

'UNTITLED STEVE KNIGHT PROJECT'  
(for Graham King Films)

By Steve Knight

Second Option  
October 31st 2013

EXT. DESERT - DAWN

The sun is just touching the horizon and a shaft of crimson light floods the empty desert.

The only sound is the engine of a twin prop Lysander airplane which we don't see. The drone continues over the sunrise for a few moments.

*Caption: Essaouira desert, Eastern Morocco, Spring 1942*

Then we see the black Lysander plane silhouetted against the blue sky. The Lysander is a skinny spy plane made mostly from wood, designed for working below enemy radar.

The plane swoops fast and begins to make its approach on a strip of flat sand. The desert is rocky and there are scrubby plants growing so the landing is going to be hazardous.

The plane comes in fast and snags on thorn trees and bushes as it hits the ground. The lightweight body is spun around and pieces are torn off the plane as it falls on to one side. A wheel hits a rock and spins high into the air. Fuel sprays from a puncture in the bodywork.

The plane bucks. All this is seen through a cloud of desert sand which is kicked up by the landing. Finally the nose of the plane twists to the left and the plane comes to rest.

*The plane was never meant to survive this landing. Whoever is inside is here for good.*

The cloud of sand and dust begins to settle. Fuel drips in the silence. The first ray of desert sun is magnified through a piece of cockpit glass and we sense that the plane is going to blow at any moment.

*Then the cockpit creaks open.*

A handsome man in his thirties emerges. This is MAX VATAN. He has a few cuts to his face and hands but nothing serious. He glances once at the rising sun and consults a small compass that he pulls from his flying jacket.

He flicks his zippo lighter and sets fire to the flight record which he pulls from his pocket. He drops the burning paper on the sand and begins to run.

The Lysander bursts into flames...

EXT. DESERT ROAD

Max is jogging at an even pace as the sun rises behind him. We sense the heat will soon be unbearable and Max needs to get where he is going before it comes up.

EXT. DESERT ROAD, A MILE AWAY

We come close to a big 1938 Traction 15 G Citroen Saloon car, all curves and chrome, with a white leather interior, sitting right there in the middle of the desert. A small sandstorm has blown up and the car is sometimes almost hidden, but inside we see keys in the ignition.

A few odd, eerie moments of waiting beside the car. Then suddenly the door is yanked open and Max climbs inside.

Max has no time to waste. He checks the contents of the car. On the back seat a Jerry can of fuel and another of water (both labelled in French). Beside the cans on the back seat are a set of casual clothes in the style of a fashionable Frenchman of the 1940s.

Max then pulls open the spacious glove compartment. Inside he finds a dismantled Sten gun which he puts on the passenger seat. He then finds French Moroccan cash (two hundred Vichy Francs) and identity papers in the name of Maurice Berne. The papers are in French.

Max then shakes the opened envelope. A photograph of a beautiful woman falls out, along with a key. He studies the photograph for a moment, committing the face to memory as he stuffs the key into his pocket. (We will learn that this woman is MARIANNE BEAUSEJOUR). Then he turns the photo over and reads an address. *'Cafe Rivoli, 161 Rue Tangiers.'* Beneath the address are the words 'BURN THIS' in capital letters.

Max clicks open his zippo lighter and sets the photograph on fire. It burns briefly in his fingers and he drops the ashes into the steel ashtray.

He then grabs the clothes and gets out of the car.

EXT. DESERT/CAR

For a few moments, through the sandstorm, we see Max Vatan naked as he changes his clothes. He lets his old clothes fly into the storm and disappear.

He gets back into the car a different man. A kind of re-birth.

INT. CAR

Max settles into the driver's seat. He angles a cloth cap onto his head and checks his look in the rear view mirror. He stuffs his new identity papers into the pocket of his jacket and fires the engine.

We see the car turn around and set off into the desert. As it disappears into the sand storm we hear big-band swing jazz...

INT. 'CAFE RIVOLI', CASABLANCA - THAT NIGHT

The cafe is pure World War Two North Africa.

Smoke swirls under propeller fans and a band plays American jazz. German and Vichy French military uniforms are everywhere, along with merchants, locals, hookers and spies.

Max enters. He looks around and walks by a couple of tables, checking out the bar. He is looking for someone.

Then, through the crowds and smoke, he sees who he is looking for. He half smiles. We follow his eyeline...

There is a large table of men and women, mostly *pieds-noir* (French raised in North Africa) who look like regular people on a special night out. They are drinking and chatting. Among them we notice the woman in the photograph that Max found in the car.

She is as beautiful as the photo, the center of a lot of attention, laughing, chattering, the spirit of the table. This is MARIANNE BEAUSEJOUR.

Marianne lights a cigarette then looks up. She freezes as the conversations continue around her. Max is now standing at the edge of the dance floor, half smiling, staring only at Marianne.

Marianne slowly stands up. As she does, her friends notice and follow her look to Max. Max and Marianne are now two still points in the room and more and more people at the table notice.

A friend (MONIQUE) speaks softly in French to Marianne...

MONIQUE

(What's wrong? Who is it?)

Marianne looks overwhelmed. The band hits a big intro. Marianne knocks over her chair as she flies to Max and leaps into his arms. They hug and kiss and hold each other and Max lifts her off the floor.

Questions are spreading around the table and Marianne grabs Max's hand and tugs him to the crowd. She gets up on a chair and announces out of sheer joy, yelling against the music...

MARIANNE

(Friends, colleagues, and those of you who thought he was a figment of my imagination, may I introduce, all the way from France and completely out of the blue...my wonderful, wonderful husband).

The table reacts and begins to applaud spontaneously. As Marianne steps down from the chair, Monique stands and kisses Marianne on both cheeks.

MONIQUE

(You didn't know he was coming?!)

MARIANNE

(I thought he was stuck in France forever).

At the table one of the guys has popped a bottle of Champagne and is pouring glasses. Everyone is delighted for Marianne. Marianne grabs Max's hands...

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

(Oh Maurice, how long do we have?)

MAX

(The department gave me six weeks leave).

Marianne yells with delight so everyone can hear...

MARIANNE

(Six weeks?! That is a lifetime!)

Everyone around is beaming. The guy with the Champagne approaches and offers them two glasses.

FRIEND

(So, it is true. You do exist!)

MAX

(Last time I looked in the mirror...)

Max lights a cigarette with his Zippo lighter. There are grins and handshakes all around...

FRIEND

(Marianne never stops talking about you).

MAX

(All good things I hope).

MONIQUE

(All amazing).

MAX (GRINNING)

(Oh hell, now I have to be amazing.)

Max drinks the Champagne down in one then takes Marianne's arm. He addresses the people around with easy charm...

MAX (CONT'D)

(Ladies and gentlemen, I haven't seen my wife in many months. I know you will forgive me if I take her home and...renew our acquaintance).

There is laughter, approval and Max kisses Marianne on the lips. Marianne turns to the table...

MARIANNE

(I must give you some money for the bill...)

MONIQUE

(No. Go, go. We will settle the bill. You go and settle your overdue account with your husband.)

More laughter. Max and Marianne turn to leave. Monique calls out...

MONIQUE (CONT'D)

(Monsieur Berne. You have a wonderful wife. When you are settled we must all meet and you can tell us all about yourself).

Max glances at Marianne and waves his cap with a bow...

MAX

(I look forward to it).

The band hits a loud jazz riff and Max and Marianne disappear into the throng as they head for the door...

EXT. 'CAFE RIVOLI', CASABLANCA - NIGHT

A chilly night in Casablanca. We can still hear the jazz as Max and Marianne approach the Citroen, parked in the street.

Max holds open the door for Marianne and speaks softly in English (with a Canadian accent)...

MAX

You were pretty good.

MARIANNE

You weren't so bad yourself.

They both get in and slam the doors.

EXT. CASABLANCA/INT. CITROEN - NIGHT

Max drives as Marianne lights two cigarettes with Max's Zippo lighter. They are driving through the darkened suburbs which are in black-out apart from a few charcoal ovens.

MAX

I've heard a lot about you around the circuits.

She hands him his cigarette...

MARIANNE

I've heard a lot about you.

MAX

You ran Dieppe for a while.

Marianne responds, dead pan and formal...

MARIANNE (INSTANTLY)

I never discuss non-relevant operational information with anyone. Not even other operatives.

She clicks the lighter closed...

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

Especially not ones who make basic mistakes.

Marianne very pointedly drops the lighter out of the window. Max brakes...

MAX

Hey, what the hell?

MARIANNE

American lighter. We are in French-German territory. I see I'm going to have to watch you like a hawk.

Max steps on the gas again. He glances at her and sees she is half smiling, maybe even teasing him. He shifts in his seat...

MAX

I'll try to stay relevant.

MARIANNE

That would be appreciated.

MAX

London said you've been in the Assembly building six months.

MARIANNE

Three months as a typist. Then I got promoted to the Embassy Liaison Department. I deal with the German legation every day.

Marianne looks out of the window as she blows smoke...

MAX

They trust you?

MARIANNE

How did it look?

Max glances in the rear view.

MAX

They seemed to like you.

MARIANNE (INSTANTLY)

I like them.

Max looks at her.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

I keep the emotions real. That's why it works. Turn left here.

Max stops and signals to turn left. Marianne reaches over and flicks the indicator off...

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

No one signals in Casablanca. You just do what you have to do and let everyone else go to hell.

A horn hoots behind. Max turns left.

INT. APARTMENT - EVENING

The apartment is tidy and functional in turn of the century French style. The wooden floorboards are dark polished oak and the furniture is *art-deco*. The door opens and Marianne ushers Max inside. She bolts the door but pushes open the window blinds.

MARIANNE

Now you're here I can show you off.  
The neighbors are French so they're  
nosey.

Max watches Marianne as she heads for the kitchen...

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

The best thing about Casablanca is  
the coffee. You want some?

He nods. She begins to brew coffee with her back turned. He studies her as they talk...

MAX

I didn't think your English would  
be so good.

MARIANNE

Yes, but your French is pretty bad.

Max is instantly offended and switches effortlessly to fluent French.

MAX

(I happen to be fluent. French is  
my first language.)

Marianne turns and looks incredulous.

MARIANNE

(But you sound so obviously  
*Canadian*).

MAX

(I've been working for two months  
on my Parisian accent...).

Marianne stops what she's doing.

MARIANNE

(So let me hear it.)

A defensive pause.

MAX

(That was it.)

Marianne puts her hand to her mouth as she laughs. Max defies, trying his best...

MAX (CONT'D)  
(One two three four, I love to ride  
the Metro, take me to the Champs  
D'Elysee. What are you laughing  
at?)

Marianne is laughing as she comes back into the lounge as the coffee brews...

MARIANNE  
(Ok, we are in trouble. That was  
pure Montreal!)

There is a playfulness about Marianne which engages Max instantly. He is surprised by her lightness. Straight away there is a connection.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)  
(You sound like you're chopping  
wood with your teeth, *Quebecoise*.  
I'm going to have to teach you).

Max shrugs, defiant and amused...

MAX  
Hey, you don't sound so Sorbonne  
yourself. What is that in your  
voice? German?

Marianne switches back to English too.

MARIANNE  
I am from Alsace. You are from  
outer space. We have time, thank  
God, to do something with you.

Max nods gently, more serious now.

MAX  
Exactly how long do we have?

A pause. The coffee is bubbling up.

MARIANNE (SERIOUS)  
The Embassy party is in two weeks.

Max looks around the small apartment.

MAX  
Two weeks.

A pause as Marianne looks around the apartment too...

MARIANNE

It's not so bad. Water's hot  
sometimes. Mice are very polite.

A pause.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

You can take the bed, I'll take the  
couch.

Max shakes his head...

MAX

I've been behind the lines for two  
years. I sleep better on the  
floor.

MARIANNE

Actually, you should sleep on the  
roof. It's cooler. In Casablanca  
the roof is where husbands go after  
they've got what they want from  
their wives.

She heads back to the kitchen. He watches her go...

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

Anyway we won't be in the apartment  
much. If I'm going to get you an  
invitation to the big party, I have  
to go out there and sell you...

She takes the coffee pot off the stove...

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

(...Like ice cream on a hot  
afternoon).

Max smiles, studying her from afar. She's everything he  
expected and more. She pours Max's coffee and brings it to  
him. As he takes it she studies him with a professional eye.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

With the girls at least it will be  
a breeze.

She turns back to the kitchen as Max analyses the compliment.

EXT. APARTMENT, ROOF TOP

Max is lying on the roof top under a blanket, staring at the  
stars. We hear the noise of the souk and the street from down  
below. The city is just lights in the distance and on the  
roof there are aerials and wires which moan in the breeze.

He puts a cigarette in his mouth and realizes he no longer has a lighter. He lies with the cigarette unlit in his mouth.

INT. APARTMENT, BEDROOM

Marianne is lying awake too, staring at the ceiling. Her window is open and her curtain billows in a breeze. She sits up and looks out. In a window nearby she glimpses a middle-aged French woman peering across.

Marianne makes a decision and gets out of bed in her (beguiling) night clothes.

EXT. APARTMENT, ROOF TOP

Max is startled as Marianne emerges from a hatch. She is carrying a small kerosene lamp to light the way. She comes to lie beside him. The desert wind blows around them.

MARIANNE

The neighbors will find it curious  
if I don't come to visit on your  
first night.

She lies down beside him but doesn't share the blanket. Max uses her kerosene lamp to light his cigarette and the lamp bathes them in a pool of soft light.

In a nearby rooftop apartment another curtain twitches. Marianne gestures at it.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

I told Madam Torgenot and Madam  
Petit all about you. They will be  
very excited.

MAX

My God. Your neighbors love you too  
huh?

MARIANNE (IGNORING)

They will guess that the sex is  
already done.

Max smiles, smoking...

MAX

It was great, by the way.

MARIANNE

Then you went to the roof. I missed you because I've been sleeping alone so many months. So I came up to tell you I love you.

Max smiles to the sky...

MAX

You're pretty thorough.

MARIANNE

That's why I'm still alive. We should talk and laugh.

MAX

We're married, why would we laugh?

She laughs. He sits up.

MAX (CONT'D)

Ok, what do we talk about?

A pause. She smiles...

MARIANNE

Kiss me.

He hesitates then kisses her on the nose. Over his shoulder we see a face at a curtain...

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

Now talk. Tell me what you will do after the war.

A pause. Max isn't a fan of small talk but goes along with it.

MAX

I don't know what I will do.

Marianne strokes Max's face, the way a loving wife would.

MARIANNE

Look, the lovely Madam Petit in apartment eighty seven is married to a German tank Captain. She is watching us. Talk and laugh.

Max sees the perfectly natural smile on Marianne's face. He decides he must engage...

MAX

Ok, ok. After the war I'm buying a ranch. I'm going to breed horses.

Marianne shares his cigarette...

MARIANNE

A *ranch*. You mean like in the movies? Cowboys. Bang bang.

MAX

Yeah.

MARIANNE

Are you just saying this to say something or is it real?

MAX

It's real. It's a ranch on the prairie. Right outside a place called Medicine Hat.

She laughs...

MARIANNE

Now I know you're joking.

They both laugh and, for effect, Max strokes Marianne's hair from her face...

MAX

I'm serious. The town is called Medicine Hat.

MARIANNE

That is a really silly name for a place.

MAX

Yeah. But when things get really bad I just think it to myself. 'Medicine Hat'.

She laughs again. A pause.

MARIANNE

You think you'll really ever get there?

Max doesn't speak. Marianne stares at the stars.

MARIANNE (SOFTLY) (CONT'D)

I guess that's not the point of Medicine Hat, huh.

A pause.

MAX (SOFTLY)

No. It's just something to think about when everything is black.

A pause. Marianne seems to understand the sentiment perfectly. They are close. After a moment...

MARIANNE

Ok. That wasn't so hard was it?

Max stubs the cigarette.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

Now this is the part where I tell you I love you and leave you to count the stars or whatever it is men do on their rooftops.

He peers at her. He already likes her.

MARIANNE (AMUSED) (CONT'D)

Je t'aime.

MAX (AMUSED TOO)

Je t'aime aussi.

MARIANNE

Kiss me again.

Max hesitates for a moment then kisses Marianne gently on the lips. They peer at each other for half a second. She gets up and walks. Max wraps himself in his blanket as he turns his back to go to sleep.

Across the rooftops Madam Petit turns out her light.

INT. APARTMENT, BEDROOM - MORNING

Marianne throws open the shutters and brilliant sunlight pours in.

The bedroom is neat and ordered. Marianne turns and slides open a wardrobe door.

MARIANNE

Ok, you can come in now.

Max enters. He is eating toast and sipping coffee. Marianne gestures at the open wardrobe, where we see a dozen men's suits and various casual clothes, shoes, ties etc.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

I have told everyone that you are quite a serious Catholic, you are kind of formal and reserved but you like expensive clothes...

She picks up a pair of polished brogues...

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

And your shoes are always polished. So. *Voila*.

Max is again impressed by her thoroughness. Marianne opens a drawer and takes out a silver crucifix. She hooks it over Max's neck.

MAX

I will leave you to choose.

After she has gone, Max examines the suits. He likes them.

INT. APARTMENT - LATER

Max is buttoning a shirt and pulling on a tie. He is dressed in one of the suits and Marianne is dressed up too. As they talk they move around each other in the small space, checking their hair and collars, Marianne pulls on shoes, Max finds cuff links. They are dressing for an occasion...

Max is pronouncing very deliberately as he buttons his shirt...

MAX

(The large lady is sitting in a small chair...)

MARIANNE

*Non, non, non.* So harsh soldier. If you want to be Parisian let your lips go loose. You will meet people today who can tell the difference..

She squirts some Cologne on Max as he pulls his tie.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

You should *smell* like a Parisian too. Try moving your lips like this...

Marianne stretches her lips in a ludicrous way and Max hoots with laughter.

MAX

Did you ever see anyone talking  
like that? Have you ever even been  
to Paris?

Marianne hesitates then goes to a mirror to apply lipstick...

MARIANNE (SOFTLY)

Yes, of course I've been to  
Paris...

Max realizes (for reasons we don't get yet) he has said the  
wrong thing.

MAX

Sorry. I forgot.

She gets busy with her face. Max is fastening cuff links...

MAX (CONT'D)

I heard V-section in London screwed  
up your circuit.

MARIANNE

It was no one's fault.

MAX

How the hell did you get away?

Marianne turns, sombre now.

MARIANNE

When the Gestapo came to my door I  
jumped out of a window and ran.  
That's all. All my friends were  
taken and killed.

A pause. She curses moistness in her eye as she applies  
mascara. Max studies her...

MAX

You know, in London you're kind of  
a legend. No pictures, no  
fingerprints.

She picks a stray piece of cotton from his shoulder.

MARIANNE

I thought in English a legend was  
something that didn't exist.

MAX

I only met one guy in the whole of  
France who'd even seen you.

She fusses in her purse...

MAX (CONT'D)

A pilot. Guy Sangster. You got him out of France through Dieppe. You remember him?

Marianne is busy loading her purse...

MARIANNE

I told you, I don't discuss non relevant information...

MAX (QUICKLY)

Sorry.

He glances at her as she goes to the mirror...

MAX (CONT'D)

He sure as hell remembered you.

MARIANNE (SMILING)

And what did he say about me?

A long pause. Marianne stands in the mirror for a final check of her outfit.

MAX

Beautiful. And good.

She peers at Max.

MARIANNE

Being good at this kind of work is not very beautiful.

A pause. Max sees a profound sadness on Marianne's face for just a half second. Then she turns and looks Max up and down.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

You look ok. Let's go.

INT. CATHOLIC CHURCH, VILLE NOUVELLE, CASABLANCA

Max and Marianne stand in a pew along with a large congregation, singing a French hymn. The pews are full of well dressed French people, many of them in the greys and blues of the Vichy French military. There are also German soldiers in uniform among the congregation.

A middle-aged French officer near the front of the pews (MARSHALL CLAUDE) half turns to glance at Marianne and check out Max. Max keeps singing. Marianne whispers...

MARIANNE  
(Important).

EXT. CATHOLIC CHURCH

On the bone white steps, the congregation emerges into brilliant sunlight. Max and Marianne mingle and, from afar, we see Marianne introducing Max to friends and associates. He seems to be doing well.

We come close as Marshall Claude picks his way through the crowd to greet Marianne.

CLAUDE  
(Madam Berne. Please. I heard about his dramatic entrance. Let me meet the mystery man).

There is laughter as Max and Claude shake hands.

CLAUDE (CONT'D)  
(I am so pleased to meet you at last. Your wonderful wife never shuts up about you).

MAX  
(Apologies. I hope I am not too much of a disappointment.)

CLAUDE  
(You should know she is the best secretary in the whole Assembly building. And she is the life and soul of the office).

Max feigns jealousy...

MAX  
(I hope I don't cramp her style now I'm here).

CLAUDE  
(Oh it's nothing like that. She has everyone laughing and happy).

Max smiles.

CLAUDE (CONT'D)  
(Anyway, my wife was wondering if you two would like to come to dinner).

Max and Marianne look at each other. Marianne feigns shock...

MARIANNE

(Oh my lord. Look at my husband's face. Look at that false smile. My husband hates to be sociable).

Claude winks, liking Max already...

CLAUDE (TO MAX)

(We will do it for the sake of the women, yes?)

Max smiles...

EXT. ANFA CAFE, CASABLANCA

In the heart of the French built Ville Nouvelle district is a Hispano-Mauresque cafe called Anfa. There are tables outside where fashionable people meet. Again, there are lots of men in German and French military uniforms. Max and Marianne find a table and sit.

MARIANNE

This is a good place to be seen on Sunday.

Marianne orders two coffees and waits for the waiter to disappear. After he has gone...

MAX

You appear to have the entire Vichy French Government wrapped around your finger, Madam Berne.

Marianne shrugs...

MAX (CONT'D)

You really know how to fool people.

Max studies his coffee. Marianne smiles a greeting at another couple at a distant table.

MARIANNE

(Look and smile, Quebécoise.)

Max peers across the tables and smiles. Then, at a table a little way beyond, he sees someone in a dark military uniform glancing over.

Max looks away sharply. The guy looks away too. It is not even certain there was eye contact. Marianne sees Max's reaction straight away.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

What's wrong?

A waiter drops two small black coffees with *biscotti* on the table and departs. Max adds sugar to his coffee...

MAX

The military *Gendarme* at three o'clock. I think I recognize him. He was attached to the *Abwehr* in Marseille. He interrogated me once.

Marianne lights a cigarette as if nothing has happened. She glances through the tables...

MARIANNE

Relax. I don't think he saw you. He is looking at his paper.

Max sips his coffee, his mind working. Marianne glances at him.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

Max, it's ok. It may not even be the same guy.

Max is now a bundle of tension.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

Man, you're so jumpy.

Max speaks very softly...

MAX

When I'm jumpy I jump. It's my job.

Just then, through tables, we see the Military police guy stand up, fold his paper and walk toward the door to go inside the cafe. Max turns just a little to ease his profile out of view.

Marianne laughs loudly to cover...

MARIANNE

(Oh that is such a wonderful story...)

The Military police guy passes. A stray chair forces him to slow and he half glances at Max and Marianne. Then he goes inside.

After he has gone, Max immediately grabs the *biscotti* biscuit that came with the coffee and snaps it in half. He then gets to his feet. Marianne is alarmed.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

Where the hell are you going?

Max follows the guy inside.

INT. ANFA CAFE

The military policeman has walked through the busy cafe and gone to a long dark corridor where there are four mahogany telephone booths. Beyond them is the dark oak door of the men's bathroom.

The policeman goes into one of the phone booths and disappears. Max moves like a shadow and enters the booth beside. He listens at the partition. We hear the words in French....

MILITARY POLICEMAN

(Put me through to the Commissariat of Police. Quickly. Yes, I will hold).

Max makes a fast decision. He can't be sure what the call is about or even if he has been spotted but he is trained not to take chances. He checks the corridor is empty. He then slips into the booth, grabs the military policeman in a lock...

With his bare hands he kills the guy in three seconds, using a technique known as '*silent killing*'. This was taught to all SOE agents behind the lines. Max's eyes are dead in his head as he goes about the business of killing.

The policeman falls limp in Max's arms. Max then takes the half of *biscotti* and opens the guy's mouth. He shoves the biscuit down his throat with his thumb, jamming it into his windpipe.

He then lets the guy slip to the floor. He straightens and walks out into the main cafe. He leans across the stainless steel counter and calls out...

MAX

(Some guy in there sounds like he's choking or something.)

Max walks.

EXT. ANFA CAFE

Max re-joins Marianne and grabs his coat from the back of his chair. He grins...

MAX

(Ok baby, let's go).

Marianne guesses what has happened but you wouldn't know it from the easy way she smiles, sips the last of her coffee and links arms with Max as they walk away.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Max is smoking and brooding as Marianne cooks a stew in the kitchen. Steam rises, the room is hot and the shutters are open. The sounds of the North African street come through an open window.

Jazz is playing on the French radio station.

Marianne pours a bowl of stew and brings it to Max. It steams on the table.

MARIANNE

Rabbit. I cook it with peaches. Cooking with peaches is the only thing the Moroccans have invented in a thousand years.

Max doesn't move. She comes to him and he snarls...

MAX (DEFENSIVE)

Look, I couldn't take the chance that I might run into him again at the wrong moment.

Marianne holds up her hands.

MARIANNE

I didn't say anything. Jesus...

A pause.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

And besides, I would have expected nothing less from Max Vatan.

Max glowers. She is on dangerous ground. He snaps back..

MAX

What the hell does *that* mean?

She hesitates then dives in...

MARIANNE

You're kind of a legend in the circuits too.

Max looks away in disgust. Then he rattles off...

MAX

Yeah. I kill people. That's what I'm good at. That's what I do. Maybe that's why you have me sleep on the fucking roof at night.

Max knows even as he says it that it's an unfair accusation. But there is a darkness in Max. Marianne isn't fazed. She comes to him and peers into his eyes.

MARIANNE

If you were *really* good at this kind of work, you wouldn't care.

A moment between them. She returns to the table.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

Come and eat and think about Medicine Head.

Max stubs his cigarette.

MAX

Medicine *Hat*.

A pause.

MARIANNE

Still a stupid name.

At last Max half smiles. He goes to the table and sits down to eat. Jaunty French music strikes up...

EXT. GARDEN DINNER PARTY

A montage with music...

In a large outside courtyard Max and Marianne are eating dinner with three other couples. Marshall Claude is there, this time out of uniform.

The guests are all laughing and drinking wine, speaking French. Swing music is playing on a record player. We get no translations but we see that Max is getting along fine. Then a Libyan servant enters with another two guests. Claude stands and introduces the new guy to Max...

OFFICER

(Maurice? This is Vincent. He's from Paris too).

Max and Vincent shake hands. Vincent is about to speak but Marianne steps up...

MARIANNE (TO MAX)  
(Baby? I'm bored. I have a wild  
idea. Let's dance).

She comes between Max and the Parisian, taking Max's hand.  
She twirls around and the other guests are all delighted.

CLAUDE (LAUGHING)  
(You are utterly crazy Madam  
Berne).

MARIANNE  
(Yes. Come on, let's dance  
everyone!)

There is laughter as other couples get to their feet. The  
dancing begins and people shriek with laughter. The music is  
turned up full blast. As Max pulls Marianne close he peers  
at her for a moment.

MAX  
You don't trust me.

MARIANNE  
He's from Paris.

MAX  
I'm offended.

MARIANNE  
I don't care. Dance like you mean  
it...

Max holds her close. We feel the raw attraction between  
them. They dance on. Everyone can see they look good  
together...

EXT. APARTMENT, ROOF TOP

The music swells and continues as the montage resumes...

As the sun rises over Casablanca, we see Max and Marianne  
eating breakfast, cross-legged on the roof, face-to-face. We  
don't come close enough for words, but we see them laughing  
and talking as they share food.

INT. 'CAFE RIVOLI', CASABLANCA

The same gang of colleagues who were present when Max first  
arrived are gathered again. They sit at the same table and  
Max is the object of everyone's attention. A slight Italian  
guy is sitting beside Max (we might infer this guy has a  
thing for Marianne, his questions are a little edgy)...

ITALIAN

(So what work were you doing in France that kept you away from your wife for so long?)

Max pours a glass of wine...

MAX

(Surveying for track. And laying it).

MAX (CONT'D)

(Trains?)

Max studies the guy and cools a little...

MAX (CONT'D)

(It was a French-German project. On the Normandy coast. Classified.)

A pause. The Italian guy shrugs and laughs...

ITALIAN

(It would take a hell of a lot to keep me away from someone like Marianne).

Max peers at Marianne across the table...

MAX

(Yeah. She's quite a woman).

Max and Marianne's eyes meet for real through the smoke. We should sense the (genuine) attraction growing...

INT. 'CAFE RIVOLI', DANCE FLOOR - LATER

A slow track is being played. Max and Marianne are close, drifting to the music. Only two other couples are on the floor. No words are spoken but we should feel the heat between them, which is increasingly real. Finally...

MAX

I'm getting kind of tired fighting off these jealous guys you work with.

She smiles...

MARIANNE

Relax. They know I'm in love with you.

Their eyes meet as they dance.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

It's very obvious.

They dance some more. After a moment Marianne breaks away and heads for the bathroom. We should sense she is walking away to shut down feelings which make her uncomfortable. Max watches her go...

EXT. DESERT - DAY

A gun shot ends the music.

A picnic is laid out but Max and Marianne are busy firing weapons into the endless sand. The car is parked a half mile away and glistens in the sunlight. We see Max and Marianne shooting at an old jacket which has been pinned on the spikes of a cactus. Max takes aim and pumps three rounds into the jacket.

His hand is steady. Marianne looks impressed. He then hands Marianne a Sten gun. Marianne takes aim and pulls the trigger. Nothing happens. Max is puzzled.

MAX (INCREDULOUS)

You forgot to take off the safety clip. Jesus.

Marianne struggles to find the Sten safety clip. Finally Max helps her. He switches the clip and Marianne fires and hits the target.

Max unloads the gun with an easy flick. There is a flicker of uncertainty on his face as he shoulders the gun.

INT. CAR, DESERT ROAD

Silence.

Max and Marianne are driving back to Casablanca through empty, featureless desert. They drive in silence for a long time, as if there is a taboo topic. Finally...

MAX

How come you don't know Stens?

Marianne seems unconcerned.

MARIANNE

I am used to using stolen German weapons.

MAX

But you're ok to use a Sten gun on the night of the operation, right?

Marianne turns to glare at Max.

MARIANNE

I would be 'ok' even if I had to use cutlery. Don't look at me like that *Quebecoise*. I won't let you down.

He drives on. An irritable unease between them. Marianne opens a window and puts her face into the wind again. Max wants her attention.

MAX

You have any idea how many bodyguards the Ambassador will have?

MARIANNE (CASUAL)

Out of my control. I am only dealing with the French guest list.

A pause.

MAX

I can take out seven before I take a hit.

She leans back into the car.

MARIANNE

So precise.

MAX (IRRITATED)

I have to be.

She still seems unconcerned. He wants her to be....

MAX (CONT'D)

Marianne there are only two days to go until the Embassy Ball and I still don't have an invitation in my hand.

Instead of confronting, Marianne reels off details in a weary voice.

MARIANNE

Tomorrow we meet the Ambassador's liaison. He is German from Cologne.

(MORE)

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

He likes golf, gambling and boys.  
He is the final hurdle. He will be  
ok. Trust me.

A pause. They drive on. She peers at him.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

You know I forgot to ask. What are  
our chances of us surviving this  
operation?

A pause.

MAX

Both of us? Ten per cent. One of  
us? Twenty per cent.

A pause.

MARIANNE

Any idea which one?

MAX

That's down to luck.

MARIANNE

No. God will choose.

A pause. Max glances at her...

MAX

You believe in God?

MARIANNE

Yes. He's the only one I can't  
fool.

She puts her face back into the wind.

INT. APARTMENT - EVENING

The room is lit by candles. A power cut across the city. A  
tension between Max and Marianne as they eat an omelette.  
There is smoke in the kitchen, swirled by the fans. Marianne  
takes a fork full. She wants to lighten the mood.

MARIANNE

You *cook* like a Canadian too.

Max shrugs, not willing to engage. They both eat in silence.  
Marianne stops and peers at Max. There is devilment in her  
eyes. She unfastens two buttons on her blouse, revealing her  
cleavage and some of her bra.

Max stops chewing.

MAX

What the hell are you doing?

She smiles.

MARIANNE

Testing you. The way you tested me.

He stares at her open blouse.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

I know you are armed with a weapon  
Mr Vatan. I am just checking your  
safety catch is engaged.

At last he smiles too. Then he laughs. He shakes his head.

MAX

You know what? You're crazy...

MARIANNE (BREEZILY)

We had our first fight. Now we're  
ok again. Yes?

Max pushes his dish away and peers at Marianne. He becomes serious. After a pause...

MAX

Look. Marianne...I...

MARIANNE (INSTANTLY)

I know. Me too. Don't say  
anything.

She begins to eat, not looking at Max. Max can't keep it in check...

MAX

Marianne, we both know people  
who've fucked each other and then  
fucked up and now they're fucking  
dead.

Marianne eats and shrugs...

MARIANNE

That's a lot of fucks...

Max clatters his cutlery...

MAX

Will you fasten your goddamn  
buttons?

Marianne looks up, all innocence. She fastens her buttons. She considers a piece of omelette...

MARIANNE

Actually Max, the mistake people make in these situations isn't fucking.

A pause. More serious...

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

It's feeling.

He peers at her for a moment, waiting to see if she is amused or really serious. She doesn't look up. Max walks before he can say anything stupid.

EXT. APARTMENT, ROOFTOP

We find Max on the roof, finding it hard to sleep. He lies awake, and we guess he is thinking about Marianne. The Muslim call to prayer echoes out, telling us it is morning.

INT. GERMAN EMBASSY, ORNATE MOORISH OFFICE/WAITING AREA - DAY

A clock ticks in the grave, dark interior of the German Embassy in El-Haf Street.

We find Max and Marianne side-by-side, waiting in hard-backed chairs, reading magazines. They are both dressed smartly. A secretary breezes by and speaks in German.

SECRETARY

(Herr Pinar will see you now).

INT. GERMAN EMBASSY, INNER SANCTUM OFFICE

A large photograph of Adolf Hitler dominates the spacious office. In a leather chair a German Embassy liaison officer (PINAR) in his thirties is opening a cigarette case and offering to Max and Marianne. He wears the uniform of an SS officer. Marianne accepts a cigarette, Max declines. Marianne speaks in English...

MARIANNE

My husband is trying to cut down. He says the war makes everyone smoke too much.

Pinar lights Marianne's cigarette, then his own. He smiles...

PINAR  
Your husband does not speak  
English?

MARIANNE  
Only a little.

Pinar speaks to Max in awkward French...

PINAR  
(Your wife has asked if she can  
bring you to the Embassy Ball on  
Saturday).

MAX  
(Yes. But of course, if it is a  
problem, I will understand).

Marianne reacts as if furious with Max. Pinar sees it.

PINAR  
He doesn't seem to want to come.

MARIANNE  
There is a stupid poker game in the  
Rue Valence.

Pinar laughs. Max hisses at Marianne...

MAX  
(What are you saying about me?)

MARIANNE  
(I have made a big effort. Please  
don't embarrass me. You are coming  
and that's that.)

Pinar is amused. He leans back in his chair. Hitler stares  
down. Pinar unlocks a drawer and speaks in English to  
Marianne.

PINAR  
Your husband plays poker?

MARIANNE (THROW AWAY)  
He is obsessed.

From the drawer Pinar produces an envelope containing invites  
to the party...

PINAR (SOFTLY)  
As am I. As am I.

...He also produces a pack of playing cards from the drawer.  
He pushes them across the desk to Max.

PINAR (CONT'D)

Shuffle.

A moment. We might sense in that second that Marianne has no idea if Max really does play cards. And we have no idea either. Finally Max picks up the cards.

*Thankfully he shuffles like a croupier.*

Marianne hides her relief with a look of irritation. Pinar chuckles and speaks in French to Max.

PINAR (CONT'D)

(Now we cut. High card wins).

Max questions with his eyes as if he doesn't understand and Marianne reacts with alarm.

MARIANNE

Wins what?

PINAR

If his card is higher than mine, he can go to his poker game. If it is lower, he must come to the party.

MARIANNE (ALMOST PANICKING)

Oh this is too absurd. You boys are all as bad as each other.

Pinar is amused but certain of his authority. He interrupts...

PINAR

(Cut Monsieur Berne. For your freedom).

Max takes a moment. Silence. Then he cuts and gets a ten. Marianne and Max react and Max is obliged to grin.

Then Pinar cuts. He gets a black Jack. Marianne reacts. Pinar sweeps the deck of cards back and smiles. He pushes the envelope forward in place of the cards...

PINAR (CONT'D)

See you tomorrow.

INT. GERMAN EMBASSY, DARK HIGH CEILINGED CORRIDOR

Max and Marianne walk away from the meeting, their footsteps echoing on the tiled floor. German uniformed embassy officials are all around. Max holds a door for Marianne and we see the controlled triumph in her eyes. Ahead is the brilliant light of the day. Marianne half smiles...

MARIANNE

So it's in the cards. We get our  
chance to make history.

Max waits as Marianne walks by.

INT. APARTMENT - 5AM

In the half light a cigarette smoulders in the ash tray. We hear the first Muslim call to prayer of the day echoing through open shutters. Max appears from the iron roof stairs and finds the smouldering cigarette. He picks it up and looks around. From the shadows...

MARIANNE

I couldn't sleep.

Marianne appears from the darkness. Max draws on her cigarette and hands it back to her.

MAX

You want to go see the sun come up?

EXT. DESERT ROAD

Another magnificent desert sunrise.

Max and Marianne sit side-by-side on a sand dune as the first light hits. They are close, the new light on their faces.

MARIANNE

You don't think you'll see another  
sunrise, do you?

He wipes his eyes of sand...

MAX

I've sent so many people to hell.  
Maybe I don't deserve to ever go  
home.

Marianne takes Max's arm.

MARIANNE

What you have done, you have done  
because it is war. It is not  
something inside you.

This is exactly what Max wants to hear. She puts her head on his shoulder and he strokes her hair. We feel the tension and attraction between them as they stare at what they believe is almost certainly their last sunrise on earth.

EXT. CAR, DESERT ROAD

Max and Marianne arrive back at the car. The sand blows around them. Max gestures ahead.

MAX

If you survive and I don't, you drive East thirty miles until you reach a place called Assilah. It is in Spanish territory. The British have moored a fishing boat. It's called the *Hameen*.

He hands her a small key.

MAX (CONT'D)

This is the key for the ignition.

MARIANNE

You have one?

MAX

No.

MARIANNE

Why not?

Max gets into the car and Marianne follows. He fires the engine. They sit side-by-side and stare ahead. There is a feeling between them that is hotter than the desert air.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

You know, if we're dead tomorrow no one will know.

MAX (QUICKLY)

We should talk about where the Maquis are hiding the guns.

Marianne is staring at Max. She speaks softly...

MARIANNE

And if only one of us dies, the other won't ever tell anyone.

The engine rumbles. Max is about to release the hand brake. Marianne reaches over and turns off the engine. Max has his hand on the hand brake. Marianne gently takes his hand from the hand brake and puts it to her face.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

I'm good at pretending but I'm very, very, very scared Max.

A pause. Finally Max turns to her. Across the gear stick and hand brake they grab each other and kiss with furious passion.

Within seconds they are tearing at each other's clothes. They have sex in the confines of the white leather interior of the '38 Citroen. It is cramped and tight but the desire wins out.

Finally they are finished. The sun beats down. They catch their breaths and unfold into their seats.

After a long moment...

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

In answer to your question, the  
Sten guns will be taped under the  
Champagne table.

INT. GERMAN EMBASSY, PARTY

A Champagne cork pops.

The German Ambassador's residence is a huge, French built Palace with floor to ceiling sash windows and statuary. Portraits of Hitler again stare down and swastika flags hang against white walls. The ball is a grand affair. Among the uniformed and suited guests, we find Max and Marianne.

MARIANNE

(At times like this I find it  
useful to think about funny things.  
Tell me a joke).

Marianne glances at Max and sees his face is made of stone. He doesn't reply and it is as if he doesn't even hear. He is looking around the room with deadly purpose. He is beyond Marianne's reach and she knows it. Marianne becomes alarmed by his intensity. Finally she tugs his arm...

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

(Smile or something).

Instead Max reaches out and kisses Marianne on the neck, a passionate but brief kiss. She reacts...

MAX

(You look beautiful).

MARIANNE

(Can you even see me?)

MAX (A SMILE)

(Not really).

Max goes back to checking out the room and the guards. Pinar is hovering. Marianne takes a scoop of punch and Max sips water. A French General is escorted into the room and asks some questions of some uniformed men around. Heads turn as a door opens.

The entry is meant to be discreet, but the arrival of a portly man in black uniform sends a shiver through the room. The man is the GERMAN AMBASSADOR TO FRENCH NORTH AFRICA. A swirl of voices.

Then two SS bodyguards step into the room beside the Ambassador and look all around. Some of the German guests applaud but the ripple dies quickly as the Ambassador gestures for 'no fuss'. Someone brings him Champagne. Pinar hurries to his side.

MAX (CONT'D)

My God, he only has two bodyguards.

Marianne hardly reacts.

MARIANNE

Because they know everyone in this room is a friend.

The Ambassador is ushered through the admiring crowd, stopping to shake hands. Max and Marianne drift toward a long trestle table where Champagne bottles are lined up.

Max pours Marianne a glass. The bubbles fizz. They stare into each other's eyes and say a silent goodbye to life and each other.

There is a tinkle of silver on glass. The German Ambassador has stepped up into a low stage and the room falls silent. The two SS men are either side of him and close.

AMBASSADOR

Ladies and gentlemen, I will not detain you long. But I would like to say that this party is meant to celebrate the relationship between the German and French people. May our unity last for the next thousand years.

The Ambassador raises a glass of Champagne. All around the room, glasses are raised.

AMBASSADOR (CONT'D)

To the thousand year Reich.

As everyone sips, Max turns over the Champagne table with a mighty smashing of glass.

There are two Sten guns taped under the table. Max rips one free, engages it and shoots the German Ambassador in the head with his first burst of fire. The Ambassador falls dead. Max then turns his gun on the armed guards. He shoots them both dead, one bullet each within a heart beat.

Marianne has ripped the other Sten gun free and sprays bullets over the heads of the guests to provide cover.

Max establishes who is reaching for a weapon and who already has one in his hand. He shoots three men dead as they reach for guns and kills the French soldier on the door.

Marianne lets off another burst of covering fire. Her friends and colleagues are staring at her with incredulous horror.

The sprays of machine gun fire make everyone drop to the floor. Max and Marianne break for a sash window, which is open. A wounded guard is up on his elbow and fires. Max is hit in the arm and shoulder. He delays half a second. Marianne shoots the guard dead.

They reach the open window and jump into darkness.

EXT. GERMAN EMBASSY, LAWN

Max and Marianne land and roll as they are trained to do. They begin to run toward the perimeter wall.

Dogs bark and lights are switched on. People from the party come to the windows. Soldiers open fire. Marianne sprays the windows with bullets and they duck back. Meanwhile German military guards are scrambling. Max exchanges fire with one and kills him.

EXT. GERMAN EMBASSY

A car screeches to a halt. Three French resistance fighters take up defensive positions. One of them attaches a sticky bomb to the Embassy wall and they all take cover. A huge hole is blown in the wall.

They leave the car with doors open and engine running, just beyond the hole in the wall.

INT. GERMAN EMBASSY, GARDEN

Max is bleeding heavily and Marianne grabs him. He almost passes out. He is half conscious as he speaks...

MAX

You go. I'm hit. I'll cover...

A guard is upon them and Marianne shoots him dead.

MAX (CONT'D)

I gave you an order.

Marianne could run for the hole in the wall and escape. Max knows it and their eyes lock. But instead of running she grabs Max's arm and they stagger toward freedom. Marianne provides the covering fire. They make it through the hole.

EXT. GERMAN EMBASSY

Max and Marianne race to the car. Marianne gets into the driver's seat. Max stumbles into the passenger seat. Marianne screeches away. Gun fire and sirens all around.

INT. CAR/EXT. CASABLANCA ROAD

Marianne drives fast through the streets. Max is bleeding but has put his dinner jacket against the wound. Blood oozes. She steps on the gas...

EXT. DESERT ROAD/INT. CAR

A dark road and moonlight. The road is silent, apart from the chirruping of crickets. Then we see headlights approaching. The only car on the road.

We cut inside and see Max grunting in pain from the bullet wound. Marianne kills the lights and drives more slowly. Now they feel the bumps of the rough road. After a moment...

MARIANNE

We are alive. We are both alive.

Max gasps in pain. Marianne stares into the darkness ahead as if it were their uncertain future...

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

We are more alive than anybody on earth.

She drives on. Max grunts in pain.

MAX

Why didn't you leave me?

After a moment Marianne pulls up sharply. Max is still getting his breath.

MARIANNE

Because I have found you. I have found the man I want in the world.

Max is in pain but turns to her. After a long moment...

MAX

Drive.

She drives on.

EXT. BEACH

Max (but mostly Marianne) shove the car across a grass bank. The car slips over a cliff edge and hits rocks down below, where the ocean is crashing.

Max is in pain but the bleeding has stopped. She helps him hurry toward a path that leads down to the rocks and a small beach below, lit by moonlight. Marianne acts as Max's crutch. From on high we watch them wade through the ocean toward a small moored fishing boat.

EXT. 'MAHEEM' FISHING BOAT, DECK - NIGHT

Max and Marianne are soaked as they step into the cabin. Marianne searches her pocket for the ignition key. She finds it and fires the engine.

MAX

Take the wheel and head toward the Moon.

Max falls back onto a small cot in the cabin. Marianne takes the wheel. On a shaft of moonlight they set out into the dark waters of the Mediterranean.

EXT. MEDITERRANEAN SUNRISE

We see the sun rising once more, this time over the ocean.

Then we see the Maheem making steady progress. In the cabin Max wakes from a fitful sleep. The blood has congealed around the wound. He sits up and sees the rising sun. Then a voice...

MARIANNE

It wasn't our last Max.

Marianne is at the wheel. She comes to Max and helps him to his feet.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

And look. Gibraltar.

She gestures ahead. Max sees the rock of Gibraltar towering over the ocean against the sunrise. A large British flag is visible flying over the high battlements and above the air strip. Max nods acceptance. Marianne finds a bottle of brandy and offers it. Max pours a little on his wound and then takes a swig.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

What will they do when we get there?

Max offers the brandy...

MAX

Someone will take this bullet out of me. Then the British will throw us both in jail while they check our identities.

A pause. Marianne swigs from the bottle.

MAX (CONT'D)

After that I will be flown to London.

They both have an agenda, neither one of them wanting to lose the other but keeping it to themselves.

Max puts the bottle away and goes to the wheel. Marianne sits back against the window. Max begins to steer toward the rock...

MAX (CONT'D)

You?

MARIANNE

I will ask to be put across the border into Spain. Then I will slip back into France.

MAX (QUICKLY)

Where every Gestapo officer will be looking for you. Except now they have your fingerprints.

She doesn't respond but stares at the glowering rock ahead.  
After a long moment...

MAX (CONT'D)

What you said in the car...

MARIANNE

...was not very professional.

He steers on...

MAX

You want unprofessional? How about  
this. Come with me to London.

MARIANNE

Max, please don't be...

He lets go of the wheel, turns her around and kisses her.  
Blood from his wound smears on her shirt. They look at each  
other...

MAX

Come with me and be my wife. We'll  
be regular people. I can't do this  
anymore, I can't tempt fate  
anymore. I'll get a desk job.

She pulls away, her shirt smeared with blood. She laughs...

MARIANNE (INCREDULOUS)

Max Vatan married and behind a  
desk? Is it the brandy or the pain?

The wheel has been left and it spins under the current.

MAX

You found me, I found you. We stay  
together now. That's it.

A pause.

MAX (CONT'D)

We survived and we can be happy.  
That's it decided.

The boat begins to arc and circle. Marianne laughs. Max  
laughs too. He grabs her and then, from above, we see the  
boat describing a circle in the ocean, running free, as a  
couple of Navy tugs approach from the Catalan Bay.

EXT. WAR TIME LONDON, THE THAMES - DAY

After the sparkling early morning ocean, a grey wet day in London.

The city is stripped for war. Railings are gone and melted down to make guns, bridges are defended with anti-aircraft batteries, barrage balloons float in the sky. We view Big Ben and Parliament and, beyond it, the offices of Government.

We begin to move beyond the Parliament building along cobbled streets until we find an unremarkable row of Georgian houses and shop fronts.

*Caption: 'Special Operations Executive Headquarters, Baker Street, London, three weeks later'.*

INT. SOE HEADQUARTERS, LONG BLEAK CORRIDOR - DAY

We find Max sitting on a hard-backed chair outside an office. The sound of frantic typing comes from every open door. Max is now wearing the uniform of the Canadian Air Force. He looks nervous. Finally the nearest office door opens and a young female secretary in uniform puts her head around it.

SECRETARY

He's ready. Come.

Max gets to his feet, smooths his hair and walks through the door. As he goes, we see the door is labelled '*Special Operations Executive, Europe Command*'.

INT. SOE HEADQUARTERS, FUNCTIONAL REGENCY OFFICE, BLINDS DRAWN - DAY

Beneath a portrait of the King and a photograph of Winston Churchill, Squadron Leader FRANCIS HESLOP is waiting, busy with paperwork. He is early forties, young for his authority, brisk and ruthless. A cigarette burns in the ashtray. Max enters and Heslop gestures for him to sit. We sense controlled anger as Heslop deliberately makes Max wait.

Finally...

MAX

They said you had news.

HESLOP (TO THE PAPERS)

I have news.

Heslop finally looks up.

HESLOP (CONT'D)

The reason for the delay....

Instantly....

MAX

It has been three fucking weeks...

HESLOP

...Sir. 'It has been three fucking weeks....Sir.' You are not behind the lines anymore. There are rules.

Max forces himself...

MAX

I'm sorry Sir.

HESLOP

Ok, the reason for the delay was the lack of corroborative photographic or fingerprint evidence of her identity before Casablanca...

MAX

So, because Marianne has been good at her job, she's being kept in jail.

Heslop grits his teeth through the interruptions...

HESLOP

However...

Heslop offers Max a cigarette which he takes...

HESLOP (CONT'D)

After two weeks of intensive tests and questioning regarding her previous activities in Paris and Normandy...

Max lights his cigarette with a new zippo. His hand shakes just a little.

HESLOP (CONT'D)

She has been approved for passage.

Max takes a huge breath of relief.

HESLOP (CONT'D)

Max, you're a *fucking* idiot.

MAX

Yes Sir.

HESLOP

How long have you known her?

MAX

My dad married my mom after a week.

HESLOP

I doubt 'mom' and 'dad' had similar constraints. Marriages made in the field never work.

Max grins.

MAX

I know. You're invited to the wedding by the way.

Heslop leans back.

HESLOP

Max, holding hands in the dark hiding from the bogeyman isn't love. It's relief at being alive. We've all been there.

Max becomes serious. He peers at Heslop and speaks as an old comrade rather than a subordinate...

MAX (SOFTLY)

Yeah. I know you've been there.

A pause.

MAX (CONT'D)

And if Claudette had survived, you would have done the same thing.

Heslop stares at Max without expression...

HESLOP (PRETENDING HE HAS FORGOTTEN)

Claudette who?

A pause. Heslop closes his file...

MAX

So how long?

HESLOP

Marianne Beausejour is in the hold of a Lancaster bomber somewhere over the Bay of Biscay even as we speak.

EXT. BIGGIN HILL AIRSTRIP - 2AM

Pouring rain over Southern England.

A Lancaster bomber lands and taxis in the storm. As the door opens, Max races through the rain across the muddy grass. Marianne emerges onto the steps and sees Max approaching. She almost falls down the steps as she hurries.

They crash into each other and embrace too close to the spinning propellers. They kiss in the rain. Marianne wipes her wet hair from her eyes...

MARIANNE

Max, guess.

He guesses. She nods...

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

I'm pregnant.

INT. LONDON, SOHO, FRENCH HOUSE PUB - DAY

A cockerel is thrown up into the air. Confetti is thrown too. Cheers and applause.

As the cockerel flutters down we see we are part of a small wedding party outside the pub in Dean Street (which is also the unofficial London headquarters of the Free French Government under Charles de Gaulle).

Max and Marianne are kissing and the small crowd are applauding. The guests are Soho types, writers, broadcasters and also Government propagandists. Some are French, some English. Half the men are in military uniform. Max is in a flannel suit. Everyone wears flowers in their button holes. Heslop is there and, in spite of his misgivings, is having a good time.

The landlord announces in French...

LANDLORD

(Now the groom will carry the bride across the threshold in the English manner.)

He holds the pub door open. Max picks Marianne up and carries her inside the pub to a big ovation.

INT. LONDON, SOHO, FRENCH HOUSE PUB - EARLY EVENING

There is jazz playing on a gramophone and the wedding guests are dancing or chatting and drinking. Wartime London is a hedonistic free-spirited place.

Marianne is dancing with an elderly Frenchman. Max is dancing with a woman in her early twenties in Canadian Air Force uniform. We will learn this is BRIDGET, Max's SISTER.

As they dance...

BRIDGET

So did mom go crazy when you told her?

Max responds in English and French.

MAX

She's just happy I married someone French. She said (*'at least she will know how to cook'*).

BRIDGET

And can she cook?

MAX

When we were in Casablanca she used to cook these crazy stews out of rabbits and peaches.

BRIDGET

Does she have family?

MAX

Her mother and father were taken by the Nazis and are missing presumed dead. Her brother is in jail in France. I stole the full background dossier from V section.

Bridget glances at Marianne, who looks beautiful and slightly wild.

BRIDGET

She has quite a reputation on the circuits. You think she'll cope with just being a housewife?

MAX

She can cope with anything.

Bridget studies Marianne again as she laughs at some joke. She turns back to Max and appraises him...

BRIDGET

So this is my brother when he's in love.

MAX

Better or worse?

BRIDGET

I've never seen you smile so much.

We might sense Bridget is a little concerned at just how smitten her brother is.

BRIDGET (CONT'D)

Have you told mom that *la femme* is pregnant?

Max sips his champagne over Bridget's shoulder.

MAX

I told dad. '*C'est la guerre*' he said.

BRIDGET

With dad everything is '*c'est la guerre*'.

The music ends and dancers begin to return to tables. Max and Bridget grab drinks...

MAX

Mom asked if you were dating anyone. I said I didn't know.

Bridget glances at a young, dark Polish woman (LOUISE) who is approaching from the dance floor.

BRIDGET

You should have said yes. Her name is Louise.

Max glances at Louise too.

MAX

I'll leave that one to you. Good luck.

They sit at a table with champagne on ice. Louise sits close to Bridget and Bridget clutches her hand. In this world that could end at any moment, they are happy for people to know they are lovers. Max pours Louise a glass of Champagne as Bridget looks around at the dancers, some of whom are now embracing, kissing, finding dark corners...

BRIDGET

You know I'll miss the blitz. No one cares who does what to who.

Louise raises her glass of champagne as a toast.

LOUISE (POLISH ACCENT)

So let's drink to war. And freedom.

Max, Bridget and Louise raise a toast. A man in his thirties at a near table (GEORGE KAVANAGH) overhears and turns to join the conversation...

GEORGE

Did I hear you making a toast to a whole city fucking like rabbits? I'll drink to that myself.

George helps himself to champagne. He is noticeably handsome and a little louche. Intelligent too. We will learn he is an old friend of Max and that he works in the war office. For now, he pours and smiles...

GEORGE (CONT'D)

All these bombs are making everybody else as dissolute as me. I'm rather loving it.

Bridget sees Marianne approaching from the dance floor.

BRIDGET (LAUGHING)

Poor Max. All this pleasure you're giving up.

Marianne joins them at the smoky table and squeezes in beside Max.

MARIANNE

What is my husband giving up?

MAX

Oh, not much.

They kiss. In just a flicker of a reaction we see that Bridget really isn't sure about Marianne but it passes quickly. Max leans back in his chair and calls out to the bar...

MAX (CONT'D)

Hey Franciose, could we have more champagne? Everyone's helping themselves to mine.

The landlord heads for the cold shelf.

MAX (RETURNING) (CONT'D)

The only thing in London not  
rationed is champagne.

BRIDGET

And sex.

GEORGE

My God she is *obsessed*.

LOUISE

Yes, isn't it wonderful.

The second bottle of champagne arrives and Max pops it. Heslop comes close with an empty glass and smiles. He bows to Marianne and sits...

HESLOP

Marianne, I hope you know what you  
have taken on. When I worked with  
him, 'Max' was short for 'Maximum'.

Marianne grabs Max's arm and kisses his cheek...

MARIANNE

But now he will become a gentle  
civil servant.

George has a wicked grin and grabs Max's other arm, as if competing with Marianne...

GEORGE

Ah, but a talented boy like Max  
Vatan won't stay with boring old  
Frank for long.

George gazes at Max's face like a lover...

GEORGE (TEASING) (CONT'D)

My spooky friends in V-section will  
come courting him...

George adds in a mock ghoulish voice...

GEORGE (CONT'D)

...Just when you least expect it.

Laughter. Everyone appears to know that V-section represents ultimate secrecy and espionage (and we will learn more soon). At that moment the air raid siren suddenly sounds. There are resigned groans but Max jumps up onto a stool with his full bottle and announces.

MAX

Screw the Luftwaffe. This is my wedding. Let's take it out into the street.

There is a cheer. Max takes Marianne's hand as everyone grabs their drinks and heads for the door.

EXT. SOHO, DEAN STREET - NIGHT

Heavy rain is falling and an air raid is just getting up like a hurricane.

Mostly the bombs are dropping on the east so the fury is mostly sound. But some are close and when one hits nearby, the whole world blurs and shakes. The skies are filled with searchlights and occasionally the silhouette of a German bomber. The bombs fall with a whizz followed by a gut turning thump.

The searchlights, the spectacular flashes and silhouettes all fizz in the driving rain.

The wedding guests spill out onto the street and begin to sing a drunken version of '*Le Marseillaise*'. They dance in the rain and yell obscenities at the sky. ARP wardens and fire watchers on roofs blow whistles and yell for them to get inside but the party goes on. In a flash of light we see George in a doorway, having frantic sex with a young girl, half out of her uniform.

Max and Marianne also find themselves in a doorway, face-to-face. They smile at each other then become serious.

MAX

Are you entirely ok, Madam Vatan?

Marianne smiles...

MARIANNE

Nothing else but this would be ok.

A falling bomb screams through the air...

EXT. LONDON, ROYAL FREE HOSPITAL - NIGHT

We are suddenly in a different air raid but, for the moment, we don't detect the cut.

A bomb is demolishing a row of houses and the front walls all collapse exposing the sitting rooms and bedrooms inside. Bodies fall through the shattered floors.

*Caption: Hampstead, London, Six months later...*

We hear a scream.

INT. LONDON, ROYAL FREE HOSPITAL, LABOR WARD - NIGHT

Marianne is giving birth in the Victorian labor ward. Her screams emerging from the blast. The lights in the labor ward are all switched off so everything is seen by the light of fires raging outside. An Irish MIDWIFE is by Marianne's side and Max bursts in through the door...

Marianne wipes sweaty hair from her face and sees Max. The midwife is gathering equipment calmly. Marianne screams in pain. The birth is close. Max takes her hand but the midwife gives orders with quiet authority...

MIDWIFE

Never mind holding hands, the hospital is on fire. Push the bed while I hold the drip.

Max begins to push the bed toward the door.

INT. LONDON, ROYAL FREE HOSPITAL, SMOKE FILLED CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Patients are being evacuated at speed. We glimpse flames at the windows. Outside, bombs are raining down and the anti-aircraft guns are pumping out shells at a rate of one every half second. It is Armageddon.

Max is pushing Marianne in the bed and Marianne is pushing out the baby. The midwife dips her head under the bed sheets to check on progress.

MIDWIFE

Very close.

A huge explosion rocks the building but Max hurries on.

EXT. LONDON, ROYAL FREE HOSPITAL - GARDENS - NIGHT

The ornamental gardens are white with ash and cinders so it looks like a snow scene. The hospital is burning and patients are taking cover or fleeing. The sky is livid with light and fire.

In the middle of this, Marianne lies on the hospital bed, screaming in pain. Max is squeezing her hand and speaking soothing words...

A gigantic German bomber, belching flames, crashes to earth in Highgate, just two miles away and the earth shakes. Some of the patients cheer.

The midwife is in the thick of birth. Marianne yells. Max sweeps his hair from his face. A huge landmine thumps the earth like a sledgehammer. Marianne is about to give the final push.

*She grabs Max's face in her hand hard, like a claw. It hurts. She puts her furious smoky face close to his. She growls in French...*

MARIANNE

(This is me. This is really me as I am before God).

Max has no time to dwell on the odd words (a product of agony he thinks) because a second later the midwife pulls a healthy baby girl from Marianne's body and wraps it in a fire blanket. Some of the other patients turn and gasp. New life amongst all this death.

Max rocks on his heels and the midwife offers him the squeaking little bundle.

MIDWIFE

It's a girl.

Nothing Max has ever done has prepared him for this. He chokes. The anti-aircraft guns keep blazing away as if in celebration. He stares at the bloody little face then at the face of his wife, lit by the explosions all around.

The other patients and staff all turn to applaud and cheer.

Max falls to his knees and Max and Marianne put their wet faces together as the tiny noise of the baby cuts through the mighty sounds of war.

INT. HAMPSTEAD, FIG TREE COTTAGE - DAY

Silence.

Outside it is a beautiful Autumn morning. Max and Marianne are asleep in a double bed with a one year old baby girl (ANNA) sleeping in between them. The shadow of a tree outside the window plays across their peaceful faces.

*Caption: 'One year later'*

We will find the cottage is compact and cosy, sitting right on the heath of Hampstead, a Bohemian lane in a Bohemian part of London. We see Max's uniform hung neatly on a hanger.

There are three gas masks on the window ledge. Two large ones and one tiny one for the baby.

In an open cupboard we see Max's service revolver in its holster, hanging from a high hook.

We find a family photograph of Max and his sister Bridget with parents. Another of Max and Marianne's wedding. Lots of photos of the baby. There is a sprig of flowers on top of a copy of Das Capital by Karl Marx.

Max wakes first. He looks around, sees the baby and smiles. Marianne stirs at the same time and their hands find each other over the sleeping baby. Max puts his finger to his lips and they begin to kiss.

They see a chance to make love while the baby sleeps and silently agree that it will be ok if they are quiet. They kiss and giggle and shush each other. Max tries to climb over the baby toward Marianne but the bed creaks.

They both freeze. They got away with it. He arrives at her side. They kiss with passion.

The baby cries. Max and Marianne accept the inevitable.

INT. HAMPSTEAD, FIG TREE COTTAGE, KITCHEN, BREAKFAST

The baby makes things busy. The radio plays jolly big band music.

There are toweling diapers hanging and lots of toys strewn around. Marianne is fixing breakfast while Max dive bombs food into Anna's mouth.

Max is in casual clothes. We glimpse news of the war on the front page of the Times. (We might glimpse rumors of a forthcoming operation in North Africa and rumors of an invasion of France).

*We see a caption: 'Friday'.*

Marianne brings two plates to the table. She has cooked eggs...

MARIANNE

There, a celebration.

Mac savors the smell of the eggs...

MAX

Of what?

MARIANNE

Your first weekend away from your desk for fifty seven days. I counted.

Marianne sits and takes over feeding the baby. Max grabs a fork.

MAX

The eggs are from the hens, right?

Marianne feeds Anna...

MARIANNE

From our hens, yes.

Max eats the eggs and makes a point of eating with relish.

MAX

So they were a good investment, right?

Marianne smiles. She knows Max has an agenda and is ahead of him. She wipes Anna's mouth...

MARIANNE

Max, you really don't need to devise schemes to keep me occupied.

Marianne gestures around at the house.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

Being a mother is more thrilling than any mission I ever went on.

Marianne picks up Anna and nuzzles her tummy...

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

And she is more demanding than any handler I ever worked with...

Max laughs...

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

Come on Max, let's go to the heath and pick mushrooms. At the party tomorrow night I am going to serve Stroganoff.

Marianne waits for Max's delayed reaction. Finally..

MAX

Party? What party?

EXT. HAMPSTEAD, FIG TREE COTTAGE/SZABO COTTAGE OPPOSITE

The Szabo cottage is directly opposite Fig Tree and is smaller and darker with heavy drapes. Max and Marianne cross the road. Marianne has Anna in her arms and she is wrapped in a shawl, sleeping. Max whispers but is intense...

MAX

I told you, I just want a quiet weekend...

MARIANNE

Max, I have lots of new friends who are dying to meet you. This is their first chance.

MAX

How many friends?

Marianne laughs.

MARIANNE (TEASING)

Oh, lots and lots.

Max reacts...

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

You will like them. They are mostly refugees. Intellectuals. Hampstead is a tiny box with so many interesting people, you have to push down the lid to fit them all in.

They have reached Mrs Szabo's door. Marianne knocks...

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

They are the people who stop me from getting bored, Max. The intellectuals and the chickens.

Max is filled with foreboding. Marianne giggles again.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

Oh poor max. In Casablanca we pretended you hated parties. And *viola*. It's true.

The door opens. A small dark lady in her late fifties opens the door and smiles. Marianne puts her finger to her lips and Mrs Szabo gets it straight away. Marianne hands Anna over...

MARIANNE (WHISPERS) (CONT'D)  
Max has the weekend off. Isn't that great?

Mrs Szabo glances at Max and nods.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)  
Oh, and we are having a party tomorrow. Will you come?

Mrs Szabo speaks in an East European accent.

MRS SZABO (SOFTLY)  
But of course.

MAX  
Yeah, everyone will be there.

Marianne pulls Max's arm and they set off to leave...

MRS SZABO  
Take your time. It is always my pleasure.

Mrs Szabo cuddles Anna then gently closes the door...

EXT. HAMPSTEAD HEATH - MORNING

On a brow of a hill we see Max and Anna framed against the rolling heath and the London skyline in the near distance.

Smoke rises from last night's bombs. Barrage balloons float in the air. Marianne has taken off her jacket and is using it as a bag to place the mushrooms she is picking. As she forages...

MARIANNE  
Most mornings after I have left Anna with Mrs Szabo, I take a walk in the beautiful oak trees...

Max is oblivious, brow furrowed, deep in thought. Marianne sees his serious expression and grabs him and twirls him around.

MAX  
You are trained in survival. Find edible mushrooms. That is an order.

Max leans back against a tree. Marianne comes to him...

MARIANNE  
Max, you are free for two whole days! Smile.

Max is made of stone. Marianne lets the mushrooms fall to the ground.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)  
Very well. I will cancel the party.

Max growls as he lights a cigarette.

MAX  
It isn't the fucking party.

A pause. He makes a decision. He speaks dead pan and deadly...

MAX (CONT'D)  
You told me about your life, let me tell you about mine.

Marianne knows what's coming and tries to stop it...

MARIANNE  
Max it's ok...

MAX  
I send young airmen on missions I know have only a ten per cent chance of success. Then I drive home to the safety of my bed.

MARIANNE  
Max, shut up...

MAX  
I send dummy encryptions to agents I know will be captured and tortured and tell what they know.

She turns away to study the horizon.

MAX (CONT'D)  
I make decisions with a pin and a list of names. The list gets shorter every day. The boys are nineteen sometimes. They shake my fucking hand and walk out of the door.

Max sits on a fallen log.

MAX (CONT'D)  
Anyone I touch dies. Just like the old days.

Marianne sits beside him. All around, the spring heath is glorious and full of hope. Marianne speaks softly...

MARIANNE  
Medicine Hat.

A pause.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)  
Horses and cows and the wide open prairie. It's just there. Just over the hill. You will be a cowboy and I will be a cowgirl and Anna will be a cowbaby.

Max almost laughs. They fall into each other's arms. Only Marianne can make him feel ok. He holds on to her like wreckage.

MAX  
I love you.

MARIANNE  
I love you too *Quebecoise*.

They embrace for a little longer. Then Max suddenly has a devilish look in his eyes.

MAX  
Right here. Right now.

Max pulls Marianne to her feet and leads her toward a gap in the bushes...

MARIANNE  
What the hell are you doing?

MAX  
C'est la guerre. No one cares...

They brush through some thorns and laugh as Max pulls her down onto the wet grass. She shrieks as he pulls her on top of him. They kiss with passion and begin to tear off each other's clothes...

INT. HAMPSTEAD, FIG TREE COTTAGE - MORNING

The phone is ringing.

Max and Marianne appear at the door with Anna. The minute they open the door and hear the phone Marianne speaks firmly...

MARIANNE

Max, just once you can ignore it.  
Just *once*.

Max doesn't hesitate for even half a second. He goes straight for the phone...

MAX (INTO PHONE)

Hampstead 235.

He listens, turns to Marianne who senses bad news...

MAX (CONT'D)

Yes Sir. Of course. I'll be there right away.

He puts the phone down. Marianne takes Anna through to the kitchen and speaks grandly as she passes...

MARIANNE (STIFLED ANGER)

Max Vatan's first weekend off for fifty seven days...

Max follows her into the kitchen where Anna is being placed in her chair...

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

When will you be back?

MAX

You know I don't know.

MARIANNE

And the party?

Max has no answer. Marianne (apparently) breaks protocol and yells...

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

What the hell is it that is so important?!

MAX (INSTANTLY)

Liberating your fucking country!

Anna begins to cry. A pause. A moment as Marianne looks up and speaks softly...

MARIANNE

And the liberation will happen soon, yes?

Max confirms with his eyes. Then...

MAX

Within ten weeks.

Marianne takes the information then comes to him with the car keys in her hand. She gently kisses his cheek...

MARIANNE

Then you must go.

Max takes the keys...

MAX

Don't cancel the party. I'll do what I can.

Max turns and leaves. We are left with Marianne's reaction as she picks up Anna to comfort her.

EXT. EAST HEATH ROAD

Max drives his Wolseley down the winding lane that ends in the first major cross roads of London. As Max pulls up to allow a military truck to rumble by, he notices some windfall apples on the ground.

He dashes out of the car and gathers up the bruised apples in his jacket. The car behind hoots its horn. He dumps the apples in the car then jumps back in and drives on. He takes a bite of an apple.

*He has a photo of Anna and Marianne on his dashboard.*

EXT. HENDON/SOE AIRSTRIP - DAY

Max arrives at an inconspicuous, but large, corrugated iron barn a quarter mile from a grass airstrip which is just visible behind barbed wire. Barrage balloons fly. In the distance we might make out the shapes of black Lysanders beside the runway...

Max gets out of the car with his bag of apples and is saluted by a passing airman. Max opens a corrugated iron door...

INT. HENDON/SOE AIRSTRIP, CONTROL ROOM - DAY

The contrast between the drab exterior and the bustling interior is startling.

The barn is, in fact, the main control room for the SOE flight operation. The ramshackle exterior is a cover. All secret flights into France are organized and monitored from here.

There are lines of desks and men and women in uniform manning phones and telegraph machines, but the space is dominated by a large map of the British South coast and the northern regions of France, with airstrips marked.

Max walks through the control room with his apples and receives informal greetings and salutes in equal measure. He arrives at the flight desk, near to the map.

A middle aged female CONTROLLER turns to him. She speaks in a matter-of-fact voice.

CONTROLLER

Lubiezcek was shot down last night.  
Anderson was killed on the ground.  
Three Maquis were arrested so we  
will have to close down Le Havre  
for a while.

Some heads turn and turn back. We realize that information is only given on a need to know basis. Max leans back against a desk.

MAX

I bought you some apples.

She half turns and turns back.

CONTROLLER

Thanks.

She works on...

CONTROLLER (CONT'D)

Any idea how come the Gestapo were  
expecting us?

Max studies her back as she works. Max speaks with irritation...

MAX

No. But I will get on to it first  
thing Monday morning. Couldn't this  
have waited?

At last the controller turns, a little puzzled...

CONTROLLER

Of course. Why are you even here?

MAX

Because Operations called me in...

CONTROLLER

They did?

A voice from the clutter of people behind Max. A still point...

GEORGE (OOV)  
Actually it wasn't operations who called you.

Max turns to see George in a crumpled suit, lighting a cigarette.

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
I'm afraid it was us.

The controller goes back to her duties quickly. Others ignore George as if he were a dangerous phantom. Max reads a whole world of trouble into George's presence...

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
Let's take a walk Max.

EXT. HENDON/SOE AIRSTRIP, CONTROL ROOM

Max and George emerge and slowly approach Max's car. George offers Max a cigarette which he refuses...

GEORGE  
V-section need to speak to you.

Max reacts with weary irritation...

MAX  
So why didn't they just call me and tell me to go to Baker Street?

George leans on the hood of Max's car.

GEORGE  
Because V-section don't use phones. Unless what they are saying is untrue.

George smokes and half smiles...

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
I told you they'd come for you eventually didn't I Max. Such a clever boy.

A pause. Max takes a moment then unlocks the car...

MAX  
So what's the job they're offering?

GEORGE

Way, way above my level of security  
old man. I'm just the messenger  
boy.

Max is filled with foreboding as he gets into the car...

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Good luck.

INT. SOE HEADQUARTERS, BAKER STREET

Max walks breezily through an unremarkable door and into a long corridor. Wartime posters adorn the walls. *'Loose lips cost ships'*. *'Careless talk costs lives'*...

We come close to his face as he walks into shadows...

EXT, SOE HEADQUARTERS, BAKER STREET, SECOND CORRIDOR

We follow Max as he makes his way to this unfamiliar part of the maze of offices. There are cream and grey walls and cracked lino. The windows are sand-bagged, the grim efficiency of a state at war. This is an inner sanctum.

He reaches a door marked in black and white ceramic...

*'Director, V-Section. Political warfare.'*

Max straightens his tie and knocks.

INT. SOE HEADQUARTERS, BAKER STREET, V-SECTION OFFICE

The office is large, oak and leather, with a view over the Thames. Max is mildly surprised to find Heslop in the office. Beside him is an OFFICIAL. Heslop is smoking a cigarette and looks grave. The Official is small and thin, an insignificant middle-aged man in round spectacles. He could be a bank clerk.

HESLOP

Max, have a seat.

The Official is studying Max like a hawk. Max re-focuses on the official and waits. Finally, (with half a smile)...

MAX

We haven't been introduced.

A pause. The official makes no attempt to introduce himself. Max feels the strangeness of the silence. Heslop has the weight of the world on his shoulders and Max feels it...

MAX (HALF LAUGHING) (CONT'D)  
Frank, whatever this position is I  
don't want it, ok? I'm happy to  
stay with you.

An awkward pause. Finally...

HESLOP  
Max, I'm afraid this really isn't  
what you think it is.

A pause...

HESLOP (CONT'D)  
And there is no easy way to say  
what we are about to say.

A pause. The official's eyes are lost behind reflections in  
his spectacles. Heslop hesitates and the official speaks for  
him...

OFFICIAL  
We believe your wife is a German  
spy.

Max freezes for just a moment. Then he gives an incredulous  
laugh of shock and the official makes a note of his  
reaction...

MAX (STILL ALMOST LAUGHING)  
Ok, wait, wait, wait. First,  
seriously, who the fuck is this  
little guy?

OFFICIAL  
You don't need to know my name.

Max's temper sparks.

MAX  
You say shit like that, you  
identify yourself...

OFFICIAL (DEADLY)  
I am a rat catcher. I also out-rank  
you. So you can call me Sir.

Max is about to respond but Heslop intervenes...

HESLOP  
Max, you have to listen to him.  
That's a direct order.

The official reaches into his briefcase and produces a file.  
He speaks like a typewriter...

OFFICIAL

In the past eight days V-Section have intercepted coded messages being sent from London to Berlin on a WT transceiver.

The official lays down a densely typed sheet.

OFFICIAL (CONT'D)

We haven't traced the signal to an address yet but it is coming from the Highgate region of North London. The information relates to the activities of SOE circuits in France.

He turns a page and reads on.

OFFICIAL (CONT'D)

In one transcript the agent referred to his source of information as 'Frau'. So it is a woman. He also refers to 'pillow talk'.

MAX

Ok, ok. Frank? Can you and I speak alone for a moment?

HESLOP

I'm afraid that isn't possible.

OFFICIAL (TO HESLOP)

May I go on?

Heslop nods. Max is exploding inside.

OFFICIAL (CONT'D)

There are four encryption officers who had access to the information that was sent on the WT. They are now *all* under investigation...

MAX (SARCASTIC)

But *my* wife's French so she's top of the list, right?

OFFICIAL (NO HESITATION)

Yes.

A pause.

OFFICIAL (CONT'D)

Commander Vatan? Do you ever speak to your wife about your work?

A long silence. Finally...

MAX

Sir? Before this thing gets crazy,  
may I speak?

Heslop nods. The official flicks through pages as if not listening as Max goes on a furious roll...

MAX (CONT'D)

*Ok, Sir?* My wife is Marianne  
Beausejour. You evidently haven't  
heard of her. Poor research. She  
ran the most effective resistance  
circuit we ever had in Paris until  
V-section fucked things up for her  
in 1941...

Heslop has his hand over his eyes. The official continues to search for something in his files.

MAX (CONT'D)

I met her in Casablanca where she  
helped me kill the German  
Ambassador. She then saved  
my...fucking...life. Sir.

Max glares murder at the official, still busy with papers...

MAX (CONT'D)

She has my baby. She gave birth to  
my baby. Do you have any of this  
in your file? Sir?

At last the official looks up, his glasses reflecting. He has found the sheet he was looking for. He hands it to Max.

OFFICIAL

That is a translated transcript of  
an interrogation of a German Abwehr  
officer captured at Tobruk.

Max begins to scan it. There are four pages of densely typed dialogue...

OFFICIAL (CONT'D)

Among many other things, he claims  
that Marianne Beausejour was  
actually arrested and executed in  
May 1941 when the rest of her  
circuit was captured in Paris.

Max looks up from the papers...

OFFICIAL (CONT'D)

Marianne Beausejour's identity was then given to a German agent of similar build and coloring who was flown to Casablanca, where no one had ever met the real Marianne.

Max is almost out of his seat but Heslop eases him back. The official hardly blinks. Max's *professional* mind is beginning to work. A tiny fragment has been chipped from his certainty.

OFFICIAL (CONT'D)

We have also subsequently learnt that the Ambassador who you killed in Casablanca was an ally of Rommel. A dissident. Hitler wanted him killed.

Max stares. The official pulls out a particular page from his paperwork and reads...

OFFICIAL (CONT'D)

In the report you made when you first arrived in Gibraltar, you described this woman as the best and most convincing under-cover operative you had ever met. You said she was able to fool everyone.

Max begins to recall how professional and thorough Marianne was. Another crack...

HESLOP

Max, we know this is a terrible shock but you have to listen.

Silence...

HESLOP (CONT'D)

Max. Say 'Yes Sir'...

MAX (VERY SOFTLY)

Yes Sir.

The official glances at Heslop. Max stirs in his chair, his fists clenched. Heslop knows him and grows concerned that he will explode. The official knows violent men too and decides to hand over to Heslop.

HESLOP

Max, this is now an operational mission and you are obliged to obey orders.

A pause. Heslop has paperwork which he tries to give to Max but Max doesn't take it...

HESLOP (CONT'D)

If Marianne is indeed a German spy...

We sense the volcano is going to blow...

HESLOP (CONT'D)

...we need to keep her in place for forty eight hours so that we can clean up the rest of her circuit. We need to find all of them.

Max is staring up at the ceiling and speaks softly, with furious amusement...

MAX (SOFTLY, TO NO ONE)

Anybody know these two idiots? Anybody know what the fuck is happening here?

Max's foot is tapping fast. Heslop is now sure Max is about to explode but the official presses on...

OFFICIAL

For forty eight hours you must behave as if nothing has happened.

Max is still staring up at the ceiling, his fists white with rage. Heslop tries to bring Max back...

HESLOP

Max, we need you to be a professional soldier right now in this moment. I am giving you an operational detail. Take the file. That is an order.

A long pause. The official is impassive. Max slowly looks down at the two men. He stops tapping his foot and appears to be calm...

HESLOP (SOFTLY) (CONT'D)

Ok, good. Now. Here is what you are going to do...

Max suddenly and without warning goes off like a 500 pound bomb.

He dives at the official. Max is trained to disable or kill with his bare hands. A chair and small table are broken to pieces. Max grabs the official and yanks him to his feet.

The official is skinny and Max easily has him against the wall in a 'silent killing' death lock.

The official is calm. At the last moment Max pulls back. He is breathing hard. The official has a calmness that survives and he glances down. He has a revolver dug into Max's belly.

Max steps back. The official calmly puts the gun away. He is accustomed to these situations. The official straightens his clothes.

OFFICIAL

Now that is out of the way, perhaps we can get down to operational business.

Heslop takes Max's arm and helps him to sit. Max is now staring into the official's eyes with a cold, murderous fury which the official absorbs.

Heslop speaks softly...

OFFICIAL (CONT'D)

Tonight you will receive a phone call. At 11.07pm. Take the call somewhere where your wife can overhear what you're saying.

Max is expressionless...

OFFICIAL (CONT'D)

You will be given information which you will write down on a piece of paper. Leave the piece of paper beside the phone and go to the bathroom.

A pause.

OFFICIAL (CONT'D)

The information is false. Only you have it.

Max doesn't respond...

OFFICIAL (CONT'D)

The information is apparently high grade. She will need to pass it on quickly. If it appears in the transcripts on Monday morning we will know.

Max is still made of stone. Heslop bites another bullet...

HESLOP

Max, it is vital that you do *nothing* differently. You do not investigate or take matters into your own hands. You carry on as normal...

A pause...

HESLOP (CONT'D)

...And that includes the party tomorrow night.

Before Max can react, the official explains calmly...

OFFICIAL

Your phone has been bugged for five days. We heard her inviting her friends. It may even be that one of them is the man sending the messages. If it is, she will probably use the party as a way of passing the information.

A pause...

OFFICIAL (CONT'D)

...During a slow dance or something.

The official seems to want to needle Max to squeeze all the emotion out of him. Max has the file on his lap, clutched in both hands. He has now turned his fury into operational certainty. He speaks to the official in a calm voice...

MAX

Sir? I apologize for behaving unprofessionally just now.

The official shrugs as if it is of no concern.

MAX (CONT'D)

But I know for a fact you will be proven wrong about my wife. So it's ok. And I'm ok.

Silence. The official looks at Max with curiosity...

MAX (CONT'D)

It's going to be ok. Because there's a thing called 'the soul'. Looking into the soul. I have looked into her soul...

OFFICIAL (QUICKLY)

No. You have looked into her eyes.

A pause as Max and the official lock eyes. Then the official smiles and stacks his papers with finality.

OFFICIAL (CONT'D)

Now, Commander Vatan, go home and enjoy your weekend off as if this meeting never took place.

INT. SOE HEADQUARTERS, CORRIDOR

Max walks back down the same corridor, hollowed out, a totally different man. In the functional grey and brown corridor Max reaches an elevator and hits the button for the ground floor. Uniformed officers and clerks walk by.

The elevator arrives. We come close to Max's face. The seed of doubt has been planted and it has begun to germinate and grow. The elevator doors open...

EXT. HAMPSTEAD LANE

Max is driving back home up the same lane he took this morning. He stops at the same cross roads. Suddenly...

FLASHBACK: INT. APARTMENT, CASABLANCA - DAY

In a brief moment of memory, we see Max and Marianne in the apartment on their first day. Max is laughing...

MAX

(You don't sound so Sorbonne yourself. What's that in your accent? German?)

MARIANNE

I'm from Alsace...

The flash back ends abruptly.

EXT. HAMPSTEAD LANE

Max is at the empty cross roads, lost in thought. A car behind is hooting its horn. Max takes a moment. Finally he pulls away...

INT. HAMPSTEAD, FIG TREE COTTAGE

The same cluttered, happy family kitchen. Outside it's dark and rain is falling. Marianne is feeding the baby and singing a French lullaby to her. The baby's eyes are heavy.

Finally Marianne stops singing to check if Anna is asleep. She is. Marianne very carefully takes her upstairs.

INT. HAMPSTEAD, FIG TREE COTTAGE, BEDROOM

Marianne lays Anna down in her crib. It is a sweetly decorated room with hand-made paper mobiles hanging. Then there are headlights on the wall and a car pulls up. Max is home.

Marianne straightens her hair and prepares to greet him.

INT. MAX'S CAR

Max is preparing himself. Then Marianne peeks out through the kitchen curtain. Max looks at the photo of Marianne on the dash board and gets out of the car.

INT. HAMPSTEAD, FIG TREE COTTAGE, KITCHEN

There is no deceit, no flickering of the eyes, just the ordinary reaction of a mother whose husband has arrived back from work.

He put his key in the door and steps into the kitchen, his jacket slung over his shoulder. She goes to him.

MARIANNE

So what was so urgent?

Suddenly every question is loaded. A big broad smile from Max as he goes to the table.

MAX

A kid needed a pep talk to get him off the ground. What happened to my kiss?

He takes her hand and holds her to his body. They kiss.

MAX (CONT'D)

How's the princess?

MARIANNE

Sleeping.

Marianne glances at the clock...

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

That was a long talk.

MAX

Yeah. Then I got dragged into a briefing. You get in, you can't get out.

Max puts the briefcase under the table. Marianne goes to the oven and takes out a casserole.

MARIANNE

I bought wine too.

He sits and she fetches plates.

MAX

But the big news? I've definitely got the rest of the weekend off.

MARIANNE

Until the phone rings.

He lounges.

MAX

Nope. Definitely free the whole weekend.

Max casually flicks open the newspaper...

MARIANNE

So the party is on.

MAX (CASUALLY)

So the party is on.

Upstairs Anna cries. Marianne peers at Max for just a second.

MARIANNE

I will settle her. Start.

MAX

Damn right.

Marianne leaves and disappears upstairs. Max begins to help himself to casserole, a big helping. He puts on salt and begins to eat. Upstairs he can hear Marianne singing her lullaby.

*Now that he is alone his face is struck by just split second bolts of lightning but he holds it together.*

*It's true, he is trained for this.* He hears Marianne returning and opens a newspaper.

MARIANNE

I think she has Colic.

MAX (EATING AND READING)

Poor sweetie.

Marianne sits down and begins to eat. Max turns the page of his paper, reading as if engrossed. As Marianne sips from her spoon she peers at him. Is some instinct telling her something? Or is she just a loving wife peering at her husband?

*The game has begun.*

INT. HAMPSTEAD, FIG TREE COTTAGE, BEDROOM - NIGHT

The same bed which was such a peaceful place this morning. Now there is uncertain moonlight, a street light outside. Max is alone in bed but we can hear Marianne in the bathroom, preparing for bed.

He is reading again, this time a Graham Greene novel but we know none of the words are sinking in. Suddenly everything is a prop.

He glances at the clock and the phone beside it. It is six minutes past eleven. He calls out casually...

MAX

Hey honey come on, I want to turn the light out.

Marianne appears from the bathroom in pyjamas and combs out her hair in the dresser.

MARIANNE

I will still need mushrooms for the casserole tomorrow. You interrupted my foraging. We will go in the morning...

MAX (READING)

Man.

MARIANNE

You're not listening.

She comes to him, kneels on the bed and puts his book face down. Max turns away and sips water...

MARIANNE (CONT'D)  
But the interruption was, to say  
the least, worth it.

Max glances at the clock. Just seconds until 11.07pm. She gets into bed...

MARIANNE (CONT'D)  
So now let's do it again.

Then the phone on the bedside table begins to ring. Marianne sighs.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)  
So typical. It's like they can  
hear us.

She grabs him and hugs him hard. She clutches on to him. Max hides his reaction and laughs.

MAX  
Ok, ok. Give me my arm.

He reaches out and takes the call.

MAX (CONT'D)  
Hampstead 235.

Marianne grabs Max's book and begins to read, apparently not listening.

MAX (CONT'D)  
Yeah, it's ok.

Max turns his back...

MAX (CONT'D)  
Jesus Amanda, come on, I'm tired.

A pause. He sighs and turns...

MAX (CONT'D)  
Honey, you have a pen?

Marianne finds a pen on her side and passes it.

MAX (CONT'D)  
Ok. Yeah.

Max begins to write the message down on the pad. It takes a few seconds.

MAX (CONT'D)  
Ok, can I go to sleep now?

He puts the phone down and sighs. Marianne turns and hugs him and gives a mock instruction...

MARIANNE

Actually Commander Vatan you can  
not go to sleep now.

She kisses him. Max goes to reach for the pad as if to put it away...

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

You don't want to go to sleep now,  
do you Max.

She reaches out under the sheet and we guess she takes hold of his penis. Max smiles, rubs his face...

MAX

Baby, it's been a *long* day...

She peers at him and play punches him in the chest...

MARIANNE

(Come on my brute. You did it in  
the bushes, you can do it here. You  
never say no).

She buries her head under the sheets, giving Max a blow job. We study Max's face. He leans his head back and closes his eyes. We are close on him. He takes a deep breath.

MAX

Oh baby. That's good.

We stay only on his face. He takes some more big breaths, desperately dispelling the thoughts. He then reaches under the sheets and grabs Marianne's face and pulls her up.

He holds her tight and kisses her hard. They begin to make love.

*There is no need to detain with every move of the process but we should sense Max is powered by anger. She responds in kind but we should just detect a flicker of surprise in her face that he is just a little more aggressive tonight.*

He lies on top of her and penetrates her and we might sense that he is doing it more quickly and violently than is usual. He begins to fuck her. He begins to move hard.

Over his shoulder we come close to Marianne's face.

She makes the right noises but maybe she senses something is different. But maybe not.

We study her reaction and can not be sure. We come around on Max's face as his passion looks like fury.

Finally he climaxes, rolls off and stares at the ceiling, catching his breath. She stares at the ceiling too. We study their faces side-by-side as they breath hard.

A long moment passes. Then Max gets out of bed and leaves Marianne alone. We come close to the false message beside the phone and wait, with Marianne out of focus beyond. Is she going to read the message. We hear Max clattering in the bathroom.

Marianne doesn't move. Then she sits up.

INT. HAMPSTEAD, FIG TREE COTTAGE, BATHROOM - NIGHT

Max stares at himself in the mirror. Just through the bathroom door his life is being decided.

As Max thinks, his reflection begins to fade into...

FLASHBACK. INT. APARTMENT, CASBLANCA

....a snippet of conversation on the morning before the church visit. Max is looking into a different mirror...

MAX

You know, in London you're kind of a legend. No pictures, no fingerprints.

She straightens his tie.

MARIANNE

I thought in English a legend was something that didn't exist.

MAX

I only met one guy in the whole of France who'd even seen you.

She fusses in her purse...

MAX (CONT'D)

A pilot. Guy Sangster. You got him out of France through Dieppe. You remember him?

Marianne is busy loading her purse...

MARIANNE

I told you, I don't discuss  
operational information...

MAX (QUICKLY)

Sorry.

He glances at her as she goes to the mirror...

MAX (CONT'D)

He sure as hell remembered you.

MARIANNE (SMILING)

And what did he say about me?

A long pause. Marianne stands in the mirror for a final  
check of her outfit.

MAX

Beautiful. And good.

She peers at Max.

MARIANNE

Being good at this kind of work is  
not very beautiful.

A pause. Max sees a profound sadness on Marianne's face for  
just a half second. This time the look has deeper  
significance.

The flashback ends...

INT. HAMPSTEAD, FIG TREE COTTAGE, BATHROOM, MIRROR - NIGHT

We hear the deep rumble of a rocket engine and then hear an  
air raid siren wailing outside. Max is still at the mirror  
and his face is reflected. Then he hears Anna crying in the  
next room, woken by the siren. He walks...

INT. HAMPSTEAD, FIG TREE COTTAGE, ANNA'S BEDROOM

In streetlight from outside, Max is cuddling Anna, rocking  
her gently back to sleep. The siren wails.

We stay with the moment between Max and Anna for a long time.  
Anna gurgles in his arms. All the time his mind is pounding.  
He begins to whisper softly as a kind of mantra...

MAX

It's ok. It's ok because it isn't  
true...

Suddenly...

MARIANNE

Max?

Max turns...

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

It's a rocket.

Marianne pulls open the curtain. In the distant sky we see the red flare of a V2 rocket jet engine, flying over the London skyline. Max follows its trajectory and assesses with an expert eye.

MAX

South of the river. It's choking on dirty fuel so it's about to drop. We'll be ok.

Marianne reaches out and touches Max's arm, grateful for his expertise. As Max turns he has an agenda. He has made a decision. He speaks casually.

MAX (CONT'D)

Look, I'm going to go see Bridget in the morning. I'll invite her to the party. Is that ok?

MARIANNE

Of course.

She comes to him and joins the embrace with Anna.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

You know I'm still not sure your sister really likes me.

Max peers out at the rocket.

MAX

That's just Bridget. Takes her own sweet time to be sure about anyone.

The rumble of the rocket engine falls silent. Marianne clutches Max's hand.

MARIANNE

It's coming down.

Max begins a whispered count down...

MAX

..two, three, four, five...

There is an explosion six miles away, on the other side of the river. The whole sky above London lights up and the window rattles gently.

MAX (CONT'D)  
Another five hundred lives.

A pause. Marianne studies him, maybe senses a new bleakness. She whispers...

MARIANNE  
I think Anna is asleep. Why don't you come back to bed Max.

He nods gently. Marianne turns and leaves. Max lays Anna back in the bed and kisses her on the cheek. He kneels down and speaks softly to the baby, his voice filled with resolve.

MAX  
It'll be ok, baby.

A pause. We come close to his face.

EXT. HAMPSTEAD, FIG TREE COTTAGE - DAWN

We see the exterior of the picture book cottage as Marianne opens the kitchen curtain.

*Caption: 'Saturday'.*

We hear Marianne calling out...

MARIANNE (OOV)  
Max! Breakfast is on the table.

INT. HAMPSTEAD, FIG TREE COTTAGE, KITCHEN - MORNING

Marianne is placing scrambled eggs on the kitchen table, wearing her robe. Then Max breezes through, already dressed and heading for the door.

MARIANNE  
Are you not eating?

Max grabs a piece of toast and kisses Marianne...

MAX  
I want to catch Bridget before she goes to work.

He walks and Marianne calls out.

MARIANNE

Don't be too long. You have to help me get everything ready.

He leaves. Marianne peers out of the window at Max as he gets into his car. She studies him as he lights a cigarette and drives away.

Strident cello music begins...

EXT. NORTH LONDON - EARLY MORNING

Smoke rises where bombs have fallen. Thick black smoke still belches from the site of the V2 explosion.

We are high above London, on Spaniards Lane. The cello music continues. Max's car drives through shot and stops sharply. It's a frosty morning. Max gets out and picks some wild roses from a small bush. He jumps back into his car.

INT. BRIDGET'S SMALL APARTMENT, ST. JOHN'S WOOD, LONDON

We find the source of the strident cello music.

Louise, Bridget's girlfriend, is playing a cello in her nightdress in the lounge of an untidy apartment she shares with Bridget.

We hear the door buzzer go and Bridget appears from the bathroom, also in her nightdress. Bridget checks the spy hole and reacts with surprise. She opens the door.

BRIDGET

Max? Is everything ok?

Max tries to be his normal breezy self as he walks in. Bridget kisses him on both cheeks in the French style and Max holds her arm a little more tightly than usual. Bridget knows her brother well, knows something is wrong. Louise stops playing.

LOUISE

Hey Max.

MAX

Hey.

He goes to the window...

BRIDGET

So, what the hell *brings* you here?

Max finally turns, trying to be straight. Bridget is on to him before he can speak...

BRIDGET (CONT'D)  
Max? You look like you did, the day  
you burnt down the barn...

MAX (DISMISSING)  
I'm ok. I just dropped by to  
invite you two to a party at our  
house tonight.

Max studies their reactions...

MAX (CONT'D)  
Marianne is going to cook. You  
want to come?

Bridget and Louise swap looks and Max sees it...

BRIDGET  
Why didn't you phone?

MAX  
I was passing.

Bridget consults silently with Louise and gets a negative from her eyes...

BRIDGET  
Actually, Max, tonight might not be  
possible.

Max studies them some more and nods gently. He tries to keep it light with half a laugh...

MAX  
You ladies really don't like my  
wife do you. Why is that?

An awkward pause.

BRIDGET  
Max, don't be silly. What's wrong  
with you?

Max turns to Louise who is preparing her bow on the strings of the cello.

MAX  
Louise?

Louise shapes her fingers on the strings...

LOUISE (MATTER-OF-FACT)  
Well Max, you know I was in the  
Warsaw ghetto...

                  BRIDGET  
Louise, shut up...

                  LOUISE (PLOUGHING ON)  
...I have an instinct about who you  
can and can't trust. Now if you  
will forgive me, I must practise.

Louise begins to play a dark symphony, loudly. Bridget is angry with her and the music fills the room. Bridget peers at Max as he reacts. She knows something is wrong.

                  BRIDGET  
Come on Max, I'll show you out and  
you can tell me which barn is  
burning.

INT. BRIDGET'S SMALL APARTMENT, ELEVATOR

The metal mesh elevator door is dragged open. Max and Bridget enter and Max hits a button. The small elevator suggests total privacy and Bridget speaks softly.

The elevator begins to descend and light flickers through the grill...

                  BRIDGET  
A little bird tells me you were  
seen in V-section yesterday. Maybe  
that's why you're being so  
strange...

Max doesn't reply. The elevator descending..

                  BRIDGET (CONT'D)  
Max, if they're offering you some  
kind of suicide mission, you can  
say no to them.

The elevator has reached the ground floor.

                  BRIDGET (CONT'D)  
You have a wife and child...

To interrupt, Max pulls open the metal mesh with a scrape. He leaves and heads for the street door. Bridget is now deeply concerned by his behavior and follows.

EXT. BRIDGET'S SMALL APARTMENT BLOCK

Max is walking to his car. Bridget follows, even though she is barefoot and wearing her dressing gown...

BRIDGET

Max...

We can hear Louise's cello from inside the block. Max grabs his keys and slows. He fights a sudden gulp of emotion. Bridget comes to him...

MAX

Bridge, you're not wearing clothes...

BRIDGET

What's *happened* Max?

He turns to her. She is the person he trusts most in the world and decides to share. He fights his emotion...

MAX

Bridget, do you know what the rules are?

BRIDGET

What *rules*?

MAX (INTERRUPTING IN AN EVEN FLOW)

The rules of espionage in time of war. If you have a relationship with someone who turns out to be a spy...

Bridget reacts to the word...

MAX (CONT'D)

...you have to execute them yourself. With your own hand. To prove you are clean.

BRIDGET

What are you talking about?

MAX

I'm talking about the rules.

Max looks up at Bridget. She is stunned and glances up at the apartment block...

BRIDGET (INCREDULOUS)

Max, are you talking about *Louise*? You think Louise is a *spy*?

Max laughs through hard fought tears and wipes his eyes angrily with his sleeve.

MAX

No. Not Louise. Not Louise.

Bridget sees the deep anguish behind Max's eyes and the penny finally drops. She is almost blown over by the shock. She reads everything in Max's eyes.

BRIDGET

My God...

MAX (FAST)

They're running a blue dye on Marianne....

BRIDGET (FAST TOO)

That's why you were in V...

Max interrupts firmly...

MAX

It isn't true and I will prove it.  
It will be ok.

He dares her to disagree. She nods gently, stunned. He smiles to show the time for secrets is over. He speaks brightly...

MAX (CONT'D)

So I want you there at the party tonight. Will you come?

BRIDGET (INSTANTLY)

We will come.

Max turns to get into his car. The cello music has stopped. As he drives away we are left with Bridget barefoot in her dressing gown, and Louise peering down from the window.

EXT. FINCHLEY MEMORIAL MILITARY HOSPITAL - MORNING

The cello music Louise was playing resumes. Max's car turns into the long, tree-lined drive that leads to the hospital.

INT. FINCHLEY MEMORIAL MILITARY HOSPITAL, RECEPTION - MORNING

The hospital is dedicated to the treatment of wounded soldiers and airmen. An airman with both legs amputated wheels himself down a long corridor, smoking and whistling. Nurses hurry a newly arrived patient down a parallel corridor and the patient groans in pain.

Max waits in a dull reception area and a brown coated porter wheels a metal cage filled with prosthetic limbs on a giant wheeled trolley. The arms and legs stick out of the steel mesh. We should feel the industrial scale of the carnage being treated here.

A doctor approaches from the other direction.

DOCTOR  
Commander Vatan?

They shake hands and set off down the long dark corridor...

DOCTOR (CONT'D)  
Captain Sangster is still quite  
fragile.

INT. FINCHLEY MEMORIAL MILITARY HOSPITAL, OPEN WARD - DAY

This particular ward deals with brain trauma and cranial injuries. As Max walks we see men with horrific injuries lying in bed or making their way around. Some mumble, some cower and squeal in terror. It is a kind of hell but Max and the doctor walk calmly on toward a bed which is separated by drawn curtains. They walk through...

INT. FINCHLEY MEMORIAL MILITARY HOSPITAL, OPEN WARD, GUY'S BED - DAY

In the bed we find an airman with terrible wounds. He is gaunt and hollow. Half of his skull has been shot away and is covered by a plate and bandages. One eye is missing. His face is a blizzard of scars.

This is GUY, a man who was once a dashing, handsome airman. Max is a soldier and hardly reacts to Guy's horrific appearance. The doctor hovers and Max dismisses him with a nod.

When they are alone Max lights a cigarette and hands it to Guy.

MAX  
Hello Guy.

Guy doesn't respond and Max assumes it's defiance. Then the smoke swirls and Guy reaches for the cigarette. His hand shakes too much to take it and Max holds the cigarette for him, putting it to his lips.

Only when he speaks do we hear the cool fury in Guy's voice.

GUY

What do you want with me, Max? I'm finished. You people threw me away.

Guy draws smoke.

MAX

I came to see how you are.

Guy nods slowly.

GUY

And how am I? What is your assessment?

Max takes the cigarette back.

GUY (CONT'D)

You bastards sent me into Pas De Calais in daylight.

A pause. Max expects the bitterness and accepts it but knows he must press on.

MAX

I need your help.

GUY

*My help?*

MAX

I have a question. There's no one else in England I can ask.

Guy gives an incredulous laugh that hurts.

GUY

*Yeah? Tough. Fuck you.*

From his inside pocket Max takes out a wedding photograph of himself and Marianne. He doesn't show it yet. He speaks evenly...

MAX

I am trusting you not to tell anyone about this.

GUY (NOT HEARING)

I have been left here to fucking rot, Max...

Max continues in a calm voice...

MAX

You told me once you were smuggled  
out of France by Marianne  
Beausejour. Dieppe 1940.

Guy struggles to sit up...

MAX (CONT'D)

You said Marianne Beausejour was  
beautiful and good.

A pause. Guy's anger is subsumed by curiosity. After a  
puzzled pause...

GUY

Why are you asking me about your  
*wife*?

Max tries to hold it together as he hands Guy the wedding  
photograph taken outside the French House.

MAX

There is no one else in England who  
met her before '42. So I need you  
to tell me. Is the woman in the  
photograph the same Marianne  
Beausejour you knew in Dieppe in  
1940?

Guy peers down at the photo, then at Max. Max holds his  
breath. A long pause. Finally Guy looks up.

GUY

What are you showing me?

Max can barely keep a lid on his voice...

MAX

My fucking wedding photograph. Now  
tell me if the woman in white is  
the same Marianne Beausejour you  
knew in Dieppe.

A long pause. Guy speaks softly...

GUY

Why wouldn't it be?

MAX

Just please answer the question.

A long pause.

GUY (SOFTLY)

Max? Didn't they tell you?

Guy takes a moment.

GUY (CONT'D)  
My left eye was shot out. My right  
eye has no retina.

Guy runs his thumb along the edge of the photograph.

GUY (CONT'D)  
All I can see is two shapes. One  
white one black.

A pause. We realize why Guy found it so hard to smoke. Max  
takes a moment. Finally...

MAX  
*Fuck.*

Guy is suddenly and instantly defiant, his anger returning.

GUY  
Well you know Max, if you hadn't  
sent me into a strip covered in  
fucking German triple A...

Max takes the photo back.

GUY (CONT'D)  
My own son screamed when he saw me.

Max gets to his feet.

GUY (CONT'D)  
Maybe this is payment for what you  
bastards do to people!

Max instinctively grabs him but Guy offers no resistance.

GUY (INSTANTLY) (CONT'D)  
Go on. Finish what you started.  
You'd be doing me a favor.

Max stares into Guy's smashed face and relents. He lets go  
and straightens. They both take a moment and Max walks.

EXT. FINCHLEY HOSPITAL

Max sits in his car, recovering. He suddenly punches the  
steering wheel and curses. He has the wedding photo in his  
hand. He checks his watch. He's been away a while and knows  
he should get back. Then a military blood transfusion van  
drives by. For reasons we don't yet get, this gives him an  
idea. He decides he has a little time. He fires the engine  
and reverses fast...

EXT. HENDON AIRFIELD - DAY

The grass airstrip is three miles from Hampstead and is busy with engineers making hasty repairs to Spitfire and Hurricane fighters. This should feel like the hub of the war effort, with fast moving supply and fuel trucks zig-zagging the runways. There are huge craters where bombs have fallen, and the scattering of brick buildings are augmented by corrugated metal barns.

Max pulls up at the gate and gets out. He is in a hurry and shows his ID to armed guards at a wire perimeter. The guards know Max's rank but there is a routine.

GUARD

What access?

MAX

Red.

GUARD

What is your business on the strip?

MAX

I have an additional item for a bag drop. Dieppe.

The guard nods and picks up a phone. He dials one number and speaks.

GUARD

A Commander Vatan for red zone access.

MAX (TO THE GUARD AS HE WAITS)

They're not expecting me but I have routine red zone clearance.

The guard hears an affirmative and places the phone...

GUARD

Ok, go ahead.

The guard salutes and gives Max a paper security pass which is date stamped. He goes back to the car and shoves the pass on the dashboard.

(This security routine will be revisited and will become important later).

A barrier is raised and Max drives fast into the frantic activity. He drives beyond the fighter aircraft and heads for a smaller airstrip at right angles to the main strip. Two Lysanders, painted black, are being serviced and prepared for flights behind enemy lines.

He pulls up beside a Lysander which is being stripped for repairs. Engineers turn and salute when they recognize Max.

MAX

Who's replacing Lubusciak on  
Archdeacon tonight?

INT./EXT. HENDON AIRFIELD, OUTDOOR LAVATORIES

A brick built block has a narrow entrance corridor into a cold, dripping men's lavatory, open to the elements. Max enters. The sinks are grimy and all the cubicles are open apart from one. We hear someone throwing up inside the locked cubicle.

Max takes a moment as he listens. The sound of retching seems to mean something profoundly sad for him. Beside one of the sinks he sees a shaving bag, a small towel, a pack of cigarettes, a quarter bottle of whisky and a kids teddy bear lying on its back. It is like a small shrine to a precarious life.

Leaning under the mirror there is a clipboard with a flight rota headed 'CAPTAIN ADAM HUNTER'.

Max approaches the sink and studies the belongings. Then the lavatory is flushed and the cubicle door opens. We see ADAM, a Lysander pilot. He sees Max and immediately stands to attention and salutes.

Max studies him for a moment. He looks as young and fresh faced as a schoolboy.

MAX

At ease.

Adam looks deeply embarrassed as he glances back at the cubicle.

ADAM

Sorry Sir. Something I've eaten.

Max smiles and hands Adam the bottle of blue tablets.

MAX

These will settle your stomach.

Adam doesn't respond. He goes to the sink and splashes his face.

ADAM

I'm going to save the amphetamines  
until take off. Then barbiturates  
when I get back. If I get back.

Max studies the rota in his hand.

MAX

You know the bag man who runs the strip at Dieppe?

ADAM

No. This is my first time.

MAX

First time to Dieppe?

Max has put the rota down and takes the wedding photo of himself and Marianne out of his pocket.

ADAM (SOFTLY)

First time behind enemy lines ever, Sir.

Max looks up sharply and sees the terror in the boy's eyes. Max knows he must press on. He tears the photo in half. He discards the image of himself and keeps only the image of Marianne. He takes the pen from the clipboard and turns the torn half of the wedding photo around. He begins to write a message on the back. As he writes...

MAX

The bag man at Dieppe is called Laramint. He has one arm. He's usually drunk but he's ok.

On the back of the photo we glimpse the message Max is writing in French and we get a sub-title translation...*'Is this woman Marianne Beausejour?'*

MAX (CONT'D)

Give this to him...

Max then unfastens a large blue envelope from under the rota. It is sealed with a metal fastening and is marked 'Most secret'. There are silks and papers inside. Max untwists the fastening...

MAX (CONT'D)

Make sure you give it only to the man with one arm. Give it only to him, ok?. And tell him you need an answer to my question before you leave. 'Oui' or 'non'. Only that.

ADAM

Yes Sir.

Adam looks more scared than ever. Max re-seals the bag and hands it to Adam.

MAX

I will call you here at midnight.  
Wait for my call in the telegraph  
office. This is classified and no  
one else must know, ok?

ADAM

Yes Sir.

MAX

It's very important.

ADAM

You can count on me Sir.

Max studies Adam's youthful face.

MAX

There are poplar trees at the end  
of the strip at Dieppe. Invisible  
if there's no Moon. So rise steep.

Adam nods.

MAX (CONT'D)

And on the ground, if anyone  
approaches your plane from the left  
rather than the right...

ADAM

I shoot them dead. I know. I've had  
the ground briefing.

Max can see the boy is swamped. He clutches the boy's arm  
and speaks softly.

MAX

Who are you thinking about?

A pause. A swallow. A moment for honesty.

ADAM

My mother.

MAX

Don't. Think of your father. He's  
proud of you. This is it. This is  
the King of all adventures.

Adam smiles.

ADAM

Yes Sir.

Max slaps his shoulder and leaves.

EXT. SPANIARD'S LANE

Max is driving back. He checks his watch and reacts to how long he has been away. Longer than would make sense to Marianne. He makes a decision and pulls over.

He takes a moment to get his story straight in his head. He then opens the glove compartment and takes out a small Air Force first aid kit. He opens it up and takes out a pin for fastening bandages.

He pulls up his sleeve and pricks himself. A bubble of blood oozes and Max un-peels a plaster and places it over the pin prick. He rolls his sleeve down and takes a moment.

He is about to fire the engine but the enormity of what has happened in the past twenty four hours hits him. Here he is, acting like a spy in the field. He looks at the flowers he picked. He looks at the photo of Marianne and Anna on the dashboard. He almost breaks...

He looks at himself in the rear view and makes a massive effort to pull himself together. Finally he drives...

INT. HAMPSTEAD, FIG TREE COTTAGE - DAY

The door is unlocked and Max enters. The house is silent and empty. Max steps inside and reacts. Has she fled?

MAX

Marianne?

He then sees a note on the kitchen table and fears the worst. He goes to it and reads...

*'Foraging! Come help me!'*

EXT. HAMPSTEAD HEATH

The same bare hill top on the Heath against a view over London. It is a brooding day. We see Marianne picking mushrooms, silhouetted against the skyline. She is carrying a basket and putting various types of mushroom into it as she walks.

As she straightens she sees Max's Wolseley pulling up on the roadside. He gets out and approaches with his hands behind his back. She continues to forage...

MARIANNE

Where have you been Max? You've been ages.

He still has his hands behind his back.

MAX

On the way back from Bridget's I  
drove past Finchley Hospital.  
There were signs saying they needed  
blood.

He brings the flowers from behind his back.

MAX (CONT'D)

And then I went in search of the  
first flowers of Spring.

Marianne takes them with a smile. Max glances at the  
mushrooms in her basket.

MARIANNE

Is Bridget going to come?

MAX

She's bringing Louise. Is that ok?

Marianne smiles without a flicker of hesitation.

MARIANNE

Of course. Having a sister who has  
a girlfriend will make you seem  
more Bohemian to my intellectual  
friends.

Max picks a mushroom from the collection.

MAX

You're sure these things are not  
going to kill us all?

MARIANNE

I've been picking mushrooms since I  
was seven years old.

They begin to walk toward the car and Max sniffs a particular  
mushroom...

MAX

I guess when you're raised on a  
farm you learn things early.

MARIANNE

Like where babies come from and  
which mushrooms are poisonous.

Max lights a cigarette with one hand as they walk...

MAX

And how to milk a cow that doesn't  
want to be milked, right?

He holds open the car door and Marianne smiles.

MARIANNE

Pigs. My papa raised pigs. I told  
you.

Max closes the door and goes around the car. Marianne reacts to the mild 'interrogation'. Max gets into the driver's seat before Marianne does. She takes a moment to put the mushrooms on the back seat...

In that moment Max sees the security pass from the airstrip with today's date. He quickly grabs it and crushes it in his hand before slipping it into his pocket. His anxiety is affecting his thoroughness.

Marianne gets into the passenger seat and Max drives away.

INT. CAR, SPANIARDS LANE

We stay with their faces for a few moments as he drives back toward the cottage. We must be increasingly unsure how much Marianne suspects. Marianne may be responding as someone who knows she is under suspicion, or her responses may be entirely innocent.

Max draws on his cigarette and Marianne steals it.

MARIANNE

Were there many in there?

MAX

Where?

She glances at his hands on the steering wheel.

MARIANNE

Giving blood. You took so long.

MAX

Lots of people volunteer after a  
rocket hits.

He hands her his cigarette and she grabs his arm. She raises his sleeve and sees the plaster with the smudge of blood. She lets go of his hand.

MARIANNE (LAUGHING)  
So you did give blood. Good. I  
thought perhaps you were with your  
mistress.

Max laughs too. He pulls his hand away. He drives on. She  
hands the cigarette back

MARIANNE (LAUGHING) (CONT'D)  
If you had a mistress, it would  
explain why you were so rough with  
me last night. That's how your  
mistress likes it.

MAX  
Rough with you?

Marianne smiles at the window...

MARIANNE  
Different. You were different last  
night. I felt it.

A pause. They both become more serious...

MAX  
I was?

She laughs again...

MARIANNE  
Yes. As if you were angry.

Max drives on. He fights his emotion.

MAX  
So do you have a list of guests for  
tonight?

She glances at him and perhaps reads his hidden emotion. She  
takes his arm and leans on his shoulder.

MARIANNE  
Everyone is coming because they all  
want to meet my wonderful husband  
who I tell them so much about.

MAX  
Just like Casablanca, huh?

MARIANNE  
No. This time it's real.

*We hear the swinging introductory bars of Glenn Miller jazz.*

INT. HAMPSTEAD, FIG TREE COTTAGE, MAX AND MARIANNE'S LIVING ROOM

Max and Marianne's party is in full swing and Glenn Miller is playing on the gramophone.

Guests are smoking, drinking and dancing, but most of all drinking. We also find George and some others cutting and snorting cocaine.

We see professors and painters, as well as a couple of uniformed soldiers and young poets. We find the landlord of the French House serving drinks.

Max is making his way around the guests.

Bridget is nursing a drink and looks uneasy. Louise is drinking shots with a painter and they are both screaming with laughter. Then a uniformed soldier makes his way through the crowd and speaks loudly above the music to Louise and Bridget.

SOLDIER 1

Excuse me. Me and some of my mates  
have a request...

Louise laughs as Bridget rolls her eyes...

SOLDIER 1 (CONT'D)

We would really like to see you two  
ladies kiss each other.

Louise is drunk and gives Bridget a huge kiss. At that moment Max walks by and he and Bridget react. Marianne is drifting through and sees the look between Max and Bridget.

*During the party there will be a sub-text of looks through smoky, crowded spaces.*

Max takes Louise's arm to break up the kiss...

MAX

Hey, hey, come on. Take it easy.

LOUISE

Ah, Max, you're so bourgeoisie  
sometimes. It's a party!

Bridget smiles as she watches Marianne leave the room, trying to maintain appearances. Bridget then brushes Max's shoulder and speaks softly...

BRIDGET

She's right Max. You really must  
try to relax.

She communicates her support with her eyes and Max turns...

INT. HAMPSTEAD, FIG TREE COTTAGE, HALLWAY

We find George kissing a young woman in an alcove by the stairs. In the shadows a middle-aged male writer is flirting with a young guy. Max makes his way through the hall with his empty drinks tray, reacting to a party that is getting out-of-hand. He goes through into the kitchen.

INT. HAMPSTEAD, FIG TREE COTTAGE, KITCHEN

A uniformed airman and a young girl are kissing and groping in the pantry. He has her shirt unbuttoned and her breasts in his hands. Max enters and sees...

MAX

Hey, excuse me. We have a garden.  
Take it in the garden, ok?

The young couple laugh and leave. Marianne is at the stove, clattering plates. Max goes to her and sees her irritation.

MARIANNE

*Everybody's drunk. I thought people  
would talk to each other. I  
thought they would eat something.  
Not just drink and have sex.*

Max takes her in his arms.

MAX

*I told you. C'est la guerre. C'est  
Londres.*

There is screeching laughter from the garden and they see that guests are spilling out onto the lawn and turning it into an impromptu dance floor. Marianne wipes her brow with her wrist...

MARIANNE

Max, would you go check no one is  
actually fucking in Anna's room.

Max hesitates. Is she trying to get him out of the way? Finally he turns and goes...

INT. HAMPSTEAD, FIG TREE COTTAGE, ANNA'S BEDROOM

Anna is sleeping in her cot and the music and laughter seeps in from downstairs. Max enters and kneels by the cot to peer at Anna.

As he does he notices Mrs Szabo fixing her make up in the bedroom opposite. She turns to peer out from across the street. Max wonders...

Then, suddenly, the door opens and George enters.

GEORGE

So did you get the job?

Max straightens. George quietly closes the door and the party noise mutes.

MAX

I'm not sure.

GEORGE

But they interviewed you?

Max stares hard at George.

MAX

You know better than to talk business when there is open alcohol.

George glances down at Anna in her cot.

GEORGE

Yes, but I thought as a friend, I ought to just give you a word of warning. If the job they're offering is the one everyone's talking about...

George turns to Max and speaks explicitly to test Max's reaction...

GEORGE (CONT'D)

...running the resistance behind the lines on D-Day...

Max doesn't respond. Across the street Mrs Szabo turns out her light. George continues...

GEORGE (CONT'D)

If it is that particular hot potato they are tossing in your lap then you should know they wouldn't just call you in for a chat. They would test you somehow.

Downstairs, people are screaming and laughing. Max reacts...

MAX

Test me? Test me how?

GEORGE

I thought you didn't want to talk  
business....

MAX (ON IT)

How would they test me?

George repeats...

GEORGE

Once again, way, way above my  
security clearance old man. Just be  
on your guard. When V-section come  
calling, especially for something  
big, odd things begin to happen.

George touches Anna's cheek softly then leaves. Max's mind is  
now racing. After a moment, a car pulls up. Even through  
his machinations he is startled to see Heslop get out of the  
car.

Max hurries down stairs.

INT. HAMPSTEAD, FIG TREE COTTAGE, HALLWAY, FRONT DOOR

The party is moving out into the hall and out through an open  
door into the darkness of the garden. Music plays loudly and  
smoke swirls. Everyone is drunk. The door is being knocked  
and Max calls out...

MAX

I'll get it.

Max opens the front door. Before Max can react Heslop  
explodes into a big hearty handshake and a fast explanation  
of his arrival.

HESLOP (ONLY TO MAX)

Hello Max, you invited me  
yesterday. You didn't mention it  
to Marianne because you didn't  
think I'd come.

Max is bewildered for just half a second but he's trained and  
slips into the deception quickly. Heslop steps inside and  
removes his hat.

MAX (RECOVERING)

So good of you to come Frank.

Marianne has emerged from the kitchen and smiles.

MARIANNE

Frank? Please don't say you're going to drag him away...

Frank takes off his coat...

FRANK

I wasn't planning to come at all but I was driving past and thought to hell with it. A whisky and soda would be wonderful.

Marianne glances at Max and Max grins...

MAX

Get Frank a drink would you darling.

Marianne peers at them both for a moment. Is she buying this? Then she departs for the kitchen. Max and Heslop are briefly alone. A guest breezes by and Heslop speaks louder...

HESLOP

You keep chickens don't you?

MAX

How do you know that?

HESLOP

Show me your chickens Max.

EXT, HAMPSTEAD, FIG TREE COTTAGE, GARDEN

The garden is large for the size of house, with over-hanging trees and the silhouettes of houses against the grey night sky.

People are jiving to the jazz music coming through open French doors. The scene is becoming more wild. Max leads Heslop into the garden and they chat through gritted teeth, their benevolent expressions contrasting their words. Max lights a cigarette.

HESLOP

You have willfully and blatantly disobeyed orders.

Guests walk by and Max smiles at them. Marianne is approaching through the crowd with Heslop's drink, stopping on the way to chat. Heslop speaks through a smile...

HESLOP (CONT'D)

We specifically ordered you not to investigate.

Max turns away...

HESLOP (CONT'D)

First you visit Guy Sangster and burst half his stitches, then you add something to the Dieppe bag...

Max turns sharply...

MAX

If it was your wife Frank, would you trust V-section?

Frank has seen Marianne making her way and knows he must speak fast...

HESLOP

For your information Adam Hunter's Lysander was shot to pieces three hours ago. On the ground. Adam's dead. Maybe because he stayed too long on the strip waiting for an answer to a question from a drunk.

Max reacts inside.

HESLOP (CONT'D)

I came here to order you to stop.

Marianne is almost upon them. Max interrupts and speaks fast because it might be his only opportunity...

MAX

Frank, is this is a game?

Heslop can barely hide his reaction. He hisses at Max...

HESLOP (INCREDULOUS)

A game?

Before Max can speak, Marianne arrives, carrying Heslop's drink in a tumbler. Max and Heslop smile as one...

HESLOP (CONT'D)

I was just saying, Max has taken to office life like a duck to water.

Marianne smiles...

MARIANNE

I don't know. I hardly see him.

To hide his reaction to the news about Adam Hunter, Max grabs Marianne's hand...

MAX

Come on Marianne, let's dance.

Max grabs her hand and pulls her onto the lawn to join the other dancers.

The music swells and they begin to dance. Heslop steps back into the shadows and watches. Marianne spins around. Max's face is made of stone.

MARIANNE

Frank bought you bad news?

MAX

Another boy dead.

MARIANNE

Something more than that I think.

The music plays on.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

I asked Bridget if there was something wrong with you and she said you were fine.

Max and Marianne have their faces close.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

But she's not trained to lie like you and me.

They communicate with their eyes. Is the facade beginning to crumble?

Over Marianne's shoulder Max sees Mrs Szabo standing alone and awkward on the edge of the dance floor. The music plays on. Mrs Szabo peers at them both. The music ends. Marianne breaks away, brushing past Mrs Szabo as she goes inside.

Frank watches it all through the bottom of his glass as he drinks.

INT. HAMPSTEAD, FIG TREE COTTAGE, CROWDED STAIRCASE

There is a queue for the lavatory and Max pushes by. Bridget sees his fixed expression. She comes to him through the crowds...

BRIDGET

Max, are you ok?

Max takes a breath and looks away. Bridget smiles and strokes his hair from his face, speaking under her breath...

BRIDGET (CONT'D)

Look, I don't know if it's relevant  
but...

Someone walks by and Bridget stops. Max smiles to cover the conversation.

MAX

But what?

Bridget whispers in his ear. Mrs Szabo drifts by in the background. After the whispered message, Max heads into the kitchen fast.

INT. HAMPSTEAD, FIG TREE COTTAGE, KITCHEN

The kitchen is crammed with people getting drinks and there is a fog of tobacco smoke. Through the crowd Max sees Marianne near to the stove with a guy in his mid sixties. This is MYERS.

Myers is smoking a pipe and talking intently to Marianne.

Max wants to get to them quickly but there are too many people, drunk, laughing, dancing. Finally Max shoves a uniformed guy out of the way and there is almost a scuffle.

Myers sees Max approaching and appears to make his excuses and leave. By the time Max reaches Marianne there is just a cloud of smoke.

Max tries hard to be his usual self...

MAX

Are you ok?

She smiles and slips into French.

MARIANNE

(Yes, why wouldn't I be  
*Quebecoise*?)

MAX

Bridget said someone was boring  
you.

MARIANNE

How would *she* know who bores me?

Max waves smoke away...

MAX

Who was that guy?

Marianne takes a beat to register the fact that the question was even asked at all.

MARIANNE

Are you jealous?

Max pours himself a drink.

MAX

Bridget said he spoke like a Dutchman...

MARIANNE

Actually South African.

Max's hand shakes and Marianne sees it...

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

He's one of my intellectuals. He's also a diamond dealer. I think he was trying to sell me a rock. I told him we're broke.

Max stares out into the garden where Myers is merging into the crowd. Marianne registers his interest. Max is about to set off but Marianne grabs his arm...

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

Max? Where are you going?

Max turns to her. There is a moment between them as she holds on to his sleeve. Is she physically stopping him from pursuing Myers? Or does she just want him to stay and talk?

At that moment, there is a break in the music and some applause from the garden. When the applause dies there is a brief moment of silence.

Except there isn't silence. Instead everyone hears a rumble of a rocket engine. People automatically look up.

EXT. HAMPSTEAD, FIG TREE COTTAGE, GARDEN

One-by-one the couples turn skyward. They all hear the deep rumble of a V2 rocket. And it's close.

VOICE

Holy shit!

VOICE 2

It's coming our way.

There are some shrieks. The garden is now full of frozen statues, couples still embracing but now looking up at the sky. Max emerges from the house and thinks he sees Myers disappearing through the back gate of the garden into the street, but he can't be sure.

Other couples emerge from the shadows, fastening their clothes. Overhead we see the bright orange flame of the V2 rocket jet engine. Voices spill over each other...

FEMALE VOICE

We should get to a shelter.

VOICE 3

It's too late. It's too close. We'd never make it.

VOICE 2

The damn music was too loud.

The noise of the rocket gets louder. Everyone turns to everyone else. Max calls out to the assembled party.

MAX

Ok. Get away from the house! Get away from the buildings!

People begin to stumble toward the end of the garden. A young airman calls out...

AIRMAN

If the engine cuts in the next twenty seconds we're all dead anyway.

MAX

Just move!

People begin to mumble prayers. Others fall to their knees, looking up at the sky. Max still has his mind on Myers and is about to head off in pursuit of the shadow but he glances back at the bedroom of the house. Marianne is on the doorstep and Max calls out...

MAX (CONT'D)

We have to get Anna.

Max hurries toward Marianne and the house. As he passes, George announces loudly.

GEORGE

Ladies and Gentlemen. May I propose a toast. To life lived in the exquisite moment of death.

He takes a deep swig of brandy and closes his eyes tight. The rocket rumbles closer.

INT. HAMPSTEAD, FIG TREE COTTAGE

Marianne follows Max running up the stairs, stumbling over guests who are just waking or fleeing. She overtakes him in her anxiety to get her baby. Windows have begun to vibrate as the throbbing roar of the rocket above gets louder. Bottles and plates fall to the floor and smash.

INT. HAMPSTEAD, FIG TREE COTTAGE, ANNA'S BEDROOM

Marianne has grabbed Anna from the cot. Max is at the door and yells above the deafening noise...

MAX

Ok, let's get her out of here!!

At that moment, the dreadful rumbling stops dead.

*Silence.*

The rocket is falling. Five seconds left.

MARIANNE (SOFTLY)

Dear God, save my child.

EXT. HAMPSTEAD, FIG TREE COTTAGE, GARDEN

Couples in frozen embraces stare up at the sky. No one knows if they will live or die. Bridget and Louise put their foreheads together and stare into each other's eyes. Heslop is mumbling a message, not his wife but to 'Claudette', whoever she was.

INT. HAMPSTEAD, FIG TREE COTTAGE, ANNA'S BEDROOM.

Anna comes to Max and, with Anna, they embrace. Marianne looks into Max's eyes.

MARIANNE

I love you Max. (*Je t'aime  
Quebecoise*).

A pause. Then the rocket explodes.

EXT. HAMPSTEAD HEATH

A huge explosion on the open heath land, near to a fishing pond. Earth, fire and water are thrown into the air.

EXT. HAMPSTEAD, FIG TREE COTTAGE, GARDEN

The guests are thrown to the floor. There is a moment of percussion, then earth and debris begin to rain down.

INT. HAMPSTEAD, FIG TREE COTTAGE, BEDROOM

Plaster falls from the ceiling but the room remains intact. Max and Marianne huddle in a protective embrace around Anna. The room shakes and ornaments fall but they are all safe.

Finally the rain of debris outside subsides. Once again there is silence.

EXT. HAMPSTEAD, FIG TREE COTTAGE, GARDEN

Guests begin to cough and get to their feet. In twos and threes the dancers look around in wonder. Others kiss and embrace.

VOICE

It landed on the Heath! Thank God.

After a moment George straightens his jacket and calls out.

GEORGE

Screw God. What happened to the music?!

A few seconds later, someone inside puts the music back on. Swing jazz roars out. Everyone begins to dance, harder and wilder than before...

INT. HAMPSTEAD, FIG TREE COTTAGE, ANNA'S BEDROOM

As the music and the screaming and laughter reaches new heights, Max and Marianne peer at each other. They share a moment as Max reviews everything.

*Was the South African the spy? And, if Marianne declared her love in what could have been her last moment on earth, then it must be real no matter what. After a moment...*

MARIANNE

Will you get rid of everyone Max?

He quickly turns and leaves. We are left with Marianne and Anna alone and study Marianne's face as she holds her baby.

INT. HAMPSTEAD, FIG TREE COTTAGE, DOORWAY

The music has been turned off. Most guests have left but some are arranging themselves, putting on hats, giggling, stumbling. Max is at the door saying good night. Heslop walks by, putting on his hat. He comes close and speaks softly.

HESLOP

Please Max. No more tricks. Monday morning we will know for sure. I'm praying for you.

Heslop prepares to leave but Max grabs his arm and stares intently into his eyes...

MAX

Frank?

Heslop responds instantly, knowing the question.

HESLOP

It is not a game.

Max studies Heslop intently. He appears to be genuinely unknowing.

MAX

Even if it was, V-section wouldn't tell you.

Is there a flicker of doubt on Heslop's face now? He turns and walks away quickly into the night, where smoke from the rocket is swirling.

INT. HAMPSTEAD, FIG TREE COTTAGE, KITCHEN

The room is wrecked and empty. All the guests have gone. Cars are pulling away outside. There is broken glass on the floor. Max enters and surveys the damage. He rubs his neck and sits down at the table. He pours himself a drink.

In the half darkness, he hears the Hampstead church bell begin to toll outside. He looks up at the clock and sees it is 3am...

MARIANNE (OOV)

Max?

Max looks up. Marianne is in the doorway in her robe.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

Tomorrow we have a whole day with  
Anna.

A pause...

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

Let's forget the war and make it  
the best day ever.

They look at each other. Perhaps Max hears a fatalism in Marianne's voice which implies she knows she is under suspicion. He nods and smiles.

MAX

Yeah. A day just for us, huh?

She waits a moment then leaves...

EXT. HAMPSTEAD HEATH, HUGE ROCKET CRATER - MORNING

The V2 rocket blew a huge crater in the open heathland beside the Vale of Health pond. Tape has been tied around stakes at the edge to keep children out and there are a couple of uniformed police standing guard.

There are also hundreds of sightseers who are staring into the hole and loving the excitement. Nearby, a small Gypsy fair has been set up with donkeys and mechanical rides and a carousel to take advantage of the crowds.

A barker calls out to the crowd...

BARKER

Roll up for the Hole-in-the Heath  
fair! Every ride a penny!

*Caption: Sunday.*

A small church congregation has gathered at the side of the crater and we hear the vicar giving his sermon...

VICAR

We have left our church this  
morning to come out here and thank  
God that the rocket that was sent  
to us last night landed here on the  
Heath and not in our midst...

Among the crowd we find Max and Marianne. Max has Anna on his shoulders and from a distance we see them peering into the hole.

Then we find them among the fairground rides. We see Max and Marianne laughing as they hold Anna on the back of a donkey and Anna begins to cry.

Max tries his hand at a shooting gallery and hits the target twice but third time he misses. Marianne's face clouds just for a second. Max would never miss. Perhaps this proves his nerves are shot.

Max hands the rifle back and they drift on.

Marianne sits on a carousel horse with Anna on her lap. Max watches as she goes around and around. We study his face as he looks at Marianne, screaming with laughter as the carousel speeds up.

Then, as he turns, Max sees Myers in among the crowds. He appears to be peering at Max but looks away quickly. Myers turns and taps his pipe out on a tree trunk then walks.

Max glances at Anna and Marianne shooting by on the carousel, both screaming. He can't hang around to explain. He sets off in pursuit.

EXT. HAMPSTEAD, FUN FAIR/VALE OF HEALTH PUB

Max walks through donkey rides and Gypsy fortune tellers, keeping a professional distance from his quarry. The crowds at the impromptu fair are mingling with drinkers in the beer garden of the lake side pub beside the Vale. Max sees Myers going through the rows of tables into the big Victorian pub.

Max follows.

INT. HAMPSTEAD, VALE OF HEALTH PUB

The pub is a classic example of its Victorian type. The interior is built for secrecy and clandestine rendezvous so that drinkers could not be seen or identified.

There is a warren of small snugs and private bars, separated from each other by frosted glass. Customers order drinks by opening small hinged windows onto the bar.

Max walks into the main bar where a crowd of people are gathered around an upright piano (*the piano will become important later*). A jaunty war song is being belted out. The place is crowded and smoky. Max passes through another public bar and lounge and begins to walk in a semi circle past the tiny private bars.

He glances through slits of un-frosted glass and through half open hatches to see various drinkers. Some are kissing and embracing in their private worlds.

Then Max sees a cloud of pipe smoke appearing above a particular snug. He heads for it and enters.

The V-shaped snug is big enough for ten people but only one table is occupied. Myers is sitting at a table by the fireplace, smoking his pipe and reading a book.

Max goes to the bar and opens a hatch and a barman approaches.

MAX

Half a bitter.

Max waits, his back turned to Myers but his training means he keeps Myers's reflection in the bar mirror. Suddenly...

MYERS

I hope you don't mind my smoke.

Max turns, his beer arrived and in his hand. The guy spoke with a strong South African accent...

MAX

No. I quite like the smell.

MYERS

It has sage in it. I have it imported especially from South Africa.

A pause.

MYERS (CONT'D)

You are Max Vatan.

Max studies him...

MYERS (CONT'D)

I was at your party last night.

Max strolls toward the table...

MAX

You were?

MYERS

You know very well that I was.

The air chills...

MYERS (CONT'D)  
And just now you followed me in  
here. Am I right?

Max slowly takes a seat. The glass in his hand is a deadly  
weapon if he chooses to use it. Myers half smiles...

MYERS (CONT'D)  
It's ok Mr Vatan. I am a  
professional. I have been in this  
situation many times.

Max prepares...

MYERS (CONT'D)  
I speak to a woman about diamonds.  
I try in my own gentle way to sell  
one to her. She says she can't  
possibly afford it...

Now Myers grins...

MYERS (CONT'D)  
Then next day the husband tracks me  
down and offers to buy it.

He slaps Max's shoulder...

MYERS (CONT'D)  
For women, the value of surprise is  
almost greater than the value of  
diamonds. Am I right?

Myers begins to chuckle. Suddenly he seems less threatening.  
He reaches into his pocket. (Even now Max tenses). Then  
Myers hands Max a business card.

MYERS (CONT'D)  
My name is Emmanuel Myers. I have  
a jewelry shop on the high street.  
You may have seen it.

Max takes the card and takes a big breath of relief...

MAX  
Yes. As a matter of fact I have.  
Many times.

Myers chuckles again.

MYERS  
If you come to see me, I will give  
you a very special price.

Max puts the card into his pocket and finishes his beer in one. He gets to his feet.

MAX

Apologies. We really are broke. I must go. I left my dear wife and child alone.

Max leaves. Through the cloud of smoke we are left with Myer's curious expression. We stay with it for long enough to wonder if he really is who he says he is.

EXT. HAMPSTEAD HEATH, FUN FAIR

From a distance we see Max walking through the crowds and finding Marianne and Anna. He taps Marianne's shoulder and she spins...

MARIANNE

Max? Where did you go? You smell of beer.

MAX

I went for a drink.

Marianne finds Max's disappearance odd and reacts with a flicker. But Max takes Anna in his arms and hoists her up. Deep inside, Max is daring to hope. Marianne smiles...

MARIANNE

Let's just go and sit somewhere quiet.

They set off through the crowds with Max hoisting Anna in his arms.

EXT. IDYLLIC GLADE ON THE HEATH

The sun is shining and we can hear the fun fair in the background. But here they are alone, sheltered and shaded by trees.

As we join them, Marianne is kneeling with Anna. Max is lying on his back staring at the clouds. Marianne balances Anna on her feet and Anna sways a little.

MARIANNE

Max, look...

Max looks up...

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

Go on Anna. Walk to daddy.

Max sits up. They both sense this might be a special moment. Max holds out his hands...

MAX

Come on baby. Walk to me.

Anna sways. Marianne holds her hand.

MARIANNE

Go on Anna. Walk.

MAX

Come to me.

They wait. Then Anna takes four faltering steps across the grass before falling into Max's arms. They both react and Max hugs Anna tight. He would hug her tight anyway but he can't help but hold her so close that tears almost come.

Marianne reacts too, her emotion almost overcoming her.

MARIANNE

Her first steps...

MAX

Yes.

Max hugs her...

MARIANNE

She has such a long journey ahead...

Max has to hide his eyes. Max hands Anna back to Marianne and Marianne hugs her too. Max and Marianne's eyes meet just for a second, and the truth is in there.

INT. HAMPSTEAD, FIG TREE COTTAGE - DAY

The shadows of Max and Marianne are at the frosted glass of the door. The phone is ringing. As the door opens, Marianne reacts to the ringing phone. Max hesitates. Finally, Marianne gives Max permission to take it.

MAX

Hampstead 235.

Marianne fusses with Anna's coat...

MAX (CONT'D)

Yes. I heard. Captain Hunter was killed last night. I'm sorry. We should get a message to his wife...

A pause. Max reacts...

MAX (CONT'D)  
...his mother then.

Max listens and then...

MAX (CONT'D)  
Replace him with Truman.

A pause.

MAX (CONT'D)  
Truman is dead too? Ok.

Marianne goes to the kitchen with Anna in her arms. As she passes...

MAX (CONT'D)  
So who do we have left?

Even as Max speaks, an idea is coming to him. Marianne has gone. Max listens to a short list of names then interrupts...

MAX (CONT'D)  
No, no, wait, wait...

The machinations in Max's mind make his voice drift...

INT. FIG TREE COTTAGE, KITCHEN

Marianne is putting Anna into her chair, whispering congratulations that she walked. She waits for Max to come in but there is silence in the hallway.

MARIANNE  
Max?

She straightens.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)  
Max?

Max comes to the doorway. He looks stony-faced as he snatches up the car keys and declares...

MAX  
Marianne? I can't let another boy die...

Before Marianne can speak, Max has turned and walked. The door opens and closes. Marianne goes to the window and sees Max jumping into the car and pulling away. She races to the door and pulls it open.

She is about to call out to the car as it drives away but Marianne sees Mrs Szabo staring down from the bedroom window with a curious expression.

EXT. SPANIARDS LANE

Max is driving fast, a grim determination on his face. As he drives he takes the photograph of Marianne and Anna from the dashboard and stuffs it into his pocket.

EXT. HENDON AIRSTRIP - DUSK

Max is at the security booth as before. A different security guy is on the phone and peering at Max's security ID.

SECURITY GUY

I have Commander Vatan. He has red zone clearance.

Max waits with bursting impatience. At last the security guy puts down the phone and hands Max his security pass. Max runs for the car.

INT. PILOT LOCKER ROOM

The functional room has lines of grey lockers. There is a notice board which doubles as a shrine to young pilots who have died. There are twenty photographs of smiling young men (all men who have died). We find a freshly pinned photograph of Adam Hunter among them.

A locker door closes. Another young airman is preparing to fly. He is wearing his leathers and is smoking a cigarette. He dry swallows a blue tablet as Max enters.

The young airman turns and salutes. He could be Adam Hunter or any other of the young guys who fly these deadly missions. Max comes to him with a smile.

MAX

I have good news, airman. You have the night off.

Max grabs the paperwork from his pocket.

EXT. HENDON AIRFIELD - EARLY EVENING

A Lysander accelerates across the grass strip and takes to the air...

INT. HAMPSTEAD, FIG TREE COTTAGE, ANNA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Rain is falling against the window. Marianne is singing a French lullaby to Anna, who has fallen to sleep. Marianne tucks a blanket around her and peers at her.

She looks at the clock on the wall. It is midnight.

INT. HAMPSTEAD, FIG TREE COTTAGE, BEDROOM - NIGHT

Marianne enters the bedroom and sits on the bed. She is deep in thought and stares across the room.

A crack of thunder. Marianne takes a moment then makes a decision of her own. She sits at the table by the window, takes out a pen and a sheet of paper and begins to write a letter...

EXT. CLANDESTINE AIRSTRIP, TWENTY MILES OUTSIDE DIEPPE

The same rain storm is soaking the dark fields around Dieppe. A V shape of flaming torches illuminates a narrow airstrip. An unlit Lysander bumps onto the grass and skids to a halt in heavy weather.

From the shadows, a half dozen resistance fighters emerge and head straight for the hold. They all pull guns when the pilot climbs out of the cockpit.

FIGHTER

(What are you doing?)

We see that the pilot is Max. He holds up his hands...

MAX

(I need to speak to Paul Laramint.)

Max gingerly produces some ID with his rank indicated. Two, then four, resistance fighters huddle round and hold his ID to the light of a torch in pouring rain.

MAX (CONT'D)

(We don't have time for this.  
Where is he?)

The fighters look up from the ID and hand it back. They consult with their eyes. Finally...

FIGHTER 2

(He's in jail).

MAX

Gestapo?

FIGHTER 1  
(Local police. He was drunk and  
crashed his car).

MAX (HISSES)  
(*Shit.*)

Max thinks for a moment then sees a motorbike half hidden in  
a hedge nearby. He gestures at it.

MAX (CONT'D)  
(Take me to the jail).

FIGHTER 2  
(You cannot leave the plane on the  
ground...)

MAX  
(I said take me to him).

FIGHTER 2  
(The jail is guarded).

Max grabs the Sten gun from the fighter's shoulder...

MAX  
(Take me to him. That's an order).

The fighter hurries to the motorbike and kicks it into life.  
Max jumps on board as pillion.

INT. FRENCH VILLAGE JAIL HOUSE/LOCK-UP

The lock-up is medieval and is secured by bars and thick  
stone walls. It is the kind of lock-up used for vagrants and  
drunks. A single Gendarme dozes in the doorway.

Rain is now pouring.

A motorbike engine wakes the Gendarme. Headlights flash on  
his face, then a flashlight. Soon he has a pistol to his  
head. The resistance guy gestures for the Gendarme to open  
up. He is no hero and immediately complies.

Max slips into the jail house.

INT. FRENCH VILLAGE JAIL HOUSE/LOCK-UP, CORRIDOR

The ancient building has a stone floor and walls dripping  
with rainwater. A couple of short term prisoners are  
sleeping. The Gendarme (at gun point) is sorting keys. Max  
is behind the resistance guy.

INT. FRENCH VILLAGE JAIL HOUSE/LOCK-UP, PAUL LARAMINT'S CELL

They reach a particular cell and the Gendarme gestures at a sleeping, snoring figure under an army blanket. Max grabs the Gendarme's handcuffs and hands them to the resistance guy. He hisses for the two of them to go.

Max unlocks the cell and steps inside. He grabs a water bucket which is collecting drips from the ceiling and dumps the cold water onto the figure.

A rough, hung over, heavy-set man sits up and splutters. This is PAUL LARAMINT.

MAX

(I'm sorry Monsieur Laramint, I have no time for introductions).

Max hauls Laramint upright. We see that Laramint has one arm.

LARAMINT

(Who the fuck are you?)

MAX

(I need a yes or a no. Right now.)

Max still has his gun brandished in one hand. With the other he pulls out the photograph he took from the car. Laramint puts his head between his knees and throws up into the bucket that once held the water.

Max skips out of the way of the splash. He pulls Laramint upright and lays the photograph on his lap.

MAX (CONT'D)

(I want you to look at this photograph.)

Laramint wipes vomit-tears from his eyes with his sleeve. He stares dumbly...

LARAMINT

(What the fuck is going on? Who are you?)

MAX

(I have three minutes before the Germans get a fix on my plane.)

To speed things up Max puts the gun to Laramint's head. Laramint stares blearily at Max. Max shoves his face closer to the photo.

MAX (CONT'D)

Is this woman Marianne Beausejour?

Laramint has found a bottle in his own pocket. Laramint goes to swig the brandy. Max swipes the bottle from his hand and holds it hostage.

MAX (CONT'D)

Yes or no!! Then you get a drink.

Laramint grumbles and rubs his eyes, still thinking this might be a dream. Max yells in English....

MAX (CONT'D)

Is it her?

LARAMINT

(Who?)

MAX

Marianne Beausejour!

Laramint wipes his eyes again. He says the name as if checking a file...

LARAMINT

(Marianne Beausejour...)

A pause. Laramint takes a big breath as Max waits. Finally he peers at the photo through teary eyes...

LARAMINT (CONT'D)

(Yes. It is her. Give me the bottle.)

Max reacts. Laramint reaches for the bottle. Max pulls it away...

MAX

Look again. Don't bullshit me.

Max grabs him and shoves him against the wall. The light from outside makes the image clearer as he holds the photo up.

MAX (CONT'D)

(Are you sure?)

Laramint is coming to himself. He struggles in Max's grip...

LARAMINT

(Hey, fuck you. Since I saw her last I got blown to fuck. I lost pieces of myself. My head is like an ocean....)

Max, in fury, shoves Laramint back onto the bed.

MAX

(But you think it is her.)

LARAMINT

(She looks the same. Yeah. Hey, give me a fucking drink...)

Max is breathing hard. He hands Laramint the bottle and he takes a swig.

MAX

(Same eyes. Yes?)

LARAMINT (GASPING)

(Yes. I think).

MAX

(Green eyes. And from Alsace. An Alsace accent. It's her, right?)

Max is trying to inject certainty into these frantic moments. Laramint is still bleary...

MAX (CONT'D)

(She laughs a lot, yes? She makes jokes about everything. Is that her?)

LARAMINT

(I don't recall jokes...)

MAX

(She twists her hair around her finger when she's reading books).

Laramint shrugs and takes another big swig of brandy...

LARAMINT

(Marianne Beausejour always knew best.)

MAX

(Yes!!)

LARAMINT

(She hates mess.)

MAX

(That's her!!)

The resistance guy comes to the door.

RESISTANCE GUY  
(We must go! Now!)

Max puts his face close to Laramint...

MAX  
(When she kisses you...it's  
like...And she drinks too much  
coffee.)

Laramint nods and takes a breath. He looks away. He takes another swig and the booze has begun to take effect. Laramint smiles as he remembers.

LARAMINT  
(Yeah, I remember Marianne. I  
remember when I met her. In a cafe.  
In Dordogne. The place was full of  
German soldiers...)

RESISTANCE GUY  
(We must leave now.)

Max waves the guy into silence. Laramint's eyes glisten...

LARAMINT  
(There was a piano. She went to it  
and played 'Les Marseillaise'. The  
French national anthem in front of  
all those German soldiers...)

Laramint has a distant smile, spinning with booze. He takes another swig then slaps his own chest...

LARAMINT (CONT'D)  
(And the only man brave enough to  
stand up for the anthem was me.  
That was how we met.)

Max's mind begins to work. The resistance guy hisses.

RESISTANCE GUY  
*Vite. Vite.*

Max has something he can use. He hurries away...

EXT. DIEPPE AIRSTRIP

Max arrives on the motorbike alone. He leaps from it and lets it skid into a tree. The resistance fighters are going insane with anxiety, hissing at Max to hurry.

As Max approaches his plane, there is gun fire.

A resistance fighter is hit. Headlights through the trees and dogs barking. A van carrying six German soldiers (an advance patrol) has screeched to a halt.

Max pulls his Sten gun. His eyes die in his head as he begins to do what he does. He steps forward and shoots out the headlights of the van. He then uses the darkness. He massacres the six German soldiers single handed, some as they try to leap out of the van, others as they try to take up positions.

The Germans are young and inexperienced. Max is utterly merciless. He doesn't spare a young soldier who tries to flee. He shoots him in the back of the head.

Another soldier is wounded and groans in pain in the mud and rain. Max steps up and finishes him with his hand gun. No one must be left alive to report back.

Max then calmly turns and climbs back into his Lysander in silence. The fighters are staring at him with awe. He climbs into the cockpit, fires the engine and flies.

EXT. HAMPSTEAD, FIG TREE COTTAGE, GARDEN - MID MORNING

Sudden silence and light. A beautiful morning outside with flowers blooming.

Marianne is playing with Anna. She is trying to get Anna to walk. She kneels and holds out her hand. Anna makes a few uncertain steps.

She hugs Anna hard. Then she hears Max's car pull up outside. A darkness descends. Marianne prepares, puts Anna down. Max enters.

INT. HAMPSTEAD, FIG TREE COTTAGE, KITCHEN

Marianne joins Max as he peels off his jacket. Max takes off his service cap. He sits at the table. Marianne comes to him. She takes a moment.

MARIANNE

I smell cordite on your clothes.  
And aviation fuel and...

Max doesn't respond...

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

...And blood. You went to France  
without consulting me.

Max stares at Marianne. There is hope in his eyes but he needs certainty. He speaks evenly...

MAX

Marianne? I want you to come with me.

Marianne is about to go to the cupboard but Max takes her arm firmly...

MAX (CONT'D)

Now.

MARIANNE

*Where?*

EXT. HAMPSTEAD, VALE OF HEALTH PUB

The Victorian building is almost deserted. The landlord is just unlocking the doors for lunchtime service but it's 11.30am. No one is around.

Apart from Max and Marianne.

From the bright sunny day, Max leads Marianne into the gloom of the public bar.

INT. VALE OF HEALTH PUB, BAR

Sunlight enters in shafts. Max goes to the bar as the landlord skips behind it...

MAX

Two large brandies.

Marianne reacts. The heavy drinks mean something is afoot. She takes a seat near the window as Max gets the drinks and approaches. He puts Marianne's drink down and swigs his own in one.

MARIANNE

Max?

Max walks across the bar to the old upright piano. He lifts the lid. He turns to her...

MAX

Marianne, I'd like you to play the piano for me.

Marianne reacts. She will begin to get it by degrees. She tries to laugh...

MARIANNE

You want *what*?

Max doesn't repeat. Marianne takes a moment and sips her drink.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

Don't be silly Max. Come and sit down.

The landlord has gone so they are alone. A pause. Marianne looks up and sees the deadly serious look on Max's face.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

Why on earth would you want me to play the piano?

Max speaks without emotion, a dead pan delivery to keep it all in check.

MAX

I want you to play the piano because I love you. And I want you to be able to play.

Marianne is preparing herself, beginning to suspect.

MARIANNE

Max, what are you talking about? You haven't slept. Let's go home.

Max doesn't move. Marianne waits. Then, finally, she gets to her feet and comes to the piano. Still there is hope...

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

Max. You need to sleep.

Max's face is filled with emotion as he tries to hold it together.

MAX

I want you to play '*Les Marseillaise*'.

A pause. Something awful has been confirmed for Marianne but still she fights it. She tries to be her old, funny self...

MARIANNE

Now *Quebecoise*, you have asked me to do some strange things, but why exactly do you want me to play the French national anthem to an empty room?

Max takes her hand gently and puts it onto the keyboard. Their hands automatically grasp each other tight above the keys.

MAX

I flew to Dieppe last night.

She looks up at him.

MAX (CONT'D)

Someone there told me a story.  
About Marianne Beausejour.

A pause. Marianne glances at the door but Max has her hand held tightly. She laughs...

MARIANNE

What story?

Max speaks very deliberately...

MAX

Please. Play.

A pause. Marianne's hand has begun to shake. She hits middle 'C'. He hopes. She begins to hit keys with her finger.

MARIANNE

I can't remember. I...

Max reacts. The tune she is picking out uncertainly might be a very rough version of *Les Marseillaise*. But it is slow and full of errors.

Max is praying for the tune to burst from her fingers. Instead Marianne stops trying to play and speaks softly...

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

I forget.

A pause.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

Now please, can we go home?...

She is about to walk but Max has hold of her arm. He stares into her eyes.

MAX

Marianne Beausejour played *Les Marseillaise* in a cafe full of German soldiers. February 1941.

A pause.

MAX (CONT'D)

I want you to play it for me.

Marianne looks down at the piano keys. After a long moment she closes the lid. It is a kind of surrender.

MARIANNE

I know the story.

A pause.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

She was a very brave woman.

A long, silent pause. Finally...

MAX (SOFTLY)

*'She?'*

Max's life begins to fall apart...

MARIANNE

I know the story but there was not enough time to learn how to play the tune.

Max is hit by a huge wave. They are close, touching.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

Max, I know it is over.

She looks down at the lid of the piano...

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

I have known since we made love on Friday night.

She looks up at him.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

What you suspected is true.

A pause.

Max could either kill her with his bare hands or hold her tighter than ever. We wait. After a moment he grabs her, slamming her into his body. It is half an embrace, half an arrest. She is stiff in his arms...

She goes to speak but Max puts his hand over her mouth. He pushes her mouth hard and stares with fierce determination.

MAX

Ok, you listen to me, ok? You just listen to me. Here's how it will be.

She fights. He holds his hand over her mouth...

MAX (CONT'D)

You listen, ok? Just listen. I need to know that this is real. That you love me and you love Anna.

He grabs the back of her head, his movements violent, a kind of silent killing of the other identity...

MAX (CONT'D)

The spy is dead. I found you. You are the woman I love. Just say 'yes' Marianne.

MARIANNE

Max...

He covers her mouth with his hand again and pushes the word back into her throat...

MAX

Say yes.

Slowly he lets her free. After a moment...

MARIANNE

I love you Max. I've loved you since Casablanca. But they wouldn't let me stop. Now it is too late.

Max grabs her hand and drags her toward the door...

MAX

It isn't too late...

EXT. HAMPSTEAD HEATH

The heath is in full bloom and mothers with children walk down the shaded paths. Max is pulling Marianne at a trot and talking fast.

MAX

I left my Lysander at the Southern tip of the field. I had it refuelled but said it had wing damage. We have until eleven before they call the flight inventory.

Max produces a set of ignition keys for the Lysander from his pocket and brandishes them. He laughs. He's wired as hell...

MARIANNE

Max, they will shoot you as a traitor...

MAX

There's enough gas in the tank to get us to Switzerland.

MARIANNE

Max, are you insane?

MAX

First, we need to get Anna.

At last Marianne pulls back and stops the frantic race. Max speaks firmly...

MAX (CONT'D)

There is a Medicine Hat in Switzerland. Or Peru. Or wherever the hell.

Marianne yells...

MARIANNE

We won't make it.

MAX

If we stay one more hour, they will order me to kill you. When I refuse they will shoot us both. We have no choice.

He holds her and they embrace tighter than ever but Marianne pulls away...

MARIANNE

Anna is with Mrs Szabo....

Max finishes Marianne's sentence...

MAX

...Who is your handler, right?

Marianne looks all around...

MARIANNE

There is so much I have to tell you.

MAX

Save it for Switzerland...

Max grabs her arm and again begins to march her forward at pace...

EXT. SZABO COTTAGE

Max approaches alone. He has a warm smile on his face. He knocks and waits. After a few moments Mrs Szabo opens the door. Max gives her a big grin...

MAX

I've come to pick up my Princess.

Mrs Szabo frowns...

MRS SZABO

So soon? Where is Marianne?

MAX

Packing.

Mrs Szabo reacts.

MRS SZABO

Where is she going?

Max pulls a revolver and pushes his way into the house, closing the door behind him.

INT. SZABO COTTAGE

The place is dark and sparsely furnished. Max holds the gun directly at Mrs Szabo's head. Anna is crying in the front room.

MAX

You used my daughter as collateral.

Mrs Szabo appears to be at peace. Max holds the gun steady into her face.

MAX (CONT'D)

That's why Marianne carried on. You bastards threatened to kill Anna if she stopped.

Max digs the gun into her temple.

MAX (CONT'D)

Yes or no?

A pause. Max yells...

MAX (CONT'D)

Yes or no?!!

Mrs Szabo is implacable.

MRS SZABO

I heard you have done worse in your  
time Commander Vatan.

Max grabs her and pushes her against the bannister.

MAX

Yeah, *c'est la guerre*. We are  
birds of a feather. Give me the  
name of your radio operator.

Mrs Szabo simply stares.

MAX (CONT'D)

I need to clean up the circuit  
before I go. Give me the name of  
the radio operator.

Max engages his pistol and points, ready to fire. Mrs Szabo  
closes her eyes.

MRS SZABO

I am an agent of the Reich. I will  
only give you my name. You would  
expect nothing else.

Max studies her. She clenches her fists. Years of training  
tell Max she has no intention of giving up any information.

Without hesitation he shoots her through the head and she  
falls dead.

Max then hurries into the front room and grabs Anna. He  
whispers sweet words to her as he wipes blood from his face  
and puts his gun away. He then straightens and prepares to  
leave, still holding Anna in one arm.

As he pulls open the door he stops and sniffs the air. He  
recognizes a smell. He turns to the fireplace and sees burnt  
pipe tobacco tapped out onto the hearth. He dips his finger  
into it and sniffs it.

As he draws conclusions he whispers to Anna...

MAX (SOFTLY)

Gonna be ok baby.

INT. SOE HEADQUARTERS, BAKER STREET, V-SECTION OFFICE

The Official is sitting in his office, busy with paperwork. A young female clerk knocks and enters. She places a piece of encrypted information on his desk. The official continues to work for a little while then finally looks up. He reads the information.

He gets to his feet and walks.

INT. SOE HEADQUARTERS, BAKER STREET, HESLOP'S OFFICE

Frank is peering out across the gloom of London, deep in thought and waiting anxiously. He checks his watch as Big Ben begins to chime ten o'clock across the river. A few moments later the official enters without knocking. Frank turns.

OFFICIAL (MATTER-OF-FACT)

Blue dye ran positive on Vatan's wife. Go to Vatan's house and make sure he shoots her himself.

Heslop is about to react but instantly...

OFFICIAL (CONT'D)

They are the rules. We will abide by them.

The official waits a moment then turns and walks to the door. Heslop hisses...

HESLOP

They have a baby.

The official stops in the doorway....

OFFICIAL

You hold the baby while he does what he has to do.

Heslop glares and the Official leaves. Two Spitfires fly down the Thames and turn skyward as Big Ben completes its tenth chime.

INT. EMMANUEL MYERS JEWELLRY SHOP - DAY

Myers, the jeweler, is busy with an inventory in the gloom of his quietly exclusive jewelry store. He hums a tune to himself as traffic rumbles by. His unlit pipe rests in a pipe holder attached to a silver ashtray. A car pulls up outside. Myers carries on with his work.

The bell on the door tinkles. Myers looks up. It is Max. He has his business face. Myers smiles...

MYERS  
Commander Vatan?

Max walks to the counter...

MAX  
I changed my mind.

MYERS  
About the diamond?

MAX (REPEATING, DEAD PAN)  
I changed my mind.

Max picks up Myer's pipe and smells the bowl. Myers chuckles (even though he already suspects trouble)...

MYERS  
You really do like the smell don't you, Commander.

He goes to open a drawer...

MYERS (CONT'D)  
Let me give you a couple of ounces as a gift...

Max speaks quickly...

MAX  
I want to buy a diamond for Mrs Szabo. She lives in the cottage opposite mine.

Myers freezes just for half a second, his hand on the drawer. He then chuckles and moves his hand to a different drawer...

MYERS  
Mrs who?

Max is an expert in deception and knows for sure now. But he waits. Myers opens up the second drawer. In half a second Max sees the revolver he keeps there. As Myers grabs it, Max pulls his gun and fires once into Myer's temple. As he falls, the drawer clatters onto the floor along with the pistol.

Max calmly puts his gun away and walks.

EXT. EAST HEATH ROAD

We see Heslop driving up the lane where once Max collected apples. We know he is near to Max's home. He is followed by a military police vehicle containing four military policemen.

EXT. HAMPSTEAD, FIG TREE COTTAGE

Heslop pulls up outside the cottage. He gathers himself for an ordeal and checks his pistol in his inside pocket. He mumbles a prayer and then gets out of the car. He gestures for the military policemen to stay inside their vehicle.

He walks up the rose bloomed path of Fig Tree Cottage and knocks. When he knocks he finds the door is open. He steps inside and sees that the kitchen is tidy and empty. The baby things have gone.

There is a handwritten note on the desk. Heslop goes to it and reads. As he reads we hear Max in voiceover...

MAX (OOV)

*The handler is dead across the street. The radio operator is dead inside Myers jewelry store. Marianne is neutralized. The circuit is cleaned up. Mission accomplished.*

Heslop takes a moment. He then dashes to the phone and, without even dialling, he speaks...

HESLOP

Whoever is listening, Vatan has gone.

Heslop then notices that the phone wire has been cut. He curses and drops it with a clatter. He takes a moment to think. He guesses where Max will have gone. He hurries out to his car...

EXT. HAMPSTEAD, FIG TREE COTTAGE

Heslop runs out and yells to the police.

HESLOP

Hendon airstrip!! Now!!

The police car hits the siren...

EXT. ROAD WITHIN SIGHT OF HENDON AIRSTRIP

We see the barrage balloons above the strip a half mile away. Max pulls up sharply. Marianne and Anna are in the passenger seat. They all leap out.

Max goes to the trunk and opens it up. Marianne hesitates...

MARIANNE

Max, if one bullet is fired, we surrender...

Max gestures for Marianne to get into the trunk and tries to inject a battlefield bravado...

MAX

You've travelled like this lots of times Marianne.

Marianne sees the operational look in his eyes...

MARIANNE

Never before with my baby. Max, this is not a mission. I would rather die than risk Anna's life...

MAX

Get in the trunk. Try to keep her quiet....

Marianne needs to break through to get his attention...

MARIANNE

Max!!

She grabs his face with her free hand and squeezes hard....

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

This is not a mission! If one weapon is pulled, you fucking surrender! You promise me!

They glare into each other's eyes. Max promises with a nod. They hear a police siren in the near distance. Marianne climbs into the trunk with Anna in her arms.

Max slams the trunk closed. He has a deadly look on his face. He drives away. A quarter of a mile away we see and hear the military police vehicle siren and Heslop's car pursuing.

EXT. HENDON AIRSTRIP, GATEHOUSE

Max arrives at the security gate and is greeted with a salute. He salutes back as he gets out. We hear a muffled cry from a baby but a Lancaster bomber flies over and hides the sound.

Max steps into the security hut and shows his ID.

MAX

I need access to the strip.

The guard picks up the phone and Max tries to hurry him...

MAX (QUICKLY) (CONT'D)

I have red zone clearance. I'm here on urgent business. Just lift the barrier...

The guard dials a number...

GUARD

I have to get clearance Sir.

The guard holds up Max's security pass. Max glances at the revolver in the guard's belt and checks out the two armed guards beyond the barrier. He is preparing for action...

GUARD (INTO PHONE) (CONT'D)

I have Commander Vatan requesting clearance for the strip.

The guard listens. Max studies his face. His face changes. Max prepares...

GUARD (CONT'D)

Your clearance has been rescinded....

Max doesn't hesitate. He pulls the guard's pistol from his belt and uses it to pistol whip the guard to the ground. As he falls, an armed guard beyond the barrier turns.

Max leaps into the car and rams the barrier. It smashes and the car hurtles through. Armed guards turn to open fire on the car. An officer yells...

OFFICER

Take out the tires!!

We come close to Max's face as he goes into operational mode. He is ignoring Marianne's instructions. He drives fast but bullets burst both rear tires of the car.

Max has trouble controlling the car and he is moving slower. The car bumps over a kerb and collides with a parked car. A siren sounds and the whole place comes to life.

More bullets are fired. Now the front tires are burst too. Max takes three go's to get the burst front tires over a kerb and onto the grass of the airstip.

The broken-up car labors to move on the wet grass. The burst tires dig into the soft surface and Max realizes he can get no speed from the car. He leaps out and pulls open the trunk.

He grabs Anna and Marianne flies at him and yells...

MARIANNE

I told you! If a bullet was fired,  
you surrender....!!

Max won't let her speak. He grabs her arm and begins to run with Anna in his arms. The the three of them begin to run across the open air strip...

We see the strip from above. Planes fly over and we see the desperate race toward a Lysander parked a little way away from the other planes at the Southern tip of the air field. They run as fast as they can. Anna is crying...

Max turns and sees Heslop and the Military Police vehicle speeding in pursuit across the grass. Other jeeps have been mobilized and two of them have machine guns mounted in the rear. The jeeps fan out across the runway and the field...

Max and Marianne arrive at the Lysander. They are breathless and Max grabs his ignition keys...

MAX

Get in!!

Marianne is fighting for breath and hesitates...

MAX (CONT'D)

Get in!! They can see there is a  
baby, they won't shoot!!

Marianne gasps and spits out...

MARIANNE

I am a spy, this is war, they will  
shoot!

Anna is wailing. The sirens and the roar of the engines of jeeps almost take their voices. Max is on a mission and tries to bundle Anna onto the steps of the plane...

MAX

Get in the fucking plane!!

Marianne shrugs him off. The jeeps are yards away.

MARIANNE

Max, I am already dead.

The delay is fatal. Three jeeps skid to a halt in formation to stop the Lysander moving off. The siren stops wailing. The jeep engines are cut.

A gentle wind blows. Heslop climbs out of the third jeep and approaches. Max, Marianne and Anna are standing beside the wing of the Lysander. After a moment...

HESLOP

Max? I assume you have your service revolver in your pocket.

Everyone gathers breath...

HESLOP (CONT'D)

You know the rules Max.

Max steps closer to Marianne and puts his arm around her. Anna is embraced between them. He makes no move to reach for a gun...

HESLOP (CONT'D)

Max, if you do it with your own hand, you will be exonerated. I will see to it. You will keep the baby and raise her yourself.

Marianne lowers her head.

HESLOP (CONT'D)

If you don't, you will be tried and executed as an accomplice to treason. The baby will be raised as an orphan.

Max continues to stare. He knows the choice before Heslop articulates it...

HESLOP (CONT'D)

Your wife or your baby, Max.

A pause. Max speaks softly...

MAX

Frank? Please tell me this is a game.

Silence. Heslop shakes his head gently. Max suddenly yells...

MAX (CONT'D)

No!!!!!!!

Marianne turns to him and grabs him. She is close to him, embracing him...

MARIANNE

I love you Max. I love you...

As she speaks she snatches Max's revolver from his inside pocket and engages it. The military police all raise their weapons but Heslop stops them with a raised hand. Marianne steps away from Max and turns to Heslop to gets his silent promise that he will do the right thing. Heslop nods. Marianne turns back to Max...

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

Take my beautiful Anna to Medicine Hat. Take good care of her. I love you. That is real. Goodbye *Quebecoise*.

Marianne shoots herself in the temple and falls dead.

Anna begins to cry again. Max holds on to Anna and stares at Marianne's fallen body.

Max falls to his knees, still holding Anna. He kneels over Marianne and lays Anna on her chest as he buries his face.

Heslop turns to the military guards who are looking on in stunned silence. Helsop speaks firmly...

HESLOP

Commander Vatan executed her himself. With his own hand. That is how you will report it. That is an order.

A pause.

HESLOP (CONT'D)

Go back to your stations. This matter is over.

The military guards slowly turn and head for their vehicles. Heslop stands and stares at Max who is covering Marianne's body with his own. Anna is crying.

The wind blows the flags all around.

We rise up high and look down on the scene as the jeeps drive away and Max, Heslop and Marianne remain beside the black Lysander.

Fade to black. Then fade up...

EXT. CANADA, ALBERTA, SMALL TROUT LAKE

A dry fly is cast onto smooth water. We see a man in a small row boat, fly fishing.

*Caption: Medicine Hat, seventeen years later.*

The man is fifty, greying but fit. We will recognize him as Max, seventeen years older. On a hill, above the lake, there is a ranch house. Horses graze all around.

The rod bends and Max reels in a fish. It is a small Brook trout. Max studies it and then unhooks it and puts it back into the water.

Then we hear a voice across the water...

ANNA

Dad!

We see an eighteen year old woman at the lakeside, calling out.

MAX

What is it Anna? I'm in the fish.

We know the girl is ANNA as an adult. She is pretty and looks a lot like Marianne. She has a serious expression...

ANNA

Dad. You have to come.

He peers across the lake and, from her voice, realizes this is something serious. He stows his rod and begins to row ashore. Anna walks on toward the house.

INT. MEDICINE HAT, RIVER RANCH HOUSE, STUDY

The study has a view over the lake and the river which feeds it, and beyond, the snowy peaks of the Rocky Mountains. The study is a comfortably furnished office with an open fire.

We see photos of Max in military uniform. We see him age in the photographs, from thirty odd to fifty odd. In each photo he has been promoted in rank.

The walls also have various military honors and commendations from campaigns from Korea to Indo-China. In the most recent photo Max wears the uniform of a Lieutenant Colonel.

There are also photos of Max with Anna as she grew older. We see school photos and photos of Anna riding horses. At the edge of the shelf there are birthday cards, celebrating an eighteenth birthday.

Then we find Anna sitting at his desk. She has an open envelope and a hand-written letter on the desk. She is fighting emotion.

Max enters...

MAX

What is it?

Anna gestures at the letter as Max goes around the desk to take his seat. He sits...

ANNA

It was posted in Berlin.

Max reacts...

ANNA (CONT'D)

A lawyer there had it in his safe.  
He had instruction to send it to me  
on my eighteenth birthday.

Max glances at the letter. He recognizes the handwriting. It is Marianne's hand...

ANNA (CONT'D)

He said it had been filed by the  
Wermarcht Government to be given to  
me when I was of age.

Max is silent, reeling.

ANNA (CONT'D)

It is a letter addressed to you and  
I.

Anna offers the letter. Max is frozen. She sees that Max is overwhelmed. His eyes are swimming and he doesn't want her to see so he looks away. A long pause.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Do you want me to leave you alone?

MAX (INSTANTLY)

No.

Max sees Marianne's handwriting is un-faded by age. He takes a huge breath to compose himself.

MAX (CONT'D)

I....

He reaches out his hand and Anna reaches out her hand across the desk. He takes her hand gently and holds it. He then turns the letter round and begins to read...

FLASHBACK - INT. HAMPSTEAD, FIG TREE COTTAGE, ANNA'S BEDROOM - THUNDER STORM

Once again, we see Marianne sitting at the desk in Anna's room, writing her letter as rain dribbles on the window and thunder rumbles. We hear Marianne's voice in voice-over.

MARIANNE (OOV)

'My dearest, darling Anna.  
I am writing this on a rainy Sunday  
night in London. If you are reading  
this then you never knew me and  
will have no memory of who I am. I  
am your mother...'

FLASHBACK - EXT. HAMPSTEAD HOSPITAL, IN AIR RAID

We see again Marianne giving birth as the bombs explode all around.

MARIANNE (OOV)

'You were born in an air raid. And  
also born into the middle of a war  
between two people who also loved  
each other'.

CONTEMPORARY - INT. MEDICINE HAT, RIVER RANCH, STUDY

Max turns a page and takes a breath. He puts the letter down and looks away.

ANNA

Should I read it for you?

Anna takes his silence as permission. She picks it up and begins to read aloud...

ANNA (CONT'D)

'Our year together in the cottage  
in Hampstead has been the happiest  
time of my life. You are more than  
I deserve.

(MORE)

ANNA (CONT'D)

Because I have committed a terrible deception. Your father is the victim of it'.

A pause. Anna looks up to see Max staring out over the lake.

ANNA (CONT'D)

'I owe you both an explanation. And this is it...'

Anna turns a page.

ANNA (CONT'D)

'When war broke out, I was a volunteer. My father was German, my mother French. I worshipped my father. He was a soldier. I took his side and thought I was doing my duty. I hope Max might understand that'.

Max closes his eyes...

EXT. HAMPSTEAD HEATH

We revisit the day of the fair on the heath, with Max and Marianne walking together through the fairground. Marianne's voice takes over the letter in voiceover...

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

'I didn't count on falling in love. Nor did I plan to have a baby. When Anna was inside me and Max brought me to London, I decided to tell him the truth. But when I was in prison in Gibraltar...'

INT. MEDICINE HAT, RANCH HOUSE

Anna turns a page...

ANNA

I was warned by some agents inside the jail that I was now too valuable to them. They said if I stopped, my whole family would die in the gas chambers.

Max is reacting with fury at himself, but it is smothered as he stares down at the lake.

ANNA (CONT'D)  
'Later, they threatened to kill  
Anna if I stopped. So I had no  
choice. I knew it would all end but  
I lived for each day.'

Anna stops to compose herself.

ANNA (CONT'D)  
'This afternoon we took you to the  
Heath...

EXT. HAMPSTEAD HEATH

We see again Anna taking her first steps from Max to Marianne  
and see the delight in their faces. Marianne's voice takes  
over the letter...

MARIANNE (OOV)  
And you took your first steps. At  
least I saw you take your first  
steps with Max by my side.'

INT. HAMPSTEAD, FIG TREE COTTAGE - DAY

We re-join Marianne writing the letter on the rainy Sunday  
night. Marianne's voice continues...

MARIANNE (OOV)  
'Max, my love. I hope you will be  
able to forgive me. I hope you  
finally made it to Medicine Hat...

Marianne signs the letter and looks out at the rain...

INT. MEDICINE HAT, RANCH HOUSE

Anna puts the letter aside.

ANNA  
It is signed Angela Voss-  
Strichland'.

A long silence. Anna waits a few moments then folds the  
letter and puts it back into the envelope.

Finally Max turns from the window and peers at Anna.

ANNA (CONT'D)  
So this is why you hardly ever  
talked about her.

Max looks down at his desk. After a moment...

ANNA (CONT'D)  
Will you tell me about her now?

Max looks up. His memory of Marianne makes him smile...

EXT. MEDICINE HAT, TROUT LAKE

We see the sweep of the prairie around the ranch and then come close to the trout lake. We see Max and Anna walking side-by-side and hand-in-hand beside the lake as autumn leaves fall from the trees.

THE END