it affects them, but when I first got here, one of 'em, of course I don't know which one, was down there sudsing me up and it was pretty damn embarrassing.

HARRY
All our nurses seem like nice girls to me.

ERNIE
Except, maybe, Rosie.

LARKIN
Thank God...

43 INT. PATIENTS' WARD, A.R.C. HOSPITAL - MORNING 43

KATHERINE DE LONG squeaks into the ward.

The foot of MCBRIDES' bed is serving as a card table. MCBRIDE, propped up on pillows, is weak, dehydrated, functioning only with the help of morphine.

Sitting next to the right side of his bed are HARRY and LARKIN.

On the left side are KENYON and ERNIE. CAVIE is shaving BURTON in the bed next to MCBRIDE. She wields the soapy brush and cut-throat razor with a proficiency born of long practice.

DE LONG
Well, gentlemen, have we all moved our bowels today?

With the exeption of MCBRIDE, they nod in perfect unison.

DE LONG
Mister Larkin?

(CONTINUED)

43 CONTINUED: 43

LARKIN
8:32, Ma'am.

She smiles in approval, notes the time... then looks at ERNIE.

ERNIE
8:33, Ma'am.

She notes the time, then looks at KENYON.

KENYON
8.34, Ma'am.

As she makes to write, she realizes she's been set up.

ERNIE
Since we're all so "regular," can we have our cocktails tonight without the usual glop at the bottom?

DE LONG
There will be no cocktails this evening, gentlemen... period.

Fake, exaggerated groans all round. She slams the chart shut, leaves.

KENYON
(jubilant)
It worked!

ERNIE
Are we playing cards, gentlemen, or what?

LARKIN
Raise you two bits.

ERNIE picks up McBride's cards and holds them so that MCBRIDE can squint at them.

MCBRIDE
(very weak)
Call.

ERNIE
McBride calls. That's big trouble.

He lays McBride's cards face down.

KENYON
Fold.

LARKIN
What're you doing, Villard?

(CONTINUED)

43 CONTINUED: 43

HARRY
Thinking.

While HARRY takes an infuriatingly long time thinking, MCBRIDE touches ERNIE'S arm with his bandaged hand.

ERNIE leans close to MCBRIDE to be able to hear him.

MCBRIDE
(barely able to speak)
'Member what I said back at the canteen... I always play the cards I'm dealt?

ERNIE nods.

MCBRIDE
I don't... think I can... play this hand.

ERNIE realizes he's not talking about the cards.

ERNIE
Sure you can.

ERNIE becomes lost in his own thoughts. So lost that, for once, he does not register the fact that AGNES has come onto the ward.

HARRY
Three fours.

LARKIN
Three nines... Ernie? ...
Ernie?.

ERNIE
(back in the game)
I'm out.

LARKIN
(reaching out for the pot)
Then that's three bucks to me.

ERNIE
Hold it.
(he checks MCBRIDES' cards)
McBride has a straight, Queen high.

From AGNES' POV, now standing behind ERNIE, we see McBride's hand... a pair of sevens. She's obviously moved by ERNIE'S concern for MCBRIDE.

(CONTINUED)

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43 CONTINUED: 43

LARKIN
I don't trust you, Hem. Let's see them.

AGNES
You trust me, don't you, Joseph?

She takes the cards and looks at them.

AGNES
A straight, Queen of Hearts high.

Without letting the others see the hand, she slips the cards into the deck.

LARKIN
Double damn!

ERNIE picks up the winnings... puts them on McBride's bedside table while AGNES injects a syringe-full of morphine into MCBRIDES' arm.

44 INT. ABOVE THE CLOISTER, A.R.C. HOSPITAL - DAY 44

AGNES is standing at an upper window looking down into the cloister.

She sees ERNIE, with advice from MAC, learning how to use crutches.

AGNES
(calling down)
Time for lunch, Mac. I'll take over.

ERNIE looks up at her, grins and struggles to wave, hold onto the crutch and not fall. MAC quickly reaches out to steady him.

45 INT. 2ND FLOOR LANDING A.R.C. HOSPITAL - DAY 45

AGNES starts down the stairs. There is no outward sign that she is attracted to this boy, except for the fact that, halfway down, she pauses to make certain her hair is in place and.

46 EXT. CLOISTER, A.R.C. HOSPITAL - DAY 46

ERNIE, the sweat of exhaustion pouring from him, swings clumsily towards the cloister entrance.

He is still unused to the weight of the plaster cast.

(CONTINUED)

46 CONTINUED: 46

MAC
Take it easy, kid. This isn't a race.

ERNIE
(miffed)
Why does everybody keep calling me kid?

MAC
(with a look)
Why, indeed?
(to Agnes as they pass)
Thanks. I'll be back in half an hour.

After MAC leaves, AGNES looks him up and down.

AGNES
Well, look at you.

ERNIE
(pleased)
Pretty good. For the first day.

She takes one of his crutches, putting his free arm on her shoulder.

They begin to walk together in silence for several steps. Then:

ERNIE
Who's the guy in New York, the one that writes you all those letters?

AGNES
He's...
(a beat)
... none of your business.

They walk several more steps, then:

ERNIE
What about the doctor? You know, you ought to be careful of him. He's old enough to be your father.

AGNES
The doctor is also none of your business.

Another few steps.

ERNIE
All right. But I meant what I said the other day.

(CONTINUED)

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46 CONTINUED: 46

AGNES
Kid, you say a lot of things. I have a hard time keeping track of them all.

ERNIE
About you being in love with me.

AGNES
Only not knowing it.

ERNIE
Right.

AGNES
And what about you?
(although she seems to be teasing him there is a seriousness underneath all the banter)
I'd hate to be the only one in love.

He stops, turns to her, looking directly into her eyes. His gaze is forthright and for a moment we see the man.

ERNIE
Oh, I love you. I love you all right. Nobody will ever love anybody more than I love you.

The moment has become, unexpectedly serious. For a moment we think they might kiss, then AGNES jumps, brings her hand to the side of her neck.

AGNES
Something bit me.

From his POV we see a small red welt puffing on her neck.

ERNIE
Let me see.

He looks closely at the bite.

ERNIE
The stinger's just barely there.

AGNES
Can you get it?

After another beat he shows her a small, black stinger on the tip of his finger.

ERNIE
There.

(CONTINUED)

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46 CONTINUED: 46

Then he notices a tiny drop of blood has seeped out of the bite.

ERNIE
You're bleeding.

He licks the drop of blood off her neck with the tip of his tongue.

ERNIE
Now you're a part of me forever.

47 EXT. BALCONY, A.R.C. HOSPITAL - DAY 47

An ITALIAN OFFICER, in full dress uniform and accompanied by an ADJUTANT, has come to present ERNIE with the Silver Medal for Military Valor and the War Cross of Merit.

Observing this simple outdoor ceremony, are AGNES, KATHERINE DE LONG, MAC, ROSIE, DOTTIE, CAVIE, CHARLOTTE, RUTH, HARRY, LARKIN, KENYON, BURTON, TERESA and ANNA MARIA. Only MCBRIDE remains in the ward.

TOM BURNSIDE - the Red Cross Public Relations Official who lectured ERNIE in the Canteen - is busily organising a photo opportunity. For him, it's the perfect propaganda exercise and he's milking it for all he's worth. An Italian OFFICIAL PHTOGRAPHER is preparing to record the proceedings.

ERNIE, the focus of all attention and loving every moment of it, leans nonchalantly on his crutches. He is wearing uniform for the first time since he was wounded and the plaster cast has been removed from his right leg.

BURNSIDE
Attaboy, Ernie. Don't forget to say 'cheese'.

BURNSIDE dashes into picture to adjust an American flag to better advantage.

He then retreats to guage the effect from the photographer's point of view.

The ITALIAN OFFICER now moves into position facing ERNIE, about to embark on the citation. But he's put himself between ERNIE and the camera. BURNSIDE dashes into frame again.

BURNSIDE
Scusi, scusi...

He takes the ITALIAN OFFICER by the shoulders, moves him to one side and turns him so that ERNIE will be well to the fore in the official photograph. The ITALIAN OFFICER is not amused.

(CONTINUED)

47 CONTINUED: 47

ITALIAN OFFICER
(in accented English)
I can start?

BURNSIDE
Si, si. Go right ahead, Sir.

ITALIAN OFFICER
(translating from the citation)
I give this Silver Medal for... your courage action on the Piave River... on the eight day of July 1918... when you are much wounded. You Ernest 'Emingway carry private Roberto Zardini... also much wounded... behind the lines...

No one notices TERESA react upon hearing the name Roberto Zardini.

ITALIAN OFFICER
... And you do not accept medical attention... until Private Zardini... is attend to first...

The ITALIAN OFFICER salutes ERNIE and pins the medal to his chest.

BURNSIDE
(to the Italian officer)
Sir. Would you mind putting your hand on the medal like so...
(demonstrating)

ERNIE grins his wholesome Oak Park grin, as the PHOTOGRAPHER takes a picture.

Then, ERNIE, with his eye on AGNES leans across and whispers something to BURNSIDE, who nods in agreement.

BURNSIDE
Could we have a photograph with one of the nurses?

ERNIE whispers something else to BURNSIDE.

AGNES begins shaking her head, "No".

ERNIE, next to BURNSIDE, grins at her discomfort.

BURNSIDE
(indicating Agnes)
You. Miss, could you step over here?

(CONTINUED)

47 CONTINUED: 47

AGNES demurs, but MAC gives her a gentle shove. As AGNES takes a step or two forward, BURNSIDE grabs her by the arm.

BURNSIDE
Just stand next to the Lieutenant.

He places her next to ERNIE and a second photograph is taken.

BURNSIDE removes the American flag from the balcony parapet, folds it, presents it to ERNIE.

Through the open french windows we see the immobile MCBRIDE, covered in bandages.

48 INT. PATIENT'S WARD A.R.C. HOSPITAL - EVENING 48

ERNIE is lying on his bed. There is a look of absolute fury on his face, and he keeps glancing to his right.

It is obvious that he is doing his best not to pay attention to what is going on, but he cannot resist.

In the next bed we see that AGNES is giving HARRY a bed bath. A sheet has been pulled up over him so that we (and ERNIE) cannot see what is going on, but ERNIE'S imagination is working overtime.

Both AGNES and HARRY are well aware of ERNIE'S jealousy and are playing everything to the hilt.

AGNES
(soothingly)
Is this all right, Harry?

HARRY
(meaning it)
Oh, yes.

AGNES
You know, Harry. I didn't realise you were so... muscular.

We see ERNIE -- grinding his teeth. He is also being bathed, but by KATHERINE DE LONG. And it is not the same sort of experience. With a look at the young nursing aide, TERESA, observing and learning, she pummels his behind in a thoroughly businesslike way.

DE LONG
Mister Hemingway, will you stop squirming around. How's this young woman going to learn anything if you won't keep still?

(CONTINUED)

48 CONTINUED: 48

He glares at her, but says nothing, wanting to get the whole experience over with.

49 INT. PATIENT'S WARD A.R.C. HOSPITAL - NIGHT 49

It is late, most of the patients are asleep. We see MAC coming on duty to relieve AGNES. She glances in the office, but there is no sign of her friend. Then from behind bed curtains at the far end of the ward she hears something. She goes to investigate and, through a gap in the curtains, observes AGNES sitting at MCBRIDE'S bedside. She has a bowl of soup in her hand and has been doing her best to get MCBRIDE to take some nourishment. It is obvious that he won't.

AGNES
Please, Jimmy... please. You've got to eat something... just a little. Jimmy, if you don't you won't make it.

MAC says nothing but her eyes are filled with tears.

50 INT. OPERATING THEATRE, A.R.C. HOSPITAL - DAY 50

The unconscious patient on the operating table is an AMBULANCE DRIVER (20's) whose crushed ribs are being repaired by DOMENICO.

ROSIE is administering the anaesthetic and AGNES is handing instruments to DOMENICO.

DOMENICO
(rhetorically)
Why do these drivers have such difficulty keeping their ambulances on the road?

The timing of AGNES and DOMENICO'S team work has now arrived at perfect synergy.

In the first surgery she was one step ahead of him. Now she's two. She knows not only the instrument he wants, but also the instrument he should want.

DOMENICO
Clamp.

AGNES grasps a sponge with the end of a forceps.

DOMENICO
No...

Feeling the forceps and sponge in his hand DOMENICO looks at her.

(CONTINUED)

50 CONTINUED: 50

DOMENICO
(smiling behind his mask)
... Sponge.

She's busy threading the suture needle.

DOMENICO
Soon American troops will join us and there will be a big push. I must leave to set up a forward surgical unit. I was hoping we could go for another drive together in the afternoon tomorrow?

AGNES is disconcerted to hear that he is leaving.

AGNES
I'm sorry, but I promised two of the patients I would go with them on an excursion.

DOMENICO
(knowingly)
The young Hemingway?

She nods.

DOMENICO
Perhaps another time.

AGNES
I would like that.

AGNES hands him the suture needle. DOMENICO starts to close the wound.

DOMENICO
Nurse, I need your help... here.

AGNES has to lean very close to DOMENICO. In the background ROSIE is not unaware of their proximity.

51 INT. SUPPLY CLOSET, A.R.C. HOSPITAL - DAY 51

AGNES is standing on a ladder, stacking splints on a shelf, cataloguing bandages, dressings. ERNIE enters on his crutches, closes the door after him.

ERNIE
(urgent)
Can I talk to you?

(CONTINUED)

51 CONTINUED: 51

AGNES
27, 28 -- You made me lose count.

ERNIE
It's Harry. I'm worried about him.

AGNES
What's the matter?

ERNIE
He's much sicker than he's letting on.

AGNES
He is, is he?

Throughout this ERNIE has been staring at her ankles and the lower part of her leg, which are about at eye level.

ERNIE
(becoming distracted by her legs)
Yes. I don't... think anyone... really understands just how... sick the poor guy is...

AGNES
But you do?

ERNIE
Mmmmm...

He reaches out, gently rubbing the fabric of the hem of her skirt.

AGNES
Ernie, don't do that.

He doesn't stop. She doesn't care that he doesn't.

ERNIE
I was just wondering what this was made of. Some kind of cotton?

AGNES
(she has completely lost count of the splints)
Chambray.

ERNIE
It must be very warm in this heat.

AGNES
It is.

(CONTINUED)

51 CONTINUED: 51

ERNIE
The thing I was thinking was that it might be very bad for Harry to come with us on the picnic.

As he is talking, ever so slowly he extends his hand... Ever so softly he touches the visible part of her stockinged-leg above her ankle...

AGNES
Ernie, please...

ERNIE
And these? Are they silk?

AGNES
Cotton...

ERNIE
And I was.. ah, thinking that if... Harry stayed here and we went on... by ourselves. He might be disappointed for a while, but, in the end it would be the best thing...

AGNES
For him.

ERNIE
Definitely, for him.

AGNES remains frozen in position, splints in hand, eyes closed, melting.

AGNES
Well, you do know him very well.

ERNIE
We are very close.

AGNES
And you do have his best interests at heart.

ERNIE
Believe me, I do.

There is a beat of charged silence.

ERNIE
Shall I tell him or will you?

AGNES
I think it's best if you leave that to me.

52 EXT. A.R.C. HOSPITAL - DAY 52

Sitting in a horse-drawn carriage is HARRY, looking the very picture of health and contentment. Next to HARRY, quite close, is AGNES, a mischievous look on her face.

The young HEMINGWAY emerges from the hospital door, realises what has (or has not) happened and comes hobbling over, a ferocious look on his face.

HARRY watches as ERNIE struggles into the carriage, just about making room for himself himself on the seat opposite amongst a mass of picnic paraphernalia.

HARRY
What's the matter, Ernie? Cat got your tongue?

ERNIE
(to the carriage driver)
Andeearmo!

The DRIVER cracks his whip, the horse takes off just as TERESA comes running into frame with her uncle, ALBERTO ZARDINI (70's). He's carrying an Arditi cape.

TERESA
(in Italian)
Stop... please!

The confused DRIVER pulls in the reins.

The carriage occupants, equally perplexed, exchange looks.

TERESA points ERNIE out to her uncle.

TERESA
(in Italian)
He's the one, Uncle.

ALBERTO approaches the carriage.

TERESA
(to Agnes, in Italian)
This is my uncle, the father of Roberto Zardini. He wants Signor Ernie to have his son's cape.

AGNES
Oh, my God, Ernie. He's Roberto Zardini's father. It's Roberto's cape.

ERNIE
And he wants me to have it?

AGNES nods.

(CONTINUED)

52 CONTINUED: 52

ALBERTO
(in Italian, handing the cape to Ernie)
My wife and I thank you for what you did.

ERNIE
Thank you, Signor Zardini. Grazie.
(to Agnes)
Please ask her if...

AGNES knows what he wants.

AGNES
(to Teresa, in Italian)
Roberto? Is he?...

TERESA
(in Italian)
Dead.

AGNES
(to TERESA, in halting Italian)
Tell your uncle that Senor Ernie is... honoured to have his son's cape.

ERNIE
Grazie... grazie.

TERESA translates to her uncle and he bows.

ERNIE sits, clutching the cape tightly on his lap as the carriage moves away.

53 EXT. EDGE OF LAKE - DAY 53

Both the CARRIAGE DRIVER and his horse are having an afternoon nap in the shade of a tree.

HARRY sits on a blanket laden with leftovers of a picnic by the lake's edge.

We pull back to see ERNIE skipping stones across the smooth lake surface. He is watching AGNES, her shoes and stockings off, skirt hiked-up to mid-calf, as she wades in the water.

AGNES
There are hundreds of tiny fish down there nibbling on my legs.

ERNIE
Lucky bastards.

(CONTINUED)

53 CONTINUED: 53

HARRY rolls his eyes.

ERNIE
If this was Walloon Lake, they'd be bass and I'd have reeled in six of 'em by now...

AGNES
Walloon?

ERNIE
It's in Michigan. Someday I'll take you there... I'll catch 'em, you'll clean 'em and we'll both eat 'em.

She playfully throws a handful of water at him.

AGNES
The day I clean bass is the day a one-legged, big-headed boy swims across this lake.

HARRY laughs a "She got you there" laugh.

ERNIE, now expert on his crutches, is making his way to the boat dock.

AGNES
Ernie... Ernie, for God's sake...

Now at the end of the dock, he dramatically drops his crutches and falls awkwardly into the lake.

AGNES is already out of the water and running, with HARRY, to the end of the dock.

AGNES
I hope that water's not too deep.

HARRY
Hope it is.

ERNIE surfaces and clumsily, like a novice swimmer, moves away from the dock on his back.

AGNES
(shouting)
All right, I'll clean one of them.

He keeps moving away.

AGNES
... Two!...

He keeps moving.

(CONTINUED)

53 CONTINUED: 53

AGNES
Okay, you win! I'll clean all six stupid fish!

ERNIE turns and, using the perfect crawl stroke of an accomplished athlete, swims speedily back, grinning all the way.

54 EXT. BRIDGE, NEAR LAKE - DAY 54

A marble angel, fronted by some votive wild flowers, has been placed on a rock ledge at one end of a bridge spanning the lake.

AGNES, HARRY and ERNIE paused to look at the view - and back at the angel.

ERNIE, still wet (and now cold) from his plunge, has draped the Arditi cape from his shoulders. From the look of disgust on HARRY'S face it's obvious he doesn't approve.

ERNIE
(quoting Rupert Brooke)
"If I should die, think only this of me: That there is some corner of a foreign field --"

HARRY
(rolling his eyes, completing the line)
"That is forever England." For God's sake Ernie, every freshman at Harvard has memorised that one.

ERNIE
(not taking offence)
Harry, you've been out of sorts all day.
(facetiously)
Can't imagine what's sticking in your craw.

AGNES
Come on, you two. You're both getting on my nerves.

HARRY
Are you going to walk around like that all afternoon -- like some third rate Shakespearean actor.

ERNIE
Pardon me, old sport. But I carried him across the damn battlefield on my back.

(CONTINUED)

54 CONTINUED: 54

HARRY
And each time you tell the damn story it gets bigger. First it was twenty yards, then it was fifty, now it's the whole battlefield.

AGNES
I'm leaving if this doesn't stop.

At this point neither one of them pays any attention to her.

ERNIE
(zeroing in for the kill)
Too bad, Harry. Must've been tough on you these last few weeks. The rest of us shot up or at least injured and you in the hospital 'cause you turned yellow.

AGNES
(her temper flares)
Ernie, that's a stupid, thoughtless thing to say.

ERNIE turns on AGNES.

ERNIE
Whose side are you on, anyway?

AGNES
Whoever's going to put an end to this ridiculous argument.

That makes ERNIE even madder.

ERNIE
And by the way who's been teaching you Italian?!

She turns and walks away. HARRY goes after her.

HARRY
I will, Agnes, but just for you.

AGNES looks back at ERNIE for some sign he's willing to stop.

AGNES
Are you going to ride back with us peacefully?

ERNIE
I'd rather walk.

(CONTINUED)

54 CONTINUED: 54

AGNES
Walk then! Come on, Harry.

She offers him her arm. As a triumphant HARRY walks away with AGNES, he can't resist one final zinger over his shoulder.

HARRY
Looks like the best man has been granted the lady's favour after all.

ERNIE smiles wickedly and nods in agreement.

ERNIE
Oh, you're right, Harry. And it was granted to me the other night... in her bed.

AGNES' body bends as if she's been punched in the mid-section.

Her eyes brimming with rage-filled tears, she strides back to ERNIE and slaps him hard across his face.

55 EXT. A.R.C. HOSPITAL - DAY 55

The only happiness in the returning carriage is HARRY'S.

AGNES is sitting as far away from ERNIE as she can get.

ERNIE, his face a blanket of misery, is turned away from both of them, sulking.

We pan up to the hospital window just as LARKIN and ROSIE finish hanging out a banner: "THE US 332nd IS HERE!"

INT. PATIENT'S WARD A.R.C. HOSPITAL - EVENING 56

The ward is in semi-darkness.

AGNES sits with MCBRIDE. He is dictating a letter to her; it is going slowly and painfully. She has to lean close to him in order to hear him.

MCBRIDE
... Everyone... is okay... I hope everyone... is okay there...

We hear the SOUND of ambulance klaxons approaching. At the end of the ward, we see the ENTIRE NURSING STAFF rushing to prepare for new arrivals.

AGNES leans forward, touches MCBRIDE gently on a bandaged arm.

(CONTINUED)

56 CONTINUED: 56

AGNES
Jimmy, I'm afraid I have to leave now. There are other patients coming in. I'll be back as soon as I can.

AGNES lays the pad of writing paper on his night table and draws the curtains round his bed. She starts to walk quickly toward the ward entrance. Suddenly ERNIE is blocking her path.

ERNIE
Listen, I just wanted you to under --

AGNES
Kid, this isn't the time.

ERNIE
(grabbing her by the arm)
Yes! Yes, this is the time. This has to be the time. It's important you understand, no apologies, no regrets. Not for me, not for you, not ever.

Overhead lights go on all over the ward.

DE LONG (O.S.)
Agnes!

AGNES pulls out of ERNIE'S grasp and rushes to the entrance just as the new patients arrive.

KATHERINE DE LONG has taken up position by the door, issuing directions to PORTERS and AMBULANCE DRIVERS as they stretcher-in six new PATIENTS, the first of many to come.

We see HARRY guiding BURTON out of the ward, on the way to the toilet.

As soon as the SIX WOUNDED INFANTRYMEN are moved onto beds -- some groaning, some with minor wounds, some unconcious -- NURSES get to work -- soaking off bloody field dressings, carrying spitoons and bedpans, taking vitals, administering medicine, setting up the anti-gangrene irrigation equipment. Other NURSES, assisted by three of the ambulant patients, -- ERNIE, LARKIN and KENYON -- set up five additional cots in the centre of the ward.

A bandaged hand, edges through a bed curtain, fumbling for an adjacent night table, homing in on the drawer.

Painfully slowly, the drawer is opened and the pathetic bandaged paw feels around until it locates the object it is so desperately seeking. As the hand is withdrawn, we see a quick flash of reflected light on razor sharp steel.

57 INT. PATIENT'S WARD - A.R.C. HOSPITAL - NIGHT 57

LATER

The main lights have been turned off again. Dim bedside lamps illuminate the few PATIENTS still receiving treatment from CAVIE, ROSIE, CHARLOTTE and VETA. Most of the new arrivals are asleep.

SONIA is making her way quietly round the ward, collecting up used water glasses from the night tables.

She stops at the sleeping BURTON'S bed, reaches for a tumbler and accidentally knocks it to the floor.

The tumbler doesn't break. Instead it rolls along the floor, under the curtain screening MCBRIDE'S bed... and into a pool of blood.

SONIA
(in Italian)
Holy mother of God...

For the first time ever, we hear running footsteps on the ward.

58 INT. PATIENT'S WARD A.R.C. HOSPITAL - NIGHT. 58

LATER STILL

We move along one side of the quiet, dimly lit ward. Every bed is full. But, when we come to bed seventeen, it is empty. Continuing, we see ERNIE'S silhouette disappearing onto the 2nd floor landing.

59 INT. AGNES' ROOM - NIGHT 59

AGNES sits in her room paralysed with grief, the letter that McBride was dictating to her on the table in front of her.

ERNIE appears, stands there looking at her. From the look on his face it is clear that he is utterly devastated.

AGNES looks up, sees him. He is the last person in the world that she wants to see right now.

AGNES
Kid, go away.

He doesn't, instead he steps inside, stands by the door for a second.

ERNIE
(indicating the letter on the table in front of her)
What's that?

(CONTINUED)

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59 CONTINUED: 59

AGNES
A letter Jimmy was dictating... before...

He crosses to her, yanks the letter from her. She gives him an infuriated look.

ERNIE
(studying the letter)
Dear Mom and Dad, thanks for the package. The weather here is hot, but maybe it will cool down soon. The food is good. Everyone is okay. I hope everyone is okay there...

AGNES
I was trying to think of a way to finish it.

ERNIE stares at the letter for a moment then rips it up.

AGNES
(outraged)
Ernie...!

ERNIE
Start writing.

Now we see a flash of ERNIE as a man - in full command, sure of himself. No bragging. No false heroics. Right now, he is doing what he is best at - even if he himself doesn't know it yet.

ERNIE
Dear Mom and Dad... the thing this war has taught me is that it's important to get things said before it's too late. First, you've been the very best parents a guy could ask for. When I was a kid and I'd get scared of the dark, it was the thought that you were there that got me through it. I think about that a lot, because I guess I'm scared now. I don't know if I can make it. And if I don't, please understand that sometimes there are places I have to go to alone. But whatever happens always know that I will be your loving son. Jimmy.

As ERNIE is dictating, AGNES is writing and crying at the same time. When he finishes she looks up at him. He stares at her for a long, long beat, then:

(CONTINUED)

59 CONTINUED: 59

ERNIE
(in a whisper)
I love you.

In an instant she is in his arms and as they kiss, she closes the door. The kiss lasts, and lasts, but before it can become more than a kiss we hear:

MAC'S VOICE
(through the door)
Ernie, Gumshoe will be on her round in five minutes.

60 EXT. TRAIN STATION, NORTHERN ITALIAN TOWN - DAWN 60

Close on a boxcar where four ITALIAN SOLDIERS are loading McBride's coffin. ERNIE watches. As the SOLDIERS finish and start to close the doors, ERNIE gestures for them to wait. He moves forward and takes something he's been carrying out from under his arm. It is his American flag, which he unfolds and drapes over the coffin. With a hand on the coffin, a moment passes as ERNIE silently says goodbye to his friend.

61 INT. LOBBY A.R.C. HOSPITAL - DAY 61

After the quiet of the night before, this is a scene of incredible chaos. Supplies are being moved out, NEW PERSONNEL arriving, and some of the regular NURSES - AGNES, MAC, CAVIE, VETA - are leaving. There is a lot of shouting back and forth and too many people in too narrow a space.

AGNES is trying to push her way through the crowd, looking frantically for someone.

Ahead she spots HARRY.

She starts to push her way through to him.

AGNES
(waving to get his attention)
Harry! Harry!

HARRY spots her and struggles toward her.

AGNES
Thank God I found you.

HARRY
What's the matter? What's going on?

(CONTINUED)

61 CONTINUED: 61

AGNES
They're moving some of us closer to the front.

MAC'S VOICE
(shouting)
Agnes! Come on!

AGNES
(calling out)
I'll be right there.
(to Harry)
Harry, I need for you to do me a big favour.

HARRY
Anything.

AGNES
Here...
(she hands him an envelope)
I can't find Ernie anywhere. Give this to him for me, will you?
(she stops)
No. Wait...

She quickly takes off her class ring, puts it in the envelope and hands it back to Harry.

HARRY'S last hopes collapse.

AGNES sees this.

AGNES
(gently)
Oh, Harry, I'm sorry. I honestly never thought something like this would happen.

MAC (V.O.)
Ag! We're leaving.

Agnes leans forward and kisses Harry on the cheek.

AGNES
You won't forget?

HARRY just manages a smile.

HARRY
I won't forget.

And she is gone.

62 EXT. COLONNADE A.R.C. HOSPITAL - DAY 62

By now all of the hubub is over and everything is quiet. HARRY exits the hospital, sets off along the colonnade. He sees ERNIE coming towards him and hurries to speak to him. But before he can say anything, ERNIE forestalls him.

ERNIE
Listen, old man, I'm glad to run into you with no one else around. There's something I'd like to get off my chest.
(this is hard for him to say)
That business I said the other day about Agnes and me. It was... it was all bull.

This is as close as he will ever come to an apology.

HARRY takes a deep breath, then takes the envelope that AGNES gave him and hands it to ERNIE.

HARRY
Yeah... yeah... well... She asked me to give you this. Orders came through and they've moved her and some of the other nurses to the front... I'm sorry. I know how you feel.

Then he turns and walks away. ERNIE opens the letter and walks slowly towards the hospital entrance.

AGNES (V.O.)
(on his retreating figure)
"My dearest Kid, Mac and I have been suddenly assigned to a field hospital at the front. There's been a big push and the orders came over the wire only moments ago. I am writing this with a shaking hand, partly because I am afraid and partly because it is so hard to say good-bye. Maybe what happened last night was a mistake, but whatever it was I will never forget it."

63 EXT. FIELD HOSPITAL, DAY 63

The sound of mortars exploding in the mountains is clearly heard in this tented city on the plain below Monte Grappa. Flashes from Austrian cannon can also be seen.

(CONTINUED)

63 CONTINUED: 63

In the distance, a fleet of ambulances, ferrying wounded from the nearby front line, turns into the main thoroughfare of the encampment as MAC makes her way to the nurses' tents carrying a letter.

64 INT. NURSES' TENT, FIELD HOSPITAL, DAY 64

Still in her surgery apron, her hair unwashed and matted, AGNES sleeps on a narrow cot.

MAC enters through the tent flap and shakes her awake.

AGNES
I'm up... I'm up... I know I'm on the next shift.

As AGNES forces herself into a sitting position, MAC hands her the letter.

MAC
You just read your letter.

AGNES smiles her thanks.

MAC leaves as AGNES opens the letter, devours every word.

ERNIE (V.O.)
"Dear Mrs. Kid... I miss and yearn to see you more than words can say. Every time someone comes through the doors, I can't help but look up and hope that it's you. I keep the ring you gave me in my pocket and take it out maybe a hundred times a day just to look at it... Harry got orders to report to your sector as soon as the doctors give him a clean bill of health. I am working hard on getting myself assigned there too."

65 INT. EMERGENCY SURGERY TENT, FIELD HOSPITAL - NIGHT 65

There's a war raging inside the tent as well as outside. Rather than the calm, quiet, sterile operating theatre at the A.R.C. hospital, this is complete insanity.

SIX BLOOD-SPATTERED OPERATING SURGEONS, American as well as Italian, shout for instruments. SOLDIER VOLUNTEERS lie on cots next to some of the operating tables, giving a direct tranfusions of blood, from one arm to another. TRIAGE MEDICS shout the fate of WOUNDED. The WOUNDED scream for God and their mothers.

(CONTINUED)

65 CONTINUED: 65

SEVERAL PRIESTS give last rites, sprinkling holy water over everyone with breath still in them.

RED CROSS AMBULANCE DRIVERS are constantly bringing in MORE WOUNDED, placing them in rows on the ground. CAVIE and VETA are among the nurses who tend them.

A large rat scurries past.

MAC pulls a lace from the boot of a newly-arrived, BLOOD-COVERED SOLDIER. She expertly uses it to make a tourniquet for his arm.

SIX OPERATING TEAMS are frantically cutting, digging, tying off, sponging, suturing.

They wear rubber gloves and surgical masks.

They bump into each other... trays of instruments are knocked over, tossed into pots of boiling water for a few seconds, then put back into service.

ONE VETERAN SURGICAL NURSE is assisting at two surgeries at the same time - the one in front of her and the other behind.

AGNES is assisting AN AMERICAN SURGEON who has none of the courtesies of the Italian doctors.

AMERICAN SURGEON
Hurry it up, will you?

AGNES picks up the pace.

Behind her we see DOMENICO finishing up at his operating table.

As he walks by, he stops, talks to her as she continues working.

DOMENICO
If I had known it was going to be this bad, I would not have asked them to assign you here.

AGNES
This is where I was trained to be.

DOMENICO
I want you to sleep after this one. You've been up almost 24 hours.

AGNES
So have you.

She goes back to the job at hand.

66 INT. 2ND FLOOR LANDING, A.R.C. HOSPITAL - DAY 66

We see a BULLETIN BOARD, that is covered with orders, nurses' duty rosters, shipping orders, etc. etc.

ERNIE (V.O.)
Damn! Dammit to hell!

His hand reaches into frame and rips one of them off.

ERNIE is staring at the paper in despair just as HARRY passes.

HARRY
What's wrong?

ERNIE hands him the sheet of paper.

HARRY
(skimming the paper)
Ernest Hemingway to report to... leaving Genoa on... bound for New York City where you will be... discharged.
(handing the paper back to Ernie)
Tough luck.

ERNIE
Not me. Not now.

HARRY
(sympathetic)
I understand...

ERNIE
I sail tomorrow morning.

Getting an idea, ERNIE grabs HARRY by the arm and leads him off to one side.

ERNIE
Listen, Harry, I need your help. You know most of the drivers in section four, right?

HARRY nods.

ERNIE
I can't get up there without orders. But if you could get one of the drivers to give me a lift, I can get back on my own with these.
(indicating the orders in his hand)

HARRY
(worried)
Ernie, if they catch you --

(CONTINUED)

66 CONTINUED: 66

ERNIE
What will they do?

HARRY
(starting to laugh)
I guess they'll send you home.

CUT TO:

67 EXT. EMERGENCY SURGERY TENT, FIELD HOSPITAL - DAY 67

Late in the day. An exhausted-looking AGNES sits on a bench outside the surgery tent. She puts down a cup of coffee and takes a cigarette, starts to light it when she sees something on the road leading to the field hospital.

We see ERNIE in the distance, his duffle bag over his shoulder, walking with his stick.

AGNES throws away the cigarette, jumps to her feet and begins walking toward ERNIE.

The closer she gets to him the faster she walks until, by the time she reaches him, she is about to break into a run.

CLOSE ON HER as she stands in front of him.

AGNES
You are such a child. This is a stupid thing to do. When are you going to grow up?

ERNIE
(simple, direct)
I couldn't leave without seeing you again.

AGNES
(stunned)
Leave?

ERNIE
I'm on orders to go back to the States.

AGNES
Oh, God. When?

ERNIE
I have to catch a train tomorrow morning at 5.30.

AGNES closes her eyes.

(CONTINUED)

67 CONTINUED: 67

ERNIE
I came to tell you that I love you. That I will love you forever.

At this point MAC comes out of the tent, looks around for AGNES. From the expression on her face it is clear that the sight of ERNIE worries her.

MAC
(calling out)
Ag!

AGNES spins around at the sound of MAC's voice.

AGNES
I have to go.

ERNIE
There's a hotel near the train station.

AGNES
(laughs in spite of herself)
Kid, that's not a hotel, it's a brothel.

ERNIE
There's nowhere else. I asked around. Will you...
(he leaves the word "come" unspoken)

AGNES
They're waiting for me. I have to go.
(she takes a step or two away, stops)
I don't know... I'll try...

And she walks back toward MAC and the operating tent, breaking into a run as if trying to get away from ERNIE.

68 EXT. FRONT LINE HOTEL - NIGHT 68

AGNES climbs down from an army truck and runs across the cobbled street towards a seedy hotel. It takes every bit of AGNES' fortitude to climb the long stairway that leads to the entrance.

69 INT. HALLWAY, FRONT LINE HOTEL - NIGHT 69

AGNES walks down the dark hallway... past the SOUND of drunken voices, laughter, beds banging against walls.

She passes SEVERAL PROSTITUTES and their SOLDIER TRICKS on their way to and from rooms. Faintly we hear a dreamy Italian melody, played on a Victrola.

70 INT. ROOM, FRONT LINE HOTEL - NIGHT 70

ERNIE stands at the window, looking out, smoking. At the sound of the door opening he spins around.

AGNES enters the room, looks at her surroundings.

The room is bare except for a small table with a water-filled pitcher, a slop bowl next to it. A bidet in one corner. A single bed with one grayish sheet thrown over the mattress. ERNIE has placed wild flowers in a tooth glass on the table.

ERNIE
I'm sorry. I didn't think it would be like this.

The SOUNDS of 'business transactions' in other rooms can be heard through the paper thin walls.

AGNES
It's just part of war. Men desperate for sex, women desperate for money.

ERNIE crosses the room to AGNES, takes her by the arm.

ERNIE
You shouldn't be here. Let's go somewhere else. Anywhere...

AGNES says nothing. She closes the door, draws him to her, kisses him. They don't seem to care that the room shakes with the concussion of several bombs exploding in unison. The Victrola starts up again - still the same tune.

ERNIE
Oh Aggie, it wasn't supposed to be like this.

AGNES
Never mind...

ERNIE
We were going to be in the most beautiful place on God's earth.

AGNES
Close your eyes.

(CONTINUED)

70 CONTINUED: 70

He does so. She takes his hand and places it on her breast.

In her need for him, she leads him toward the bed where they begin to remove each other's outer clothing.

They lie on the bed together. He pulls her on top of him.

Her hair already coming undone, she pulls the pins from it... lets it fall down over them until they're both inside it... as if under a waterfall.

71 INT. ROOM, FRONT LINE HOTEL - DAWN 71

LATER

FADE UP to semi-darkness to see just the mere silhouettes of them as they slowly dance together to the music of the distant Victrola. The melody remains the same.

They speak in dreamy, post love-making tones.

ERNIE
Told you I wasn't much of a dancer.

AGNES
To me this is the most wonderful waltz in the world.

ERNIE
(laughs)
This isn't a waltz. Even I know that.

An exploding mortar shell throws a split-second flash of blazing white light into the room. It's only in this split second that we see they are naked.

72 EXT. TRAIN STATION, NEAR THE FRONT - EARLY MORNING 72

ERNIE is hobbling towards his train, AGNES at his side. He carries his duffle bag over his shoulder.

The train whistle blows. Steam shoots from underneath it and envelopes the lovers as they rush to the last carriage.

AGNES
Be careful.

ERNIE
(he holds her tight)
I will...

(CONTINUED)

72 CONTINUED: 72

AGNES
(kissing him)
Promise...

ERNIE
Yes... I love you, Mrs Kid. As soon as this is over we'll be married, right?

AGNES
(laughing)
Sure. Mr and Mrs Kid!

He gets on the train, leans out of the window.

ERNIE
Say you love me. I need to hear you say it.

The train starts to pull away.

ERNIE
Say it! Say you love me.
(shouting)
Say it!

There is a piercing whistle from the train that obliterates AGNES' declaration:

AGNES
I love you.

AGNES stands watching the train disappear.

73 EXT. ROAD TO FIELD HOSPITAL - DAY 73

The sun is glaring, making the horror up ahead even more painfully real. The figures in foreground, who seem like peasants tilling the field, are actually GRAVE DIGGERS creating a six foot wide trench.

AGNES is alone... walking up the road. She tries to keep her eyes up, but it's impossible to deny her peripheral vision which sees a row of DEAD SOLDIERS awaiting burial.

Beyond THE BODIES, long mounds, each marked by a single cross, bear mute testament to the number of Italians who have died defending Monte Grappa.

One by one THE BODIES are picked up by MEMBERS OF AN ITALIAN BURIAL SQUAD wearing surgical masks. No time for prayers, they place THE BODIES into the trench.

Shovelfuls of lye are thrown on them before the shovelfuls of dirt. A PRIEST utters a mass benediction.

(CONTINUED)

73 CONTINUED: 73

AGNES swats flies from her face. The whole area is suffused with the sound of their buzzing.

AGNES' look of joy is gone and the dreamy glow of a few hours ago is slowly being decimated by the reality of the here and now.

74 EXT. EMERGENCY SURGERY TENT, FIELD HOSPITAL - EVENING 74

AGNES and HARRY are sitting on a fallen tree trunk several yards behind the emergency surgery tent. Both are smoking.

HARRY
Gee... that's... that's...
(only half meaning it)
... terrific news.

AGNES gives him a look that says she doesn't believe him.

HARRY
Look, maybe he and I have had our differences, but he's okay...
(smiles ruefully)
I hate to admit it, but he's better than okay.. You'll do him a world of good.

AGNES
What's that supposed to mean?

HARRY
You know Ernie. He needs someone who can take care of him.

AGNES
That's his mother's job. I don't want to be his mother, Harry...
(a deep sigh)
Even though I'm probably going to look as if I am.

HARRY
What's an eight year age difference when you're in love?

AGNES
(shooting him a look)
Seven. He just had a birthday.

HARRY
So what? He can go on having birthdays and you can stop.

AGNES
Yesterday I saw a gray hair.

(CONTINUED)

74 CONTINUED: 74

HARRY
(thinking he's being helpful)
Listen, as the years pass, you and Ernie will age toward each other. Older people start to go backwards at some point. Then you'll eventually meet in the middle.

This is not what she wants to hear.

AGNES
Oh, God, Harry, am I making a mistake? It's not just the age difference. We don't...

HARRY
You love each other. That's what counts.

AGNES
Listen to you... the voice of experience.

HARRY puts his arm over her shoulder as she rests her head against him.

75 EXT. FIELD HOSPITAL - DAY 75

Along the road leading from the mountains comes a column of AUSTRIAN PRISONERS OF WAR, defeated and dispirited. They are accompanied by a handful of ITALIAN SOLDIERS.

There is minimal activity outside the emergency surgery tent. MEDICS, NURSES, OTHER MILITARY PERSONNEL are in evidence, but the urgent, chaotic frenzy that used to dominate it is now finished.

Some personnel tents are being taken down. The AUSTRIAN PRISONERS and their GUARDS trudge across the bleached and trampled grass where others used to stand.

AGNES, on her way to the surgery tent, stops to let them pass. A WOUNDED AUSTRIAN with a dirty bloodstained bandage covering half his head stares mutely at her Red Cross brassard and then at her face. AGNES, seeing his fear and his exhaustion, smiles compassionately.

AGNES
(in German)
Don't be afraid. They won't harm you now.

(CONTINUED)

75 CONTINUED: 75

WOUNDED AUSTRIAN
(in German)
Thank you. We lost the war.

He continues to look back at her until she's out of sight.

76 INT. EMERGENCY SURGERY TENT, FIELD HOSPITAL - DAY 76

AGNES walks through the empty area where we saw mass surgery being performed and collapses on one of the cots for post-operative patients.

A moment later, MAC appears through the canvas partition; studies her friend carefully.

AGNES
I'm so tired I could sleep for a week.

MAC
(sitting on the cot beside her)
Listen, I'm going to ask you a question.

AGNES
Can it wait until I've gotten a few hours sleep?

MAC
No. This is important. Just promise you won't say no.

AGNES
(suspicious)
No to what?

MAC
(insistent)
Just promise. This is very important to me.

AGNES
Alright, I promise. Can I go to sleep now?

AGNES
(grabbing Agnes, kissing her)
Fine. We're going to spend the weekend with the good doctor.

AGNES stares at her blankly.

(CONTINUED)

76 CONTINUED: 76

MAC
Dr. Caracciolo.

AGNES
(instantly regretting her promise)
No. I don't think --

MAC
At his mother's house. You swore. You gave me your solemn word.

AGNES
(grabbing at straws)
But I don't have anything to wear.

MAC
He's a doctor. How fancy can it be?

77 EXT. ITALIAN COUNTRYSIDE - DAY 77

The top on DOMENICO'S tourer is down, revealing passengers AGNES and MAC as DOMENICO drives through the Italian countryside... past vineyards, farmlands and flocks of grazing goats.

78 EXT. NARROW ALLEY, VENICE - DAY 78

DOMENICO leads AGNES and MAC along an alley flanked by old brick buildings. It is so narrow they must walk single file.

At the far end of the narrow alley is a steep flight of stone stairs swathed in Virginia creeper.

DOMENICO motions AGNES and MAC up the staircase. He tugs on a bell rope as he starts up the stairs.

79 INT. CARACCIOLO PALAZZO, VENICE - DAY 79

AGNES is the first to enter a cool foyer leading to a long, high ceilinged room containing priceless antique furniture.

Obviously awe-struck, the only thing that pulls AGNES' attention from the magnificence around her is MAC'S audible gasp.

SEVERAL LIVERIED ITALIAN SERVANTS scurry into frame, approach DOMENICO, curtsy... bow. He indicates discreetly that one of them should attend to the baggage they have left in the unseen boat.

(CONTINUED)

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79 CONTINUED: 79

AGNES and MAC marvel at the glistening, elaborately-patterned stone floor, the high, delicate, painted ceiling, the two rows of chandeliers, the golden mirrors and side tables. They are drawn to the glass doors which open onto a balcony.

Beyond the balcony is the sweep of the Grand Canal. Gondolas glide below the elegant three and four storey palazzo facades which line the calm waters leading to the Rialto Bridge. It is breathtaking.

DOMENICO joins AGNES and MAC who are still staring in dumb-struck silence.

AGNES
You never told us about all this.

DOMENICO
I was afraid you might not come.

AGNES
Oh... I think it's beautiful.

DOMENICO
(gravely)
It is you that are beautiful.

For the first time since they met, AGNES drops her eyes.

80 INT. BEDROOM, CARACCIOLO PALAZZO, VENICE - EVENING 80

Folded on the immense canopied bed are Agnes' undergarments, her stockings, her one sweater.

Her Red Cross duffle bag, now empty, looks very out of place next to an opened mahogany armoire in which hang her other two civilian dresses. Her one hat is on the shelf.

The door to the adjoining bedroom opens to reveal MAC, holding her stockings.

MAC
Would you believe somebody ironed my stockings... I could get used to being one of the idle rich.

AGNES stands at the window, staring thoughtfully out into the twilight. She turns from the window to face MAC.

AGNES
Mac, this isn't right. I shouldn't have come.

(CONTINUED)

80 CONTINUED: 80

MAC
(mock anger)
Agnes! For once in your life, relax. Have a good time. It's allowed.

AGNES
I'm talking about Ernie. It feels wrong, being here in Domenico's house.

MAC
(dry)
It's not a house, it's a palazzo. Technically it's called a palazzo. And he's a count.
(then nodding sympathetically)
But I understand. I really do. It makes perfect sense. On the one hand you have a dump like this.
(gesturing at the room they are in)
Then there's Domenico, what is he, forty, forty-two? Handsome, charming, educated... did I say rich? And he's Italian. I understand what you feel. I mean, how can that possibly compare with a nineteen year old boy -- good looking, I'll give you that -- who didn't go to college and who says he's a newspaper reporter, but to the best of my knowledge has no visible means of support. And who lives in some rinky dink town in Illinois. I can understand how you can give all this up for that. It makes perfect --

She doesn't get the word 'sense' out before a pillow hits her in the face.

81 INT. BATHROOM, CARACCIOLO PALAZZO, VENICE - EVENING 81

AGNES sinks into a copper tub filled with steaming water. She closes her eyes... lets herself luxuriate in the benison of the suds.

82 INT. SMALL DINING ROOM, CARACCIOLO PALAZZO, VENICE - NIGHT 82

THE CARACCIOLO FAMILY is having a pre-dinner aperitivo. A white-gloved FOOTMAN circulates glasses on a silver tray.

The family compromises Domenico's mother, COUNTESS CARACCIOLO (60's), his father, the elder COUNT SERGIO CARACCIOLO (60's), his sister, ISABELLA (30's), and his widowed AUNT LUCIA (50's).

AGNES and MAC, in their simple, American-style dresses are being escorted by DOMENICO and presented formally to each family member in turn. The girls shake hands with the women. Count Sergio kisses their hands.

COUNT SERGIO
(in accented English)
I would like to welcome our American guests and express my gratitude to them for their efforts in saving the lives of so many of our countrymen who are now so close to victory.

AGNES
(to Domenico)
Your family is wonderful... Everyone has made us feel so welcome...

He looks across the room at his mother, who is smiling sweetly at MAC.

AGNES
Mac seems to be getting on very well with your mother.

COUNTESS CARACCIOLO
(to Mac)
America is of course a very young country. Perhaps not so overburdened with tradition as we are.

MAC
No I 'spose not. But we do have Arbor Day and Ground Hog Day and Opening Day at the ball park.

83 EXT. FRONT PORCH, HEMINGWAY HOME, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS - DAY 83

ERNIE is standing on the steps of the front porch... holding court for members of the AMERICAN PRESS. He wears both his uniform and Roberto's Arditi cape.

His medals are much in evidence and he carries a silver topped cane.

(CONTINUED)

83 CONTINUED: 83

His father, DR. ED HEMINGWAY (50's) stands on the top step like a guarding eagle while his mother, GRACE, refills Ernie's glass of milk, then passes out cookies to TEN REPORTERS gathered on the lawn below. ERNIE's teenage sister, MARCELLINE, and young brother, LEICESTER, are also on the porch.

FOUR PHOTOGRAPHERS take ERNIE'S picture. As the cameras flare pop and flash, he again exhibits his innate talent for posing.

SUN TIMES REPORTER
Just a couple more questions, Mr Hemingway. How did you feel about being the first American wounded in Italy?

ERNIE
(cheerfully)
I'd much rather have been the last.

There is general laughter from the reporters.

OAK LEAVES REPORTER
You must be very proud of him, Mrs. Hemingway.

GRACE
Ernest was a hero to this family long before he went to war.

THE REPORTERS love it, write it down.

TRIBUNE REPORTER
How exactly were you wounded?

ERNIE'S balancing his cane on the palm of his hand.

ERNIE
(with becoming modesty)
Like I said, I was just fooling around in the trenches.

ED HEMINGWAY is looking at his pocket watch.

ED
Sorry folks, but that's enough. I have patients scheduled.

GRACE shoots him a "You always have patients scheduled" look.

OAK LEAVES REPORTER
Just one more question, Dr. Hemingway.
(to Ernie)
Did you fall for any of those Italian beauties, Ernie?

(CONTINUED)

83 CONTINUED: 83

ERNIE
No. But I did find just about the best looking American girl you ever saw over there.

Both ED and GRACE react with surprise.

OAK LEAVES REPORTER
Can we have her name?

ERNIE
Agnes Hemingway as soon as the war ends.

In looking at their son with shocked disapproval, ED and GRACE finally present a united front.

84 EXT. EXPANSE OF WATER, VENICE - DAY 84

An atmospheric long shot. AGNES and MAC recline, side by side, in the main passenger seat of a gondola. DOMENICO sits on his own, facing them.

85 EXT. BRIDGE AND CANAL, VENICE - DAY 85

An ITALIAN FISH MERCHANT touts his product in a loud energetic voice to AGNES, DOMENICO, and MAC as they stroll past a boat which has been turned into a floating fish shop.

Never having seen one before, MAC tentatively touches one of the suction cups on the purple tentacle of an octopus. In a reflex, it closes around her finger.

DOMENICO is puzzled as to why AGNES is querying the FISH MERCHANT about some gray fish.

AGNES
Are these bass?... Bass?

The FISH MERCHANT shakes his head, "No" and hawks the superiority of his local product.

86 EXT. ST. MARKS SQUARE, VENICE - DAY 86

AGNES and DOMENICO stroll along a colonnade in St. Mark's Square which is blanketed with thousands of pigeons, periodically taking flight in flocks of hundreds.

(CONTINUED)

86 CONTINUED: 86

The Moorish figures on top of the Clock Tower strike the bell with their poles, chiming the time, prompting DOMENICO to check his own pocket watch as the facade of the cathedral comes into view.

DOMENICO
I do not wish to hurt Mac's feelings, but it would please me greatly if you, just you alone, would come back to Venice on your next break.

AGNES is tapped on the shoulder from behind, prompting her to turn around, suck in a startled breath as she looks into the painted face of a grinning harlequin.

The mask moves, revealing MAC, who grabs AGNES by the arm and pulls her toward an outdoor stall displaying masks of all descriptions.

MAC
Come and look at these. They're great.

MAC has already traded the harlequin for a cat as AGNES begins to look for a mask for herself.

DOMENICO tries to get AGNES' attention.

DOMENICO
Agnes...

MAC, without realising it, continues to interrupt him to show AGNES each mask she holds up to her face.

MAC
Look at this one... How 'bout me as a clown?

DOMENICO
(to Agnes)
I would buy a mask for you...

AGNES, holding up a kabuki-white mask of a woman with a red tear at the corner of one eye, looks at her reflection in a mirror at the back of the stall.

DOMENICO gently removes the 'kabuki' mask, revealing her own face.

DOMENICO
But this is the face I would choose.

To cover her embarrassment AGNES holds up the 'kabuki' mask again.

(CONTINUED)

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86 CONTINUED: 86

AGNES
I prefer this one.

87 INT. PATIENTS' WARD, A.R.C. HOSPITAL - DAY 87

A new crop of wounded and ill AMERICAN SOLDIERS occupy the beds on the ward. They are having their mid-day meal.

AGNES is walking up the ward with a covered bedpan. There is a noticeable change in the way she relates to the patients.

She's warm, friendly, but the spark we saw in her when Ernie was there is missing.

She's preoccupied with something that rests heavily on her mind.

As AGNES passes the nurses' cubicle, DE LONG is pouring letters from a pouch onto the desk.

MAC, DOTTIE, CHARLOTTE, VETA and CAVIE sort through them.

AGNES, returning from the sluice, sees a letter from Ernie, quickly grabs it.

MAC has picked up a postcard.

MAC
It's from Rosie. She's in Naples.
(reading aloud)
"Larkin and I got hitched by a de-frocked priest. Could have used you all as bridesmaids."

88 INT. AGNES' BEDROOM, A.R.C. HOSPITAL - DAY 88

As AGNES reads Ernie's letter, more and more doubt becomes visible on her face.

ERNIE (V.O.)
... and a fleet of reporters were there when my boat docked, including one from the New York Times. The press here in Oak Park has been hounding me and want to put my mug on their front pages. I made Pops proud last night when I gave a speech at the Rotary to a standing ovation and...

89 INT. ERNIE'S ROOM, HEMINGWAY HOME, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS - DAY 89

ERNIE, waiting at the window, sees the MAILMAN on his delivery route.

90 EXT. HEMINGWAY HOME, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS - DAY 90

Anxious to get to THE MAILMAN, ERNIE grabs his old bike.

Seeing ERNIE riding his bike through the autumn leaves reminds us again of just how young he is.

A GROUP OF 9-YEAR-OLD BOYS catch up to him.

BOY
Let's see 'em again, Ernie.

He slows down just enough to reach in his pocket, retrieve some pieces of shrapnel, show them.

BOY
Tell 'em how many you had in you.

ERNIE
227.

ERNIE speeds up... catches up with the MAILMAN.

MAILMAN
Nothing from Italy. Sorry, Ernie.

Crushingly disappointed, he quickly covers it for the MAILMAN.

ERNIE
(lying)
Can't complain. She sends me a telegram practically every other day.

He does a wheelie on the bike before he peddles off.

91 INT. DINING ROOM, CARACCIOLO PALAZZO, VENICE - NIGHT 91

A gigantic chandelier umbrellas a dinner table appointed with the finest china, crystal, silver, lace. AGNES is dining with the Caracciolo family and FOUR FAMILY FRIENDS, one of whom is a CATHOLIC CARDINAL.

The MAJOR DOMO enters, goes over to the COUNT and leans down to whisper in his ear.

AGNES is talking to ISABELLA.

(CONTINUED)

91 CONTINUED: 91

AGNES
... all I knew was buon giorno. Now your poor brother is suffering through my conjugation of verbs.

DOMENICO
Agnes seems to live only in the present. She has trouble with the past tense, both perfect and imperfect.

AGNES
The past isn't important. What matters to me is the here and now.

COUNT CARACCIOLO
(getting to his feet)
My dears, I have wonderful news. The Armistice has been signed. The war is over.

DOMENICO
Thank God... Thank God.

The SOUND of a church bell is heard coming from outside. Then more and more church bells begin to ring out.

Joy erupts around the table. Tears, embraces, toasts.

DOMENICO takes AGNES by the hand and leads her out of the room. His FAMILY follow.

92 EXT. BALCONY, CARACCIOLO PALAZZO, VENICE - NIGHT 92

Bells are ringing all over the city. AGNES and DOMENICO stand on one section of balcony, his FAMILY and FRIENDS on another.

DOMENICO
I must suppose the Red Cross will now post you back to America, Agnes. Is that to be your future?

AGNES
Oh, Domenico... I don't know... I may have to give it up.

DOMENICO
But why? Medicine is your life -- as it is mine. May I say something?

(CONTINUED)

92 CONTINUED: 92

AGNES
Of course.

DOMENICO
I have never worked with a more gifted nurse.

He kisses the back of her hand... then her palm.

93 INT. ABANDONED FACTORY, VENICE - DAY 93

AGNES watches DOMENICO who holds a rolled set of blueprints, as he stands in the center of a dust-filled skeleton of a building containing broken and abandoned gondolas. TWO RAGGED URCHINS play in the ruin and a thin dog prowls.

DOMENICO
Over here will be the operating room and there...
(pointing in another direction)
... a maternity ward. I will be able to do caesarean sections and other emergencies when necessary.
(with a smile to her)
Of course it will not be so impressive as your Saint John Hopkins. But it will be done with love...
(he breaks off in mid-sentence and turns to her)
Why is it, Signorina Agnes, I can perform six hours of surgery without the slightest fear and now...
(he gestures helplessly)
... Now I am frightened to death.
(suddenly)
Excuse me, but we should be going. I am sorry I brought you here.

He takes the astonished AGNES by the arm and escorts her toward the door. Suddenly he stops, turns to face her.

DOMENICO
(making up his mind)
No.

DOMENICO takes a deep breath, and rattles off something in Italian so fast that it sounds like machine gun fire. He finishes, looks at her. AGNES looks back at him blankly. Then it dawns on DOMENICO that she hasn't understood a word he has said.

(CONTINUED)

93 CONTINUED: 93

DOMENICO
I am sorry, Agnes. What I am asking is will you do me the honour to be my wife?

94 INT. LOBBY, A.R.C. HOSPITAL - DAY 94

DE LONG tries to make her way through the trunks and suitcases cluttering the lobby.

There is farewell hugging, kissing, between AGNES, MAC, DOTTIE, CAVIE, ANNA, VETA, CHARLOTTE, EMILY, RUTH, PHYLLIS, ELENA and ALL THE ITALIAN STAFF. AGNES is bidding a special farewell to her protégé, TERESA.

THE PORTERS are quickly moving the American nurses' luggage out the door, indicating their imminent departure.

MAC
They need to know which transport your bag goes on, Ag...

Completely immobilised by the weight of her indecision, AGNES just stands there staring at her duffle bag.

MAC
You have to make up your mind.

AGNES
Venice.
(suddenly)
No! No.
(to Mac)
I don't know. I don't know what to do.
(a long beat)
I can't stop thinking about him.

MAC
The Kid? Wake up. See it for what it was... a flirtation... maybe even a fling, but that's all.

AGNES
It was more than a fling. I told him I'd marry him.

MAC
You can't marry Ernest Hemingway! He's a child.

AGNES
You never liked him did you?

(CONTINUED)

94 CONTINUED: 94

MAC
No. No, I liked him fine and I think he's as good looking as sin, but, my God, he's not a husband.
(then, with a look)
But whatever you decide, I'm with you all the way.

AGNES
Oh, Mac, I can't bear the thought of you going.

She takes MAC in her arms.

95 INT. PATIENTS' WARD, A.R.C. HOSPITAL - DAY 95

AGNES stands alone, looking over the ward, void of patients.

THE CLEANING WOMEN are stripping the beds, tossing bedding into piles along with the curtains that used to separate the beds.

THE PORTERS are upending the beds, removing head boards, foot boards.

96 INT. CORRIDOR, NURSES QUARTERS, A.R.C. HOSPITAL - NIGHT 96

AGNES stands in the doorway of her old room, where only her small desk remains.

After a beat, she slowly enters, closing the door behind her.

AGNES (V.O.)
Dear Kid. I am writing this late at night after a long think by myself and I am afraid it is going to hurt you...

97 INT. ERNIE'S ROOM, HEMINGWAY HOME, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS - DAY 97

The Italian medals have taken their place next to a football, fishing rod, books and pictures of boxing champ Tommy Burns and football star Bum McClung.

ERNIE is reading Agnes' letter.

AGNES (V.O.)
... But I can't get away from the fact that you are still just a boy. I won't deceive you.
(more)

(CONTINUED)

97 CONTINUED: 97

AGNES (Cont'd)
Dr. Caracciolo has asked me to stay in Italy and marry him. I have decided to do so. I know that someday you will thank me for...

Every muscle in his body tenses as rage churns up like lava in a volcano. He rips the letter into shreds... reels around looking to destroy any symbol of his boyhood.

He rips his Oak Park High School pennant from the wall... flings his yearbook, footballs, and boxing gloves onto the floor.

He grabs something off his bedside table then looks down into his opened hand at the bullet that was in his leg and the ring Agnes gave him.

The symbols of love and war.

Still clutching them, he lies down on his bed. The crying that was lodged in his throat erupts and he sobs the last sobs of a little boy.

98 INT. BALLROOM, CARACCIOLO PALAZZO, VENICE - NIGHT 98

This is a celebration to mark the end of the war.

THE CARACCIOLO FAMILY MEMBERS we've already met plus 40 MEMBERS OF VENETIAN ARISTOCRACY, mostly middle-aged, are mingling, talking. All are attired in expensive formal wear. EIGHT LIVERIED FLUNKIES stand at attention along the walls.

DOMENICO is surrounded by a group of MALE FRIENDS, conversing in rapid Italian and, with many hand gestures, enjoying an 'inside' joke.

AGNES is striking in a magnificent ball gown, her dark hair up in an elegant style of the day.

ISABELLA
Agnes, I do hope you will say yes, you could be so happy here.

AGNES, obviously fond of ISABELLA, kisses her.

A STRING QUARTET begins to play the first waltz of the evening. Led by DOMENICO and AGNES, couples take to the floor

DOMENICO, an excellent dancer, whirls AGNES in fluid-like circles around the room.

(CONTINUED)

98 CONTINUED: 98

DOMENICO
Having you in my arms makes this the most wonderful waltz in the world.

The perfect couple, the perfect setting, the perfect future... except as we move CLOSE ON AGNES' face, we see that one thing is clearly missing... a true physical attraction to this man.

As they dance on, we - and AGNES - begin to hear, emerging through the waltz music, a dreamy, romantic melody, heard before on an unseen Victrola in a wretched room in a front line hotel.

CLOSER AND CLOSER ON AGNES' face. The tears in her eyes are not those of joy.

EXT. VENICE WATERFRONT - DAY 99

AGNES and DOMENICO are walking arm in arm. We can't hear what they are saying over the sounds of the SEAGULLS, the wind and the water, as they talk deeply and earnestly. They stop. And embrace, tenderly.

100 EXT. RESTAURANT, NEW YORK CITY - DAY 100

AGNES crosses a street in the business section of Manhattan and enters a discreet but obviously expensive restaurant.

SUPERIMPOSE: NEW YORK CITY, 1919

101 INT. RESTAURANT, NEW YORK CITY - DAY 101

MEN in business suits occupy most of the restaurant's tables.

AGNES enters, looking for someone. With a smile of recognition on her face, she navigates her way to a table.

HARRY, in a suit and tie, stands when he sees her.

AGNES
Hello, Harry.

HARRY
Agnes... how great to see you.

He holds a chair for her as she sits.

AGNES
You look very grown up. I must say that suit looks better on you than pyjamas.

(CONTINUED)

101 CONTINUED: 101

HARRY
And you look just as beautiful.
(then, as the WAITER pours her wine)
I took the liberty of ordering Chianti.
(lifting his glass)
For old time's sake.

AGNES
(raising her glass)
For old time's sake...

HARRY
It seems more like a hundred years than... eight months is it... since I saw you last. Do you remember?

AGNES
Certainly. You were giving front line advice to the lovelorn.

HARRY
Which I understood you didn't take. I had heard you'd married the good doctor, but...
(glancing at her hand)
I don't see a wedding ring.

AGNES looks away.

AGNES
No. No, I didn't marry Domenico. I'm afraid I've made a mess of things all the way around. How did you hear I was married?

HARRY
How do you think? From an angry, gin soaked voice on the telephone at three o'clock in the morning.

AGNES
(she quickly changes the subject)
And what about you, Harry? What are you up to?

HARRY
Trigonometry, calculus, which I loathe, but after graduation, I'm thinking about the diplomatic field.

AGNES
You'd be perfect...

(CONTINUED)

101 CONTINUED: 101

A long, tense silence rescued by the arrival of A WAITER to refill their glasses.

AGNES
... Do you ever see him?

HARRY
No, but I get raging, rambling letters from him -- mostly about you. He's very angry.

AGNES
He has every right to be. Where is he?

HARRY
He's up at Walloon Lake, trying his hand at scribbling -- living off his old man if you ask me. Does he know you're back?

She shakes her head.

HARRY
You haven't written him?

Again she shakes her head.

HARRY
(a long beat, then)
Do you mind if I ask you something?

She waits, still looking at the table cloth.

HARRY
Do you love him?

There is a long beat, finally she nods.

HARRY
Did you ever tell him?

AGNES
(a whisper)
Yes. But I don't think he heard.

HARRY
Don't you think it might be a good idea if you told him now?

102 EXT. WALLOON LAKE, MICHIGAN - LATE AFTERNOON 102

A local taxi waits in the background as AGNES walks through a spinney of silver birches, twigs snapping under her feet.

(CONTINUED)

102 CONTINUED: 102

A new sound brings her to a halt.

The SOUND of a shotgun firing repeatedly can be heard up ahead.

She sees a small, wood-framed cabin at the edge of a vast and beautiful lake.

As she gets closer to the lake, she sees geese in the sky... scattering with each firing of the gun.

Then, as she walks around the cabin she sees a small dock with a boat tied up to it.

103 EXT. BOAT DOCK, WALLOON LAKE, MICHIGAN - LATE AFTERNOON 103

ERNIE is standing at the end of the dock, facing away from her, firing at the geese. He is halfway to becoming the Hemingway of legend, in a checked shirt, suspenders, cord trousers and old shoes. He is growing a beard.

AGNES
Harry told me where to find you.

ERNIE slowly lowers the gun. He puts his hand on the back of his neck over the hairs that are standing up. He looks out over the peaceful lake, perhaps to draw strength from its calm. Then, coming to a decision, he turns and walks toward the cabin. He still limps a little.

ERNIE
(full of defenses)
What are you doing here?

AGNES
There were things that needed to be said. I just hope it's not too late.

ERNIE continues toward the cabin and AGNES has no choice but to follow.

104 INT. CABIN, WALLOON LAKE, MICHIGAN - LATE AFTERNOON 104

Rough but liveable. A man's cave. Momentoes of hunting trips including an elk's head on a wall over a large fireplace. An improvised writing table, chest high, by the window facing the lake.

On the wall are some photographs from the war. Several guns are in a case.

As soon as ERNIE enters, he instinctively covers up what he has been writing.

(CONTINUED)

104 CONTINUED: 104

ERNIE
(as Agnes enters)
You want a drink?

AGNES weighs it up. She has come this far.

AGNES
All right.

ERNIE
In that case, I think I'll have one too.

He limps over to a table which holds several bottles.

AGNES
How is your leg?

ERNIE
Is that a personal or a professional question?

AGNES
Oh, Ernie...

ERNIE hands AGNES her drink. It is a stiff one, as is his. He downs his drink in a gulp, raising his glass.

ERNIE
(toasts)
Absent friends.

AGNES drinks silently. This isn't going to be easy. She covers her discomfort by examining the cabin. She spots photographs on the wall and goes over to them.

She looks at several group photographs taken at the American hospital in Italy. ERNIE is already working on his second drink.

AGNES
Remember Dottie? She married Burnside, of all people. Rosie ran off with Larkin. Oh, and Mac said, if I saw you again, to say hello.

No response from ERNIE. AGNES feels she is babbling.

AGNES
As you'd expect she's still with the Red Cross, nursing in Cuba.

ERNIE fills up his glass again. He looks out the window. Lights a cigar.

(CONTINUED)

104 CONTINUED: 104

ERNIE
Burnside. Never liked him. Pompous ass.

AGNES
Are you in touch with any of the boys?

ERNIE
(noncommittal)
Harry sometimes.

AGNES
Yes, he said you've been writing.

ERNIE
I've sold a few pieces.

ERNIE pauses to refill his glass a third time. He does not drink from it. He's waiting for AGNES to come to the point. He moves to the door.

ERNIE
Christ, it's stuffy in here.

He swings open the screen door and steps outside.

105 EXT. CABIN PORCH, WALLOON LAKE - LATE AFTERNOON 105

AGNES follows ERNIE. The view is breathtaking.

AGNES
It's beautiful... just as I imagined.

ERNIE looks out over the lake.

ERNIE
(sarcastically)
My little palazzo in the woods.

She knows what is coming.

ERNIE
Harry told me you and doctor whatshisname didn't go through with it. Why not? Can't you commit to anyone?

AGNES
It was a mistake. There was always someone else...

ERNIE
Anyone I know?

(CONTINUED)

105 CONTINUED: 105

AGNES
Oh, come on Ernie... who else but you? It still is. I was so...

ERNIE cuts her off.

ERNIE
No apologies, no regrets, remember?

AGNES
Yes, I do remember. That's why I had to come and tell you how sorry I am...

ERNIE
Sorry for what? It was the war. A lot of things happen in a war. What did either of us know?

AGNES
Oh, we knew. You can't deny that.

ERNIE
We had a fling. Kid's stuff.

They stare at each other. They both know it isn't true. Agnes turns away. Ernie finally breaks the silence.

ERNIE
But there's still a part of me that wants to take you in my arms... just like it was... But I've changed.

AGNES
Of course things have changed.

ERNIE
It wouldn't work. Not now. Not this time.

AGNES
(struggling against tears)
Oh, Kid.

ERNIE
The Kid grew up, Ag. Thanks to you.

AGNES has no answer. She nods slowly, sadly. Then she walks down the steps from the porch, stops for a moment and looks back at him.

(CONTINUED)

105 CONTINUED: 105

AGNES
I'll love you Ernie, as long as I live.

She turns and makes her way back up the hill.

ERNIE throws his cigar aside. He goes inside the cabin.

106 INT. CABIN, WALLOON LAKE, MICHIGAN - DAY 106

With no more than a glance at AGNES' retreating figure, ERNIE goes to his desk. He picks up his pen - as if to start writing. He can't. He puts the pen down and turns to watch AGNES, now a small figure among the trees.

We stay on ERNIE'S back as the love of his life disappears from view. His shotgun lies on a nearby table.

107 EXT. CEMETERY, KETCHUM, IDAHO - DAY 107

HARRY, the only remaining onlooker, stands and watches as the last car of MOURNERS disappears around the bend in the road.

Looking at the setting sun, then the empty road he sighs in resignation and walks toward his rental car.

Just as he begins to get in, he thinks he hears something. He waits. And waits. Then he sees a taxi appearing around the bend.

He watches in anxious anticipation as it pulls up, stopping ahead of where he stands under a tree.

From HARRY'S POV we see the silhouette of a woman through the back window. As she turns her head, now crowned with gray hair, we clearly see the profile of AGNES.

She gets out of the taxi. Her physicality is reminiscent of the AGNES of 40 years ago, only a little stooped now. Her back still to HARRY, she doesn't see him standing under the tree.

We don't see her face as she walks toward the freshly dug grave. Her gait is slower, but still graceful.

The camera rises slowly until HARRY disappears from frame.

We remain on AGNES as she reaches Ernie's grave. She stands alone, perfectly still, with her memories.

FADE OUT