

THE HOME FRONT

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Based on thousands of true stories

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FADE IN

EXT. LONDON - NIGHT

SUPERIMPOSE: "London, 1940."

A German bomber flies overhead.

INT. JOHNSTONE FLAT/LEIGHANNA'S ROOM (LONDON) - NIGHT

Sounds of air-raid sirens crescendo through the night.

LEIGHANNA JOHNSTONE, a waifish and timid girl, 12, sleeps.

DOUGLAS JOHNSTONE, her brother, 17, bursts through her door.

DOUGLAS

Leighanna, luv. Wake up.

Douglas draws off the covers; Leighanna sleeps fully dressed.

DOUGLAS (CONT'D)

Got your jumper on. Good girl.

INT. JOHNSTONE BUILDING/HALLWAY

Douglas carries Leighanna into the hall, where he joins his nervous and careworn mother, MIRIAM, 30s.

MIRIAM

Douglas, hurry!

INT. STAIRS

The air-raid sirens howl as the Johnstones hasten downstairs.

They encounter MRS. BAILYWICK as she rushes from her flat.

MRS. BAILYWICK

One night. All I ask, one night of sleep.

DOUGLAS

Hitler doesn't want you sleeping.
It might keep your spirits up.

They all freeze as the sound of an airplane passes overhead. Moments later a nearby explosion rumbles through the night.

INT. CELLAR - NIGHT

Fourteen building RESIDENTS crowd the cellar by candlelight. Douglas and two GRANDFATHERS are the only men in the group.

Leighanna dozes while the explosions grow distant.

MRS. BAILLYWICK

There they go. Another lucky night.

An elderly MRS. MULDOON shivers.

MRS. MULDOON

I just pray that one night I can go to sleep feeling safe.

MRS. BAILLYWICK

Dearie, every able-bodied man in England is working on that for you.

Eyes turn to Douglas, as if to ask, "Why aren't you at the front?"

INT. JOHNSTONE FLAT/LEIGHANNA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Leighanna listens to muffled voices from the next room.

INT. KITCHEN

Miriam fiddles with a teakettle while Douglas stares out the window. They never turn on the lights after dark; only the glow of distant flames through the window illuminates them.

DOUGLAS

Charlie Potts enlisted last week.

MIRIAM

He's half a year younger than you.

DOUGLAS

They never checked his age.

Tension mounts, as they skirt the subject of enlisting.

DOUGLAS (CONT'D)

How do you suppose Dad's doing?

MIRIAM

I'm certain he's a one-man morale lift to all the kids over there.

DOUGLAS

He was the only one who could get Leighanna to laugh. Even as he was boarding the train.

MIRIAM

You do pretty well yourself.

DOUGLAS

Wish I could get her to say more than three words at a time.

MIRIAM

Stop. She'd be lost without you.

DOUGLAS

I think this war is doing things to her head.

MIRIAM

Your dad and I grew up in a war, and we made it through well enough.

Douglas affectionately pokes her nose with his finger. Miriam smiles in spite of herself, and returns the gesture.

Leighanna stumbles in, bleary.

DOUGLAS

Well, who's this?

Douglas scoops her up in his arms.

DOUGLAS (CONT'D)

Can't you sleep? Come on, then.

INT. LEIGHANNA'S ROOM

Douglas playfully drops her into bed as if she were a sack.

LEIGHANNA

What do you want?

DOUGLAS

How do you mean, now?

LEIGHANNA

For your birthday?

DOUGLAS

Never you mind, I have all I need.

(beat)

To see Dad.

He selects and unfolds a letter from a pile on her nightstand.

DOUGLAS (CONT'D)

This one, maybe?

(reading)

"Dear Leighanna, how's my favorite daughter?"

(aside)

Only daughter.

Leighanna hits him with a pillow.

DOUGLAS (CONT'D)

Oof! Do you want a bedtime letter or not?

Leighanna taps his nose with her finger, and he continues reading as it becomes clear this is a letter from:

EXT. BRITISH ARMY CAMP (FRANCE) - DAY

BRADLEY JOHNSTONE, 30s, shivering in threadbare army woolens, sips broth from a tin as he writes by the waning daylight.

BRADLEY (V.O.)

Another good day, dear one. Roast lamb for supper. I could scarcely finish my pudding.

He flinches at the sound of a plane approaching, only daring to return to his letter once it passes out of bombing range.

INT. JOHNSTONE FLAT/LEIGHANNA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Douglas looks up from the letter, feigning envy.

DOUGLAS

Roast lamb. Such a life. Hope he doesn't get used to that French food.

INT. JOHNSTONE FLAT/KITCHEN - DAY

Miriam places a birthday cake - a sorry thing, flat and frosted with what looks like cooking grease - on the table.

Leighanna regards the cake, underwhelmed.

Sounds of footsteps and keys from the hall outside.

MIRIAM

Hurry, now, here he comes.

Douglas enters, carrying an envelope in hand, which Leighanna plucks from him as he scoops her up in one arm.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)
Happy birthday, Dougie!

DOUGLAS
You made me a cake! How'd you do it?

MIRIAM
A mother's secret.

DOUGLAS
I wish you'd told me. I would have brought these home sooner.

Douglas reaches for Leighanna's ear with his free hand, and, with a flourish, plucks forth an egg.

MIRIAM
An egg? You got us an egg!

DOUGLAS
Three eggs.

Douglas produces the eggs and sets them on the counter.

MIRIAM
But where?

DOUGLAS
Heh. Everyone's been saying I'm chicken...

LEIGHANNA
Oh.

Leighanna has opened the envelope, and Miriam reads the expression on her face even before she sees the large print reading "Enlistment" atop the page. Douglas is going to war.

MIRIAM
Oh, Dougie.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE GROCERY (LONDON) - DAY

Dozens of WOMEN wait in line at the grocery store.

INT. GROCERY COUNTER - DAY

CARLYLE THE GROCCER, 50s, packs Miriam's groceries into a canvas bag. Miriam pays with ration coupons and cash.

CARLYLE THE GROCER
 Thanks, Mrs. Johnstone. Oh, Miss
 Johnstone, you've dropped something.

Carlyle the Grocer slips Leighanna a stick of candy.

MIRIAM
 Leighanna?

Leighanna grips the candy, smiling shyly at Carlyle the Grocer.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE GROCERY - DAY

Miriam spies a poster on the brick wall of the building.

She glimpses the words "evacuation" and "children" and "send them to the country" before Leighanna tugs at her hand.

MIRIAM
 Wouldn't kill you, you know, to say
 "thank you" now and again.

Leighanna's lip quivers as she wipes tears from her eyes.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)
 Oh! We'll send letters, every day.
 (welling up)
 Now you've got me started.

EXT. BRITISH ARMY CAMP (FRANCE) - DAY

Bradley laughs with a comrade as he trudges back to camp late in the afternoon.

Once alone, he collapses at his tent and peels off a boot. Beneath his tattered sock, his big toe is split and bleeding.

DOUGLAS
 It sounded much nicer than this, in
 your letters.

Bradley whirls to find his grinning and newly uniformed son. Bradley stumbles to his feet to embrace him.

BRADLEY
 Dougie!

DOUGLAS
Douglas, dad, please! Don't want
 the lads thinking I'm a nancy.

BRADLEY

Of all the daft things! Couldn't you have got assigned to polishing flagpoles? In Scotland?

DOUGLAS

Someone has to keep you out of trouble.

BRADLEY

Does this mean I missed your birthday? I'm sorry, son. What day is it?

DOUGLAS

It doesn't matter.

Bradley sits, groaning, and strips off his other boot.

BRADLEY

It certainly does. The worst atrocity I'll commit this war is to forget my own son's birthday.

DOUGLAS

Jesus, Dad, your socks!

Douglas rummages in his own pack for a new pair of socks.

BRADLEY

Oh, no, you keep those. You've no idea how precious they'll become. I'm glad to see you, son. I wish to God you weren't here, but still.

Bradley taps Douglas on the nose. Douglas looks around, embarrassed lest anyone might have seen, but smiles in spite of himself and taps his father's nose in return, as:

INT. JOHNSTONE FLAT/LEIGHANNA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Miriam taps Leighanna's nose, tucking her into bed. Leighanna holds up one of her father's letters.

MIRIAM

Surely you've had enough of these by now?

Leighanna shakes her head "no," and Miriam smiles fondly.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)

(reading aloud)

"May third, 1940. My darling girl..."

EXT. SCHOOLYARD (LONDON) - DAY

SCHOOLCHILDREN cavort in the schoolyard during a recess.

Leighanna sits alone on a bench. Her friend MARIE approaches and nudges her. When Leighanna doesn't respond:

MARIE

Mum says they're sending us away.

LEIGHANNA

Who?

MARIE

Us. Children. The ones who didn't go on the first evacuation. For our own-

INT. SOCIAL SERVICES MEETING HALL - DAY

Miriam and a hundred MOTHERS cram the meeting hall as a uniformed CIVIL SPOKESMAN addresses the assembly.

CIVIL SPOKESMAN

-safety. In the event of a German land invasion, we'll be better served, and better able to serve, if our children are far from London. We've secured more volunteers in all parts of the country to welcome evacuees into their homes...

INT. JOHNSTONE BUILDING/CELLAR - NIGHT

The building Residents huddle in the cellar as sirens peal. Leighanna dozes while Miriam writes a letter by candlelight.

MIRIAM (V.O.)

Dearest Boyos. They're shipping the rest of the children to the country.

EXT. BRITISH ARMY CAMP (FRANCE) - DAY

Bradley and Douglas drag themselves back to camp.

A SOLDIER hands Bradley the letter as he enters the camp, and Miriam continues in voice-over.

MIRIAM (V.O.)

I know we didn't send her with the first evacuation, but now, with the bombings, I don't know.

A second page falls to the mud. Douglas recovers it.

It is a drawing from Leighanna, of Bradley and Douglas in their army gear, with the words "Come home soon."

EXT. TRAIN STATION (LONDON) - DAY

Thousands of EVACUEE CHILDREN and MOTHERS throng the station. Harried CONDUCTORS manage the crowds.

Each child wears a cardboard box on a string around his neck.

Miriam and Leighanna fight their way into this urgent mayhem. Leighanna carries a small duffel and her own cardboard box.

A RUNNING BOY jostles Leighanna, and she drops her box. The cardboard splits open, revealing the gas mask inside. Miriam recovers it and writes Leighanna's name on the box.

MIRIAM

My goodness. Here. So you can tell
it apart from all the others.

EXT. TRAIN PLATFORM

The Evacuee Children throng onto the train, many of them wailing and clinging to their Mothers.

CONDUCTOR

Please keep boarding, now!

MIRIAM

You must be brave, my lovely.

Leighanna nods, and pokes Miriam's nose. Miriam hides her distress with a laugh, and hugs Leighanna.

CONDUCTOR

We've got to get along, ma'am.

Leighanna, boarding the train, looks back with moist eyes as the crowd engulfs her and she disappears from view.

A FRENZIED MOTHER catches the Conductor's arm.

FRENZIED MOTHER

Excuse me, where is this train going?

CONDUCTOR

Can't say, ma'am. Security reasons.

FRENZIED MOTHER

Where are you taking my boy?

ADMINISTRATOR

If the Germans found out where we were going ... you wouldn't want them bombing this train, now would you?

INT. A SEAT ON THE TRAIN - DAY

Howling Evacuee Children with a few CHAPERONES swarm about. Leighanna, crammed into a window seat, waves to her mother. She struggles not to cry as Miriam gets lost in the throng.

INT. JOHNSTONE FLAT/KITCHEN - DAY

In the dying light, Miriam cooks dinner, alone.

The wireless babbles on, nearly inaudible, until Miriam abruptly wipes her hands and turns it up.

WIRELESS ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

... number in the hundreds of thousands. By now, these evacuee children have settled into cozy homes with the promise of uninterrupted sleep, enjoying peace and quiet in Wales and North England ...

INT. TRAIN (CLARYDALE, YORKSHIRE) - NIGHT

The train squeals to a stop, waking Leighanna. Only two dozen Evacuee Children remain.

The sign above the provincial train platform reads CLARYDALE.

EXT. CLARYDALE TRAIN PLATFORM - NIGHT

The Evacuees stumble blearily onto the meager train platform. A MINISTER and CONSTABLE WICKHAM bellow in Yorkshire brogues.

MINISTER

Please form a queue!

CONSTABLE WICKHAM

Agh. What are we to do with so many?

The Minister fights his way to the train Conductor.

MINISTER

Hoy! We canna take such a crowd.

CONDUCTOR

Sorry, guv. Manifest says last stop.

MINISTER

But where will we put them?

CONDUCTOR

That's up to you, then, isn't it?

A WEARY LASS evacuee tugs at the Minister's sleeve.

WEARY LASS

Pardon, sir, where is this?

MINISTER

Clarydale, miss. Clarydale, Yorkshire.

(to the crowd)

Sitha, ye bairns! I know you're jiggered, but hugger up and follow me and Constable Wickham...

The Weary Lass turns to Leighanna.

WEARY LASS

What did he say? Do they not speak English?

Leighanna takes the Weary Lass's hand to comfort her.

INT. CHURCH (CLARYDALE) - NIGHT

Evacuees clamor into the church while the Minister and Constable Wickham strive for order.

TOWNSFOLK examine the Evacuees - some kindly, some as if they were cattle - and indicate their selections to the Minister.

A STRIDENT WOMAN looks Leighanna up and down and goes so far as to inspect her teeth. Attending her is a farmhand, JOCKEY, 14, a sprightly lad with a tangle of red hair.

STRIDENT WOMAN

(Yorkshire accent)

Can thee carry coal?

Leighanna remains speechless, terrified.

STRIDENT WOMAN (CONT'D)

Can thee carry coal? Cook? Shovel snow?

The Strident Woman scoffs and moves on to another Evacuee.

JOCKEY
(whispers, thick brogue)
You're better off, trust me.

Jockey winks, and hurries after the Strident Woman.

The STRIDENT WOMAN points to a BROTHER and SISTER.

STRIDENT WOMAN
I'll take the lass.

SISTER
I want to stay with my brother!

STRIDENT WOMAN
We've room for nobbut one bairn. No more.

BROTHER
It's all right, Molly. Go along.

SISTER
No, I want to stay with-

MINISTER
Look, lass, you've got to go with. Just for tonight. Once you lot are settled, we'll see about putting you two together.

BROTHER
Go, Molly! There's no families left!

STRIDENT WOMAN
Stop your fussing.

The Strident Woman drags the Sister away, Jockey shouldering her suitcase.

Leighanna meets the Brother's eyes and tries to smile in sympathy, but the Brother turns away to hide his tears.

The Church falls silent as no more Townsfolk arrive.

Of the children, only Leighanna and the Brother.

The Minister and Constable Wickham whisper nervously.

CONSTABLE WICKHAM
Can't well house them here all night, Sam.

MINISTER

Could you take them to the station?
You've got beds there.

CONSTABLE WICKHAM

The jail, you mean? You want me to
put these poor children in jail?

The Brother begins to cry.

Leighanna offers him a handkerchief, but he shrugs her off.
She casts a pleading look toward Constable Wickham.

CONSTABLE WICKHAM (CONT'D)

I'll tell you what, lass. You come with
me. The lad go with Sam, here. We'll
find places for you if we have to jowl
on every door in town.

EXT. THE LAST DOOR IN TOWN (CLARYDALE) - NIGHT

A cottage door closes in Constable Wickham's face.

Leighanna stumbles, holding Constable Wickham's hand as they
return to the road. Constable Wickham walks with a limp.

CONSTABLE WICKHAM

You'd think no one knew there's a war on.

LEIGHANNA

No bombing. At least.

CONSTABLE WICKHAM

Aye. Praise be for that. I suppose
we're limping to Ferry's Down.
Bound to be someone there for you.

EXT. OUTSIDE WIDOWSES COTTAGE (FERRY'S DOWN) - NIGHT

Constable Wickham, now carrying Leighanna, knocks on the door.

ROSEMARY, 60s, a plump and beaming woman wearing a robe over
her nightgown, opens it.

ROSEMARY

Mr. Wickham! Goodness, who is this?

CONSTABLE WICKHAM

Good evening, Rosemary.

ROSEMARY

Do come in. Nothing's wrong?

INT. WIDOWSES/ENTRY - NIGHT

KATE, starched and austere, 60s, joins them. She carries a half-finished quilt that she sews continually.

CONSTABLE WICKHAM
(brightening)
Why hello there, Kate. Er, Mrs. Tilden.

INT. KITCHEN

Leighanna, nodding off, sips tea at the kitchen table. Kate, Rosemary, and Constable Wickham parlay.

CONSTABLE WICKHAM
So sorry for the imposition Kate, but
this little girl has no place to sleep.

KATE
Out of the question. We've no means to
tend a bairn. And with Rosemary's heart...

ROSEMARY
Oh, Kate. Tush about my heart. She
can sleep in Johnny's-

KATE
No one sleeps in Johnny's room!

CONSTABLE WICKHAM
I know you've got space for it, Kate.
Make it just tonight, and we can sort it
out tomorrow. My bonnie Kate, please?

ROSEMARY
Come, Johnny wouldn't mind.

KATE
One night. One night.

INT. JOHNNY'S ROOM

This was once a lad's room and has remained unused and tidy with the eerie precision of a museum exhibit - a bed, dresser, framed photographs, and well-loved ice skates hanging from the wall.

Kate, holding a candle, leads Leighanna in.

KATE
Touch nothing. Nothing. You understand?

Leighanna nods.

KATE (CONT'D)
You're a quiet one. Do you speak?

Leighanna nods again. Then, tentatively:

LEIGHANNA
The W.C.?

KATE
W.C.? Indeed.

INT. BACK DOOR

Kate directs Leighanna out into the dark back yard.

KATE
The midden's just to the left. I'll
bring a pitcher and basin to your room.

Leighanna hesitates, and Kate hands her the candle.

KATE (CONT'D)
Quit gawping. Do your business and
hurry back. You're letting in the cold.

Rosemary bustles forward.

ROSEMARY
Just follow the plank, dear. If the
goats fret you, give them a kick.

A narrow plank, just above the mud, leads into the darkness.

INT. OUTHOUSE - NIGHT

The outhouse is merely a bucket beneath a hole in a bench. Leighanna finishes and stands, reaching up for a lavatory chain to flush. She searches for a moment, but finds none.

INT. JOHNNY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Rosemary carries a pitcher and basin into the room as Leighanna climbs into bed, fully clothed.

ROSEMARY
What are you doing?

Leighanna freezes.

LEIGHANNA
Can I not touch the bed, even?

ROSEMARY
'Course you can touch the bed. But
full in your gear? Do you not have a
nightdress?

LEIGHANNA
If there's a raid...

ROSEMARY
I think, Miss Leighanna, they sent you
here for there are no raids. Lord, are
you telling me you've been sleeping
fully dressed down in London?

Leighanna nods.

ROSEMARY (CONT'D)
Poor dear. Sleep comfortable, for once.

Rosemary sets down the pitcher and basin and helps Leighanna
out of her coat and into her nightdress.

LEIGHANNA
Ma'am?

ROSEMARY
Ayup?

LEIGHANNA
May I ... may I call you Aunt Rosemary?

ROSEMARY
Why, that would be darling.

Rosemary turns to go.

LEIGHANNA
I couldn't find the chain.

ROSEMARY
Chain?

LEIGHANNA
To flush the W.C.

ROSEMARY
(baffled)
Ah.

Rosemary closes the door.

Leighanna washes her face, recoiling at the cold water, then climbs under the covers.

In the encompassing country silence she pulls from her duffel a bundle of her father's letters and reads by candlelight as a tear streams silently down her cheek.

INT. JOHNSTONE FLAT/LEIGHANNA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Miriam sits in darkness upon Leighanna's empty bed. Finally, she curls up in it and goes to sleep.

INT. WIDOWSES/JOHNNY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Sunlight spills into the room as Leighanna wakes and stretches, fully rested for the first time in months.

Leighanna explores the room. She lingers at the ice skates and at old photographs on the dresser depicting scenes from Johnny's youth with his father and a much younger Kate. Then she gazes out the window:

EXT. OUTSIDE THE WIDOWSES - DAY

A wee Yorkshire town. A few small houses within view. Scrubby trees, with rolling hillocks and moors in the distance. A glimpse of a river winding near town.

Jockey, the redhead youth from the train station the night before, urges a flock of sheep along the dirt road.

INT. THE WIDOWSES/KITCHEN - DAY

Rosemary bustles in the kitchen. Kate enters from the back with a basket of eggs and a pail of goat milk. She sets the eggs on the counter beside Rosemary.

KATE

Watch those eggs, this time.

ROSEMARY

(good-naturedly)

I never overcooked an egg a day in my life, you nagging shrew.

KATE

Too stubborn to admit it, you are.

ROSEMARY

I, stubborn? I? Hah!

INT. STAIRWAY

Leighanna tiptoes down the stairs and peeks into the kitchen.

KATE

If you hadn't opened your gob, we'd not have this bairn to worry about.

ROSEMARY

Did you see the wee thing?

KATE

I swear, if it were a roach with big eyes, you'd take it in.

ROSEMARY

And if it were an injured bunny, you'd kick it to the mud, you would.

INT. KITCHEN

Leighanna creeps into the kitchen, and Kate bristles.

KATE

Awake at last, are you?

Leighanna nods. Kate doesn't know how to treat her silence.

ROSEMARY

Sit, have some softies and a door-stop.

KATE

(to Leighanna)

Say something, would you?

As Leighanna sits at the table, Rosemary sets two soft-boiled eggs and a slab of soda bread before her.

LEIGHANNA

Eggs!

Kate startles at Leighanna's outburst and drops a spoon.

KATE

Sakes! I liked you better quiet!

ROSEMARY

You don't like eggs?

LEIGHANNA

Don't waste them. When will you get more?

ROSEMARY

'Tis fair odds the chickens'll lay us
more than we can eat by the morrow.

KATE

Do you get no eggs in London?

LEIGHANNA

They're rationed.

ROSEMARY sets a cup of milk before Leighanna.

LEIGHANNA (CONT'D)

Milk?!

Leighanna's cry startles Kate into dropping a second spoon.

KATE

We like our peace in the morning, child!

ROSEMARY

Kate, you just asked the girl to
speak up. Milk? Rationed, too? What
did you use in bread? Or cakes?

Leighanna devours her eggs, bread, and milk with delight.

LEIGHANNA

Liquid paraffin.

ROSEMARY

Well, I never. What else?

LEIGHANNA

Mum boiled parsnips, said they were
bananas.

KATE

Sounds positively revolting.

ROSEMARY

We'll be sure to get you fatted up
right quick, then. How was your room?

Leighanna eats studiously for a moment, as Kate and Rosemary
watch her, until she realizes they expect her to speak.

LEIGHANNA

The boy in the photos?

Awkwardness descends suddenly.

KATE

You didn't go snooping around?

Leighanna shakes her head "no."

KATE (CONT'D)

Nowt of your business, is what those photos are. Just as this house, and our lives, are nowt of your business.

ROSEMARY

Kate, she's just asking.

KATE

Bad enough you usurped his room.

ROSEMARY

Usurped? Really.

Kate storms off. Leighanna looks questioningly at Rosemary.

ROSEMARY (CONT'D)

It's not your fault, dear. He was-

Kate reenters buttoning on her coat.

KATE

One night, that was the agreement.

ROSEMARY

Goodness, Kate, where will you take her?

KATE

Back to the constabular. We did our part.

ROSEMARY

There's our big war effort, is it?

KATE

Not one word more, Rosemary. Our war effort last time cost us dear enough.

ROSEMARY

Well then, I'll come with you.

KATE

Nonsense. Your heart. It's all the way to Clarydale. Stay and make certain you punch down the bread in an hour.
(to Leighanna)
Sam up your things.

INT. GROCERY (LONDON)- DAY

Miriam shops for groceries amid other WOMEN PATRONS.

The sparsely stocked market displays signs depicting rationed foodstuffs and such excuses as "Our boys need it."

Miriam fills her basket with corned beef, a few tins of sardines, a cake of soap. She approaches the counter.

MIRIAM

Morning, Mr. Carlyle. What do you have?

CARLYLE THE GROCER

I've been saving these special: two of my best pork chops for you and the little miss.

MIRIAM

Just ... one, please.

Carlyle the Grocer regards her sympathetically as he bundles the groceries and motions away Miriam's ration book.

CARLYLE THE GROCER

On the house, this time, Miriam.

Miriam smiles thinly in thanks, then breaks down in tears.

Other Women Patrons watch with stoic sympathy, and a POST WOMAN, wearing a blue postal services uniform, touches Miriam's shoulders.

POST WOMAN

There, luv. I know. I know. Shh.

MIRIAM

So sorry. Forgive me.

EXT. WIDOWSES/BACK YARD - DAY

Rosemary tosses grain while singing to the chickens.

ROSEMARY

Me mother told me, lassie...

Rosemary spies Kate returning with Leighanna and claps her hands, dropping the grain tin to the delight of the chickens.

ROSEMARY (CONT'D)

Oh, goodness, good Lord!

INT. WIDOWSES/ENTRY - DAY

Rosemary spins in circles trying to contain her excitement, then pulls open the door affecting an air of calm.

ROSEMARY
What's this, then?

Kate storms in, followed rather more timidly by Leighanna.

KATE
Too busy, they say. Too many children
to put up. No place for her, they say.

INT. KITCHEN

Rosemary follows Kate into the kitchen.

KATE
I knew this would happen. Knew it. You
had to take her in, Rosemary, and now
she's here, and will they take her back?
Certainly not, she's at the Widowses!

Leighanna tries to become invisible at the kitchen table.

ROSEMARY
And you, all meek and prim, did
what then?

KATE
Constable Wickham, the only one of
the lot with any gumption, wasn't
there. Said they'd look into it, find
a place as soon as possible. Oh, and
she's to go to school. In Clarydale,
starting tomorrow.

ROSEMARY
And?

KATE
And? I gave them the what for, and
came straight back. Would you have me
leave her to rot in the street?

Kate throws herself into a chair and massages her temples.

LEIGHANNA
Ma'am?

KATE
What? What?

LEIGHANNA
May I call you Auntie Kate?

KATE

Certainly not! You may call me Mrs. Tilden, or Miss Kate if you mun. And don't think because you're here another night that it means anything at all.

ROSEMARY

At the least, dear, write your mother straight away and tell her you're safe and sound.

Kate stands, seizes the kettle, realizes it's empty, reaches for the water bucket, finds it empty too, and grumbles.

KATE

Long as you're here, you'd do well to make thissen useful. Come!

ROSEMARY

She's not a puppy, you shrew.

Kate grabs the water bucket and stomps out to the back yard.

Rosemary bursts into guffaws and shoos Leighanna outside.

EXT. WIDOWSES/BACK YARD - DAY

Kate leads Leighanna to the water pump and primes it.

KATE

Sitha, if ever you see the bucket near empty, you fill it. I dinna want, ever, to find an empty bucket.

Leighanna nods.

KATE (CONT'D)

The goats, as well, will be your job.

Kate points, and Leighanna turns to see, for the first time, the pen of goats. Leighanna shrieks.

KATE (CONT'D)

Lord, you'd think you never saw ... you've never seen a goat?

Kate pulls Leighanna by the hand into the goat pen.

EXT. GOAT PEN

The goats bleat around Kate and Leighanna. Leighanna shrinks back as the goats nuzzle her hands seeking treats.

KATE
Watch, now. I'll show you how to milk.

LEIGHANNA
Miss Kate?

KATE
Aye?

LEIGHANNA
Am I really to go to school?

EXT. A PARK (LONDON) - DAY

Miriam and the Post Woman walk, arm in arm, through the park as the light wanes.

MIRIAM
I don't know what came over me. Mr. Carlyle, giving away groceries! He with a family of his own to mind.

POST WOMAN
You can steel yourself against any kind of horror, but a simple act of kindness will melt a person, every time. How long has it been, then?

MIRIAM
My first day.

Miriam bursts out laughing. The Post Woman joins her.

POST WOMAN
You've got to get out. Keep yourself busy, or you'll go mad.

EXT. ROAD OUTSIDE WIDOWSES - DAY

A sparkling morning. Leighanna wears a bonnet and carries a lunch basket as Rosemary sends her on her way.

ROSEMARY
Just follow the road. It looks like it goes nowhere, and it does, and a mile past that is the school.

INT. WIDOWSES/KITCHEN - DAY

Rosemary returns to the kitchen, where Kate sews their quilt.

KATE
You shouldn't indulge that bairn.

ROSEMARY
Somebody has to.

Kate nods to the milking pail.

KATE
Look at that kit. She's not got half
the milk out of those goats. I'll
have to finish the milking myself.

ROSEMARY
You should be proud.

Kate looks inquiringly at Rosemary.

ROSEMARY (CONT'D)
(in a huff)
To be the only woman born knowing
how to milk a goat.

EXT. ROAD TO SCHOOL - DAY

Leighanna has left the houses behind as she walks along the
road beside the river.

She crests a hillock beside a bustling farmhouse. Then sees:

EXT. OVER THE HILLOCK

A DROVER drives his herd of cows along the road.

Leighanna shrieks in terror and flees.

EXT. THROUGH THE FIELDS

Leighanna hurtles away from the cows, off the road now,
fighting through the scrub. She loses her bonnet, then trips
and falls in the dirt, stunned.

As she shakes herself off, she hears a very thick brogue:

JOCKEY
Ayup, what's all this, then?

She turns to regard Jockey, the elfin, redheaded lad.

LEIGHANNA
Monsters!

JOCKEY

Monsters?

Leighanna scrambles backwards, pointing at the road, until she becomes entangled within a shrub.

Jockey sees the cows, realizes what she means, and erupts with laughter not malicious, but charming and full of life.

He points and speaks as if teaching Leighanna a new word.

JOCKEY (CONT'D)

Cows.

LEIGHANNA

Cows? Cows?

Jockey helps Leighanna up like he's known her all his life.

JOCKEY

You do know what cows are?

Leighanna stares at the cows. Finally, she nods.

JOCKEY (CONT'D)

Dinna say much, do you?

EXT. ROAD TO SCHOOL - DAY

Back on the road, Jockey walks with Leighanna, talking non-stop.

JOCKEY

You're right, cows is monstrous beasts. Dumb as stones, as soon trample you as not. Ponies, now, they won't step on you, were you lying in their path.

LEIGHANNA

Ponies?

JOCKEY

You do know what ponies-

LEIGHANNA

Yes!

JOCKEY

That's me work, the ponies. They call me Jockey, because I'm so good with 'em. You?

LEIGHANNA

Not good with ponies.

JOCKEY

That's what they call you? "Not Good With Ponies?"

LEIGHANNA

No. Leighanna. Leighanna Johnstone.

JOCKEY

You're offcunden. Where do you belong?

LEIGHANNA

London.

Jockey claps his hands as if it were Christmas.

JOCKEY

London! Gerr away! London? What's it like? Is the ground really all made of stone? And does water come out your walls? And motorcars and tunnels and picture shows and more than two trains a day?

Leighanna nods.

JOCKEY (CONT'D)

I've never seen a city. You'll have to tell us all. Every word, next we meet.

Jockey stops and makes to return whence he came.

LEIGHANNA

Do you not go to school?

JOCKEY

Hah, us? Nay, I canna read nor write. And I've no head for figures.

LEIGHANNA

You don't read?

JOCKEY

Ponies don't care if you read or no. Nor trees nor rivers nor stones. I'm off, then, Leighanna-Leighanna Johnstone. Miss "Not Good With Ponies."

With an impish grin, Jockey scampers back the way he came.

INT. DISTRICT POST OFFICE (LONDON) - DAY

The Post Woman leads Miriam, newly attired in a blue postal uniform, through the bustling post office.

POST WOMAN

So glad you decided to put in. We
can use the help.

EXT. SCHOOL YARD (CLARYDALE, YORKSHIRE) - DAY

Schoolchildren, both LOCAL YOUTHS and a handful of Evacuees,
scatter out of the schoolhouse.

Local bullies GARETH and SIMON taunt the Evacuees.

GARETH & SIMON

Vaccie, vaccie!

Leighanna inquires of an EVACUEE BOY:

LEIGHANNA

Vaccie?

EVACUEE BOY

Its what the local kids call us.
Evacuees. Haven't you heard?

LEIGHANNA

Haven't met any local kids. Well, one.

Gareth shoves the Evacuee Boy and Simon knocks off his hat.

GARETH

Get on back to London!

SIMON

Let the bombs drop on you.

The teacher, MRS. PIDGET, storms out of the school.

MRS. PIDGET

Hoy, enough of that, I'm warning you.

Mrs. Pidget separates the quarrelers, and addresses the
Evacuee Boy and, by extension, all the Evacuees.

MRS. PIDGET (CONT'D)

I was against it, I was, taking in the
lot of you. But here you are, and we'd
best try not to kill each other, then.

EVACUEE BOY

(mock-Yorkshire accent)
Makes you feel right welcome, don't it?

INT. PUBLIC BUS (LONDON) - NIGHT - TRAVELING

Miriam, in her post uniform, sits on the bus. She overhears two nurses, NURSE MOLLY and NURSE ODILE:

NURSE MOLLY

Did you hear? Louise lost her Charles yesterday. Police came to her house, middle of the night, to tell her.

NURSE ODILE

Awful, bloody awful. I pray the police never comes to my door.

Over the roar of the bus, Miriam makes out the sound of a plane engine. Suddenly, a bomb explodes nearby, shattering the bus windows and toppling the bus onto its side.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

The BUS DRIVER kicks open the emergency door and helps PASSENGERS haul forth an UNCONSCIOUS WOMAN.

Miriam helps lower the Unconscious Woman on the ground.

NURSE MOLLY

You're bleeding, love.

Miriam looks at herself: glass from the shattered bus windows has cut her forearm. Nurse Molly holds Miriam's arm and plucks out a glass shard.

INT. NURSE MOLLY'S FLAT (LONDON) - NIGHT

Nurse Molly finishes wrapping a makeshift bandage around Miriam's arm.

NURSE MOLLY

Lot of people won't bother the hospitals. Good thing, too, we're packed solid.

MIRIAM

I can imagine.

NURSE MOLLY

I have strangers stop me in the street, asking if I'll take a look at this or that, or check a child who's too sick to be sent off. Kids of your own?

Miriam nods, sadly.

EXT. WIDOWSES/BACK YARD - DAY

Rosemary and Leighanna feed the chickens together, Leighanna more comfortable after days of chores but still timid.

ROSEMARY
Lord, child, I raise the tamest
birds in Ferry's Down.

Rosemary thrusts a squawking chicken into Leighanna's arms.

ROSEMARY (CONT'D)
They couldn't hurt you, even if
they wanted to.

LEIGHANNA
Cows will as soon trample you as not.

ROSEMARY
A whole sentence from you! Yes, but
only if you let 'em.

LEIGHANNA
She doesn't like me much. Kate, I
mean.

ROSEMARY
Don't you mind Kate one jot.
There's a soft spot under that
crust. She's just not used to
changes. This war's got her upset.

Leighanna looks inquisitively at Rosemary.

ROSEMARY (CONT'D)
We grew up nearly sisters, Kate and
us. Did everything together. She was
the beauty. And a great thinker. If
she'd been a boy, her family might've
sent her to university.

Rosemary gives a "what-can-you-do?" shrug.

LEIGHANNA
Then?

ROSEMARY
We both wed in Ninety Five, both had
sons the next year. Did everything
together, see? Then, the Great War,
and our men and our boys went off.
(points heavenward)
And went off.

LEIGHANNA
My father and brother...

ROSEMARY
Ah, don't you fret. I feel it right
down to my chicken bones they'll
come back.

LEIGHANNA
You never married again, either of you?

ROSEMARY
No. No, no, no. Kate would never.

LEIGHANNA
But you?

ROSEMARY
Where Kate goes, I always follow. "The
Widoweses," as they calls us.
(confidentially)
Yet Kate needs me. A good deal more
than her salty ways let on.

LEIGHANNA
Might she come to like me?

ROSEMARY
(winking)
Only if you let her. Hoy, now, tend to
those goats while I get supper on.
Kate'll be back soon, and let's to
give her nary a cause to gripe.

INT. DISTRICT POST OFFICE/SORTING ROOM (LONDON) - DAY

Miriam and another POSTAL TRAINEE sort mail.

POSTAL TRAINEE
Hey, Miriam, here's one for you.

The Postal Trainee hands Miriam a package, from Leighanna.

Opening it, inside she finds a brief note, which reads: "Dear
Mum, I thought you might like these."

Beneath, safely wrapped and nested in straw, are four eggs.

EXT. WIDOWSES/BACK YARD/GOAT PEN - DAY

Leighanna, alone, struggles to milk one of the goats. Then:

JOCKEY
So, Miss Not-Good-With-Ponies.

Jockey vaults over the goat pen fence.

LEIGHANNA
Jockey!

JOCKEY
How are you with goats, then?

LEIGHANNA
Not good with goats either.

JOCKEY
Well, you're wearing no bonnet. I never
seen a milkmaid b'aht a bonnet.

LEIGHANNA
Lost it.

JOCKEY
Running from "monsters," aye?

Jockey pulls Leighanna's bonnet from his pocket with a flourish reminiscent of Douggie. Leighanna accepts it happily.

JOCKEY (CONT'D)
I wot it were yours. That or cows have
started eating girls whole. Here.

Jockey squats next to Leighanna.

JOCKEY (CONT'D)
Squeeze firm, pull gentle. Just so.

He puts his hand over hers and helps her with the milking.

Their faces are very close for this tender moment, though Jockey is oblivious to Leighanna's admiration.

JOCKEY (CONT'D)
Little miss "not-so-bad-with-goats."

Another goat approaches Jockey and nuzzles his shoulder.

LEIGHANNA
She likes you.

Jockey frolics with the goat until Kate interrupts.

KATE
Leighanna, the milk! Oh, hello, Jockey.

JOCKEY
Evening, Miss Kate.

Leighanna nods toward the house, as if to say "I must go."

JOCKEY (CONT'D)
I'm off, then.

Jockey hops the goat pen and darts away.

EXT. OUTSIDE WIDOWSES COTTAGE

Jockey leaps onto a pony and with a wave, gallops off.

INT. WIDOWSES/KITCHEN - DAY

Leighanna enters with the milk pail. Rosemary and Kate work together on their quilt.

Leighanna sets the pail down and sits to peel potatoes.

ROSEMARY
Nice to see you've made a friend.

KATE
You shouldn't go faffin' with that boy.

ROSEMARY
Oh, come, you crusty gimmer.

KATE
He's touched, the lad is. Gormless.
Cannot read, nor make himself
useful, other than to tend the
animals.

LEIGHANNA
He's nice to me.

KATE
He'll get you into trouble.

ROSEMARY
He's a changeling.

Leighanna looks questioningly.

KATE
No such thing, Rosemary, you know it.

Kate leaves the room, pulling off her apron.

LEIGHANNA
Changeling?

ROSEMARY
Jockey and his ma and da got lost on the moor one night, when he was but a wee thing. The mist came up thick. I reckon they followed a will-o'-the-wisp, thinking it were the light of a house.

LEIGHANNA
Will-o'-the-wisp?

ROSEMARY
Faery lights. They took his parents, the faeries did. Never seen again. Or, some say, faeries put one of their own in Jockey's blanket. The old Tildens found him next morn, near frozen, took him in.

Leighanna ponders, moved by the story.

ROSEMARY (CONT'D)
And stranger things than that. This isn't London.

Rosemary ends with a wink as Kate reenters with a basket full of onions from the garden.

EXT. LONDON STREET - NIGHT

Miriam walks home, still in her Post uniform. She overhears two POLICEMEN as they exit a building.

FIRST POLICEMAN
Worst thing about this job. What's it our duty, telling some poor woman her husband's offed in the war?

SECOND POLICEMAN
Better to tell the news than be the news, I say.
(to Miriam)
Evening, ma'am.

EXT. SCHOOL YARD (CLARYDALE, YORKSHIRE) - DAY

Leighanna strolls alone through the schoolyard. There are noticeably fewer Evacuees. The Evacuee Boy plays alone nearby.

Gareth and Simon call to them both.

GARETH
Hoy, Vaccies!

Leighanna and the Evacuee Boy turn; is this an invitation or a threat?

GARETH (CONT'D)
Why are you still here?

EVACUEE BOY
We don't scare as easy.

Gareth and Simon laugh. Gareth feints a lunge at them.

Leighanna shrieks and recoils. More laughter.

EVACUEE BOY (CONT'D)
Sod off.

GARETH
Hoy, now, cut it out. We want to know: what's it like? The bombing?

EVACUEE BOY
Bloody awful, is what it's like.

GARETH
Like, how, then?

LEIGHANNA
You sleep in your clothes.

EVACUEE BOY
Because you never know when a raid will come. Sometimes you hear sirens. Sometimes you hear planes first. Sometimes you just hear the explosions.

LEIGHANNA
The Doodlebugs, you don't hear. They just drop bombs.

GARETH
Ach, it doesn't sound so bad.

LEIGHANNA
"If I should die before I wake..."

A moment of sober silence.

GARETH
Ever seen a dead body?

Leighanna and the Evacuee Boy look at each other, and both nod. This earns respect from Gareth, and hence Simon.

Then, Simon nudges Gareth and points.

EXT. ROAD BESIDE SCHOOLYARD

Jockey rides a pony laden with baskets along the dirt road past the schoolhouse. He ignores the Local Lads.

EXT. SCHOOLYARD

GARETH
(taunting)
Jockey, Jockey, daft in his crock-ey!

Simon joins in the chant. The Evacuee Boy, trying to fit in, taunts as well.

Leighanna is horrified, but too nervous to speak.

EXT. ROAD BESIDE SCHOOLYARD

Jockey looks passively at the Local Lads, then sees Leighanna, and his face brightens.

EXT. SCHOOLYARD

Gareth notices the eye contact between Jockey and Leighanna.

GARETH
What, are you two friends?

Leighanna, wanting to speak, opens her mouth, says nothing.

Jockey, hurt, whispers his pony into a trot.

Amid the laughter of the local youths, Leighanna is mortified by her inaction.

INT. JOHNSTONE FLAT/LEIGHANNA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Miriam enters Leighanna's empty room and turns on the light. She finds one of Leighanna's letters from Bradley fallen beneath the bed.

INT. WIDOWSES/JOHNNY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Rosemary tucks Leighanna into bed, and notices the bundle of Bradley's letters.

ROSEMARY

Oh, are these all letters from...?

Leighanna nods, and Rosemary sits beside her on the bed.

INT. JOHNSTONE FLAT/LEIGHANNA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Miriam, reading the letter, hears a knock at the front door.

INT. WIDOWSES/JOHNNY'S ROOM - NIGHT

ROSEMARY

You mun worry about him awful.

LEIGHANNA

Auntie Rosemary? Why would he go away from me?

ROSEMARY

I think rather he went away for you.

LEIGHANNA

What?

ROSEMARY

When a man goes to war, it's not to get away from people, but to protect them. He goes because he loves you, dearie.

INT. HALL OUTSIDE JOHNNY'S ROOM

Kate has paused at the door, moved by their conversation.

INT. JOHNSTONE FLAT/ENTRY - NIGHT

Miriam opens the door, horrified to see to the two Policemen whose conversation she overheard the other evening.

FIRST POLICEMAN

Sorry to trouble you, ma'am.

MIRIAM

Is it ... is he ...?

FIRST POLICEMAN

It's just that we could see a crack of light from your window, ma'am. Don't want to make a target of yourself. Best draw the curtains a little tighter, yes?

MIRIAM

Oh, dear lord. Yes. Yes, of course.

FIRST POLICEMAN

Again, sorry for the trouble.

Miriam closes the door and crumples, sobbing with relief.

EXT. ROAD FROM SCHOOL (CLARYDALE, YORKSHIRE) - DAY

Leighanna looks toward the farmhouse manor she routinely passes, then turns from the road and scrambles toward it.

INT. TILDEN FARM/STABLES - DAY

Jockey brushes a pony, as Leighanna peeks in. He ignores Leighanna, forcing her to speak first.

LEIGHANNA

Hello.

JOCKEY

Na then.

LEIGHANNA

What are you doing?

JOCKEY

Brushing.

Dreadful pause. With great effort:

LEIGHANNA

You're cross with me.

JOCKEY

Have I reason to be?

LEIGHANNA

The other day. At school.

Jockey continues brushing.

LEIGHANNA (CONT'D)

The first time any of them spoke to me.

Jockey brushes. No help at all.

LEIGHANNA (CONT'D)
I didn't know what to do.

JOCKEY
I think you did.

LEIGHANNA
You are cross—

Jockey sets down the brush and finally looks at her.

JOCKEY
I'm not. I thought you to be
different from the lot of them. I'm
the fool, for thinking.

LEIGHANNA
You don't know what it's like, not
having any friends!

Jockey pierces her with his eyes: yes, he does.

EXT. BRITISH ARMY CAMP (FRANCE) - NIGHT

Bradley and Douglas sit, reading a letter from Leighanna by
firelight.

LEIGHANNA (V.O.)
Nobody wants us here. I'm trying to
make friends, but it's so hard.
What do you do if you make a
mistake? And hurt someone?

Bradley looks up from the letter.

BRADLEY
I worry about her.

DOUGLAS
You worry about her?

BRADLEY
Middle of nowhere, a family she
hardly knows. No friends.

DOUGLAS
Fresh milk, country air, sound sleep?
No constant midnight bombings?

BRADLEY
She's my little girl.

DOUGLAS

I know, Dad. But I'll tell you, if I wasn't old enough to be sleeping in the mud with foot rot and lice, I'd have wanted you to send me away.

INT. WIDOWSES/JOHNNY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Sounds of a plane engine grow louder.

Leighanna suddenly bolts up from a sound sleep, listening.

INT. KATE AND ROSEMARY'S ROOM

Leighanna bursts into Kate and Rosemary's dark room.

LEIGHANNA

Wake up! Wake up!

KATE

What in the name of heaven?!

LEIGHANNA

Get up! Don't you hear?

ROSEMARY

Hear what, child?

LEIGHANNA

A plane, it's a plane!

Kate reaches for a candle.

LEIGHANNA (CONT'D)

Don't light it!

ROSEMARY

Kate! Listen!

They pause, and yes, they can hear a plane engine.

INT. BOTTOM OF STAIRS

Leighanna, Kate, and Rosemary scramble downstairs. Leighanna grabs the quilt that Kate and Rosemary have been sewing.

LEIGHANNA

Where's the cellar?

KATE

Cellar? What are you thinking?

LEIGHANNA
What kind of house has no cellar?!

KATE
The Yorkshire kind!

INT. WIDOWSES/KITCHEN

Leighanna, Kate, and Rosemary huddle under the kitchen table, wrapped in the partially-completed quilt. Rosemary breathes heavily, one hand on her chest.

KATE
Rosemary?

ROSEMARY
Don't you mind. I'll be fine.

KATE
What are planes doing so far north?

ROSEMARY
And how long mun we stay here?

LEIGHANNA
Awhile.

ROSEMARY
Will they bomb us, do you think?

LEIGHANNA
Dunno. You never know.

ROSEMARY
And this was every night in London?

Leighanna nods.

ROSEMARY (CONT'D)
You poor thing! I'm glad you thought to grab this quilt. We're certain to be fine.

LEIGHANNA
Why?

ROSEMARY
It's a friendship quilt. When you make a quilt for someone you love, it means you'll never be parted.

KATE
Except it doesn't always work.

ROSEMARY

Oh, hush.

INT. OUTSIDE JASON TRIPP'S APARTMENT (LONDON) - DAY

Miriam, in her post uniform, gasps up the last flight of stairs in the building. She knocks at a door.

MIRIAM

(calling out)

Post.

JASON TRIPP, late 40s, a handsome American in an Air Force uniform, with a patch over one eye, opens the door.

TRIPP

Hello, there, mail lady.

MIRIAM

"Post woman," please.

Miriam hands him a letter.

TRIPP

Post woman. Thank you kindly. You okay?

MIRIAM

Just winded, thank you. It's the stairs.

TRIPP

I bet. Back in Dubuque we don't have many buildings with more than two flights.

MIRIAM

Does their postal service have any openings?

Tripp laughs. He offers his hand.

TRIPP

Jason Tripp.

Miriam shakes his hand.

MIRIAM

Miriam Johnstone. You're an American?

TRIPP

Yes, ma'am. Air Force Captain. Here to help train some of your pilots.

MIRIAM

Does this mean the Americans have
joined the war?

TRIPP

Not officially. But a former airman
like me can still make himself useful.

MIRIAM

Former?

Tripp taps his eye patch.

TRIPP

Lost this in the last war. Can't
fly with just one.

MIRIAM

Oh. I'm sorry.

TRIPP

No need.
(scrutinizing Miriam)
I can see well enough.

MIRIAM

(flattered by his attention)
Well. I'd best be going.

TRIPP

See you around, mail lady.
(blinks his good eye)
Sorry, I tried to wink just then. I
keep forgetting. I must have just
looked sleepy.

Miriam laughs.

EXT. THE ROAD FROM SCHOOL (CLARYDALE, YORKSHIRE) - DAY

Leighanna hears a commotion by the river.

EXT. THE RIVERBANK

Leighanna approaches and sees Gareth, Simon, and two LOCAL
LADS throwing stones into the river.

She's about to sneak away when she notices what they're aiming
at: an unexploded bomb lies, half submerged, in the riverbank.

The boys continue to hurl stones as Leighanna rushes forward.

LEIGHANNA
Stop it! Stop it!

GARETH
And why so, Vaccie?

LEIGHANNA
That's a bomb!

All the boys look, overcome with awe, at the bomb.

LEIGHANNA (CONT'D)
That plane last night must have
dropped it.

GARETH
We should put it in Mrs. Pidget's desk!

LEIGHANNA
It could go off!

GARETH
Aye, exactly!

The boys laugh. Then Gareth spies Jockey riding his pony along the road. Gareth approaches with the two Local Lads while Simon lingers.

GARETH (CONT'D)
Hoy, Jockey, we got a gift for you.
It'll blow your mind!

Jockey ignores them.

GARETH (CONT'D)
Hoy, crock-ey!

Gareth flings a stone toward Jockey.

Leighanna shoves Gareth with all her might.

LEIGHANNA
Leave him alone!

Gareth sprawls in the mud. The Local Lads gape.

GARETH
Vaccie whore! I'll-

By now, Jockey has dismounted and interposed himself.

JOCKEY
You'll not be belting a lass, Gareth
Moiry. Not b'aht us having a say.

LOCAL LAD #1
Get him, Gareth!

Gareth bristles for the fight. But then:

Simon throws one last stone at the bomb. The stone hits the metal shell of the bomb with a clang.

The subsequent explosion knocks them all off their feet.

Drenched with mud and river water, they all stir and stand.

Except for Simon, who lies face down on the riverbank.

Gareth regards the situation for a moment, then:

GARETH
Bugger!

Gareth runs. The Local Lads, panicking, follow.

LEIGHANNA
Come back!

JOCKEY
Let them go. Them's feckless.

Jockey hastens to Simon's side. Leighanna follows.

JOCKEY (CONT'D)
Simon, you nutter, can you hear us?

They roll Simon over. He bleeds from a gash on his forehead.

LEIGHANNA
He's still breathing.

Jockey scouts the riverbank.

LEIGHANNA (CONT'D)
What are you doing?!

Jockey pulls up a root.

JOCKEY
Ah. This'll stop his bleeding.
You'd best go for some help.

Jockey gnaws off part of the root, crushes it between his fingers, and applies it to Simon's forehead.

JOCKEY (CONT'D)
Quick, now!

INT. WIDOWSES/KITCHEN - NIGHT

Kate, in a fury, scrubs Leighanna's muddy clothes.

Rosemary pours water warmed on the stove over Leighanna, who sits in a tub on the kitchen floor.

KATE

...unacceptable. Of all the mad things. A snip of a girl like you has no business brawling. It's by the grace of heaven that Simon Coppers wasn't badly hurt.

LEIGHANNA

He'll be all right?

Rosemary gives Leighanna a reassuring nod.

LEIGHANNA (CONT'D)

The others just left him.

ROSEMARY

Good you came along when you did.

KATE

And I warned you, did I not, to keep away from Jockey? 'Twouldn't surprise me one jot if he put a charm on you and you turned out half-daft just like him.

Rosemary dries Leighanna with a towel.

ROSEMARY

Did you really shove Gareth Moiry, full on, into the mud?

Leighanna nods as Rosemary helps her with her nightdress.

ROSEMARY (CONT'D)

Wonder of wonders.

KATE

Don't be encouraging her, Rosemary. And now, girl, straight to bed with you. You'll be lucky if you don't catch your death.

Leighanna scampers upstairs. Rosemary starts to chuckle.

KATE (CONT'D)

You hush.

Rosemary guffaws, and covers her mouth with her hands.

KATE (CONT'D)
 Rosemary, a bomb went off in Clarydale.
 A boy was hurt. This is no cause for...

Rosemary cackles, and even Kate cannot stop a smile. Kate turns away so Rosemary won't see her grin.

KATE (CONT'D)
 I swear, that bairn.

Rosemary snorts.

INT. OUTSIDE JASON TRIPP'S APARTMENT (LONDON) - NIGHT

Miriam knocks on Tripp's door, which he promptly answers.

TRIPP
 Mail lady!

MIRIAM
 Post woman. Hello, again.

Miriam hands over a letter.

TRIPP
 Working late, huh?

MIRIAM
 Yes. Often. We're understaffed.

TRIPP
 Aren't we all? I wonder-

Suddenly he pauses, and cocks his head.

MIRIAM
 What?

TRIPP
 Let's go.

MIRIAM
 Go? What-?

Tripp takes her arm and hurries her down the stairs.

INT. STAIRWELL

And only now do the air-raid sirens wail.

MIRIAM
How did you-?

TRIPP
I'm a pilot. I can smell planes coming.

INT. GROUND FLOOR

Tripp leads Miriam out the back door.

MIRIAM
What about the cellar?

TRIPP
Forget it. I've got an Anderson
shelter out back.

EXT. BACK YARD - NIGHT

Tripp dashes to a half-buried steel structure. He yanks open a small door and ushers Miriam in as explosions sound nearby.

INT. TRIPP'S BOMB SHELTER - NIGHT

Darkness, until Tripp lights a candle. The shelter is stocked with blankets, canned food, a radio. Quarters are tight, and Tripp and Miriam sit close together on an old cot mattress.

MIRIAM
Why is there no one else here?

TRIPP
The building's empty. Everyone just
up and left.

Tripp opens a box of biscuits and offers it to Miriam.

MIRIAM
Thank you. If all the flats are empty,
why do you live on the top floor?

TRIPP
I've got a thing for heights.

MIRIAM
This is quite cozy, your space here.

TRIPP
If you've got to spend few hours in a
hole, it might as well be a nice hole.
(MORE)

TRIPP (CONT'D)
 I'd have put up wallpaper if I'd known
 I'd entertain such pretty company.

Miriam falls uncomfortably silent.

TRIPP (CONT'D)
 I meant no offense. I mean, I can see...

Tripp points to Miriam's wedding band.

TRIPP (CONT'D)
 Just a free compliment.

MIRIAM
 Thank you.

Tripp unwraps a precious bar of chocolate.

TRIPP
 Is he at the front?

MIRIAM
 Yes. Bradley. And my son, Douglas.

TRIPP
 I'm sure they'll pull through. I did,
 didn't I, and the life expectancy of
 a pilot is, maybe, twelve seconds.
 (beat)
 That didn't help much, did it?

Miriam smiles, and shakes her head.

TRIPP (CONT'D)
 I'll keep my mouth shut.

MIRIAM
 No. It's nice to have someone to chat
 with who has some notion what's going on.

Tripp hands Miriam a piece of chocolate, and holds up one of
 his own as if to toast with it.

TRIPP
 Here's to chats.

EXT. TILDEN FARM/OPEN FIELD (YORKSHIRE) - DAY

Leighanna, on her way home from school, crests a hillock.

There, in a field, stands Jockey, motionless. A coil of rope
 lies at his feet.

Twenty yards away, a pony colt gambols through the brush.
Jockey hears Leighanna approach, but keeps his eyes on the pony.

JOCKEY
Ayup, Miss Good-with-Goats.

LEIGHANNA
Ayup, Jockey. What are you doing?

JOCKEY
Training a new pony.

LEIGHANNA
No whip, no bridle?

JOCKEY
Aye, if you want a slave. Not if
you want a friend.

LEIGHANNA
He'll come to you?

JOCKEY
She. If not today, tomorrow. Or after.

LEIGHANNA
You just wait?

JOCKEY
Wait. Talk. Sing. Let her know
she's welcome.

They stand in silence for awhile. Finally:

LEIGHANNA
I'm glad you came by. The other day.

JOCKEY
How'd it do with the Widowses?

LEIGHANNA
Kate gave me a scolding.

JOCKEY
Sure an' she did. But you did the right
thing. Miss Kate knows it, even if she
don't let on.

LEIGHANNA
I brought you something.

Leighanna holds out the bundle of her father's letters.

JOCKEY
You know I canna-

LEIGHANNA
I thought, perhaps, I could teach you?

Jockey hesitantly unfolds one of the letters.

JOCKEY
You truly think I could learn?

LEIGHANNA
Of course!

JOCKEY
Such magic! It's like a spell you
hear about in the faerie stories.

Leighanna nods.

LEIGHANNA
We friends again?

JOCKEY
You know you're always welcome.

Leighanna tentatively reaches out and taps him on the nose:
the same gestures she uses with her family.

Jockey ingenuously taps her nose in return.

INT. OUTSIDE JASON TRIPP'S APARTMENT (LONDON) - DAY

Tripp opens the door to Miriam.

TRIPP
Please, God, a bombing raid. Right now.

MIRIAM
Enough with you.

Miriam hands over an envelope.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)
You certainly get a lot of mail.

TRIPP
I write letters to keep you coming
by. Let me show you something.

INT. JASON TRIPP'S APARTMENT

Tripp uses a stout board on two crates as a desk. As he talks, he clears it of books and papers and lifts the board.

TRIPP

Friend of mine told me about this.

Tripp carries the board over to the window

INT. WINDOW

Tripp slides the board out the window, forming a bridge between his room and the adjacent building.

TRIPP

There. Now you don't have to go all the way down this building and all the way back up the next.

MIRIAM

I'm to walk across on that? We're five flights up!

TRIPP

Try five-thousand feet in the air, Jerries shooting at you. This is nothing.

MIRIAM

Are you mad? No. No. Absolutely not.

EXT. THE BOARD BETWEEN THE BUILDINGS - DAY

Tripp leans out of his window, holding Miriam's hand as she shuffles her way across the board.

TRIPP

Don't worry, I've got you.

MIRIAM

I'm not invading someone's bedroom, am I?

TRIPP

That window opens into a hallway. And don't look down.

MIRIAM

Oh, sweet Lord!

TRIPP

What?

MIRIAM
I looked down.

TRIPP
Now you've done it. Nice knowing you.

MIRIAM
What?!

TRIPP
Kidding. One more step.

INT. ADJACENT BUILDING/HALLWAY - DAY

Miriam climbs in and clings to the windowsill, gasping.

EXT. OUTSIDE JASON TRIPP'S APARTMENT/WINDOW - DAY

Tripp leans out the window as he retrieves the board.

TRIPP
There, now. That wasn't so bad, was it?

INT. ADJACENT BUILDING/HALLWAY - DAY

Miriam takes deep breaths.

MIRIAM
I'll let you know once I've done vomiting.

TRIPP
Hah! See you tomorrow, mail lady.

INT. SCHOOLHOUSE (CLARYDALE, YORKSHIRE) - DAY

Mrs. Pidget addresses the class.

MRS. PIDGET
Please tell your families the town is collecting for the Comforts for the Forces Fund.

Mrs. Pidget rattles a steel canister filled with coins.

MRS. PIDGET (CONT'D)
Our lads across the Channel shouldn't be without at least some of the niceties of home.
(MORE)

MRS. PIDGET (CONT'D)
 Secondly, it's already October, which means the winter Solstice Festival is coming-

Whoops and cheers from the Students.

MRS. PIDGET (CONT'D)
 I suppose I needn't say any more.

INT. TILDEN FARM/STABLES (YORKSHIRE) - LATER

Leighanna teaches Jockey his letters, very slowly. They write together on a sheet of paper.

A light dusting of snow falls just outside.

LEIGHANNA
 That's an "F."

JOCKEY
 "F." How many are there?

LEIGHANNA
 Twenty-six.

JOCKEY
 Now you're just jesting. No? How does anyone remember twenty-six letters?

LEIGHANNA
 Be patient. Like with a pony.

Jockey scrutinizes the page.

LEIGHANNA (CONT'D)
 What's the Solstice Festival?

JOCKEY
 Ah, it's gradley! Cider, games, sleigh rides, and spice. December 21st. Shortest day of the year.

LEIGHANNA
 I've never been to anything like that.

JOCKEY
 If you're not otherwise spoke for, I was hoping you'd go with us.

LEIGHANNA
 Really?

JOCKEY

Aye. And now I've got summat for you.

Jockey retreats into an empty stable stall, then returns with a pair of wooden ice skates that he has meticulously hand-carved and bound with leather.

LEIGHANNA

What are they?

JOCKEY

Sometimes I wonder how you managed in London. Ice skates. Them is ice skates.

LEIGHANNA

Oh! I've never seen any like this.

JOCKEY

I had to make them. Carve them out of oak, and fasten the leather shanks, and-

LEIGHANNA

You made them? That's amazing!

JOCKEY

You learn to make do. Ever been on a frozen river?

LEIGHANNA

A little.

Jockey leaps about the stable, as if skating.

JOCKEY

Just wait! The Swale will freeze any day, and then, you've never known such skating.

INT. WIDOWSES/KITCHEN - NIGHT

Leighanna argues with Kate while Rosemary washes dishes.

KATE

Certainly not. For one, the Solstice Festival is nothing but a horde of drunkards. For another, letting Jockey take you? Disaster follows that boy.

LEIGHANNA

That's not true.

KATE
As long as you're in my charge,
you'll abide by my judgment.

LEIGHANNA
But-

KATE
You mind me, girl!

Leighanna storms upstairs, and Rosemary turns on Kate.

KATE (CONT'D)
What? Now what do you have to say?

ROSEMARY
What harm, Kate? What harm in
letting her go?

KATE
Solstice Fest is no place for a child.

ROSEMARY
You and I went every year, and
younger than her.

KATE
That's no reason. And that Jockey-

ROSEMARY
Come, he's harmless. You know full
well. And he's her only friend. She's a
little girl, Kate.

KATE
What do you know about little girls?

ROSEMARY
I was one, once. Weren't you?

KATE
We both had to work for our lives,
an' we were young. I don't recall
having the time to be a little girl.

ROSEMARY
Well 'appen you should start now.

For the first time, her good-natured bickering seems pointed.

KATE
And what is that meant to mean?

ROSEMARY

Ever since the last war I've done
right by you, and happily. You know
I love you like my own sister. I
don't mind being a crusty hag
myself, but is that any reason to
make that child old before her
time, you heartless termagant?

Rosemary throws down her dish towel and huffs out.

EXT. ARMY TRENCH (FRANCE) - NIGHT

Bradley, Douglas, and a dozen SOLDIERS shiver in a ditch.
Sounds of gunfire and explosions, not too terribly distant.

Bradley drinks from his canteen, then offers it to Douglas.
Douglas drinks. His hands shake.

BRADLEY

Dougie?

DOUGLAS

They're getting closer.

BRADLEY

Yes.

DOUGLAS

We'll be seeing a fight soon.

Bradley nods.

DOUGLAS (CONT'D)

Do me a favor. Next time I insist on
coming to war, nail my feet to London.

BRADLEY

Promise. Hey, nothing will happen
to you.

DOUGLAS

Oh?

BRADLEY

Your mother'd never forgive me. I'd be
sleeping in the bathtub for a year.

DOUGLAS

I think that was meant to be funny.

Bradley swats him on the helmet, then taps his nose.

EXT. WIDOWSES/BACKYARD/GOAT PEN - DAY

Leighanna skillfully milks the goats. Rosemary sits nearby, pouring water over an ailing chicken's eyes.

ROSEMARY

In all my years I've never seen an eye infection like this. Do you think Jockey might know owt for it?

LEIGHANNA

I can ask him.

ROSEMARY

Would you?

(beat)

You two getting on, then?

LEIGHANNA

Mm hm.

ROSEMARY

You fancy him? Ah, don't answer. Makes no never mind, just don't let on to Kate.

(beat)

You fancy him?

LEIGHANNA

Dunno.

ROSEMARY

Oh, dear.

(confidentially)

My advice, then, is to-

Kate strides into the yard with a hand-knit scarf and mittens.

ROSEMARY (CONT'D)

(abrupt subject change)

-send them a letter straight off.

KATE

Send a letter to whom?

ROSEMARY

(flustering)

President Roosevelt. Ask him to send an army. And some chocolate.

KATE

Chocolate?

ROSEMARY

Well, do you get enough chocolate?

KATE

I-

ROSEMARY

Nor do I. If we can't rely on the Yanks for chocolate, what are they good for?

KATE

Honestly.

Kate turns to Leighanna, and Rosemary gives a sigh of relief.

Kate proffers the scarf and mittens to Leighanna.

KATE (CONT'D)

Wipe your hands, lass.

Leighanna obliges and accepts the items inquiringly.

KATE (CONT'D)

You're not used to Yorkshire cold, are you? That thin muffler you brought with won't hold up past autumn.

LEIGHANNA

Thank you.

KATE

You'll need something stouter out of doors at the Solstice Festival.

This takes a moment to dawn on Leighanna.

An earsplitting squawk as Rosemary drops the chicken.

Then, Leighanna scrambles over the goat fence and throws her arms around Kate.

LEIGHANNA

Thank you Auntie Kate! I mean Miss Kate.

KATE

Don't blame me if you catch your death.

Kate storms back into the house.

Rosemary has her hands clasped over her mouth, her eyes sparkling with glee as she and Leighanna break into laughter and dance, hand in hand, about the goat pen.

EXT. BOMB SITE WRECKAGE (LONDON) - DAY

A POLICEMAN and VOLUNTEERS sort through the rubble.

Miriam's friend the Post Woman, and the POST SUPERVISOR, a grizzled woman of 50, speak with the Policeman.

A body lies, covered with a tarpaulin, nearby.

POLICEMAN

(indicates the body)

One of yours, I think, in a post uniform. Can't make out a face, I'm afraid. Not a pretty sight, neither.

The Policeman pulls the cover from the corpse.

POST SUPERVISOR

(to Post Woman)

Who was on this route last night?

POST WOMAN

Miriam Johnstone, I think.

POST SUPERVISOR

Fits her description. Bloody shame.

INT. CLASSROOM (CLARYDALE, YORKSHIRE) - DAY

The Students sit, pale and silent, before Mrs. Pidget and Constable Wickham as Mrs. Pidget addresses the class with utmost solemnity.

MRS. PIDGET

...stolen twenty pounds from the Comforts for the Forces fund.

CONSTABLE WICKHAM

Now, lads, lasses, it'll go easier on you if you just return the money. Mrs. Pidget and I will be in her office. We expect anyone with information to pay us a visit.

MRS. PIDGET

This money is for our men at the front who are fighting to keep you all safe. It is a crime of the highest order-

CONSTABLE WICKHAM
Mrs. Pidget. Please.

Constable Wickham and Mrs. Pidget exit. Murmurs sprout among small groups of Students. Finally, Gareth stands.

GARETH
Well, I won't stand by, knowing
who's the thief.

INT. DISTRICT POST OFFICE (LONDON) - DAY

The atmosphere is grim, as WORKERS go about their business.

Moments later, Miriam bustles in.

Miriam's Post Woman friend shrieks upon seeing her. The entire office grinds to a halt.

POST SUPERVISOR
Miriam!

MIRIAM
So sorry to be late. One never
knows which buses won't be running.
(noting their shock)
What?

The Post Woman throws her arms around Miriam.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)
What?

POST WOMAN
So it wasn't you!

POST SUPERVISOR
I'll go through the register, then,
find out who it might have been. Not
much cause to celebrate, people,
we've still lost one of our own.

MIRIAM
What?

INT. CLASSROOM (CLARYDALE, YORKSHIRE) - DAY

Mrs. Pidget, Constable Wickham, and Gareth reenter. Mrs. Pidget marches sternly to Leighanna.

INT. CLASSROOM/MRS. PIDGET'S OFFICE

Leighanna sits before Mrs. Pidget and Constable Wickham.

LEIGHANNA

I never! Never!

CONSTABLE WICKHAM

I'm sorry to say, Master Moiry's story was quite convincing, Miss.

LEIGHANNA

My dad's at war. And Douggie! I wouldn't!

MRS. PIDGET

Enough. We'll give you one last chance to tell us where the money is.

INT. WIDOWSES/KITCHEN - NIGHT

Leighanna sits at the table, her eyes red. Rosemary clasps Leighanna's hands, while Kate rants.

KATE

To have someone under my roof a thief, escorted home by that kindly Constable Wickham.

LEIGHANNA

I didn't!

KATE

I've never known a thief who admitted it.

ROSEMARY

How many thieves have you known, then?

KATE

Rosemary, not a word. Not one word.
(to Leighanna)
If you needed money, you should have come to us, not humiliated this house.

LEIGHANNA

But Gareth lied!

KATE

Master Gareth would have no need of money. His is one of the wealthiest families in Clarydale.

(MORE)

KATE (CONT'D)

First thing Monday, I shall speak
to Constable Wickham about sending
you away.

Leighanna shrieks, and flees outside.

INT. OUTSIDE JASON TRIPP'S APARTMENT (LONDON) - NIGHT

Miriam knocks on Tripp's door. Tripp, disheveled and morose,
opens it, holding a half-eaten can of beans, which he
promptly drops with a start upon seeing Miriam.

TRIPP

Holy Christ!

MIRIAM

What?

TRIPP

I thought you were - someone else
came by yesterday, with my mail.
They said-

MIRIAM

I know. Mistake. I was off yesterday.

Overcome, Tripp embraces Miriam.

TRIPP

I missed you! God, I missed you!

Miriam draws away, moved.

MIRIAM

You certainly wear your heart on
your sleeve, don't you?

TRIPP

Sorry, that was a bit American of me.

MIRIAM

Well, it is nice to be noticed.

Tripp laughs, and recovers his beans.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)

What's that you're eating?

TRIPP

Air Force food. We don't get ration
books.

MIRIAM

At least heat them up.

TRIPP

Oh, you know, I was depressed. Crying into my soup, so to speak. Cold beans seemed to fit the profile.

MIRIAM

And I thought my meals were bland. Show me your larder.

EXT. THE MOORS (YORKSHIRE) - NIGHT

Leighanna, exhausted, tromps through the moors. A shiver racks her body. She turns, but suddenly realizes she doesn't know which way to go. The landscape looks uniformly grey in the mist.

She moves toward a light in the distance.

INT. WIDOWSES/ENTRY - NIGHT

Kate and Rosemary take turns nervously looking out the window.

KATE

Serve that girl right, going out in November without her new muffler.

ROSEMARY

What a horrid thing to say! The fettle she was in, weren't no room in her brain to think "muffler."

Rosemary reaches for her coat.

KATE

What do you think you're doing?

ROSEMARY

Finding that poor bairn.

KATE

With your heart in its condition?

ROSEMARY

Well someone's got to do summat.

KATE

Fine, fine. I'll go to the constabular.

ROSEMARY
Fine. And I'll go-

KATE
Nonsense. You stay here, in case she
finds an ounce of sense and returns.

Kate throws on her coat and hat and storms out.

INT. TILDEN FARM/STABLES - NIGHT

Jockey lies on a straw mattress in one of the stables,
studying one of Bradley's letters by lantern-light.

He startles to furious knocking on the stable door.

Jockey pulls open the door to reveal Rosemary.

JOCKEY
Miss Rosemary!

Rosemary fights for breath as Jockey helps her inside.

JOCKEY (CONT'D)
Are you not well?

ROSEMARY
It's Leighanna. She's gone. Lost. We
don't know where. She and Kate had a
fight. Gone. B'ah't her coat. She-

Jockey calms her.

JOCKEY
Can you get across the way to the
manor? Mum Tilden will lig you by
the fire, give you some tea.

Rosemary nods.

JOCKEY (CONT'D)
Go, then. For the love of heaven,
take it slow, you're jiggered.

In a trice, Jockey has released a pony and taken up a lantern
and blanket. As he swings himself onto the pony:

JOCKEY (CONT'D)
Don't worry, Miss Rosemary.

And he's gone.

EXT. THE MOORS (YORKSHIRE) - NIGHT

Leighanna panics; she should have reached the light by now.

INT. JASON TRIPP'S APARTMENT (LONDON) - NIGHT

Miriam works at Tripp's oven. Swing music plays on the wireless.

TRIPP
That smells mighty fine.

MIRIAM
I promise it will at least be
better than lukewarm beans.

Miriam holds up a meat pie.

TRIPP
Holy smoke! You're my goddess! The
House of Tripp worships at your altar!

EXT. THE MOORS (YORKSHIRE) - NIGHT

Leighanna now sees the light in yet a different direction,
and after it she goes, shivering badly.

INT. JASON TRIPP'S APARTMENT (LONDON) - NIGHT

Miriam and Tripp eat at his makeshift table, she on the only
chair, and he on an overturned crate. Music still plays.

TRIPP
Mm. Mmm? What's that flavor?

MIRIAM
It's mock pie crust. You didn't
have any eggs or milk. Or flour.

TRIPP
Is that real mock, or imitation
mock?

MIRIAM
Corned beef and tinned potatoes.
Mashed and pressed into a pie tin.

TRIPP
That is a mockery. But all hail
wartime ingenuity. One of these
days I'll cook the famous Tripp
Family Apple Pie.

MIRIAM
Sounds delightful.

TRIPP
Made from motor oil and fish paste,
but ... mmm.

They laugh.

TRIPP (CONT'D)
(indicating the music)
Oh, this is a good one!

And then Tripp is on his feet, pulling Miriam up for a dance.

MIRIAM
Oh, I don't, I don't know-

TRIPP
Just go with it. Left, right, back,
right. I mean backwards, for you it's
backwards. Right, left, back, left.
Good. Good! And when the trumpet comes
in, that's when you spin. Ready ... now!

Tripp spins Miriam, and they stumble together, laughing.

The song changes to a slow number. Nervously, Miriam allows
Tripp to draw her close.

EXT. THE MOORS (YORKSHIRE) - NIGHT

Sitting now, hugging her knees, Leighanna hears something:

JOCKEY (O.S.)
Hoy!

She sits up. Again:

JOCKEY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Leighanna! Hoy!

LEIGHANNA
Here! I'm over here!

Jockey gallops up, dismounts, and enfolds her in his blanket.

JOCKEY
What're you doing way out here?

LEIGHANNA
They said I stole the money.

JOCKEY

What money? No matter, that's daft!
You've not a thieving bone in your
body.

INT. JASON TRIPP'S APARTMENT (LONDON) - NIGHT

Miriam and Tripp slow dance, their faces inclining together.

Miriam, almost kissing Tripp, abruptly pulls away.

TRIPP

Oh, God. God damn it! Miriam, I'm
sorry. I didn't mean for that to
happen. I just - you're just so-

Miriam nods desperately, to silence him.

MIRIAM

I should go. Oh my. I really should.

TRIPP

I'd never dream of taking advantage!

MIRIAM

I know, I know.

TRIPP

I just meant-

MIRIAM

Please, don't say anything more.
I'll be off.

After hesitating for just an instant, Miriam hastens out.

TRIPP

(to himself)

You stupid, stupid jerk!

INT. WIDOWSES/ENTRY - NIGHT

Kate returns to the house, only to find Rosemary absent. At
the sound of a carriage, Kate hurries to the window.

EXT. ROAD OUTSIDE THE WIDOWSES - NIGHT

Jockey helps Rosemary and a swaddled Leighanna down from the
Tilden's carriage. Kate hurries outside.

KATE
Where in heaven?

ROSEMARY
Hush, now, Kate. All's well, thanks
to Jockey, here.

KATE
And what were you thinking-

ROSEMARY
Kate, let's get her in and warm.

Rosemary ushers Leighanna inside. Leighanna pauses only to
look back at Jockey and smile. Jockey nods back.

Kate remains as Jockey climbs onto the carriage seat.

JOCKEY
Had a bit of scare out on the moor.

KATE
Bit of a scare? People get lost out
there and never heard from again.

JOCKEY
(very serious)
Well I know.

KATE
I'm sorry. I forgot myself. How did
you find her?

Jockey taps his head.

JOCKEY
I know things. I was practically
born on the moors, as you remember.
'Night to you, Miss Kate.

Jockey urges the horse onward. As he goes:

JOCKEY (CONT'D)
She dinna take the money. You know.

INT. WIDOWSES/JOHNNY'S ROOM

Rosemary bundles Leighanna in quilts as Kate storms in.

KATE
Never been so afraid in all my life.

ROSEMARY

You, afraid? How do you think she felt? She must have been fair starved!

KATE

Imagine, running off in November, without that muffler and mittens I took such trouble to make for you.

LEIGHANNA

I'm sorry, Miss Kate.

KATE

If anything had ... I'd have never forgiven myself.

Unexpectedly on the verge of tears, Kate busies herself stoking the fire in the stove.

INT. JOHNSTONE FLAT/ENTRY

Miriam flusters into her flat. On the floor, slipped under her door, lies her post: a letter from Bradley.

INT. JOHNSTONE FLAT/KITCHEN

Miriam sits at the kitchen table, reading the letter. She places the letter down, and holds her head in her hands.

Tears in her eyes, she takes paper and pen, and writes.

INSERT OF MIRIAM'S LETTER: "My Beloved Bradley,"

INT. CLASSROOM/MRS. PIDGET'S OFFICE (CLARYDALE) - DAY

Leighanna timidly enters Mrs. Pidget's office. Her nose is red, and she suffers from a case of the sniffles.

Mrs. Pidget, Constable Wickham, and Gareth await her.

MRS. PIDGET

Sit down, please, Miss Johnstone. It appears we owe you an apology.

CONSTABLE WICKHAM

We've had a confession. The Tilden's stable boy, Master Jockey, returned the twenty pounds he says he stole from the Fund.

LEIGHANNA
Jockey? That can't be!

CONSTABLE WICKHAM
I was fair capped, I'll admit.

LEIGHANNA
He doesn't even go to school here.
How could he?

MRS. PIDGET
Nonetheless, he confessed.

LEIGHANNA
What will happen to him?

MRS. PIDGET
He returned the money. As he is
touched in the head—

CONSTABLE WICKHAM
—we'll simply let the matter go.

MRS. PIDGET
As for you, we regret we leapt to
conclusions. I shall announce your
innocence to the class.

Mrs. Pidget rises and exits. Leighanna looks inquisitively at
Constable Wickham, and he gestures her to follow.

Leighanna exits. Gareth stands as well.

CONSTABLE WICKHAM
Master Moiry, a word.

Gareth slithers back into his chair.

CONSTABLE WICKHAM (CONT'D)
As I recall, your testimony was that
you saw Miss Johnstone nick the money.
Actually witnessed it, yes?

GARETH
Well, 'appen I didn't actually.

CONSTABLE WICKHAM
Pity. I was impressed by your perceptive,
and quite accurate, account of the
location of the money. That will be all.

Gareth again rises to go. As he leaves:

CONSTABLE WICKHAM (CONT'D)
Mr. Moiry?

Gareth freezes.

CONSTABLE WICKHAM (CONT'D)
That's a fine pair of boots you're
sporting today. New, are they?

Gareth looks down at his shiny boots, then sheepishly regards
Constable Wickham. Constable Wickham smiles coolly.

INT. WIDOWSES/JOHNNY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Leighanna lies in bed with a cold. Rosemary fusses over her.

ROSEMARY
What was I thinking, sending you to
school after a night on the moor?

LEIGHANNA
I've had fevers before, Aunt
Rosemary.

ROSEMARY
Aye, but this is Yorkshire ague.
Still, must be lifting your spirits
to know you're not a criminal.

Rosemary finds a half-written letter as she fluffs pillows.

ROSEMARY (CONT'D)
Mercy, you write a lot of letters.

LEIGHANNA
Sometimes I go a whole hour without
worrying about them.

ROSEMARY
I know, dear. I wrote every day, when
my lads were away. Still have all
them letters. Even the ones I mailed.
They were sent back to us, after-

Kate strides in, bearing a steaming cup of brew.

KATE
Sup this down.

Leighanna weakly sits up, drinks, and gags.

LEIGHANNA
Ach! It's awful!

KATE

It's meant to quacken you, not
taste good.

ROSEMARY

Any fever would rather go belly-up
than drink Kate's drams.

Kate sits on the edge of Leighanna's bed.

KATE

I know I was hasty to judge you,
last night. But it was also daft of
you to run off like that. If we can
both agree not to leap to
conclusions... are we clear?

Leighanna nods, though this is in no way clear.

ROSEMARY

Heavens! Was that an apology?

KATE

Rosemary!
(to Leighanna)
You owe a great deal to Jockey, for
bringing you back safe.

ROSEMARY

We all do, that.

LEIGHANNA

He dinna steal the money.

KATE

Oh, any soul who thinks that boy is
a thief is even dafter than he is.
(contemplating)
Is there owt we could do for him?

EXT. ARMY CAMP/MEDIC TENT (FRANCE) - NIGHT

A battle has just ended, and the army camp is in tumult.

Bradley and Douglas together carry a WOUNDED COMRADE whose
body is torn by shrapnel to the medic tent.

EXT. CITY STREETS (LONDON) - DAY

INTERCUT between Miriam walking her postal route on a bright
winter day and her voice-over of her letter to Bradley in the
army camp:

EXT. ARMY CAMP/MEDIC TENT (FRANCE) - NIGHT

Bradley helps the MEDIC cut the clothes from the Wounded Comrade. Douglas retreats to watch, shell-shocked.

MIRIAM (V.O.)

My darling, it was never so evident how much I relied on you until you left. Even the simplest things had so much more meaning when I had you to do them for.

EXT. CITY STREETS (LONDON) - DAY

Jason Tripp waits on a bench. Miriam doesn't notice him until:

TRIPP

Hullo, Mail Lady.

MIRIAM

Oh! Jason. Captain Tripp.

EXT. ARMY CAMP/MEDIC TENT (FRANCE) - NIGHT

By now, Bradley and the Medic are covered in the blood of the Wounded Comrade. Bradley calls to Douglas to help, but Douglas is too paralyzed with horror.

MIRIAM (V.O.)

What is truly driven home, in my heart, is not how much I relied on you, but how much I miss you. I may not often say it, but you make me feel like I belong in the world, like I belong with you.

EXT. CITY STREETS (LONDON) - DAY

Tripp stands, and walks beside Miriam.

TRIPP

I want to apologize for the other night. No, please, listen. That's not me. I never intended, well, that. I was so enjoying our friendship.

MIRIAM

As was I.

EXT. ARMY CAMP/MEDIC TENT (FRANCE) - NIGHT

The Wounded Comrade has expired, and Bradley hobbles over to Douglas, who crouches despairingly in the mud. Bradley kneels beside him and puts his arms around his son.

MIRIAM (V.O.)

They say "all's fair in love and war." Right now we've got both, and it's not fair, being apart from you. I don't ever want you to doubt my love for you. It's the one sure thing I have.

EXT. CITY STREETS (LONDON) - DAY

Trip respectfully doffs his hat.

TRIPP

I was hoping we could continue? As friends? If I swear-

And Tripp kneels down on one knee and holds his arms aloft.

TRIPP (CONT'D)

-on my dear mother's grave - a phrase I never truly understood, did you? - not, under any circumstances, to make an ass of myself again?

MIRIAM

Oh, get up!

TRIPP

Is that a yes?

EXT. ARMY CAMP/BRADLEY'S TENT (FRANCE) - NIGHT

Later, though still caked in blood, Bradley sits before his tent reading Miriam's letter. Douglas rocks beside him, drinking weak tea from a tin cup.

MIRIAM (V.O.)

In the end, know this: every night I pray that you hurry home. To me.

Bradley wipes away tears. The blood that soils his hands leaves a smear on his cheeks as he does so.

EXT. CITY STREETS (LONDON) - DAY

Miriam walks beside Tripp.

MIRIAM
I wrote my husband.

TRIPP
Oh, good God. Is he going to shoot
me in the knees when he gets back?

MIRIAM
One of them, I'd expect.

TRIPP
Fair enough. Could it be the right one?

MIRIAM
Yes, Jason.

TRIPP
Good, 'cause I'm a southpaw.

MIRIAM
Yes, we can be friends.

INT. WIDOWSES/JOHNNY'S ROOM - DAY

Leighanna lies in bed, still slightly ill. Kate enters, with
Jockey trailing her.

KATE
Miss Leighanna. You have a visitor.

LEIGHANNA
Jockey!

Leighanna has by now developed a hint of a Yorkshire accent.

KATE
I'll be downstairs, if you need
anything.

JOCKEY
Thank you, Miss Kate.

Jockey pulls a chair to Leighanna's bedside and brandishes a
few of Bradley's letters.

JOCKEY (CONT'D)
Thought I might read to you. More
or less.

LEIGHANNA
I'm glad you came.

JOCKEY
I'm a patient lad, but I haven't seen
you on the road to school in weeks.

LEIGHANNA
I've been ill.

JOCKEY
So I gather. I smell a moor ague on
you. But you're mending, I wot.

LEIGHANNA
(very serious)
Thank you, Jockey.

Jockey waves his hand as if to say "it was nothing."
Leighanna hits him with a pillow.

LEIGHANNA (CONT'D)
Where did you get twenty pounds?

JOCKEY
'Twas me own addled brass, over the
years. Ah, what do I need with money?

LEIGHANNA
I've never heard anyone say that
before.

Jockey shrugs. He means it.

LEIGHANNA (CONT'D)
Why did you do it?

JOCKEY
Which, the rescuing or confessing?

LEIGHANNA
Confessing.

Jockey ponders, as if he hadn't considered it until now.

JOCKEY
I dinna want them sending you away,
now, did I? Not before Solstice Fest.
(prophetically)
Which you will get well for.

LEIGHANNA
But you took the blame.

JOCKEY

Oh, that. Well, Constable Wickham paid a visit to Gareth's pa. Old Man Moiry has him a temper.

LEIGHANNA

Aye?

JOCKEY

Next day, Gareth was sporting a black eye, bare feet, and a forty-pound "donation" to the Comforts Fund.

LEIGHANNA

Hah!

JOCKEY

So I think my good name is fine.

Leighanna regards him excitedly, and giggles.

JOCKEY (CONT'D)

What?

Leighanna pulls a package, wrapped in brown paper and twine, from beside her bed and hands it to Jockey.

JOCKEY (CONT'D)

What's this, then?

LEIGHANNA

For you. To say thank you.

Jockey is baffled. No one has ever given him a gift.

JOCKEY

What is it for?

LEIGHANNA

It's a gift.

JOCKEY

What do I do with it?

LEIGHANNA

Open it, silly. It's for you.

Jockey gingerly picks at the knot and studies the wrapping.

LEIGHANNA (CONT'D)

Oh, come on!

Leighanna tears open the paper for him.

Within the box gleam ancient ice skates: Johnny's old pair, which no longer hang on the bedroom wall.

Jockey stares, spellbound.

LEIGHANNA (CONT'D)

Do you like them?

JOCKEY

Them is Fen Runners. They're like nothing I've ever ... they make the wooden things I made you look like...

LEIGHANNA

The wooden ones are perfect because you made them! I won't wear owt else.

JOCKEY

You would if you had Fen Runners.

LEIGHANNA

I hope they fit.

JOCKEY

Oh, they'll fit. If I have to wear ten stockings, or cut off a toe, they'll fit.

LEIGHANNA

Good. Now, read to us!

Speechless for a change, Jockey taps her on the nose.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Kate works at the stove as Jockey steps into the kitchen.

JOCKEY

Miss Kate? I'm off, then.

KATE

Good night, Jockey.

Jockey holds up the ice skates.

JOCKEY

I've got an idea, mum, where these came from, and what they mean to you.

Kate nods.

JOCKEY (CONT'D)

I wish ... I wish, I could tell you
what they mean to us.

Jockey beams at her, actually bows to her like a Dickensian gentleman, and goes.

Kate takes a few deep breaths and smiles.

INT. WIDOWSES/KITCHEN - DAY

Leighanna and Rosemary decorate for Christmas, with fir cones and nut husks and bits of straw and makeshift paints.

ROSEMARY

Been years since we've decorated.

Kate enters from the front hall, removing her coat.

KATE

What on God's great earth?

LEIGHANNA

Christmas decorations, Miss Kate.

ROSEMARY

Isn't it grand?

Kate almost smiles and hangs her coat on its peg.

KATE

Christmas is a time to remember our Lord. Nevertheless, you may as well use proper wreath frames. I may have a few upstairs.

ROSEMARY

I wager you've never made a straw angel, now, 'as-ta?

LEIGHANNA

Nay.

ROSEMARY

This, me mother taught us. You keep painting them conkers. Be right back.

INT. UPSTAIRS CLOSET

Kate rifles through boxes and old clothes.

EXT. WIDOWSES/BACK YARD - DAY

Rosemary, with an armful of straw from the shed, slowly comes to a stop halfway back across the yard. She looks toward the house, her mouth open as if to call out.

Then, Rosemary drops the straw and slides gently to the ground, letting out a single, loud sigh.

INT. WIDOWSES/KITCHEN - DAY

Leighanna pauses. Did she hear something? She moves to the kitchen door, and sees Rosemary, lying face down in the snow.

LEIGHANNA
Aunt Rosemary!

INT. UPSTAIRS CLOSET

Kate hears Leighanna's cry and emerges from the closet.

EXT. WIDOWSES/BACK YARD - DAY

Leighanna hauls Rosemary onto her back.

LEIGHANNA
Aunt Rosemary! Aunt Rosemary!

Rosemary's eyelids flutter and focus dimly on Leighanna.

ROSEMARY
Put a coat on, child. Catch your death.

LEIGHANNA
Aunt Rosemary, get up!

ROSEMARY
No, no, I think no. You mind Kate, now.
She'll need you. More than you know.

LEIGHANNA
Don't talk like that.

ROSEMARY
Do you have any idea how she's
changed, now that you've come? You're
the best thing. That ever happened. To
us.

Very gently, Rosemary breathes her last breath.

INT. WIDOWSES/UPSTAIRS WINDOW - DAY

Kate looks out over the yard, assessing the situation in an instant. Her jaw quivers, yet only the slightest of sounds escapes. Then, mastering her grief, she marches downstairs.

EXT. WIDOWSES/BACK YARD - DAY

Leighanna, hugging Rosemary, realizes Kate stands beside her.

KATE
Help me take her inside.

EXT. WIDOWSES/FRONT LANDING - NIGHT

The GRAVEDIGGER, on a horse-drawn sleigh burdened with a simple coffin, swats the horses into motion.

A last few FRIENDS and Constable Wickham pay respects.

CONSTABLE WICKHAM
If you need anything at all, Miss
Kate.

Leighanna stands nearby with Jockey.

LEIGHANNA
Why don't they bury her?

JOCKEY
They will. Come spring. You canna
dig this earth in winter.

Everyone else has gone.

KATE
(to Jockey)
You'd best get on before dark.

JOCKEY
An' it's all alike to you, Miss
Kate, I thought I'd help out a bit.

KATE
Thank you, but-

JOCKEY
I'd wager your goats hasn't seen a
proper milking today. And I noticed
your coal pile getting sparse.

KATE

Well. I can see you're set on it.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE (FRANCE) - DAY

Bradley and Douglas march with other INFANTRYMEN. Snow blankets the ground, and Douglas shivers.

BRADLEY

Not quite as cold as London.

DOUGLAS

But in London, we live in a building. Hey, Christmas is coming. What'd you get me?

BRADLEY

A tin of ham. With a shoelace for a ribbon.

DOUGLAS

Oh. That's what I got you.

As they crest a rise they see the glow of a battle in the distance. The sounds of artillery pierce the dusk.

DOUGLAS (CONT'D)

(wryly)

I'm guessing that's where we're headed.

Bradley looks at him, somberly.

DOUGLAS (CONT'D)

Just a guess.

INT. WIDOWSES/KITCHEN - NIGHT

Leighanna and Kate sort through Rosemary's things. Leighanna opens a box to find hundreds of letters. Many are smudged and dirty. Suddenly, she realizes what they are.

KATE

What is it?

LEIGHANNA

Her letters, during the last war.

Kate slowly takes some of the letters and regards them sadly.

KATE

I didn't know she kept them.

LEIGHANNA
Did you keep yours?

A knock on the front door.

EXT. WIDOWSES/FRONT LANDING - NIGHT

Leighanna opens the door to Jockey, bundled in a coat and blanket. Behind him his pony stands hitched to a sleigh.

LEIGHANNA
Jockey?

JOCKEY
You mun dress warmer than that.

LEIGHANNA
Why?

JOCKEY
Why? Solstice Fest! Solstice Fest?

Kate steps sternly onto the landing.

LEIGHANNA
(she'd forgotten)
Oh! I... I'm sorry, Jockey. I can't.

Jockey slumps, though he tries nobly to understand.

KATE
(to Leighanna)
You will go.

JOCKEY
Eh?

LEIGHANNA
It's been just a week since-

KATE
You've been looking forward to this.
Besides would Rosemary have wanted you
to sit home and meddle in her things?
Stop staring, girl, and get your coat.

Leighanna grins and runs inside. Jockey beams at Kate.

JOCKEY
I knew it.

KATE
What?

JOCKEY
I knew you was a softie, really.

KATE
Stop it.

Jockey taps his head as if to say "I know things."

KATE (CONT'D)
Stop it, I said, you fey changeling.

Leighanna returns, pulling on her coat and scarf. Jockey gestures at the seat beside him on the sleigh.

JOCKEY
Space enough for three.

KATE
Oh no. I'm in no mood to celebrate.

JOCKEY
(winking)
Would Miss Rosemary have wanted you
to sit home and meddle in her things?

This reaches Kate.

JOCKEY (CONT'D)
Besides, if you don't come, I'll put
a curse on your goats. And you know
I can, fey changeling that I am.

Jockey gives a mock-evil look, as Leighanna tugs Kate's hand.

LEIGHANNA
Please come, Miss Kate.

EXT. JOCKEY'S SLEIGH/COUNTRYSIDE (YORKSHIRE) - NIGHT - TRAVELING

Jockey pilots the sleigh across the snowy fields. Leighanna and Kate sit beside him, buried beneath blankets.

The festival fires glow as they crest a hill.

EXT. RIVERBANK (YORKSHIRE)

Jockey reins in his pony and stops the sleigh.

The Solstice Festival sprawls along the frozen river. Bonfires blaze, both on the riverbank and on the ice of the river itself. Caroling TOWNSFOLK gather by roasting chestnuts and steaming kettles. MUSICIANS play. CRAFTSMEN hawk their goods.

Leighanna claps her hands in wonder.

JOCKEY

Aye. You ever seen such a sight?

LEIGHANNA

How do they build fires on the ice?

JOCKEY

'Tis thick ice, that. They build fires on platforms. Tradition holds that when the fires burn through, the Fest ends and nobbut then do we all go home. I hear tell of one year, way back, the river froze solid and they reveled 'till dawn.

KATE

Yes. I remember.

Jockey helps Kate and Leighanna down from the sleigh. He sets the pony loose and takes up a knapsack.

KATE (CONT'D)

Won't you be tying her?

JOCKEY

Nay. She'll come back when I whistle.

Constable Wickham, red-nosed and jovial, bows to Kate.

CONSTABLE WICKHAM

My bonnie Kate, what an unexpected pleasure!

KATE

Good evening, Chester. Are you fresh?

CONSTABLE WICKHAM

Aye! You mun come have a cup of wassail by our fire. Stanley Creeks is with us. And the Leeshes.

KATE

Very well.
(to Leighanna)
You'll be all right?

LEIGHANNA

Go on with you!

EXT. SOLSTICE FEST

Leighanna and Jockey wander through the festivities.

JOCKEY

If I had a few pennies left, I'd buy
you apeth of roast conkers or a parkin.

Leighanna reaches into her pocket.

LEIGHANNA

I can. Here.

Leighanna buys roast chestnuts from a VENDOR. The Vendor wraps two helpings in cones of old newspaper.

JOCKEY

Here, now. Slip them in your coat.

Jockey secures the hot chestnuts in her inside coat pocket.

JOCKEY (CONT'D)

They'll keep you warm while you eat
them.

Jockey cracks a chestnut and pops the nutmeat in his mouth. Leighanna does the same, then inhales sharply from the heat.

JOCKEY (CONT'D)

Aye, they're scalding.

Jockey scoops up a ball of snow and offers it to Leighanna. She takes it and sucks on it to ease her burning tongue.

Simon, a scar on his brow, runs by, and spots them.

SIMON

Jockey, Jockey, daft in his crock-ey!

Leighanna hurls her snowball at Simon, and hits him square in the side of the head.

SIMON (CONT'D)

Hey!

JOCKEY

Now you've done it.

Simon hurls a snowball of his own. Leighanna squeals in alarm, though the snowball misses.

SIMON

Get 'em!

Several more YOUTHS join the fray and snowball mayhem ensues.

EXT. SOLSTICE FEST - NIGHT (LATER)

Jockey and Leighanna stroll the riverbank, drinking mulled cider. Jockey looks out at the frozen river.

JOCKEY

I think it's time, now.

LEIGHANNA

Time?

Jockey sits and opens his knapsack. Inside are Johnny's old Fen Runner skates and the skates he made for Leighanna.

EXT. SOLSTICE FEST/RIVER

Leighanna skates slowly on the ice to the magical glow of bonfires. Jockey weaves expertly through other SKATERS.

JOCKEY

It's like flying! Flying!

LEIGHANNA

This is beautiful!

JOCKEY

Come on!

Jockey takes her hand and leads her upriver.

EXT. SOLSTICE FEST/RIVER

Jockey and Leighanna race past Skaters. Jockey breaks from her, flying ahead, then returns to take her hand. Eventually, they stop far from the crowd and the fires. It is very dark.

JOCKEY

Look yon.

He points. Leighanna gasps in wonder.

There, on the bank of the river, a tributary brook creates a tiny waterfall no more than a few feet high, only now the cascade has frozen into a frenzy of glittering icicles.

JOCKEY (CONT'D)

'Tis a mournful foss. Like a hundred hands, grasping toward the river, not able to move. Just waiting for spring, so they can shake their tired bones once more.

LEIGHANNA

I wish Miss Rosemary were here.

JOCKEY

Aye. Sure, she's in heaven now. Want to look for her?

LEIGHANNA

How?

Jockey pulls her again into the center of the river.

JOCKEY

Look down.

Leighanna looks down and for the first time sees the sky, and a million brilliant stars, reflected in the ice.

LEIGHANNA

Oh!

Jockey grasps her waist from behind and pushes her along, back toward the Festival.

JOCKEY

Just skeg at the ice. I'll guide you.

As they go, Leighanna marvels at the stars beneath her feet.

Eventually, they reach the bonfires again and Jockey stops.

LEIGHANNA

I've never seen anything so wonderful.

JOCKEY

Aye. Earth and sky, water and fire. It's all alike, sure as we live.

He taps his noggin, again as if to say, "I know things."

Leighanna reaches out and touches his nose. Jockey returns the gesture. They stare at each other for a moment, then:

A flash of flame and a furious hiss as the nearest bonfire finally melts through the ice and plunges into the river.

Cries and cheers from the Townsfolk.

Another bonfire disappears in a flash to more cheers.

Jockey again takes Leighanna's hand and they skate down the river as the bonfires fizzle out around them.

JOCKEY (CONT'D)

That's it! Solstice is over!

LEIGHANNA

I don't want it to end! Why is everyone cheering?

JOCKEY

Because it's a boon. See, the days get longer from here.

Jockey howls, and leaps over a bonfire just as it plummets through the ice. Leighanna can only gaze at his ebullience.

EXT. BATTLEFIELD (FRANCE) - DAY

A pitched battle of ground TROOPS, ankle-deep in snow. Bradley and Douglas try to stay together amid the fray.

Bombs and gunfire everywhere, SOLDIERS dying, planes overhead, MEDICS desperately fretting over the injured.

A GERMAN SOLDIER leaps at Douglas and wrestles with him.

BRADLEY

Dougie!

Bradley shoots the German Soldier dead, and Douglas stares.

BRADLEY (CONT'D)

Come on!

Bradley grabs Douglas, and they struggle through the battle. Sound of an incoming mortar shell.

DOUGLAS

Dad, look out!

Douglas throws himself upon Bradley just as the explosion hurls them to the ground.

INT. JOHNSTONE FLAT/ENTRY - NIGHT

Miriam opens the front door to reveal the two Policemen.

A desperate silence.

We hear Bradley, writing an anguished letter in voice-over as he re-lives the events of the battlefield.

BRADLEY (V.O.)
My Dearest Bride.

EXT. BATTLEFIELD (FRANCE) - DAY

It is long moments before Bradley's vision clears. Dust and smoke everywhere.

He calls out to Douglas, but the blast has momentarily deafened him; all he can hear is a ringing in his ears.

BRADLEY (V.O.)
I do not know if I can write what I
must write.

Bradley calls out again, silently, his voiced drowned by the ringing noise.

Bradley staggers to his feet, heedless of a jagged plate of shrapnel embedded in his thigh. Blood drenches his leg.

He sees Douglas lying motionless and calls out, again hearing nothing but ringing. He hobbles over to shake his son's body.

BRADLEY (V.O.)
Our Dougie is with God now.

INT. JOHNSTONE FLAT/ENTRY - NIGHT

In silence, but for Bradley's voice-over to the ringing in his ears, the First Policeman mouths the news.

BRADLEY (V.O.)
It is a crime against nature for a
man to bury his own son. Not a minute
has passed but I wish it had been me.
Then, at least, I could face my
judgment with a full heart, and
Douglas could be coming home to you.

Miriam nods to the Policemen, in shock.

EXT. BATTLEFIELD (FRANCE) - DAY

Bradley carries the broken body of Douglas through the battlefield, weeping, howling for help.

BRADLEY (V.O.)
 My heart is split with this grief.
 I cannot bear it. I cannot bear it.
 Be strong for me, my love.

A FRENCH MEDIC rushes to him.

Bradley and the French Medic lay Douglas on the ground. The French Medic inspects Douglas, then withdraws sadly.

BRADLEY (V.O.)
 You see my tears, where they are
 falling even now on this war-torn
 scrap of paper.

Bradley shakes the French Medic, screaming at him to help his son. The French Medic notices the shrapnel in Bradley's thigh.

The French Medic subdues Bradley. Bradley clings to the French Medic, wailing and wailing.

INT. JOHNSTONE FLAT/ENTRY - NIGHT

The First Policeman tips his hat in farewell.

BRADLEY (V.O.)
 Only this sustains me: I will be
 coming home, they tell me, soon. In
 your arms, I pray, I will find
 again proof of life.

Stunned, Miriam closes the door and leans against it.

BRADLEY (V.O.)
 Your loving husband.

Still, we hear the ringing in Bradley's ears.

INT. WIDOWSES/ENTRY - DAY

Kate opens the door and blushes to find Constable Wickham.

KATE
 Good afternoon, Chester. Social call?

CONSTABLE WICKHAM
 Afraid not, Kate. Miss Leighanna in?

KATE
 What sort of trouble is it now?

Constable Wickham does not speak, and Kate notes his gravity.

KATE (CONT'D)

She's out back with the goats.
Shall I fetch her?

CONSTABLE WICKHAM

Not just yet. A cable from London.
Thought I'd best bring it personally.

Constable Wickham hands Kate a folded page. Kate, having a momentary flashback of the last war, does not move.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Leighanna, entering with a pail of milk, hears Kate crying.

INT. ENTRY

Leighanna approaches. Kate sits in the entry, weeping, with the cable announcing Douglas's death on the table before her.

LEIGHANNA

Miss Kate?

Kate turns away, but cannot stop crying. Leighanna steps forward and stands beside her.

LEIGHANNA (CONT'D)

I miss her, too.

Kate, still sitting, throws her arms around Leighanna.

KATE

No, no, no. You poor child. Poor child.

Leighanna sees the cable on the table. She picks it up and reads it while Kate clings to her.

Then, Leighanna closes her eyes tightly and stands there for long moments, holding the sobbing Kate.

INT. OUTSIDE JASON TRIPP'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Miriam stands at the doorway, bidding farewell to Jason Tripp.

TRIPP

I'm so sorry, Miriam. I couldn't imagine.

MIRIAM

And I'm afraid I can't...

TRIPP

Hell, don't be worried about my feelings. We were just two people looking for sanity in Bedlam.

MIRIAM

Still, you made the war a little less terrible, for just a moment.

TRIPP

That is my family motto: "we're less awful than war."

Miriam smiles, and Tripp reaches out for a handshake.

MIRIAM

Oh, for heaven's sake.

She hugs him, then breaks away and, after a sad smile, descends the stairs.

EXT. TRAIN STATION PLATFORM (LONDON) - DAY

A train howls to a stop. Miriam hurries along the station platform, searching among the disembarking PASSENGERS.

Bradley, on crutches, hobbles down from the train car. He stands there on the train platform, also searching.

Miriam sees him.

MIRIAM

Bradley!

Bradley turns. His eyes well up. Miriam rushes to his arms.

EXT. TILDEN FARM/SHEEPCOTE (YORKSHIRE) - DAY

Jockey leads sheep out of a shed into the pen. The sheep follow him like puppies.

Leighanna, perched on the fence with a backpack, calls out.

LEIGHANNA

Jockey!

JOCKEY

Ayup, Not-So-Good-With-Ponies.

Jockey waves his arms and scatters the sheep about, then leaps onto the fence.

JOCKEY (CONT'D)

Look at 'em! Nothing laiks like sheep.

LEIGHANNA

Come with us.

EXT. A SNOWY FIELD - DAY

Together, in a dwindling patch of May snow, Leighanna and Jockey hoist a snowball to form the head of a snowman. Jockey steps back as Leighanna takes stones from her pack.

LEIGHANNA

Help us up.

Jockey lifts her around the waist, and Leighanna places stones to form the snowman's eyes, mouth, and nose.

JOCKEY

Aye, that's a fine gentleman.

They both sit in the snow to admire their handiwork.

JOCKEY (CONT'D)

What do we name him?

LEIGHANNA

Douggie.

Tears well up for her brother, at long last.

Jockey puts his hand on her head. It's a strange, but somehow comforting, gesture. After awhile:

JOCKEY

Think of him skating-
(pointing skyward)
-aboon in the sky with the stars
real and true beneath his feet.

Jockey stands and gestures a strange salute to the snowman.

JOCKEY (CONT'D)

In honor of your brother.

LEIGHANNA

How long will it last?

JOCKEY

A few weeks, mayhap.

LEIGHANNA

Is that all? Can you read this?

Leighanna hands him a letter. Jockey regards the envelope before removing the letter.

JOCKEY

This from London?

Jockey studies the page, mouthing the words as he spells them out. Finally, he looks up at Leighanna.

JOCKEY (CONT'D)

You're going home?

LEIGHANNA

My mum and dad have sent for me.
I'm to leave tomorrow.

JOCKEY

That's wonderful news for you.

Leighanna doesn't respond.

JOCKEY (CONT'D)

Isn't it?

LEIGHANNA

The bombing's stopped. Everyone's
sure the Americans will mobilize
... I'll miss you.

JOCKEY

Aye. There was much I wanted to show
you. I know where the birds nest,
when the primroses are on the fields.
And where the goose gogs grow...

(beat)

I'll mind Miss Kate. And your goats.

Leighanna takes the Christmas wreath from her backpack.

LEIGHANNA

Will you put this on Miss Rosemary's
grave, when they bury her?

Jockey nods. Leighanna has new tears in her eyes.

JOCKEY

Will you come visit?

LEIGHANNA

Yes! Yes! And you can come to London.

JOCKEY

London! Aye! With streetcars, and
scores of people, and them magical
stairs that carry you up and up!
That would be champion!

Leighanna throws her arms around Jockey's neck.

LEIGHANNA

Think on us every time you pass
this spot.

JOCKEY

I'll think on you much more than that.

INT. WIDOWSES/JOHNNY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Leighanna packs her few belongings into her duffel. She
lingers over the wooden ice skates Jockey made for her.

Beneath her bed she finds a cardboard box. She opens it and
removes her gas mask, staring at its now unfamiliar features.

Kate enters, carrying the finished quilt.

KATE

Are you packed?

LEIGHANNA

Aye.

KATE

I hope you have room for this.

Kate lays the quilt down on the bed.

KATE (CONT'D)

Thought you should have a little
something to remember us by.

EXT. TRAIN PLATFORM (CLARYDALE, YORKSHIRE) - DAY

The morning train waits in the station, ready to depart.

Leighanna and Kate approach, along with YORKSHIRE PASSENGERS.

KATE

You have everything, then?

LEIGHANNA

Aye.

KATE

Well. I hope you'll write to me.

LEIGHANNA

Aye. Much as you can stand it.

KATE

I must say, you're not the quiet girl who came to us last summer. I'd never have believed it, but I'm suited you came to us.

LEIGHANNA

Thank you, Miss Kate. For everything.

KATE

Ah, call us Auntie Kate. Now go on before I make a fool of myself.

INT. THE TRAIN - DAY - TRAVELING

Leighanna stares out the window, watching the countryside. She spots something in the distance:

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

A lone figure on a pony, along the ridge overlooking the train tracks: Jockey, galloping at top speed.

INT. THE TRAIN - DAY - TRAVELING

Leighanna waves, but Jockey cannot see her.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

Jockey howls into the wind as he races along.

INT. THE TRAIN - DAY - TRAVELING

Leighanna watches him, rapt.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

Jockey reaches the top of a hill and reins to a stop. He leans against the pony's neck, watching the train.

INT. THE TRAIN - DAY - TRAVELING

Leighanna gazes at him until he fades from view.

INT. THE TRAIN (LONDON) - NIGHT - TRAVELING

Leighanna wakes as the train pulls near the station. She looks out the window at London. This world seems very grey, with many demolished buildings now piles of rubble.

EXT. TRAIN STATION PLATFORM - NIGHT

Bradley and Miriam scan the windows of the approaching train.

MIRIAM

There!

INT. THE TRAIN (LONDON) - NIGHT - TRAVELING

Leighanna spies her parents, and all but flings herself against the train window as she waves.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE WIDOWSES - DAY

Autumn is settling on Yorkshire country.

INT. WIDOWSES/KITCHEN - DAY

Jockey, Kate, and Constable Wickham sit at the kitchen table, with a letter from Leighanna. Jockey reads aloud, slowly.

JOCKEY

(reading)

"...my parents can't believe I'm talking so much. And in a Yorkshire accent. The Blitz is over, but we still don't get any eggs. I'd for--"

(stumbling over the word)

KATE

(helping him)

Forgotten.

JOCKEY

(reading)

"...what it was like. My mum says that maybe we can come visit for the Solstice Festival..."

(MORE)

JOCKEY (CONT'D)
(looking up)
Aye, won't that be grand!

KATE
Stop fussing and read the letter!

We hear Leighanna narrating her letter in Voice-over.

EXT. TRAIN STATION, CLARYDALE, YORKSHIRE - DAY

The train pulls into the station, which is covered in snow and decorated for Christmas.

LEIGHANNA (V.O.)
Tell Miss Kate I sleep with her quilt
every night. It's keeping me safe.

Leighanna, Bradley, and Miriam exit the train. Bradley limps with a cane, and Miriam holds their new, swaddled BABY BOY in her arms.

Kate, Jockey, and Constable Wickham await them. Jockey sits astride his pony, holding the reins of the colt he was training last year. Kate and Constable Wickham hold hands.

Jockey smiles, and nods toward the second pony.

Leighanna rushes forward.

Jockey leaps from his own pony and they embrace.

FADE OUT