

The Lady of Legions
- Preliminary Script -
The True Story Of Jack Traynor

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SCRIPT LAYOUT:

This script has been intentionally written as a blend between a novel and conventional script so it can be easily read and understood by those inside and out of the industry.

Given the sensitivity of the story an additional level of detail has been provided at key scenes to provide further understanding of the tone and direction of the story:

SCENES: INTERNAL/EXTERNAL. LOCATION, DATE, TIME.

Actions - Conveying the movement and events that occur within the scene.

SHOTS: USED TO INDICATE ARTISTIC TONE, LOOK AND FEEL OF THE SCENE.

Dialogue provided for key character scenes. Additional dialogue to be added at next stage.

Internal Monologues in Italic. To provide frames of reference for character development and actor notes.

TRANSITIONS: MARKING CHANGES BETWEEN SCENES AND PROVIDING FINAL THOUGHTS.

All Dates, Events & Heroism shown by John 'Jack' Traynor are historically accurate & backed with public documentation.

The soldiers around Jack have been added to the story to reflect the unnamed heroes' that would have stood beside him.

Part I: War Hero

Part II: Patient

Part III: Burden

Part IV: Pilgrim

Part V: Legacy



PART I: JACK TRAYNOR - WAR HERO #838

1 EXT. COAL YARD, LIVERPOOL DOCKYARDS, JULY 1914.

On the smoky streets of Liverpool's dockyards, JACK TRAYNOR, a devout Catholic from humble roots, toils alongside his friends, hauling coal bags off the SS River Clyde with a jovial spirit. A natural leader, Jack's warmth radiates as he rallies his gang, their laughter echoing through the soot stained air. As Jack and his band of men make to leave at day's end, NES, the son of a well-known Orangeman, now in charge of the docks, makes to intervene.

Leaning against the gatepost, arms folded, a smug curl on his lip, he dares Jack's crew to give him an excuse to use his position of power.

NES

Just a break I presume? The Clyde came
in from Glasgow at 3.

Jack's crew tenses. You can hear their teeth grinding behind Jack. One wrong word and it's fists. Jack steps forward, calm as confession.

JACK

You'll find your coal bagged and ready
for the morning. You'll also find the
yard swept out, it was long overdue.
Goodnight Matthew.

A polite nod from Jack, nothing more. The whole pack follows him out, leashes held by a quiet voice. Nes watches them go, almost disappointed the bait didn't land.

As Nes turns, a soot stained cloth fires past, inches away from his face, landing perfectly in the rag-bucket with a ring. EDDIE gives Nes a layered wink and continues on with the team.

Young ROBBIE, a 16-year-old orphan with an Artful Dodger spirit, bounds up to the crew, eager to join them at the Working Men's Club.

JACK (CONT'D)

Nice try, but there's a sixpence in it
if you go sweep out the furnaces ready
for the morn'.

Jack flicks the coin back at Robbie, who dashes off with a gleeful smile. Jack's kindness seeks to lift the boy, planting a seed of brotherhood.

EDDIE

You know I already did that.

JACK

I know

He responds with a smile.



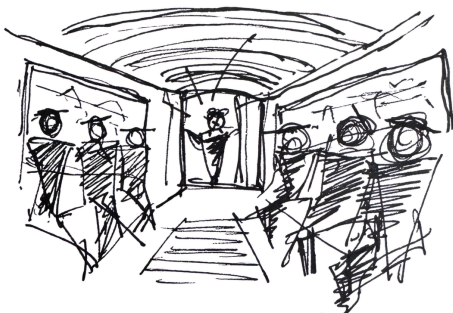
2 LIME STREET STATION, LIVERPOOL, 4TH AUGUST 1914.

Liverpool's young men, swept up in patriotic fervour, board trains for the war effort, binding men from all walks of life - employer, employee, Catholic and Protestant.

CHEERS ARE HEARD FROM THE CROWD, FLAGS ARE WAVED AND TOKENS ARE GIVEN TO THE BRAVE MEN BY WOMEN AND CHILDREN AS THEY DEPART.

Jack notes Nes in line who has opted to sign up rather than taking an easier route for him as officer. They share a courteous nod; a begrudging respect through a cause bigger than their own. Their unity a flicker of hope amidst division.

On the train, Jack and his friends banter with one another, an air of optimism surrounding them all. Robbie, who has faked his age to enlist, slips through the half shut door and flops onto the seat next to Jack with a devilish glee. Furious yet protective, Jack vows to himself to look after Robbie - forever being one to protect and nurture an outcast.



3 SBOOTCAMP, CHATHAM NAVAL DOCKS, ENGLAND, SEPTEMBER 1914.

On the training fields, tensions flare as men from different sides of Liverpool's tracks now live and breathe in such close proximity. A brawl looms, but Jack, wielding his charisma, transforms the clash into a rough-and-tumble football match - Jack's Everton motley crew versus Liverpool, led by the city brawler DEANO.

Nes reluctantly joins Jack's Everton side having been ostracised as the Protestant outsider by both - a juxtaposition of usual life back at the dockyards.

By the end of the game, sweat and laughter forge the Northern Regiment into the war's most united squadron - Jack's leadership, despite rank, having been the glue.

4 THE BATTLE FOR ANTWERP, BELGIUM, WESTERN FRONT, 6TH-9TH OCTOBER 1914, DAY.

The story cuts to the brutal Battle of Antwerp. Jack's squadron, now with a reputation throughout the British ranks as being the tightest knit and bravest, form the rearguard. Last to leave the city, they hold the line whilst the remaining Allies attempt a desperate retreat from advancing German forces.

Jack's troop take heavy losses as they eventually have to abandon the city, their honour shining through the chaos.

GERMAN GUNFIRE PICKS OFF STRAGGLERS. WOUNDED SOLDIERS GUT-WRENCHINGLY CRY OUT FOR HELP, HEARTS BREAKING AS SOLDIERS ARE FORCED TO LEAVE THEIR FRIENDS BEHIND. NOT JACK.

Jack keeps Robbie in his sights, eyes locked until a shell knocks him sideways.

SMOKE SWALLOWS EVERYTHING. JACK STOPS, CALLS OUT - NOTHING. THEN A VOICE AT HIS FEET. THE SMOKE CLEARS: NOT ROBBIE, BUT THE BRITISH BASECAMP OFFICER - A GOOD MAN, TOO GOOD TO DIE.

Jack hauls him up, ox-strong, and carries them both through hell. Miles under fire, his squadron dropping around him. Jack keeps going.

THEN, A NOISE. NOT ANOTHER BULLET ZIPPING OVERHEAD, NOT SHELLS. IRREGULAR. CLOSE - THE SLIDE OF A RIFLE PULLING BACK - TAKING AIM.

Jack drops the officer and turns slowly - at peace with his coming fate. Twenty meters away on the crest of the hill - a German soldier, one knee in the dirt, barrel levelled at his chest. Finger on trigger - Jack closes his eyes.

AS HE DOES, EDDIE CRESTS THE RIDGE, BAYONET SINKING SAVAGELY THROUGH THE SOLDIER'S COLLAR BONE. NO PAUSE, NO FLINCH.

Eddie bounds over. No words, just war doing its work. They haul up the officer between them. Taking shoulder each, they move on.

5 NO MANS LAND, ANTWERP TO BRUGES RETREAT, WESTERN FRONT, 6TH-9TH OCTOBER 1914, DAY.

As they crest the next rolling hill, Eddie and Jack pause for breath, the officer sagging between them. They look back.

The German forward party spans out in a line, gaining ground. Behind them, a second wave mercilessly moves through the wounded allies. Bayonets flash. No shots - Ammunition is a commodity. Just steel, silence, and the end.

WAR DOESN'T SPARE THE FALLEN. IT FINISHES THEM.

AS JACK & EDDIE PRESS ON, FASTER NOW, BULLETS WHIZZ OVERHEAD, MORTARS SPITTING SHRAPNEL INTO THE SKY. AT THE BOTTOM OF THE BANK, THE SOUND SHIFTS AGAIN: NOT WHIZZING, BUT RIPPING FLESH.

Eddie grunts, drops to one knee, blood staining his hip dark.

Jack spins, starts back - then pauses. The officer sags on his shoulder, heavy, alive. Eddie sees it and makes the impossible call for him.

EDDIE

Go. Get him out of here.

Eddie swings his rifle round, leans back against a dusty outcrop and starts clipping on his bayonet. Still checking the chamber, he raises a hand.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Now's a good time for any spare bullets.

Jack opens his mouth to protest but Eddie knows what's coming.

EDDIE (CONT'D)
You don't get to decide this Jack. The boys need a leader to rally around.

Eddie looks up into Jack's eyes with a smile of resolve.

EDDIE (CONT'D)
Make it count, Jack.

A single nod of understanding, born from growing up together on the Liverpool dockyards - years of promises passed between them. Jack hauls the officer onto his back and presses on.

JACK WALKS TOWARD CAMERA, THE LIMP OFFICER ON HIS BACK. CAMERA PULLS IN ON EDDIE, EYES CLOSED, PREPARING HIMSELF AS THE LINE OF GERMANS CREST THE HILL.

EDDIE (CONT'D)
As I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me. My guard, my guide, my light.



EDDIE'S EYES SNAP OPEN, HE TURNS AND LETS FIRE. THREE GERMANS DROP - CLEAN, FAST - COAL-THROWING ARM NOW A RIFLE'S FAMILIAR FRIEND.

CUT TO JACK WITH OFFICER. EDDIE'S DISTANT SHOTS ARE HEARD. A VOLLEY OF GERMAN RETURN FIRE. THEN SILENCE.

JUST AS THE SPIRES OF BRUGES CREST THE NEXT HILL SIGNALING SAFETY AND EDDIE'S SACRIFICE WORTHWHILE - A BOMB EXPLODES UNDERNEATH JACK.

HARD CUT TO DARKNESS AND A PIERCING RING.



6 INT. ALLY HOSPITAL TENT, THE RETURN TO ENGLAND, NOVEMBER 1914.

SURGEONS' KNIVES GLINT UNDER LAMPS. KNIFE PARTS SCALP, SHRAPNEL CLANGS INTO THE DISH NEXT TO JACK'S HEAD.

SURGEON

As much shrapnel as I dare pull.

The surgeon mutters, wiping blood from a shard the size of a communion wafer. They sew, bandage, step back. Jack doesn't wake.

FOR FIVE WEEKS JACK'S BODY LIES STILL. HOSPITAL TO HOSPITAL - STRETCHER TO STRETCHER. THE HOSPITAL COT HIS DESERT - WHITE WALLS INSTEAD OF SAND, BUT THE SAME FORTY-DAY SILENCE. THE SAME DEVIL.

7 40 DAYS WITH THE DEVIL, JACK'S DREAM STATE, THE RETURN TO ENGLAND, NOVEMBER 1914.

THE DEVIL'S FIRST TEMPTATION: DEATH.

A soft voice, warm as morphine.

*Let go. No more trench rot, Robbie's
laugh turning to coughs. Just peace.*

Jack's eyes twitch - almost nods - until duty punches back like a bayonet: Brothers behind him, relying on him to bring them home.

THE DEVIL'S SECOND TEMPTATION: HOME.

*Picture it - the Liverpool door,
daughter's hair in ribbons, wife's
hand in yours.*

*One more push, and you can stay. No
Antwerp, no shrapnel. Just tea on the
table.*

Jack's fingers curl in the sheets; the vision cracks - Robbie's face flashes, mud - caked, waiting for orders; alone, no family, no one there for him.

THE DEVIL'S THIRD TEMPTATION: POWER.

They'll make you a legend. Captain,

*colonel, even - desk job, medals,
speeches, cheers from the crowds. No
more bleeding.*

Jack almost grins - the devil missteps - medals mean nothing to a man who has as much metal trapped in his skull.

DUTY SNAPS THE RIBBON.

Jack's eyes flash open, lungs gasping for air - breaking the surface after forty days under.

JACK
The Officer? Robbie?

He rasps to a doctor, frozen in place.

NO FIREWORKS, NO ANGELS - JUST A MAN WHO WALKS BACK TO PEOPLE, STILL DUSTY, STILL STARVING, BUT UNBREAKABLE. NOT BEATING TEMPTATION; BUT CHOOSING LOUDER.

THE DEVIL RECOILS. THE DESERT SHRINKS. THE WAR RESUMES.

8 RMLI HOSPITAL DEAL, FOURTY DAYS AFTER ANTWERP, NOVEMBER 1914.

In a sterile hospital, Jack awakens for the first time, since the Antwerp explosion. His first concern piercing through the fog.

JACK
Did the Officer make it?

Relief washes over him as he learns that miraculously, the officer he carried miles through gunfire survived unscathed, Jack's body having absorbed the bomb's full wrath. His next question, laced with panic.

JACK (CONT'D)
Robbie? Eddie? The other lads?

Grim news follows - the Northern Regiment suffered devastating losses, their fates shrouded in silence. Driven by duty, Jack struggles to rise, desperate to rejoin his remaining men but a searing migraine forces him back into the bed.

JACK (CONT'D)
I need to be with my troop,

The Doctor and Officer in charge urge recovery, firm that what he needs is rest having sustained such serious injuries.

9 CHATHAM NAVAL BASE, ENGLAND, NOVEMBER 1914.

Promoted to petty officer whilst in recovery, Jack finds himself at a black-tie naval event, rubbing shoulders with high-ranking brass. Amidst the clink of glasses, he overhears grim truths: his squadron faces redeployment from the Western Front to the Eastern Dardanelles and Gallipoli - fortresses promising a bloodbath.

Unlike the German feud, there's no enmity with the Turks - yet warlords in London, callous to human cost, push the campaign to secure Russian and Romanian wheat - a commodity Britain could buy by accruing debt rather than blood. Officers protest, warning of slaughter, but the War Lords press on, seeing men as mere pawns.

Despite Jack's new position revealing the dehumanising approach to War, Jack's resolve to foster humanity is undimmed amidst the war's grim machinery. Jack hardens, his faith-fuelled heart set on leading his men despite knowing they march toward likely death.

Jack's doctor alerts him to the shrapnel undoubtedly still in his skull and the need for surgery. Defiant, Jack has the sympathetic Doctor not mention his migraines and is signed out.

But fate shifts again - instead of rejoining his troop, Jack is transferred to the Dublin Fusiliers as their fitness Traynor, tasked with preparing new souls for slaughter.

10 THE DUBLIN FUSILIERS, DECEMBER 1915.

Transferred to the Dublin Fusiliers, Jack meets Jordan; a black Irish-Catholic shunned by his peers. When a racist slur sparks a fight, landing Jordan in trouble, Jack sees the light within him.

JACK
Grace moves mountains more than fists.

Jack vouches for the outcast and taking him under his wing as he did Robbie - Jack's gift for collecting misfits shines, uniting them through understanding, forgiveness and compassion, echoing his football game that forged a regiment.

When the Fusiliers face an option to join the Eastern Front's advance party, Jack signs up, knowing his old troop awaits.

With Jordan and the Fusiliers, he boards for Egypt, the occasional migraine a quiet secret, ready to face the crucible once again - where faith and humanity will be tested against war's heartless machine.

11 ALLY FORCES BASE CAMP, ALEXANDRIA EGYPT, EASTERN FRONT, JANUARY 1915.

Jack Traynor steps off the ship into Egypt's blistering heat, the Dublin Fusiliers at his side, his body scarred with shrapnel and the faint wobble of migraines kept secret.

Before him stretches a vibrant mosaic of Allied camps - a living Tower of Babel under a sprawling sky.

ANZACS FROM AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND SWAP TALES IN ROUGH ACCENTS, THEIR LAUGHTER MINGLING WITH THE CRISP ORDERS OF BRITISH OFFICERS AND THE MELODIC CHATTER OF FRENCH SOLDIERS. INDIAN MUSLIMS, STEADFAST IN FAITH, KNEEL IN PRAYER, WHILE NORTH AFRICAN TROOPS FROM FRENCH COLONIES - BLACK AND BROWN FACES - SHARE SONGS IN ARABIC AND BERBER, THEIR RITUALS WEAVING A TAPESTRY OF COLOUR AND CREED.

VOICES FROM ALL CORNERS OF THE WORLD DANCE THROUGH THE AIR, EACH SQUADRON NAIVE AND JOVIAL, BOUND BY A FLEETING CAMARADERIE. A REFLECTION OF A TIME BEFORE GREED DREW HUMANS EYES' TO THE CLOUDS. BEFORE A TOWER WAS EVEN CONCEIVED - FAR-FLUNG CULTURES STANDING SIDE BY SIDE, THEIR DIFFERENCES A CHORUS OF SOULS REACHING HARMONIC CHORDS NEVER IMAGINED - YET SUMMONED BY THE GRIM HAND OF WAR.

Jack, the uniter of Liverpool's docks and Antwerp's rearguard, sees divine potential in this gathering but his heart weighs heavy with the truth overheard at the naval gala:

This campaign is no noble fight, but a warlord's gambit to seize Russian and Romanian wheat - a prize they could buy at the cost of debt, not blood. The powers above, blind to the

*humanity below, have woven a senseless
battle, scattering nations like the
Babel builders, divided by language
and creed yet yearning for meaning.*

Knowing the slaughter awaiting, Jack stands among the laughing soldiers, his spirit both lifted by their shared humanity and burdened by the coming fall. He watches one Muslim soldier, bow low, lips moving. Jack hears the name:

*Isa al-Masih - Jesus the Messiah, who
ascended to heaven.*

Born of Maryam - The Virgin Mary.

The same miracle, a different tongue. Jack's chest tightens. Not strange, familiar. His eyes drift.

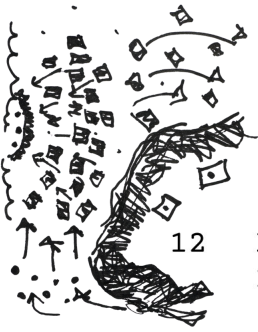
*The same son. The same mother; spoken
more times in their holy book than my
own. Maryam - chosen, pure, blessed. A
woman who carried God without asking
why; who stood at the cross while men
fled; who cradled the dead while
empires crumbled.*

*Our Lady, within every soldier. Not
just the faithful. Not just the brave.
A mother who guards the broken, the
lost, the men who pretend they're
steel. Regardless of creed, regardless
of border. She stays. Quiet.
Nurturing. Keeping peace in the storm.*

Jack's heart stirs with a call to find grace amidst the chaos, a silent vow stirring to lead his boys in the same manner through the coming darkness.

JACK SCANS THE VIBRANT ALLIED CAMPS FOR HIS BELOVED LIVERPOOL SQUADRON BUT HIS HEART SINKS; THEY'RE ALREADY OUT ON THE FRONT LINES, FACING THE DARDANELLES' DEADLY DEFENCES.

AS JACK WALKS ON, THE CAMERA PULLS BACK ONTO THE PRAYING MAN. HIS SHADOW IN THE SAND IS NO LONGER HIS OWN, BUT SOMEONE ELSE, FOREVER WATCHING OVER HIM - OUR LADY OF LEGIONS.



12 ISMAILIA FRONT LINE, DARDANELLES, EASTERN FRONT, FEBRUARY 1915.

Called to action, Jack leads the Dublin Fusiliers, with Jordan at his side, as an advance party tasked with disabling Ottoman artillery threatening the forthcoming Allied ships.

The mission turns to carnage, shells and gunfire boxing them in. With the beaches at their backs and hope fading amidst the screams, just as despair grips, an Allied unit rounds the cliff head from the east, storming in like madmen, scattering the enemy and freeing up Jack's beleaguered troop for a retreat.

13 EXT. ALLIES CAMP, DARDANELLES, EASTERN FRONT, FEBRUARY 1915.

Back at base, dust and the reality of what the Fusiliers have ahead of them settling in, a *borrowed* flatbed truck skids into camp.

OUT LEAPS ROBBIE - ONCE THE BOYISH ORPHAN, NOW BATTLE-HARDENED AT SEVENTEEN, HIS EYES BLAZING WITH LEADERSHIP - FLANKED BY NES, THE ORANGEMAN, AND DEANO, THE BURLY LIVERPOOL FOOTBALL THUG TURNED LOYAL BODYGUARD. THE REMNANTS OF JACK'S SQUADRON FOLLOW, THEIR STEPS STEADY WITH ADMIRATION FOR ROBBIE, WHO'S RISEN TO FILL JACK'S SHOES IN HIS ABSENCE.

At the tent, Jack stands awestruck as Robbie, military-sharp, salutes and reports.

ROBBIE

You'll find your troops in order. Nes is still as pessimistic as ever, but he's got light in him still. As for Deano, he's come into himself, even if he is a mad bastard!

Jack, pride swelling in a rare moment is lost for words.

JACK

Robbie, you did good Son.

Pulling him into a fierce hug, Robbie's boyish smile breaks through - the orphan's heart glowing, knowing he's made Jack proud, The spark of grace amid war's chaos that Jack holds on to.

Over Robbie's shoulder Jack sees a final soldier, unpacking the truck. Loyal as ever, it's Eddie - he had survived. As if in knowing, Eddie looks up at Jack and beams. He walks over, only a small limp from his hip wound - not enough for discharge, they needed the bodies. They enter into a warm embrace.

Jack studies Eddie's eyes.

JACK (CONT'D)

Thank you for looking out for Robbie.

EDDIE

He's looked out for us. Come into his own that one.

JACK

Humble as ever. You may lead from the back but you are the spine.

EDDIE

Nah, just a meek shire horse me.

JACK

'Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the Earth' - Those that bend, not break. Who serve without ego.

FADE OUT.

14 EXT. ALLIES CAMP, DARDANELLES, EASTERN FRONT, FEBRUARY 1915.

In the dusty glow of camp, Jack and Eddie heading into the tent where the Dublin Fusiliers and remnants of the Northern Regiment greet each other.

The squadrons begin to blend, their shared scars forging bonds, but Jordan, the black Irish-Catholic, stands apart from the others, shunned by wary glances.

Before Jack can intervene, Robbie, now a leader forged in battle, steps forward, his voice cutting through the tension.

ROBBIE

You Lads wouldn't be casting out this one, when we're a band of misfits ourselves?

The room falls into silence, all eyes on Jordan.

JORDAN

Highest ranked here if that's the case...

After a moment's pause, the room erupts into laughter. Their shared outcast spirit awakened, they receive Jordan with warm handshakes and brotherly grins - welcoming him into the fold.

Yet at the back of the line, tensions flare. As Jordan extends a hand to Nes, the Orangeman's face hardens, his Protestant pride clashing with Jordan's Catholic faith.

NES RUFFLES HIS NOSE AS IF A BAD SMELL - OLD DIVISIONS SEALED THROUGH GENERATIONS OF BLOODSHED THAT WOULD NEVER BE STARVED OF OXYGEN BY A HANDSHAKE.

A fight erupts, fists raised over old divides, until Jack and Robbie each grab a man, their authority halting the brawl. A frosty grudge lingers between Nes and Jordan, their mutual respect for Jack and Robbie holding them just shy of more violence.

15 EXT. ALLIES CAMP, DARDANELLES, EASTERN FRONT, FEBRUARY 1915.

The next day, Jack reports to his commanding officer, his heart still warmed by Eddies survival, Robbie's growth, and the fragile unity of his remaining misfits.

OFFICER

Your squadron is tasked with returning to the Dardanelles, to destroy the remaining Ottoman artillery ahead of the navy advance. Do this and your boys will have avoided the need for troops to storm the beaches.

The officer's new instructions hit like the shrapnel still left in his skull. Jack sees through his officer's lies.

Even if successful, troops would eventually have to return to Dardanelles slaughter to defend any shipments of wheat obtained from Russia or Romania...

Jack leaves the tent, silent, his mind churning with how to rally his already disheartened men.

As he walks through the encampment, a further Tower of Babel vision grips him:

OTTOMANS CHARGING INTO BATTLE WITH CRIES OF ALLAHU AKBAR, THEIR FAITH ECHOING THAT OF THEIR INDIAN AND NORTH AFRICAN COUNTERPARTS - BROTHERS DIVIDED BY WAR'S CRUEL HAND, FIGHTING WITHOUT GRUDGE FOR A CAUSE NOT THEIR OWN. THE CACOPHONY OF LANGUAGES SWIRLS IN HIS THOUGHTS - A FLEETING UNITY TORN BY SENSELESS ORDERS, LIKE BABEL'S SCATTERED TONGUES.

Facing his troop, their faces heavy with dread, Jack buries the truth of the inevitable beach assault. Sealed by faith, he rallies them.

JACK

We go in to knock out their guns. Do this, and we stop thousands dying on those beaches.

Jack's white lie kindles hope, uniting the squadron - Robbie, Eddie, Jordan, Nes, Deano, and the rest - in a shared resolve; a flicker of hope amidst broken nations.

16 ALLIES TRENCHES, DARDANELLES, EASTERN FRONT, FEBRUARY 1915, DAY.

The plank road creaks under boots. With Jack back, Robbie's guard drops, he's the boy again, the orphan Jack first met at the Liverpool docks; no walls, just a grin.

Robbie and Jordan, same age, same spark, walk ahead - Robbie half a step in front like he's showing off his best toys. Jordan's fists unclench, the guard he's carried since his first memories finally slipping. Jack and Eddie trail behind, quiet smiles flickering between them.

The trench forks: Lime Street scratched on scrap wood to the left, Regent Street on the right.

A BARE BULB SWINGS FROM A JURY-RIGGED POLE. OSCAR BALANCED ON A LADDER, TWISTING WIRE TO MAKE IT GIVE THE RESEMBLANCE OF A VICTORIAN STREETLAMP.

He spots Robbie, grins, and launches a STRING BALL his way. Robbie snags it mid-air, laughing like the war's on hold. Robbie calls over.

ROBBIE

Love what you've done to the place,
Osc!

OSCAR

A-why thank you!

He replies with a bow in a mock upper-class accent, his east-end tones still ringing through. Robbie nods toward Jordan.

ROBBIE

You'll like this one, zero fucks
given.

JORDAN HESITATES BUT ROBBIE'S ARTFUL DODGER GRIN PULLS JORDAN IN WITHOUT ASKING. HE TAKES THE BALL FROM ROBBIE AND LAUNCHES IT BACK TO OSCAR WITH A LAUGH — OLIVER TWIST STEPPING INTO THE GANG, NO LONGER THE OUTCAST, JUST ONE OF THEM — SKIN AND CREED DON'T MATTER HERE, ONLY WHETHER HE CAN KEEP UP.

Jack and Eddie hang back half a step, no words. Smiles flicker between them.

Jack & Eddie watch the exchange; the makeshift ball a throwback to the lives they should currently be leading. seeing their boyish smiles, laughter they feel the knot loosen in their chests. They don't join in. They don't need to. because right now? There's still hope. For this generation and the ones that'll come after.

17 ALLIES TRENCHES, DARDANELLES, EASTERN FRONT, FEBRUARY 1915, EVENING.

Evening settles. Jack and Robbie slump against the trench wall, rifles propped like umbrellas.

JACK

How's it been?

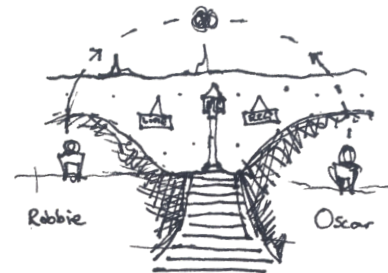
Robbie shrugs.

ROBBIE

Not bad.

JACK

How's it really been?



ROBBIE
(voice low)
Brutal.

But as you said, it's about finding
and holding onto the small things.

The string ball sails over from Regent street trench, a
crumpled note in Oscar's handwriting:

*Is it all the sand up your noses
that's got Lime Street talking so
funny?*

Robbie snorts, scribbling something filthy and lobs it back.
The ball arcs, note inside, and Jack hears Oscar's answering
cackle across the gap.

ROBBIE (CONT'D)
As you taught me, there is always a
glimmer of light to be found in dark
places.

They both knew that on sun-up the light dies. But tonight
their faith was successfully being held together by string.

18 LE CAP FRONT LINE, DARDANELLES, EASTERN FRONT, FEBRUARY 1915.

THE NEXT DAY SEES A BAYONET BLUR OF STEEL, BLOOD, AND GROUND
GAINED INCH BY BLOODY INCH AS OPPOSING TRENCHES SQUEEZE
CLOSER. BOTH SIDES FIRM IN THEIR BELIEF THAT THEY ARE THE
RIGHTEOUS PARTY - THE OTTOMANS DEFENDING THEIR HOMELAND, THE
ALLIES FIGHTING FOR THE SUPPOSED 'BIGGER PICTURE'.

Gunfire blessedly pauses at dusk; a mutual, wordless truce.
Shells stop, rifles fall silent - everyone too tired to
continue the forced hatred until sunrise.

Robbie, Jordan and Oscar volunteer to take the night watch,
meeting at the Allies furthest position.

A scuffle of noise, mere meters away, silences their chatter.
Next come voices, deeper, unrecognisable. Before panic
ensues, the boys realise it is their Ottoman foe's opposing
trench - now so close you could spit in the enemy's tea.

From the other side drifts the faint smell of tobacco smoke
and low Turkish voices. Robbie's eyes widen, then narrow;
fear flips to dare. He cups his hands and calls out in

English, voice pitched low.

ROBBIE
Any chance of a cigarette?

< Beat >

Turkish murmurs - sharp, suspicious.

Robbie elbows Oscar, stifling giggles. At seventeen they are too young for the habit but know it is the dare that counts.

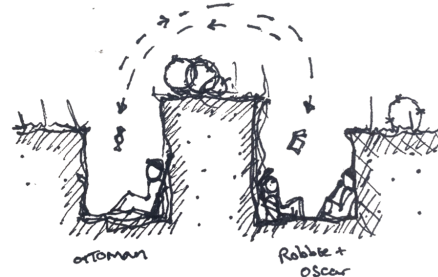
JACK, INSOMNIA GNAWING, WANDERS THE PLANKS, LANTERN IN HAND. HE ROUNDS THE CORNER AND FREEZES SEEING ROBBIE AND OSCAR PRESSED SHOULDER-TO-SHOULDER, EAR AGAINST THE TRENCH WALL AS THOUGH IN A GAME OF CHINESE WHISPERS.

Robbie laughs softly through the silence. Jordan hisses.

JORDAN
They'll think we're mad!

Robbie tries again.

ROBBIE
We've got jam!



Another silence. Robbie fishes a tin out from his pocket and pulls out a pot of jam. He chucks it to Oscar who expertly ties it to his string ball and passes it back.

Feeling its weight, Robbie launches it over the top.

CLINK - GLASS ON SAND.

CHAOS ON THE OTHER SIDE ENSUES: MUFFLED CURSES, BOOTS SCUFFLING.

JACK AS ONLOOKER TENSES, HAND ON RIFLE, BUT THE NOISE SETTLES INTO LAUGHTER - RAW, DISBELIEVING.

A moment later, a pack of cigarettes tumbles back over the parapet attached to the shared ball. Laughter rises from both trenches - two languages, one joke.

WALLS THIN ENOUGH FOR CURSES, THICK ENOUGH FOR PEACE; WHITE TOBACCO SMOKE CURLING BETWEEN TRENCHES LIKE MOMENTARY FLAGS OF TRUCE THAT WOULD DISSIPATE AT DAWN.

JACK REMAINS HIDDEN. SEEING TWO BOYS TOGETHER, BRIDGING GAPS WITHOUT THE NEED FOR LANGUAGE, JUST ACTS OF KINDNESS, INSTILLING IN JACK HOPE FOR THIS NEXT GENERATION; A GENERATION THAT WOULD ENSURE THIS WOULD NEVER HAPPEN AGAIN.

19 LE CAP FRONT LINE, DARDANELLES, EASTERN FRONT, FEBRUARY 1915.

THE NEXT DAY, BAYONETS ARE RE-ATTACHED, THE SMOKE OF TRUCE DISSIPATES - BUT BOTH SIDES' SHARED MOMENT OF TRUE REBELLION STAY IN THEIR HEARTS.

THE WAR CONTINUES.

REED BANKS CHOKES THE ADVANCE; DIRTY WALLS OF SAND AND SCRUB. BOOTS GRINDING, LUNGS BURNING AS THEY CLIMB. CLIFFS BRISTLE WITH SNIPERS, OTTOMAN ARTILLERY DUG IN HIGH, WAITING TO SHRED BRITISH NAVAL SHIPS. EVERY STEP IS A GRIND, SAND IN EYES, WIRE SNAGGING LEGS.

As they advance, Jack falters, a shrapnel-induced migraine hitting.

Momentarily leaning against an outcrop of shrubs, Robbie rushes over concerned, but Jack brushes him off.

JACK
I'm fine Lad.

Robbie steps back to his position, turning with his youthful smile:

ROBBIE
You're getting old, Jack.



IN THAT HEARTBEAT, A SNIPER'S BULLET RIPS THROUGH ROBBIE'S HEAD - HIS SMILE FROZEN AS HE DROPS - OPENED-EYED, LIFELESS TO THE GROUND.

JACK STANDS STUNNED. ALL SURROUNDING NOISES OF WAR GONE. THE TRENCH SILENT IN A HORRIFIC PAUSE.

DEANO, WITNESSING ROBBIE'S FALL, IS THE FIRST TO ACKNOWLEDGE THEIR NEW REALITY. SNAPPING INTO A PSYCHOPATHIC RAGE, HE CHARGES OVER THE REED BANK DIRECTLY TOWARD THE OTTOMAN LINE.

JACK SHAKES HIS DAZE OFF, EYES NOW A TERRIFYING WINDOW INTO THE SOUL OF A MAN WHO HAD LOST ALL COMPASSION. NO FAITH. NO RESTRAINT. JUST A STORM.

Driven by vengeance the troop fearlessly charge after Deano towards the enemy line. Jack takes a bullet through the leg but doesn't even break stride.

DEANO, A WHIRLWIND OF FURY, CUTS DOWN HALF THE OTTOMANS BEFORE BAYONETING THE SNIPER WHO KILLED ROBBIE, WHO CRIES OUT IN A SICKENING GARGLE. DEANO FREEZES - BEFORE HIM LIES A FEMALE TURKISH SOLDIER, FIGHTING FOR HER HOMELAND, HER BLOOD ON HIS BLADE.

DESPITE AN UNBANDAGED LEG WOUND, JACK AND HIS SHATTERED TROOP MERCILESSLY DRIVE ON FOR THREE DAYS THROUGH THE DARDANELLES FRONT LINES - DISMANTLING ARTILLERY IN A RELENTLESS PUSH, FUELLED BY SICKENING GRIEF AND RAGE, FORGED IN THE CRUCIBLE OF LOSS.

20 INT. ALLIED CAMP, EASTERN FRONT, MARCH 1915.

The few remaining survivors - Jack, Eddie, Deano, Nes, Jordan, and a mere handful of others - return battered and broken, both mentally and physically; the weight of their Dardanelles carnage etched behind their eyes.

DEANO, ONCE THE BRASH LIVERPOOL THUG, TREMBLES WITH TERRIFYING PTSD. HAUNTED BY THE TURKISH WOMAN'S GARGLES, HE TWITCHES AT SHADOWS, WHISPERING TO NO ONE.

Jack, his leg still raw from bullets, carries the image of Robbie's frozen smile and the weight of his own blood-stained hands. Nes and Jordan, bound by a frosty truce, stand silent, their grudge overshadowed by shared sorrow.

As the remnants of the once vibrant squadron trudge through camp hollowed, they are all too aware of how few quarters are now unoccupied - small tokens upon empty bedside units, the only record of their existence.

They reach their assigned barracks and freeze.

OUTSIDE THE NEXT GHOSTLY QUARTERS STANDS OSCAR; RIGID, WHITE-FACED. HE BLANKLY THROWS HIS STRING BALL AGAINST THE WHITE WASHED WALL TO NO ONE, UNDER A BARE BULB.

THUMP... THUMP... THUMP

LIKE A PULSE THAT'S FORGOTTEN IT BELONGS TO A BODY. NO GRIN, NO LAUGH. THE BALL BOUNCES BACK INTO EMPTY HANDS; HIS EYES DON'T FOLLOW.

A JAM JAR SITS BY HIS BOOT, LID OFF, FLIES CIRCLING.

JORDAN MAKES TO SPEAK - BUT THE WORDS GET CAUGHT IN HIS THROAT. WHAT WAS THERE TO SAY? OSCAR DOESN'T EVEN BLINK, HE JUST THROWS HIS STRING BALL AGAIN.

THUMP. THUMP.

WAR HAD BROKEN ANOTHER GENERATION THAT STRING COULDN'T HOLD.

21 INT. CHAPEL, ALLY CAMP, EASTERN FRONT, MARCH 1915.

That night, Jack and his few surviving troops lie shattered, their spirits as broken as their bodies after the Dardanelles' horrors. Despite their exhaustion, sleep eludes them all.

DEANO, THRASHES AND SCREAMS IN HIS NIGHTMARES, FORCING WEARY SOLDIERS TO PIN HIM DOWN UNTIL HIS CRIES FADE AND HE COLLAPSES BACK INTO UNEASY REST.

Jack, once a beacon of faith who saved an officer too good to die, now wrestles with darkness, moral compass spinning. Trapped in his own torment he is unable to shut his eyes. Distressed and faith at breaking point, Jack gets out of bed and goes to the CHAPEL.

Here, away from being the face of hope, Jack lets out his sobs as he questions his faith. Looking toward the altar, he notices for the first time an Irish nurse with a mane of red hair, on her knees by the tabernacle.

ROSARY BEADS IN HAND AND BENT LOW TOWARD THE GROUND, SHE IS DEEP IN PRAYER, AS THOUGH IN DIRECT COMMUNICATION WITH GOD.

Jack is mesmerised by her resounding faith. Having finished her prayers she stands and heads up the central isle towards Jack. Unapologetically but gracefully, she sits next to him. Saying nothing, she allows a rare silence in War.

Eventually Jack speaks up.

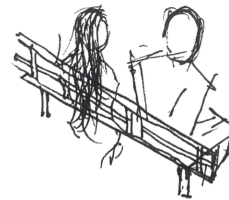
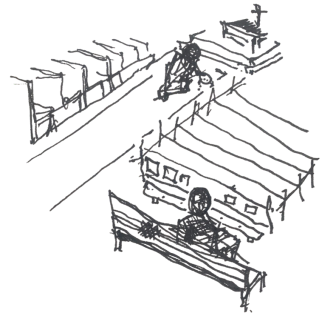
JACK

How do you keep such strong faith? You of all, who sees War's horrors in the flesh, as men die in your care every day?

IRISH NURSE

If we don't have faith, then what do we have? If God is within all of us, then he is also here to experience himself. If that is the case then the bad must come with the good, for without it there is no marker for success.

Faith then becomes the knowing that good will always prevail, and there will come a time when we will have gone through enough trials to understand that we are all one and the same.



THE NURSE CALMLY PLACES HER ROSARY BEADS INTO JACK'S CLASPED HANDS. RESTING HER HAND ON HIS, SHE HOLDS JACK'S EYES WITH HER OWN, IN A MOMENT OF TWO SOULS TOUCHING.

With a knowing nod, the nurse turns back to the altar, makes the sign of the cross and exits.

JACK LOOKS DOWN AT THE ROSARY, AND BACK TOWARDS THE ALTAR, A SINGLE TEAR RUNNING DOWN HIS CHEEK - A TEAR OF RESILIENCE AND RESTORED FAITH.

22 ALLY CAMP, EASTERN FRONT, APRIL 1915.

Though Jack's heart remains fractured from Robbie's death a spark of faith has been rekindled by the Irish nurse's words.

Meeting his officer, who had led the battle from the comfort of his war office, Jack learns the navy failed to breach the Dardanelles' fortifications and now the Allies, including the remnants of his troop, must land on Gallipoli's beaches - a certain bloodbath.

Jack is left speechless, wondering at what point he and his men had lost free will.

*What choice did they have? Suicide on
foreign soil or public execution for
cowardice?*

Back with his broken troops, Jack finds they've heard through the grapevine that this fight is for wheat, not honour. Facing their despair, he rallies them with a half-truth.

JACK

It is about wheat, yes, but it's wheat for your families. Without it, they'll starve. This fight's as vital as the Western Front - if we must die, let us die together, for them.

That evening Jack introduces his squadron to Father Finn whose group prayer offers them faith in God's plan and peace before the coming battle.

FATHER FINN

...Jesus didn't pick Kings or Colonels to be by his side, he took fishermen, shepherds, a tax-collector, everyday men like you or I. Regular on the surface but God's elite. So if doubt creeps in before dawn, remember this: those same fishermen walked to their crucifixion rather

(MORE)

FATHER FINN (CONT'D)
 than deny their belief - Nobody dies
 for a lie. You are not pawns, you are
 God's chosen, fighting *for* his peace.
 It need not be understood in this
 hour, just know that he *will* be at
 your side.

IN A SILHOUETTED SIDE ROOM, UNHEARD, WE SEE FATHER FINN OFFER
 EACH SOLDIER A BLESSING AND PRIVATE PRAYER. EACH MAN REACTS
 TO THIS MOMENT OF SILENCE DIFFERENTLY, REFLECTING THEIR
 DIFFERING SCARS, FEARS AND DEMONS THAT HAVE ARISEN THROUGH
 THE HORROR OF WAR. WHILST POWERFUL AND TOUCHING, THERE IS A
 FOREBODING SIMILARITY TO A PRIEST GIVING LAST RITES.

FADE OUT.

23 GALLIPOLI LANDINGS, EASTERN FRONT, 7TH MAY 1915.

Resigned to death, but calm in the knowledge of what is to
 come, Jack's squadron board the SS RIVER CLYDE, Jack the
 captain of the machine gun on the ship's forecastle.

Jack takes charge of the first boat to leave the starboard
 side, rowing toward Gallipoli's shores.

FROM THE BOAT, THEY SEE A FORTRESS OF TERROR IN FRONT OF THEM
 - WAVES CRASHING ONTO BARBED WIRE, STEEP BANKS BRISTLING WITH
 MACHINE GUNS AND SNIPERS, SET AND WAITING IN POSITION FOR THE
 SLAUGHTER.

Currents further betray them, landing them right at the doors
 to the fortress - steep cliffs instead of flats as planned.

THE FRIENDS LOOK AT EACH OTHER AND THEN DOWN TO THEIR
 COMMISSIONED PUSHBIKES WITH GRIM SMILES, RESIGNED TO THEIR
 FATE.

Jack squeezes the butt of his rifle with his right hand, one
 last time and gives the boat a final lift of resilience.

JACK
 Faith isn't about never being hungry,
 it's about what you do when the
 bread's not coming.

You are the salt of the earth, here to
 add flavour, not to be trampled
 underfoot.

JACK (CONT'D)

For a year we have come together
finding light in dark places - no
more. Now we put that light on the
stand, for Robbie, for Oscar, for your
Families back home. For God.

Today we let our lights shine for
those to follow - so people may
remember our good deeds, and we can
once again Glorify our Father in
Heaven.

We stand by him, for him, now and
forever.

JACK JUMPS OUT OF THE ROWING BOAT, THE FIRST TO TAKE ON HELL
ITSELF IN GOD'S NAME.

The Ottomans wait, holding fire until they can see *the whites*
of their eyes, then unleash a merciless hail of bullets.

Eighty percent of the landing party falls - shot dead or
tangled in barbed wire, left to drown or bleed out.

MORE MEN FALL BEFORE FEELING DRY GROUND ON THEIR BOOTS. OF
THE 45 BROTHERS, SONS, FATHERS IN JACK'S BOAT, ONLY 14 MAKE
IT TO SHORE. AMIDST THE HORROR WE SEE FATHER FINN'S DEAD
BODY, TANGLED IN BARBED WIRE - EVIL HAVING PREVAILED.

JACK SPOTS HIM, AND KNOWING THE TALISMAN THE PRIEST HAD STOOD
FOR, VEERS AWAY FROM A DIRECT LINE OF SAFETY TOWARD FATHER
FINN'S BODY. WHERE ONCE JACK WOULD HAVE BEEN ALONE ON HIS
FUTILE ENDEAVOUR, HIS REMAINING SQUADRON SPOT JACK AND JOIN
THE ATTEMPT - NO LONGER ONE MAN LEADING BY EXAMPLE, BUT MANY.

They eventually manage to pull the priest's body through the
barbed wire and up the beaches to the temporary safety of the
shrub line. Miraculously, Jack, Deano, Nes and Jordan emerge
unscathed, not having taken a single bullet whilst leading
the survivors to cover.

With officers having fallen shoulder to shoulder with their
men, Jack is now in charge of over 100 souls.

24 GALLIPOLI LANDINGS, EASTERN FRONT, 7-9TH MAY 1915.

Three relentless days on Gallipoli's beaches. Jack Traynor, now a petty officer, commanding over a hundred men, endures a hell worse than the Western Front.

MACHINE GUNS BLAZE WITHOUT CEASING. THE SEA BLOCKS EVACUATION AND THE WOUNDED DIE UNDER SNIPER FIRE AS SURVIVORS ATTEMPT TO CLAW UPHILL.

Jack, still untouched by bullets, hears a soldier from another troop whisper.

That one's touched by God

JACK BRUSHES OFF THE COMMENT.

Pausing for breath after the next 10 meter push, Jack spots Eddie - his old wound torn open, hip bleeding afresh. Eddie tries to hide it, back turned, hand pressed against jacket. Jack's gut twists.

JACK
Not you as well.

Eddie grunts, pale as chalk, blood now dripping out the bottom of his trouser leg.

EDDIE
Don't worry, Jack. I've got at least one more in me.

Jack makes to counter, but Eddie pushes back.

EDDIE (CONT'D)
You may be a lofty officer these days, but nothing changes between us, this isn't your choice.

Jack stops. Changes tack.

JACK
Someone needs to survive this. To tell our story. Save as many souls as you can, get the wounded out. The bravest choice is often the one not taken.

Jack pauses. Voice low.

JACK (CONT'D)
And... look after my family.

Eddie looks up, eyes sharp, then soft. A nod. Begrudging, but real.

AT THE NEXT CHARGE, REGARDLESS OF ORDERS EDDIE POPS UP, RIFLE STEADY AND UNLOADS ON THE TURRET - DRAWING EVERY EYE. BULLETS RIP AIR. THE MACHINE GUN SWINGS. EDDIE DUCKS BACK DOWN WITH A SMILE AS BULLETS RICOCHET OFF THE BANK BEHIND HIM, AS HIS REMAINING TROOP SURGE THROUGH TO SAFETY.

JACK KEEPS MOVING. EDDIE STAYS LOW, ALIVE. LEADING NOW, NOT JUST FOLLOWING.

Deano, having not slept now in days, broken by PTSD, loses himself in the perpetual noise of gunfire. With his friends hunkered down, being shot like fish in a barrel, he throws caution to the wind.

STORMING A MACHINE GUN NEST IN A SUICIDAL BLAZE, DEANO TAKES IT OUT BEFORE FALLING HIMSELF IN A FINAL ACT OF LOVE. THE

LOVE OF A MAN WHO NEVER KNEW THE WORDS TO SPEAK IT.

MEN FALL BY THE MINUTE AS BULLETS HURTLE OVERHEAD. EDDIE, DEANO, ROBBIE, ALL GONE. ONLY NES, JORDAN, AND A HANDFUL OF STRAGGLERS ARE LEFT WITH JACK.

They hunker behind the next reed bank for cover, the turret Deano took out still smoking. Jack turns to Nes on his left, Jordan to his right, their eyes hollow but still alive. Jack's voice is low, steady.

JACK (CONT'D)
One last push. For everything we believe in. For everything we've gone through.

THEY BOTH NOD. JACK RISES. JUMPS THE BANK AND RUNS UPHILL.

THE NOISE IS UNBEARABLE - BULLETS CRACKING, MEN SCREAMING, DIRT EXPLODING. THEN A SHIFT SLOW-MOTION - CAMERA LOW, ON JACK RUNNING UPHILL, THE TIP OF THE V, NES AND JORDAN FLANKING.

THE SOUND OF CHAOS DROPS. A PEACEFUL, MUSICAL UNDERTONE CREEPS IN, SOFT, ALMOST HOLY. JACK IS EMITTING A FAINT GLOW AROUND HIM, AS IF CHOSEN. FAINTER BUT STILL PRESENT GLOW IS ALSO ON HIS DISCIPLES, NES AND JORDAN. BULLETS SLIDE PAST WHILST OTHER SOLDIERS DROP AROUND THEM, SILENT, SLOW.

THEN SNAP - THE MUSIC CUTS. REALITY SLAMS OUT OF SLOW MOTION, NO GOLDEN GLOW, JUST THE RUTHLESS SPEED OF WAR.

SCREAMS - METAL - CHAOS.

BAM - BAM - BAM

THREE CLOSE SHOTS AND JACK IS SLAMMED BACKWARD ONTO THE SAND IN A CRUMPLED HEAP - EYES WIDE, MOUTH OPEN.

NO GRACE. NO HEROIC FALL. JUST GONE.

NES AND JORDAN BREAK STRIDE FOR HALF A STEP BEFORE EXPLODING INTO RAW, GUTTURAL SCREAMS AS EVERYTHING THEY BELIEVED IN JUST DIED. NO FREEZE. NO PAUSE. JUST RAGE, GRIEF, & TERROR.

They sprint, dodge bullets, bound over bodies toward Jack. Jordan's arm is hit with a flesh wound, Nes' leg is ripped on barbed wire but they make it to Jack, grab him and drag him toward another reed bank.

JACK LIES LIMP ACROSS THEIR LEGS. BLOOD DARK ON HIS CHEST. NO BREATH. EYES BLANK.

NES AND JORDAN HUNCHED OVER JACK'S BODY CRYING, YELLING, HOLDING HIM LIKE HE'LL WAKE UP. THE WORLD KEEPS SHOOTING. THEY DON'T CARE. THE MYTH'S DEAD. AND THEY'RE LEFT WITH NOTHING BUT EACH OTHER.

THE CAMERA PULLS BACK, SLOW, MERCILESS. FIRST TO FATHER FINN'S SHALLOW GRAVE; SAND PILED ROUGH, WIRE CROSS CROOKED - THE PRIEST THEY HAD DRAGGED FROM BARBED WIRE, BURIED SO HE WOULDN'T BE LEFT BEHIND. NOW? NO ONE'S LEFT AT ALL.

FURTHER - CLIFFS AND OPEN BEACHES: BODIES TANGLED, MEN CRAWLING, CRYING OUT, SOME STILL TWITCHING UNDER STRAY SHOTS. GUNS SLOW DOWN WITH FEWER TARGETS TO SHOOT AT. SMOKE CURLS. SILENCE SWALLOWS SCREAMS.

A telegram message crosses the screen:

No wheat in Russia or Romania.

Rail tracks diverted to the front line.

Crops lie rotting in the farmers' fields.

- 07.05.15

THE SCENE FADES TO DUSK, AS DARKNESS SPARES US. WHITE TEXT APPEARS ON SCREEN:

The Gallipoli landings of May 1915 were deemed a complete mission failure.

300 of 700 Dublin Fusiliers lost their lives in the first wave.

8000 British troops were killed or wounded in the first week.

190,000 Allied Troops were lost at Gallipoli and the Dardanelles.

After a moment's pause, a second white paragraph follows.

Yet, after the sixth day of slaughter, the British launched a full nighttime retreat under the cover of darkness using hospital, coal, fishing and civilian rescue ships.

The odds were near impossible. But currents did not betray them, and they were not spotted. The retreat was a complete success with no additional casualties.

Some called it a miracle...

MIRACLES DON'T COME IN THE FORM OF WAR, THEY COME IN THE FORM OF COMPASSION.

PART II: JOHN TRAYNOR - PATIENT #838

25 INT. HOSPITAL WARD, ALLIES CAMP, ALEXANDRIA, EGYPT, MAY 1915, DAY.

Jack, writhing in agony, is rushed into the hospital ward where the IRISH NURSE from the chapel urgently takes the trolley and sets about attempting to save his life.

THE SOUND OF URGENCY IN THE VOICES OF THE DOCTOR AND NURSES
ECHOES AROUND HIM. THE ROOM GOES IN AND OUT OF FOCUS,
EVENTUALLY GOING BLACK.

Two more days and Jack is still dipping in and out of consciousness as pain and epileptic convulsions overwhelm him. Nes, Jordan and the last of his squadron wait, heartbroken on the other side of the doors, each scream piercing their bones.

Convinced they made the wrong decision to bring him back, Nes, Jordan and the few leftovers from the ravenous war, begrudgingly agree to meet back at the ward at midnight to put Jack out of his misery.

FADE OUT.

26 INT. HOSPITAL WARD, ALLIES CAMP, ALEXANDRIA, EGYPT, MAY 1915, NIGHT.

Jack's squadron give their final, tearful goodbyes. Nes with pillow in hand.

WE SEE THE ROSARY BEADS FROM THE CHAPEL DANGLING LOOSELY IN JACK'S LEFT HAND.

Before the pillow can be raised and Nes can know if he could have gone through with it, the IRISH NURSE bursts into the ward, storming up to the soldiers - berating them like an Irish mother.

IRISH NURSE
What in God's name? How dare you!

Nes pushes back.

NES

What life will he have? This is a fate worse than death!

IRISH NURSE

So you have the right to play God instead then, do you? This is not your decision to make.

She turns to the rest of the soldiers.

IRISH NURSE (CONT'D)

The decision you do have, is whether you will have him see out his remaining days, however long they may be, in dignity... or act as if he has already departed this world.

JACK'S TROOP LOOK AT ONE ANOTHER, SOME UNCOMFORTABLE, SOME WITH DETERMINATION IN THEIR EYES.

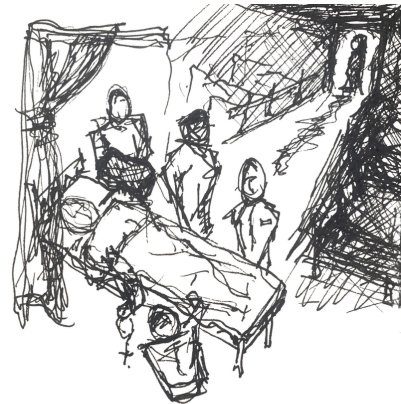
Moved by the Irish nurse's fierce defence the rest somberly agree. Jordan whispers resiliently.

JORDAN

We lead by example, bound to serve.
For Jack.

They each make an unbreakable bond, there and then; they will give Jack the dignity and honour a hero deserves.

UNTIL HIS DYING DAY.



27 INT. HOSPITAL WARD, ALLY BASE CAMP, ALEXANDRIA, EGYPT, MAY 1915.

Lamplight flickers over Sir Frederick Travis as he inspects Jack's unconscious, broken body. He peels back the bandages, voice calm, as though Jack is merely another curious case, like his last charge, the Elephant Man.

SIR FREDERICK
Two through the chest - clean
traversals, no permanent damage. But
this one...

He traces his pen along Jack's inner arm up to his collar bone.

SIR FREDERICK (CONT'D)
...entered through the Axilla, clipping
the Brachial Plexus. Nerves shredded -
arm dead as wood.

Jordan shifts, Nes stares. Travis taps Jack's pulse - fast, ragged.

SIR FREDERICK
I attempted a nerve suture but he's
still running Gallipoli in his sleep.
Fight-or-flight wired permanent. The
tissue won't knit until the mind
decides the war's over.

It's not the body that's broken,
gentlemen. It's still listening for
whistles overhead.

Only place it'll hear surrender is
home. We'll ship him back. Let the
Thames be his ceasefire.

He snaps his ledger shut.

SIR FREDERICK (CONT'D)
Dignity means living long enough to
hate the hospital bed. Let's give him
that.

28 INT. STEAMSHIP GURKHA, ENGLAND BOUND, AUGUST 1915.

THE STEAMSHIP GURKHA'S HOLD IS A FLOATING MORGUE OF THE LIVING. HEROES ONLY YESTERDAY - NOW INVALIDS ON STRETCHERS. AMONGST THEM, JACK LIES LIKE THE OTHERS: UNCONSCIOUS, CHEST BANDAGED, RIGHT ARM NOW A BAG OF SAND, SKIN GREY AS THE ATLANTIC FOG.

Nes and Jordan guard his bed. Major Ross leans in, stethoscope cold.

MAJOR ROSS

I once again attempted a suture but the nerves are spaghetti. The arm's done. But his pulse is starting to steady.

Jordan cracks a laugh that doesn't reach his eyes.

JORDAN

What's an arm? Jack's survived worse.

NES

We're going home, mate.

Jack seems to hear. The corner of his mouth lifting out of his restless slumber - a twitch of hope.

THE SMILE FREEZES BEFORE IT CAN FORM. EYES BOLT BEHIND EYELIDS AT AN UNSEEN SHADOW. HIS FACE CONTORTS: NOT IN PAIN, FEAR. BLOOD TRICKLES FROM THE CORNER OF HIS MOUTH LIKE A FUSE.

THEN A CONVULSION SLAMS HIM RIGID. BACK OFF THE MATTRESS, BLOOD FOAMING AT HIS TEETH. THE COT SHAKES LIKE IT'S STILL ON GALLIPOLI SHORE. AN UNSEEN DAGGER TWISTS; HE ARCHES LIKE A BOWSTRING, HEELS DRUMMING METAL AS THE DEVIL REFUSES TO RELEASE ONE OF GOD'S BEST.

The ward holds its breath in the knowing that War doesn't end with cheers, it ends with yesterday's hero, fighting ghosts on a ship that won't dock until his fight does.

DOCTOR'S SWARM, SHOUTING. ONE DOCTOR PARTS JACK'S HAIR REVEALING A WALNUT SIZED SWELLING IN HIS SKULL.

Major Ross flips the file:

November, 1914. Antwerp, shrapnel
removed from skull. Nausea, migraines,
potential long term damage.
Unconscious - 40 days.

CUT TO BLACK. STEAM SHIP HORNS FADE.

29 EXT. LIME STREET STATION, LIVERPOOL, AUGUST 1915.

THE PLATFORM, ONCE PACKED WITH FLAGS, CHEERS, BOYS SHOVING
ONTO TRAINS AND KISSING LOVED ONES GOODBYE, IS NOW HOLLOW.
DOORS CREAK OPEN. FEW STEP OFF.

The cheering crowds from Jack's war departure now fall
silent; their faces twisting in horror as they see their
hero, convulsing and dying as he is lifted onto the platform.

NES AND JORDAN WALK DOWN LIME STREET STATION CARRYING JACK'S
BODY, UNCONCONCIOUS ON A STRETCHER - JAWS CLENCHED, HEADS
HELD HIGH, THEY FIGHT BACK TEARS TO HONOUR JACK'S MEMORY.

Eddie waits ahead, cane steady, officer uniform sharp, next
to Jack's wife and daughter.

HE PULLS THE GIRL CLOSE, COVERS HER EARS. A MOTHER'S CRY
SPLITTING THE SILENCE THAT NO DAUGHTER SHOULD HEAR.

MRS TRAYNOR RUNS UP TO JACK, KISSES HIS LIPS, BLOOD SMEARING
HERS - SHE DOESN'T FLINCH.

In the background, Deano's wife paces the platform, eyes
scanning every carriage window. we hear her call out.

Where's my Deano??

THE TRAIN CONDUCTOR APPROACHES HER WITH QUIET WORDS, HAND ON
HER SHOULDER. SHE FREEZES, THEN DROPS TO CONCRETE WEeping.

ALONE.



30 INT. RMLI HOSPITAL, DEAL, NOVEMBER 1915. [ONE YEAR AFTER THE BATTLE OF ANTWERP]

WEEKS BLUR AS EPILEPTIC FITS, ANOTHER TOKEN OF WAR, HIT UNANNOUNCED DAY AND NIGHT. EACH SEIZURE A FRESH AMBUSH, NERVES SPARKING WHERE SHRAPNEL SLEEPS.

The Navy Surgeon hovers over Jack's bed like a vulture, seeking to take more of Jack.

NAVAL SURGEON

The arm's dead, Jack. Useless. It will only atrophy from here. Cut it off, get on with life.

Jack's jaw sets, the same stubborn line taken in Gallipoli.

JACK

I'll not hide my scars, let them stand as a testament, penance for my part in the war.

31 INT. RMLI HOSPITAL, DEAL, NOVEMBER 1915.

Eddie, Nes and Jordan sit around Jack's narrow bed, ghosts of their fallen comrades filling the empty spaces.

Nes nudges Jack's pillow.

NES

Looking solid, mate. Colour back in your cheeks.

Jordan grins, half-teasing.

JORDAN

Fits still tagging along?

One side of Jack's body shrugs.

JACK

Just the occasional visitor. Nothing to write home about.

They laugh - small, real.

EDDIE

We'll get you a desk job next to mine. Not quite the same as the coalyard or
(MORE)

EDDIE (CONT'D)
 as rewarding as being physical
 Traynors like these two, but we'll
 have the craic all the same.

They slap his working shoulder and file out, promising
 letters from his family and beers when he's up.

EDDIE, NES & JORDAN EXIT.

Before the door can swing shut, the same armchair officer
 from the Eastern Front enters, crisp ENVELOPE in hand.

The officer standing over him, Jack tears it open:

DISCHARGED, 80% DISABILITY PENSION.

The Officer claps Jack's back, a little too hard.

OFFICER
 You deserve this, Jack. Eight out of
 ten is a nice chunk. Your war is over,
 get some rest.

FOOTSTEPS FADE. SILENCE SWELLS. JACK STARES AT THE CEILING,
 LETTER CRUMPLING IN HIS REMAINING FIST. PURPOSE GONE - NO
 TRENCH, NOT EVEN A DESK, NO FIGHT LEFT TO WIN.

JACK'S BODY FREEZES, EYES GLAZE AS THE SHADOW APPEARS ONCE
 MORE UPON HIS DISTORTED HORIZON. THEN THE WAVE HITS AGAIN:
 BACK ARCHING, JAW LOCKING, BLOOD THREADING THE CORNER OF HIS
 MOUTH.

THE FIT THRASHES HIM ALONE, THE DEVIL'S RECEIPT FOR A SOUL
 CUT LOOSE.

CUT.

32 INT. RMLI HOSPITAL, DEAL, NOVEMBER 1915. - 6 MONTHS AFTER
 GALLIPOLI.

The military ward door swings shut behind Jack like a coffin
 lid. Dignity, identity and purpose left behind. Goodbye
 tastes like shrapnel that pounds his brain.

Nes grips his shoulder too tight, like he's afraid to let go. Jordan says nothing, eyes red as Jack is pulled from his brothers. Eddie wheels him out but he is soon taken from him by orderlies dressed in all white, lifting him into the back as if late for their next delivery.

JACK IS WHEELED OUT OF THE BARRACKS, ABANDONED BY EVERYTHING HE HAD FOUGHT FOR - THE CHAIR'S SQUEAKY WHEEL A FINAL MOCKING REMINDER OF THE BIKES THEY NEVER RODE TO CONSTANTINOPLE.

CUT.

33 INT. CIVILIAN WARD, HOSPITAL, LONDON, NOVEMBER 1915.

A new hospital corridor; An unnatural glare; no flags; no colour; no personality.

The nurse looks past Jack to the attendant wheeling him in.

NURSE

John Traynor?

He interjects, looking up at her, voice scraped thin.

JACK

It's Jack.

NURSE

Birth certificate says John, sir.
Policy.

She signs the attendant's clipboard and gifts Jack a condescending smile.

THE WHEELCHAIR LURCHES FORWARDS AS JACK IS HANDED OVER LIKE A PARCEL.

CUT.

34 INT. CIVILIAN WARD, HOSPITAL, LONDON, NOVEMBER 1915.

A whitewashed dorm; beds, old faces, radios tuned to nothing. An old man leans over to Jack.

OLD MAN

What's your story, John?

Jack opens his mouth to correct him but refrains.

JACK
(mutters)
Just... war.

CUT.

35 INT. CIVILIAN WARD, HOSPITAL, LONDON, 27TH NOVEMBER 1916 - 1
YEAR AFTER GALLIPOLI.

Another attempted nerve suture, another failure.

In a rare moment where Jack is not bed bound we see him
muster the strength to walk with a double cane outside.

HE CLOSES HIS EYES, BREATHEs IN THE SWEET CLEAN AIR IN A
MOMENT OF PEACE.

NURSE
Time to come in for your tea, John!

Every letter stripping away another layer of Jack's identity,
dignity, and fight.

CUT.

36 INT. CIVILIAN WARD, HOSPITAL, LONDON, NOVEMBER 1918. - 3
YEARS AFTER GALLIPOLI.

Two years later and Jack's condition has only got worse. A
shadow of his former self, he receives another letter
announcing that his pension is being increased to 100%
[September 1917] and he is again being transferred
unannounced - This time to the special institution for
epileptics, Maghull House.

AN ELDERLY LADY ON JACK'S LEFT PATs HIS HAND FAREWELL. A BED
BOUND GENTLEMAN TO JACK'S RIGHT WAVES A HANDKERCHIEF LIKE
SURRENDER.

The orderlies sign him out again, and wheel him onto the
Ambulance, the nurse more busy with her next burden to bid
him farewell.

CUT.

- 37 EXT. MAGHULL HOUSE FOR EPILEPTICS, LANCASHIRE, SEPT 1918. - 3 YEARS AFTER GALLIPOLI.

THE IRON GATES OF MAGHULL HOUSE CLANG SHUT, CASTING SHADOWS UP ITS WALLS.

THE COURTYARD SMELLS OF BLEACH AND LOST SOULS. THE AIR THICKENS. CONVULSIONS ECHO THROUGH BARRED WINDOWS, BODIES JERKING IN RHYTHM LIKE METRONOMES SET TO MADNESS.

Mr Traynor

A doctor reads off his identity bracelet.

WHEELS ROLL OVER STONE THAT MIGHT AS WELL BE OBSIDIAN. A SCREAM CUTS SHORT. ANOTHER FOLLOWS, WETTER. JACK FEELS IT: THIS IS WHERE THE DEVIL UNPACKS HIS BAGS. NO LAMP POSTS HERE. NO STRING BALLS. JUST GATES CLOSING BEHIND HIM, AND THE SQUEAK OF BEDSPRINGS.

CUT.

- 38 INT. NORTHERN HOSPITAL, LIVERPOOL, APRIL 1919. - 4 YEARS AFTER GALLIPOLI.

The ambulance doors slam like cell latches with the realisation that ten months at Maghull House were merely hell's waiting room.

Northern Hospital looms over Lime Street, close enough to smell homemade bread but barred by brick and iron.

Officiaries wheel in Patient #838

The surgeon - a new face, the same hunger - pinches his arm between iron pliers. He looks up at the nurse.

SURGEON

The arm's rotting meat. Get rid.

Jack's throat tightens; he shakes his head, his dead arm twitching in protest.

SURGEON (CONT'D)

Fine. Electrical re-education it is.

39 INT. NORTHERN HOSPITAL, LIVERPOOL, APRIL 1919. - 4 YEARS AFTER GALLIPOLI.

Corridors longer, lights colder, the hum of generators rumbling like distant thunder.

Stripped to the waist, electrodes stuck to dead flesh, current snaps in - white pain forks up Jack's arm, muscles jerking like hanged men dancing.

JACK BITES THE LEATHER STRAP; THE DEVIL GRINS THROUGH THE DOCTOR'S MASK. EACH ZAP IS A VOTE: SCIENCE SAYS DIE, FAITH SAYS HOLD ON. THE CHAIR CREAKS. THE SWITCH FLICKS AGAIN.

Jack bites the leather like Christ on Golgotha - no scream, just teeth grinding, veins popping blue across the dead arm and into what remains of his dead body. Doctors circle, clipboards in hand, eyes clinical; noting voltage, noting sweat, noting nothing of the man who once led men into battle.

ZAP!

The current crawls up his shoulder, snaps in his jaw. He feels the devil riding every volt.

ZAP!

The strap splits. Jack's eyes roll white. One more for good measure.

Zap!

Darkness takes him.

THE MACHINE WINDS DOWN. THE LEATHER, SOAKED IN BLOOD AND SWEAT, DROPS TO THE FLOOR LIKE A SPENT CROWN OF THORNS.

Doctors peel the pads off like stickers off a corpse. Two orderlies lift his limp frame off the table and deposit it back in the ward bed, still twitching, but still breathing.

CUT.

40 INT. SPRINGFIELD HOSPITAL, APRIL 1920. - 5 YEARS AFTER GALLIPOLI.

JACK GRIPS THE TWO HANDLED CANE LIKE IT'S A CRUCIFIX, DRAGGING HIMSELF OUT THE SIDE DOOR INTO A GLORIOUS BEAM OF LIGHT. FOR THIRTY SECONDS - NO MORE - HE'S NOT JOHN, NOT PATIENT #838, JUST HIMSELF. GRASS BETWEEN HIS TOES, AIR RUSHING THROUGH LUNGS HE'D FORGOTTEN HOW TO FILL. A ROBIN LANDS ON THE PATH, TILTS ITS HEAD AND CHIRPS. NO WHISTLES, NO GUNS. HE INHALES; THE WORLD TILTS RIGHT FOR A MOMENT.

A nurse calls.

NURSE

Back in.

CANE SCRAPES STONE. THE BIRD FLIES. THIRTY SECONDS - GONE.

41 INT. EPILEPTIC WARD, SPRINGFIELD HOSPITAL, APRIL 1920.

The ward smells like burnt bone. Major Monserrat stands over the bed, stethoscope dangling like a noose.

MAJOR MONSERRAT

Three fits a day - it's the devil's timetable now. We'll trephine. 2.5 centimeters off the skull, let the brain breathe.

Jack sees Nes's knuckles whiten on the bedrail. He doesn't speak, his eyes say it all.

This is another Gallipoli, another lie dressed as a cure.

Jordan stands opposite, younger, voice cracking like a boy's.

JORDAN

It could... it could really help, Jack. They said it's the pressure. This lets it out.

His words hang, too hopeful, too thin. Jack's wife - pale, palms together - nods like she's praying with her whole body, eyes pleading. His daughter, ribbons in hair, still too young to fully understand.

Eddie says nothing but his eyes tell Jack what he has always known; regardless of the decision, he will be there for him

and his family.

JACK'S GAZE DRIFTS: FIRST TO JORDAN'S EARNEST FACE, THEN TO HIS WIFE, WHOSE HOPE IS A KNIFE IN HIS RIBS. NO MEDALS NOW. NO CHEERS.

A SINGLE NOD OF AGREEMENT FROM JACK - THE DEVIL'S BARGAIN SEALED WITHOUT SOUND.

Orderlies step in. Nes loosens his grip as if doing so hurts. Jordan swallows and Eddie gently gives Mrs. Traynor his shoulder once again.

THE WHEELS START ROLLING - SLOW, INEVITABLE - DOWN THE CORRIDOR THAT SMELLS OF BLEACH AND ENDINGS. JACK SQUEEZES THE ROSARY HE RECEIVED IN A MILITARY CHAPEL A LIFETIME AGO.

The doors swing shut, Jack's body - God's temple - going in alone again.

CUT.

42 INT. SURGERY, SPRINGFIELD HOSPITAL, APRIL 1920.

The theatre smells like burnt bone.

SCALPEL, DRILL, THE WHINE OF BONE DUST. AN AREA OF THE BODY ONLY GOD HAD A RIGHT TO.

THEY LIFT AWAY JACK'S CROWN; A SOFT POP OF PRESSURE RELEASING, AND A PULSE YOU COULD COUNT WITH YOUR FINGERTIP.

CUT.

43 INT. EPILEPTIC WARD, SPRINGFIELD HOSPITAL, APRIL 1920.

JACK BLINKS AWAKE TO A COLD CROWN: STEEL PLATE RIVETED OVER THE HOLE, LEATHER STRAP BUCKLED UNDER HIS CHIN LIKE A SCHOOLBOY'S DUNCE CAP. HAIR SHAVED TO STUBBLE, FACE PALE AS THE CEILING.

Montserrat appears - voice flat as chalk.

MAJOR MONSERRAT

Complications. Legs went. You'll never walk again.

His wife squeezes Jack's remaining good hand; Monserrat's clipboard snaps shut. No apology. Just the click of the buckle, the weight of metal where bone used to be.

JACK STARES AT THE WALL, FEELS THE PULSE BEHIND THE PLATE
-GOD'S DRUM, STILL BEATING, STILL UNANSWERED.

Monserrat's words ring through his chilling crown of mockery
that rattles when the bed shifts - *never walk*.

JACK STARES AT LEGS THAT WON'T ANSWER, USELESS AS SANDBAGS.
FEELS THE BREEZE RUN THROUGH HAIR NO LONGER THERE. HAIR HE
COULD ONCE RUN BOTH HANDS THROUGH. THE SAME WIND THAT EVEN IN
HIS DARKEST DAYS PUSHED HIS COLLAR WHILE HE LEANED ON THE
CANE AND BREATHED - HIS ONE REPRIEVE. OUTSIDE WAS THIRTY
SECONDS OF LEGS THAT WORKED, LUNGS THAT WORKED, A SKY WITHOUT
CEILINGS.

The cane hangs on the wall like a joke nobody laughs at.

NOW EVEN THAT WAS STOLEN - NO SOIL HOLDING WEIGHT. NO
SPARROW, NO BREEZE TO FORGIVE HIM. JUST METAL, LEATHER, AND
THE SLOW DRIP OF TIME.

They took my name, my arm, my war, my
home - now they take the only prayer I
had left: walking free under God's
open roof.

THE BED SWALLOWS HIM, LEGS USELESS UNDER THE SHEETS. THE
DEVIL HADN'T TAKEN HIS LIFE, HE'D STOLEN JACK'S LIVELIHOOD,
HIS WALK HOME - BY LOCKING THE DOOR.

THE BREEZE KEEPS MOVING OUTSIDE. JACK KEEPS LYING.

THE DEVIL'S GRAND FINALE ERUPTS WITHOUT WARNING, WITHOUT
MERCY. JACK'S BODY JACK-KNIFES OFF THE MATTRESS, PLATE
CLANGING AGAINST THE BEDFRAME LIKE CHURCH BELLS IN HELL. HIS
EYES ROLL WHITE, MOUTH FOAMING CRIMSON, LEGS KICKING ONCE AT
AIR THEY'LL NEVER OWN AGAIN.

Nes lunges forward, caught by Jordan's grip. His wife presses
their daughter's face into her shoulder so she doesn't see
her father drown on dry land.

MAJOR MONSERRAT (CONT'D)
Six hours since his last convulsion.

The doctor states flatly, almost impressed - as if he's
timing fireworks.

MAJOR MONSERRAT (CONT'D)
Plenty of fragments came out you know.
He had no right to walk the first
time.

His words hang like smoke. Nes shakes; Jordan whispers no, no. His wife can't cry anymore. The fits slow, Jack's chest heaving under a sky that his legs will no longer support him under.

The doctor glances back, clipboard tucked under his arm like a trophy.

MAJOR MONSERRAT (CONT'D)

I wouldn't wait. Unconsciousness last time was twelve hours. Nothing more to be done here.

He turns - heels clicking cold - and leaves them.

Nes's fist stays clenched on the rail. Jordan's shoulders fold. His wife's hand trembles against her daughter's hair. And in the silence, the devil had won.

AWAY FROM THE IRISH NURSE'S WHISPERED PSALMS, AWAY FROM THE FRIENDS WHO'D ONCE LET HIM CARRY THEM, AWAY FROM FAMILY PRAYERS FOR HOME. NO MORE LIGHT SLIPPING THROUGH CRACKS. NO MORE HOPE BORROWED FROM OTHER HEARTS. GOOD HAD LINGERED BUT FAITH HAD MERELY DELAYED THE INEVITABLE.

HE HAD WAITED, SHARPENING HIS CLAWS ON EVERY SHARD, EVERY INCISION, EVERY WIRE, EVERY METAL PLATE - AND DELIVERED THE FINAL BLOW NOT WITH FIRE, BUT WITH STILLNESS.

JACK, BROKEN OPEN, ALONE. MISSION OVER.



PART III: LAST RITES. MR TRAYNOR - BURDEN #1

44 INT. EPILEPTIC WARD, SPRINGFIELD HOSPITAL, JULY 1921. - 6 YEARS AFTER GALLIPOLI.

Six years after the guns went quiet for Jack, the devil signs the discharge papers himself. Springfield Hospital hands John back to the street - legs dangling like wet rags, right arm shrunken to bone, mind lost in loops of yesterday's shellfire.

Eyes open to nothing. Fits still come three times a day, each one a slow reminder that the trenches never really ended.

The Doctor stamps his release form:

- Epileptic fits numbering three a day.
- Severe migraines.
- Loss of memory.
- General state of daze and confusion.
- Both legs paralysed.
- Right arm atrophied and completely useless.
- 2.5cm trephine in skull.
- Minimal control of bladder and bowels.

...Home to die.

No fanfare, no medals - just a wheelchair rolled to the kerb, release papers lying on his dead legs as the final death warrant.

THE SHADOW THAT WAS JACK TRAYNOR IS WHEELED AWAY, LEAVING
EVEN HELL BORED.

CUT.

45 EXT. HOME, LIVERPOOL DOCKS, JULY 1921.

The doorstep sags under Liverpool rain. Mrs Traynor fumbles the latch, eyes shining like she's seeing a ghost and a hero in one frame. His daughter, all elbows and courage.

Jack's lips twitch; the only signal needed for them to both passionately embrace Jack in his chair before the nurse can even finish what she has to say.

Then the orderly taps the handles.

ORDERLY

Wheelchair's hospital property. We need it back.

Shock freezes the hug. His daughter straightens.

DAUGHTER

Not a problem.

Jack feels the leather straps leave his thighs; the cold air licks skin that doesn't remember daylight.

In one clean motion his daughter scoops up Jack, dead weight against her chest, and carries him over the threshold. No grunt, no wobble: Another Traynor challenging the status quo. No spires of Bruges but the Traynor spirit of sweat, grit, determination, and a refusal to give up.

JACK FEELS THE WORLD TILT: LEGS DANGLING, METAL PLATE SCRAPING HER SHOULDER, AN UNSEEN TEAR SLIPPING DOWN HIS CHEEK. DIGNITY LEAKS OUT LIKE RAINWATER THROUGH THE CRACKED SILL, YET JACK'S CHEEK RESTS ON HIS DAUGHTER'S COLLARBONE AND FOR ONE BREATH HE DOESN'T CARE WHAT HE'S BECOME - SIX YEARS FROM GALLIPOLI - HE'S HOME.

The nurse calls after them, something about forms.

THE DOOR SLAMS SHUT.

46 INT. HOME, LIVERPOOL DOCKS, JULY 1920.

The bed creaks under Jack as his daughter lays him down, kisses his forehead, whispers good night. His wife lingers in the doorway, eyes heavy before following her out.

DOOR SHUTS.

Alone, air thick, no breeze, no sky. The room is a soot-black box; a single window smeared with coal dust from Liverpool's lungs. No light, just the grey haze of poverty clinging to the walls like old wallpaper.

He's not home - he's in a different cage, one that taunts him with a window showing him the life he could have had.

47 INT. HOME, LIVERPOOL DOCKS, OCTOBER 1920.

Months blur into the sheets. The bell by Jack's pillow, rings like a weak heartbeat. Footsteps: his daughter slips in smiling, slips her arms under his wasted body, lifts. No words.

Toilet, back, bed.

Toilet, back, bed.

Toilet, back, bed.

JACK IN A LIVING PURGATORY HE HAS PULLED HIS FAMILY INTO WITH HIM.

48 INT. HOME, LIVERPOOL DOCKS, DECEMBER 1920.

The worn bell jingles - no footsteps. His bowels rumble. Panic.

Jack drags his good arm to the bedside table, fingers clawing for purchase, trying to haul his deadweight. He rests his mangled arm on the table for support - it flops like jelly against bone, sandbag against brick.

He crashes to the floorboards, metal plate bouncing off the cold wooden floor. Legs useless.

Jack's wife's scream slices the air; daughter's feet thunder. The cage door swings open, but he is still trapped.

Bursting in they see a crumpled form of soldier that left, *Half the weight, half the man*, swallowing back tears.

49 INT. HOME, LIVERPOOL DOCKS, JANUARY 1921.

Abandoned by the country he served and not being able to afford his own wheelchair, Jack's bed has become his whole world - spring mattress sagged, blanket thin as paper, walls the colour of yesterday's smoke.

SUNLIGHT IS SOMETHING HE DREAMS IN FLICKERS: GOLD ON A LIVERPOOL STREET WITHOUT RUBBLE; THE WAY IT USED TO HIT THE CANAL BEFORE WAR.

MONTHS CRAWL; THE BELL RINGS, HIS DAUGHTER LIFTS HIM. DRIED BEDSORES RIPPING AFRESH AS THEY DETACH FROM SHEETS.

THE SAME FOUR WALLS, THE SAME SOOT WINDOW.

JACK ALONE, SUN SLANTING ACROSS CRACKED WALLPAPER. GLANCING DOWN SEES A DARK STAIN SPREAD BETWEEN HIS SHEETS, UNANNOUNCED, UNSTOPPABLE.

Jack hears footsteps coming up the stairs. The door opens to his daughter smiling, ready to lift.

Jack roars, face purple, voice shredded.

JACK

Get out!

She freezes, backs away, eyes wide as a child's.

THE DOOR SHUTS.

Later the carer arrives - an older woman with latex gloves and no questions - peels back the linen, rolls him like meat, wipes him like newsprint.

Jack stares at the ceiling, metal plate cold against his skull, every muscle screaming shame instead of pain. The devil doesn't need fire; he's already in the sheets.

THE DOOR SHUTS.

Jack stares at the ceiling and hears his own voice echo: Get out! He waits for the shame to settle. It doesn't. The pain in his shoulder, the wetness on his legs - none of it touches the ache behind his eyes.

It rises instead like the devil turned his back before Jack let go. The room shifts. Not light, not hope, just fact.

If he were back in no-man's-land with Robbie and Deano, he'd trade every step he ever took for one more minute of his daughter's voice saying Dad.

For one more night of his wife's hand in his. This room, this useless body - if that's the price for still having them - so be it.

The fit passes. The anger passes. What doesn't pass is the mirror. He sees it now.

Not the medals, not the bayonet charges - Jack Traynor was never meant to save. He was meant to stand. Even when standing hurts.

From this second forward, no more snarling. No more hiding in sheets. For the man they knew and the ones that never got to be - the one who laughed through trench foot, who named trenches city streets. Not because the war ended. Because the war became this bed, this bell.

The devil thought he'd won with paralysis and plate and piss - stained linen. He'd forgotten the one thing you can't amputate: character. Jack closes his eyes.

When she comes back tomorrow, she'll find him humming.

CUT TO LIGHT - SUNLIGHT, REAL THIS TIME, THROUGH A CRACKED WINDOW.

PART III CONTINUED: SALVATION. MR TRAYNOR - INCURABLE #838

50 INT. HOME, LIVERPOOL DOCKS, APRIL 1921 - JUNE 1923.

Soon after Jack allows Grace back into his life - knowing that darkness can't touch his core - a wheelchair rolls in from the British Red Cross. No name, just a man with a clipboard saying 'Donation'.

HIS DAUGHTER LIFTS HIM ONCE MORE, BUT THIS TIME SHE LOWERS HIM INTO WHEELS INSTEAD OF THE TOILET BOWL, AND JACK LETS OUT THE FIRST UNFORCED LAUGH IN YEARS; SUNLIGHT, REAL SUNLIGHT, STRIPES THE KITCHEN FLOOR; THE POLISHED COBBLES OUTSIDE LOOK ALMOST FRIENDLY.

Days later an air cushion arrives - soft as mercy - slipped under his spine where sores had been blooming like poppies. The Ministry of Pensions follows suit: a light propelling chair.

TWO MORE YEARS PASS AS JACK, LIVING THE LIFE OF AN INCURABLE INVALID LIVING AT HOME IN CONDITIONS OF CONSIDERABLE POVERTY, BUT THE DAILY RITUAL OF HIS DAUGHTER LIFTING HIM INTO HIS CHAIR IS ALWAYS RECEIVED WITH A SMILE. [JUXTAPOSING MONTAGE FROM TOILET LIFTS]

TIME SPEEDS PAST HIS WINDOW, POVERTY STILL BITING, FITS STILL KICKING - BUT JACK SMILES FROM HIS CHAIR WATCHING PASSERS-BY, AND NODS OF RECOGNITION TO NEIGHBOURS WHO PRETEND NOT TO NOTICE THE PLATE ON HIS HEAD OR THE WAY HIS RIGHT ARM DANGLES LIKE FORGOTTEN ROPE.

BRIEF VISITS FROM EDDIE, NES AND JORDAN ARE NOT RESENTED BUT RELISHED - THEY HAVE THEIR OWN FAMILIES TO PROVIDE FOR NOW. JACK'S CONDITION CONTINUES TO WORSEN BUT WHEN HIS UNFORGIVEN SHADOWS OF WAR, APPEARING AS CONVULSIONS COME, THEY ARRIVE IN PRIVATE; IN PUBLIC HE OFFERS THE SAME CROOKED SMILE HE ONCE GAVE HIS REGIMENT.

NIGHTS FALL, BREAD IS BROKEN, AND EACH DAY ENDS WITH A PRAYER NOT FOR HEALTH BUT OF THANKS - THE DEVIL APPARENTLY HAVING LOST HIS ADDRESS.

FADE OUT.

51 INT. HOME, LIVERPOOL DOCKS, JUNE 1923 - 8 YEARS AFTER GALLIPOLI.

A LETTER SNAKES UNDER THE MAILBOX FLAP, THE DELIVERER'S SHADOW RETREATING LIKE SMOKE BEFORE HIS WIFE ROUNDS THE CORNER.

Jack tears the envelope at the table:

Mossley Hill Incurables, Admission -
24 July, 1923.

His wife gasps. His daughter's spoon halts mid-air.

Jack reads it twice, folds it once, and rips it straight down the spine. The scrap flutters to the floor like a white flag no one saluted. Nothing is said, nothing is needed to be said. Surrender was never an option.

His brain - already scarred by shrapnel - will no longer be polluted by idle threats. The powers that be had become the pressure on his skull, not the metal in it.

MATTER CLOSED.

52 INT. HOME, LIVERPOOL DOCKS, JULY 1923, 8 YEARS AFTER GALLIPOLI

A week later the knock. The devil's messenger stands there, voice polished to pity, hands clasped behind his back as if delivering news to a widower.

PENSION DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL
Your pension will be removed - if you
refuse, Mr Traynor. Two pounds ten,
gone. Think of your wife and daughter.

The pull is precise - Jack's remaining heartstring, remaining weakness - family.

Neither of them break rank next to him, a hand on each of Jack's chair handles.

WIFE
Take it. I have two hands - I'll earn
every penny back.

DAUGHTER
So do I.

Jack in that moment sees it clearly: they will stand, be just fine with or without him. The final hurdle cleared. Jack meets the man's eyes.

JACK

I will not be returning.

OFFICIATE

We'll see.

The man pockets the threat and leaves empty-handed.

The door clicks shut. Silence swells, but Jack breaks it into ordinary chatter.

53 INT. HOME, LIVERPOOL DOCKS, JULY 1923, 8 YEARS AFTER GALLIPOLI

Alone in his room again, under candlelight, Jack bows his head. Metal plate warm on his scalp, he whispers.

Lord I am not worthy to receive you,
but I come to you today with a
request...

Do not let them take me, Lord. Do not
part me from my family again. Let me
stay, Lord - not for pride, for the
girl who carries me, for the woman who
fights for me, for..

Voice cracking, he pushes out something so inherently against the character this life had forced him to become -

...me. Let me enter into eternal rest
in Your kingdom, if that is now Your
wish. Whilst I cannot forgive myself
for my part in the war, I did my best
in Your name. Please do not send me
back there. This is all I'll ever ask
of You for myself...

Let this be my last battlefield.

HE MAKES THE SIGN OF THE CROSS, HIS ROSARY FROM WAR EVER
PRESENT.

54 INT. HOME, LIVERPOOL DOCKS, JULY 1923.

July 1923, the air thick as porridge. Jack is in bed - plate gleaming under one grimy bulb - when the neighbor Mrs. McCanahan knocks, face flushed from the parish hall.

MRS. MCCANAHAN

Father McKinley has just announced
that our Liverpool Diocese will be
making their first ever pilgrimage to
Lourdes next month! 13 pounds total,
one pound deposit...

She blurts out as much to herself as the room. Already
formulating a shopping list in her head.

TIME STOPS AROUND JACK. HE KNOWS IT IS AN INVITATION FROM OUR
LADY; ONE LAST JOURNEY, THIS TIME TOWARD PEACE.

He watches his wife out back, hanging out bedsheets, humming
a wordless tune despite everything. Jack calls out to her -
voice cracked but steady.

JACK

Get the Todd's box from the cabinet
will you love?

She freezes.

MRS. TRAYNOR

Jack? The emergency sovereign from
your brother?

JACK

If you would...

She climbs, fingers shaking, bringing down the little tin. A
single gold sovereign glints like a small sun. Jack presses
it into Mrs. McCanahan's palm.

JACK (CONT'D)

Book me in.

The neighbor hesitates.

MRS. MCCANAHAN

Jack, you're...

JACK

I'm going.

55 INT. HOME, LIVERPOOL DOCKS, JULY 1923.

Father McKinley arrives next day in his black soutane, rosary clicking like bones.

FATHER MCKINLEY
You'll die before even getting to
Lourdes, son. Give it up.

JACK
I've paid my deposit, I'm going.
Lourdes or Mossley Hill - I'm choosing
Lourdes.

Father McKinley leans in.

FATHER MCKINLEY
You'll need a Doctors' sign-off. You
can't travel without a Medical
Certificate. There's just no way.

The family ring many local Doctors, all white coats and
shaking heads. Every stethoscope thuds the same verdict:

DR MCCONNELL
It'd be suicide even trying to get to
Lime Street. I will not accept this
responsibility.

A medical certificate is denied.

Father McKinley pleads again.

FATHER MCKINLEY
The Church won't back it. Without a
medical certificate, they won't be
insured.

Jack smiles, the same smile that once faced Ottoman fire.

JACK
Then you back me.

The priest bows his head for a moment, looks at each family
member, crosses himself, and signs the paperwork anyway.

JACK (CONT'D)
If this is sin, let it be mine.

56 INT. HOME, LIVERPOOL DOCKS, JULY 1923.

His brother's gold sovereign gone - twelve pounds more to scrape.

JACK'S WIFE DIGS OUT THE BROOCH HER MOTHER GAVE HER ON HER WEDDING DAY, PRESSES IT INTO THE PAWNBROKER'S PALM LIKE HANDING OVER A HEARTBEAT. JACK PAWNS HIS OLD POCKET WATCH - THE ONE THAT STOPPED TICKING THE NIGHT OF THE FIRST FIT. THE HOUSE EMPTIES OF SILVERWARE, OF STORIES BUT POUND BY POUND, THE DRAWER FILLS.

57 INT. LEWIS'S SHOES, LIVERPOOL, JULY 1923.

The shop bell tinkles like a small apology as mother and daughter step in - thin coats, eyes hollow from last night's vigil.

The Lewis's sale rack stands empty except for one pair of brown brogues - five shillings. The girl lifts them; the leather creaking like old hinges. They take them to the counter.

MRS. TRAYNOR

For my husband.

Voice flat against the polished floor.

MRS. TRAYNOR (CONT'D)

He hasn't walked in three years.

The shopkeeper - moustache neat, sleeves rolled up - takes the shoes, turns one in his hands as if weighing more than leather.

SHOPKEEPER

He'll walk in these.

Matter-of-fact, almost gentle.

A sad smile crosses her face - small, reluctant, the kind that knows promises bruise easiest. She presses the coins into his palm, takes the wrapped box, and leaves with their daughter without another word.

THE BELL RINGS AGAIN, SOFTER, LIKE IT'S SORRY TOO.

58 INT. HOME, LIVERPOOL DOCKS, JULY 1923.

Friday night, Jack's family kneels at St. Michael's Evening Service, the night before departure. Jack rests, before his final battle.

Eddie, Nes and Jordan arrive that night, caps off, boots still caked with shipyard clay. They kneel by the bed like it's a shrine, faces older, same vow in their eyes.

NES

We'll get you there.

JORDAN

Carry you if we have to.

Jack nods.

JORDAN (CONT'D)

(whispers)

You're mad.

NES

...Good mad.

Jack smiles - the same smile from the trenches, just thinner.

THE DEVIL KNOCKS AT THE WINDOW, BUT THE COIN IS GONE, THE BED WILL BE EMPTY BY DAWN.

THE REMAINING THREE FRIENDS WHEEL A MAN OUT INTO JULY HEAT,
ALL OF THEM CERTAIN HE'S DYING - BUT NOT BEFORE HE SEES
LOURDES' WATERS.

59 EXT. LIME STREET STATION, LIVERPOOL, SATURDAY 21ST JULY 1923.

Lime Street looms, steam hissing like warning. Eddie pushes Jack in his bathchair through the streets of Liverpool around the back of the station to dodge the gathering crowds, dodge the questions, dodge the pity.

Eventually making it through, they witness the White Ambulance Train, bound for Lourdes, already pulling out of the station.

Eddie curses under his breath. Jack's eyes remain on his destination - focus, adapt.

JACK
Alright, Blue train it is.

Father McKinley appears in his black coat, hand on the brake.

FATHER MCKINLEY
Give up, son. You've made your point,
you got here. Now head home.

Jack leans forward.

JACK
You can shove me in the coal tender if
you have to, Father.

Nes and Jordan, rucksacks on backs, arrive at Jack's side.

JACK (CONT'D)
But I am getting on that train.

The priest looks at Eddie, at the empty platform, then steps aside.

The blue train idles like a loaded gun. No ramp, no lift, just an open carriage window staring back and the steel tracks beckoning below.

Jack's squadron starts by transferring him onto a stretcher, Jack's body rigid, metal plate flashing like a bayonet tip. Eddie braces Jack's shoulders like they're lifting Father Finn off wire once again. Complete.

Next, the lift. Jordan and Nes grab one end of the stretcher, Eddie the other; One, two - up. Three men, one breath. God's adrenaline flooding their veins like a mother lifting a car off her child.

Nes and Jordan hoist the stretcher shoulder-high, Jack rocking with the motion. His dead arm flops out, swinging 8ft above the tracks.

Eddie sees it, lunges, catches the wrist with his own forearm. The stretcher tilts; Jack's head nearly slipping off the edge. Eddie doesn't let go, he twists instead - arm and stretcher pinned against the sill, bone-grinding, veins popping.

Jordan sprints, vaults the step and hoists from the inside.

Nes shifts alone, legs shaking as if back on the firing step in Gallipoli's sands. The strength of faith and resilience pumping through his wrists.

Jordan pulls with all his might and the window swallows Jack with a grunt that echoes down the aisle. Stretcher kept upright by Jordan, he is locked between seats like a field gun.

Eddie climbs aboard last, forearm purple but free.

His regiment linger at the doorway for a moment, heads bowed to their friend; officer; leader as he slips in and out of consciousness. Nes straightens, Jordan wipes sweat and Eddie gives Jack's good hand a final squeeze.

EDDIE

See you in Lourdes, Lad.

Nes soberly pats Jordan on the arm.

NES

Come on.

They had pulled him through the first mile south, his Dardanelles, but he must now face Gallipoli alone.

The carriage door slides shut. The whistle bites. The train lurches forward, stretcher creaking with Jack's joints.

JACK, ALONE AGAIN. JUST HIM, THE SWAY OF THE HOT, STALE CARRIAGE AND THE DEVIL TAPPING AT THE GLASS, WAITING AT EVERY MILE MARKER.

NOW THE REAL FRONT LINE BEGINS - WHETHER HE'LL EVEN MAKE IT THROUGH THE NIGHT TO LOURDES, LET ALONE BACK.

PART IV: ATONEMENT. JACK TRAYNOR - PILGRIM #111

60 INT. TRAIN TO LOURDES - NIGHT, SATURDAY 21ST JULY 1923.

Jack's episodes cause the train to grind to a halt for the first time - no station, no lights, just moonlight and shadows on empty tracks. Jack's breath rattles, the carriage tilts, everyone thinks he's gone.

ROBBIE'S DEAD OPEN EYES, DEANO'S BODY FOLDED OVER A SANDBAG, HIS WIFE'S LAUGH GONE BRITTLE, DAUGHTER'S SMALL HANDS CLEANING PISS STAINED BEDSHEETS - EVERY MEMORY A SPLINTER. HE DOESN'T CRY; HE JUST LETS IT CRUSH HIM, THE WAY JESUS LET HIS CROSS KISS THE DIRT - ACKNOWLEDGING THE WEIGHT OF HIS SINS.

61 INT. TRAIN TO LOURDES - DAWN, SUNDAY 22ND JULY 1923.

Wheels lock again somewhere after dawn. The engine coughs, the conductor whispers there is no hospital for miles. Having survived the night and its shadows, Jack encounters his second fall in France's Summer heat.

NOW THE DEAD AREN'T HIS OWN - HE SEES A YOUNG GERMAN SOLDIER WOUNDED BEGGING FOR HELP, HEARS THE FEMALE TURKISH SNIPER'S GARGLING CRY. THE WAR WASN'T HIS ALONE; IT WAS HERS, IT WAS EVERYONE'S. JACK TOSSES AND TURNS, UNCONSCIOUSLY SQUEEZING HIS ROSARY BEADS FROM WAR HARDER. HIS ARM TWITCHES, NOT IN PAIN NOW - GUILT.

His squadron stand around him, awaiting his inevitable demise. Eddie squeezes the wooden stretcher handle as if taking its weight would help. A nurse doing the rounds, mops his brow.

THE CARRIAGE STEAMS, SHAME THICKER THAN SWEAT.

62 INT. TRAIN TO LOURDES - MORNING, SUNDAY 22ND JULY 1923.

The third stop: Jack body fails him completely. The doctor onboard shakes his head.

JACK DOESN'T WAIT FOR RESURRECTION - HE GRINDS HIS JAW, AND FORCES AIR BACK IN. NO VISIONS, NO ANGELS, JUST THE PROMISE:

I'll make Lourdes.

HE HADN'T COME ALL THIS WAY TO DIE. HE WAS HERE TO LEAD, WHETHER IT WAS FROM THE FRONT LINE OR STRETCHER - TO INSPIRE, TO GIVE HOPE - HIS SINS, THEIR SINS, HIS CROSS THE WOODEN STRETCHER.

THE TRAIN JERKS FORWARD AGAIN, SLOWER, BUT MOVING.

63 INT. TRAIN TO LOURDES - DAY, SUNDAY 22ND JULY 1923.

FRENCH POPPY FIELDS BLUR PAST. EVERY JOLT PROVING A POINT: IF A MAN WITH NO LEGS, ONE ARM, AND A HOLE IN HIS HEAD CAN CLATTER SEVEN HUNDRED MILES WITHOUT DYING, THEN THE BLOKE IN THE NEXT CARRIAGE WITH HALF A LUNG OR A MIND STITCHED TOGETHER WITH MORPHINE CAN PUSH HIS OWN WHEELS ONE MORE MILE.

As the gruellingly hot, sweaty train continues on to Lourdes, Jack slips in and out of consciousness. Despite his bravery, his body betrays him one more time. No longer in control of his body Jack soils himself.

JACK ALLOWS HIMSELF A SINGLE TEAR TO TRACE HIS CHEEK AS HE FACES HIS SHAME - CALLING FOR HIS FRIENDS TO HELP IN SUCH MATTERS BEING OUT THE QUESTION.

THIS MAY NOT BE GALLIPOLI, LEADING ABLE BODIED MEN UP SANDBANKS. THIS WAS HIS NEW CHARGE, JUST AS IMPORTANT: THE LAME, THE LIMPING, THE FORGOTTEN - EVERY INVALID WHO WAS TOLD 'THAT IS FAR ENOUGH'.

JACK'S BATTLE CONTINUES.

64 INT. TRAIN CARRIAGE, LOURDES TRAIN STATION - DAY, SUNDAY 22ND JULY 1923.

The train wheezes into Lourdes like an old warhorse that's finally reached the trough.

Jack, breath shallow, continues to slip in and out of fever dreams as he battles unseen demons through the fog.

THE GHOSTS OF JACK'S PAST CROWD THE COMPARTMENT - NAME AND NATIONALITY BADGES GLINTING LIKE DOGTAGS, PERSONIFYING HIS SHAME FURTHER: A GERMAN WITH A BAYONET SCAR, A TURK STILL TASTING SAND, ANOTHER FACE HE GUTTED OUTSIDE BRUGES. THEY LOOM ABOVE HIM, SILENT - HELL'S FINAL TRIBUNAL.

He tries to push himself up, to go down fighting, but arms

catch him from all sides. Then light cracks through: smiles, not snarls. Hands, not claws.

The German mutters in French, the Turk in broken English.

OTTOMAN VOLUNTEER

Easy, soldier. We have you.

Not the dead - volunteers - accents like a Babel of mercy. No uniforms, no bayonets, just sleeves rolled up from Istanbul, Berlin, Liverpool.

VOLUNTEER HANDS SLIDE UNDER JACK'S TORSO, BETWEEN SOILED BLANKETS. PAIN WORSE THAN A BULLET WOUND IS SEEN ON JACK'S FACE. RATHER THAN FLINCH FROM THE SOILED BLANKETS, JACK IS GREETED BY A PURE, UNWAVERING SMILE SHOWING NO JUDGEMENT. 'LE SERVICE' THE MAN WHISPERS.

They lift him like a fallen banner, carry him through the steam, past the platform where the devil thought he'd won. Jack's head lolls. The eight-year, final battle was won. Everything else after this was a blessing. He allows his metal skull to relax into the pillow for what seems the first time.

LOURDES - WHERE THE SHADOWS OF GHOSTS BECOME MEN WHO CHOSE THE LIGHT. A TIMELESS PLACE THE WAR NEVER DARED TOUCH.

65 EXT. LOURDES STATION PLATFORM - DAY, SUNDAY 22ND JULY 1923.

The BRANCARDIER [Hospitalité Notre-Dame de Lourdes (HNDL) Volunteers] lift Jack, his spine bracing for another scream of pain. No additional pain comes as the men expertly lift him from stretcher to custom made train stretcher, lift him off the train onto the platform and wheel him onto the ambulance cars via TRANGLLOT (stretcher trolley).

Nes, Jordan and Eddie shove through the crowd on the platform too late to reach Jack. Eddie curses under his breath.

NES

That was our watch!

Nes spits, red-faced, to one of the remaining volunteers on the platform. The Brancardier turns - Ottoman badge, but voice soft.

OTTOMAN BRANCARDIER

It's everyone's duty here.

He offers a hand. Nes knocks it away.

Eddie pauses, thinks, asks.

EDDIE

How you lifted him, will you teach us?

They do. Jordan is shoved onto the stretcher.

JORDAN

What, me?

OTTOMAN BRANCARDIER

Of course. We must understand how it feels.

He's terrified, laughing nervously through it, arms flailing like a drunk cadet. They teach the soldiers the correct grip - one from the back, hands under armpits bracing with the wrists; one under the legs, the German Brancardier at the side guiding the torso.

ONE. TWO. THREE - THEY LIFT AS ONE - MOVING MORE THAN THE POWER THEY COULD HAVE ACCUMULATED INDIVIDUALLY.

NEXT THE PIVOT - FEAR MELTING AS PURPOSE CLICKS.

FADE OUT

66 INT. ASILE HOSPITAL, LOURDES - DAY, SUNDAY 22ND JULY 1923.

WHEELS SCREAM DOWN THE CORRIDOR LIKE THEY DID AFTER GALLIPOLI AS JACK FIGHTS FOR HIS LIFE - ONE LAST TIME, BARELY ALIVE BUT ALREADY HOME.

WHITE BLUR, LAMPS WHIPPING OVERHEAD. HIS BODY JACK-KNIFES ON THE TROLLEY, PLATE CLANGING AGAINST THE TROLLEY RAIL, FOAM FLECKED CRIMSON.

FLATLINE CUTS THE SOUND OUT OF THE WORLD - RINGING LIKE A BURST EARDRUM.

SCREEN BLACK.

67 INT. ASILE HOSPITAL, LOURDES - NIGHT, SUNDAY 22ND JULY 1923.

EYELIDS CRACK OPEN LIKE BUNKER DOORS - A VOID WITH A CORRIDOR

OF LIGHT AT THE FAR END. IN IT STANDS THE SILHOUETTE OF A WOMAN, ROBES BATHED IN LIGHT. OUR LADY.

JACK'S BREATH CATCHES, GRATITUDE FLOODING HIM - PEACE, RELIEF, TEAR READY. HE HAD DIED, HE HAD MADE IT, SHE HAD COME.

Then she steps into the room, red mane of hair falling down her back. Focus snaps. Horror floods Jack's face: not Mary - the IRISH NURSE from a different lifetime. The devil's last joke - resurrected just to be seen broken.

JACK POV. THEIR EYES LOCK. JACK SEES HER REMEMBER HIM - STANDING TALL, NOT A TWITCHING RELIC. SHAME FLOODS HIM; HE'S THE SHADOW OF THAT MAN, SOILED, HELPLESS, AND SHE IS SEEING EVERY INCH.

NURSE POV. SHE PAUSES FOR BARELY A HEARTBEAT, AS SHE NOTICES HER OWN ROSARY BEADS TWISTED IN HIS FIST. HER EYES SOFTEN; SHE COMES FORWARD, TAKES HIS TREMBLING HAND. NO WORD. JUST A LOOK:

*I know the man you were,
and this is still you.*



The nurse glances at his sheets, still stained from the journey. Jack stares up at the ceiling, the tear he had saved for joy betraying him once again.

She slips out the room, returning with a ceramic jug and bucket, warm water sloshing, sponge dripping like mercy.

SILENCE SWELLS, BROKEN ONLY BY WATER RUNNING SOFT, A MOTHER'S MERCY AGAINST A SOLDIER'S PRIDE.

JACK KEEPS HIS EYES SHUT TIGHT, JAW CLENCHED - EVERY GENTLE STROKE A FRESH KNIFE TURN OF HUMILIATION; THE STING OF BEING LIFTED, TURNED, EXPOSED. A HERO OF BOTH THE WESTERN AND EASTERN FRONT NOW LYING HELPLESS WHILE A STRANGER WIPES HIS BOTTOM WITH THE SAME DEVOTION SHE MIGHT GIVE A CHILD.

She tenderly rolls him, her fingers steady his hip. She unwraps the filth, wipes every inch. No disgust, no rush, no judgement, only reverence - just Mary Magdalene at the tomb with a sponge and myrrh.

THE SPONGE TRACES THE SCARS LIKE BRAILLE; WATER RUNS PINK THEN CLEAR, CARRYING AWAY BLOOD AND YEARS. CLEAN CLOTH FOLDS AROUND HIM ONCE MORE, THE QUIET FINALITY OF DIGNITY RETURNED, EVEN IF JACK CAN'T YET CLAIM IT.

He hadn't died. Not yet. But in that quiet chamber, dignity is laid back on him like a shroud reversed.

THE DEVIL WATCHES FROM THE HALLWAY. HE DOESN'T DARE ENTER.

68 INT. ASILE HOSPITAL, LOURDES - MORNING, DAY [1] MONDAY 23RD JULY 1923.

Morning light shines through the hospital ward. Nes, Eddie and Jordan enter like a squad on parade. They lift Jack with the technique shown by HNDL Volunteers; a team not defined by borders on a map.

NO GRUNT THIS TIME, NO STRAIN, JUST SMOOTH LEVERAGE THAT MAKES IT LOOK EASY.

JACK STIRS, EYES SLIT OPEN; A GHOST OF A SMILE FLICKING ACROSS CRACKED LIPS: PROUD THEY HAD LISTENED.

JACK

Take me where they go.

Jack croaks.

JACK (CONT'D)

The pilgrims. The Stations of the Cross. The Baths. All of it.

No argument. They oblige, resigned to leaving Jack's fate in God's Hands now.

THEY PUSH OFF.

Gravel rattles under wheels; sun slices through the BASILICA's ARCHES. Jack's head lolls, but he keeps it up, watching dawn over the sanctuary as pilgrims shuffle, not for a miracle but for courage.

JACK'S STRETCHER TROLLEY RATTLES LIKE ARTILLERY PAST THE FIRST STATION: PILATE CONDEMNS JESUS TO DIE.

AT THE NEXT STATION THE WHISPER OF LATIN DRIFTS OVER THE RATTLE OF JACK'S TRANGLLOT [STRETCHER TROLLEY]. THE SECOND STATION: JESUS ACCEPTS HIS CROSS.

THE TRANGLLOT RATTLES ON, TOWARDS THE NEXT STATION: JESUS FALLS THE FIRST TIME.

JACK SEIZES. FIRST A JERK, THEN FULL SEIZURE: BACK BOWS, HEAD SNAPS, FOAM FLECKED RED; THE STRETCHER BUCKS LIKE A FIELD GUN RECOILING. THE DEVIL'S LAST SHOT, RIGHT AT THE THRESHOLD, AS IF HELL WON'T LET HIM CROSS IN PEACE.

Jordan curses.

EDDIE

Hold him.

NES GRABS JACK'S SHOULDERS. JACK CONTINUES TO CONVULSE. PILGRIMS STEP BACK, CROSSING THEMSELVES.

THEY WHEEL JACK PAST THE FOURTH STATION: JESUS MEETS HIS AFFLICTED MOTHER.

69 EXT. PLATEAU PISCINES, LOURDES SANCTUARY - DAY [1]

THE LINE PARTS, EYES WIDE. BLOOD THREADS FROM JACK'S MOUTH ONTO HIS COLLAR LIKE THE MEDAL HE NEVER WANTED.

The HEAD ATTENDANT of the Piscine's (Lourdes Baths) looks once at Jack and, voice flat, makes to dismiss him.

HEAD ATTENDANT

Not today. Too sick.

Jack's eyes clear just long enough to rasp a response, blood bubbling.

JACK

No. I've come to be bathed. If I die,
I'll die in a good place.

The Head Attendant freezes, ruffling his nose - Trouble.

HEAD ATTENDANT

We can't have that.

Jack slumps, gone again.

The Head Attendant turns on his heel and disappears into the

baths to find a more worthy soul.

EDDIE'S FISTS TIGHTEN ON THE HANDLE. NES SWEARS UNDER HIS BREATH; JORDAN JUST STARES AT THE BLOOD DRYING ON JACK'S LIP.

THE DOOR OF THE BATHS OPENS AGAIN - THIS TIME SOFT, DELIBERATE. THE IRISH NURSE STEPS OUT; THE SAME RED MANE FALLING DOWN HER BACK, THE SAME EYES THAT REMEMBER THE VOWS MADE ON A DEATHBED A LIFETIME AGO.

TIME FOLDS; THE WAR SLAPS THEM SIDEWAYS: EIGHT YEARS, THREE OCEANS, ONE OATH - AND IT LANDS RIGHT IN THEIR CHESTS. NO WORDS COME.

JORDAN'S MOUTH DROPS OPEN, NES FORGETS TO BREATHE. EDDIE SWALLOWS, EYES WIDE, FINGERS NOW TREMBLING ON THE RAIL. HE LOOKS AT THE NURSE, THEN AT JACK'S BLOOD-STREAKED MOUTH, THEN BACK.

EDDIE

Till his dying day.

Eddie almost whispers it.

This is it - Our Lady's hand, the bells, come to escort him over.

Thank you for bringing him home.

He doesn't realise he's crying.

JACK'S BODY BUCKS AGAIN, SHOULDERS JERKING AGAINST THE STRAPS. SHE ARRIVES AT HIS SIDE BEFORE ANYONE MOVES - KNEES ON STONE, HAND SLIDING OVER HIS RUINED RIGHT ARM, FINGERS WEAVING THROUGH HIS OWN LIKE SHE'S UNTANGLING FR.FINN FROM BARBED WIRE; TWISTED TENDONS THAT STILL CLUTCH HER ROSARY.

The convulsions stall, loosen, pull back. Jack's breath evens. She doesn't look up. Just stands; slow, certain. The nurse walks past them, voice low but clear.

IRISH NURSE

Follow me.

They do. Around the corner, past crates and buckets, to the empty children's baths.

70 INT. PISCINES, LOURDES SANCTUARY - DAY [1]

Inside, she turns to the men.

IRISH NURSE
Undress him.

AWKWARD HANDS FUMBLE; BOOTS, TROUSERS, BOXERS EASED DOWN
UNDERNEATH LINEN CLOTH - NO STINK, NO SHAME, NO STAINED SKIN
- THE NURSE'S MIDNIGHT MERCY STILL HOLDS.

Jack's rolled to one side, sheets slide under - clean linen
wrapping his delicate frame like a shroud. They stand either
side of the stone basin.

IRISH NURSE (CONT'D)
On three.

Hail Mary, full of grace.

EDDIE
One.

IRISH NURSE
The Lord is with thee.

JORDAN
Two.

Blessed art thou amongst women, and
blessed is the fruit of thy womb,
Jesus.

NES
Three.

THE COLD WATER BITES, JACK'S CORPSE JOLTS IN SHOCK, NOT A
CONVULSION. AIR WHISTLES OUT OF HIM, WATERS ENVELOP HIM, EYES
ROLL.

IRISH NURSE
That's enough for now.

THEY LIFT HIM OUT, DRAPE THE ROBE, RE-DRESS HIS LIMBS.

EDDIE
Holy Mary, Mother of God, Pray for us
sinners, now and at the hour of our
death.

HE HANGS IN THEIR ARMS; UNCONSCIOUS AGAIN, BUT NO BLOOD,

WATERS RUNNING CLEAR - LIMP NOT RIGID.

AMEN.

71 EXT. PLATEAU PISCINES, LOURDES SANCTUARY - DAY [1]

The squadron files out into the shaded waiting area outfront, shoulders looser, the morning air cooler than it felt an hour ago.

JACK'S BREATHING HAS STEADIED; NO MORE BLOOD AT THE LIP, JUST THE FAINT TREMOR OF A MAN WHO'S BEEN ALLOWED TO LIVE ANOTHER HOUR. EDDIE AND JORDAN EXCHANGE QUIET NODS - HOPE IS A SMALL THING, BUT IT IS THEIRS NOW.

Nes hangs back, staring at the line of pilgrims shuffling forward: crutches, wheelchairs, eyes lifted like beggars at heaven's back door. He scowls. The Irish nurse catches it.

IRISH NURSE

You disapprove?

She asks, gently, not accusing. Nes shrugs.

NES

People here are praying for a miracle.
False hope is cruel.

She studies him for a moment in a way that makes Nes feel naked.

IRISH NURSE

Who are we to judge? Hope is the miracle.

Try saying to a child, blind from birth, that all that exists is what can be seen? It does not matter what you believe in. These people find peace and hope being in Lourdes. That should be enough.

She places her hand lightly on his shoulder - warm, steady - then gone.

Peace and forgiveness starts within.

She walks off through the crowd.

NES STAYS PLANTED, THE SCOWL SOFTENING INTO SOMETHING HARDER
TO NAME.

72 INT. ASILE HOSPITAL, LOURDES - DAY [1]

The return trip to the hospital is all easy chatter - Jordan cracking jokes, Eddie humming, the stretcher trolley rolling smoothly as if the sanctuary's grace is still under its wheels.

Jack manages a thin smile, convulsion free, the first real lull in days.

But the hospital doors swing open and the optimism snags. Halfway to the bed, Jack's spine arcs like a bowstring at the point of snapping; Jack's head plate clangs the rail, dark red foam bubbling afresh.

THREE SOLDIERS, ONE CRIPPLE, BACK IN THE MAN-MADE WARD WHERE MEDICINE'S WALLS BOUNCE EVERY DEMON STRAIGHT BACK AT JACK.

IGNORANT, THEY WHEEL HIM IN ANYWAY. BY THE TIME THE SHEETS ARE TUCKED IN, HE'S BUCKING SO HARD THE FRAME SHAKES; EDDIE PRESSES THE BELL, JORDAN MUTTERS PRAYERS, NES STANDS USELESS, FISTS CLENCHED ON NOTHING.

Disheartened, they file out, footsteps echoing like retreat drums knowing nothing can be done, leaving Jack alone with his shadows and an unanswered beep for assistance.

73 INT. ASILE HOSPITAL, LOURDES - NIGHT [1]

Night drops. Corridors dim once again. The Irish nurse steps through like a candle in fog. No rush, no words; bucket & sponge, her familiar ritual.

Jack doesn't shut his eyes this time. Dead-still gaze fixed on the wall, he allows her to roll him. The shame still burns, but quieter.

*The big shame would have been being
seen by his brothers in arms in soiled
sheets. Nes wiping him.*

Jack starts to understand - this is learning, inch by inch - help isn't defeat, it's the next trench.

Water runs clear. She rinses the sponge, folds the sheets back over him. He keeps staring, not crying now, just seeing:

*Dignity doesn't die when it's
borrowed; it just changes hands.*

She finishes, rolls him back - his body a dead weight, having undergone hours of rigor mortis. But in that moment, their eyes lock.

Hers steady, his wide, glassy but unblinking. No words. No nod. Just two people who have seen each other at the edge and still chose mercy. In that look: A thank you. An I know. It's enough.

THE SILENCE AFTER IS SOFTER THAN ANY PRAYER.

74 INT. MINISTRY OF PENSIONS, LIVERPOOL - MORNING, TUESDAY 24TH JULY 1923

The Ministry corridor smells of boiled tea and old ledgers. Mrs. Traynor, coat too thin, wrists naked of jewellery, stands at the hatch while a clerk in spectacles snaps.

CLERK

Name?

MRS. TRAYNOR

Traynor. Jack. I mean, I'm John
Traynor's wife.

The clerk flips cards - thin lips, sharp voice.

CLERK

Due at the incurables ward of Mossley
Hill this morning. Where is he?

She swallows.

MRS. TRAYNOR

France. Lourdes.

A pause sharp enough to cut paper.

CLERK

And why exactly does a war pensioner
take a foreign holiday instead of
reporting here?

She hears the accusation - *why waste our money?* But she keeps her voice flat.

MRS. TRAYNOR

I pawned my wedding ring, my mother's
brooch, everything we had for him to
(MORE)

MRS. TRAYNOR (CONT'D)

go.

The clerk's pen hovers, scrawls something, and waves her on to the next window without looking up.

The second clerk, softer chin, older eyes.

CLERK 2

Lourdes? Why go at all, if he's so broken?

She swallows but stands tall in unwavering defence of her husband.

MRS. TRAYNOR

He has faith in it. He went there because he believes he will come back walking...

The words hang-bare. Stupid. Brave. She doesn't add what she knew to be true - *he hadn't planned past Lourdes. Just trusted the next breath would show up.*

The man's eyes soften, he stamps something and passes her on.

THE ROOM QUIETENS. PAPERS RUSTLE LIKE MASS CARDS. THE CLERK'S HAND STILLS ON THE LEDGER.

CLERK 2

Most don't come back on their feet. You know.

MRS. TRAYNOR

I know.

He closes the file gently. No lecture, just pity.

CLERK 2

We'll back-date the absence. Tell Mossley Hill you telegraphed.

Sorry, love.

Pension Approved, he pushes it across to her. She gives him a courteous nod, and turns before the pity reaches her face.

OUTSIDE, THE WIND OFF THE MERSEY CARRIES ENGINE SMOKE AS GULLS CRY.

75 EXT. PLATEAU PISCINES, LOURDES SANCTUARY - MORNING, DAY [2]
TUESDAY 24TH JULY 1923.

THE SAME CAREFUL LIFT - JACK'S BODY, NOW ONLY 8 STONE - LIGHT
AS FORGIVENESS. THE SAME ROLL DOWN TO THE BATHS.

Outside, a young Italian and German Brancardier from the
railway station, bar the gate, forming a polite barrier.

Nes, pride still damaged from the station, creates a fuss
demanding an English speaker.

BLUE APRON LOOSE, SLEEVES HIGH, SKIN BROWNEED BY FOREIGN SUN -
EMERGES OSCAR.

HE SPOTS THEM AND AFTER A MOMENT'S PAUSE, FACE UNREADABLE, HE
OFFERS THEM A TIGHT CORNER-OF-THE-MOUTH SMILE AND A SLOW NOD
- PEACE, HARD-WON BUT FOUND IN LOURDES THROUGH HIS OWN PATH.

Oscar calmly walks over.

JORDAN, FINALLY REGISTERING THAT HE IS NOT SEEING A GHOST
BOLTS OVER LIKE HE'S CROSSING NO-MAN'S-LAND ONE MORE TIME. HE
COLLIDES INTO OSCAR WITH A FULL-BODY HUG.

AFTER A PAUSE, OSCAR SQUEEZES BACK - ALLOWING THE OLD LAMP-
POST GRIN FLASH FOR THE BOY WHO USED TO THROW STRING TO
ROBBIE.

After a moment, breath steady, he speaks low:

OSCAR

You lads may know the correct
techniques but pride must stay at the
gate. If we bend rules for you,
tomorrow some proud fool with a broken
friend thinks 'I can do it myself,'
tries the wrong lift and snaps a spine
- same rules for all.

The German volunteer beside him tilts his head toward a fresh
line shuffling in wearing Turkish name badges, town parish
banners in parade.

THE SQUADRON STIFFENS: BAYONETS, SAND, BLOOD. NO ONE MOVES.

THEY EACH TURN TO JACK - SILENT, WAITING. HIS EYES, FOGGED
BUT FIERCE, FLICK ONCE. AND IN THAT BLINK, IT'S THE TRENCH
AGAIN: ROBBIE TOSSING JAM ACROSS NO-MAN'S-LAND, OSCAR
SCRIBBLING RUDE NOTES, JORDAN LAUGHING LIKE THE WAR WAS A
TIMED ASSAULT COURSE. JUST MEN HUNGRY FOR SWEETNESS. THAT WAS

KINDNESS IN HELL - SMALL, ABSURD, UNBREAKABLE. NOW IT FLARES BACK: THE SAME LOOK, THE SAME DARE.

THEY GLANCE BACK AT BOYS AND GRANDFATHERS, NOT SOLDIERS - JUST THE WAR'S ORPHANS. FADED FEZZES WHOSE SONS ARE GHOSTS, CARRYING STRETCHERS SAGGING UNDER BOYS NO OLDER THAN JORDAN.

Eddie nods first, the ghost of Robbie on his shoulder. They move off, boots over stone, hands under Ottoman shoulders, Jordan shoulders a stretcher; Nes steadies a boy's wheelchair. The jam is gone, but the sweetness lands anyway - proof Robbie's lost laugh wasn't lost, and Oscar's returning smile was just waiting.

Jack watches from his stretcher - helpless, but eyes sharp.

A GERMAN BRANCARDIER, JACK'S AGE, WHO COULD HAVE BEEN CHASING HIM DOWN AT ANTWERP. AN ITALIAN BOY, WITH THE SAME LOSS BEHIND THE EYES AS OSCAR, COMING OVER TO RECEIVE JACK WITH LOVE - STRANGERS' HANDS ON HIS SKIN.

AND BEHIND THEM, HIS OWN - EDDIE, NES, JORDAN - STILL TURNING TO HIM FOR LEADERSHIP, RESOLVE, PERMISSION TO CHANGE. SEEING THE LIGHT IN THE DARK, MEEK IN FAITH.

Jack sees it replay, not memory - miracle. Robbie died, but that light didn't go out; it lodged in Eddie's hip, Nes' frown, Jordan's quick feet. Now it was blooming: three soldiers crossing the enemy line, not with rifles, with steady arms under wheelchairs, under stretchers, in the knowledge that we are all sons and daughters of God.

Jack's chest tightens - no breath, no tears - just the quiet thunder: Robbie lived six months past sense, but those nine months gave this. His life was short, too short but his echo isn't. The world tilts back to peace when boys who could've hated learn to catch the jam instead.

Oscar wheels Jack inside with the other volunteers. Enemies turned pall-bearers. No flags. Just bodies that still bend.

THE WAR ENDS TWICE: ONCE WITH BULLETS, ONCE WITH MERCY.

76 INT. ASILE HOSPITAL, LOURDES - EVENING, DAY [2] TUESDAY 24TH JULY 1923.

Back in the ward, the squadron lowers Jack like he's glass, not lead. Jack lies still - no twitch, no rattle. They exhale, almost believe it.

EDDIE
See you tomorrow, soldier.

Eddie says, voice cracking on the word. They leave, shoulders squared with borrowed faith.

The door clicks.

THEN THE SPASM HITS - FIERCER THAN THE DARDANELLES. HEAD PLATE DRUMS THE RAIL LIKE A JAMMED MACHINE-GUN. HE BITES THROUGH HIS TONGUE; BLOOD SOAKING PILLOW.

A matron pauses outside the glass, fingers to lips, eyes ancient. She's counted heartbeats on death's ledger before. One more. She walks on knowing nothing can be done.

Night thickens. Doctors and nurses clock out, leaving their posts until sun-up.

Deep in the night, footsteps echo back through the hall to Jack's room; the Irish nurse - bucketless this time.

ALONE IN THE CORRIDOR SHE WHEELS A STRETCHER IN.

ARMS TREMBLING, SHE LIFTS HIM WITH A STRENGTH BORROWED FROM GOD. NO QUESTIONS, JUST THE SOFT SLIDE OF LINEN.

77 EXT. ASILE HOSPITAL, LOURDES - NIGHT, DAY [2] TUESDAY 24TH JULY 1923.

OUT THE SIDE DOOR, TRANGLLOT WHEELS BOUNCING OVER COBBLES, MOONLIGHT ON HER NURSE'S CAP LIKE A LIGHTHOUSE. SHE PAUSES FOR BREATH, STRUGGLING TO MANOEUVRE THE STRETCHER ALONE.

The German Brancardier from the baths, walking back from late night prayer at the Grotto, sees her struggle. Without hesitation the man jogs over and grips the base of the stretcher trolley.

Enemy - Ally - Angel - It matters not.

The Irish Nurse steers, keeping Jack steady from the head, whilst the German Brancardier pulls from the front - strong as a shire horse, meek as a noble steed.

The stretcher wheels rattle past the Basilica; its ramparts an inviting embrace, windows glowing gold - a kingdom never stormed, only passed through.

THE GROTTO'S STONES GLEAM AHEAD. JACK'S BREATHING SHALLOWS WITH THE NIGHT SMELL OF CANDLES. STONE UNDER RUBBER, TORCHLIGHT LICKING THE WALLS.

A lone priest kneels in candle-smoke; he rises and joins them where once Bernadette stood. Hand on Jack's shoulder, he casts his eyes up to the statue of the Virgin Mary, where the apparitions occurred. He murmurs in Latin, the only other sound, the trickle of the spring.

AS THE IRISH NURSE CARES FOR JACK OVER HIS SHOULDER, THE BRANCARDIER AT THE STRETCHER'S FEET, AND THE PRIEST OFFERING PRAYER TO OUR LADY, THE PEACE AND TRANQUILLITY OF THE GROTTO IS FELT IN STARK CONTRAST TO JACK'S BROKEN BODY AND MIND, BOTH SO INTENT ON DEFEATING HIM.

Then Jack's eyes focus on the helper at his feet who hasn't taken his eyes off his ward - pale face, name-tag fluttering:

Name: Schmidt. Nationality: German.

The Brancardier's face morphs into a nameless German boy in Antwerp screaming out for help.

*Twenty-one, freckled, the boy Jack
shot in the scrub, dust on his lip,
plea in his eyes. Tears blur the badge
into blood.*

Tears streaming, Jack wrenches, casting his eyes away in shame in the direction of the Virgin Mary.

JACK
Forgive me!



The priest finishes his prayer on the same breath, heard in Jack's own tongue.

PRIEST
Lord, I am not worthy to receive you,
but only say the word and I shall be
healed.

Then, soft as breath inside Jack's skull, her voice:

*You were always forgiven, you need
only to forgive yourself.*

HIS LAST GRACE: ESCORTED TO HIS RESTING PLACE BY THE SAME WAR
THAT BROKE, FORGED AND FORGAVE HIM.

Jack's shoulders drop; the sheets rise and fall like a tide going out. The priest crosses himself. The Brancardier and the Nurse exchange one look -enough- and turn the stretcher for home.

THE GROTTA STAYS LIT, CANDLES GUTTERING, BUT NEVER WAVERING

78 INT. HOME, LIVERPOOL - MORNING, DAY [3] WEDNESDAY 25TH JULY
1923

Breakfast smells of yesterday's toast and cold tea. Jack's wife spoons porridge like it's glue, watching their daughter chew with a mouth too full of school chatter to notice.

Brave face on.

Their daughter bolts out the door, satchel banging, and the house drops dead quiet. A clatter at the letterbox. No shadow this time, just a postman and a plain envelope, postmarked - Lourdes.

Her stomach flips before her fingers touch it. Paper tears.

Dearest Mrs Traynor,

The train stopped three times between here and Lourdes. Each halt, we feared Jack hadn't made it - lungs failing, colour gone. But he did. He pushed through. He reached the grotto, as he said he would.

You should know that Dr McConnell said he'll never breathe England's air again. They'll bury him in the local cemetery if he passes tonight.

Our Lady Of Lourdes, pray for us. In our prayers, always.

Mrs McCanahan, 22 July 1923.

22ND JULY - THREE DAYS OLD - JACK MUST SURELY BE DEAD BY NOW.
THE LETTER FLUTTERS TO THE FLOOR LIKE A MOTH WITH CLIPPED
WINGS.

She stands, doesn't scream - just stares at the empty doorway
and wonders how long silence can last.

79 INT/EXT. LOURDES SANCTUARY - MORNING, DAY [3] WEDNESDAY 25TH
JULY 1923

Dawn cracks grey over the ward. Eddie, Nes and Jordan file
in, eyes red from no sleep, the matron's whisper still
ringing.

MATRON

It's a blessing he survived the night,
it is best you say your goodbyes
gents.

They note Jack's unconscious body, greying skin, breath
rattling. Eddie breaks the silence, whispering the vow they
made 8 years ago to the Irish nurse.

EDDIE

To his dying breath.

They nod in silent treaty, sliding him onto the stretcher
like pall-bearers at a funeral march. No words, just the
scrape of sheet on stretcher.

Down the corridor, past the basilica's shadow, wheels ticking
like a clock that's almost done.

At the baths the Brancardiers wait. The head attendant eyes
Jack - bloodless, limp. The German volunteer from the night
before makes to receive Jack - face sharp, eyes steady. Nes
hesitates, jaw tight.

NES

You heard him before, he'd sooner die
in there.

Eddie leans in, hand on Nes' tight grip.

EDDIE

Let him.

The German gently takes the rail, Nes begrudgingly handing his brother over to the other trench.

Jack is taken into the baths where Oscar, in calm understanding, leads the prayers showing an internal development comparable to Robbie's own before Jack's return.

The Brancardiers lower Jack into Lourdes' icy waters.

JACK'S EYES SNAP OPEN - GASPING, LUNGS BURNING. HIS BODY SPASMS AS IT HITS THE WATER - NOT IN EPILEPTIC CONVULSION AS BEFORE - THE JOLT OF A BODY REMEMBERING TRUTH - OVER THAT WHICH MAN BASTARDISED AS *ELECTROLYSIS TREATMENT* IN YEARS PAST.

Jack's legs kick, violently agitated; water emptying over the sides. Alarmed, the Brancardiers grab him, attempting to hold down his bucking body to ease his passing.

JACK AS EVER FIGHTS BACK - THRASHING, NOT CONVULSING. GRABBING WHATEVER LEVERAGE HE CAN WITH HIS REMAINING WORKING ARM.

Jack snarls, voice raw.

JACK

Unhand me! I can stand. Let go!

But they don't hear hope. To them, it's delirium in a language not their own. They raise their voices in devoted prayer to help drown out Jack's muffled protests.

OSCAR, APRON WET, TURNS HIS HEAD AWAY BUT DOESN'T ARGUE; HE'D SEEN THIS ENDING COUNTLESS TIMES ON THE BATTLEFIELD.

The Brancardiers haul Jack out, dripping; Jack crying now from sheer weakness. Clothes are thrown onto wet skin.

HE SOBS ONCE - EXHAUSTED, NOT DEFEATED - THEN GOES QUIET.

80 EXT. LOURDES SANCTUARY - AFTERNOON, DAY [3] WEDNESDAY 25TH
JULY 1923

The German Brancardier from the night before, and silent Italian boy hurriedly wheel Jack out of the baths, Jack's troop having gone on ahead to aid the other pilgrims in need, leaving Jack's fate in God's hands.

OSCAR STANDS AT THE DOORWAY, MAKES THE SIGN OF THE CROSS, BOWS HIS HEAD SOBERLY AS IF MAKING HIS FINAL GOODBYE, AND TURNS BACK TO HIS DUTY.

Clothes still damp, skin clammy, the German and Italian, with the stiff Head Attendant, rosary clicking at their heels, wheel Jack past the grotto to catch up with the Blessed Sacrament Procession - A dying man's final request.

PILGRIMS AT THE GROTTA MASK HIS VIEW OF THE VOICE HE HEARD THE NIGHT BEFORE.

They slot Jack at end of the line by the Basilica ramparts' shadowy embrace.

Jack's eyes clear for a second.

JACK
I can walk!

The Brancardiers blink, not understanding English. The Head Attendant glares at the three men, shushing the hubbub as the Blessed Sacrament approaches.

THE PROCESSION WINDS BACK FROM THE BASILICA LIKE A LIVING RIVER; THOUSANDS OF FEET ON GRAVEL, CANDLES FLICKERING IN THE LATE AFTERNOON HEAT, INCENSE HANGING THICK.

UP FRONT, THE BLESSED SACRAMENT GLIDES UNDER ITS CANOPY: GOLD MONSTRANCE CATCHING SUN. CLOTH RUSTLING, THE ARCHBISHOP OF RHEIMS WALKING SLOW, DELIBERATE. PILGRIMS LINE BOTH SIDES - CRUTCHES LEANING, BABIES HUSHED, FACES TURNED TOWARD THE PROCESSION LIKE SUNFLOWERS.

THE LIVING ROSARY CLIMBS THE STEPS TO THE BASILICA, PAUSING AT THE ALTAR WHILE THE CHOIR SWELLS, THEN TURNS.

The anointing of the sick begins. Down one row, then the next. Cross after cross.

The Archbishop stops in front of Jack; close enough for him to smell the incense, see the man's lips move in Latin, too low to catch.

Their eyes lock - grey on grey, soldier to shepherd. The monstrance rises. Jack's voice cracks.

JACK (CONT'D)
Lord, I am not worthy to receive you,
but only say the word and I shall be
healed.

The Archbishop makes the sign of the cross.

FOREHEAD, STOMACH, LEFT SHOULDER, THEN RIGHT.

Jack's arm that hasn't moved since Gallipoli, the shoulder that's been a dead weight for eight years, answers.

LIKE HINGES OILED AFTER DECADES OF NEGLECT, FINGERS CRACK OPEN: KNUCKLES STIFF, START TO ROLL; TENDONS STRAIN UNDER SKIN GONE PAPER-THIN.

Bandages loosen thread by thread, falling away like flags of peace. Jack calmly watches them drop - white on grey stone - then lifts his arm.

FOREHEAD, STOMACH. LEFT SHOULDER - EASY. FINALLY HIS RIGHT; THE ONE THAT HADN'T RECEIVED ORDERS IN 8 YEARS REPLIES - HE COMPLETES THE SIGN OF THE CROSS - RIGHT HAND TO RIGHT SHOULDER - COMPLETE, FULL, FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE AN OTTOMAN BULLET TOOK THE CHOICE FROM HIM.

The Archbishop moves on. The line shifts. Jack's arm drops -trembling but alive. Joy flashes across his face. He knows he can stand.

LEGS PUSH. THE STRETCHER TILTS - HE'S HALFWAY UP BEFORE THE BRANCARDIERS TAKE NOTICE; THE GERMAN BRANCARDIER'S FACE WHITE, THE ITALIAN BOY'S MOUTH OPEN.

The Head Attendant - pious, starched, rosary clicking like a metronome - doesn't look toward the noise at the temple. He keeps praying under his breath, eyes on the Sacrament.

The other two volunteers hesitate; the German glancing at the Italian, the Italian at the ground.

*They'd seen men break before - some
from pain, some from too much hope -
but this? This felt different.*

The Head Attendant finally raises his head, only seeing broken bandages, and thrashing.

HEAD ATTENDANT
Hysterical. Restrain him.

The procession rolls on; hymns covering the struggle. The attendant calls over a nurse - white cap, soft shoes, syringe ready. She slips through the line like a ghost.

HEAD ATTENDANT (CONT'D)

Hypo.

The needle slides in between Jack and the men.

JACK'S EYES FLUTTER WIDE THEN ROLL. THE WORLD TILTS: COLOURS BLEED, HYMNS SLOW, THE BASILICA BLURS INTO CANDLE-SMOKE. DARKNESS DESCENDS.

The head attendant finishes his prayer without looking back at Jack. The Brancardiers stand awkwardly, hands clasped too tight, watching Jack's body go slack.

THE PROCESSION ENDS, BELLS RING AND JACK IS WHEELED BACK TO THE HOSPITAL, NO LONGER RUSHED, STEADY UNDER DRUGGED FOG, BANDAGES DANGLING FROM HIS WRIST.

81 INT. ASILE HOSPITAL, LOURDES - EVENING, DAY [3] WEDNESDAY
25TH JULY 1923

FOG. THICK, CHEMICAL FOG.

JACK'S WORLD IS A HAZE OF WHITE WALLS AND DISTANT VOICES - FRENCH WORDS HE HALF-GRASPS. HE FIGHTS IT. EYES FLUTTER. CEILING SWIMS. A DOCTOR LEANS IN. BRANCARDIERS GUARD THE DOOR SHIFTING THEIR FEET AS NURSES ALREADY RUSH FOR MORE DOSES OF SEDATIVE.

The Brancardiers make to interject but are cut off.

DOCTOR

This'll stop him from doing anything
foolish that could lead to him harming
himself further.

Jack pushes himself up.

JACK

No! Let me walk!

He swings his legs off the side of the bed, toes touching cold tiles. His toes curl. The room tilts. Doctors rush over - hands like restraints - Jack looks them dead in the eye, the look of past authority - they freeze.

JACK STANDS.

ANTWERP ON HIS BACK AGAIN, DRUGS NOT GAS - THE ENEMY'S NEW WEAPON OF CHOICE.

ONE STEP.

The weight is morphine, not an officer.

A SECOND STEP.

Divine intervention not adrenaline.

A THIRD.

A wobble - knees wanting to buckle, orders telling him that was no longer an option.

A FOURTH.

Each step carved out of the morphine like walking uphill through Ottoman sand.

A FIFTH.

Not grace, not yet- just will power.

SIX.

A stumble of exhaustion from Jack snaps the hyenas out of their trance. They move in.

JACK (CONT'D)
I *can* walk. I CAN walk.

SEVEN.

Jack wavers under the weight of his cross. The doctors grab him, needles ready. The hypodermic needle slides in - the second jab, the devil's last lunge.

Jack slurs.

JACK (CONT'D)
No, you must believe me...

His eyes roll and he falls limp back into their overly nurturing arms.

BACK DOWN ON THE BED. STRAPS. SILENCE. THE GUARD LIGHTS A CIGARETTE. JACK FIGHTS, BUT THE FOG WINS AGAIN.

The French overseer from the baths rationalizes the situation seeing the distress in the eyes of the two Brancardier volunteers.

ATTENDANT

The body when receiving medication can often induce unnatural movement.

This one has a reputation for obstinance. I would ask that between you, you guard him overnight - make sure he doesn't cause further distress to himself or others. Lourdes is a place of peace.

The German and Italian look at each other uncomfortably; they know something is off, see the twitch in Jack's foot under the sheets, but orders are orders - they wheel Jack through to the ground floor ward for *troublesome cases*, next to the two other undesirables.

FACE SLACK, BANDAGES HANGING LOOSE, EIGHT YEARS OF PARALYSIS PACKED INTO ONE LIMP FRAME - THE MIRACLE MASKED UNDER SEDATION.

Three beds, three crosses. Jack in the middle. To his left; a blind man - thin as smoke, squinting through the sound of wheel on tile as if trying to see. To his right another ghost - coughing phlegm like cordite residue.

THE DOOR CLOSES - SEALING THE COFFIN SHUT AND PLUNGING THEM INTO DARKNESS.

The Italian posts guard outside the door, the German mutters something in his native tongue.

GERMAN BRANCARDIER

... Pontius Pilate.

He heads off in the direction of the grotto, disturbed by what he had just witnessed and in need of prayer to make sense of it.

82 INT. ASILE HOSPITAL, LOURDES - DAWN, DAY [4] THURSDAY 26TH
JULY 1923

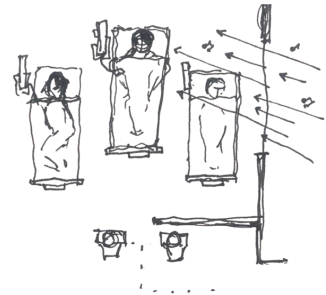
Moonlight owns the room - thin silver blades through the bars, cutting beds like prison stripes.

ONE RING. THEN ANOTHER. JACK STARTS TO HEAR THE BELLS FORCE THEIR WAY THROUGH THE FOG OF SEDATION.

AVE MARIA DRIFTS LOW, NOT HYMN NOW - A HEARTBEAT. NOT FROM A CHOIR BUT THE BASILICA ITSELF, SLOW AND CLOSE, LIKE A MOTHER WHISPERING.

Jack hears the blind man exhale, to no one.

BLINDMAN
Beautiful.



The bells listen, like angels calling. His head turns to Jack's bed where he watches him for a minute before sinking back into the soft pillow in contentment.

The doubter to Jack's right rolls over, back turned, shoulder blade sharp against the sheet - refusing the song, refusing hope.

LUNGS BURN, LEGS REMEMBER. JACK SITS - NO GROAN, NO WARNING - BEDFRAME CREAKING LIKE JACK'S REPLENISHING JOINTS.

JACK'S BARE FEET REACH FOR THE COLD TILED FLOOR; PAIN SHOOTS UP SHINS, REAL PAIN, LIVING PAIN. JACK SLIDES OFF THE MATTRESS TO HIS KNEES - NO SOUND, NO GROAN - JUST THE WOOD CREAKING LIKE OLD ARTILLERY.

FINGERS FIND THE ROSARY STILL TWISTED IN HIS FIST - BEADS WARM FROM SLEEP. VOICE BARELY A BREATH, JACK PRAYS THE FIFTH AND FINAL DECADE - OUR LADY'S DECADE - FOR ALL SINNERS- AVE MARIA AFTER AVE MARIA MATCHING THE BELL HEARTBEAT.

The doubter flips back - eyes wide.

DOUBTER
Impossible.

A man who hasn't stood in eight years kneeling - upright, alive.

JACK DOESN'T ANSWER. HE FINISHES THE LAST AVE, KISSES THE CRUCIFIX AND STANDS ON FIRM LEGS.

83 EXT. ASILE HOSPITAL & LOURDES SANCTUARY & GROTTA - DAWN, DAY
[4] THURSDAY 26TH JULY 1923

JACK LOCKS ON TO THE SHADOW OF THE ITALIAN GUARD THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOOR, CROSS SHAPED UNDER MOONLIGHT - THE ITALIAN BRANCARDIER STANDING OUTSIDE, ROSARY AT HIS SIDE LIKE A HOLY LANCE.

HE UNBUCKLES THE STRAP OF THE METAL SKULL PLATE - THE CROWN OF THORNS HE HAD BEEN FORCED TO WEAR FOR 8 LONG YEARS - ROSES NOW READY TO BLOOM.

ONCE BEARING THE WEIGHT OF THE WORLD, JACK'S METAL HEAD PLATE NOW DANGLES FROM ITS STRAP IN AN UNWAVERING RIGHT-HANDED, FULLY RECOVERED GRIP - ONCE SOUGHT TO MOCK, NOW THE KEY TO HIS FREEDOM.

Jack releases his grip on the leather strap.

CLANG!

On the other side of the door the Italian bounces up from his chair.

CLANG!

AS THE SECOND CLANG OF THE METAL PLATE BOUNCES OFF THE FLOOR, IT IS MET WITH THE BASILICA'S CHIME OF APPROVAL.

The shadow moves across the door. Now's the moment. That's the line.

NO WHISTLE. NO COUNT. NO HESITATION. JACK LAUNCHES - LEGS PUMPING LIKE THEY NEVER BROKE, CHARGING SILENCE ITSELF LIKE 1915 WAS A LIE.

Jack slams through the door with a fully mobile right shoulder. The Italian, on seeing a ghost, staggers back in shock.

LONGINUS

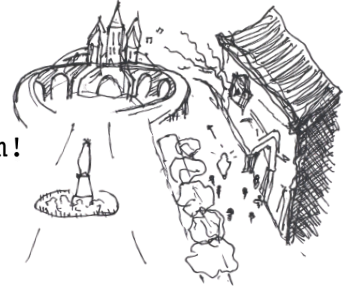
Madonna!

Jack is already past him, bursting out into the corridor where Doctor Marley stands by the reception desk, mid sip of coffee that is spat back into the mug.

The Italian pauses.

DOCTOR MARLEY

Don't just stand there, after him!



Jack breaks into a run.

RUN - FOR THOSE WHO NEED THE COURAGE TO GET BACK UP,

Through the ward gate, sidestepping nurses, and guards that can't keep pace. Bare feet slapping gravel; no cuts, no slipping.

HE'S LAUGHING - HOARSE, FULL-THROATED - THE LAUGH OF A MAN WHO'S DIED TWICE AND COME BACK LAUGHING. TEARS STREAK, SALT ON DUST, JOY ON FIRE.

RUN - FOR THE MEMORIES OF THOSE NOW LOOKING DOWN.

Across Rosary Square, past stunned nuns, under the Basilica's yawning mouth. Sprinting the 200 meters to the grotto like it's no-man's-land, Our Lady's waiting on the other side.

RUN - FOR HIS DAUGHTER, FOR HIS WIFE, FOR HIMSELF.

JACK ARRIVES AT THE GROTTA - ARMS OUT, CRYING, LAUGHING,
ALIVE.

84 EXT. LOURDES GROTTA - DAWN, DAY [4] THURSDAY 26TH JULY 1923

Jack beams up at the statue of Our Lady from where she appeared to a young girl 65 years prior, meeting her eyes for the first time since the night at the Grotto.

JACK

Thank you.

Eyes freely streaming, Jack kneels with ease, two working kneecaps supporting his weight.

He lowers his forehead to stone like the Irish nurse at the altar a lifetime ago.

THROUGH HIS FOREHEAD HE CAN FEEL THE SMOOTH ROCK ON HIS FOREHEAD. CAN FEEL ITS HEARTBEAT, HER HEARTBEAT. SMOOTHED OVER TIME BY THOUSANDS OF FAITHFUL PILGRIMS, EACH WITH THEIR OWN STORY OF FAITH.

JACK (CONT'D)

I am not worthy to have received you
but let my testimony stand as a beacon
of hope and courage for all.

A calm, knowing feeling arises within Jack. A moment of peace and clarity like no other - *To remember, learn, teach* - so it was all worth it, so others didn't need to experience the same.

GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN, DOWN BUT NEVER DEFEATED.

The Grotto is silent except the trickle of spring water and Jack's own grateful breath.

Jack kneels at the grotto, night clothes bunched at his knees, his timeless rosary laced through two steady hands.

The Italian Brancardier arrives - boots skidding to a halt as he sees Jack knelt in prayer; soles raised to the sky - clean, unmarked. He makes the sign of the cross and steps back, the first to bear witness to Our Lady's walking testament.

Oscar, starting his morning shift at the baths, passes the grotto and sees Jack praying on his knees, hands clasped together - a crowd of shocked pilgrims starting to form around him.

OSCAR SMILES BUT DOESN'T APPROACH, AS HE REMEMBERS HIS OWN PERSONAL MIRACLE THAT BROUGHT HIM BACK TO THE LIGHT. HE ENTERS THE GROTTO'S WOMB FOR ANOTHER DAY OF EXPERIENCING GOD'S HAND.

WHEN JACK FORGAVE HIMSELF AT THE GROTTO, THE DEVIL LOST THE ROOM. GOOD DOESN'T ROAR - IT SLIPS IN QUIETLY, BAREFOOT, AND STAYS.

85 EXT. LOURDES GROTTTO - EARLY MORNING, DAY [4] THURSDAY 26TH
JULY 1923

For twenty minutes Jack's head is bowed, lips never stopping. The bells finish their Ave again as the first pink of dawn slips over the Pic du Jer.

Finally he raises his head, looking directly at where The Immaculate Conception appeared to Bernadette. Tears flowing freely, he smiles up at her, free of all remorse.

JACK
Thank you, again.

Jack stands, genuflects and takes his leave of the grotto's sanctity; oblivious of the crowd that had appeared just as Bernadette in her later apparitions.

PILGRIMS IN SLIPPERS, NURSES STILL IN APRONS, A WIDE EYED CHILD HOLDING HER MOTHER'S HAND, PART LIKE THE RED SEA, HOLDING THEIR BREATH.

Jack walks in a peaceful daze, back across Rosary Square, crowd trailing, whispers rising. At the statue of the Crowned Virgin, he stops and genuflects again.

*A distant memory comes to him of his
mother telling him as a boy, to make a
sacrifice when asking a favour from
Our Lady.*

Jack digs into the pocket of his night-clothes. No money, no medals left. Just these - he pulls out a packet of cigarettes. Like confession, he eyes the bin beside them, smiles and, with a shake of the head, he drops them in - sealing his resolution with a sign of the cross.

AS JACK WALKS BACK TOWARD THE HOSPITAL THE CROWD OF PILGRIMS HAVE GROWN - SOME CLAPPING, SOME CRYING - BUT HE BARELY NOTICES THEM, CONTINUING ON AS IF IT WAS JUST ANOTHER DAY AT THE COAL YARD.

*Whilst he knew the old Jack wouldn't
have understood, it seemed the most
obvious thing to him now, it all made
sense. What was there to look at? Our
Lady is there for everyone; in
whatever way they most need it at that
time, whether understood at the time
or not.*

JACK GLIDES ON, STILL BAREFOOT, THROUGH THE HOSPITAL DOORS THAT ARE STILL PUSHED FREE.

86 INT. ASILE HOSPITAL WARD - MORNING, DAY [4] THURSDAY 26TH JULY 1923

Jack steps back inside the hospital ward that still smells of bleach and fear. He heads straight for the washroom, staying clear of his bed, as though a landmine.

He strips fast, keeping one eye on the corridor, expecting hands to grab - needles to flash. Water runs hot on skin that remembers eight years of sponge baths.

HE SHAVES; A FOGGED MIRROR PARTIALLY SHOWING JACK'S RETURNING SELF, A STEADY RIGHT HAND HOLDING THE BLADE.

Towel round his waist, Jack walks back into the ward, bare feet silent. Men in beds sit up. One enters into rushed prayer, another crosses himself like Jack's carrying plague. Jack doesn't get it. He pulls on yesterday's clothes - shirt stiff, trousers loose, brown leather shoes souls unworn, forever staying clear of his coffin bed.

Then Father Grey enters the ward; black cassock, white collar, face calm.

FATHER GREY

Will anyone here help serve Mass this morning?

Jack lifts a hand before the thought lands.

JACK

I'll do it.

Hearing the tone of agreement from somewhere in the ward, the priest continues on. No one stops him.

87 INT. ASILE HOSPITAL CHAPEL - EARLY MORNING, DAY [4] THURSDAY 26TH JULY 1923

The chapel door creaks. Wheelchairs line the front three rows; able bodied pilgrims fill the pews and those remaining press in at the back, elbows sharp. After 8 long years of sitting, Jack stands at the back, within the crowd, next to the offertory table.

AS THE OFFERTORY HYMN STARTS. THE CROWD PARTS TO ALLOW THE OFFERTORY THROUGH. JACK TAKES THE TWO CHALICES FROM THE BACK TABLE AND PROCESSES DOWN THE CENTRAL AISLE, HANDS STEADY. EYES WIDEN & JAWS DROP AS THE CONGREGATION REALISE WHO WALKS IN FRONT OF THEM.

Bells ring. Bread is broken. Jack receives communion from Father Grey and proceeds to move along the line of pilgrims with the priest as they receive communion.

They start from the left: the priest leaning over to an old man in a truss, lips trembling.

JACK'S ARM - NO LONGER A DEAD WEIGHT - EXTENDS THE SILVER PATEN UNDER EACH PILGRIM'S CHIN TO ENSURE HOST DOES NOT FALL. AGAIN AND AGAIN.

PRIEST
The Body of Christ.

PILGRIM
(gravel voice)
Amen.

Next, a girl no older than Robbie, legs twisted.

PILGRIM (CONT'D)
(whispered)
Amen.

Another whose wheelchair rattles, lungs rattling worse.

PILGRIM (CONT'D)
(a gasp)
Amen.

Jack rises, and takes his place now at the front of the chapel, to now assist the able bodied.

CHALICE, TO LIPS - BACK. CHALICE, TO RECEIVING HAND - BACK. A BLESSING TO A CHILD - ARMS CROSSED LIKE ANGEL WINGS. AGAIN AND AGAIN.

The line shuffles forward, until Eddie, Jordan, Nes - three war wolves in Sunday suits - stand there at the front line, opposite Jack.

EIGHT YEARS OF MORNINGS FLASH THROUGH THEM: COUNTLESS BEDSIDES, SPOONING HIM PORRIDGE, ROLLING JACK'S BED TO MASS, SWEARING THEY'LL CARRY HIM TILL THE END.

THE SAME VOW, SAME FACES. ONLY NOW THE BED IS EMPTY AND JACK TRAYNOR STANDS BEFORE THE ALTAR, HOLDING THE PATEN LIKE HE'S DONE IT FOREVER.

Their eyes say: *this can't be..* but Jack interrupts their thought, Calm as the first light. The Host lifts in Jack's steady hands.

PRIEST
Body of Christ.

THREE WORDS. THREE FRIENDS SNAP BACK TO THE PRESENT.

Eddie swallows and steps forward trembling as he feels something unregistered loosen in his chest.

Jack extends the silver paten without tremble.

Jordan steps up next, eyes watering, taking an extra second's pause, head bowed.

THE VOW REVERSED: THEY, WHO CARRIED THE PARALYTIC, NOW CARRY THEMSELVES TO THE ALTAR. THE SACRIFICE; EIGHT YEARS OF LOYALTY, GUILT UNPAID, TURNS IN MID-AIR LIKE A TOSSED COIN AND LANDING MERCY-SIDE UP.

Finally Nes, the one they'd called stubborn in the trenches, who never knelt, never asked, steps up last; arms crossed like he's guarding something. Everyone in the pews expects the Protestant to flinch.

NES BOWS HIS HEAD, FOREHEAD FORWARD, EYES SHUT - NOT SURRENDER; REAL MEEKNESS, THE KIND THAT WOULD NOW RIDE INTO BATTLE WITHOUT QUESTION.

Jack's thumb, soldier-rough, presses a cross over the centre of Nes's skull. No words. Just pressure, steady, like sealing a victory.

IT'S NOT PIETY; IT'S EGO SLIDING OFF LIKE OLD SKIN, FAITH STRIPPED BARE, THE KIND THAT SUBMITS BECAUSE IT KNOWS BIGGER HORSES CARRY BIGGER LOADS.

JACK'S BLESSING LANDS, AND FOR THE FIRST TIME NES ISN'T PROVING ANYTHING; HE'S JUST RECEIVING. ARMS UNCROSS. HEAD STAYS BOWED. THE WAR'S GHOSTS WATCH, JEALOUS.

Jack's old guard walk back up the aisle lighter, shoulders unclenching as they finally let go. Behind them, the congregation sees three soldiers walk straight-backed for the first time since the Eastern Front. No medals, no applause—just the quiet knowledge:

THE BED IS GONE, THE WAR IS OVER, THE BLESSING FITS.

88 INT. ASILE HOSPITAL CAFETERIA - MORNING, DAY [4] THURSDAY
26TH JULY 1923

Jack enters the refectory. A silence falls as faces turn; men who'd shared cigarettes yesterday now slide chairs away, eyes wide, like he's glowing.

THE SAME LOOK FROM THE LANDINGS: BULLETS WHIZZING PAST HIS HELMET, JACK CONTINUING TO WALK FORWARD. THEY WHISPERED THEN BEFORE HIS FALL - TOUCHED BY GOD - THIS TIME HE IS, AND THEY'RE TERRIFIED OF IT.

Seeing Eddie, Jordan and Nes sat around a table talking in hushed tones, Jack approaches and takes a seat.

JORDAN

(grinning ear to ear)

Mornin, Jack. Are you feeling all right?

Jack swallows.

JACK

Yes. Quite all right. Are you feeling alright?

Jordan laughs, too loud.

JACK (CONT'D)

What are all those people doing outside?

JORDAN

They're glad to see you!

Jack glances at the window - crowds pressing on glass like waves on a dock.

JACK

It's very nice of them, but I wish they'd leave me alone.

Jack stirs the coffee, Eddie, Jordan and Nes lost for words at Jack's nonchalant attitude to the morning's events.

The three Liverpool doctors push through the breakfast door - Azurdea, Marley, Finn - like a bad memory; faces pale as the sheets Jack had lived in for 8 years.

The conversation around Jack dies. The doctors approach; three white coats like judges. Jack stands, tray clattering, fists half-clenched, ready for another bayonet charge. Jack's squadron rises around him.

JACK'S CREW TENSES; YOU CAN HEAR NES'S TEETH GRINDING BEHIND JACK. ONE WRONG WORD AND IT'S FISTS. JACK STEPS FORWARD, CALM AS CONFESSION.

Dr Azurdea swallows. The other two freeze, mouths open. Then Marley steps in, voice low.

DR MARLEY

If you'd permit, we'd like to re-examine you. Just once. Quietly. Just us. To... confirm.

DR FINN

...please Jack.

Jack hears the word *please* for the first time in eight years and almost laughs.

A POLITE NOD FROM JACK, NOTHING MORE. THE WHOLE PACK WATCHES THEM OUT, LEASHES HELD BY A QUIET VOICE. NES WATCHES THEM GO, ALMOST DISAPPOINTED THE BAIT DIDN'T LAND.

89 INT. ASILE HOSPITAL SIDEROOM - MORNING, DAY [4] THURSDAY 26TH JULY 1923

Jack follows; down the corridor, through to a small side room. The door shuts.

They offer Jack a chair but two legs is now his comfort, he chooses to stand; vertical, back to the wall, not yet able to trust his captors. Azurdea clears his throat but Jack cuts in.

JACK

What's the matter with everyone?

The doctors look at each other.

DR MARLEY

You were paralysed man! Bottom half,
top right. Severe fits, head-plate,
everything. Now - nothing. The
baseline is shattered.

Jack shrugs. Dr Azurdea takes a tentative step forward.

DR AZURDEA

If we may?

JACK

You *may*.

The Doctors circle, prodding, measuring, whispering numbers.
And for once Jack doesn't fight - he stands straighter,
because they finally see what he felt a day ago.

Dr Marley starts, lifting Jack's right arm - dead for eight
years, feels the bicep.

DR MARLEY

Power's back. Full flexion. You had
atrophy - shoulder, pectoral, ulnar,
median - wasting like drought soil.
Now it's filled.

He rotates Jack's wrist, shoulder, elbow - no catch, no
tremor.

Azurdea bends Jack's legs, taps knees, soles.

DR AZURDEA

Sensation's returned, reflexes jump
like live wires. Double incontinence
gone.

And finally Dr Finn assesses his skull; the 2.5cm trephine
hole that forever pulsed, counting away the years under metal
plate.

They lead Jack to the chair. He lowers himself, but keeps his
back straight. Dr Finn steps close, fingers trembling as he
parts Jack's hair above the right ear. There - a smooth
scalp, no ridge, no crater. The hole, now a pale scar,
puckered like a healed shrapnel wound. No throbbing pulse. No
hollow. Marley's fingertip presses -nothing gives.
Impossible, he breathes.

DR FINN
 You were epileptic, we saw it
 ourselves, three fits between
 Liverpool and Lourdes alone. You
 should be dead!

Dr Azurdea leans in.

DR AZURDEA
 No throb, barely a dent.

DR FINN
 Where's the plate Jack?

Jack shrugs, genuinely puzzled.

JACK
 No idea. Last I saw it, I tossed it on
 the floor when I ran.

Dr Marley's eyes flick up.

DR MARLEY
 It was screwed in, Jack. Surgically.

JACK
 Maybe something like that has no place
 in Lourdes.

Jack touches the spot, feels only bone. Silence thickens.
 Marley straightens.

DR MARLEY
 Do you have any idea what's happened?

Jack meets their eyes; three doctors, mouths open. Jack leans
 forward, elbows on knees.

JACK
 Our Lady happened. Miracles happen
 every day. Doctors see lungs fill - a
 miracle. A child reading a name badge
 when you swore he couldn't - miracle.
 Oscar, throwing string against walls
 to keep ghosts out? Now with that same
 string he makes candle wicks in the
 grotto - miracle. Nes learning to lift
 an Ottoman stretcher without snarling
 - miracle. Nations shake hands over
 graves - miracle. Children forgiving a
 war that killed their dads - miracle.

JACK (CONT'D)

Me? I just walk. I don't need a certificate. Mine's no louder than a heartbeat forgiving itself. Don't stare at me. Stare at your own feet - they carried you here, didn't they? That's the testament. Every day's got one - if you're looking. Mine's just louder. Why? I don't know, maybe to inspire.

AZURDEA SCRIBBLES THE CERTIFICATE HANDS SHAKING.

90 INT. ASILE HOSPITAL, LOURDES SANCTUARY - EVENING, DAY [4]
THURSDAY 26TH JULY 1923

JACK STEPS OUT OF HIS WARD INTO THE LOBBY, LIGHT CATCHING HIS RENEWED FACE.

Nes, Jordan, Eddie stand at the ready; backs straight, eyes soft with the kind of pride that doesn't shout. Eddie snaps a formal salute accompanied with cheeky wink; Nes just nods, lips pressed thin so he doesn't grin like an idiot. Jordan's chest swells once, then settles.

JACK WALKS STRAIGHT BETWEEN THEM - NO WORDS, NO FUSS - THEY FALL IN TO PACE BEHIND LIKE IT'S ANOTHER PARADE MARCH AND HE'S STILL THE OFFICER THEY FOLLOW.

91 EXT. TORCHLIGHT PROCESSION, LOURDES SANCTUARY - EVENING, DAY
[4] THURSDAY 26TH JULY 1923

The torchlight procession starts just as the sun slips behind the Pyrenees, casting a warm glow over the sanctuary. The old troop spill out onto cobbles, already warm with thousands of feet; pilgrims shoulder to shoulder like rosary beads strung alive.

IT'S NOT PRAYER ON KNEES ANYMORE - IT'S PRAYER ON LEGS. PROCESSION - PRAYER THAT HURTS, EVERY STEP A SMALL ATONEMENT; WHEELCHAIRS CREAKING FORWARD, CRUTCHES TAPPING IN TIME, TORCHES LIFTING AND DIPPING LIKE SOFT HEARTBEATS.

Having refused the clergy's invitation to accompany them upfront, the four friends slot into the procession; just another couple of uniforms among blankets and shawls.

WHEELCHAIRS AND SINGING VOICES WEAVE MAJESTICALLY BETWEEN THE BASILICA'S OUTSTRETCHED ARMS, SEEMINGLY BY ITSELF.

Eddie starts humming off-key - Nes elbows him. Jordan keeps glancing at Jack like he might vanish. But Jack's eyes are fixed ahead, scanning. The crowds part for a moment and Jack spots the Lourdes Hospitalier; men and women, young and old; of all nations, holding the rope together - guiding pilgrims home.

Eddie spots Jack's gaze first, tilts his head. Jack nods once. Without words, they file in-between the other nationalities - Nes between a Turk and Spaniard, Eddie next to a Scot, Jordan next to a French nun who grins like she's known them forever.

THEY FILE BETWEEN NATIONS; PALMS WRAPPING ROUGH SISAL, FOUR MORE BEADS, SLIPPING INTO PLACE. TORCHES TILT FORWARD LIKE THEY'RE BOWING. THE HYMN SWELLS.

TORCHES TREMBLE LIKE THEY'RE BREATHING. JACK TAKES THE GAP IN THE MIDDLE, PALMS CLOSING ROUND WARM ROPE. JACK GLANCES DOWN AT HIS BROWN SHOES; DUSTY, THE SAME AS EVERYONE ELSE'S. DESPITE THE MIRACLE, HE WALKS - JUST ONE MORE PILGRIM, RETURNING HOME TO OUR LADY.

Jack meets the German's eyes first; the same man from the grotto; the one whose face the night before had swam into every dead soldier Jack couldn't forget.

The German smiles, moving his hand over. Jack steps in. The Italian boy on his left - the guard who'd been told to bring Jack back, but was instead the first to kneel at the grotto bearing witness.

THEY CLOSE RANKS - NOW THERE'S NO BATTLEFIELD BETWEEN THEM, ONLY THE LIFELINE.

The hymn rises. Jack's eyes trace the length of rope, past weathered hands and calloused grips, every volunteer an untold miracle. Faces blur into one long thread of kindness stitched against every atrocity Jack had seen.

At the head of the living rosary, through the shimmer of torchlight, the Irish nurse lifts her head.

WHITE UNIFORM CATCHING FIRELIGHT, EYES STEADY LIKE THEY'VE SEEN HIM BEFORE TIME STARTED, SHE SMILES - QUIET, KNOWING - THE KIND THAT SAYS EVERYTHING'S ALRIGHT NOW.

Jack smiles, nods once, and turns back to his duty at peace.

PULL BACK TO AERIAL SHOT OF THE TORCHLIGHT PROCESSION.

92 INT. ASILE HOSPITAL - MORNING DEPARTURE, DAY [5] FRIDAY 27TH
JULY 1923

Jack zips the last strap on his bag, throws it over his shoulder and glances round the empty ward one last time.

Jack leans over the reception desk, blank page in front of him; He doesn't overthink. He never has.

AM BETTER. J.

That's it. He hands the telegram over to the hovering matron, and walks over to greet Eddie, Nes and Jordan, without waiting for the stamp.

*She'll know the handwriting,
understand the man who writes five
words instead of fifty.*

Having completed their farewells, the squadron are met with Oscar standing in the doorway; small against the light, face softer than when they first met.

Eddie grabs him into a bear hug that nearly lifts him off his feet. Nes next - a quick clap on the back, eyes saying what tongues can't. Jordan lingers, eyes wet.

Jack steps up close.

JACK
Come home with us lad.

Oscar shrugs, a half-smile.

OSCAR
Lourdes is home now. Quiet. No more
shells.

Jack nods. He doesn't hug him, just rests a palm on Oscar's cheek, thumb tracing an old scar.

JACK
We'll still be loud, but we'll always
be here, when you're ready.

Oscar smiles, slow as sunrise.

OSCAR

When I'm whole I'll come find you lot,
promise.

Eddie whistles their departure, Nes checking the timetable walking out the door, when Oscar calls back to them:

OSCAR (CONT'D)

Oi, Jordan!

Jordan spins. Oscar flicks his wrist, sending a small spherical object whizzing through the air.

Jordan snatches it mid-air. It isn't a ball of string, it is a Lourdes grotto snow-globe - Plastic Mary in the middle, fake flakes swirling. Jordan stares, then laughs - loud, startled.

Oscar replies with a laugh of his own - short, surprised, like he had forgotten how; the trenches suddenly a lifetime away.

Nes wipes his eye like it's sweat. Jack takes two steps then stops, and jogs back to the matron at the desk.

JACK

Oh, Matron. Have you seen...

< Jack pauses, realising he hadn't even got her name >

JACK (CONT'D)

...the Irish nurse? Mane of red hair.
I need to thank her for everything
she's done for me.

The matron, with a confused expression, checks her files, frowns, flips pages again.

MATRON

Irish Nurse? Had no one of that
nationality in all week. Nothing in
the rota either.

Jack pauses, a chill of wonder hitting him.

*Who was she? Our Lady? Saint
Bernadette guiding him since the war's
chapel?*

The Matron rationalises for Jack.

MATRON (CONT'D)

Many volunteers come and go, called to
Lourdes unannounced.

The words don't come, Jack just breathes, slow.

JACK

A true blessing from God.

The Matron's smile softens, real now, not just duty.

MATRON

They all are, love.

SHE TIDIES UP HER PILE OF PAPERS AND LEAVES JACK WITH THE
SAME PERPLEXED EXPRESSION ON HIS FACE HE HAD RECEIVED THAT
MORNING FROM OTHER PILGRIMS.

93 INT. HOME, LIVERPOOL - MORNING, DAY [5] FRIDAY 27TH JULY 1923

Coal dust hangs thick as fog. Mrs. Traynor swings the shovel,
face streaked black, apron clinging.

Face grey with dust, she hears the gate; a boy shoves the
telegram under the door and pedals off.

She freezes. Sees the blue paper. Her hands shake. She wipes
them on her apron and opens it slowly.

AM BETTER. J.

SHE STARES. THE YARD TILTS A LITTLE. NOT GONE. NOT WORSE.
BETTER. SHORT, TO THE POINT - JACK. BETTER WILL DO.

She presses it to her lips, once. She doesn't smile, not yet,
but the shovel feels lighter. She folds the telegram once,
pressing it to her chest.

Hope. Just enough. She has no clue he's coming back whole,
but hope's a start.

SHE GOES BACK TO WORK, HUMMING QUIETLY.

94 INT. TRAIN LEAVING LOURDES - DAY [5] FRIDAY 27TH JULY 1923

JACK, STILL IN A BLISSFUL A DAZE, STARES OUT OF THE CARRIAGE WINDOW, SMEARING FRENCH POPPY FIELDS INTO WATER COLOURS.

At the insistence of the Pilgrimage Director, Jack sits in the same first-class carriage that was his makeshift morgue five days prior; staring at nothing, still floating, the tranquillity of the grotto still in his mind's eye.

The door eases open with a dignified hiss. Violet skullcap first, then the gentle face of Archbishop Keating. Jack drops to his knees without thinking, head bowed to receive a blessing. Keating lifts him gently, voice warm.

ARCHBISHOP KEATING

Jack, I think I should be getting your blessing.

Jack blinks, mouth open. He gestures for Jack to have a seat. They sit sideways on the bench seat bunk, knees almost touching. Keating studies him like he's reading scripture.

ARCHBISHOP KEATING (CONT'D)

Jack, do you realise how ill you have been? That you have been miraculously cured by the Blessed Virgin?

The words land like coins in still water. Everything ripples back:

*2 years of physical warfare; 5 years
of mental warfare; 3 years of
spiritual warfare.*

*Weeks before Lourdes when breathing
felt like betrayal, living like a
burden - then the grotto's forgiving
light...*

Tears spill over Jack's cheeks, onto clasped hands. Keating's eyes fill too, no shame, no wiping. Just two grown men crying like kids on Christmas morning, window rattling applause for them both.

FADE OUT

95 INT. HOME, LIVERPOOL - DAY [6] SATURDAY 28TH JULY 1923

Father Dworber knocks gently. Mrs. Traynor opens the door, sleeves rolled high, face smudged with coal.

FATHER DWORBER

I called on you Friday to try and
prepare you for the news of Jack.

Mrs. Traynor steps aside and lets him in. They sit. He folds his hands:

FATHER DWORBER (CONT'D)

I have been in contact with some of
the congregation on the Lourdes
pilgrimage... I have been told that
Our Blessed Lady is sending Jack home
again, walking, fully restored to his
former health.

She blinks slow, sceptical.

MRS. TRAYNOR

'Better' Father, not walking. I only
wish that his pain and suffering might
have eased.

FATHER DWORBER

But suppose, if you find Jack quite
improved, quite a bit, promise me you
won't get upset?

Mrs. Traynor nods, doubtful.

MRS. TRAYNOR

I promise, and I'll be glad if I see
him improved.

FATHER DWORBER

Supposing you see him walking, Mrs.
Traynor?

She shakes her head.

MRS. TRAYNOR

I'm afraid I'll never see my husband
walk but anyhow, you can rely on me.

FATHER DWORBER

The train will be in shortly Mrs.
Traynor and I think it would be nice
(MORE)

FATHER DWORBER (CONT'D)
to go down to meet it.

96 EXT. LIME STREET STATION, LIVERPOOL - EARLY EVENING, DAY [6]
SATURDAY 28TH JULY 1923

Dusk paints the sky. The papers hawk headlines:

MIRACLE IN LOURDES - SOLDIER HEALED!

Mrs. Traynor and Fr. Dworber shuffle through the gate into Lime Street Station.

She pushes through the crush of coats and hats, elbows tucked in, breath shallow - Everyone staring down the platform, waiting for the miracle to arrive.

Mrs Traynor gets as far as the ticket barrier before being stopped.

MRS. TRAYNOR
I'm Mrs. Traynor. Please let me
through.

The collector squints at her, then at the mob behind.

TICKET COLLECTOR
Well, all I can say is Mr. Traynor
must be Muhammad then, because there
are seventy or eighty Mrs. Traynors on
the platform already.

She bites her lip, stands on tiptoes. A voice rises over heads - her friend June, already past the gate with daughter in hand.

JUNE
That's her! Let her through!

The Ticket Collector steps aside. June threads back, takes her arm and drags her forward, weaving between shoulders and scarves until they reach the front.

RAILWAY MEN IN OILSKINS HERD THE CROWD BACK. A CARRIAGE SITS ON A SIDE TRACK - JACK'S CARRIAGE; DETACHED, QUIET, LIKE A PRIVATE CHAPEL.

Archbishop Keating strides out from the carriage door, violet cap gleaming, he lifts both hands and addresses the crowd.

ARCHBISHOP KEATING

I would ask that you be orderly. If you see Jack Traynor walk down the platform, promise me you will be satisfied and let him go home with his wife and child?

The crowd murmurs, then roars back.

CROWD

We promise!

MRS. TRAYNOR CLUTCHES HER DAUGHTER'S HAND, KNUCKLES WHITE. BREATH FOGS BETWEEN THEM. THE BAND STARTS LOW. SOMEWHERE DOWN THAT EMPTY STRETCH OF PLATFORM, WHEELS BEGIN TO ROLL.

97 INT. LIME STREET STATION, LIVERPOOL - EARLY EVENING, SATURDAY
28TH JULY 1923

Eddie leans across the others, peering out of the carriage window. Steam coils around a sea of faces stretching the whole length of Lime Street. He meets Jack's eyes. No words, just a trench nod - *ready?*

Jack's stomach flips like he's about to go over the top. Same knot, different ground. Eddie, Nes and Jordan, shoulders pressed close, stand at the ready for their final march. Jack stands, grips the wheelchair handles like a riflestock and pulls the door wide.

Maybe they'll have gone. Maybe it was an exaggeration.

The roar slams into them like a wall- raw, joyful, unstoppable.

CHEERS ARE HEARD FROM THE CROWD, FLAGS ARE WAVED AND TOKENS ARE GIVEN TO THE BRAVE MEN BY WOMEN AND CHILDREN AS THEY ARRIVE - THE HOMECOMING THEY HAD ALWAYS DESERVED.

Someone has a megaphone:

JACK TRAYNOR!

THE NAME, HIS NAME, REVERBERATES IN HIS EARDRUMS AND THROUGHOUT THE CROWD CHANTING IT BACK AT HIM LIKE A PERSONAL HYMN:

Jack, Jack, JACK!

Strangers who didn't care for his service number, or his patient number but knew his miracle. Eddie laughs through tears. Jordan mouths a told you, Nes just swears softly and grins.

A RECOGNISABLE BROWN, LEATHER SHOE STEPS OFF THE TRAIN ON STEADY LEGS ONTO THE PLATFORM: SCUFFED, WALKING AGAIN, JUST AS THE COBBLER HAD SAID. MRS. TRAYNOR'S HAND FLIES TO HER MOUTH AS JACK TRAYNOR, HER HUSBAND STEPS DOWN ONTO THE COBBLES.

Sunlight slices between the station roof and blinds Jack for a second - then he sees them. All of them. Bunting strung from girder to girder. Flashes from cameras, not nightmares.

JACK WHEELS HIS EMPTY CHAIR FORWARD. HE SETS OFF SLOWLY - NES, EDDIE AND JORDAN FLANKING HIM IN SILENCE, THE WHEELCHAIR ROLLING IN FRONT OF HIM LIKE A SURRENDERED WEAPON TOWARD THE CROWD.

As he nears, the crowd parts like the Red Sea and he sees them. His wife pale, and trembling, holding their little girl's hand. His daughter's eyes go wide, shouts 'Daddy', and breaks free of her mother's grip, sprinting twenty yards up the platform into her father's arms.

JACK DROPS TO ONE KNEE, THE DISUSED CHAIR CLATTERING OVER. DESPITE HER SIZE, JACK SCOOPS HER UP INTO STURDY ARMS WITH A VIGOUR SHE'D DESERVED WHEN LEARNING TO WALK.

He kisses her hair, smelling the salt and soot of home. His wife at their side in three strides, arms round them both, burying her face in his neck.

Eventually Jack straightens, taking in his surroundings. Thirty or so men, shoulder to shoulder, arms linked tight to contain the crowd - the same as Lourdes the night before, just torches traded for flashlights.

JACK SEES THE ECHO: PEACE AND HAPPINESS - HOPE AND FAITH - HAPPENING NOT JUST IN LOURDES BUT OUTSIDE IT; A LIVING EXPRESSION OF THE MESSAGE OF LOURDES.

Cameras flash. Jack tries not to look shy knowing this moment was greater than himself - so courage and faith can be heard by all. So he lifts his right hand just once - not a salute, just a wave - lets the smile break, real and unashamed, while the whole world cheers.

I owe them this.

JACK STEPS FORWARD. THE CHAIN LOOSENS, THE CROWD SPILLS OUT GENTLE AS LOW TIDE. JACK LETS THE RED SEA EMBRACE HIM. HANDS HOIST HIM ONTO SHOULDERS; OTHER LADS GRAB THE WHEELCHAIR, HOIST THAT TOO, LIKE A WAR-WAGON ON PARADE. JACK THE COAL-YARD MATE, WARTIME HERO, THE WALKING EXCEPTION FOR EVERY SCouser CHEERING.

THE SINGING SWELLS: HOPE, FAITH - LIVERPOOL, THE WORLD. THEY PARADE HIM OUT THE STATION ON SHOULDERS, BAND CRASHING, BOOTS STAMPING IN RHYTHM, ARMY DRUMS IN EVERY HEARTBEAT. THE STATION ROOF RINGS. FAITH BEING CALLED, LOUD AS GUNS ONCE WERE, AND JACK, GRINNING DESPITE HIMSELF, LETS THEM.

PULL BACK TO LIME STREET & THE LIVERPOOL DOCKS BEFORE FADE
OUT



PART V: JOHN 'JACK' TRAYNOR - MIRACLE #71**2 YEARS AFTER THE MIRACLE**

98 EXT. COAL YARD, LIVERPOOL DOCKYARDS - DAY, JULY 1925. - 11 YEARS AFTER WAR STRUCK

On the smoky streets of Liverpool's dockyards, Jack Traynor, a devout Catholic from humble roots, toils alongside his friends, with a jovial spirit. A natural leader, Jack's warmth radiates as he rallies his gang, their laughter echoing through the soot-stained air.

Jack Traynor steps off the gangway to the SS River Clyde with familiarity; each patched plate telling a shared story. A two-hundred-pound sack of Glaswegian coal, rides Jack's shoulder like a feather. No stagger. No grunt. Just the old rhythm: shoulders, swing, dump. Dust blooms.

NES ENTERS FRAME DOING THE SAME - NO LONGER OVERSEER BUT SHARING IN THE ENJOYMENT OF HONEST HARD WORK.

99 INT. HOME, LIVERPOOL - EVENING, JULY 1925.

The door creaks. Inside, Mrs. Traynor, hair loose, apron dusted with flour, meets Jack in the hallway.

Two children barrel past - Mary-Ellen and little Robbie. Jack kneels, scooping them both into arms full of the life that war once stole.

Mrs Traynor kisses the sweat off his cheek.

MRS. TRAYNOR

You're late.

JACK

Am I?

They laugh - small, real. Jack hangs up his cap, rolls up sleeves scarred but not crooked. The house smells of stew and coal smoke drifting off his skin.

The kitchen table groans; three families, ten chairs, one candle, Jack at head. Mrs. Traynor ladles stew. Eddie, cane hooked on the back of the chair sits opposite, leg stiff but smile wide. Nes has his two girls on his lap, feeding them

breadcrusts. Jordan and his wife trade jokes across the stew. Kids clatter spoons; dogs circle. No silence left.

Eddie raises a chipped mug of tea.

EDDIE

To those that deserved to make it, may
their memory live on by how we choose
to live our own lives.

Jack raises his own mug.

JACK

Lead by example, bound to serve.

Clinks. Smiles. Steam curling like incense.

Jack looks round: four men, once half-corpses, now fathers, husbands, neighbours. The candle flame steadies – no flicker – not anymore.

OUTSIDE, THE SS RIVER CLYDE STEAMSHIP KEEPS ITS SLOW HEARTBEAT. INSIDE, THE PATCHED-UP WORLD KEEPS EATING, BREATHING, LAUGHING.

WAR OVER BUT MIRACLES STAYING BUSY.

16 YEARS AFTER THE MIRACLE

100 EXT. LOURDES STATION PLATFORM – DAY, SUNDAY 22ND JULY 1939.

A stifflingly hot train arrives into Lourdes Station. Breath shallow, a bedbound man continues to slip in and out of fever dreams as he battles unseen demons through the fog. He grinds his jaw, and forces air back in. No visions, no angels, just the promise:

*I'll make it to Lourdes. He hadn't
come all this way to die.*

Despite his bravery, his body had betrayed him again.

VOLUNTEER HANDS SLIDE UNDER THE MAN'S TORSO, BETWEEN SOILED BLANKETS. PAIN WORSE THAN A BULLET WOUND IS SEEN ON THE MAN'S FACE.

RATHER THAN FLINCH FROM THE SOILED BLANKETS, AN OLDER, STILL POWERFUL JACK GREETES HIM WITH A PURE, UNWAVERING SMILE SHOWING NO JUDGEMENT.

JACK
Le Service.

Working beside Jack is an aged Nes, once the sceptic; the German volunteer from the night at the Grotto; an Italian boy, the embodiment of the boy from the battlefield Jack couldn't save; and by his side is Jack's son, now the spitting image of Robbie - the same age, the same artful dodger smile. Each working together, unloading pilgrims, bridging past wounds, uniting nations and generations in service.

The man braces for another scream of pain. None comes as the men expertly lift him like a fallen banner - stretcher to chair - off the train - onto the platform - and onto the ambulance cars.

LOURDES - WHERE THE SHADOWS OF GHOSTS BECOME MEN WHO CHOSE
THE LIGHT. A TIMELESS PLACE WAR NEVER DARE TOUCH.

101 INT. ASILE HOSPITAL, LOURDES - DAY, SUNDAY 22ND JULY 1939.

Having finished unloading the Liverpool Pilgrimage at the hospital that Jack remembers so well he turns to Nes.

JACK
Will I see you at Mass at seven?

Nes scoffs.

NES
Not bloody likely, you know that's not
me.

Jack grins.

JACK
The Grotto at nine, then?

NES
Of course.

Nes smiles. His faith lying in good deeds, not ritual - a testament to Lourdes' universal call.

Jack steps back into his old hospital ward. The same cracked ceiling. The same three beds.

He walks the Asile he once crawled in spirit. Past the bed on

which he was laid to rest. Past the nurse's empty station.
Past the place where he first said *enough*.

Jack stops at the shuttered window and pulls it open wide.
Soft, golden light spills in. The same rays from sixteen
years ago when he lay here; legs dead, heart on pause.

Jack presses his palm flat against the sill. Feels the rough
plaster. Feels the pulse of stone under it - steady, waiting.

A CHILD'S VOICE DRIFTS UP THE CORRIDOR. A PILGRIM LAUGHS.
JACK LETS THE SOUND ROLL OVER HIM, LIKE SPRING WATER IN A
GROTTO. HE CLOSES HIS EYES. HE DOESN'T PRAY. HE JUST LISTENS.

JACK TURNS IN THE DOORWAY, CASTING THE SHADOW OF THE TALL,
SQUARE MAN, STILL CARRYING COAL IN THE SHOULDERS. A SMILE
ARRIVES ON HIS FACE; SMALL, FINAL, SATISFIED.

NOTHING MORE TO CONQUER. ONLY TO GIVE.

Jack steps into the light of the reception area. He's almost
through the front doors when he hears it - soft, familiar.

JACK TURNS. GLANCES BACK DOWN THE HOSPITAL CORRIDOR. AT THE
END OF THE WARD HE SEES A FLOWING MANE OF RED HAIR - THE BACK
OF THE IRISH NURSE'S HEAD TENDING THE NEXT ARRIVAL. THE SAME
TILT OF THE HEAD, THE SAME STEADY HANDS - UNAGED.

Jack doesn't call out, doesn't chase after her - only pauses,
smiles and walks on to his next duty, sensing her divine
presence.

OUTSIDE, THE BELLS START. NOT FOR THE DEAD. FOR THE ONES WHO
WALKED ON ANYWAY.

100 YEARS AFTER THE MIRACLE

102 EXT. LOURDES - DAY, SUNDAY 22ND JULY 2023

A century later, the Liverpool Archdiocesan pilgrimage marks
its 100th year, mirroring Jack Traynor's miracle. [Shot with
raw, iPhone intimacy]

VOLUNTEER HANDS SLIDE UNDER A STRETCHER-BOUND PILGRIM, A
HOSPITALIER'S SMILE BEAMING DOWN - NOT A FAMOUS FACE, BUT AN
EVERYMAN OF TODAY, ECHOING JACK.

ON THE PLATEAU PISCINES, VOLUNTEERS FROM ALL NATIONS SHARE BANTER; THEIR LAUGHTER BLENDING LIKE JACK'S TROOP AND BRANCARDIER'S ONCE DID - UNITED IN SERVICE.

A PROCESSION OF PILGRIMS IN WHEELCHAIRS ROLLS INTO THE SANCTUARY, PASSING A STATUE: A STRETCHER-BOUND FIGURE, A HOSPITALIER AT HIS FEET, A NURSE CARING OVER HIS SHOULDER, AND A PRIEST GAZING UP AT MARY - A FROZEN ECHO OF JACK'S GROTTO MOMENT, BLENDING ART AND REALITY.

THE ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL MILITARY PILGRIMAGE FILLS LOURDES WITH SOLDIERS -BRITISH, ITALIAN, FRENCH, GERMAN AND MANY MORE - SWAPPING STORIES, MARCHING, VOLUNTEERING, AND SINGING IN CAFES - THEIR CLINKING GLASSES SEALING BONDS FORGED BEYOND OLD BATTLE LINES.

IN A QUIET OFFICE, SOMEONE IN THE MIRACLE BUREAU UNEARTHS JACK TRAYNOR'S DUSTY FILE, PRESENTING IT TO A MEDICAL COUNCIL. SCENES UNFOLD OF THEIR METICULOUS SCRUTINY - DEBATING SCANS, AND NOTES FROM DOCTORS AZURDEA, MARLEY, AND FINN - BEFORE DECLARING THE CASE AN OFFICIAL SCIENTIFIC MIRACLE - DEFYING MODERN REASON AND INVITING SCEPTICS TO DIG INTO ITS TRUTH.

THE CAMERA PULLS BACK TO AN AERIAL VIEW OF THE CANDLELIT PROCESSION, THOUSANDS CLUTCHING FLAM

ES, SINGING AVE MARIA IN UNISON, THEIR VOICES A TESTAMENT TO FAITH'S ENDURING PULL.

A voiceover intones:

" I don't know what I believe, but I
believe in Lourdes. "

Alongside links to Jack's miracle paperwork, volunteer opportunities, and a call for viewers to share their own personal miracles - Inviting all to join Lourdes' living legacy.

OUR LADY OF LEGIONS PRAY FOR US.