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**TOM HARTLEY'S WAR**

FADE IN:

LOCATION: QUEENSLAND, AUSTRALIA.

EXT. CATTLE RANCH - DAY

GREG HARTLEY (50) The owner of the property rides up. He is weather beaten and tired. The homestead copes that. There's out-buildings and a water trough in the yard near the verandah.

KIT PETERS (40) The farm hand strides towards Greg, who hands him an envelope.

GREG

Sorry to see you go, Kit, but you know how it is, little feed for the cattle and beef prices down.

Kit snatches the envelope, checks its contents, frowns and pockets it.

KIT

Who'll check out the boys now?

GREG

Tom's got his head screwed on and Max a quick learner. We'll manage. Hope you'll find another job soon. Good luck.

Greg turns and enters the homestead.

Kit scowls and jumps into his battered 4x4. He drives off in a cloud of dust.

EXT. THE ROLLING HILLS - DAY

Sun scorched grassland stretches to the horizon. Thunder clouds threaten above.

Tom Hartley (20) Athletic, wavy hair rides toward us on a fine horse.

EXT. TREES - DAY

In the shadows on horseback sits FRANK SAWYER, large, (45), overpowering. Beside him sits JOE, (35), rough looking, well muscled. Unnoticed by Tom. Sawyer points towards Tom. Joe winks, with a hint of a smile.

Joe remains under the tree, almost out of sight. Sawyer rides towards the homestead.

EXT. HOMESTEAD/VERANDAH - DAY

Sawyer rides into the yard, and waves to Greg. He comes down from the verandah and shakes Sawyer's hand.

SAWYER  
 (oozing goodwill)  
 G'day Sir. We're buying up  
 properties for a big businessman.  
 I thought I'd check you out. Sorry  
 to see you're so short of fodder.

GREG  
 Guess so. You got some to offer?

SAWYER  
 'fraid not. You staying on?

His eyes are everywhere, taking in the property, and all.

SAWYER  
 Manage the property on your own?

Greg stares hard at Sawyer.

GREG  
 Not much option.

SAWYER  
 Ever thought of new horizons?

Greg brightens up.

GREG  
 At the right price.

SAWYER  
 Be in touch.

He hands Greg a card.

GREG  
 Do that.

Sawyer trots off. Greg returns to the verandah.

EXT. A WEATHER BEATEN HOMESTEAD - DAY

Tom rides into the yard. He demounts and is welcomed by his dad. Max, 13, Tom's pleasant looking brother, takes Tom's horse to the water trough. Max looks troubled.

GREG  
 Grub's up Tomk. Come right in.

INT. LIVING ROOM/KITCHEN - DAY

Greg uneasy, watches Tom eat.

Tom demolishes his meal. He pauses.

TOM  
Mum not back from town? A bit late.

Greg winces.

GREG  
She's left. Not coming back.

TOM  
(Jerking back in his chair.)  
What! Why? Where's she gone?

GREG  
Had enough of Drought, Fire and  
Flood. Said she's going to stay  
with cousins in the USA...

RUMBLE of thunder.

TOM  
Not even saying goodbye! No! How's  
Max taking it? Hard on him. Still a  
kid.

GREG  
He'll get over it. Keep him busy.  
Give me a hand with that tree we  
chose yesterday. A bit of axe work  
will take your mind off things.

EXT. WOODLAND - DAY

Tom attacks a tall tree with an axe.

GREG  
Now the other side and watch out  
for its falling.

TOM  
I know what I'm doing.

Tom hacks out a wedge on the far side.

GREG  
Too late when it's killed you.

TOM  
Dad, I'm not a boy anymore.

The tree makes a CRACKING noise.

GREG  
Tom!



The tree falls, narrowly missing Tom. He grins.

TOM  
You only die once.

GREG  
I'll give you some shooting  
lessons. In case you get called up.  
Always keep the rifle unloaded till  
you use it. Too many accidents.

EXT. YARD - DAY

Greg places some tins on a fence.

Tom raises a rifle.

GREG  
Take a breath. Hold it. Take aim  
and squeeze the trigger. Don't  
snatch.

Tom does so and fires. A tin flies away.

GREG  
Good lad. Another.

Tom hits the next tin. He hits the next and the next.

GREG  
Good on you. You're a natural. I'm  
going inside to balance our books.  
Tidy up the tree small branches.

More THUNDER.

GREG  
Watch out for the lightning.

DISTANT SMOKE.

Max joins Tom dragging branches into a heap.

Fire races towards them. Tom's face twitches. Fire terrifies him.

EXT. CREEK - DAY

TOM watches a wall of fire approaching through incinerating gum trees... Tom searches for a gap in the flames. He's surrounded.

Petrified, he freezes, then pushes MAX ahead of him into the water. Max disappears. Tom dives in. The fire jumps the creek. Tom's head comes up for air. Tom searches for Max, then vanishes underwater again. Tom's agonised face appears. No Max.

Fire continues to burn to the water's edge. Smoke chokes Tom. Tom, frantic, dives again and again.... He surfaces, maddened.

TOM

No!

Greg, oblivious of Max gone, strides towards Tom.

GREG

Storm on the way.... We'd better get our skates on. Move the cattle to higher ground.

TOM

Max's drowned. Can't find him. Searched all over. Must've been swept downstream.

Greg's aghast.

GREG

Oh my god! You sure?

Tom nods grimly.

GREG

Look for him later. Must move the cattle or they'll drown too.

EXT. Paddock - DAY

It's raining in torrents. The fire is out. Greg and Tom in oilskins steer their horses near a creek, now a river. They battle against the elements for a beat.

Greg's saddle slips, depositing him into the water. Tom rides his horse close to where Greg has disappeared.

Tom, frantic, searches calling:

TOM

Dad, where the hell are you? No, No, No!

Tom searches down stream. He searches under clumps of debris. He shakes his head. Tom stumbles and disappears for a beat under water. He emerges, spitting water. He makes for the river bank.

Greg emerges face down. Tom wades out and hauls Greg to land. He pumps Greg's chest but there's no response.

TOM

Dad! Come on!

Tom breathes into Greg but no response. Tom HOWLS.

EXT. HOMESTEAD'S GARDEN - DAY

There are two mounds of earth each with a crude wooden cross. Tom kneels by one drying his tears. He mutters:

TOM  
My fault... Should've checked his  
girth. Groans: Oh Dad, Max! Alone!

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Tom, lit by a candle, sits on his bed, gazing into space. Miserable. He shakes his head. He gazes at a photo of Max. Groans.

A window CREAKS. Tom listens, worried. He rises and shuts it; he takes a pistol out of a cupboard and checks it's loaded. He places it under his pillow. He lies down and drifts off to sleep.

The wind whistles. Tom wakes, listens to the storm. He relaxes.

A door CREAKS. Tom stirs, hears floorboards CREAKING and sits up. The door opens by degrees. Sawyer and Joe stand observing Tom.

SAWYER  
He's all yours Joe. I'll take the  
farm and he's your jackaroo. Work  
him till he drops. Enjoy.

Joe chuckles and reaches for Tom's legs.

TOM  
Git off me.

His hand slides under his pillow unseen.

Joe's hand closes on a leg and he pulls Tom towards him.

There's a CRACK as Tom fires, tearing Joe's sleeve.

JOE  
Fuck!

Joe leaps back, releasing Tom.

TOM  
Out before I reach six, or I'll  
kill you both. One, Two, Three...

Both men leap for the door. They collide and escape.

Tom scowls and strides after them, pistol in hand.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Tom fires into the dark and bars the front door.

**SUPER: January 1942 World War II.**

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Tom's slumped on the settee, empty eyed, listening to his radio.

RADIO

The Japanese invasion force is approaching Malaya. The Allies are convinced Singapore has sufficient troops to defend it. All fit young men are welcome to join our army.

Tom's alert, switched on.

EXT. YARD - DAY

BILLY (30) Indigenous, farm worker, listens to Tom.

TOM

Billy I'm off to train as a soldier.

BILLY

What! Don't! Think again, Tom. Suppose you get killed?

TOM

(grinning)  
I'll try not to... Please keep an eye on our cattle while I'm gone. I've left word with the bank manager to pay you monthly. Many thanks.

EXT. /INT. 4 X 4 UTE - DAY

Tom drives away from the homestead. He turns for a final look. As through his eyes we see two crosses marking the graves. He wipes away a tear and drives on.

LATER

EXT. ARMY ASSAULT COURSE - DAY

Live rounds are being fired from a machine gun at head height.

Thirty SQUADIES in groups of three run, ducking below the level of fire.

Tom Hartley, a lieutenant now, in Australian army uniform, signals his platoon to crouch and freeze.

The ground rises so they have to scramble on all fours to be safe. The "monkey run". The firing pauses. Three look at Tom. He beckons them on.

As they reach the higher ground, the machine gun starts again. It catches one soldier in the chest. He dies instantly. A second lies wounded. The last hugs the ground.

TOM  
(yelling)  
Cease fire. Cease fire...Oh my God!

Tom dashes forward to the wounded man, shouting "Medic, Medic!" Tom presses the man's leg to stop the blood flow.

LATER

INT. NISSEN HUT - DAY

Tom alone rocks to and fro on his bed, distraught. He can't stem his tears. Tom dries his tears and buries his head in his hands.

EXT. NEWSPAPER BOARD - DAY

THE JAPANESE HAVE JUST INVADED MALAYA. THEY SWARM THROUGH THE JUNGLE, TARGETING THE BRITISH AND AUSTRALIAN ARMY IN SINGAPORE.

INT. AUSTRALIAN ARMY HEAD QUARTERS. JACKSON'S OFFICE - DAY

MAJOR JACKSON (35) hard faced, smart Australian uniform, sits at a desk, facing Tom, standing at attention.

MAJOR JACKSON  
At ease, Hartley. Have a chair. I'm going to give you a chance to redeem yourself. A word of advice first.

TOM  
Sir?

MAJOR JACKSON  
You are best on your own, or at least with a small group. Men... avoid their weaknesses. Build on their strengths

TOM  
(Bitter)  
Less to destroy.

MAJOR JACKSON  
Put it behind you. Okay, you made a mistake. One you won't make again. Acting solo, not possible. You have initiative. Use it.

Tom sits, tense, still on edge.

Jackson passes targets to Tom. Each has the bull shot out.

The targets are marked: LIEUTENANT HARTLEY.

MAJOR JACKSON

You've come out top in your squad. Your Japanese is sufficient to understand their messages. We like your attitude. We can use you on a special mission.

Tom's all attention.

MAJOR JACKSON

You tend to rush into things. This mission will need planning and caution.

TOM

I guess I can do that Sir.

MAJOR JACKSON

The Japanese have invaded Malaya and are advancing towards Singapore. We need to know their numbers and progress. Could you operate on your own?

TOM

I'll try, sir. Do you really think I'm up to it sir?

MAJOR JACKSON

That's why we chose you. You'll have a number 18 wireless set; a bit bulky, but the best we have at present... It's imperative we stop them at Singapore. Burma and even India are at stake.

TOM

Yes Sir. How do I get there?

MAJOR JACKSON

You'll land by boat, at night, from a submarine. Try to keep just ahead of the enemy advance. Join up with our troops, who should hold them before Singapore. Listen in to enemy radio transmissions and report back their contents to our forces in Singapore.

Jackson passes Tom a map, which he studies.

MAJOR JACKSON

It's vital our troops blow up the  
causeway to slow the enemy advance.  
If they do, you may have to swim  
for it.

TOM

I'm a strong swimmer. I'll get  
across.

MAJOR JACKSON

You've no one at home, have you? No  
girlfriend?

Tom chokes, then pulls himself together.

TOM

No. My dad died just before I left  
for the army. Mum left us for the  
States. Couldn't take Fire, Flood  
and drought any more. Max, oh no!

Tom hides a tear by blowing his nose noisily.

The Major nods.

MAJOR JACKSON

A bit different from ranching  
cattle on a remote Queensland farm.  
You'll be used to going solo. And  
fending for yourself.

Tom bites his lip as he takes in why he was chosen.

TOM

Sounds like a one way trip.

MAJOR JACKSON

Not if you play it canny. We're  
counting on you. Keep out of  
trouble, son. Don't get caught.  
You're our eyes and ears.

TOM

Sir... Thick jungle. Any support?

MAJOR JACKSON

Good cover. Your jungle training  
north of Toowoomba will help. One  
last thing, you're promoted to  
Captain. More clout with our boys.  
Good luck.

Tom smothers his surprise, salutes and exits.

A WEEK LATER

EXT. MALAYA - JUNGLE - DAY

JAPANESE SOLDIERS advance into CLEARING.

A bush behind them stirs. Tom observes them cycle past, amazed. Tom Hartley's slouch hat peeps through undergrowth. Silence apart from jungle insects CLICKING.

Machine GUNFIRE draws closer. Rifle bullets ZING. Tom winces: Tom nestles into thick jungle close to the ground. He wears a headset attached to his wireless. He listens: TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH:

LIEUTENANT SAITO(V.O.)  
Lieutenant Saito here. Light  
British and Australian resistance.  
Anticipate they will give in by the  
time we reach the causeway... Next  
target...

A stray bullet SMASHES the radio.

TOM  
Shit!... Oh Jeez!

EXT. CLEARING - DAY

A Japanese WAR ARTIST peers through the undergrowth, busy sketching.

A JAPANESE SOLDIER rides his bike into view. A pack on his back throws him off balance as he stops and peers ahead. Japanese SOLDIERS join him, on push bikes.

A SHOT rings out. The first soldier falls dead. The others spread out on foot, FIRING. A ferocious if brief firefight. Two more Japanese fall dead. Heavier FIRE from the Japanese side.

Single SHOTS from the defenders, hidden in the jungle. SILENCE. Tom keeps low.

An AUSTRALIAN SOLDIER flies backwards into the clearing, shredded by machine gun FIRE. THREE other AUSSIES sprint through the clearing, away from the Japanese. One stops and CLICKS on an empty magazine. He vanishes into the jungle.

Two Aussies stagger to the ground, wounded. Four JAPANESE surround the wounded. The Japanese SERGEANT studies them for a moment. An Aussie SOLDIER (19) lies on the ground clutching his bleeding leg.

JAPANESE SERGEANT  
(in English)  
How many are you?

The wounded Aussie shrugs.



JAPANESE SERGEANT  
Tell me or you die.

AUSSIE  
No idea.

The sergeant pulls out his pistol, cold as ice.

AUSSIE  
Leave me. I'll do. Give me a stick.  
I can walk.

FLASH of Tom's worried and then horrified face.

The sergeant SHOOTS the boy and the other wounded once each.  
The bodies twitch, then lie still.

Tom looks savage... struggling not to open fire.

JAPANESE advance through the clearing.

EXT. BUSH - DAY

A bush behind them stirs. Tom observes them go, seething  
hatred, his trigger finger twitching.  
NOISE of Japanese soldiers fades. Distant sporadic SHOOTING.

A Japanese COLONEL strides into the clearing. He peers  
around. He turns to follow the soldiers.

Tom checks for other enemy; NONE, he stalks then dives onto  
the colonel, driving his bayonet into his back. The colonel  
falls dead.

Distant battle SOUNDS. Tom searches the body before it stops  
twitching. Tom snatches out of the colonel's breast pocket a  
small notebook and maps. Tom hears troops APPROACHING O.S.  
Tom darts back under cover.

The Japanese War Artist almost disappears as he steps back  
under cover. He draws oblivious Tom...

LIEUTENANT SAITO, 25, slim and fit, appears behind him.  
He snatches the drawing, studies it and pockets it, slapping  
the artist on the shoulder. Saito moves on.

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

The SOLDIERS pass by so close. Tom flattens into the  
undergrowth. He studies the notebook with arrows showing  
routes towards Burma. Clusters of handwritten Japanese Kanji.  
SUBTITLE: "Proposed major attack on British position. Target -  
Burma. Date: "March."

Tom stuffs notebook and maps into his pocket. Tom searches  
around. The enemy have passed forward. Tom runs over to the  
two slaughtered Australians. He checks they're dead, crosses  
himself. Tom slides into the jungle.

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

Tom is well hidden by foliage. Enemy VOICES are all around him. He digs a shallow "grave" for the bulky radio. Body movements are close by. Tom tense, waits for them to move on... He tries the radio again and again. He buries it.

EXT. CAUSEWAY - NIGHT

Tom drifts through the jungle, more by feel than sight. Ferocious battle SOUNDS are ahead. Large EXPLOSIONS as the Allies blow up the causeway.

JAPANESE TROOPS halt in front of the water.

EXT. SAMPAN - NIGHT

Tom finds a sampan and pushes it ahead of him as if caught by the tide. Beat. He reaches the far side and struggles onto dry land.

EXT. SINGAPORE - NIGHT

Tom comes face to face with three JAPANESE SOLDIERS, also dripping wet. They box him in. (in perfect English)

JAPANESE SOLDIER

Big fish. Come with us. You tell us  
your unit.

TOM

Girl Guides.

One soldier tries to bind Tom's wrists. Another has his bayonet at Tom's throat. They force Tom away. Tom stumbles and evades the bayonet. They close on him.

JAPANESE SOLDIER

Keep upright or lose your head.

SWAMP They stagger through mud and water, Tom gasping.

TOM

I'm no good to you dead. Ow!

A soldier scrapes his bayonet down Tom's thigh. Tom swivels, seizes the rifle and slashes its owner's throat. In the same movement Tom dives into the dark and vanishes underwater.

The remaining soldiers search around. No Tom. They FIRE into the water. No body floats.

EXT. SINGAPORE WATERFRONT - DAY

Sunken boats. Dead civilians. Discarded weapons. Chalked on a wall: AN ARROW: AUSSIES > PUB Bullets and explosions ERUPT all around.

INT. O'REILLY'S BAR IN SINGAPORE - EVENING

Two ragged, dirty, deadbeat SOLDIERS in Australian jungle uniform drink at the bar. An immaculate BARMAN, reigns in the almost empty bar. He tries a water tap to wash glasses. Water fades to a trickle.

The soldiers' rifles and a bren gun, (light machine gun) lie on a table beside them, their packs dumped on the floor. ASH JENKINS, (30), a tall Pommie (Brit), with smile lines. REME on his shoulder marks him as an Engineer. His hard and scarred face mark him as an experienced soldier. Ash tosses back a whisky, his face tense.

CHARLIE BROCK (21), an Aussie infantryman, a joker, soft with a lance corporal stripe on his arm, needs a shave.

The occasional heavy gun FIRES in the distance. Machine gun fire CHATTERS closer.

CHARLIE

Bloody Japanese running all over us. Units scattered. Fuck knows where mine's got to. Yours, Ash?

ASH

No chance. Outnumbered. No tanks?

Charlie nods and sticks two fingers upwards.

CHARLIE

Yeah and where are our fuckin' planes?

Ash empties his glass. The Barman fills it again without being asked.

Sporadic rifle and machine-gun FIRE draw closer. Charlie aims his bren gun through the window. He pulls the trigger. An empty CLICK. Charlie flashes a wry smile and drains his glass.

Tom Hartley blasts in. His cap badge announces "2nd/14th Light Horse". Black mud streaks his face. His clothes are dripping wet.

Aussie GREG TOPPING (28), tall and thin, same unit, follows.

GREG

Look what I've dredged up.

CHARLIE

Jeez! No coloureds in here.

Tom strides to the bar and sweeps all glasses onto the floor. Tom shows contempt at the relaxed scene.

TOM  
Having a bloody picnic?--- Japs!

Tom points through the window. He grabs a hand towel, wets it with a soda siphon, and cleans his face.

CHARLIE  
(twitching)  
Why not? Stay alive. Be fed.  
Set free when it all ends, eh?

ASH  
That was my drink!

TOM  
Find a boat out or die. I'm Tom  
Hartley. You are?

Ash picks up his rifle and pack.

ASH  
Ash. He's Charlie.

GREG  
Greg.

TOM  
Same unit, yet we've not met?

GREG  
Reinforcements. Ambushed. Lucky to  
survive.

Greg checks his rifle magazine. It has one round left.  
He shrugs and snaps the magazine into the rifle.

A red faced British COLONEL (40's), strides in. Hat on and  
shiny riding boots, pistol strapped into a polished holster.

Tom makes for the door, rifle in one hand and pack in the  
other, looking out for Japanese. Tom hesitates.

TOM  
Colonel, you haven't a radio I can  
borrow, have you?

COLONEL  
Filthy soldier. You'd have to ask  
the quartermaster. If not over-run  
by now.

The colonel is Pomposity Personified.

COLONEL  
What are you chaps doing here?  
Get down to the square and fall in.  
We can present a jolly smart show  
surrendering.

The colonel stands beside the bar, full of his own importance.

ASH  
(affected)  
We've not been taught how to  
surrender sir, actually.

Charlie winks at Ash.

CHARLIE  
I say, old chap. Would you like my  
rifle? It's no fuckin' good with no  
ammo. What ho old fella. Jolly good  
war, eh? Well played Sir.

Ash gives a mock Nazi salute.

The colonel bristles with anger.

COLONEL  
I'll put you on a charge in the  
morning. Jankers for you lot.

A tracer BURST through the open window SHATTERS bottles  
behind the bar, right in line with where Tom had been  
standing. They all duck.

CHARLIE  
Fuckin' hell!

GREG  
Enjoy Jap hospitality, Mate.

Tom vanishes out of the door.

They grab their weapons and packs. Led by Greg, Charlie and  
Ash run out, brushing past the colonel. Ash makes him stagger  
backwards. In an adopted Aussie tone:

ASH  
'Bye Sir. Enjoy your jankers,  
wanker!

The colonel is ready to explode.

COLONEL  
Bloody Colonials. No discipline!---  
Barman, a gin and tonic. Make it a  
double.

A stray bullet SMASHES the only gin bottle.

EXT. QUAYSIDE - NIGHT

Tom, Ash, Greg and Charlie shelter in the shadow of a boat.  
Sporadic CHATTER of machine gun fire in the distance.

Flames flicker as a building blazes in the next block.  
Bullets PING off hard surfaces.

SCREAMS come from the hospital with a large Red Cross on its wall.

Charlie whispers to Ash:

CHARLIE

I'm for surrender. Not following a  
boy scout just out of nappies.

TOM

Surrender's death.

ASH

Bloody hell. Cold blooded murder!

GREG

Japanese butchers!

TOM

You'll get your chance.

GREG

You're yellow, Yank!

Tom's glare radiates fury at Greg. He spits his words like bullets.

TOM

Sure! The four of us with no ammo!  
We must be some of the few who  
haven't surrendered.

Ash is shaken. He grits his teeth, a habit under stress.

TOM

I've got to reach Australia fast.  
I've got vital information for our  
guys. Find a radio or a boat,  
provisions, water cans. I need you  
to row unless there's a motorboat.

Ash looks at Tom as if he's mad. Tom points to his captain's pips.

CHARLIE

Obey a Yank? Why not follow the  
colonel and give ourselves up?  
He'll buy us a gin and tonic. What,  
ho. Strewth mate. Wouser!

Charlie chuckles. Tom burns him with contempt. Charlie takes a pace backwards.

ASH

We spend years in a prison camp as  
Colonel Blimp's batmen! Can't wait.

Greg regards Ash as if he's lost his mind.

TOM

Take Charlie, Greg. Find food,  
fishing gear. Ash, come with me.

Tom whispers in Greg's ear:

TOM

Watch Charlie. We need him to row.  
(Louder to the rest)  
Meet us by the Customs shed and  
watch your backs.

Greg gives a casual salute, ending in two fingers as Tom and Ash sprint along the quay.

Greg pushes Charlie towards dark buildings, his hand on his shoulder.

EXT. QUAY - FURTHER ALONG - NIGHT

Tom leads crouched, slinking between vessels. He halts suddenly and points. Ash colliding, bounces off Tom's six feet of muscle.

A rowing boat lies tied to a ring in the concrete wall. Tom gives a thumbs up. They creep towards it.

TRAMPING feet O.S. Tom and Ash scuttle behind barrels.

A SQUAD OF SOLDIERS run by. They fade into the distance.

A flame thrower lights up the far end of the street.

Tom's face twitches. Fire terrifies him.

TOM

No!

Tom and Ash jump down steps to the boat. Water sloshes in it.

TOM

Find another. Quick! The motor  
launches'll all be taken.

Running BOOTS DRUM O.S. on the quay above.

Tom and Ash take cover against the wall. Shadows of SOLDIERS running by. Tom and Ash's faces tense. The BOOTS fade into the distance. Tom gestures to the steps. Tom leads their sprint up them.

ANOTHER JETTY

Tom and Ash clamber into a boat. It's dry. It has a small rudder.

Tom checks the two oars. Both with okay rowlocks. It has no engine or sail but a tarpaulin.

TOM

Water containers. Find some. By the Customs shed in twenty.

ASH

Wilco.

They disappear up the steps to the Quay-side.

More MACHINE GUNFIRE sounds close.

EXT. GROCER'S SHOP - NIGHT

Greg tries to force open the door with his bayonet. No luck.

Marching FEET approach. Greg is urgent.

CHARLIE

It's not worth it. Give ourselves up, now.

Greg shakes his head and hacks at the door. He splinters the wood round the lock. The door opens. Greg pushes Charlie inside ahead of him.

INT. SHOP

Greg and Charlie enter. Greg closes the door behind them.

The feet TRAMP closer. The feet MARCH by.

Charlie and Greg search the shop in the dim glow of a distant street light. Charlie flourishes an empty flour sack. Greg pulls a tin opener from a drawer.

Greg disappears into a ROOM behind.

Charlie continues searching for food tins. The PING of a telephone being replaced makes Charlie curious.

BACK ROOM

Charlie snatches open the door and looks at Greg?

GREG

Trying to contact my brother.

They return to scavenging.

CHARLIE

What now?



EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Greg leads the way out, carrying the sack.

MACHINE GUN FIRE riddles a shop front next door. Greg's sharp intake of breath. Charlie crouches lower.

CHARLIE  
Shit! Flying shit!

O.S. Glass SHATTERS.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Tom enters a PHONE BOX.

A quick check around for the enemy. Tom feeds in coins. He presses the button with the receiver to his ear. Nothing. He SLAMS down the phone.

EXT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

JANICE HARPER, (20) an English nurse in uniform, slim, soft, bursts from the hospital, chased by two Japanese SOLDIERS, bayonets on their rifles. They close on her.

SHONA SING, a Malayan, (25) a nursing auxiliary, athletic, steps out of an alley and knifes one soldier in the belly, ripping upwards. He folds dead on the ground.

The other soldier levels his rifle at Shona. BANG! Soldier falls dead.

Greg, emerging from a street corner, lowers his rifle, followed by Charlie.

Shona wipes her knife on her victim's body, casually. She nods thanks at Greg.

He waves them on.

EXT. CUSTOMS SHED - NIGHT

Greg and Charlie arrive at the shed, the girls behind.

CHARLIE  
Caught?

Greg shrugs. A mortar THUMPS further down the street.

Charlie and Greg take shelter behind canvas bales. The girls follow them.

GREG  
Tom's trying to find a boat to get  
the hell outa here.

CHARLIE  
The hospital?

SHONA  
We escape from hospital. They kill  
us like the rest if they find us.

MACHINE GUN FIRE sounds closer. A BURST ricochets off a  
nearby building.

They duck. Janice is petrified. Shona, angry.

GREG  
Kid's call. Depends on the size of  
the boat, if he finds one.

Tom and Ash arrive out of the shadows. Each carries a full  
jerry can. Tom has a pack. Hard ammo magazines' outlines  
show.

TOM  
Hey, what?

CHARLIE  
Passengers first class.

TOM  
They'll never fit.

ASH  
We can't just leave 'em here.

JANICE  
Have you room for a nurse? If we  
stay here they'll kill us like in  
the hospital.

TOM  
That won't happen.

GREG  
(sarcastic)  
Must obey the captain. He knows  
best.

ASH  
Watch yourself Greg.

GREG  
The boy's got a champion. Fancy  
him, do you Ash?

ASH  
Don't be a bloody fool. We'll only  
survive if we stick together.

Greg offers his hand to Tom, who takes it and squeezes as he shakes it. Greg winces and pulls away, rubbing his crushed fingers.

BULLETS trace closer.

Tom gestures to the girls to follow. He takes in Janice in appreciation. She notices his interest with a slight smile.

They dart along the quay.

EXT. - BOAT - NIGHT

Tom hesitates, sizing up the craft. It's very small. His face melts.

TOM

Come on girls. We may have to amputate. Not leaving you to those monsters.

Charlie chuckles.

CHARLIE

She fuckin' filleted a Jap just like that.

SHONA

They executed my parents and burnt our town. I learnt my skills for survival on the back streets very young.

TOM

You'll have to work your passage.

INT. BOAT - NIGHT

Tom stows his can in the boat.

TOM

You are...?

JANICE

I'm Janice. She's Shona. An aide. They've been killing patients, doctors, nurses, everyone in the hospital. (TRUE)

Janice shudders.

Machine-gun tracer fire reflects in a nearby window.

Tom points to the boat.

TOM

Move it.

They sprint to the boat.

INT./EXT. TOM'S BOAT - NIGHT (MOVING)

Buildings burn in the distance. The moon gives a little light.

The girls squeeze up the bow, against the jerry cans. Charlie regards the girls with interest. Shona's legs peep through her slit skirt.

Greg steers. Tom and Ash row. The tired rowers GRUNT, and the water MURMURS. They stop rowing.

TOM  
Stuffed. Your turn.

The boat drifts to a stop. Greg and Charlie take the oars.

CHARLIE  
Did you make contact Greg, in the shop?

Greg flashes an uncomfortable glance.

GREG  
Phone was dead.

He faces Charlie as if a half-wit.

GREG  
Jeez, mate. Try matching your oar with mine. It's easier that way.

TOM  
Shona steer. If a big wave comes, steer right at it.

Shona nods, and takes her place aft.

LATER

EXT. BOAT - DAY (MOVING)

Not a ship in sight. Tom and Ash row, exhausted. The rest sleep.

Janice wakes up and stretches.

JANICE  
Want a spell?

Tom is amused.

TOM  
Huh. Thanks --- men's work.

JANICE

I used to row with my brother.  
He was at Radley, a school famous  
for rowing.

TOM

Shona? You game for it?

SHONA

Give it a go. Show'em up?

Tom and Ash share a sceptical look, then stop rowing. They swap places with the girls.

JANICE

Take it steady. Don't catch a crab.

SHONA

No find them this far out at sea.

Janice smiles. She and Shona grab their oars. Shona makes a sweep with the oar, misses the water and lands on her back. Laughter all round except for Tom, dead-pan.

Janice searches Tom's face, wondering. He clenches his teeth.

FLASH of Japanese murdering the wounded.

Shona rows with more care. Janice matches Shona's uncertain pace. Spray from the oars wets everyone... They settle into a smooth routine.

Greg wakes. He can't believe his eyes.

GREG

Mermaids next!--- Why are you in  
such a hellfire hurry to get back  
to Aus. Tom?

Tom hesitates.

TOM

Only seconded to your mob -  
Intelligence. A month or two  
it'll be too late.

Greg waits for more in vain.

Tom and Ash slide under the tarpaulin.

Greg finds a line. He throws it off the stern.... The line jerks. He pulls in a small fish. Greg grins and shows it to the girls. They smile.

Charlie, jealous, notices and scowls.

Greg unhooks the fish and threads a larger hook through it. He throws the baited hook into the sea.

Ash pulls in on his line and has to fight a large fish. Tom helps land the fish with his bayonet.

Shona slices off a piece of raw fish. She offers it around. Janice waves it away. Tom and Ash try it, then eat. Shona eats with relish.

ASH

How're you so quick with a knife,  
Shona?

SHONA

I was an orphan in town and kept  
off the men with a knife. They soon  
learnt.

CHARLIE

How come you Poms gave up the  
fight?

Tom's stare freezes Charlie, who wilts.

ASH

The Japanese in control at sea and  
air. We have nothing to stop their  
tanks. Short of ammo too.

TOM

Our General would never have  
reckoned the Japs would invade on  
bicycles. Who would? They came like  
a swarm of ants.

CHARLIE

If the Japs don't get us the sea  
will. How the fuck can we row ---

TOM

The difficult we overcome. The  
impossible takes a little longer.

Janice flashes a warm glance at Tom. His face softens.  
The expression fades as the trained soldier kicks in.

They all follow his pointing finger. A distant land mass.

TOM

There's another island ahead.  
Sumatra. Huge. A great place to  
disappear. Find a radio.

CHARLIE

How far back to Aus.?

TOM

About 3,000 miles. Only 2950 now.

CHARLIE

Jeez! We'll never row that far.  
I just wanna leave this stinking  
war. Why do we have to fight? Only  
good for undertakers.

Ash throws Charlie a pitying look.

TOM

Won't have to Charlie. Half of it's  
land. We'll pinch a motor launch.  
Have faith in yourself.

CHARLIE

Mm.

The wind picks up.

JANICE

Couldn't we rig a sail? The  
tarpaulin?

TOM

Nice one, Janice. Oars in.

She flashes him a smile.

There's the HUM of a distant plane.

INT. PLANE - (MOVING) - DAY

The Japanese PILOT scans the sea ahead. Stiffens as he sees  
a boat. He SHOUTS into his chest mic:

PILOT

*Ohaido to base, do you hear me?*

He receives no reply as he searches the wave bands with a  
knob on the facia. He repeats:

PILOT

*Ohaido to base, do you hear me?*

There's a CRACKLE response.

PILOT

*Ohaido to base. A small boat. Very  
low in water. Going to investigate.*

INTERCUT AS NEEDED.

Greg points to the PLANE.

The plane ZOOMS towards their boat.

GREG

Under the tarp, girls. Quick!

Greg nudges Tom.

GREG

Tom!

The boat rocks as the girls squeeze under the tarpaulin.

Tom and Ash jolt up. Tom's bleary eyed. He sees the plane.

TOM

Greg. My pack!

Greg unbuckles the pack. He extracts two bren magazines. He hides them under the tarpaulin.

Tom pulls out a rod and pretends to fish. Ash does likewise.

TOM

Greg, wave as it gets closer.  
He may be looking forward to fish  
for dinner.

CHARLIE

Optimist. He'll mince us.

Tom and Greg wave. The plane roars overhead. --- It returns, lower.

INT. PLANE

The pilot twists his radio knob.

PILOT

*A small boat. Four men. I'll take a  
closer look.*

The plane swoops closer.

INT. BOAT

Tom crosses himself.

TOM

Greg, take the bren; girls, keep  
down below the gunwale.

Janice ducks down, Shona likewise.  
Greg snaps a magazine into the bren.

GREG

How far ahead should we aim?

TOM

Try about a plane length, and then  
let it fly through your spread.  
We'll fire at him with rifles and  
try to break his concentration.



Tom passes rifle magazines to Ash and Charlie, clicking one into his rifle.

TOM

Janice, think you can hold the tiller steady with one hand up?

JANICE

(white-faced, trembling voice)  
I'll try.

The ROAR of the plane closing in.

A Japanese FIGHTER PLANE cuts through the haze.

TOM

A little prayer, everyone... that the pilot's short-sighted.

A general chuckle.

Greg appears sardonic. Janice's lips murmur in prayer.

The plane dives towards them.

TOM

Hold it --- Wait --- Wait --- Fire!

Janice jolts up and pulls on the tiller with all her might.

The boat swings away from certain death.

Machine gun bullets HIT the water where they should have been.

Greg opens up with the Bren gun, followed by the others' rifles. Their bullets miss the plane.

Janice swings the boat back on course. Tom gives her a thumbs up.

ASH

Spot on, Janice.

CHARLIE

It's curtains before we reach land.

The plane swoops away, and wheels for a second dive.

ASH

Get down Tom. We need you.

TOM

Belt up and concentrate! Only about half a mile now. If we're sunk, swim for it.

Janice flashes Tom a smile. Tom's face twitches. He turns away from the others, unnoticed, except for Janice.

The plane swoops in again.

Greg loads a fresh magazine. He fires earlier this time. He aims well in front. Greg holds his bren-gun steady, so the plane has to fly through his bullets.

Bullets strikes the side of their boat above the waterline. One hits Tom in the arm. He gasps. He drops his rifle. He holds his wound tight.

The others watch the plane with apprehension.

Greg's gun runs out of ammunition.

The plane flies towards land.

They regard each other, wondering.

The plane's engine, cuts and splutters. It might make the beach. Charlie gives a thumbs up.

The plane's engine starts again. It disappears over land.

A BANG, and smoke billows up over an island ridge. Shona notices blood streaming down Tom's arm. She nudges Janice.

Janice rummages through a pack, finds a tin of sulphonamide.

They CHEER.

She sprinkles the powder on the wound and straps on the field dressing. Tom winces.

JANICE

Missed the bone. Straight through.  
This'll keep you right, brave boy.

Tom grits his teeth. He smiles in appreciation.

TOM

I'll live --- bloody sore! Good  
shooting everyone.

He blanches, biting his lip.

GREG

You can't stay in charge with that,  
Tom.

TOM

Watch me.

Tom freezes Greg, daring him to question him. Ash watches Tom with growing interest. Greg's shaken.

EXT. A LARGE VESSEL - DAY

In the distance a ship appears on the skyline.

Charlie spots it first. He points.

TOM  
Shit! All we need.

ASH  
One of ours?

TOM  
Don't reckon. They've sunk our big ships.

JANICE  
How do you know?

TOM  
Intelligence.

GREG  
Jesus!

CHARLIE  
(grinning)  
He's long gone.

INT./EXT. BOAT

The ISLAND looms closer.

TOM  
We'll land and find cover. Hide in the jungle.

A long, sandy BEACH stretches into the distance.

TOM  
Take rifles, provisions and water. Drop the bren over the side, Greg.

Greg does so.

CHARLIE  
Sink the boat? They might think we've drowned.

TOM  
Worth a try. Good one, Charlie.

Charlie is pleased.

A reef bars them from the shore. Ash commands the helm. Surf explodes on the reef.

The boat pitches and tosses.

Tom slides against the side of the boat, banging his wounded arm. He winces, but remains stoic.

Ash steers the boat parallel with the reef. --- They roll worse as the waves hit them broadside.

All are tense.

Ash spins the boat towards where the surf lessens. He guides the boat through a narrow gap in the reef...

An audible SIGH of relief from everyone. All are silent while Ash steers towards rocks.

Tom watches the destroyer.

CHARLIE

What're you doing? We've got to get out before you sink her.

Ash shoots Charlie an "I know what I'm doing" look.

At the last moment, Ash steers the boat onto a patch of sand.

EXT. ISLAND - BEACH - DAY - CONTINUOUS

The group jump out of the boat.

Ash and Charlie pile the provisions into the tarpaulin. They lift it and run across the rocks to the trees.

Tom grabs his rifle. Greg carries the jerry cans. Janice struggles to carry Greg's pack plus Tom's.

Shona follows with two more rifles.

Greg, Ash and Charlie return to the boat. They push it out shoulder high, and wade round to one side.

ASH

Heave!

They overturn the boat. It fills with water and sinks.

They run up over the rocks.

TREES - CLEARING

Tom and group slump down to catch their breath. Greg opens his mouth but Tom beats him to it. Tom is grim as they face the jungle.

TOM

We need a sign the Japs won't twig. Once like this for "Freeze".

Tom makes a SOUND from the back of his throat.

He repeat the SOUND twice. Then again:

TOM  
That's for All Clear. Like the  
monkeys. Got it?

They all nod.

TOM  
Girls carry what you can and get  
under cover, now!

Janice and Shona register concern. They pick up their rifles  
and packs.

TOM  
Take the lead Greg. Ash bring up  
the rear. Cover our tracks. Quick.

Greg nods. He starts off into the jungle, using his bayonet  
to slash through creepers. The team scramble into cover.

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

Tom slashes with a bayonet with his good arm, his rifle slung  
on his back.

All sweat and slap at flies.

A snake slithers out of their path. Janice YELPS. Smiling,  
Shona taps Janice's shoulder.

SHONA  
A green snake. Not poisonous.

Janice shakes her head, white faced. They continue.

Ash frequently stops and listens for sounds of pursuit.

EXT. ISLAND CLEARING - DAY

Relentless rain drenches Tom's party.

TOM  
Take five.

Each slumps to the ground.

TOM  
They may only send one boat-load.

ASH  
Ambush?

Tom nods.

TOM

Greg go back and kill off their rear. We need the rifles.

Using his bayonet Greg cuts several sharp stakes from bamboos, and drives them into the ground with his rifle butt across the path. He hides their points with leaves.

Greg stretches a piece of vine as a trip "wire", so anyone walking along the path would stumble onto the stakes.

TOM

Neat one Greg.

Greg grins. Charlie and Ash look impressed.

TOM

No prisoners unless you're sure they've no weapons. Hurry.

The other men nod. Janice is horrified.

JANICE

That's murder!

TOM

It's not tea with the vicar.---  
Greg, take care. They'll expect you.

SHONA

I go with Greg.

Tom is dubious. He nods and hands Shona his bayonet. She kisses it.

Shona and Greg disappear back the way they came.

TOM

Keep together so we don't shoot each other. --- Janice.

Tom beckons Janice under the vegetation. Tom, Ash and Charlie hide on one side of the track. Janice slides under the undergrowth behind them. Her face is tense.

Charlie's rifle is unsteady as he trembles. Tom gives him a thumbs up and grins. Charlie grins back.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

A motorboat grounds on the sand. An OFFICER and ELEVEN Japanese SAILORS scramble out, holding their weapons high above the water.

The officer gestures towards the trees. They run, spread out, searching for footprints.

They follow up the rocks to the trees. They stop, at a loss. One points to a mark on the ground.

JAPANESE SAILOR

*Ai.*

OFFICER

*Well done.*

The other sailors converge on him. They disappear among the trees.

EXT. - JUNGLE - DAY

Greg and Shona hide off the track, listening. Shona lifts her finger and points. Greg nods.

Feet trample through the undergrowth. NINE Japanese SAILORS file by with their officer.

They are strung out, several yards between each. They peer through the jungle.

Greg rises to pounce when another appears. Greg sinks back. He gives a thumbs up. Shona nods.

Greg springs on the Japanese, as soon as he has passed. Greg drives his bayonet through the Japanese's spinal cord. The Japanese GRUNTS and slumps to the ground.

A movement behind them reveals the last Japanese, astonished and petrified. He swings up his rifle to point at Greg, who freezes. Shona dives under the rifle and drives her bayonet up through the Japanese's chest. He drops the rifle and falls dead. Greg smiles his thanks.

Shona and Greg drag the bodies off the track and take the rifles into the jungle.

EXT. ISLAND - CLEARING

Tom struggles with his wounded arm, propping up his rifle. He props it against the V of two creepers.

They hear a distant SCREAM.

ASH

One to Greg.

Ash and Charlie are on either side of Tom, their fingers on their triggers. Tom points Ash to fire at the left, Charlie the right. They nod.

The undergrowth CRUNCH of Japanese approaching. The OFFICER appears on the clearing's edge. He stops and peers at the other side. Three others appear beside him. They scan the jungle.

Tom nods. Tom, Ash and Charlie FIRE as one. The Japanese Officer and two sailors fall. The other FIRES into the jungle. A bullet hits a tree trunk in front of Janice. She winces.

Charlie and Ash fire together. The fourth Japanese falls dead. The remaining Japanese can be heard retreating. Charlie points to his rifle. He shrugs to suggest "no ammo".

Tom snatches up a semi automatic from a fallen Japanese. He thrusts it into Charlie's hands, shaking his head like: "Do I have to do everything for you?"

Ash grabs another automatic, throwing his rifle bolt into the jungle.

Tom gestures down the path. The others nod. Ash and Charlie follow the Japanese.

Tom checks the Japanese are all dead, rolling some over. Some are in their late teens. Tom shows a sudden flash of sorrow -

TOM  
(mutters)  
So young.

His war front kicks in again. Hard as a rock. Ash overhears Tom. He smiles.

ASH  
(mutters)  
Our kid.

Tom checks behind him.

TOM  
Okay Janice?

Janice emerges from the jungle, shaken.

Tom rests his hand on her arm.

TOM  
Good girl.

She pulls away.

JANICE  
Nothing's good. It's barbaric.

TOM  
I've seen the Japs killing helpless wounded.

JANICE  
So have I. It doesn't mean we have to stoop to their level.



TOM

No, but I don't want a bullet in  
the back from an enemy playing  
possum.

EXT. JUNGLE FURTHER ON - DAY

Greg and Shona wait off the track. Japanese run towards them. Two trip. A third falls, pinning the first two to the ground. Greg bayonets the man on top of the stack in the back of the neck.

The other two roll away and rise to their feet. They draw knives and square off against Greg and Shona. One of them stabs at Shona, but she grabs his wrist and holds it high.

He slips behind her and wraps his free arm around her throat. Still struggling with the hand holding the knife she drives vicious elbows into her attacker's face and together they stagger back and forth.

Greg slashes at the other Jap, but the soldier kicks the knife away and stabs at Greg with his own weapon. Greg rolls onto his back to avoid the knife, and the Japanese jumps on top.

Shona's attacker is still behind her. Each holds a weapon in one hand and uses the other for defence. The attacker forces Shona's hand down and the knife slices her thigh. Greg use the heel of his hand to break the nose of his opponent, who is momentarily stunned, enabling Greg to pull away and slit his throat.

Greg grabs the bayonet at his feet, and skewers Shona's opponent. He helps Shona to stand. RUNNING FEET are close. Greg carries Shona back into the jungle.

Three newly arrived Japanese stop short before the carnage.

JAPANESE SOLDIER

*There!*

They fire into the jungle.

Ash and Charlie pursue the Japanese, who disappear down the track. Two rifle SHOTS and a SCREAM.

Tom appears carrying his fresh weapon. He checks the pile of bodies. He collects weapons. Searches for food.

Greg reappears with limping Shona, her thigh roughly bandaged.

TOM

Bad?

Shona shakes her head. Another distant SHOT rings out.

GREG

I reckon that's the lot.

Janice appears. She blanches, seeing the bodies.

TOM

War. Kill or be killed. What do you think they were firing at us? Peppermints?

JANICE

We should bury them.

TOM

No time. Leave them for the next boat-load. Take their weapons and ammo. We'll get under cover.

JANICE

For the vultures?

Tom looks at her, pitying. Like at a child.

EXT. - BEACH

Tom and the others survey a body on the beach from the trees' cover. Another has reached the boat and hangs over the side, dead.

TOM

We'd better put some distance between us and the next patrol. Could be close behind.

Janice removes the dirty bandage from Shona's leg, sprinkles powder on the wound and straps on a dressing.

They pull out the tinned food from under the bushes, and stuff them into their packs.

Ash leading, they stride up the original path into the jungle. Tom checks to see they aren't being followed.

EXT. CLEARING - EVENING

Tom raises his hand. The party slump down round him.

GREG

(sardonic)

What now? Run out of ideas, Tommy boy?

ASH

You got any Greg?

Tom ignores Greg.

TOM

Looks like we've lost any pursuit  
for now.

He checks his compass.

TOM

We'll follow the coast. Jungle's  
too slow. We need another boat.

GREG

Jungle's safer. They'll never find  
us. Take real care.

CHARLIE

He's got a point, Tom. I'd like to  
stay alive. We might even get home  
in one piece.

JANICE

I'd second that.

Tom looks at each in turn. He's determined.

TOM

For Pete's sake so do I! We could  
fall into an ambush in the jungle  
as easily as be spotted at night in  
a boat. Those that want to chance  
the jungle, go with Greg. The rest,  
follow me.

Tom rises and strides on. Reluctantly, they all follow Tom,  
Greg the last to leave.

EXT. COAST/JUNGLE - EVENING

Tom and group stagger through the jungle fringe. Tom clutches  
his arm, in pain. All are dirty and sweating. Charlie and  
Shona watch the sides of their track for the enemy.

Janice jolts to a stop and points into the jungle. They all  
freeze.

JANICE

Eyes watching us!

Ash and Greg raise weapons. Shona has her bayonet ready.  
Charlie peers, then laughs.

CHARLIE

It's a monkey, you twit.

GREG

Your cousin, Charlie?

They laugh, except for Charlie, and push on.

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

Another Japanese patrol of c. 20 SOLDIERS searches for the missing patrol. Saito leads, taking a few steps forward, then stops and listens.

They discover their comrades' bodies. Saito is shocked, then furious.

SAITO

*How to tell their mothers?*

Saito gestures to four men to take guard ahead, and points others to search the jungle on either side.

Others check the bodies, then bury them with their combination tools, part axe, part shovel.

SAITO

*Treat them with respect.*

Saito talks on a walkie-talkie, gesturing in fury.

SAITO

*(into phone)*

*Enemy have wiped out Patrol 1. Send me reinforcements... To the airfield... Move it!*

He listens, nods and switches it off.

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

The vegetation thins. Janice faces Tom as if she's spent. Tom gives her an encouraging tap on the shoulder.

Ash takes the lead. He scans ahead. Ash points ahead. A VILLAGE. A few huts.

TOM

*Keep going everybody.*

They lengthen their strides.

EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

A clearing reveals palm thatched huts on stilts.

Tom signals to take care, waving and pointing. They spread out and search the huts, covering each other.

The girls wait in the jungle. Shona has a rifle at the ready. The village appears deserted.

Tom is watchful but bleary eyed. He leans against a veranda support.

Ash and Greg return. They wave the others towards the village.

CHARLIE  
Paradise.

JANICE  
Thank God.

Tom staggers. Ash runs to his side and, props him over one shoulder.

INT./EXT. HUT - DAY

A cute Indonesian BOY, SUBUL, (11), dressed only in a pair of tattered shorts, screams and runs inside a hut.

His mother, MARIA (35), a native, hides her crystal set before peeping out. She advances, relieved and waves them into her hut.

MARIA  
Welcome --- I'm Maria. British?

ASH  
Allies.

Maria takes in Tom.

MARIA  
Bring him in.

Janice moves to help with Tom. Maria helps Ash support him inside.

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

Saito leads his men with caution.

Soldiers carry another wounded soldier on a litter made of poles and a groundsheet. He has ghastly spike wounds across his chest and legs.

Saito's savage expression bodes ill for Tom's group. He searches for Tom's trail.

Saito points to bent foliage. He grins and gestures to his men to fan out left and right, a pincer movement.

He signals to them to stop and listen. A faint murmur from ahead of them.

INT. MARIA'S HUT - DAY

Tom lies in a hammock. Janice sits beside him on a stool. She bathes his forehead from a water bucket. Tom, delirious, sees Subul from the other side of the room.

TOM

Max.

Tom sits up, then slumps back exhausted.

Ash enters.

ASH

Take good care of him. Our  
inspiration.

Maria squats beside Tom. She regards the bloody bandage.

MARIA

This'll have to come off.

Tom is alarmed.

TOM

My arm?

MARIA

No, silly, your shirt.

Maria takes off his shirt with care, and inspects his wound. She cleans it. Tom winces. He drifts in and out of consciousness.

Janice opens her pack and extracts the sulphonamide. She applies it to the wound and bandages it.

JANICE

That should help.

She exits. Tom regains consciousness.

MARIA

Lie there while I boil some soup.

ASH

Will he be okay? We need him.

MARIA

If he doesn't get a fever.

Ash nods his thanks.

TOM

Japs? Have they been here?

Maria crosses herself.

MARIA

No, thank God. Some villagers are hiding in the jungle. They left me to keep an eye on the place. The rest've gone east. I can't see the Japanese bothering with us.

TOM

Don't bet on it... Tough on you  
being left on your own.

MARIA

I can fade into the jungle if the  
Japs arrive... Subul.

Subul emerges from the shadows. She hugs him. He responds and  
exits with Maria.

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

Maria whispers to Subul:

MARIA

Don't trust anyone my love. Not  
these men and no way the Japs if  
they come.

SUBUL

Why not these? They're friendly.

MARIA

Just remember what I've told you.  
Pretend you'll obey whatever.

She leads Subul into another hut.

INT. HUT - DAY

Ash approaches Tom. Tom shifts his position in the hammock  
and winces. He checks to see if they're alone.

Tom and Ash close together. Tom looks in a mental turmoil.  
He opens his mouth to tell Ash something, but hesitates.  
He winces at his wound.

Ash takes in Tom's quandary. He nods with an encouraging  
smile.

TOM

Ash... can I trust you to carry on  
if I get it?

ASH

Too right, Tom. You'll survive.

TOM

Listen. I've vital information for  
the Allies. It could save many  
lives if we get back in time. 3,000  
miles in six weeks or so. The date  
and routes of the Japanese invasion  
of Burma.

ASH

Yeah?

Tom removes his hat and points to a rough map with arrows on it. Ash nods.

Greg appears outside. Tom marks him.

TOM

I'll tell you later. Post a watch,  
just in case the Japs pick our  
trail. We'll rest up a couple of  
hours.

ASH

I'll watch your back, Tom. I'm  
always there for you.

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

Saito stops at signs of Tom's progress. Looped vines might trigger a booby trap. He indicates they should search with care.

Saito points to any footprints. Faint traces being washed away by the rain. Saito listens but only jungle SOUNDS are audible. He looks mystified.

SAITO

The first of you to find where  
they've gone will be well rewarded.

There is a surge of searching around but no immediate results. They stop every few yards, listen and creep on.

EXT. TREE

Shona is part hidden up a tree, the look-out, alert.

INT. HUT

Charlie and Greg recline on a mat/bench.

CHARLIE

What happens if Tom buys it?

GREG

One of us has to take command.

CHARLIE

I'm the fucking Corporal!

Greg shakes with laughter. Charlie looks hostile.

Ash enters.

ASH

Before you get too cosy being in  
charge, Tom's delegated me.



GREG

Yeah? He's only a kid. A captain? Mummy's boy. What experience has he of leadership? Follow him up the creek?

ASH

He's on top so far.

GREG

You or I should lead. We've seen action.

ASH

Mm.

GREG

We should get out of here. The Japs'll be searching for us. Leave Tom here. He's not fit to travel.

ASH

Not bloody likely. They've a huge area to search. This is one of the largest islands in the world.

CHARLIE

Dinkum?

GREG

Didn't they teach you geography at school, Charlie?

ASH

Or anything else?

CHARLIE

Wasn't there much, was I?

GREG

I believe you.

Charlie gives a hostile look but ignores his sarcasm.

ASH

I'll take first Watch. You second, Greg. Your turn Charlie at twelve. Be alert.

INT. HUT - DAY

Tom sits. Maria observes him.

MARIA

How're you feeling?

TOM

Better, thanks to you --- Where did you learn to speak English?

MARIA

I worked in Jakarta for an import firm, dealing with Great Britain most of the time. A secretary.

TOM

Subul's dad?

MARIA

The sea took its toll... Do you really hope to reach Australia?

Tom searches around to see they're alone. He lowers his voice.

TOM

(spark of emotion)

All of us? I hope so...I'd say come with us, but it'd put you both at risk.

Subul enters and hugs his mum.

Tom regards the two as if yearning to be included.

EXT. HUT - DAY

Tom sits in a chair in the shade, his arm in a crude sling. Janice sits down in the shadows behind him, out of earshot from the others.

JANICE

What were you before the army?  
I guess at school?

TOM

I lived on a cattle station. No picnic. We had intruders rustling some of our beasts. Dad taught me to shoot. Problem sorted.

JANICE

Wow. Your folk?

TOM

Dad drowned. Mum left us. She had enough of fire, flood and drought. A guy who used to work for us was so friendly at first. He gradually enslaved me.

Tom shudders.

FLASH of KIT beating Tom. Another of Kit kneeling on Tom, in shorts alone, face down. In spite of his struggles, Tom lies helpless.

KIT

When I've trained you I've a friend  
who'd like to meet you. You've to  
learn complete obedience.

Tom stares back, hostile.

FLASH ENDS.

Tom shudders.

TOM

No one to go home to. Lonely.  
I guess I'm responsible for you all  
now.

For a beat Tom looks desolate. Janice looks sad. She fondles his shoulder. He likes this, swaying with the pressure.

EXT. HUT - DAY

Shona, with rifle, is part hidden in bushes, keeping watch. Charlie sidles in beside her.

CHARLIE

Like a bit of company?

He places an arm round her. She knocks it away.

SHONA

I'm on guard.

CHARLIE

You'll keep.

SHONA

Maybe.

Her smile gives him hope.

INT. HUT - DAY

Charlie and Ash relax in hammocks.

Maria enters with Subul and sits. Tom regards Subul fondly.

TOM

Subul don't grow up before this  
bloody war finishes. War's just  
politicians' way of making money  
from armament sales. We're the  
cannon fodder to make them rich.

ASH

Not just that, Tom. They also want power. Grab and control other countries. The Japs are probably after Indonesia, and Australia for starters.

CHARLIE

I could stay here and last it out. (He chuckles) Make out with the monkeys.

ASH

You're a soldier like me. We kill Japanese. Before they kill us.

CHARLIE

And stay alive. We could live off the jungle till the end of the war. Survive, that's my motto. Tom's likely to get us all killed.

Tom gives Charlie a long, cold stare. Charlie wilts.

CHARLIE

I reckon we fade into the jungle. Let the Japs think we've gone.

TOM

Goodbye.

Charlie shakes his head.

Parrots make a CACKLE. All reach for their rifles.... They search the immediate jungle. Beat... Nothing. They relax.

EXT. HUT - DAY

Tom checks Shona is alert. He listens. Only jungle sounds. Charlie, Janice, Ash and Greg are present.

TOM

Listen up everyone.

They gather round.

TOM

Sit.

They form a half moon round Tom. Ash has his weapon ready.

TOM

I need to know you're all with me ... and with each other.

Tom gauges their reactions, with hard gazes at Greg and Charlie.

TOM

Two choices: One, you stay here,  
wait for the Japanese if they  
return, and give yourselves up.  
Good luck.

Ash makes a throat slitting sign. Tom nods.

TOM

I go on solo with information.  
The Brits in Burma, warned of the  
Japanese attack, will break them.  
The Burma oil fields will be saved  
from the Japs, we hope.

Greg's face reflects his disbelief.

TOM

With me, I can only promise you a  
fifty/fifty chance of getting back  
to Aus. It'll be tough surviving  
the jungle, and with storms at sea.

He pauses, watching their reactions.

TOM

The Japs'll be after us like  
hornets, and we'll have to fight  
for survival--- If you come with me  
you take my orders.

Charlie slowly raises his hand.

TOM

And?

Greg watches the others. Ash and the girls give thumbs up, or  
raise their hands as one. Greg raises his hand.

Tom notes Greg's hesitation, not happy.

TOM

We find a boat. Avoid the Japs if  
we can. Any questions?

Greg looks as if he might ask. Ash eyeballs him, and he  
changes his mind.

Tom draws a map in the dirt, of India and Burma.

TOM

The Allies've got to stop the Japs  
taking over India and Burma.  
Australia and then the whole of the  
far east.

GREG

So?

Tom draws the battle plans taken from the Japanese colonel, in the dirt. He uses a twig as a pointer.

TOM

We need a radio. Time's getting short. Every one of you must give 100%, so we travel as fast as possible. Cut the chatter.

STUNNED SILENCE

MARIA

You can't stay here. The Jepang have landed round Jakarta, and Pedang. I heard it on my crystal set.

TOM

Leave here in an hour. We've wasted too much time already.

The others look at him in surprise.

TOM

Keep your weapons ready.

GREG

You're not fit to lead.

TOM

I got you here, didn't I?... Clean your weapons. Greg, take over from Shona.

Greg nods, grudging. He takes up watch.

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

The Japanese patrol cuts its way through dense vegetation. Saito leads, hard and determined. The distant sounds have evaporated.

Saito discovers the vegetation cut by Tom's group. Excited, he waves his men forward, and plunges on.

EXT. STREAM BANK - DAY

Janice skims stones across the stream. Charlie sidles up. He drops down beside her.

Janice searches for something safe to say.

JANICE

What did you do at home?

Charlie's embarrassed.

CHARLIE

Worked for the Council. Picking up  
litter. Get something better  
next... Not posh like you. Bet  
you're the squire's daughter.

Janice laughs.

JANICE

Not quite. Dad's a vicar. Poor as a  
church mouse. Mum's crippled with  
arthritis. I can't wait to get  
back, and check they're all okay.

CHARLIE

A vicar? Can't be very exciting.

JANICE

He nearly drowned a baby in the  
font at a baptism. It wouldn't stop  
howling and slipped. Did it on  
purpose?

Charlie laughs. Charlie hesitates, as if unsure to share a  
confidence.

CHARLIE

My bro was reported missing in  
Singapore, just before we left.

JANICE

Maybe the enemy have him as a  
P.O.W.

CHARLIE

Hope so.

Charlie leaves. Tom drifts out of the jungle.

TOM

Time for some shut-eye. An hour and  
then we go.

INT. HUT - DAY

Most sleep/relax. Charlie is absent, on watch.

Tom's awake, grim, staring out of the doorway. He observes  
the resting bodies, one to the next and shakes his head.  
Uncertain. Alone. Close to tears.

EXT. BUSHES

Charlie's asleep.

INT. HUT

Subul dashes in. He runs, shaking everyone.

They all jump up.

GREG  
Damn you, Subul.

SUBUL  
Men come. Japanese.

The men snatch up their weapons. Maria dashes in. She ties up the hammocks, removing signs of her visitors.

Shona and Janice are first out.

TOM  
With me, Subul and Maria.

MARIA  
Take Subul. Just coming.

She stuffs the hammocks under a table, plus her crystal set.

TOM  
Hurry. They'll kill you --- Subul!

Maria grabs mugs to hide.

INT./EXT. HUT - DAY

Tom leads out, Subul's hand in his.

Ash throws on a pack, and exits, holding Tom's pack. Ash kicks their "watchman" Charlie awake, as he slumbers in the shade of a tree.

ASH  
Waste of space! Japs!

Charlie blinks, and jumps up.

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

Impenetrable creepers and trees block progress. Tom gestures them to hide. They spread out, forcing their way under vegetation.

Charlie stops and faces Tom.

CHARLIE  
We're trapped. Give up as P.O.W.'s.

TOM  
(Through gritted teeth)  
Get under cover now.

Charlie dives under bushes. A distant Japanese voice shouts commands.



Tom searches for tell-tale broken plants. He peers along the track. No Japanese yet. Tom and Subul disappear into the undergrowth.

EXT./INT. HUT - DAY

Maria follows them, rushes back and grabs clothes off the line. She disappears inside her hut with them. Saito follows her.

Maria darts through a doorway, and stows Tom's group's clothes under a bed. Saito catches her doing this. He yells:

SAITO  
Where are they? Soldiers? They've  
killed my men. For that they pay.

Maria acts dumb.

SAITO  
I give you a chance. How many? When  
did they leave?

Saito pulls out Subul's shorts.

SAITO  
You have a child. Want him to live?

Maria shrugs as if she doesn't understand.

SAITO  
A slow death. My men could toy with  
him first. Which way did they go?

Maria's expression could kill Saito. Saito slaps her. Maria looks at the window, as if for an escape route.

Saito darts to the door.

SAITO  
*Burn them out!*

He shoots Maria once in the forehead... Japanese commands.

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

Subul wriggles out from cover. Tom snatches him, just in time to keep him from running out.

Tom clasps Subul's mouth before he can yell, and drags the squirming child into the jungle.

Tom makes the Freeze SOUND.

Janice lies next to Shona. Tense faces. Janice's questioning? Janice trembles. Shona puts her arm round Janice. She jogs a plant, releasing a torrent of water over them both.

EXT./INT. VILLAGE - DAY

JAPANESE SOLDIERS run in and out of the empty huts.

Saito leaves Maria's hut. A wisp of smoke turns into an inferno behind him. The village disappears in a hell of flames. Saito watches, approving.

The soldiers line up behind him. One runs up to Saito with a walkie-talkie, and hands it to Saito, who listens.

WALKIE TALKIE VOICE O.S.

*Track them. See if they meet up  
with others, and capture the lot.*

SAITO

*Sir, yes Sir. Take the leader. Kill  
the rest--- Yes Sir--- Get the info  
out of him.*

Saito nods. He leads his men towards where Tom and group are hiding.

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

The Japanese search the perimeter of the village, and close to where Tom, Subul, Ash, Greg, Charlie, Janice and Shona hide.

A heel stamps down, inches from Charlie's face. The foot brings down more vegetation over him. Ash and Greg hide, their weapons at the ready. Tom signals not to fire. Subul lies motionless under Tom's arm.

The Japanese search continues forever.... They must discover Tom's party if they smash one yard deeper. The Japanese give up the search, and disappear into the jungle... all but one YOUNG SOLDIER, who's too slow. Saito draws his sword and swipes at the lad, missing his head by a finger width. The soldier dives after the others.

Saito hides his men, and watches to see if any people will emerge. Beat. He gives up, and beckons his men away.

Tom listens. Subul tries to lift his head. Tom forces him flat. He strokes Subul, calming him. beat. Tom rises and listens. He waves to the group to stay down, and listens again.

Just jungle SOUNDS. beat. Tom makes the All Clear SOUND and signals to them to rise, pointing to his lips for quiet. They emerge from their hiding places, weapons at the ready, creeping towards the smouldering village.

Tom gestures for them to wait under cover. Leaving Subul with Janice, Tom sneaks around the perimeter. Only blackened frames remain. Smoke survives the rain.

SUBUL

Mum?

Tom reappears, and shakes his head. Janice tries to cuddle Subul, who screams and runs to his mother's hut's charred remains.

Shona gazes at Maria's body outside. Her expression bodes badly for their enemies.

Janice follows, and puts her arm round Subul. She lets him grieve by the body ... then draws him away. Janice sits with Subul, and whispers something to him in private. Janice puts her arm around Subul's shoulders.

Subul shakes her off, and runs back to the body.

JANICE

Maria did nothing to them.

Her face hardens.

TOM

Care for the boy. Keep him quiet.  
Quick.

Janice nods, and follows Subul. Tom's face is savage.

TOM

Bury Maria first.

Tom's group rush to dig a grave on the village edge. Ash lays Maria's body, with reverence, in the grave. Janice and Subul join them.

SUBUL

No, you can't!

Subul runs to the grave to touch Maria's body. Janice runs after him. She hugs Subul.

JANICE

Come away love. She's gone to  
Heaven. I'll look after you.

She guides him away. He buries his head in her dress, crying.

JANICE

Someone say a prayer.

They line up by the grave. Tom brushes away a tear. Janice looks at him surprised.

TOM

Goodbye brave Maria. My saviour.  
May God protect your soul.

Tom crosses himself.

ALL

Amen.

Ash helps Charlie fill the grave. Tom freezes, staring into the distance.

JANICE

Tom.

His face is torn with emotion. He turns away from the others.

JANICE

Tom, what...?

TOM

I failed her. Caused her death.

Ash places his hand on Tom's shoulder.

ASH

No laddie. No way did you.

TOM

Time to go.

Greg joins them. Charlie points to Subul, then Tom questioning. Subul is lost in his misery.

TOM

We'll take him with us, till we can find his people.

GREG

He'll slow us down.

Janice is astounded. Shona is absorbed in the blade of her knife. She glares at Greg. Ash's stare burns Greg. Animosity builds.

ASH

(sarcastic)

Excess baggage?

TOM

(furious)

Leave the kid on his own, maybe at the Japs mercy? No bloody way!

Greg turns away, shaken by Tom's ferocity.

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

Gorgeous colours. Tom leads, hacking his way through the undergrowth with Maria's machete. Jungle SOUNDS surround them. Monkeys CHATTER.

Subul tracks Ash, who smiles encouragement. Ash hugs him, and swings him across his shoulders. Tom approves. Janice's face reflects exhaustion. Shona waits for her to catch up.

Tom listens, and searches every few steps, controlling his reactions as tendrils snag his wound.

Charlie slashes at vines, his face resigned. Greg keeps a wary watch to their rear.

EXT. THICKETS - DAY

Saito leads a weary troop of fed up soldiers. He searches for traces of Tom's party. None. Saito waves them to halt, and beckons them to the ground. He remains standing.

SAITO

*I'll give 100 dollars to the first man to discover our enemies' trail.*

The men are past caring. Saito looks disappointed.

SAITO

*200 dollars for each head of our enemies, and 500 dollars for the Captain dog brought to me alive.*

A little more interest.

SAITO

*There are two young women.*

Much more interest. Saito grins. Saito studies the drawing of Tom. He shows it to his SERGEANT He murmurs:

SAITO

*Our target. Screw out of him where he is to meet other groups, and then eat him. Like our fathers did, to absorb their enemies' strength.*

EXT. JUNGLE CLEARING - DAY

Tom's party rests. They drop where they are. They wipe their sweating brows, shattered.

TOM

*I figure we've come five miles. We've been walking five hours. Good going.*

ASH

*Gives us a start on the bastards. They could be ahead of us.*

TOM

*So keep our eyes open, and listen. Especially snapping twigs.*

JANICE  
 Much further?

TOM  
 About five hundred and fifty miles,  
 if we stick to the island. Then  
 sail for Java.

A shocked silence as they absorb it.

SHONA  
 A bit far for city girl.

She gestures towards Janice, who is falling apart.

JANICE  
 I'll never make it. Leave me  
 behind. I can live off jungle  
 fruit.

GREG  
 Yeah. I'll go with you, Tom. Just  
 two'll travel faster on our own.

TOM  
 The Japs could find you here.  
 No way are we leaving you.

He looks at her straight.

TOM  
 You're doing all right girl.

Tom's face softens. Janice nods, absorbing Tom. Real interest there. Greg is coldly amused.

Tom rises, and winces as his movement jogs his arm.

TOM  
 On your feet. Ash lead, Greg at the  
 rear. Be alert for pursuers. They  
 could be close. Dead quiet.

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

Saito searches for tracks.

SAITO  
*Sergeant, keep inland half a mile.  
 Make enough noise to divert them  
 towards the sea.*

He turns to a very young soldier.

*Boy, keep in the middle of the  
 group. I'm not presenting your dad  
 with your dog tag.*

Saito squeezes his shoulder. The boy shudders and bows. Saito signs across his mouth for silence. He beckons his men forwards.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Tom and company drift out of the jungle.

TOM

Have a drink everyone. Make it a small one. We should be about twenty miles from where we landed.

They use their water bottles.

TOM

At this rate we should be well ahead of any Japs.

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

Saito views the beach through the trees. Nothing but beautiful sea and sand. Saito beckons his men forward, touching his lips like: "Be Quiet".

EXT. ISLAND - BEACH - DAY

Tom's group halt, and look expectantly at him.

TOM

(whispering)

We'll keep going at the same speed. Take a ten minutes break, but listen for enemy. Dead silent.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Tom's party is concealed by a large rock. They eat bananas.

CHARLIE

(muttering)

We could have raised the boat, and hugged the shore in it.

TOM

We'd be sitting ducks if they sent another plane. These weapons haven't the bren's punch.

GREG

(sarcastic)

I don't rate taking on a destroyer.

JANICE

Couldn't we spend the night here? Recharge our batteries?

She eyes Tom. A glimmer of a smile in return.

TOM

You're all doing well. Keep faith  
in yourselves. We'd better stick to  
the jungle fringe. It'll be  
quicker.

Subul gazes into space. Janice hugs him.

JANICE

He'll come right.

Tom nods, unsure. He eyes her in appreciation. Tom melts into the jungle. The others likewise.

EXT. BEACH/JUNGLE - DAY

Saito and men advance, searching for enemy traces. Two scout onwards. One scout disappears into the jungle. There's a GRUNT. Tom drags a body under cover. Beat.

Tom approaches another victim. The other scout searches around. He whispers something. Two hands appear round his neck. His head is twisted in one motion. A CLICK. His feet are briefly seen disappearing.

EXT. JUNGLE FRINGE - DAY

Saito gestures to his men to space out. They advance with caution, checking the jungle fringe, searching for the dead scouts.

EXT. CLEARING - DAY - LATER

Tom appears beside Janice.

JANICE

Feel better?

TOM

Revenge is sweet.

FLASHBACK TO JAPANESE MURDERING THE WOUNDED.

Tom's party moves through the trees. They halt.

SOUND OF THE SEA

Tom gestures downwards. They slump to the ground. Tom, suffering from his wound, beckons to Janice. She places a fresh bandage/field dressing on it. She squeezes his other arm, with a secret smile.

The jungle shimmers, and the canopy of trees swirls. Tom shakes his head to maintain consciousness. Greg notices.

GREG

I say we hide up for a day. We're  
all shattered.



Subul perches on Ash's shoulders. He swings Subul down. He hugs Subul. Subul's eyes reflect his love for Ash.

TOM

For a couple of hours, yeah.  
A day's too long. Watch out for  
hostiles. You could try spear  
fishing.

Greg pulls his bayonet from his belt. He hacks down bamboos. Tom, Ash, Shona and Charlie copy. Janice puts out her hand for a spear.

Greg shrugs, then nods.

SUBUL

One for me.

Ash nods, encouraging.

TOM

We'll try to find a motor launch;  
any of you good with engines?

ASH

I was an engineer for a small boat  
firm.

He pulls out a well loved photo, showing a boy of about ten and a pretty woman in a boat. He kisses the photo and tucks it away with care.

Ash sharpens his spear with his bayonet, before offering to do the same for the others. Greg cuts Subul a spear. Ash sharpens it and hands it to Subul. Subul aims it at an imaginary foe.

Greg looks at Subul scornfully. Tom pats Subul fondly.

TOM

I'll check first. Still dead quiet.

Tom creeps through the last trees.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Tom scans the deserted beach. The sea swirls on the sand. Tom gives a thumbs up.

Ash watches the way they had come, rifle ready.

CHARLIE

I'm hungry and thirsty.

SUBUL

I know where's water. I've been  
here. It's over there.

SHONA  
Water. Anyone with me?

CHARLIE  
Count me in.

Shona gives Charlie a brilliant smile. Charlie looks at Greg, victorious. Greg scowls.

Charlie collects their water bottles. He and Shona take off into the jungle.

TOM  
Watch for enemy. Be back in thirty.

Tom hides behind a rock nearby, rifle ready, keeping watch.

ASH  
You remind me of my boy. Same age.

Subul pulls his spear from the water with a fish. He smiles, showing it to Ash, just as an aircraft approaches. They all dash for the trees. BULLETS chase them. They just make it as the plane passes overhead. Ash swings Subul out of the bullets' path.

Tom's face twitches. He turns quickly from the others.

GREG  
Can't take the heat, youngster?

ASH  
He's doing as well as you Greg.

GREG  
You his nurse maid, Ash?

ASH  
Try me anytime, Greg. Now?

Ash fingers his bayonet.

Tom shakes his head at Ash.

Tom gives Greg a long, cold calculating look.

Greg is startled. Such self assured hostility unnerves him.

EXT. JUNGLE - CLEARING - EVENING

Charlie and Shona freeze at the sound of the bullets.

CHARLIE  
No cries. Must have missed, or ...

Charlie and Shona break from the trees onto the edge of a pool, an idyllic spot. They fill the water bottles.

Charlie strips to his underpants and dives in.

SHONA  
I need a man.

CHARLIE  
You've found one.

SHONA  
Any alligators?

Charlie grins.

CHARLIE  
Just a snake.

Shona, in her pants, joins him. Shona swims faster than Charlie. She keeps just out of his reach, flirting. He chases her. Shona laughs.

CHARLIE  
Shhhh. Japs.

Shona dives. Charlie searches for her. No sign. Charlie is worried. She surfaces behind him, and ducks him. They swim closer till Charlie puts his hand up, and Shona matches it, pressing hers against his. They kiss.

They are face to face nibbling at each other. They swim to shallow water. Charlie slides down their pants. They join and make love --- ecstatic. They break and grab their clothes.

EXT. CLEARING - EVENING

The group hides in the cover of large palm trees. SOUND of a distant plane.

TOM  
Hm --- They'll slow us. We're  
already chasing time. Fix 'em.

Eyes widen. Greg shakes his head, as if Tom is mad.

ASH  
Travel by night?

TOM  
We'll never get to Australia in  
time. Remove obstacles. Anyone fly  
a plane?

No reaction.

ASH  
Don't go looking for trouble.

TOM  
It's found us.

EXT. JUNGLE - EVENING

Charlie and Shona run towards the beach. A fighter flies overhead. Charlie and Shona freeze.

SHONA

Tom! Hope they're okay.

EXT. CLEARING

Fighter-bombers pass above the trees.

Ash seizes the billycan. Tom scatters the embers. Planes keep flying inland. Their ENGINES change to a rougher pitch.

GREG

An airfield?

TOM

Know what I'm thinking? Destroy.

GREG

Crazy.

TOM

We take them out, or they take us out. Find a radio.

FLASH of a plane firing at them on the beach.

Charlie and Shona trot into the clearing, with the water bottles suspended from their shoulders by vine loops. Charlie gives a thumbs up as he sees Tom's group unscathed.

CHARLIE

Great scenery.

TOM

Took your time. Right, we go. Now!

Tom, his LMG at the ready, leads, always alert for the enemy. Ash keeps Subul close enough to lift over creepers.

The girls hold their fishing spears. Charlie, carrying a semi automatic, brings up the rear. He stops to listen, then continues. Tom puts up his hand, and waves it up and down, directing them to take cover.

FLASHBACK OF TOM'S PREVIOUS FAILED LEADERSHIP-

The firing pauses. Three soldiers look at Tom. He beckons them on.

As they reach the higher ground, the machine gun starts again. It catches one soldier in the chest. He dies instantly. A second lies wounded.

TOM  
 (yelling)  
 Cease fire. Cease fire...Oh my God!

FADES Tom shakes his head violently as if to dispel the vision..

EXT. AIRFIELD FENCE - EVENING

A six foot fence bars their way. They crouch and listen.

GREG  
 I'll go forward and recce?

TOM  
 No, stay here with the others.  
 Be ready for action everyone.  
 Ash with me.

Tom rises, and strides forward. He and Ash disappear. Greg bottles his irritation.

SUBUL  
 I kill a Japanese?

JANICE  
 No love. You stay with me.

Subul scowls.

A plane skims the jungle. It lands close.

EXT. AIRFIELD PERIMETER - EVENING

Tom and Ash creep forward on their knees. Tom stops, and points to the fence, not dug in at its base.

TOM  
 Wait for my signal, and fetch  
 Shona, Greg and Charlie. Meet at  
 the petrol drums.

ASH  
 Watch yourself.

TOM  
 Sure. Look out for any radios we  
 can grab to contact Aus.

Ash strains at lifting the fence. Tom helps him. It gives. Tom scrambles underneath. Ash follows. They watch for sentries. Ash stays by the fence.

EXT. AIRSTRIP - NIGHT

Lights flick on near the planes. An airstrip cut out of the jungle. There are no hangars.

Masses of petrol drums cast shadows ahead of Tom. Two HUTS, made out of branches and leaves, are further on.

Tom slinks along the perimeter fence, till opposite the huts.

Two ARMED SENTRIES stroll around the planes.

Forty two-seater fighter/bombers are laid out in straight lines, the nearest close to the drums and petrol filler hose.

Tom approaches the drums, keeping them between him and the sentries. Tom creeps towards the huts, just as TWO MEN exit them. They lean against a wall, and light up cigarettes. Tom hugs the ground. He rolls behind a runway light, in deep shadow. He lies there.

EXT. JUNGLE - NIGHT

Only outlines show in the fading moonlight.

JANICE

What're we going to do, while you are playing heroes?

CHARLIE

Stay here, keep low and be ready to move out quick.

SHONA

I'll help.

Subul picks up a spear. He jabs with it.

SUBUL

Me too.

CHARLIE

(chuckling)

Not for kids. Stick to fish.

EXT. AIRFIELD - NIGHT

The sentries stroll towards Tom, who flattens himself behind the light, in its shadow. One flicks a cigarette butt close to Tom. They must see him. The sentries chat. Beat. They wander back inside the hut.

Tom creeps across the close cut vegetation, towards the huts. He rises, and runs to the huts, again in deep shadow. Tom lifts crates of empty beer bottles. He looks towards the sentries. They walk back towards him. Tom freezes close to the ground. He crouches in the shadow...

The sentries turn, and stroll towards the far planes.

Tom slinks with his crates to the drums, avoiding rattling. Tom fills the bottles with petrol. His hands shake. More petrol pours outside the bottles than inside.

He stops pouring, and clenches his fists. Tom pours again, finishing the task.

EXT. JUNGLE - NIGHT

Charlie, Shona, Janice and Subul sit waiting, close to where the fence wire was pulled up. A faint BIRD SOUND from Ash, by the fence.

CHARLIE

Shona go.

He picks up his weapon, and creeps along the path left by Ash, Greg and Tom. Shona follows close.

EXT. AIRFIELD FENCE - NIGHT

Charlie pokes his head above vegetation, and sees the airfield plus planes:

CHARLIE

Shit! We can't do this. There's flamin' masses of 'em.

SHONA

Tom. He do anything.

EXT. AIRFIELD

Tom hides the filled petrol bottles behind the drums, and checks the huts. He steps out from the shadow, and waves his handkerchief/shirt.

EXT. FENCE

Ash sees Tom's handkerchief. He backs into the jungle, and into Greg. Greg quickly pockets something too fast for Ash to see.

ASH

What the---

Greg crouches over Tom's pack, as if hiding it. Ash dives under the fence, which Charlie stretches up. Greg, Shona and Charlie follow, as Ash holds up the fence.

Ash beckons them to follow him. They sprint to the drums.

DRUMS

Ash, Greg and Charlie reach Tom without incident.

TOM

Charlie give covering fire. Ash and Greg roll the drums, as close as you can to the huts.

CHARLIE

Wilco!

Charlie hugs the ground. He sights his weapon on the nearest hut doorway. Rifle sight P.O.V.

TOM

Shona with me.

SHONA

Light them?

Tom holds out the crates to Shona, who takes two bottles.

TOM

Hell no! We don't want to fry.

He freezes, shivering. He pretends:

TOM

Bloody malaria.

Tom leads with two crates of bottles.

EXT. AIRFIELD

Ash and Greg roll two drums towards the huts.

They approach, crouching, towards the planes.

INT. HUTS

In the filtered moonlight, through mosquito nets, men sleep in hammocks. Approaching petrol drums RUMBLE. A PILOT opens his eyes, and stretches. He listens to the rumble getting closer. --- He rolls out of his hammock, and runs to the door. He sees approaching petrol drums.

PILOT

*Wake up! Enemy here! Get up!*

EXT. FENCE AREA

Janice watches Tom and Shona with tense interest.

JANICE

You'll get revenge tonight, Subul.

No answer.

JANICE

Subul, Subul!

Subul's disappeared.

JANICE

Oh God!



She searches around in panic. No Subul.

INT. AIRFIELD - HUT - NIGHT

The pilot peers through a window, at distant figures approaching the furthest four planes. He shouts:

PILOT  
*Ai! The planes! Someone!*

ANOTHER PILOT  
*It's the sentries, fool!  
Go back to bed.*

The pilot throws on his clothes.

PILOT  
*Quick! Planes!*

The first pilot dashes to the door. Other PILOTS rush to get dressed. Two pilots seize their weapons, and make for the door, clad only in underpants. The pilot opens the door, a pistol in his hand.

EXT. AIRFIELD HUTS - NIGHT

The pilot steps outside. He moves forward aiming at Greg, who's rolling his drum.

A swish. A thud. A spear sticks out of the pilot's back. He falls dead. Subul yanks his spear from the body. Subul fists the air, triumphant, and vanishes into the shadows.

Greg and Ash have their drums close to the huts. They trundle them at top speed.

The doors open in both huts. Men stream out, many carrying pistols. A siren SHRIEKS. More lights flick on around the runway.

Ash and Greg leave their drums rolling towards the doors, and sprint away, Ash towards Tom, Greg into the darkness.

EXT. AIRFIELD - NIGHT

Charlie waits till they're clear. --- Then opens up with shots on the drums. They explode, creating a curtain of fire. Charlie uses single shots on stragglers. As one clip empties, he snatches another. A turkey shoot.

Burning Pilots roll screaming on the ground. The ground crews from the other hut do the same. Flames everywhere.

Tom runs on. Bullets fly in all directions. Tom and Shona turn from the last plane. Tom points towards the fence.

SHONA  
*Shit. We'll never make it.*

TOM

Run!

Shona sprints into the darkness, towards the fence.

Tom traces a trail of petrol from one plane to the next, with a jerry can. Reaching the final plane, he runs towards Charlie.

Tom turns and fires at the nearest drum. It explodes, causing a chain reaction of exploding drums. The petrol "fuse" leaps from plane to plane, reaching the bottles, which explode one after another, causing every plane to become a raging inferno.

Tom reaches Charlie, diving to the ground. Bullets fly.

Ash sees Tom and Charlie pinned down by a swarm of bullets. Ash observes the source, a machine gun near the officers' hut. He takes careful aim, and the machine gunner is hurtled backwards. Bullets cease.

Tom waves, and beckons to the fence. Ash sprints to the fence. Half-way there, he spots a lone enemy sighting his rifle on Tom. Ash takes quick aim, and fires. The enemy drops.

EXT. HUT

Beyond the other two, this hut has its lights on. OFFICERS dash out, firing.

EXT. JUNGLE - NIGHT

Saito tracks his prey, trotting, stumbling, tripped by a creeper. His men struggle to keep up with him. They stop, and listen to bullets and exploding planes in the distance. Saito, furious, beckons his men forward.

EXT. AIRFIELD/FENCE AREA

Ash and Shona scramble under the fence, which Janice holds.

JANICE

Subul's gone.

Subul emerges beyond the fence, smiling.

SUBUL

No.

Janice helps him back under the fence and clasps him.

EXT. AIRFIELD - HUT

Charlie and Tom return FIRE. Officers' bodies tumble down the steps. The bullets cease.

Tom rushes the hut, stumbles and collapses. The fire maelstrom is too much for him. Charlie sprints after him. He halts at gasping Tom.

TOM

I'm okay. Check for a radio.

Charlie dashes forward, and mounts the hut steps.

INT. HUT - NIGHT

One last OFFICER tries to get through on the radio.

OFFICER

*Hello! Hello!-- Shenko Airfield.  
We've been attacked. A large force!  
--Commandos! - What!*

The door opens. Charlie enters, weapon in hand. Greg emerges from darkness, entering the far end of the hut.

The officer keeps talking. He tries to draw his pistol. Charlie shoots him. Greg fires into the radio.

CHARLIE

What the fuck? I was hoping to contact our guys. Tom could've told them his info..

GREG

He would have asked for help, no-hoper!

CHARLIE

We could have hidden in the jungle.  
--- Taken our time getting home.  
You've blown our chances, ass-hole.

Charlie exits. Greg follows him. They race towards the fence.

EXT. AIRFIELD - OFFICERS' HUT

Two Japanese remain alive outside the hut. Charlie shoots one. The other, wounded, struggles to aim at Charlie, who freezes. The Japanese falls dead. Charlie checks ahead. Tom lets his rifle fall. Charlie runs to him.

CHARLIE

Thanks. Jeez! That was clo---

TOM

A radio?

CHARLIE

Not now.

Tom rises, shivering, in turmoil from the flames.

TOM  
Shit! Let's go.

Charlie scans the mayhem around them. Planes explode.

CHARLIE  
Not bad.

TOM  
Go!

Tom sprints towards the fence, gasping.

CHARLIE  
Not hit, Boss?

TOM  
No. Out of here.

EXT. AIRFIELD PERIMETER

Tom surveys the smoking planes, and motionless bodies in awe.

TOM  
Thanks Ash.

ASH  
Any time.

JANICE  
Carnage.

TOM  
The start of what's to come. If the  
Japs hadn't attacked, all these  
would still be alive. And if we  
hadn't burnt the planes, they would  
be blasting hell out of our boys.  
War.

EXT. JUNGLE - NIGHT

Tom's party stops for a breather. Janice toys with a spear.

JANICE  
Blood.

Subul pretends not to hear, retreating into spaced out mode.  
She looks hard at Subul.

TOM  
Up now. The sea route. Move it.

Greg groans. Tom ignores him.

Tom's party heads off towards the sea. They make slow  
progress, due to the creepers and exhaustion. Insects CLICK.

TOM  
Keep your eyes open. We'll have  
attracted attention.

Charlie is shattered.

CHARLIE  
Really?... (He chuckles.) Can't we  
stop some more, Boss?

TOM  
Soon Charlie. We've taken too much  
time as it is. Well done.

Tom nods in the direction of the airfield. He pats Charlie on the back. Charlie stands straighter. His self image a foot taller.

EXT. COASTAL JUNGLE - DAY

Tom and company stagger through trees, near the coast. They slap at midges/mosquitoes.

They turn to Tom, as he pauses in a clearing.

TOM  
We'll rest here.

Charlie heats a leech off Shona's thigh, with his lighter.

SHONA  
Thanks.

CHARLIE  
It shows good taste.

They all drop where they are. Subul is perched on Ash's shoulders. Ash swings him to the ground, and slumps down.

ASH  
How many do you reckon we killed on  
the airfield, Tom?

TOM  
Pilots - forty plus, same number of  
navigators, and at least twenty  
ground crew, and signals plus the  
cooks.

Tom is a little shaken, as the enormity of their action sinks in.

All are stunned.

ASH  
Pity you weren't in charge in  
Singapore, Tom.

Tom doesn't notice Charlie crossing himself.

TOM  
I wouldn't have wanted that one.

The hum of a distant plane freezes everyone.

TOM  
Relax. They can't see us in a sea  
of green.

They listen. The plane circles the airfield, and fades away.

ASH  
What're you going to do, when we  
get home Tom? Prime Minister?

TOM  
I might start a demolition firm.

CHARLIE  
Or an undertakers.

They laugh. Subul shakes his spear, triumphant, re-living the moment.

EXT. AIRFIELD - DAY

Saito and men arrive at the airfield. They take in the bedlam of twisted wreckage, and bodies, amazed, revolted. They search for survivors. --- None. Saito shakes with rage.

SAITO  
*Sergeant Hogo!*

SERGEANT HOGO (30) exits the remains of a hut fast. He dashes to Saito and salutes.

SAITO  
*We need to snare the beast. The  
young one, who'll be leading them.  
Catch him and we've got them all.*

HOGO  
*Sir.*

SAITO  
*Set a trap. Think like him for a  
start... He must lead them to the  
sea eventually. They'll need a  
boat.*

Saito pulls out a map. He points to a headland.

SAITO  
*Near the fishing village. That's  
where we'll hide.*

HOGO  
*After capture Sir?*

SAITO  
*Keep the women alive. The leader  
 won't let them suffer for long.  
 He'll break and tell me what I  
 want. Where there are other groups  
 of saboteurs.*

Saito searches around for Tom's path. Saito finds broken bushes, and gestures his men to follow him. They hurry on.

EXT. CLEARING - DAY

Tom's group lie around a small fire, shielded from enemy eyes by rocks. Tom scans the jungle, his eyes roving. The fire has glowing embers, and no smoke. A roasting lizard swings above, from a pyramid of branches.

SHONA  
 Smells good.

ASH  
 Cordon bleu.

TOM  
 No talking. Just listen.

Tom points to the jungle. Charlie and Greg face into the jungle, rifles at the ready.

Ash cuts the vines suspending the lizard, and places it across two mess tins.

Janice murmurs:

JANICE  
 What were you before the war, Greg?

Greg struggles to say.

GREG  
 A lawyer. Criminal Law.

CHARLIE  
 Not much help in the jungle.

GREG  
 It's hard to tell who are the  
 monkeys.

Greg faces Charlie, superior. Only Greg laughs. Charlie resents the implication. His hand rests on his bayonet. Ash shakes his head at Charlie.

GREG

It'll be good to get back to civilization.

CHARLIE

Yeah, I bet. Rubbing shoulders with all those crooks.

Greg regards Charlie like a piece of dirt. Charlie stares down Greg.

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

Ash joins Tom further off from the others. He crouches beside Tom.

TOM

The girls, I'm putting them at risk.

Tom watches Janice. His face softens.

ASH

Better than a prison camp ...  
You're doing alright, Tom.

TOM

Thanks mate.

As if rejuvenated, Tom strides towards the others.

TOM

Time everybody. Clear away any signs we've been here. Leave in five minutes.

Ash scatters soil over the fire embers.

EXT. JUNGLE - EVENING

Tom leads, but is slower with every step. All look shattered.

GREG

Do you know where we are, Tom?

Tom points to an OUTCROP OF ROCKS showing through the trees.

TOM

We'll head for that outcrop in the morning. Try for another little village.

JANICE

Maybe a home for Subul?

SUBUL

No! I want to stay with you.  
My family now.



He clutches Ash's arm.

TOM

Too dangerous Subul. You'll be safe  
with your own people.

Subul shakes his head, close to tears. He turns to Ash for support. Ash winks and hugs him.

SUBUL

Like Mum was? That man in charge of  
the Japs, I know his voice. He  
killed my mum.

Subul's face is savage.

INT. JUNGLE - NIGHT

Saito's on his walkie-talkie.

SAITO

*Understood. I'll get his mission  
out of him, one way or another.*

Saito listens.

SAITO'S BOSS V.O.

*Have you captured the spy?*

SAITO

*Very soon. No chance he'll get  
away. The noose tightens.*

EXT. JUNGLE - NIGHT

Tom and group stop.

TOM

We'll leave at first light.

CHARLIE

Why not now?

TOM

We're not stumbling around in the  
dark. I'll take first watch till  
ten. Shona and Janice can take  
second. Ash and Charlie last.

Greg's angry at being left out.

TOM (O.S.)

Get under cover now.

They slide under separate bushes.

EXT. JUNGLE - BUSHES - NIGHT

Full moon. Tom murmurs. Janice creeps up unseen, and listens.

TOM (O.S.)  
 --- and forgive us our trespasses  
 as we forgive them that trespass  
 against us--- And Lord, keep us  
 safe, and let our mission succeed.

Janice is amazed. She creeps closer to Tom. He draws her closer. Face to face. Lips to lips. They kiss tentatively... Tom withdraws.

TOM  
 Another time. Sleep.

JANICE  
 If we survive.

She slinks off into the darkness.

EXT. BUSH - NIGHT

Janice and Shona hide under the same bush, a short distance from the men, on watch.

Subul disappears under another bush, a little remote from the rest.

JUNGLE NOISES AND SNORING.

Weapons are being cocked. FIGURES circle the four men. Bayonets flash in the moonlight.

SAITO  
 Up. Now!

The men wake up.

TOM  
 Oh hell!

CHARLIE  
 Fuck it!

SOLDIERS prod Tom's group with their bayonets.

The four stumble to their feet, waking into the nightmare.

TOM  
 We're coming.

SAITO  
 Where's the rest of you?

TOM

Only us. The rest died of sickness,  
and wounds.

Soldiers prod them away into the dark.

EXT. JUNGLE - MORE BUSHES - NIGHT

Moon shadows loom above the girls. A bayonet pricks Janice,  
who yelps.

SHONA

Pigs!

A bayonet tears her sarong. She jumps to her feet. She  
reaches for her bayonet. A soldier knocks it out of her hand,  
under a bush.

Soldiers handcuff them both, and hustle them away.

LATER

EXT. COASTAL FORTIFICATIONS - NIGHT

A small cluster of wooden buildings, surrounded by jungle.  
Saito watches as his soldiers open a cell door, and push Tom,  
Charlie, Ash and Greg inside.

INT. MEN'S CELL - NIGHT

Tom and the other men lie in a cell, just big enough to take  
the four.

GREG

So much for the girls on watch.  
I heard them chatting; so must've  
the Japs.

TOM

At least they'll be free. My fault.  
Should have put Greg on watch. Oh  
god. Another fuck-up.

CHARLIE

The girls aren't trained soldiers.

TOM

In the can at best. I should have  
gone solo. So sorry guys.

He thumps the wall in desperation.

ASH

Tell them what they want to hear.  
It might save our skins.

GREG

How d'ya get out of this one, Tom?

The cell door opens. TWO Japanese SOLDIERS enter, rifles at the ready. They search Charlie, Tom, Ash and Greg's pockets. One takes Charlie's lighter. The other takes their watches.

The first approaches Tom. He hooks his bayonet into Tom's shorts. Tom rises. He exits, followed by the soldiers. A KEY TURNS in the lock.

INT. SAITO'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Saito sits by a wireless set, radiant.

V.O.

*Well done, Captain Saito. You are promoted as of today, for capturing such a valuable asset. Get the information out of him to keep your rank.*

SAITO

*With pleasure Sir.*

Soldiers catapult Tom into the office, so he falls to his knees. He staggers upright. Tom stands handcuffed, in front of a basic desk. Two soldiers to his rear, their rifles pointing at him.

Saito sits behind the desk.

SAITO

Captain Tom Hartley?

Tom shows his amazement.

SAITO

*Search him.*

The sentries rummage through Tom's pockets, his shorts, his shirt.

TOM

See! Nothing!

SAITO

Cooperate or else---

Saito slides his sword part out of its scabbard.

TOM

We are prisoners of war. Observe the Geneva Convention.

Saito just smiles at that, as if of no consequence.

SAITO

Where are the rest of your group?

Tom struggles to pull up his shorts.

TOM  
We're all that's left.

SAITO  
(angry)  
Don't lie to me. There must have  
been many of you to wipe out that  
patrol, and destroy the airfield.  
We've found your women.

Tom hesitates, deadpan.

SAITO  
We've been tracking you for hours;  
just waiting to see if you'd lead  
us to other groups.

Saito motions to the soldiers. One knocks Tom off his chair  
with his rifle butt. The other kicks him when he's on the  
floor.

SAITO  
(yelling)  
Don't think you can lie to the  
Imperial army. Tell me where are  
the rest of your men!

Tom GROANS on the floor.

TOM  
Okay, okay; another twenty. Some  
were killed by the patrol. The rest  
died in the jungle. Starvation,  
malaria.

SAITO  
What was your objective!

TOM  
Trying to get home to Australia.

Saito nods to the soldiers, who kick Tom again, and beat him  
with their rifle butts. He GROANS.

SAITO  
Australia from here! You were  
spying for the British, or going to  
sabotage more Imperial assets.

TOM  
I'm telling you the truth. Dinkum.

SAITO  
We'll see you and your soldiers in  
the morning ... *Take him back to  
his cell.* The truth, or I kill you  
very slowly. The women can watch.

(MORE)

SAITO (CONT'D)  
*Death by a hundred cuts. You each  
 can take it in turns tomorrow.*

Saito smiles at the prospect. Tom keeps impassive, not letting on that he understands. The soldiers kick Tom again. He passes out.

INT. MEN'S CELL - NIGHT

Ash, Greg and Charlie are shocked at the bloodied state of Tom, as the soldiers drag him into the cell.

ASH  
 YOU BASTARDS!

The soldiers remove Tom's cuffs, and drop him on the floor. As the door closes, Ash strides over to Tom. He lifts him up, his back against the wall. Tom shakes, semi conscious. Tom murmurs, dreaming:

TOM  
 Enough Sergeant.

Tom comes to. Ash helps him put on his shirt. He pops Tom's hat on.

TOM  
 They've got ... the girls.  
 Tomorrow's probably... our last.  
 Mine for sure.

CHARLIE  
 That's it then.

Ash gets up. He strides to the door.

ASH  
 Water!

TOM  
 No don't. They may use it as ...,  
 as an excuse to bash you.

Tom slumps forward. Ash puts his hand on Tom's shoulder.

ASH  
 Stay with us Tom. Don't let the  
 bastards beat us.

NEXT CELL

JANICE  
 Hi Tom.

GREG  
 Not too good.

CHARLIE

No escape! We should have stayed in  
Singapore... What's next?

Ash scowls.

ASH

Ever the defeatist.

EXT. MEN'S CELL - NIGHT

The moon illuminates the camp: featureless, one storey  
buildings. Subul crawls towards the cell, in deep shadow.  
He reaches the wall of the cell.

EXT. WOMEN'S CELL - NIGHT

A SENTRY approaches the door, on the next side. He checks  
it's locked - pauses. He walks towards the corner Subul  
crouches behind.

The sentry searches round the corner. His eyes look above the  
boy, and into the dark. Subul freezes in the shadow --- The  
Sentry turns, and disappears.

EXT. WOMEN'S CELL - NIGHT

Subul tiptoes near the window. No glass. Only bars.  
He whispers:

SUBUL

You there?

No reply. Subul picks up small stones. He throws some through  
the bars.

SUBUL

Anyone home?

JANICE (O.S.)

Subul! Don't get caught, love.

SHONA O.S.)

Find a piece of wire.

SUBUL

Be back.

Subul crawls off into the dark.

INT. WOMEN'S CELL - NIGHT

Janice and Shona stretch to see out of the window. They turn  
to the door.

JANICE  
 We'll never open that lock with  
 wire, that's if the boy'll find any  
 in the dark.

SHONA  
 I take that bet.

EXT. WOMEN'S CELL

Subul crawls with a log in his hand... He reaches the window.

SUBUL  
 Hello?

SHONA (O.S.)  
 Hi.

SUBUL  
 No wire... Use this... Catch.

He throws the log through the bars. No sound.

SHONA (O.S.)  
 Silly boy. We can't knock down the  
 door with this.

SUBUL  
 No. I bring sentry here by window.  
 You knock him out.

INT. WOMEN'S CELL

Lit by a moon beam, Shona gestures to Janice. She passes her  
 the log.

SHONA  
 You do it. Up on my back.

JANICE  
 I can't. I might kill him.

SHONA  
 So?..., hands on knees. I'll stand  
 on your back.

Janice crouches, back to the wall, bracing her hands on her  
 knees. Shona climbs on her back. Janice shakes with the  
 effort.

EXT. WOMEN'S CELL - NIGHT

Subul disappears around the corner.

EXT. FAR CORNER OF CELLS - NIGHT

The sentry peers into the night. Subul springs out of bushes.



SUBUL

Yah!

The sentry jumps, then chases him.

EXT. WOMEN'S CELL

Subul runs, the sentry chasing him. Subul collapses outside the window. The Sentry hauls him to his feet by his hair, and twists it.

SUBUL

Ow! You're hurting me!

The sentry SLAPS Subul.

Shona CRACKS the sentry over the head. He collapses, then crawls after Subul.

SUBUL

Quick. Give me the log.

Shona throws it through the bars. The sentry grabs Subul's leg, as he catches the log. Subul smashes the log on the sentry's head, knocking him out.

Subul checks the sentry ... out cold. Subul retrieves the keys, and runs to the corner. Subul checks to see whether anyone else approaches. He runs to the door.

A relief SENTRY approaches in the distance. Subul fumbles with key after key. He drops them. He retrieves them.

The relief sentry is yards away. The moon reduces the shadow. At last the lock opens. The Relief Sentry strides closer. Subul dives into the cell.

INT./EXT. WOMEN'S CELL - NIGHT

Subul locks the door. He shushes Shona and Janice, and points to the door. They hear the FOOTSTEPS and nod. All freeze.

The Relief Sentry tries the door. He strides on to the men's door, and tries it. ---

RELIEF SENTRY (O.S.)

*Hito! Where are you?*

The sentry rounds the far corner.

Shona seizes the keys from Subul. She unlocks the door, beckoning to Janice. They exit.

EXT./INT. WOMEN'S CELL - NIGHT

Shona and Janice run to the near corner. They peep round it. They each take an arm of the unconscious Sentry, and drag him into the cell. Subul seizes the keys from Shona, and locks the door. They sink panting to the floor.

RELIEF SENTRY (O.S.)

*Hito!*

Shona picks up the log. She waits beside the door. She whispers:

SHONA

Open it Subul.

Subul does so.

The New Sentry appears. He's astonished by the open door.

JANICE

Water, water.

Janice mimes drinking from a cup.

NEW SENTRY

*Hey!*

He doesn't buy it. He fumbles for his keys. Subul pushes past him, punching him in the stomach.

The New Sentry chases after Subul. They disappear into the dark.

JANICE

The men. Quick.

They run out.

EXT. WOMEN'S CELL - NIGHT

Shona grabs his gun, and locks the door on the unconscious sentry. They rush to the men's cell.

EXT. MEN'S CELL

Shona unlocks the door. She checks around. There's a distant NOISE of Subul, and the New Sentry CRASHING through the bushes.

INT. MEN'S CELL

A glimmer of moonlight shines through a window. Shona and Janice beckon the men out.

GREG

What!

Janice winces at Tom's bloodied face. She runs to him, and tenderly wipes some blood off.

ASH  
Tom's angels.

The men are delighted, as they see Shona and Janice. Charlie hugs Shona. She disengages herself, and gestures to the door.

SHONA  
Quick.

Ash and Charlie hoist Tom to his feet, and drag him out of the cell.

ASH  
Go. Keys.

Shona picks up the sentry's gun, slots his bayonet in her belt, and hands the keys and gun to Ash. They exit the cell. Ash closes and locks the door.

EXT. MEN'S CELL

Tom puts his hand up, halting everyone.

TOM  
Subul.

ASH  
We can't search for him now.

JANICE  
We can't just leave him. He set us free.

GREG  
How the Hell do we find him in the jungle in the dark, with no torches, unable to shout? Want to be a prisoner again?

TOM  
You go. I'll listen for Subul. I'm not moving. Our saviour.

Ash is exasperated.

GREG  
You'll have us all back inside again. That won't help Subul. He'll get by. A jungle boy.

JANICE  
(sparking)  
I'll stay. If not for Subul, we'd all be stuck in the cells.

TOM

And I'd be tortured. I care for the boy just as much as you. I'm staying. He's our lifeline.

Tom staggers. Greg and Charlie bundle an emotional Tom into the darkness. He struggles in vain to stay. Ash grabs Janice, and slings her kicking over his shoulders.

EXT. JUNGLE - DAWN

Tom and party emerge next to the bushes, where Shona and Janice hid on sentry duty. Janice stands by Tom, her face miserable, but resigned. He hugs her.

Shona searches for their left behind weapons and packs. Gone.

CHARLIE

Back to bananas.

ASH

I guess we find that high ground.

TOM

Makes sense. Well done everybody. We've wiped out a huge enemy unit, and shown what we can achieve together.

INT. JAPANESE ARMY OFFICE - DAY

The relief sentry enters, dragging Subul by his arm. He throws Subul to the ground, in front of an irritated Saito.

SAITO

*Where did you find him? What use is a small boy?*

NEW SENTRY

*He was with the prisoners, sir. They've---*

SAITO

*He's a native.*

NEW SENTRY

*Their decoy, sir. They've escaped.*

SAITO

*What! Get a search party. Move! Shoot the boy and bury him.*

NEW SENTRY

*A kid!*

SAITO

*Hm... I'll make use of him... as he fattens.*

The New Sentry exits.

Saito beckons Subul to him. Subul approaches Saito as if the man's a snake.

SAITO  
Do you want to live boy?

Subul stares.

SAITO  
Tell me all you know about the  
American.

Subul is stony faced. Saito adopts a friendly front, and strokes Subul's hair.

SAITO  
It's good to be on the winning  
side. Just tell me where the  
American's heading.

Subul pretends he hasn't heard. Saito slaps him.

SAITO  
I'll make your leader cooperate  
when he watches me prepare your  
barbecue.

Saito traces down Subul's bare chest with his bayonet. Subul trembles.

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

Tom and company ease through the trees and undergrowth.

Swinging upside down from a tree is a headless young native. Janice gasps and retches.

Tom explodes:

TOM  
Bastards, Bastards, Bastards!

The others look at him amazed. Janice clutches him. He leans against her, shaking. beat. Tom pulls himself together. Tom waves the others on a circuitous route, avoiding the corpse. He cuts it down, and lays it to the side of the path.

TOM  
That's what we're up against.

Janice nods. Shocked, she's equally grim. They merge with the jungle.

EXT. OUTCROP/SEA - DAY

Tom and company emerge from the jungle. Tom waves them back under cover, apart from Ash. The two crouch to find their bearings.

They hear SHOUTS from Saito's men from all directions.

TOM

We need to break out. Ash, Shona.  
Careful.

Tom beckons towards the jungle.

TOM

We'll be back shortly.

Tom waves Charlie, Greg, and Janice under cover. Ash and Tom dive among the trees. Shona fades into the jungle.

GREG

I reckon we're surrounded. Better  
give ourselves up.

CHARLIE

I don't rate the rest of the war in  
prison.

JANICE

Do your own thing Greg. He's got us  
here so far. I'm right behind him,  
against these monsters.

GREG

(reluctant)

I guess you're right.

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

A Japanese patrol of 10 MEN, well strung out, cuts its way. The last man GRUNTS as Shona slices him. She drags his body into the foliage. She vanishes.

The "last" man turns, and searches for his dead comrade. He opens his mouth to call, and slumps to the ground as a bayonet cuts his throat.

THE REMAINING EIGHT of the patrol CHATTER, frightened, clustering around their OFFICER. They fire in all directions.

SHONA lies flattened, bullets skimming just over her head. The patrol fires until their bullets run out. They reload.

The officer gestures them forward, leading the way. They are close to him; one trips unnoticed by the rest. In a flash, a knife slashes twice. The bodies fall, intertwined.

SHONA is back under cover, and searches a victim's pack. She finds packets of rice, and tins of fish and meat. She slings the pack on her back. She stalks them for a beat.

The final six soldiers search back for their comrades. They stick close to their officer, petrified.

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

Tom eases through thick vegetation. He searches around for Ash. No sign.

TOM  
(under his breath)  
Ash? Where the Hell are you?

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

FURTHER BACK

A single enemy soldier tracks Tom. He gradually closes. Tom is unaware. They ease forward. BEAT. The soldier matches his moves with Tom's, the sounds of one covering the other's.

The Japanese springs onto Tom, knife held high. Another knife flashes. Ash cuts the enemy's throat. Tom shakes at the near miss. He relaxes and gives a thumbs up.

Ash copies. They ooze forwards.

EXT. OUTCROP/RIDGE - DAY

Charlie and Janice are partly hidden.

Tom and Ash appear, carrying their new spears and weapons. They hear ENEMY NOISES (O.S.)

Tom whispers:

TOM  
Hide. Spears only. They're silent.  
Pick off the last man each time. We  
only wound some, so they slow  
pursuit.

CHARLIE  
Shona's not back yet. In trouble?

TOM  
She'll be okay. A jungle girl.

JANICE  
I hate to say it, but we haven't a  
chance in Hell. They've got Shona?

CHARLIE  
I'm not leaving without her.

TOM

Hang on.

EXT. JUNGLE

Charlie creeps through thick vegetation. He stops and listens. SOUNDS of Japanese voices only yards away. Charlie flattens under large palm leaves. The voices FADE. He creeps forward.

EXT. JUNGLE CLEARING - FURTHER ON - DAY

Shona grabs another soldier, but his comrade has his rifle barrel under her chin. The corporal binds her wrists. He fingers his bayonet.

CORPORAL

*Your comrades?*

Shona shrugs, not understanding. The corporal raises his bayonet to her neck. Charlie dives into their clearing.

The corporal swivels towards him. Shona knees the corporal, throwing him off balance. Charlie shoots the corporal, and his mates with one BURST.

CHARLIE

Good timing. We vanish.

Charlie unties her. He gives her a quick hug. She mimes a kiss. Shona points a finger to be quiet.

EXT. JUNGLE EDGE - DAY

Tom, Janice, Greg and Ash lie, part hidden, where the jungle meets the rocky outcrop. Shona eases out of the vegetation, followed by Charlie.

Tom whispers:

TOM

(Pointing along the ridge.)  
They won't expect us to split.  
Ash and Charlie, avoid trouble.  
Reach the sea and find a boat. If  
you hear us up the creek, create a  
diversion.

He points at the sun.

TOM

We'll meet you in about an hour.  
The sun'll be about that high, over  
those trees. Beyond the headland.  
Listen well.



EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

Tom, Shona, Janice and Greg ease through the jungle. Tom leads. He halts, and waves the others down. Tom listens. He waves Greg and the girls forward.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Saito, and his 10-20 MAN PATROL reaches a headland.

There are several fishermen's boats and launches.

SAITO

*Kill them all, but for the women  
and the blond man. We have them  
now.*

Saito positions his men behind the vessels, ambush ready.

A soldier carries Subul, gagged and bound, and dumps him on the ground. Saito observes Subul and smiles.

A soldier draws his knife, and approaches terrified Subul.

SAITO

*Not yet. He'll keep better fresh.*

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

Shona creeps ahead of Greg, Janice and Tom, watching Saito. She signals the enemy numbers and positions. Tom shows five fingers, pointing to his absent watch.

Shona and Janice nod. They melt into the jungle.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Ash and Charlie emerge near another cluster of boats. Some are already in the water, their FISHERMEN ready. Ash checks the sun.

CHARLIE

No shooting. They must be okay.

Ash appears doubtful.

SNAPPING of branches behind them. Tom, Janice and Greg appear, carrying captured guns.

TOM

See that launch? It looks sound. Charlie, tell Greg and the girls a joke, strolling down the beach. Ash and I'll watch your backs.

GREG

Suppose the locals cotton on?

TOM

No firing till aboard. Our mutual friends are just around the headland. We don't want any native casualties. They could get in the cross-fire.

Tom and Ash, carrying weapons concealed by palm fronds, run down to the sea near the launch.

Charlie waves to the FISHERMEN. Greg is worried. Shona emerges from the shadow of a boat.

SHONA

Relax Greg. We're on holiday.

Shona PEALS with laughter. Ash and Tom swerve to the launch, fooling around.

LOCALS appear suspicious. One draws a long knife, and chases after Charlie and Greg. They both sprint to the launch, and jump in.

The KNIFE MAN switches towards Tom and Ash. Another FISHERMAN cuts them off. Tom aims his gun. The fishermen back away.

INT/EXT. LAUNCH - DAY

Ash starts up the engine. Tom is also aboard and helps Janice, Shona, Greg and Charlie inboard. Ash backs the launch out to sea, and swings her round.

EXT. HEADLAND - DAY

Saito has SOLDIERS behind sand dunes facing the sea, and a launch, plus other smaller row boats.

SAITO

*Fire at their legs. Leave the blond man to me. Wait.*

A soldier followed by others, rounds the headland and FIRES. Saito fires at the launch.

INT./EXT. LAUNCH MOVING - DAY

Tom fires back. His target falls. Ash opens the engine to full THROTTLE.

Another rifle SHOT. All duck. More Japanese SHOTS. Tom, Greg, Ash, Charlie and Shona FIRE back keeping low profile.

Janice holds the tiller steady.

TOM

Move it, Ash!

ASH

Not stopping for breakfast!...  
Shit! They've got Subul. Don't  
shoot.

More SHOTS SPLASH close. Some HIT the side of the launch. The launch SMACKS down on the waves. They are soon out of range.

Greg takes the helm, and Charlie searches ahead for other vessels. Shona opens tins of meat and fish, and passes them to surprised comrades.

INT./EXT. BOAT - CABIN - DAY

Tom flourishes a chart, and Janice holds it flat, while he pores over it.

ASH

Subul. No way of getting him back.  
At least he's alive.

TOM

'fraid not... They won't hurt a  
kid. I reckon we've got fuel for a  
couple of hundred miles at least.

CHARLIE

If we don't get attacked.

Ash freezes Charlie like: Here we go again!

TOM

Stick with the fishing fleet. We'll  
hide among the islands till dusk.

EXT. BEACH/LAUNCH - DAY

Saito, furious, runs to another launch, and leads his men, pushing it towards the sea. He pulls Subul, now legs free, with him, and throws him into the launch.

Subul drifts towards the engine, unobserved. He fiddles with an electric lead, and tugs it free.

The men struggle, but succeed in getting the launch into the water. Subul drops the lead into the sea, unnoticed.

Saito strides to the engine. He cranks it but there's no response. He tries again. Nothing. Furious, he finds four oars. His men row for their lives.

Saito searches the jungle edge for his missing men, through binoculars. No sign.

SAITO

*Where the Hell are they?*

EXT. BOAT - DAY

Tom's launch has reached the far side of the FLEET. It drifts further away.

A SMALL ISLAND appears through the mist.

Sharks cruise close by.

Tom searches his pack. He fails to find whatever.

INT. LAUNCH DRIFTING - DAY

Charlie peers into the thinning mist.

TOM

We put that island between us, and the fleet. It'll conceal us.

SHONA

We leave Subul now?

TOM

He's a resourceful kid. How can we get him back? I'd love to have him here.

GREG

He'd only get in the road.

CHARLIE

He saved your life, you dick.

GREG

Mine?

Ash tops up the engine's fuel tank. He starts the engine. It chugs on, switched to SLOW.

Greg cracks. He pulls out a pistol and covers everyone.

TOM

What the hell!

GREG

The Japs've got my brother. They said they'd keep him alive if I worked for them. If not they'll put his head on one pole and mine on another.

TOM

So you're taking over?

GREG

Right. You're all going back to a P.O.W. Camp. Or swim.

Shona looks at Ash, whose body blocks Greg's vision.  
Ash nods.

TOM  
So what? Manage this boat on your  
own?

Ash is coiled up to spring on Greg.

Shona points as if at another vessel, as a diversion. Greg is not distracted.

TOM  
Like hell!

Ash springs at Greg, whose bullet takes Ash in the chest. Ash gasps, and slumps to the seat, dying. Janice rushes to Ash's side, pulling out a field dressing, and tries to stem the blood.

Tom is ready to attack. Greg waves his pistol at him. Shona's ready to kill.

TOM  
(devastated)  
Ash was worth ten of you, Greg.  
Fuck you! Damn you to Hell!

Janice gives up on Ash, dead. She sits back, shaken.

GREG  
(scowling at Tom)  
I could've killed you. Still could.

JANICE  
Murderer! How I hate you.

She blinks back tears.

TOM  
Not another! Death follows me. So  
sorry Ash. Best mate.

GREG  
Self defence.

JANICE  
I guess Greg's got us now. Make the  
best of it.

She pulls out a fishing rod. She dangles the hook in the water.

She has eye contact with Tom, who inclines his chin a fraction. Janice winks at Tom, out of Greg's vision. She stands, blocking Greg's view of Tom. Tom nods.

Janice drops as Tom GUNS the engine, pulling hard on the tiller at the same time. The launch changes direction. Greg stumbles off balance, dropping his pistol into the sea.

Janice whips Greg across the face with her rod. He backs away, catches his heel in the planking, and lurches over the side.

Greg swims after the launch, shouting:

GREG  
You can't leave me!

SHONA  
Watch me.

CHARLIE  
Give sharks indigestion.

Sharks circle Greg. For a beat Greg might make it to the launch, swimming like in the Olympics.

EXT. LAUNCH - DAY

A shark drags Greg under water. He surfaces again, his arms flailing. Greg YELLS and SCREAMS with blood spraying as he's dragged under.

Janice looks shattered. Shona and Charlie are pleased. Tom nods, as if satisfied.

JANICE  
Ash...

A tear. She shakes.

TOM  
One of the best. Damn you, Greg...  
My right arm gone.

Tom struggles with his grief. He turns away to hide a tear.

TOM  
His boy'll never see his dad again.

Janice sees Tom with new eyes.

TOM  
A sea burial. Give me a hand with  
Ash.

JANICE  
What about the sharks?

TOM  
He's dead, poor guy.

Charlie helps Tom lift Ash over the side. His body sinks away.

JANICE  
May God welcome him aboard.

TOM  
Amen... Oh Ash!

EXT. LAUNCH - DAY

Saito studies a map of islands, a SERGEANT beside him.

Subul can't understand Japanese but side glances at the map.

SAITO  
*I need a bigger vessel, with a  
machine gun.*

SERGEANT  
*Yes Sir.*

Saito steers the vessel towards land.

EXT. SHORE - DAY

Saito points to the map.

SAITO  
*I will coordinate the sea search.  
These men are making fools of us.*

SERGEANT  
*Sir.*

SAITO  
*Go.*

The Sergeant salutes and exits.

Subul is tethered with a rope round his neck. Saito ruffles Subul's hair.

SAITO  
*I've got a son like you. When we've  
won the war, you could live as his  
slave. Would you like that?*

Subul keeps deadpan, anger simmering.

FLASH OF SAITO SHOOTING MARIA.

SAITO  
*You will obey.*

Saito fingers Subul's ribs, licking his lips.

Subul remains deadpan. Saito shrugs, and returns to his map.

EXT/INT. LAUNCH - DAY

The launch shelters between two islands, bobbing in uneasy seas.

Janice bites her lip.

TOM  
Don't lose any sleep. Justice.

Janice nods, grateful.

Charlie is on the CABIN roof on watch. Shona snoozes.

EXT. MOTOR TORPEDO BOAT - DAY

The enemy vessel PUTTERS to a halt. A heavy machine GUNNER cocks his weapon.

Saito paces the deck. Saito searches the horizon with binoculars.

EXT. LAUNCH - MOVING - DAY

The launch emerges from the shadow of an island. A sea mist.

TOM  
See anything?

CHARLIE  
No, too thick.

EXT. SAITO'S MTB - DAY

SOLDIERS search for the launch.

His back to the others, Subul works at his bound wrists with his teeth. They loosen.

Saito is on watch with two SAILORS nearby, one behind the mounted machine gun.

SAITO  
*Keep your eyes open. I can almost  
feel they aren't far away. When you  
see them, don't sink them.*

INT/EXT. LAUNCH MOVING - DAY

Charlie is still on watch, peering through the mist.

Tom has the launch at slow ahead. No other sound, but for the PUTTER of their motor.

Charlie stiffens. He points ahead.



CHARLIE

Boss, there's something out there.  
Not moving. No lights.

TOM

Dead quiet everyone.

Tom turns the tiller, so they head away from the other vessel. He reduces the engine noise. They drift, each face tense.

A powerful engine GROWLS AWAKE.

SHONA

What now?

TOM

Got a white flag? Anything'll do.

Janice rips off her blouse, and hands it to Tom. Tom takes it and thrusts it up to Charlie.

CHARLIE

Are we giving in?

TOM

No way. When you see them, wave this, and keep waving it.

SHONA

I'd die before falling into their hands.

Tom whispers:

TOM

Give me your water bottles everyone, quick. Take a drink first. Then empty them.

They obey.

A large engine THROBS closer.

CHARLIE

Fuckin' hell. I know that growl.  
An MTB. We've had it.

INT. SAITO'S MTB - MOVING - DAY

The mist clears in patches. Saito peers through his glasses. He spots the launch. Saito gestures towards it to his machine gunner. The man nods. He FIRES a burst, close to the launch's bow.

SAITO

*It might not be them. Wait.*

Saito picks up a loud-hailer.

SAITO  
We're coming aboard.

Subul slinks to the rear of the MTB. A sailor grabs him. He bites the sailor's arm, so he lets go.

Subul slides into the water. He swims towards the launch.

INT. LAUNCH - MOVING - DAY

Tom hands the tiller to Shona. He has set the engine at Slow.

JANICE  
Don't invite any more shooting.  
That missed us by a whisker.

TOM  
Small rags.

Hidden behind the cabin, Janice helps Tom fill the water bottles with petrol. He takes his time to avoid spilling it. Tom's hands are steady. His fear of fire extinguished by the airfield attack.

Shona tears small rags from her sarong with her knife. Tom "corks" each bottle with a piece of rag. He whispers:

TOM  
Charlie, tell me when they're  
twenty yards away.

Charlie nods. Tom lines up the bottles on the seat nearest the MTB, concealed by the edge of the boat.

TOM  
A match or lighter?

Charlie pulls out his empty pocket. A deathly silence, apart from the water LAPPING, and the engine's dull THROB.

TOM  
Give me a piece of rag. Now.

Shona hands one to Tom, who soaks one end in petrol. He points to an engine spark plug.

Charlie makes a vigorous sign behind his back.

The MTB edges alongside, throwing its engine into reverse. It BUMPS them so Tom spills petrol on himself. Tom lights the rag from a spark plug, keeping the burning end well away from himself, and the bottles.

INT. MTB - STATIONARY - DAY

Six SAILORS are poised to jump into the launch, their weapons at the ready.

SAITO  
*Steady. Wait.*

Saito recognizes Charlie's tattered uniform, and fists the air.

INT. LAUNCH/MTB - DAY

Charlie jumps down from the roof of the cabin.

Four petrol bottle bombs fly through the air, fuses burning. They fall on the deck of the MTB. They BURST into flames, and EXPLODE.

INT. LAUNCH - DAY

Shona GUNS the engine. The launch shoots forward, throwing everybody onto their knees.

TOM  
Duck!

The MTB EXPLODES with a giant BLAST. Tom and group cover their heads from falling DEBRIS. They hold onto each other, and the edge of the launch.

EXT./INT. SEA/LAUNCH - DAY

Pieces of MTB SHOWER onto the sea. A small piece of debris knocks Subul unconscious. He floats face up.

Some distance away float Japanese bodies. Some still alive, making frantic attempts to swim. Saito stretches for a large wooden panel and works his way onto it. Subul floats in the water, motionless.

Tom's launch surges away.

Saito spots Subul and drags him onto the panel. Subul is semi conscious. Saito pumps his chest. Subul spits out water and sits up.

SAITO  
Ah, keep till I get hungry... No  
knife. Sharp teeth. Tender. Salt  
water.

He clutches Subul's thigh. Subul rolls away without falling off the panel. Saito ties Subul to a fragment of the panel.

Saito appears to bite Subul's arm. Subul's scream dies, petrified. No bite marks.

SAITO  
No mint sauce.

Subul stares at him, mad? Saito kisses his forehead.

SAITO  
Relax boy. I couldn't.

Subul gazes through tears.

EXT. TOM'S LAUNCH - DAY

Janice turns towards the MTB's distant debris. She spots distant Saito and then Subul.

JANICE  
Tom! Stop the launch. It's  
Subul...and that Jap.

Tom spins the launch towards them. They close on the panel. Saito looks horrified as Charlie levels his rifle.

TOM  
No Charlie. Enough bloodshed.  
We claim Subul and leave that man  
to the waves.

Janice and Shona lift Subul onto the launch, while Tom steadies it.

TOM  
Goodbye. If the sharks get you,  
poetic justice.

He motors them away, leaving a distraught Saito.

Janice bursts into tears as she hugs Subul.

TOM  
Good lad.

He kisses Subul's forehead, hugs him. Then wipes a tear away. Janice soaks this in, surprised.

SUBUL  
A dream?

Janice strokes his face, and rises. Tom pulls off his shirt, and lays it over Subul. Janice hugs Tom. He responds. Both are thrilled. They kiss.

TOM  
Have a sleep.

SUBUL  
You left me.

TOM  
 We'd no idea where you were.  
 Hated leaving you.

Subul clutches Tom.

SUBUL  
 I'll tell Ash about the big bang...  
 Where's Ash?

A frozen SILENCE. Tom shakes his head.

TOM  
 So sorry, Subul.

Subul shakes Tom, then HOWLS.

SUBUL  
 Ash! Oh Ash!

Tom hugs him again. Subul resists. He throws himself about tears trickling; likely to harm himself then accepts the hug... He clings to Tom, shoulders shaking.

SUBUL  
 Why? Why Ash?... No, can't be. No,  
 no!

Subul drums his fists on Tom's chest. Janice is close to tears. Her eyes meet Tom's.

TOM  
 We all need someone to love.

Tom continues to hug Subul. Janice places a hand on Tom's.

INT./EXT. LAUNCH - MOVING - DAY

An empty sea glistens in the sun. Tom spells Shona at the helm; the engine drives at full bore. Charlie sits in front of the cabin with binoculars.

TOM  
 We'll head southeast into our  
 shipping lanes and hope for a  
 friendly vessel.

Subul trails his hand in the water. Janice pulls Subul's hand from the water.

JANICE  
 No. Shark bait.

Subul shudders.

A heavy bank of cloud threatens ahead; the waves heighten.

Fishing lines stream from behind the boat.

INT./EXT. LAUNCH - MOVING - DAY

The sea is choppy.

TOM

Good to have Java behind us. Reckon we'll be in Darwin in another week or so. Hope we're not too late.

Tom checks the fuel gauge.

TOM

Getting low on fuel.

Tom points to the cloud thickening. Janice clenches her fists.

JANICE

Will the launch take a storm?

TOM

We need to keep her head into the waves. Just enough revs and no more.

The boat rises, and THUDS down. The sky darkens. Water comes aboard. Charlie bales with a large tin. Tom uses a bucket with better effect.

The sky blackens, and the waves tower.

TOM

Take turns baling.

Shona snatches the tin from Charlie. She bales water; it flies away.

CHARLIE

The Jap planes won't see us in this.

TOM

They won't need to, if it gets any worse.

EXT. SEA - EVENING

Tom's group drift through increasing darkness, the sea calmer as they reach the lea of an ISLAND. The engine SPLUTTERS and dies.

TOM

Shit!

The launch rolls, as it lies broadside to the waves, threatening to overturn. It barely weathers the sea.

The tide drifts them towards the ISLAND.

CHARLIE  
Here we go again.

TOM  
Keep baling. That's a mile away.

Tom seizes an oar and paddles like crazy to keep the boat facing the waves. Shona hands the tin back to Charlie, who bales like mad. Water deepens in the launch.

LATER

Shona peers ahead, towards the rain blurred HORIZON.

SHONA  
A ship!

TOM  
Hell, not a prison camp after all this. It must be a Jap vessel. Our mob won't be this far from home.

CHARLIE  
Not an MTB. Bigger. A Bathurst class corvette. 80 crew... One of ours. My uncle's on one.

They all YELL and wave. At first they're unnoticed. beat. A rocket shoots up from the ship. A general sigh of relief.

As the vessel closes, a rubber dinghy with tow rope is thrown towards them, just as their boat turns over.

TOM  
Together!

A large shark cruises nearby, and then closes to investigate.

They make slow progress swimming to the dinghy. It slides away, just as their fingertips touch it. Tom steadies one end and Charlie the other, as Subul clammers in. Shona turns to help Janice but she has disappeared.

SHONA  
Tom! Janice. She's ...

Tom dives into the murky depths, but rises emptyhanded. He dives again. Beat. Tom is out of sight, forever. beat. He surfaces spluttering, clutching Janice.

Shona helps Janice into the dinghy, while Charlie steadies it. Tom gasps and spits out. Janice too. Charlie slaps the water near the shark, with his paddle. Charlie helps Tom up its slippery side.

The shark closes in.

EXT./INT. CORVETTE - DAY

The corvette looms out from the murk. A scrambling net hangs from the corvette's side. LIEUTENANT TUSKER (20s) in smart naval uniform, speaks into his loud hailer, breaking the SLAP of the waves.

LIEUTENANT TUSKER

Climb onto the net everyone. Hold on tight. Tie the dinghy to the net.

The sea's a little calmer in the corvette's lea.

TOM

Girls first.

The shark swims closer. Shona rolls off the dinghy. Janice's hand slips by degrees from the net. She sees the approaching shark, YELLS and Shona hauls her further into the net, just in time.

Tom grabs Subul, and slides into the water. Tom shoves Subul into the net, and kicks the shark's nose in the same movement. He swings his feet up into the net.

EXT. NET - DAY

The bottom rope is pulled up on both ends, so they are ensnared inside it. The net rises up the vessel's side, the dinghy attached to the net.

EXT. DECK - DAY

Tom rolls out of the net. Lieutenant Tusker pulls him to his feet.

LIEUTENANT TUSKER

A motley crew. Where the blazes have you come from?

TOM

Tom Hartley. I need to radio our guys in Darwin with info. Urgent.

LIEUTENANT TUSKER

Sorry Tom. Radio silence. We give away our position, and we're fish food.

TOM

Damn it. This could save many lives.

LIEUTENANT TUSKER

No Tom. There are still Jap planes around, and I'm not risking the lives of all on board.



Tom thumps the rail, and strides away.

INT. CORVETTE CREW'S CABIN - DAY

Two bunk beds and two chairs. Subul is fast asleep on a bed. Janice and Shona towel their hair dry. They wear naval ratings tunics, and trousers.

JANICE

Oh my god! I thought we were going to die.

Shona laughs.

SHONA

Your god protects the wicked.

INT. ARMY HEADQUARTERS DARWIN - DAY

Tom, Subul, Charlie, Janice and Shona wait on a bench, outside the General's office, smartly dressed. Tom paces up and down. Charlie is amused. Tom strides to the door, and is poised to knock on it.

CAROL (30), a secretary, in army uniform, opens the door.

CAROL

The General will see you now, Captain Hartley.

The others rise.

CAROL

The captain only.

The others sit back, disappointed. Tom charges in.

GENERAL'S OFFICE

GENERAL ASHTON (40), is enthroned at a desk.

The General rises, and shakes Tom's hand.

GENERAL

General Robert Ashton. Good to meet you, Hartley. I believe you've survived an epic journey.

TOM

Yes Sir.

GENERAL

I have radioed your info. to the British in Burma. It should give the Japs a nasty surprise.

Tom is delighted.

GENERAL

You all deserve a couple of days leave. Then I'll make good use of your experience Tom.

TOM

Glad we could help sir, all of us.

GENERAL

Will you call the others in now, Carol.

She opens the door and waves the others in. She indicates they stand in a row next to Tom.

GENERAL

I want to congratulate you all on a wonderful effort. Hartley will be in for a medal in due course, and he reckons that applies to all of you.

He pauses:

I am delighted to inform you, your heroic efforts, wiping out the airfield, saved Darwin from a much worse bombing.

All smile.

GENERAL

I salute you as heroes.

EXT. PARK - DAY

The group relax on a well kept lawn. Tom joins them. He is bottling up his emotions.

TOM

Charlie, you're wanted in the office.

CHARLIE

A medal?

Charlie disappears towards the office.

Tom makes for Janice. She invites him, wondering. Janice steps towards Tom with longing. He smiles, and steps forward to kiss her.

Charlie approaches with GEORGE (25), holding a walking stick, emaciated, but managing to stagger alongside Charlie, who has his arm round him.

CHARLIE

Meet brother, George. Just released  
by the Allies from a Jap P.O.W.  
camp.

Charlie struggles to hide his tears. Tom carefully shakes  
George's hand. Then, lost for words, embraces Janice.

George slumps onto a bench, joined by Charlie, amazed as if  
he's seen a ghost.

TOM

How'd you get free, George?

George has difficulty in speaking. So frail.

GEORGE

Just thank the British in Burma.  
Less than half of us survived a  
death march. Tens of thousands.

George is close to tears. Tom opens his mouth to question  
George further, but Charlie shakes his head.

CHARLIE

We'll see you later. In the pub.

Charlie and George give a thumbs up, as they stroll away with  
Shona in tow. Shona takes Charlie's arm. They stop.

CHARLIE

You'll hang your hat with me?

SHONA

Oh yeah!

They have a hug in, to George's amusement.

SUBUL

Where do I go?

Tom, smiling, ruffles Subul's hair.

TOM

How'd you like to live on my cattle  
station? Be a cowboy? I'll teach  
you to ride.

Subul says nothing. Tears glisten in his eyes. He hugs Tom,  
who picks him up, and whirls him around, laughing.

Tom and Janice stroll away, with Subul between them.

JANICE

I can't wait to return to England,  
but I guess my folk'll be okay in  
the countryside. I'll do some  
nursing right here.

TOM

Yeah, no way back right now. After the air-raids, Darwin will welcome a nurse. Your folk'll be there, after the war.

JANICE

You won't have to go back and fight, will you?

Tom waits to answer --- amused by her tension.

TOM

And leave you? The General's asked me to stay here on his staff. Intelligence liaison with the USA.

JANICE

And?

TOM

I guess it's time to know you better, if you're on?

They kiss, break for air, and kiss again, watched by amused Subul. Tom grabs Subul with one arm and Janice with his other. He hugs them both.

TOM

The terrible trio. A family.  
A reason for living.

The hug continues.

FADE OUT