

TWO PROMISES

BY

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FADE IN:

INT. GERAGHTY KITCHEN, 1957 - DAY

EAMONN GERAGHTY (59) - a quiet, simple farmer, stands at his range making tea. He is scruffily dressed, like a tramp in wellies.

He turns around slowly.

EAMONN
Milk and sugar?

Seated at a kitchen table behind him is an INTERVIEWING OFFICER (35) from the Bureau of Military History. He is smartly dressed in a dark suit and Brylcreemed hair.

INTERVIEWING OFFICER
Just milk please.

From the briefcase on his lap he removes a paper file and places it beside a huge portable tape recorder on the table.

He scans the shabby room and tries hard to keep the disgust from his face.

In the hall the silhouette of ANNIE (58), Eamonn's devoted wife, ties a headscarf.

She calls out.

ANNIE O/S
Eamonn - I'm just going across to the church!

EAMONN
Bye love!

Eamonn brings two mugs of tea to the table and sits down.

EAMONN
So you want to interview me?

INTERVIEWING OFFICER
That's right.

EAMONN
Why?

INTERVIEWING OFFICER
We're creating an archive of witness statements so that future generations will be able to learn about you and your comrades and what you did for this country.

EAMONN

Will this affect my pension application?

INTERVIEWING OFFICER

No. We're a completely different branch of the government.

EAMONN

Why you want to interview me anyway? I was just a volunteer.

INTERVIEWING OFFICER

We want to gather a range of different perspectives. Without people like you, mister Geraghty, we won't get a complete picture of what happened.

Eamonn sighs uncertainly as he strokes his chin.

EAMONN

I don't know. What if I refuse?

INTERVIEWING OFFICER

We're not going to judge you, mister Geraghty.

EAMONN

There are a lot of people with long memories around here. You might not judge... but they will.

INTERVIEWING OFFICER

I understand - but let me assure you that anything you say that is sensitive will be censored.

Eamonn looks into the Interviewing Officer's eyes and strokes his chin.

EAMONN

Where do you want me to start?

The interviewing officer nods and starts his tape recorder.

INTERVIEWING OFFICER

Do you mind me recording you?

EAMONN

No.

INTERVIEWING OFFICER

Why don't you start from when you first took an active interest in the Republican Movement?

Eamonn leans back and takes a swig of tea.

EAMONN

Well, I suppose that would be
July nineteen fourteen. I was
seventeen years old..

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

EXT. GERAGHTY COTTAGE, MEATH, JULY 1914 - DAY

Outside the clean, whitewashed walls of a simple,
thatched cottage, a wedding party is in full swing with
music, dancing, drinking and laughter.

The smiling, comely bride, MARY (24), threads her way
through a throng of drinking and dancing guests.

Her two brothers laugh heartily. CHRISTY (22), is a
tall, carefree farm labourer and EAMONN (17), is equally
tall, good-looking and fiercely competitive.

Mary goes up to her mother, JANE (49), an iron-willed
matriarch - although that's not on show today as she
glows with pride.

Jane wipes away a tear and takes Mary's hands in her own.

JANE

My sweet angel! Look at you -
you look beautiful.

MARY

Thanks, mammy.

They embrace lovingly.

Mary looks over to her father, BILLY (61), who plonks
himself down, red-faced, on a bench. He almost falls-off,
but stops himself and bellows with laughter.

He raises his glass to his daughter.

She shakes her head in mock exasperation.

A gang of young children dance and run around the scene,
playing tag.

Mary looks over to Christy and Eamonn. They both raise
their glasses to her and smile.

EAMONN

Hey, Christy - Maggie Ennis
giving you the eye.

CHRISTY

Really?

Christy looks around and catches a PRETTY GIRL (19) staring at him. She looks away, embarrassed.

EAMONN

Definitely.

CHRISTY

Hold this.

Christy passes his glass of porter to Eamonn and winks.

He strides confidently towards the pretty girl.

Christy offers his hand to the pretty girl as she smiles up at him. She accepts it and they happily join the dancing.

A tipsy Billy tries to stand on the bench and nearly falls off. He is helped up, laughing, by a couple of guests.

Billy waves his arms.

BILLY

Hush now! Hush there - please.
Come on now! A bit of quiet for
the father of the bride!

The guests fall silent and expectant.

INTERVIEWING OFFICER V/O

Sorry to interrupt you there,
mister Geraghty, but what has
this to do with the War of
Independence?

EAMONN V/O

My sister's wedding? 'Twas on
the same day as Bachelor's Walk.

EXT. DUBLIN, JUL 1914 - DAY

A BOY (9) in dirty, ragged clothes runs barefoot along a dark cobbled street between high, run-down tenements.

Silence - except for the slapping of bare feet running on wet cobbles.

As the boy runs, he glances over his shoulder. Behind him, desperate to catch up, is a YOUNGER BOY (6), barefoot and equally ragged.

The boy runs around a street corner and stops, hit by a wall of noise - the roar of an angry mob.

He stares in astonishment at the scene unfolding before him.

The younger boy catches up with him. They look at each other open mouthed.

A panicked British Army MAJOR (48), orders the marching retreat of one hundred and eighty men of the King's Own Scottish Borderers along the Liffey quayside.

Stones and bottles are hurled at the soldiers. A stone hits the Major a glancing blow on the face. Angrily, he turns and barks an order to SERGEANT SULLIVAN (35).

MAJOR

Sergeant Sullivan! I want thirty men to form a rear-guard. Two ranks right here - across the road! The rest are to march on.

SERGEANT SULLIVAN

Yes sir!

The angry crowd of one thousand people close-in on the heels of the marching soldiers. Hundreds of years of bitter resentment is revealed in their wrathful faces.

Sergeant Sullivan grabs thirty soldiers from the column and hastily forms them up into two ranks.

MAJOR

Fix bayonets!

There is the sound of steel scraping from scabbards as the thirty men fasten their bayonets to their rifles.

MAJOR (CONT'D)

Front rank - kneel!

The front rank kneel with their rifles pointing skyward.

The Major stands to one side of the soldiers, blood streaming down his face. He turns to the angry crowd, trying to keep the desperation out of his voice.

MAJOR (CONT'D)

(shouts to the crowd)
Right you Irish rabble - listen to me! You are to disperse instantly or I will be forced to fire upon you!

The crowd continues to edge forward menacingly, hurling missiles at the troops.

MAJOR (CONT'D)

Squad - present!

The soldiers raise their rifles to their shoulders. One of the soldiers cries in pain as he is hit in the face with a bottle.

The crowd stops just yards in front of the troops. Their anger grows. They shout, jeer and hiss.

The two young boys innocently push to the front of the crowd.

To the side of a wall of bayonets and rifle muzzles, the Major uneasily raises his arm.

A single shot rings out. The crowd go silent. Before they can take another breath, the wall in front of them erupts as a full volley is fired by the soldiers.

EXT. A COUNTRY LANE NEAR TRIM, OCT 1914 - DAY

On a sunny afternoon, Christy saunters home along a country lane with Eamonn, who is dressed in muddy hurling gear and has a bloody gash above his left eye.

Eamonn angrily swipes at tufts of grass with his hurley stick.

Christy's head is buried in a copy of the Meath Chronicle.

He looks up at Eamonn and winces.

CHRISTY

Cheer up Eamonn. Anybody could have missed that shot. Would you not let me take a look at your eye - 'tis a nasty gash there.

EAMONN

No - I'm fine, I tell ya.

Eamonn jerks his head away and scowls in pain.

CHRISTY

Suit yourself. Anyway, listen to this: "John Redmond calls for all true Irish patriots to join the British Army in the fight against the Germans."

EAMONN

That man's an eejit! Why would any of us want to do that?

CHRISTY

He thinks we can prove to the British that we're loyal and trustworthy and then they'll let us have Home Rule.

EAMONN

Home Rule? No chance!

Christy reads aloud from the paper.

CHRISTY

"Account yourselves as men in the defence of right and freedom. We will win for our country the most estimable treasure in creating a free and united Ireland - united North and South, Catholic and Protestant."

EAMONN

We fight for the English in their war and they give us a free and united Ireland in return? A load of nonsense!

Christy rolls up his newspaper and sticks it in his trouser pocket.

CHRISTY (CONT'D)

I tell you though - there'll be one good thing to come from this war...

EAMONN

What's that then?

CHRISTY

All the bloody Unionists will be fighting in France and not here! Now... race you home?

Eamonn, already running, shouts over his shoulder.

EAMONN

You're on!

They both sprint down the road and across a grassy field, laughing. Christy easily outpaces Eamonn, who deliberately trips him with his hurley stick and runs on.

CHRISTY

Hey! You great cheating eejit!

INT GERAGHTY KITCHEN - NIGHT

Eamonn and Christy sit round the table eating their evening meal with Billy and Jane, plus their sister BRIDIE (13) and brother JACK (11).

EAMONN

Daddy - do you think we should fight in the war against the Germans?

JANE

Why do you ask that, Eamonn?

EAMONN

Oh, me and Christy were talking it over...

Billy puts down his spoon and wipes his mouth thoughtfully.

BILLY

Sure now I don't know. But if I was a young man looking for some adventure - then I might join-up.

JANE

You - in the British Army? You would not, you lazy auld goat! Pass the bread.

CHRISTY

Are you saying you think Irishmen should enlist daddy?

BILLY

No son, I'm not saying that at all... but I wouldn't hold it against any man who did join-up.

Jane stops cutting bread and inadvertently points her bread knife at Billy.

JANE

We shouldn't be fighting their wars for them. Have you forgotten Bachelor's Walk? Not a single murdering British soldier was held to account for all those innocent people. The British think we're vermin. To be gunned-down without so much as a tear of regret - or shame.

EAMONN

They'd have to drag me kicking and screaming into their bloody army.

JANE
Watch your language!

EAMONN
Sorry mammy.

CHRISTY
I think we should go.

The family all stop eating and stare at Christy.

EAMONN
But it's not our fight Christy.
Our fight's here - against the
British - to kick them out of
Ireland once and for all.

CHRISTY
If we don't stand up for what's
right, how can we expect anyone
to stand up for us?

EAMONN
Can you honestly see yourself
wearing a British uniform?

CHRISTY
The uniform is not important.
This is about freedom and
justice.

BILLY
They wouldn't want you anyway
Eamonn - you're too young to
fight, you scrawny wee puppy!

Christy and Eamonn laugh as Jane uneasily surveys the pair of them.

EXT. A FIELD OUTSIDE TRIM - DAY

On a fine, clear day, a motley looking group of twelve men in civilian clothes form-up in two ranks. Christy is one of them.

Standing in front of them is BYRNE (28), a gruff, no nonsense type of man.

Byrne paces slowly up and down in front of the men. He holds a piece of paper in his hand and he looks furious.

BYRNE
Listen up now lads. This might
well be our last parade. No
doubt you've all heard John
Redmond's speech.

He stops pacing and faces the men. He looks at each one.

BYRNE (CONT'D)

You must decide for yourselves what to do. If you chose to heed Redmond's call, then good luck to you. But, I tell you now, I will not be joining the British Army.

Some of the men nod in agreement. Christy does not.

BYRNE (CONT'D)

Redmond's words are folly. There is no way that the laying down of Irish lives in the defence of British interests will ever bring about freedom for our nation.

Christy and the other men look around at each other. They mutter excitedly.

EXT. A COUNTRY LANE - DAY

Christy strolls along with another of the volunteers, his friend, PETER QUINN (19), skinny, trusting, innocent.

CHRISTY

What do think Pete? Would you go?

PETER

I don't know... I mean - go to war? It's awful scary.

CHRISTY

'Twould be an adventure! Better than mucking-out cow sheds anyway.

PETER

Are you serious? You'd join-up?

CHRISTY

Yes. I would.

PETER

Weren't you going to try for the Meath football team this year?

CHRISTY

Sure, that can wait. They say this war will all be over by Christmas anyway.

Christy puts his arm around Peter's shoulder.

CHRISTY (CONT'D)

Come on - I'll buy you a pint!

Christy and Peter smile at each other and stroll on.

INT. DROGHEDA ARMY RECRUITMENT OFFICE, JAN 1915 - DAY

A line of eager young men snakes out of the door and down the road.

Inside the building the line terminates in a spartan room, lined with uniformed officers and sergeants seated behind desks.

Christy stands expectantly near the front of the line. Peter shuffles apprehensively behind him.

PETER

Are you sure about this?

CHRISTY

I am - are you though? I don't want people saying I bullied you into anything. Maybe you should go home now, Pete.

PETER

I'm definitely sure! (beat) I think...

CHRISTY

That's good enough for me.

RECRUITING SERGEANT

Next! Name?

Christy steps forward smartly and stands before a desk. A fearsome looking RECRUITING SERGEANT sits behind it, with pen in hand. He glares up at Christy.

CHRISTY

Christopher Geraghty sir.

RECRUITING SERGEANT

Don't bloody call me sir - it's sergeant to you sonny!

CHRISTY

Sorry sergeant.

RECRUITING SERGEANT

Address?

CHRISTY

Brannockstown, Trim, County Meath.

RECRUITING SERGEANT

Age?

CHRISTY
Twenty two.

RECRUITING SERGEANT
Trade or calling?

CHRISTY
Sorry sergeant?

Christy looks confused.

RECRUITING SERGEANT
(sighs)
What work do you do lad?

CHRISTY
I'm a farm labourer sergeant.

RECRUITING SERGEANT
Are you married?

CHRISTY
No, I'm not.

RECRUITING SERGEANT
Are you a British subject?

Christy hesitates.

The recruiting sergeant eyes Christy sternly.

RECRUITING SERGEANT
Well boy? Last time I looked,
Ireland was part of Great
Britain, is it not?

CHRISTY
Yes sergeant. I am, sergeant.

RECRUITING SERGEANT
Good! How tall are you son?

CHRISTY
Six foot sergeant.

RECRUITING SERGEANT
Now then - a strapping young
fella like yourself... how do you
fancy being an Irish Guardsman?

CHRISTY
Yes sergeant.

RECRUITING SERGEANT
Good man! Sign here... Right, now
take this form and go to that
officer over there. Next! Name?

Peter steps forward nervously. The recruiting sergeant glares at him.

PETER
Peter Quinn sir!

The recruiting sergeant slams his pen down and barks at Peter.

RECRUITING SERGEANT
Were you not listening to the last fella? Don't bloody call me sir - it's sergeant to you sonny! Now - let's start again. Name?

PETER
Sorry sir - I... I mean sergeant!
Sorry...

EXT. GERAGHTY'S COTTAGE - DAY

Bridie and Jack play tag in the lane.

Jane kneels in the doorway, scrubbing the front step.

She sits up as she notices Christy and Peter coming up the lane.

They laugh and light-heartedly jostle each other as they sing "The Minstrel Boy" loudly.

JANE
And where in God's name have you been all day?

CHRISTY
We've just got back from Drogheda.

JANE
Drogheda! What on earth were you doing all the way out there?

CHRISTY
We signed-up!

Jane stands. Her eyes pierce Christy but holds her stare determinedly.

JANE
What?

CHRISTY
We've signed-up... Pete and me.

PETER

We've heeded Redmond's call,
missus Geraghty. We've joined
the British Army to fight the
Germans.

JANE

Is this some sort of joke?

CHRISTY

It's no joke mammy.

PETER

It's true Mrs Geraghty. We've
taken the King's shilling. We're
going to be in the Irish Guards!

Jane flies towards the young men. She angrily shakes her
scrubbing brush at Peter.

JANE

You stay out of this Peter Quinn!
As for you, Christopher Geraghty..

CHRISTY

Mammy - I'm twenty two years old
- I'm not a child.

Bridie and Jack stop playing and timidly watch the drama.

Eamonn arrives home. He takes in the scene, sensing
tension.

Jane turns to him angrily.

JANE

Don't tell me you've joined too?

EAMONN

Joined what? What's going on?

CHRISTY

I've done it Eamonn, I've joined
the army!

EAMONN

You have not! You - in the
British Army? Don't make me
laugh!

CHRISTY

No Eamonn - I really have. So's
Pete here.

EAMONN

But what about us - your family?
You can't just up and leave!
What about fighting for Ireland?

CHRISTY
We will be fighting for Ireland!

JANE
You'll be fighting for the
bloody British!

PETER
Yes, so that Ireland can be free
one day...

Jane wheels round angrily at Peter.

JANE
I told you to stay out of this!

Eamonn stares at Christy, his face darkening with anger.
His eyes start to well-up.

EAMONN
If that's what you want then go
on with you - wear your bloody
British uniforms! See if I care!

Eamonn storms inside the house and slams the door.

Jane shakes her head slowly. She looks into Christy's
face with utter betrayal in her eyes.

JANE
I never thought I would live to
see the day a son of mine joined
the British Army...

She turns her back on Christy as she fights back tears.

CHRISTY
Come on Pete - let's go...

PETER
Goodbye missus Geraghty.

Christy and Peter walk away down the lane, heads bowed.

Christy stops and turns around. He looks bitterly
disappointed.

CHRISTY
I'll be sure to send you half my
pay.

Jane spins round furiously as he walks off.

JANE
I don't want your blood money -
do you hear!

Jane watches Christy walk away and sobs desperately.

EXT. A COUNTRY LANE NEAR TRIM - DAY

Christy and Peter mope along the lane, hands in pockets.

CHRISTY

That could've gone a lot better.

PETER

Sure - your mammy will come round
in the end, Christy.

CHRISTY

You don't know my mammy, Pete, if
you think that. And what about
Eamonn?

PETER

Look - here comes your daddy.

Billy happily strolls down the lane, crook in hand,
sheepdog at his side.

BILLY

Howaya there lads?

CHRISTY

Daddy - I have to say goodbye.

BILLY

Goodbye? What are ye talking
about?

CHRISTY

We're off to England - me and
Pete... to join the army.

Billy stops and leans on his crook, looking confused.

BILLY

Today? Just like that?

CHRISTY

Yes.

BILLY

But son, you can't leave like
this. You're being hasty. Will
you not come home and have a
think about it?

CHRISTY

I can't go home now. Mammy and
Eamonn...

BILLY

Oh! She took it well then, did
you're your mother?

PETER
Not really, no.

Billy gives Peter a withering look. Peter hangs his head in embarrassment.

BILLY
Come home son.

CHRISTY
It's too late . I've already taken the oath. And we have the travel permits stamped for today.

BILLY
I'm sure they'll let you change your mind. Just go back and tell them you've made a mistake..

CHRISTY
But I haven't made a mistake daddy. I have to do this.

Billy rubs his chin and sighs.

BILLY
For all the good it'll do you. You must do what you think is right. Good luck to you son - and come home safely.

Billy shakes his head slowly and sadly as the sun sets behind him. He holds out his arms to Christy. They embrace as father and son.

Christy heads off sadly with Peter as Billy leans on his crook and wistfully watches them go.

INT. IRISH GUARDS' DEPOT, WARLEY, FEB 1915 - DAY

In a white canvass tent, Christy and Peter plus two other recruits, BALFE (26) and CLARKIN (26) stand nervously next to their camp beds.

The canvass flap bursts open. CSM GRIMWOOD (26), a man you wouldn't want to upset, enters. He is followed by the equally scary Sergeant BROCK (34).

SERGEANT BROCK
Stand by your beds!

CSM GRIMWOOD
Stand still! Look to your front!

CSM Grimwood picks up items of kit and flings them to the floor.

Christy and Peter dare not move, but look nervously out of the corners of their eyes.

CSM GRIMWOOD
That's not clean. The Lord alone
knows what that is supposed to
be! (beat) You! Name?

BALFE
Balfe sir!

CSM Grimwood eyes Balfe up and down with utter contempt.

CSM GRIMWOOD
Do you still need your mammy to
dress you?

BALFE
No sir!

CSM GRIMWOOD
Look at the creases down your
tunic Balfe! You look like the
wreck of the Hesperus. I expect
better - much better!

BALFE
Yes sir!

CSM GRIMWOOD
Right - you! What's your name?

CHRISTY
Geraghty sir!

CSM Grimwood checks Christy's kit thoroughly, but is impressed enough to not fling it to the floor.

CSM GRIMWOOD
Not bad Geraghty, not bad... you
may have the makings of a
Guardsmen.

CHRISTY
Thank you sir!

CSM Grimwood eyes Peter's bed. He moves over to it and picks a dead fly from the floor.

He puts his face close to Peter's - holding the fly in his fingers.

CSM GRIMWOOD
Hold out your hand.

Peter reluctantly holds out his hand.

CSM Grimwood places the dead fly theatrically in Peter's palm.

CSM GRIMWOOD (CONT'D)

Name?

PETER

Quinn sir!

CSM GRIMWOOD

Now would this be your fly,
Private Quinn?

PETER

No sergeant major!

CSM GRIMWOOD

Are you sure now? It was right
by your bed.

PETER

It's not mine sir!

CSM GRIMWOOD

By my reckoning, either it
belongs to you or you're a dirty
wee spailpín for not cleaning
under your bed! Well lad, which
is it, eh...? (beat) Docked two
days' pay Quinn. One day for
keeping an unauthorised "pet" in
your tent and another day for not
looking after said pet properly!

CSM Grimwood looks at Sergeant Brock.

CSM GRIMWOOD

Make a note sergeant. (to Peter)
What have you to say for yourself
Quinn?

PETER

Sorry sir!

Sergeant Brock writes in his notebook.

CSM GRIMWOOD

(mockingly)

"Sorry sir!"

CSM Grimwood glares round at all four soldiers.

CSM GRIMWOOD (CONT'D)

Shabby - very shabby... with the
exception of Geraghty there.

(CSM GRIMWOOD CONT'D OVER)

CSM GRIMWOOD (CONT'D)

This is not what I expect from Irish Guardsmen. You will do better! There will be another inspection tomorrow morning and I want everything perfect from all of you. If not, you'll all be on jankers for a week! Is that understood?

FOUR SOLDIERS

(shout together)

Yes sir!

CSM GRIMWOOD

Very well - carry on.

CSM Grimwood turns sharply and exits the tent.

Sergeant Brock goes up to Peter, gives him a filthy look and shakes his head slowly.

SERGEANT BROCK

I'm watching you Quinn! Get rid of that thing.

He turns and briskly follows CSM Grimwood.

Christy has a broad grin on his face. He doubles over in pain from silently splitting his sides.

Peter, still holding the fly, looks devastated.

PETER

Have they gone? Two days' pay!
Jesus! And you can shut up too
Christy Geraghty!

EXT. THE IRISH COAST, MAY 1915 - DAY

Dead bodies float in the sea, alongside flotsam.

A FISHERMAN rows slowly ashore with bodies in his boat as a horrified WOMAN stands on the beach and watches aghast.

WOMAN

What happened to them?

FISHERMAN

They're saying a passenger ship
has been sunk off Kinsale. T'was
the German's who torpedoed her...

WOMAN

All those poor people...

FISHERMAN

Aye. 'Tis a terrible business,
to be sure...

The woman makes the sign of the cross.

WOMAN

Hail Mary full of Grace - the
Lord is with thee. Blessed art
though among women and Blessed is
the fruit of thy womb Jesus..

EXT. A WALL OUTSIDE A RECRUITMENT OFFICE - DAY

There is a short line of men queuing to enlist.

A paper boy is selling papers.

PAPER BOY

German atrocity on the high seas...
Lusitania torpedoed off the Irish
coast... Ship sinks in just twenty
minutes... Hundreds of civilians
killed... Women and children among
the dead... Dozens of Irish slain.

EXT. WARLEY BARRACKS, ENGLAND - DAY

Christy and Pete stand at ease on the parade ground with
their platoon. CSM Grimwood, with a pace-stick under his
left arm, barks at them.

CSM GRIMWOOD

The Irish Guards are the best
soldiers in the entire British
Army - the very best! You are
carrying on the finest traditions
of Irish service that go back two
hundred and fifty years! There
have always been Irishmen in the
British Army and there always
will be. You will be expected to
fight with the courage and
tenacity of Irish men and the
discipline of British soldiers!
Now - standing properly at ease.
That means you Quinn!

LIEUTENANT KIPLING (18) nervously tugs at his tunic, then
walks briskly across the parade ground to the platoon.

CSM Grimwood snaps to attention.

CSM GRIMWOOD (CONT'D)

Platoon! Plat-oon... Atten-shun!

The soldiers snap to attention. CSM Grimwood turns smartly to face Lieutenant Kipling and salutes.

Lieutenant Kipling halts and nervously salutes back.

LIEUTENANT KIPLING
Thank you sar'nt major. Please
stand the men at ease.

CSM GRIMWOOD
Sir!

CSM Grimwood does an about turn.

CSM GRIMWOOD (CONT'D)
Stand at... ease!

The platoon stands smartly at ease and CSM Grimwood marches to the side.

Lieutenant Kipling takes a piece of paper from his breast pocket and unfolds it carefully.

LIEUTENANT KIPLING
Stand easy. (beat) Right men,
listen up! I've just received
the following message from
Colonel Butler:

Lieutenant Kipling hesitates, looks up and clears his throat.

LIEUTENANT KIPLING (CONT'D)
"Second Battalion Irish Guards
has been given notice by the
Secretary of State for War to
make all necessary preparations
for overseas service. We are
ordered to be ready to depart for
France in five days."

A loud murmuring erupts from the ranks. CSM Grimwood snaps around angrily.

CSM GRIMWOOD
Quieten down - all of you!

INT. THE GERAGHTY KITCHEN, AUG 1915 - DAY

Billy sits at the table with Jane, Bridie and Jack. They look at him expectantly as he slowly unfolds a letter.

BRIDIE
What does he say, daddy?

JANE
Patience, child!

Billy looks round the table to drag out the moment.
 He clears his throat dramatically then begins to read.

BILLY

Dear Mammy and Daddy, I hope you
 are well and I hope that Eamonn,
 Bridie and Jack are too. I am in
 fine spirits as I write this.

CUT TO

EXT. WARLEY BARRACKS - DAY

Christy sits on his camp bed, writing.

Outside the tent the sound of drilling on the parade
 ground can be heard.

CHRISTY V/O

We are finally ready to leave for
 France. The mood here is
 jubilant and we are itching to
 prove ourselves in battle. We
 were honoured to be inspected by
 Lord Kitchener two days ago. He
 told us that our battalion would
 be a credit to the new Guards
 Division being formed in France.

EXT./INT. SERIES OF SHOTS - CHRISTY GOES TO FRANCE - DAY

A] Christy's company march to the train station.

CHRISTY V/O (CONT'D)

As we prepare to march to the
 train station, my heart is always
 thinking of home and I recall the
 Minstrel Boy in the song, : "The
 Minstrel boy to the war is gone,
 In the ranks of death you will
 find him."

B] Christy and Peter board the train. They merrily slap
 each other on the back.

CHRISTY V/O (CONT'D)

"His father's sword he has girded
 on, and his wild harp slung
 behind him."

C] Christy and Peter board a ship with their kit and
 rifle. They laugh and joke with other soldiers.

CHRISTY V/O (CONT'D)
 "Land of Song!" said the warrior
 bard, though all the world
 betrays thee, One sword, at
 least, thy rights shall guard.
 One faithful harp shall praise
 thee!"

D] Christy and Peter stand on deck watching the White
 Cliffs of Dover disappearing behind them as the sun
 sets.

CHRISTY V/O (CONT'D)
 I will write as soon as I can
 once we have landed in France.
 Please give my best wishes to
 all, Eamonn especially. I hope
 that he will understand what we
 are trying to do here. May God
 Bless you. Love, Christy."

EXT. A SPORTS FIELD, TRIM - DAY

On a warm summer's day, Eamonn lazes on the grass with
 his friend - LIAM DALY (19).

They watch a noisy, fast-paced hurling match.

Liam casually pulls at a blade of grass.

LIAM
 So - I'm thinking of enlisting...
 y'know - going to France like...

Eamonn looks round at him scornfully.

EAMONN
 Don't be an eejit Liam. Why on
 earth would you want to do that?

LIAM
 Because I'm bloody bored here!

EAMONN
 You could join the Volunteers.

Liam laughs sarcastically.

LIAM
 The Irish Volunteers? All they
 ever do is march round and drill
 with hurley sticks. Jesus -
 they'd not even know how to fire
 real guns if they ever had them.
 What's the point in them?

EAMONN

You see your men over there?

Eamonn points to a group of men standing behind one of the goals, one of whom is SEAN BOYLAN (35) - a man who looks like he means business.

EAMONN (CONT'D)

They're IRB - so I've been told. They run the local Gaelic Athletic Association and the Irish Volunteers. Your man in the middle there is Sean Boylan. He's the commander for the whole of Meath. I've heard they're getting ready for something big.

LIAM

Them lot - mobilizing? Ha! I'm tellin' yer, France is where the action is - not here. I want to be just like Michael O'Leary. Victoria Cross! Now he's a true Irish hero! Just think about it - all the girls swooning over me and I'd never have to buy another pint for the rest of my life!

Eamonn shakes his head and laughs sardonically.

LIAM (CONT'D)

Isn't your brother out there in France?

Eamonn looks over at the IRB men and his expression hardens.

EAMONN

He is.

LIAM

Why did he decide to go then?

EAMONN

He was stupid enough to fall for Redmond's empty promises.

Eamonn tugs angrily at a blade of grass.

Liam eyes him suspiciously.

LIAM

I think you're jealous.

EAMONN

Of Christy? Don't be stupid!

LIAM

You are too! You're jealous because he's off on some grand adventure and you're stuck here.

EAMONN

I'm not jealous! He's a traitor to his people!

Eamonn gets up and brushes grass off his trousers. He looks over purposefully to the IRB men.

EAMONN (CONT'D)

Hold on, I'll be right back..

Eamonn strides over towards Sean Boylan as Liam looks on confused.

Eamon and Sean Boylan talk for a short time.

They shake hands as Sean Boylan pats Eamon on the back. Eamonn walks back towards Liam, smiling contentedly.

He sits back down and puts a long blade of grass between his teeth. Liam watches him suspiciously.

LIAM

What was that all about?

EAMONN

Nothing. What's the score?

EXT. LOOS BATTLEFIELD, FRANCE, SEP 1915 - NIGHT

It is raining hard. Christy and his company take cover in a thin line of mauled trees. They desperately struggle to dig-in as the ground around them explodes.

Dozens of machine guns strafe them, shells explode all around them.

The noise of rifle and machine gun rounds pinging around their ears is terrifying, as Sergeant Brock barks orders at them.

SERGEANT BROCK

All of you - dig! Come on now, dig faster or we're all dead meat!

A shell explodes and almost buries them all. They frantically dig themselves out, fighting for breath, white with slimy chalk.

PETER

It's no use... I can't go on. I'm exhausted!

CHRISTY

Come on Pete - you've got to dig!

Peter slumps down and wipes his forehead with his sleeve.

PETER

I just need to rest... catch my
breath for a min...

A single shot hammers out above all the other noise and Peter is hit in the heart.

Red mixes with white on his uniform. He dies instantly, sliding slowly to the ground.

A utterly distraught Christy cradles him in his arms.

CHRISTY

Pete? Pete - can you hear me?

Sergeant Brock puts his hand gently on Christy's shoulder.

SERGEANT BROCK

Leave him son - he's dead. Start
digging now - or you might be
next! (shouts) Where's that
bloody runner got to?

With tears in his bloodshot eyes, Christy gently places Peter's body on the ground and looks at sergeant Brock desolately.

SERGEANT BROCK (CONT'D)

Jesus! Come on now, all of you -
dig! Put your backs into it!

Christy picks-up his shovel and attacks the earth with it like a maniac as Sergeant Brock crawls away.

More shells explode and bullets tear the ground around him.

Christy is hit by bullets in his leg and arm. He falls down screaming in agony.

CHRISTY

Arghh!

Sergeant Brock rushes over to assess Christy's wounds.

SERGEANT BROCK

Don't worry son - I've got you.
Lay still... we'll sort you out.

Sergeant Brock rips open a field dressing and starts to dress Christy's wounds.

A shell explodes next to them.

INT. A BRITISH ARMY DRESSING STATION, FRANCE - NIGHT

It is still hissing with rain. The walls of the Dressing Station, located in the basement of a ruined building, shake when shells explode nearby.

It is dark, damp and dusty. The noise of the shelling is like thunder.

Christy is carried in on a stretcher by two ORDERLIES. A SURGEON kneels over him and checks his wounds.

SURGEON

Right then, gunshot wound to right arm and shrapnel wound left leg. (to Christy) We're going to send you up to a field hospital where they can fix you up. (to Orderly #1) This one's to go up to Etaples, Corporal. See to it that these wounds are redressed.

ORDERLY #1

Yes sir. Ready... one, two, lift!

The orderlies carry Christy away as the surgeon mops his brow.

SURGEON

(shouts)

Next one!

EXT. A FIELD NEAR TRIM - DAY

Eamonn sits bareback upon a powerful, chestnut horse. He pats the horse's neck then looks into the distance, his face full of determination.

The field is lush, grassy pasture, bounded by high hedgerows.

EAMONN

Alright fella - let's see what you've got!

Eamonn kicks his heels into the horse's flanks and the horse speeds away down the long field.

Eamonn kicks harder, his body low to the horse.

EAMONN

C'mon!

Faster the horse gallops. A high, impenetrable hedge looms up in front. Eamonn smiles with determination, willing the horse on.

EAMONN
Faster boy! C'mon!

The horse tears towards the high hedge. Eamonn kicks again with purpose.

EAMONN
Hup!

The horse vaults the high hedge and lands safely on the other side.

Eamonn gently reins him in.

The horse comes to a stop. Eamonn pats his neck enthusiastically.

EAMONN (CONT'D)
Well done boy! Well done!

He looks back at the high hedge and smiles with deep satisfaction.

EXT. A COUNTRY LANE - DAY

Eamonn, still bareback on the horse, gently walks him down the lane.

The sun is shining, the birds are singing and Eamonn's face is a picture of contentment.

Walking towards him, with wild mushrooms strung on grass stalks, are Bridie and her shy, pretty friend, ANNIE LYNCH (19).

Eamonn cockily tips his cap to them.

EAMONN
Good afternoon ladies!

Bridie looks shocked. She looks around in a panic.

BRIDIE
Eamonn! Get off that horse this instant! What if the priest sees you?

EAMONN
Ah - relax would you? He's up in Dublin for the day. Anyways - he told me to exercise the horse, so that's what I'm doing!

BRIDIE

Look at the state of him! You've been riding him across the fields!

EAMONN

Maybe I have.

BRIDIE

And what if you break his leg?

EAMONN

Bridie - stop trying to sound like mammy. I'm not gonna let him break his leg now am I?

BRIDIE

You can be such an eejit sometimes, do you know that, Eamonn?

Eamonn smiles smugly, touches his cap and walks off lazily, leaving Bridie fuming.

Annie watches him go with interest.

Bridie looks to the heavens.

BRIDIE

Come on Annie, would you?

INT. GERAGHTY KITCHEN - DAY

Billy walks into the kitchen, reading a telegram with a shocked look on his face. Jane stops kneading dough and watches him worriedly.

Eamonn, eating an apple, looks over Billy's shoulder inquiringly.

EAMONN

What is it daddy?

BRIDIE

A letter from Christy? Let me see!

Bridie excitedly rushes over to Billy's side.

BILLY

No, it's a telegram from a hospital in France...

JANE

Oh God! What does it say?

Billy hurriedly scans the paper again and turns it over. He looks at Jane.

BILLY

It just says 6551, private Geraghty, Christopher, Second Battalion Irish Guards, wounded in action. That's all.

JANE

Oh Lord above! How bad is it?

BILLY

It doesn't say.

Billy hand the telegram to Jane.

JANE

Why not? We're his family! Don't we have a right to know?

BRIDIE

Will Christy get better mammy? Will he be alright?

BILLY

He'll be alright, love - he's special... you'll see...

Billy gives Bridie a reassuring hug.

JANE

Oh Billy - I pray to God you're right...

INT. A BRITISH MILITARY HOSPITAL, ENGLAND, OCT 1915 - DAY

On a clean, bright hospital ward, a gaunt Christy sits up in his bed, writing a letter.

Other injured soldiers and nurses wander about the ward.

He winces as he tries to gets comfortable.

CHRISTY V/O

Dear Mammy and Daddy, this is just a quick letter to tell you that I am recovering well. I am writing to you from a comfy hospital bed in England, so please do not worry about me.

Christy looks across the ward. He watches a nurse attending to an injured soldier.

CHRISTY V/O (CONT'D)

We've had an awful rough time of it in France. It breaks my heart to have to tell you Peter Quinn was killed. Please give his family my love and condolences when you see them.

A one-legged soldier on crutches hops past Christy's bed. They nod to each other.

CHRISTY V/O (CONT'D)

My wounds are healing well, although I am told I will be out of action for quite some time. The doctors have said that I can go home on leave when I am recovered a bit more. I can't wait to see you all again and to tell you all about my adventures! God bless you, Christy.

A prim-looking NURSE (24) comes up to Christy and starts rearranging his pillows.

NURSE

And how are we feeling today, Private Geraghty?

CHRISTY

Much better, thank you nurse.

INT. A PUB IN TRIM, FEB 1916 - NIGHT

The pub is warmly lit and the atmosphere heavy with smoke. A lone fiddler plays a sad reel which pierces the chatter as Billy sits in the snug with NED QUINN (55).

Both look into their near-empty glasses sombrely.

BILLY

How's Eliza?

NED

Oh, you know - She's holding up as best she can. It hasn't really sunken in what's happened. But the hardest part about it is knowing that his body's still out there somewhere.

Ned's chin begins to quiver. He weeps, but he instantly struggles to regain his composure. He wipes his eyes pathetically.

NED (CONT'D)

He'll never have a proper grave.

Billy pats his arm sympathetically.

Ned struggles to regain his composure.

NED (CONT'D)

Do you have any news on when
Christy's coming home?

BILLY

He's hoping to be with us for
Easter.

NED

That's good to hear, so it is.
We're all glad he's going to be
alright.

Billy drains his pint and looks thoughtfully at his empty
glass. He stands.

BILLY

Ready for another pint there Ned?

NED

Aye, that'd be grand, thanks
Billy.

Billy looks over to a group of men around the fiddler.

One stands and sings "Danny Boy". The whole pub stops to
listen.

INT. AN IRB VOLUNTEER'S HOUSE, TRIM, FEB 1916 - NIGHT

In the candle-lit little parlour, Eamonn stands
nervously, surrounded by a small group of Irish
Republican Brotherhood men, including Sean Boylan.

Eamonn holds a bible in his raised right hand and reads
nervously from a small card.

EAMONN

In the presence of God, I, Eamonn
Geraghty, do solemnly swear that
I will do my utmost to establish
the independence of Ireland, and
that I will bear true allegiance
to the Supreme Council of the
Irish Republican Brotherhood and
the Government of the Irish
Republic and implicitly obey the
constitution of the Irish
Republican Brotherhood and all my
superior officers and that I will
preserve inviolable the secrets
of the organisation.

The group clap and cheer heartily as Eamonn looks back at them, embarrassed.

SEAN BOYLAN
Welcome to the IRB, Eamonn.
You're one of us now!

The grinning men shake Eamonn's hand vigorously and slap him on the back, as he beams at them.

SEAN BOYLAN
Right lads, let's get down to
business.

Sean Boylan's eyes flash with eagerness.

SEAN BOYLAN (CONT'D)
My dear auld father always said
that nothing good ever came out
of England. Even the wind that
blew from there was a foul one.
Well lads - the wind's changing.
Can you feel it?

Sean Boylan looks keenly around the gathered faces.

EXT. GERAGHTY'S COTTAGE - DAY

In the misty morning light, a silhouetted figure limps slowly up the lane.

Bridie stops her game of hopscotch in the road as she watches the figure curiously.

The limping figure draws near. Bridie's face lights-up as she recognises Christy, in Irish Guards uniform.

BRIDIE
Mammy! Mammy! Christy's home!

Bridie rushes to greet her brother.

There is a crash of iron pan on stone floor as Jane rushes out of the house. She runs and embraces Christy, crying tears of joy.

JANE
My darling boy! Let me look at
you...

Jane gently frames Christy's face in her hands and then embraces him again.

JANE (CONT'D)
But you're half starved! Don't
they feed you in that army of
yours? Come on in...

Jane carefully leads Christy into the house, followed by Bridie.

INT. THE GERAGHTY KITCHEN - NIGHT

Christy sits alone at the table, staring intently into the turf fire which gently burns in the fireplace.

Billy enters quietly with a bottle of poitín and two glasses.

Christy barely notices as Billy sits down next to his son and pours two drinks.

He pushes a full glass to Christy who looks down at it.

CHRISTY

Sláinte.

Christy raises his glass and takes a swig.

BILLY

Sláinte. (beat) We're all sorry about Peter Quinn. He was a good wee lad.

CHRISTY

He was my best friend. I was right beside him when he died.

BILLY

What happened?

Christy sighs heavily. His eyes begin to water as he stares into the fireplace again.

CHRISTY

We were in this thin treeline - Chalk Pit Wood it was called. Pinned down by a German machine gun that was sweeping us from our right. All our officers were dead, or wounded. We couldn't go forward and we couldn't go back. We tried to dig-in to get some cover, but the ground was solid chalk. In the pouring rain - we all just lay there... and then the shells started to fall. They crept closer and closer until they were landing right on top of us. Three days and three nights we lay there. T'was a miracle any of us survived.

Christy downs his drink and stares at the empty glass.

His eyes begin to water.

CHRISTY (CONT'D)

They never found Pete's body.
One minute he was lying next to
me and the next he was gone...
Boom! There was nothing left of
him. He was twenty years old.

Christy closes his eyes as he shakes his head bitterly as
he wipes away tears.

CHRISTY (CONT'D)

And then there was Paddy Clarkin
from Dunderry - he died there
too... and Michael Colclough from
Navan - died of his wounds a day
or so later.

Billy slams his empty glass down on the table and looks
earnestly at Christy.

BILLY

Don't go back, Christy. Stay
here, with your family. Please!
We'll protect you, we'll hide
you. We'd make sure the British
never found you.

CHRISTY

Daddy - I won't be a deserter.
I've got a job to do and I'm
going to see it through. I made
a promise.

BILLY

To who? The English King?

CHRISTY

To John Redmond - to the people
of Ireland - and especially to
the lads back in France. They're
my comrades - my friends.

BILLY

Look at what they've done to you!

CHRISTY

I won't be called a coward!

BILLY

It's not cowardice! This was
never your fight. Wanting to
help your friends - I can
understand that, but you owe John
Redmond nothing!

(BILLY CONT'D OVER)

BILLY (CONT'D)

Do you really think the British will give us independence just because a handful of you lads put on their uniform and die for them? They don't care about us Christy - they didn't give a cuss for Peter Quinn or those others - and they don't care about you! You're just more meat for their grinder. Stay with us, where it's safe - please, son.

CHRISTY

If I stay I'm a coward... a deserter. If I go back...?

BILLY

If you go back - you'll die.

Christy starts to sob.

CHRISTY

I don't want to die! But I can't just opt out of it because I don't like it anymore. I signed up for the duration of the war. I gave my word. I have to go back... and trust to God's mercy.

The door opens and Eamonn walks in. He spots Christy and stares at him with utter contempt.

EAMONN

So, the wounded soldier returns. What do you want here?

Christy looks hurt and confused.

CHRISTY

Are you not happy to see me, Eamonn?

EAMONN

Happy to see you? A bloody British soldier, in my own house?

BILLY

It's not your house - and he's still your brother...

EAMONN

Brother? You think he's my brother? (to Christy) You're nothing to me now!

BILLY

Eamonn - that's enough!

EAMONN

He comes here like he's some sort of hero - expecting us all to be so proud of him! I'm not staying here - with him in the house.

Eamonn shoots a brutal look at Christy, storms out, slamming the door.

Billy starts to get up angrily, but Christy gently pushes him back into his seat.

CHRISTY

Let him go, daddy - it's alright.

Billy shakes his head sadly as he pats Christy on the shoulder.

BILLY

I'm sorry son.

Christy pours two more drinks and smiles weakly.

EXT. THE HILL OF TARA, EASTER SUNDAY 1916 - NIGHT

In the pitch black, Eamonn picks his way up the road. An owl hoots harshly. Eamonn freezes.

Byrne, armed with a rifle, steps out in front of him. He points the rifle at Eamonn, who instinctively starts to raise his hands.

BYRNE

Who goes there?

EAMONN

Eamonn Geraghty, Boardsmill Company.

Byrne relaxes and lowers his rifle.

BYRNE

Alright. On you go son. You'll find all the lads up there - on top of the hill.

EAMONN

Is it a full mobilisation?

BYRNE

Don't know. We're still waiting for Sean, but there's been a delay. Do you have the time?

EAMONN

It's around midnight. You don't think they've caught him, do you?

BYRNE

No. If they had, we'd be up to
our necks in police and soldiers
by now.

A car, without headlights, drives slowly up the road
towards them.

Byrne hastily crouches in a ditch.

BYRNE

Everyone - hide!

The car stops. Byrne aims his rifle at the car.

The front passenger door opens and a dark figure gets out
and looks about.

BYRNE

Who's there?

SEAN BOYLAN

It's Sean Boylan.

Byrne sighs, stands-up and walks towards Sean Boylan.

BYRNE

It's alright lads - it's Sean!

SEAN BOYLAN

Gather round lads. I'm sorry,
but it's bad news. Everything's
off and you're all to go home...

VARIOUS VOLUNTEERS

You're joking! Jesus!

BYRNE

Are you sure, Sean?

SEAN BOYLAN

The order comes from MacNeill -
so yes, I'm sure. Sorry lads. I
know how disappointing this is.
I want you all to go home, stay
there and wait for instructions.

VARIOUS VOLUNTEERS

Aw - come on Sean!

SEAN BOYLAN

But we'll not stand down just
yet. I'm going to find out
exactly what's going on in Dublin
and then I'll get word out to you
all.

(SEAN BOYLAN CONT'D OVER)

SEAN BOYLAN (CONT'D)
 Go home carefully lads. The
 police are still out there and
 they're looking for any excuse to
 lock you all up! Good luck to
 you!

The men slowly drift away in small groups, grumbling.

EXT. A ROAD NEAR ASHBOURNE, APR 1916 - DAY

Thirty seven Irish Volunteers led by ASHE (31) and his
 second in command, MULCAHY (30) take up firing positions
 around a barricaded RIC barracks and on nearby the road.

Eamonn and some of the Meath Volunteers are with them.

Ashe stands and approaches the building confidently as
 his men watch cautiously.

ASHE
 (shouts)
 We have you surrounded.
 Surrender in the name of the
 Irish Republic! You would do
 well to lay down your arms
 quickly and come outside with
 your hands up! You have my word
 that you will be unharmed!

The RIC inside start firing and Ashe dives for cover.
 The furious volunteers instantly return fire.

MULCAHY
 Doesn't look like they're in the
 mood to give up just yet Tom!

ASHE
 Blanchfield - throw one of those
 bombs - quickly now!

A volunteer throws a home-made cocoa tin grenade which
 lands short, in a bush.

For a split second it looks as though the bush will
 catapult it back towards the thrower. The nearby
 volunteers all hold their breath. The grenade falls
 through the bush and explodes violently.

Some volunteers sigh with relief, others groan with
 disappointment.

MULCAHY
 Never mind about the bomb lads -
 look!

The RIC in the barracks show a white flag out of a top floor window.

ASHE

Cease Fire! Cease Fire! They're
surrendering! (shouts to RIC)
Come out - unarmed - with your
hands up!

A frantic shout goes up from the roadside. Ashe and Mulcahy turn to look as Eamonn sprints towards them.

He points desperately behind him.

EAMONN

(shouts)
There's a police column coming up
the road. There's about twenty
motorcars full of the bastards!

In the distance, an RIC column of about seventy men is approaching at speed in open-topped cars.

The volunteers, in ambush positions by the roadside, open fire and the column grinds to a halt.

Panicked RIC officers dive out of their cars and seek cover behind them and in nearby ditches. They begin to return fire, but are taking casualties.

Ashe quickly turns to Mulcahy.

ASHE

Dick! Leave seven men here to
watch the barracks. The rest are
to get down the road and engage
that enemy column. Find Lawless
and get his reinforcements up
here.

MULCAHY

Yes Tom!

Mulcahy grabs a volunteer.

MULCAHY (CONT'D)

You there! Get all the rest of
these men up the road and engage
the RIC, right now! Run! We
have the initiative lads.
They'll not stand up to us for
long! Go on now!

Mulcahy runs off to find the reinforcements.

Eleven RIC crawl along in a ditch.

The volunteer reinforcements quickly arrive and, as they run past the ditch, the hiding police emerge surrendering frantically. The RIC are stripped of weapons and ammunition and marched away with their hands in the air.

The RIC COMMANDER stands-up in one of the cars to rally his men. He aims his revolver and kills a volunteer. Immediately he is shot in the head and falls dead.

A cheer goes up among the volunteers.

ASHE
(shouts)
Fix Bayonets! Prepare to charge!

The volunteers fix bayonets and stand up roaring. The disheartened RIC survivors immediately surrender.

Ashe stands and looks towards the RIC barracks as fifteen police emerge from there with their hands up.

ASHE
Put them with the others! Well done lads! Dick, make sure we get all their weapons and ammo.

A massive cheer goes up amongst the volunteers as the RIC are disarmed.

A doctor, a priest and other bystanders rush to attend to the dead and wounded.

ASHE
Now listen here all you men of the RIC. You have taken up arms against your countrymen. Those uniforms you wear mark you as enemies of Ireland. On behalf of the Provisional Government of the Irish Republic, I offer you now a pardon. This pardon, however, comes with a clear warning. If any of you ever again take up arms against the Irish people - you will be hunted down and shot. Do you understand?

Ashe turns to Mulcahy.

ASHE (CONT'D)
Dick - have this mob of blackguards marched up the road before letting them go. Then we'd better get out of here. We'll take their cars. Get the men in and make sure all the weapons are loaded in as well.

MULCAHY

Yes Tom!

ASHE

Do you know the Butcher's Bill?

MULCAHY

Two men dead - Crennigan and Rafferty - and five wounded. They've all been taken care of by Doctor Hayes up at the house yonder...

ASHE

I see... and the RIC?

MULCAHY

Eight dead - two of them civilian drivers. We've put their bodies in a cart.

Ashe nods grimly. He looks around.

ASHE

How many rifles did we get?

MULCAHY

Ninety five- plus hand guns and about three thousand rounds of ammunition.

ASHE

That's excellent! Well done Dick. Have all the wounded sent by car to the infirmary in Navan, then let's get all the lads out as quickly as we can.

The volunteers load rifles into the RIC cars, get in themselves and drive away.

EXT. MAGGIE ENNIS'S HOUSE - DAY

Christy, a bunch of wild flowers in his hand, stands expectantly at the front door.

Maggie opens the door with trepidation.

Christy grins.

CHRISTY

Hello Maggie.

MAGGIE

Christy... how are you?

CHRISTY
I'm grand thanks. And yourself?

MAGGIE
Christy... please... I can't see you.

Christy laughs nervously.

CHRISTY
Why not?

MAGGIE
My family... you're a British
soldier now...

CHRISTY
So?

MAGGIE
Have you not heard what's
happened in Dublin?

CHRISTY
No.

Maggie thrusts a newspaper at Christy.

MAGGIE
Here. Keep it.

Christy takes the paper and reads the headlines. He
shakes his head in disbelief.

He looks down sadly at the flowers in his hand.

CHRISTY
I picked these for you...

MAGGIE
Please go.

Maggie closes the door in Christy's face.

He leaves the flowers on the doorstep and walks sadly
away.

INT. THE GERAGHTY KITCHEN - DAY

Christy storms in and slams the newspaper down on the
table.

Billy and Eamonn are sat at the table - mugs of tea in
front of them. Eamonn looks at Christy belligerently.

CHRISTY
Jesus, Mary and Joseph, have you
seen what's happened in Dublin?

BILLY

I know. It's a tragedy.

CHRISTY

Tragedy? Four hundred people lying dead - thousands wounded! This is far beyond tragedy! What has this country come to? Have they all gone mad?

EAMONN

They've done what every patriotic Irish man and woman should do. They've struck a blow for Irish freedom!

CHRISTY

Stop talking like an eejit Eamonn! This is bloody murder! There are women and children dead on the streets of Dublin. Did you know that?

Eamonn jumps up and pushes Christy hard with both hands.

EAMONN

Don't you call me an eejit and don't think you can push me around because you wear a stinking British uniform! I'm in the IRB now and I'm a Volunteer.

Christy reels back in shock. Billy jumps up and grabs Eamonn's arm, but Eamonn angrily throws him off.

CHRISTY

The IRB? You're only a boy! Tell me you weren't you involved in any of this Eamonn?

Eamonn remains silent, but the look in his eye confirms Christy's fears.

CHRISTY (CONT'D)

Jesus Eamonn - you'll have the RIC at the door looking for you! They could hang you for murder - did you not think about that? Daddy - did you know about this?

BILLY

No son, I did not. Eamonn - Christy's right. Now is not the time for a revolution, boy.

Billy puts his hand on Eamonn's shoulder and gently pushes him back into his seat.

EAMONN

Now is the time! We can kick the British out of Ireland once and for all. We must stand up and be brave. You used to be one of us!

CHRISTY

I can't believe I'm hearing this. You're all bloody fools! We're in the middle of a war with Germany and you do this? All those troops on the streets of Dublin and Cork are needed - now - in France. You're doing the Kaiser's dirty work for him.

Eamonn furiously jumps up again.

EAMONN

What gives you the damn right to come in here and tell us what we should or shouldn't do? Go back to England you bloody turncoat!

Christy goes nose to nose squares-up to Eamonn.

CHRISTY

I'm no turncoat - I'm as much a patriot as you are - but this? I don't want any part of it. This is madness and you can't see it!

Christy jabs his finger towards Eamonn, who tries to grab it. Christy pushes Eamonn forcefully.

CHRISTY (CONT'D)

Don't worry Eamonn - I'm going. How can I stay here now?

EAMONN

Go on then and good riddance to you. Get your stinking British uniform and go... I hope I never see you again - you traitor!

Eamonn aggressively takes a pace towards Christy, who prepares to defend himself.

Billy jumps up and puts his body between the two of them.

BILLY

Eamonn - that's enough! He's your brother, for God's sake! (to Christy) Come on now Christy, son - don't leave - please...

CHRISTY

He's right. Look at me - I'm a British soldier. I'm the enemy - at least I am to him and his kind, so how I can't stay in Ireland?

Christy grabs his service dress tunic and starts to put it on as Eamonn glares at him.

INT. A TRAIN CARRIAGE - DAY

Christy sits desolately on his own, in uniform, as the steam train begins to pull away from Trim station. His eyes are red.

The GUARD (52) whistles cheerfully as he comes in to the compartment.

GUARD

Ticket please!

Christy hands him his ticket in silence.

The guard glances at Christy's uniform and smiles pleasantly.

GUARD

Thank you, son. Irish Guards, eh? You wouldn't happen to know Michael O'Leary there, would you now?

CHRISTY

Sorry, no - other battalion...

GUARD

Never mind.

The guard points to Christy's wound stripe.

GUARD (CONT'D)

Wounded, were you?

CHRISTY

At Loos.

GUARD

I'm sorry to hear it. That was a nasty business by all accounts. Sure, an awful lot of fine Irish lads never came back from that place.

A woman, dressed in a green overcoat with a Cumann na mBan badge, slides back the door.

She stares at Christy's uniform, indignantly turns her nose up at him and walks out again.

The guard watches her leave as he shakes his head sadly.

He leans in towards Christy

GUARD

I'm sorry about that, son. Not all of us feel the same way as her. Some of us think you're doing a fine job against the Boche..

CHRISTY

Thanks.

Christy looks out of the window and sees, in the distance, plumes of black smoke rising. He is appalled.

The guard looks out too, his face full of sadness.

CHRISTY

Is that...?

GUARD

Yes son - that's Dublin alright. It breaks my heart to see her like that.

The guard leaves as Christy returns his gaze to the plumes of smoke.

EXT. WARLEY BARRACKS - DAY

Christy, with kit bag on his shoulder, limps towards the guardroom. He drops his kitbag and hands a slip of paper to the duty sergeant.

The sergeant reads it and points into the camp.

Christy nods, picks-up his kitbag and limps in.

EXT. COURTYARD AT KILMAINHAM GAOL, MAY 1916 - DAY

Silence is punctuated only by the echo of hobnail boots on cobbles.

A British army firing squad stand at ease as JAMES CONNOLLY (47) is brought out on a stretcher.

He is lifted onto a chair, tied to it and blindfolded. A white cloth disk is pinned over his heart.

The stretcher bearers march to a position behind the firing squad.

A priest prays next to the prisoner, gives him Holy Communion, and then walks slowly to one side.

With a silent nod from the FIRING SQUAD COMMANDER, the firing party, come to attention and take aim.

The firing squad commander raises his right arm, holds for a second then silently drops it.

A volley of shots rings out and echoes around the yard, as the prisoner pitches backwards.

A Medical Officer walks slowly over to the lifeless figure.

FIRING SQUAD COMMANDER
Firing party... Unload!

The firing squad noisily work the bolts on their rifles as the body is cut from the chair and placed back on the stretcher.

EXT. VARIOUS HOUSES AROUND TRIM -DAY/NIGHT

SERIES OF SHOTS:

RIC officers raid various houses of suspected Irish Volunteers.

A] Police drag a man out of bed at gunpoint.

B] Police storm into a pub and drag men out to a waiting lorry. They push them to the ground and point bayoneted rifles in their faces.

C] Mulcahy, with hands cuffed behind his back, is frogmarched along a dingy prison corridor by two British soldiers. He holds his head up defiantly.

D] Sean Boylan and his three brothers walk dejectedly out of a house with their hands up.

They are met by a grim-looking group of British soldiers with bayonet-tipped rifles.

Soldiers rush at them and man-handle them into the back of a lorry.

E] Ashe is strapped to a chair in a prison cell.

A British soldier grabs his hair and yanks his head backwards.

A British Army doctor, in white coat, slowly approaches with a length of rubber hose and a funnel. Ashe watches him out of the corner of his bulging eye. He jerks and struggles desperately.

INT. GERAGHTY KITCHEN - DAY

Eamonn mopes at the table.

Jane slides a cup of tea in front of him.

He looks up at her. She nods solemnly.

JANE

I heard they got Sean Boylan and his brothers.

EAMONN

They did..

JANE

So what's going to happen to the Volunteers?

EAMONN

No-one knows. They've all gone to ground - the ones who haven't been rounded-up.

Bridie breezes in and stands next to Eamonn expectantly.

Eamonn looks up at her irately.

EAMONN

What do you want?

BRIDIE

Did you say you were going into town day?

EAMONN

I said I might. Why?

BRIDIE

Can you post this for me? It's a letter to Christy.

Bridie slaps the letter on the table in front of Eamonn and smiles before skipping away.

Eamonn slowly picks it up and frowns at it.

EXT. FRONGOCH INTERNMENT CAMP, WALES - DAY

The camp, located in a bleak valley, consists of lines of wooden huts attached to an old whiskey distillery. It is surrounded by high fences and barbed wire.

Over one thousand detainees, who cluster in small groups, mill about and chat happily.

The camp is patrolled by unfit British soldiers, with slung rifles, who seem totally disinterested. Prisoners pretend to ignore them but, in fact, many watch the guards carefully.

A lorry pulls up and a handcuffed Sean Boylan jumps out of the back, along with other prisoners and four British soldiers. The prisoners are shepherded through the gates, where their handcuffs are removed.

MEN SINGING

"Óró, 'sé do bheatha abhaile,"

Boylan nods his head to the singing group and walks on.

Some men run up to him enthusiastically and shake hands.

PRISONER #1

Sean Boylan! You made it!

SEAN BOYLAN

Howaya all? It's good to see you.

PRISONER #2

Where were they keeping you?

SEAN BOYLAN

Wandsworth.

PRISONER #1

We heard it was pretty brutal there.

Sean Boylan looks around. He scratches the back of his head.

SEAN BOYLAN

'Twas no picnic, lads - that's for sure.

PRISONER #2

Well then, welcome to Hotel Frongoch! You're gonna love it here, Sean! There's Irish language classes, Gaelic football and (quietly) even lectures in field-craft!

PRISONER #1

The English are so stupid! They've put all our best men here so they can teach the rest of us!

Boylan gives a wry smile and pats Prisoner #1 on the back.

SEAN BOYLAN
Is Mick Collins here?

PRISONER #2
Mick? Yeah - and Arthur Griffith,
Dick Mulcahy and loads of others..

SEAN BOYLAN
Really? That's grand, so it is.
And Thomas Ashe?

Prisoner #1 looks uneasily at Prisoner #2 and then looks down at his feet.

PRISONER #1
No -he's not here..

SEAN BOYLAN
Can you take me to Mick?

PRISONER #1
Sure. This way..

EXT. THE SOMME, FRANCE, SEP 1916 - DAY

Christy sits on a fire-step in a support trench, cleaning his rifle. He listens as another soldier plays a jig on a penny whistle.

In the distance, the crump of exploding shells goes ignored by the men.

A seasoned soldier, HILLEY (29), plonks himself down next to Christy.

HILLEY
What the Hell are you doing back here? If I'd had a Blighty wound - you wouldne see me again, I can tell you.

Christy props his rifle against the fire-step.

CHRISTY
There's nothing for me back home now, Pat. All I've got is right here. So I'm back to see this thing through.

Christy looks around the trench.

CHRISTY
To help keep all you ugly buggers alive!

HILLEY

You're mad, son - you're bloody mad.

Christy laughs.

CHRISTY

Aye, Pat - I suppose I am! But, then again, this is a bit of a mad place, is it not?

Christy looks into the middle of nowhere, deep in thought.

Sergeant Brock makes his way carefully along the slippery duckboards and stops in front of him, snapping him back to the present.

SERGEANT BROCK

Shut that bloody whistle up, will you! Hilley -go make yourself useful somewhere else! Piss off.

Hilley gives Christy a look and slowly leaves.

HILLEY

Yes sergeant!

Sergeant Brock leans against the side of the trench.

SERGEANT BROCK

Welcome back Geraghty. It's good to have another experienced man in the platoon. They're a bit thin on the ground these days.

CHRISTY

I wish I could say it's good to be back, sergeant...

SERGEANT BROCK

I understand son. Who in their right mind would want to come back to this?

He gestures along the trench.

SERGEANT BROCK (CONT'D)

Although, from what we've been hearing, it's almost as unhealthy back in Ireland. Is it true? Are things as bad as they say?

Christy furrows his brow.

CHRISTY

Dublin's a mess. The rebels have a lot of sympathy - especially since their leaders were executed. Now they have a load of Republican martyrs. The British are only making things worse for themselves and I can't for the life of me understand why...

SERGEANT BROCK

We're only soldiers Geraghty. Ours not to reason why, eh?

CHRISTY

Yes sergeant. Ours but to do and die..

EXT. A ROAD IN FRONT OF A CHURCH, MEATH, APR 1917 - DAY

A small, cheering crowd watch an anniversary march, with a pipe band in kilts playing "The Soldier's Song".

Eamonn carries a tricolour proudly as he marches at the head of his volunteer comrades.

FATHER JOSEPH (50), the local priest walks beside the flag.

Six RIC officers push roughly through the crowd to stand in front of the marchers.

POLICEMAN #1

Come on now - stop all this nonsense! All of youse go home!

FATHER JOSEPH

Come now constable, this is a peaceful parade. Sure, they're only marching to the church. Now if you could let them on their way - all will be fine.

POLICEMAN #1

I can't do that, father.

FATHER JOSEPH

My son - no-one wants to see any trouble here. If you just let them pass...

Policeman #1 looks around furiously.

POLICEMAN #1
(shouts to the marchers)
If you don't start to disperse we
will arrest you!

POLICEMAN #2
Come on boy - hand that Fenian
flag over now!

EAMONN
I will not!

The police try to take the flag. They scuffle with the
marching volunteers.

Members of the public begin to push and heckle the
police.

CROWD
Who do you think you are? Leave
the lad alone! You can't push us
about like that!

POLICEMAN #2
Do you want me to come down hard
on you, eh? I'll split your
skulls you Fenian bastards!

The crowd numbers start to swell as more angry people
arrive. A violent scuffle breaks out between the RIC and
crowd.

A policeman lunges for the flag.

EAMONN
Get your filthy hands off of me!

CROWD
Get 'em lads! Don't let them
take the flag!

Father Joseph pushes past people towards Policeman #1.

FATHER JOSEPH
Constable! You must see that
you're outnumbered here. I think
it would be safer for you and
your men to withdraw.

Policeman #1 thinks for a moment. He looks at the angry
crowd, then reluctantly turns to his colleagues.

POLICEMAN #1
The priest's right. Pull back.
Let them through. Pull back!

The RIC withdraw and a massive cheer goes up.

The march continues with much jubilation.

In the crowd, being jostled, are Billy and Jane, Bridie and her friend, Annie.

Annie catches Eamonn's eye. She smiles shyly at him.

An angry, red-faced brute of a man, her father BERNARD (42), grabs her arm tightly and bustles her away beyond the crowd.

INT. THE LYNCH HOME - DAY

Father Joseph sits in the pristine parlour, having tea with Annie and her parents, Bernard and JULIA (41), an ashen-faced woman who is all but broken in spirit.

Annie's head is bowed unhappily. She toys with the frayed hem of her apron.

BERNARD

Honestly Father, God knows we've tried with her. She's nothing but a bloody waste of space..

JULIA

Barney! Not in front of Father Joseph! I'm sorry Father..

FATHER JOSEPH

Now, Mr Lynch - I hardly think that's fair on the poor girl.

BERNARD

It's high time she went out and got herself a job - and stopped being a burden on me.

FATHER JOSEPH

Well, I might just be able to help you there. You see - a vacancy has come up at the Parochial House for a housekeeper. I'm willing to give Annie here a chance.

JULIA

Oh, thank you father, that's awful kind of you.

BERNARD

Do you hear that Annie? Father Joseph- out of the goodness of his own heart - is willing to give you a chance. Don't you go and muck it up now.

A dejected Annie doesn't lift her head at all.

ANNIE
I won't daddy.

BERNARD
What do you have to say to Father Joseph, now?

ANNIE
Thank you Father.

FATHER JOSEPH
You're welcome Annie. I'm sure we're going to get along famously.

JULIA
God bless you Father.

Julia smiles appreciatively at Father Joseph.

He smiles sweetly back at her, before turning his gaze to Annie. For a brief moment, his smile slips as his eyes dart up and down Annie's body.

EXT. A TENTED CAMP AT LE TRANSLOY, FRANCE, APR 1917 - DAY

A visibly exhausted Christy sits on his camp bed writing a letter home.

CHRISTY V/O
Dearest mammy and daddy, I'm sorry it has taken so long to write to you. We have been very busy lately, what with the German retreat. I am well and I pray you all at home are too. We are far away from the front so it is very quiet here. Thank you for the Saint Benedict's medal that you sent me, and the chocolate. Both were very much appreciated.

Christy picks up the medal and stares at it.

CHRISTY V/O (CONT'D)
We are all hoping that, now the Germans are on the back foot, one more big push will do the trick and then we can all come home. I will try to write again soon. Love, Christy.

INT. GERAGHTY'S COTTAGE - NIGHT

It is raining heavily outside as Jane opens the door. In the pale light of the lantern she holds, she sees a soaked Sean Boylan standing on the threshold.

He tips his hat politely but does not smile.

SEAN BOYLAN

Good evening missus Geraghty. I was hoping to have a word with Eamonn.

JANE

Come in, Sean - come in.

Sean Boylan takes off his hat as he enters.

Eamonn comes through from the kitchen, wiping his hands on a towel. He sees Sean Boylan and grins

EAMONN

Sean!

SEAN BOYLAN

Evening Eamonn.

EAMONN

When did you get out?

SEAN BOYLAN

A few days ago.

EAMONN

Will you have a drink?

SEAN BOYLAN

Thanks, but no. (beat) We're reforming the companies. This time it's going to be different - we're gonna be organised. We're not gonna wait to be attacked. This time we're gonna take the fight to the British - and we're gonna win!

Eamonn grins and enthusiastically pats Sean Boylan on the shoulder.

Jane looks from Sean to Eamonn. There is a look of steely determination in all their eyes.

EXT. YPRES BATTLEFIELD, 15 AUG 1917 - NIGHT

Christy crawls through mud and drops into a shell hole occupied by a platoon of exhausted Irish Guardsmen.

They are under the command of Sergeant MOYNEY (22). The group includes privates WOODCOCK (29) and Hilley.

Shells explode intermittently around their position and shower them with mud.

CHRISTY

Coming through! Watch your heads!

SERGEANT MOYNEY

What's happening?

CHRISTY

Jerry's setting-up a machine-gun post between us and the river.

SERGEANT MOYNEY

Damn! They've got us completely surrounded now. Did they see you?

CHRISTY

No. I don't think so.

SERGEANT MOYNEY

Good lad!

HILLEY

Do you think our lot will still come for us, sarge?

SERGEANT MOYNEY

No - we've been given up for dead. It's only the Jerries that'll come for us now, son.

HILLEY

Has anyone got any water left?

VARIOUS SOLDIERS

No chance! Ran out days ago...

SERGEANT MOYNEY

Right lads, listen up.

Sergeant Moyney looks into their tired faces.

SERGEANT MOYNEY (CONT'D)

Jerry hasn't finished us off because he doesn't know there's only fifteen of us.

Nods of agreement from the others.

SERGEANT MOYNEY

He can't just leave us here, so he's gonna try to get us, especially now we're surrounded.

VARIOUS SOLDIERS

Right sarge. Yeah, s'pose so.

SERGEANT MOYNEY

We can't stay here without food and water. So - if we want to get out of this alive, we've got to go now!

VARIOUS SOLDIERS

Yes sarge.

SERGEANT MOYNEY

Good lads! Thankfully, we've got plenty of Mills bombs, a Lewis gun, plenty of ammo - right?

VARIOUS SOLDIERS

Right!

SERGEANT MOYNEY

So we give it all we've got. We bomb and shoot a hole in his line and run like hell, back across the river to our own lines. I'll cover our rear with the Lewis gun - all you lads have to do is keep up the bombing and the firing to punch a hole through them.

Woodcock, on lookout at the lip of the shell hole, frantically whispers to Sergeant Moyney.

WOODCOCK

(hisses)

Sarge! Take a look... There's more than a hundred of 'em. They're forming-up - coming this way...

Sergeant Moyney peaks over the lip of the shell hole.

German soldiers are approaching ominously through the mud.

Sergeant Moyney returns to his men.

SERGEANT MOYNEY

When I give the order - we put a volley into that lot first, then we run in the opposite direction towards the river, right?

ALL SOLDIERS

Yes sarge!

Sergeant Moyney re-joins Woodcock at the lip of the shell hole. He peers carefully over.

SERGEANT MOYNEY

Keep your heads down. Wait until they're right on top of us. Hold your fire... Keep holding 'til I say. Wait now... Get ready with those bombs...

Shells suddenly start exploding all around them.

The advancing Germans, caught out in the open, dive for cover.

HILLEY

That's our guns! They know we're here!

CHRISTY

They don't. They must think Jerry is massing for an attack.

SERGEANT MOYNEY

Now's our best chance. Come on all of you - move!

The guardsmen emerge screaming war cries from the shell hole and run, firing from the hip, towards the German machine gun position.

INT. GERAGHTY COTTAGE, FEB 1918 - DAY

Jane sits by the fire. She brushes away a tear as she reads a letter.

Eamonn enters and stands next to her.

JANE

There's a letter just arrived from Christy...

EAMONN

Oh.

JANE

It's very short - do you want me to read it to you?

Jane smiles weakly at Eamonn, who kneels by her chair.

She gently pats his cheek and Eamonn takes her hand.

EAMONN

Mammy...

Jane pulls her hand away.

JANE

He's still your brother, you know.

EAMONN

Is he?

Jane, sadness in her eyes, turns to look Eamonn straight in the face.

JANE

What if it was you out there?
How would you feel - knowing you had a brother back home who hated you?

EAMONN

Mammy, I don't hate him... I just don't know if I can forgive him right now...

JANE

Forgive him for what? Sure he's in the British Army, but he's done nothing against you - except perhaps offend your pride. God knows I hate the British for what they've done to us, but Christy's not fighting against us.

EAMONN

I know, mammy.

JANE

Do you? Then do something about it - before it's too late.

Eamonn stares soul-searchingly into the fire.

EXT. BOISLEUX ST. MARC, FRANCE, MAR 1918 - DAY

Christy, stripped to his shirt, wields a pick as he and his platoon, repair a collapsed trench.

A young RECRUIT (18) shovels next to him.

RECRUIT

All the lads are saying we don't stand a chance.

Christy stops for a moment, mops his sweaty brow and smiles at the recruit.

CHRISTY

Come on now - that's just banter.
Pay them no heed.

RECRUIT

But what if it's true?

CHRISTY

Listen son - the Germans are
desperate. They know the Yanks
are on their way over any day.
This push of theirs - 'twill come
to nothing. You'll see. They'll
burn themselves out and then
they'll have nothing left!
They'll be forced to surrender
and we'll have won!

RECRUIT

Are you sure?

CHRISTY

You're in the Irish Guards. The
best bloody regiment in the whole
British Army. Jerry will not get
past us. Just keep your head
down. We'll get through this -
and then we can go home!

RECRUIT

Go home?

Christy smiles and pats the recruit on the shoulder.

CHRISTY

Yes, son. We'll all go home. I
promise.

Sergeant Brock picks his way along the duckboards. The
ground shakes with the intermittent crump of exploding
shells.

SERGEANT BROCK

Hear that? They're getting
closer. Dig 'em deep lads... we're
gonna bleedin well need 'em.

SOLDIER #1

Yeah - That way we'll save the
burial parties the trouble, eh
sarge?

SERGEANT BROCK

Something like that, son... We
have to hold 'em here lads -
'cause if we don't - God only
knows...

A CAPTAIN (25) arrives. Sergeant Brock snaps to attention and salutes him.

CAPTAIN

I'm going to need the men's attention sergeant.

SERGEANT BROCK

Yes sir! Right you lot - stop what you're doing and come here!

CAPTAIN

Listen-up everyone! Brigade reports enemy troops in Moyenneville massing for an assault. We expect friendly troops to retire through our sector. Be on the look-out for them - don't shoot 'em! Our job is to stop the Boche advance at all costs. We are the last line of defence, so there is little chance of relief or reinforcement. We are to hold this position for as long as possible. I'm afraid it's going to be a grim task but the longer we can hold-out here, the better chance we have that Division can organise an effective counter attack. Is everybody clear on that?

TROOPS

(together)

Yes sir!

CAPTAIN

That's the spirit! Carry on sergeant - and best of luck to you all! The Division is counting on you.

SERGEANT BROCK

Thank you sir!

Sergeant Brock salutes the Captain and then turns to address the men.

SERGEANT BROCK (CONT'D)

Right you lot - stand to! Check weapons! Watch out for Jerries - and don't fire on our own men!

Christy and the other soldiers look at each other silently as they put down their pickaxes and take-up firing positions.

They check their weapons.

Shells begin landing close by.

Christy reaches into his breast pocket and takes out a photograph of his family. He looks at it fondly for a moment before replacing it.

As he quickly stuffs it back, his Saint Benedict's medal falls to the ground and is trodden into the mud.

EXT. DOULLENS CASUALTY CLEARING STATION, FRANCE - NIGHT

A soldier is carried in on a stretcher, badly wounded and covered in blood and dressings.

The SURGEON (40) peels away his dressings.

SURGEON
Orderly? Morphine - now! This
one's pretty bad.

An orderly rushes over with a syringe of morphine.

The surgeon injects Christy. His skin is blue, his breathing rapid and shallow.

The surgeon checks the soldier's dog tags.

SURGEON
Padre? You're needed over here!

The PADRE (52) appears, looking concerned.

The soldier coughs up blood and makes gurgling noises.

SURGEON (CONT'D)
I'm afraid he's going..

PADRE
Yes...

The surgeon steps aside as the padre begins to administer the Last Rites.

PADRE
Through this holy anointing may
the Lord in his love and mercy
help you with the grace of the
Holy Spirit.

The padre anoints the soldier's mud-encrusted face with Holy Water.

PADRE (CONT'D)
May the Lord, who frees you from
sin, save you and raise you up.

The man passes away. The padre and surgeon exchange sombre glances.

EXT. DOULLENS CEMETERY, FRANCE - DAY

It is raining. A burial party hastily place a soldier's canvas-wrapped body in a freshly dug grave.

The padre bows his head in silent prayer as they pile the soil on top of the body and hammer in a wooden cross with Christy's name, rank number and regiment written on it.

The burial party salute and march away.

The padre makes the Sign of the Cross over the grave and walks away too.

INT. GERAGHTY'S COTTAGE - DAY

Eamonn comes through the door to find all the Geraghty family comforting one another. He looks around the room in shock and confusion.

Billy cries as he holds a telegram from the War Office.

Jane wails uncontrollably. The children are crying in her lap. Father Joseph has a sympathetic arm around Jane. He looks up sorrowfully at Eamonn.

EAMONN

What's happened?

BILLY

Eamonn - Come here, son...
Christy's dead.

Billy gives Eamonn the telegram. Eamonn reads it in disbelief.

Billy embraces Eamonn and weeps. Eamonn stands totally stunned.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. EAMONN'S KITCHEN, 1957 - DAY

Eamonn weeps.

The interviewing Officer switches-off the tape recorder. He looks at Eamonn sympathetically.

Eamonn wipes his eyes and takes a deep breath.

EAMONN

I'm sorry.

INTERVIEWING OFFICER

That's quite alright. Take your time.

EAMONN

You know - it's been forty years since he died and it still hurts. The guilt, the anger... the shame.

INTERVIEWING OFFICER

The shame?

EAMONN

Yes. I'm ashamed of how I treated him - my own brother. He should never have gone back. I drove him back there - to his death. Mammy and daddy blamed the British - but I blamed myself. I still do.

Eamonn gestures to the tape recorder.

EAMONN

You might want to switch that back on.

INTERVIEWING OFFICER

Huh? Oh, yes - of course!

EAMONN

Straight after Christy's death there was the Conscription Crisis of 1918. Everyone was so scared that the British would round-up all the young men in Ireland. That was when things really started to happen...

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

EXT. BAILIEBOROUGH MARKET SQUARE, APR 1918 - DAY

Dozens of volunteers parade before a cheering crowd of thousands, including Eamonn and Sean Boylan.

Father Joseph stands under a banner reading, "No Conscription. Stand United". He confidently addresses the crowd.

FATHER JOSEPH

All you young men, here today,
are faced with the horrifying
menace of Compulsory Military
Service. The Catholic Church
stands shoulder to shoulder with
Sinn Féin, the Irish Volunteers
and others to utterly denounce
this atrocious law. Together we
will stringently oppose any move
by the British government to
enact Conscription.

The crowd cheer noisily. Father Joseph waves at them to
quieten down.

FATHER JOSEPH (CONT'D)

The British call this the "German
Plot". They claim Sinn Féin and
other Irish societies are in
thrall to the Kaiser. This is
nonsense. A wicked lie put about
by the British to discredit
anyone who opposes them.

The crowd cheer louder. Father Joseph waves them down.

FATHER JOSEPH (CONT'D)

We will deny the right of the
British government to enforce
conscription in this country.
Together we will resist
Conscription by every means at
our disposal.

The crowd go wild. Father Joseph looks around and nods,
profoundly pleased with himself.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Jane, with a black shawl over her bowed head, lights a
candle in the Mary Chapel and closes her eyes.

The noise of the door opening makes Jane look up and
turn.

Annie enters with a floral display. She slowly walks up
the aisle, genuflects and she places to one side of the
altar. She genuflects again and turns.

Annie becomes aware that Jane is watching and she looks
sympathetically at her.

Jane smiles weakly as Annie walks over to her.

JANE

Those are pretty flowers you have there.

ANNIE

Thank you Mrs Geraghty. (beat)
I'm really... really sorry for your loss..

JANE

You're Annie - Bridie's friend - aren't you? I hear you're the new housekeeper at the Parochial House.

ANNIE

That's right.

Jane pats Annie's hand affectionately.

JANE

Thank you for your sympathy, child.

Annie smiles weakly and leaves.

Jane turns and looks sadly at the statue of the Blessed Virgin. She resumes her prayer.

INT. CHURCH HALL, TRIM, MAY 1918 - NIGHT

The hall is packed with about thirty young men, including Liam, who are all eager to be sworn in to the Irish Volunteers.

An Irish tricolour adorns the wall, as does a banner which reads "We Serve Neither King Nor Kaiser But Ireland".

The chattering crowd falls silent with expectation as Sean Boylan walks onto the stage and addresses them.

He looks around the room confidently.

SEAN BOYLAN

Brothers - since Cromwell's invasion, never was there such a determined attempt to exterminate the Irish nation as there is today. The passing of this Conscription Bill by the British must be regarded as a declaration of war on the Irish people.

(SEAN BOYLAN CONT'D OVER)

SEAN BOYLAN (CONT'D)

If we accept it we will be
surrendering our liberties and
acknowledging ourselves slaves to
the English. We are not English
slaves - we are Irishmen. Here,
tonight, another thirty young men
stand ready to pledge themselves
to the Irish Volunteers - to join
us in our struggle. To help us
to victory - and a free Ireland!

The men cheer madly. Sean Boylan beams back at them.

EXT. CENTRE OF TRIM, JUL 1918 - DAY

A brass band plays as over one hundred people march along
the street under flags and banners saying "No To
Conscription" and "We Serve Neither King Nor Kaiser But
Ireland".

Hundreds more bystanders cheer them on as police
desperately try to push the crowds back.

INT: A PUB IN TRIM - NIGHT

Eamonn and Liam are enjoying a few pints in a noisy and
crowded pub. Eamonn raises his glass to Liam.

EAMONN

Here's to you Liam boy - and
Molly. May you both have a long,
happy life together.

LIAM

Thanks Eamonn.

EAMONN

(laughs)

You know, it's awful fast Liam.
Are you sure you haven't got her
in the family way?

Liam looks shocked as he takes a gulp of his pint.

LIAM

Shut up you - I have not! I
haven't laid a finger on her!

EAMONN

Are you worried about being
called-up, then? Do you figure
you're less likely to be sent to
France if you're married?

LIAM
It's not like that!

Liam starts to put his pint to his lips, then stops.

LIAM (CONT'D)
Do you think it's going to happen
- conscription, like?

EAMONN
We'll fight it all the way.
There're thousands of us who'll
refuse. They can't lock us all
away. (beat) I must say you've
changed your tune, though Liam.
I thought you were all for
enlisting anyway?

LIAM
I was - but that was before your
brother was killed.

The pair bow their heads solemnly.

EAMONN
Anyways - that's enough of that
talk. We're here to celebrate!
Here's to you Liam. Sláinte!

LIAM
Sláinte!

INT. GERAGHTY'S COTTAGE, NOV 1918 - NIGHT

The Geraghty family sit at the kitchen table, eating
dinner.

Bridie puts down her knife and fork and looks around the
silent table.

BRIDIE
I think it's wonderful that the
Armistice has been signed, don't
you? We should all thank God.
The greatest war in history is
finally over and all our men can
come home.

Jane doesn't even look up from her plate as she coolly
cuts a boiled potato in half.

JANE
It really makes no difference
Bridie, dear. Our Christy will
never be coming home.

Billy looks at Bridie and inattentively waves his knife at her.

BILLY

But it will make a Hell of a difference to Ireland. There'll be thousands of English soldiers that they can send over here. We could have a full scale war on our hands. There'll be blood on the streets - mark my words.

Eamonn doesn't look up either, but grits his teeth.

EAMONN

Then so be it.

BRIDIE

Eamonn! Shame on you! One war has just ended and you pray for another one to start! Have you not seen enough bloodshed and hatred?

Eamonn and Jane look at each other.

EAMONN

If we're to fight for Irish freedom then now's as good a time as any. We're as ready for them as we're ever going to be.

JANE

Eamonn's right. Christy's sacrifice counted for absolutely nothing. The British won't give us Home Rule, so we'll have to take it from them - by force. The only path left open now is armed rebellion.

EXT. PAROCHIAL HOUSE, JAN 1919 - DAY

Eamonn grooms the priest's horse.

Annie, carrying a basket of groceries, hurries up to the back door. She is about to enter when notices Eamon and stops. She nervously walks over to him as she takes a newspaper from her basket.

Eamonn blushes as he continues to brush the horse.

ANNIE

Good morning Eamonn.

EAMONN

Oh, hello Annie.

ANNIE
Have you seen the paper today?

EAMONN
No - why?

ANNIE
They've declared independence!

EAMONN
Who has?

ANNIE
Sinn Féin. At the Mansion House
in Dublin. They're calling it
Dáil Éireann! I... I know you're
interested in that kinda thing..

Eamonn stops brushing and looks at her.

EAMONN
I am. Can I see?

Annie looks a bit confused.

EAMONN (CONT'D)
The paper.

ANNIE
Oh! Sure - here.

Annie reaches into her bag and knocks a packet of meat
out onto the gravel.

Eamonn picks it up.

They laugh nervously as they swap the meat for the
newspaper.

EAMONN
Thanks...

Eamonn concentrates on the newspaper and forgets Annie is
there. She looks around, self-consciously.

ANNIE
I'd better get back to work. See you
later Eamonn.

Annie walks away slowly.

EAMONN
Annie - wait! I was wondering if
you'd like to come to the dance
with me on Saturday night?

She stops and smiles gleefully, then turns back to
Eamonn.

ANNIE
I'd love to.

EAMONN
That's great...

ANNIE
Bye.

Annie walks off, smiling happily. Eamonn grins as he starts to read the paper.

Father Joseph comes round the corner. Annie stops smiling and hurries back indoors.

Father Joseph watches her, then spies Eamonn reading the newspaper. His eyes narrow as he walks over.

FATHER JOSEPH
Am I paying you to groom my horse
or to read your newspaper?

EAMONN
Sorry father.

Eamonn looks shamefaced as he puts down the paper and resumes grooming.

Father Joseph watches him sternly.

EXT. THE WORKHOUSE, DUNSHAUGHLIN - DAY

A group of prominent British Army officers and wealthy ladies and gentlemen, all dressed in hunting garb and on horseback, mill around the workhouse yard with a pack of foxhounds and a caged stag on a wooden cart.

Three motorcars pull up and out get twelve severe looking IRA men with rifles, shotguns and pistols. Sean Boylan is their commander. Eamonn and Liam are among the volunteers.

Six IRA men take up position around the caged stag. The rest, including Eamonn, are with Sean Boylan.

The HUNT MASTER (49) arrogantly trots up to Sean Boylan.

SEAN BOYLAN
Who's in charge here?

HUNT MASTER
I am. What do you people want?

SEAN BOYLAN

Under the instructions of the Dáil Éireann, you are to disperse immediately. You are agents of British control and, as such, your organisation is prohibited.

HUNT MASTER

Look - Who are you people?

SEAN BOYLAN

We are the Irish Republican Army.

HUNT MASTER

Well I don't take notice from the likes of you!

SEAN BOYLAN

I am giving you a Government instruction!

HUNT MASTER

Government instruction! The only government we recognise is in London and it doesn't give instructions through you! Now you listen to me - this is our land and we will hunt it if we chose!

SEAN BOYLAN

This hunt is illegal and you will disperse - now!

HUNTSMAN #1 casually walks his horse up to the Hunt Master, ignoring the IRA men.

HUNTSMAN #1

(whispers to Hunt Master)
We can ride them down...

HUNT MASTER

(whispers to huntsman #1)
Wait for my word.

Huntsman #1 casually walks back to the other riders. A whisper spreads through the host.

The IRA men look at each other expectantly.

From the back of the hunting pack there is a shout.

HUNTSMAN #1

Charge!

A group of huntsmen charge at the IRA men around the caged stag. A HUNTING LADY (40) aims her galloping horse straight at Sean Boylan, who coolly jumps out of the way.

A single shot rings out and a horse falls to the ground near the caged stag. The rider rolls away and gets to his feet, badly shaken, but uninjured.

Half the hunt ride off in panic. The rest rein in around the Hunt Master and glower at the IRA men.

HUNT MASTER
Scoundrels! You have shot Mr
Nugent's Horse!

SEAN BOYLAN
Count yourselves lucky we didn't
shoot any of you!

The Hunting Lady rides forward.

HUNTING LADY
You are monsters! I shall go to
the police and I shall identify
the man who shot the horse!

SEAN BOYLAN
Madam, if you were to do such a
thing, we would regard you as an
informer and we happen to shoot
informers - did you know?

HUNTSMAN #1
(shouts)
Someone disarm him!

Sean Boylan points his revolver threateningly at the riders. His face is murderous.

SEAN BOYLAN
The first one to move - I will
drop you!

The hunters realise these men are deadly serious. A quiver of alarm passes through them as they look at each other.

HUNT MASTER
You've not heard the last of
this!

SEAN BOYLAN
Is that so? Nevertheless my
original instruction to you still
applies. I should not need to
repeat myself. We are still
waiting.

HUNT MASTER
What about our stag - and our
boxcart?

SEAN BOYLAN

The boxcart we will return to
your kennels - as for the stag
inside of it - he is now the
property of the Irish State.

The Hunt Master looks around at the dead horse and the
grim faces of the IRA men.

HUNT MASTER

Come on everyone - I no longer feel in
the mood for hunting today..

After a short stand-off the hunters slowly ride away.
The IRA men grin to one another and cheer as they watch
the riders leave.

EXT. HUNTING LADY'S HOUSE, CLONEE - DAY

A bored-looking Sergeant Brock interviews the Hunting
Lady in front of her house.

SERGEANT BROCK

Now then, I was told you could
identify the man who shot Mr
Nugent's horse..

HUNTING LADY

I'm very sorry officer but you
are mistaken. I did not get a
clear view of the fellow.

SERGEANT BROCK

Did you recognise any of them?
(beat) Madam?

HUNTING LADY

I'm sorry but no - they... they all
looked like strangers to me..

The Sergeant Brock tries to hide his annoyance as he
sighs and writes in his notebook.

INT. CHURCH HALL - NIGHT

Eamonn escorts Annie into the packed hall. There is a
ceilidh band on stage and dancers twirling to a set of
reels.

Groups of people are sat, happily chatting, at tables and
other mill around the hall.

Eamonn takes Annie's coat. She smiles.

EAMONN

Can I get you a drink Annie?

ANNIE
Lemonade please.

A hot and sweaty Liam comes up to them grinning.

LIAM
Howaya Eamonn? Howaya Annie?
T'was a great show the other day,
was it not - eh, Eamonn?

EAMONN
It certainly was. Annie - I'll
be right back. D'you want a
drink Liam?

LIAM
No - I'm grand, thanks.

As Eamonn heads to the bar, Annie eyes Liam suspiciously.

ANNIE
What happened the other day?

LIAM
Oh, nothing really..

Annie looks doubtful, whilst Liam tries, and fails, to look innocent.

The dance finishes - everyone claps. The CEILIDH BAND LEADER (50) stands up.

CEILIDH BAND LEADER
Now can we have everyone lined up
for Strip the Willow?

Eamonn rushes back with two lemonades. He puts them on the table where Annie sits and escorts her to the dance floor. They line-up with the other dancers, facing each other.

The dance starts with a lively jig.

EXT. BALLIVOR RIC BARRACKS OCT 1919 - DAY

Eamonn and Liam are in a small group of IRA volunteers, all armed with shotguns and revolvers, under the command of Sean Boylan.

They crouch and run silently to the front of the building. Two men knock on the front door of the RIC barracks.

A dog barks.

The door opens and a head appears around it. The IRA men force the door and charge in. A single pistol shot rings out, then silence.

The front door opens again and six RIC officers are led out at gunpoint, with their hands up.

They are forced to sit on the grass with their hands on their heads. A dead RIC officer is dragged out and placed in front of them.

SEAN BOYLAN

Nice work lads. Get all the guns
and ammo - quickly!

Smoke starts to pour out of the barracks, followed quickly by flames licking at the windows and doors.

A grim faced Sean Boylan stands in front of the shocked and sullen RIC officers.

SEAN BOYLAN (CONT'D)

This is a message to the RIC from the
Irish Republican Army. You are the
instruments of an oppressive foreign
power. You are traitors to your
country and enemies of the Irish
Republic. From this day forward you
will be hunted down and your barracks
burned.

The barracks blazes behind him, as the other IRA men form a ragged line behind their leader.

INT. PAROCHIAL HOUSE - DAY

Annie cleans the mirror in the parlour.

Father Joseph comes up right behind her and smells her hair.

Annie stands petrified as she watches him in the mirror.

ANNIE

Is there something I can do for
you father?

Father Joseph covetously looks her up and down. He whispers in her ear.

FATHER JOSEPH

I'm sure there is Annie, I'm sure
there is..

The door knocker sounds. Father Joseph rolls his eyes, the stares at Annie's reflection for a second before he turns and leaves the room.

Annie stands there horrified, her eyes wide with shock.

FATHER JOSEPH O/S
 Ah! Mrs Higgins - and what can I
 do for you this fine day?

EXT. GERAGHTY COTTAGE, MAR 1920 - DAY

Jane beats a rug against the front wall as a convoy of military lorries speed by.

Surprised by the sudden noise, she stops and watches with trepidation as hard-looking men in unfamiliar uniforms glare back at her from the lorries.

One draws his thumb across his throat and mouths the words "fucking bitch" as he glowers at her.

Still with her eyes on the lorries, she turns her head towards the open front door and shouts.

JANE
 Billy! Eamonn! Come quick!

From inside the house, Billy and Eamon rush to the doorway and watch the tail of the convoy speed by.

BILLY
 Who the Hell are they?

EAMONN
 They're Black and Tans. Here to
 put us Irish back in our place

They watch with deep foreboding as the convoy speeds off down the lane.

EXT. CENTRE OF TRIM, MAR 1920 - DAY

The convoy of military lorries pulls up and out jump forty BLACK & TANS in police jackets and army trousers. Armed with rifles and revolvers, they start to shove the townspeople around.

Strutting around with menace, these men mean business. They barge into people and stare in their faces.

BLACK & TAN #1
 You'd better watch out paddies!

BLACK & TAN #2
 We're in charge here now.

BLACK & TAN #3
 You bunch of filthy Fenians!

A terrified Annie hurriedly walks along the street with her shopping basket, trying not to make eye-contact with them.

Two Black & Tans stand in front of her. She walks into the road to avoid them, but they move and block her path again.

She nervously looks up at them.

BLACK & TAN #1
What you looking at you Irish
bitch?

BLACK & TAN #2
Get out of my bloody way you
stupid woman!

One of the Black & Tans violently pushes Annie to the ground. Her shopping spills everywhere.

BLACK & TAN #2
Now look what you've done you
clumsy cow! You should watch
where you're going!

The Black & Tan stands over her laughing spitefully. He deliberately treads on her groceries, grinding them into the ground.

Annie weeps uncontrollably in fear and utter confusion.

EXT. A COUNTRY LANE - DAY

On a warm spring day, Eamonn and Liam cycle lazily down a quiet country road.

A military lorry speeds past them and almost knocks them off their bicycles. The lorry driver beeps his horn aggressively to intimidate the two cyclists.

In the back of the lorry are AUXILIARIES. One raises his pistol and shoots at the men on bicycles, wounding Liam in the arm.

Liam falls off his bicycle in agony.

As the lorry speeds away, the laughing auxiliaries shoot randomly at horses, cows, sheep and dogs.

EAMONN
Are you alright Liam?

LIAM
The bastards shot me!

EAMONN

Oh my God! You're bleeding!
Come on - I've got to get you to
a doctor! Can you stand-up?

LIAM

What about my bicycle? I'm not
leaving it here in the road!

EAMONN

Yes you bloody well are! It'd be
of little use to you if you were
to bleed to death now would it?

LIAM

Fair enough. Can you help me up?
Hide it in the hedge though, will
you?

EXT. THE HILL OF TARA - DAY

The sun is shining brightly on a warm spring day.

Eamonn and Annie stroll around the hilltop. Eamonn
carries a picnic basket. They are alone.

Annie's attention seems elsewhere and Eamonn is
concerned.

EAMONN

You seem awful far away Annie.
Are you feeling alright?

ANNIE

Sure, I'm fine... Don't worry about
me Eamonn.

EAMONN

Was it those Tans?

ANNIE

No - it's not that. Honestly,
I'm fine...

EAMONN

We're going to make them pay,
y'know? They'll regret what they
did - you make my words.

ANNIE

I wish you wouldn't talk like
that. Why do you hate the
British so much?

EAMONN

Look across to that hill over there...

Eamonn points to the other side of the valley.

ANNIE

That one?

EAMONN

Yes - the Hill of Slane. Do you know what happened on that hill?

Annie sits herself down on the grass. Eamon sits down next to her. She looks at the till, then looks at Eamonn and smiles feebly.

ANNIE

St. Patrick brought the Holy Church to Ireland.

EAMONN

That's right. St. Patrick arrived one Easter and lit a huge fire. All the people flocked to it - and he told them about Our Lord.

Eamonn crouches in front of Annie. She watches him intently.

EAMONN (CONT'D)

The High King of all Ireland was seated right here - where we are now - and he looked out upon the flames and all the people flocking to the fire. He grew fearful that he would lose his people forever, so he went across to St. Patrick and was baptised. From that day onwards all Ireland followed the True Faith. Right here.

Eamonn looks around him and focuses all his hate on the church just behind them.

He turns and looks at Annie with fire in his eyes.

EAMONN (CONT'D)

The most important, most sacred place in all of Ireland. Home of the Tuatha Dé Danann. the Fianna, Fionn MacCumhaill, Oisín, Oscar and all the others. Diarmuid and Gráinne fell in love here.

(EAMONN CONT'D OVER)

EAMONN (CONT'D)

For thousands of years this place has been sacred in the hearts of all Irish men and women. Then the English turn-up and what do they do?

Annie shrugs.

EAMONN (CONT'D)

They build a Proddy church right on top of it. And that's why I hate them.

EXT. TRIM POLICE BARRACKS, 26 SEPT 1920- DAY

Twelve IRA men take-up firing positions around the fortified RIC barracks. Eamonn is among these men and Sean Boylan is their leader.

A side door opens and a policeman with a bucket comes out. He sees the IRA men and frantically tries to run back in. Two volunteers, hiding behind the door, grab him and haul him to the ground - a revolver to his head.

Two more volunteers hurdle the gates and sprint to the house. They run through the open back door, past the policeman on the ground. A single shot rings out. More IRA men run in through the door.

Shortly afterwards eight police officers are led out with their hands in the air. The dead body of the chief constable is also dragged out.

Eight more police are led from the church up the road and placed with the first group, sat lined-up along a low wall, with six IRA men pointing weapons at them.

SEAN BOYLAN

Eamonn - get all the weapons!
Con, Joe, Paddy - make sure
everyone's out and burn it!

The thick grey smoke billows from the building.

IRA and RIC stand and watch as the barracks burn. Their faces lit by the glow of the flames.

EXT. HILL OF TARA - DAY

Eamonn and Annie walk happily around the hill, holding hands.

The roar of distant vehicle engines grabs Eamonn's attention. He spots a snaking line of army lorries rushing along the road below them.

Eamonn is troubled as he watches helplessly.

Annie looks at him, puzzled.

ANNIE
What do you see?

EAMONN
That's a Tan column. They're
heading for Trim.

EXT. TRIM, 27 SEPT 1920- DAY

The convoy of two hundred RIC, auxiliaries and Black & Tans roar into the town of Trim whilst a hurling match is taking place.

They jump out of their lorries, indiscriminately firing their weapons and attacking any locals they can catch.

A group of Black and Tans kick and beat two young boys in the street.

They maraud down the main street, smashing windows and burning homes.

The town hall is in flames.

Jane, Bridie and Jack are in town. They flee with the terrified townspeople to the surrounding fields.

A savage-looking Black & Tan drags a terrified local man called LAWLOR into the road and presses a bayonet-tipped rifle into his chest.

BLACK & TAN
Where are your sons Lawlor you
Fenian bastard? Tell me!

LAWLOR
I don't know! Honest to God! I
don't know!

AUXILIARY #1
Go on - stick the bleeder!

AUXILIARY#2
No! Don't do it! Leave him be
for Christ's sake!

The Black & Tan hesitates.

He looks from one Auxiliary to the other, then he reluctantly releases Lawlor and viciously kicks him down the street.

LATER:

The carnage continues into the night, like a scene from Hell.

Forty houses burn and crumble.

As dawn approaches, the Black & Tans and auxiliaries begin to depart.

They shout and dance around with a primeval, deranged ecstasy. They whoop and fire their weapons.

Stunned townspeople drift pathetically through the wreckage, too shocked even to cry.

EXT. DROGHEDA - DAY

Black & Tans go around the town pasting notices which reads:

"If in the vicinity a policeman is shot, five of the leading Sinn Féiners will be shot. Stop the shooting of the police or we will lay low every house which smells of Sinn Féin."

They stand around, looking menacing with weapons ready - daring anyone to get in their way.

INT. PAROCHIAL HOUSE - NIGHT

Sean Boylan knocks loudly on the door. An irritated Father Joseph, in night clothes, opens it.

FATHER JOSEPH
Who is it? What do you want?

SEAN BOYLAN
It's Sean Boylan, Father.

FATHER JOSEPH
Oh? What do you want in the middle of the night?

SEAN BOYLAN
Father, I wonder if you can deliver a message for me - to the RIC?

FATHER JOSEPH
The RIC?

SEAN BOYLAN
That's right, Father. You see
I've heard they intend to burn
down the houses of a large number
of suspected volunteers.

FATHER JOSEPH
I see...

SEAN BOYLAN
I'd like you to inform them that,
if they burn down so much as a
single Volunteer's house, we will
burn down the houses of every
British Loyalist in the whole of
the county Meath!

FATHER JOSEPH
You mean that too, don't you?

SEAN BOYLAN
I do indeed, Father.

FATHER JOSEPH
I'll send your message. Now go
away.

SEAN BOYLAN
Thank you Father. Goodnight.

Boylan disappears into the night.

EXT. HAGGART STREET, TRIM, JAN 1921 - DAY

Eamonn and a group of determined-looking IRA volunteers
hide behind a low stone wall, next to a road. They are
armed with shotguns and revolvers.

A girl (18), on a bicycle, rides slowly past. She
doesn't look at them and she doesn't stop.

GIRL
They're coming. Thirty yards...

Eamon checks his revolver and looks around the group of
men.

EAMONN
Everyone ready?

The men nod grimly.

EAMONN
Liam?

LIAM
I'm ready.

EAMONN

On three. One... two... three... Now!

The men spring up, weapons ready.

A squad of Black and Tans is marching down the road towards them.

Using the wall for cover, Eamonn and his men open fire. The surprised Black and Tans scatter. Two lie dead, the rest seek cover and return fire.

A volunteer is hit in the shoulder and falls.

A squad of RIC run down the road and start to pour enfilading fire into Eamonn and his men.

EAMONN

Fall back! Fall back!

They turn and run for their lives.

Eamonn helps the wounded volunteer to run.

They are chased across fields by the RIC reinforcements but all escape.

INT. THE PAROCHIAL HOUSE - DAY

Annie is cleaning Father Joseph's bedroom. Father Joseph silently appears in the doorway.

FATHER JOSEPH

There you are Annie - I've found you at last! May I just say, you're looking very pretty today.

Father Joseph leers greedily as he steps into the room and slowly closes the door.

INT. GERAGHTY COTTAGE - NIGHT

An eight-man party of RIC, led by Sergeant Brock pound the front door.

SERGEANT BROCK

(shouts)

Open-up in the name of the King!

Billy, in pyjamas, hurries down the stairs. The rest of the Geraghty family cluster around Jane at the top of the stairs.

Billy opens the door. The RIC push past and stream in.

Billy staggers back and looks shocked.

BILLY
What's wrong?

SERGEANT BROCK
We have reason to believe that
you are harbouring weapons.
Where is your son?

The police begin to roughly search the cottage - but they do not trash it.

Jane comes down and stands beside Billy with her arms folded.

JANE
Which one? We had three of them
- now we've got two left, thanks
to your murdering bloody king.

Sergeant Brock looks at her sternly.

SERGEANT BROCK
We are looking for Eamonn
Geraghty. We want to question
him.

Billy is confused, flustered.

BILLY
Eamonn? We don't know. He's not
been home all night.

SERGEANT BROCK
Come on now - tell me where he
is!

JANE
We don't know. We haven't seen
him.

POLICEMAN #1 reports to Sergeant Brock.

POLICEMAN #1
There's nothing here and no sign
of him sarge.

Sergeant Brock looks round at his men.

He sighs.

SERGEANT BROCK
Come on then lads, let's go...

Sergeant Brock looks at Jane.

Billy turns very pale.

SERGEANT BROCK (CONT'D)

I knew your lad Christy. I served with him in France. He was a good man, your son. Out of respect for him, we'll go easy on you. But you should tell your Eamonn we're looking for him.

The police leave quietly. Jane looks up the stairs where Bridie and Jack are sat. The children look at each other.

Billy grips his chest and collapses on the floor.

Jane spins round to see him fall. She rushes to him.

JANE

Billy!

EXT. A FIELD BEHIND THE GERAGHTY COTTAGE - NIGHT

Eamonn and Liam lie in a ditch. By the light of a full moon, they silently watch the RIC leave.

EAMONN

Thanks for the warning Liam. Do you think it's safe to go back in?

LIAM

I wouldn't go back tonight Eamonn. They'll be watching for you - and they'll shoot you if they catch you. We'll find a barn to sleep in. Come on...

They slink-off into the night.

EXT. PAROCHIAL HOUSE - DAY

Eamonn stands on the doorstep and knocks.

Annie opens the door a few inches and peers through. Her eyes are bloodshot.

EAMONN

Annie?

ANNIE

Please, Eamonn... go away.

EAMONN

Annie, what's wrong?

ANNIE

Just leave me alone! I can't be with you any more Eamonn.

EAMON

Why not? Is it something I've done?

ANNIE

(crying)

Eamonn - I' sorry... you must stop trying to see me.

EAMONN

Why? You've got to tell me - what have I done?

ANNIE

It's not you... It's me! I've done something really bad and if you knew - you would hate me for it. So it's better for both of us if I just don't see you anymore.

EAMONN

Annie - tell me what's happened. We can sort this out. Please!

ANNIE

No Eamonn. Just leave me alone..

Annie closes the door. Eamonn stand there in shock for a moment before turning sadly to leave.

Annie, on the other side of the door, slides down the wall and crumples into a sobbing heap on the floor.

INT. THE GERAGHTY COTTAGE - DAY

Billy is in his bed, dying. His family are around him, trying to hold back the tears.

Father Joseph stands ready to administer the Last Rites.

Eamonn bursts in.

EAMONN

I just heard..

He stops and stares at Billy. He wells-up.

Jane looks up at Eamonn with weeping eyes.

She looks back to Billy and gently strokes his hair.

JANE
 Billy, love? Can you hear me?
 Eamonn's here..

Billy struggles to sit up, but is too weak.

He stares into nothingness.

BILLY
 Christy? Is that you son?
 Christy! Jane - Christy's come
 home. Oh son - is it really you?
 Can you see him Jane - our boy?

JANE
 (crying)
 Billy?

BILLY
 Oh, you look so smart there son..
 I know - you kept your promise.
 (beat) Wait Christy... I'm coming
 now... I'm ready..

JANE
 Goodbye Billy... Childer - it's
 time to say goodbye to your daddy
 now.

Eamon, Bridie and Jack step forward, each one fighting
 back the tears. They each kiss Billy on the forehead.

EAMONN / BRIDIE / JACK
 (one after the other)
 Goodbye daddy..

Billy quietly passes away.

Jane gathers her children in her arms and wails as Father
 Joseph administers the Last Rites.

EXT. THE GRAVEYARD IN BRANNOCKSTOWN - DAY

Billy's coffin is carried by Eamonn, Ned Quinn and two
 other friends of Billy.

It is laid by the graveside as the Father Joseph blesses
 it with Holy Water.

The pall bearers slowly lower it into the ground.

Jane is comforted by Bridie and Jack. Eamonn joins them.

FATHER JOSEPH

In the Name of The Father and of
The Son and of The Holy Spirit...
Amen. God our Father, Your power
brings us to birth, Your
providence guides our lives, and
by Your command we return to
dust. Lord, those who die still
live in Your presence. Their
lives change but do not end.

Father Joseph looks up and watches as Annie walks sadly
up to Eamonn.

She looks him in the eyes and takes his hand for a short
time.

Without a word, she lets go of Eamonn's hand, she hugs
Jane and then she walks off.

Eamonn hugs his mother tightly.

EAMONN

I'll come back when I can.

JANE

Do you know where they're taking
you?

EAMONN

I'll be with all the Trim lads.
It'll be fine.

JANE

You don't have to go, you know.

EAMONN

Mammy, I do. The police, the
army, the Tans - they're all
looking for me now. It'll be
safer for all of us if I'm away.
All the lads will keep an eye on
you and I'll come back whenever I
can.

Eamonn hugs his mother again and walks to a waiting car.
Sean Boylan holds the door open for him. He gives Eamonn
a nod as Eamonn gets into the car.

INT. A GROCER'S SHOP, BALBRADAGH FEB 1921 - NIGHT

Thirty one auxiliaries surround a pub and shop belonging
to MR CHANDLER (79) and his wife, MRS CHANDLER (60), a
tough, Unionist lady.

AUXILIARY MAJOR

Open up in the name of the King!

MRS CHANDLER
 Alright, alright, hold on - I'm
 coming.

Mrs Chandler opens the door and is roughly pushed out of the way by the auxiliaries as they storm in and begin to ransack the shop.

AUXILIARY CAPTAIN
 Stand aside there!

A shocked Mrs Chandler faces up to the Auxiliary Major.

MRS CHANDLER
 What do you want?

AUXILIARY MAJOR
 We have received information that
 you are storing ammunition for
 the Republican rebels.

Some of the other auxiliaries start to carry off alcohol, food, live poultry, bedding, jewellery and carpets.

MRS CHANDLER
 That's preposterous - we are
 Unionists. Why would we want to
 help the Republicans? Hey! What
 are you doing with all my stock?
 Leave it alone for God's sake!

AUXILIARY MAJOR
 We are seizing it madam - as
 evidence!

MRS CHANDLER
 You can't do that! Bring it back
 at once!

Mr Chandler is rough-handled down the stairs by an auxiliary.

MR CHANDLER
 What in Hell is going on here?

AUXILIARY
 Ammunition - over here!

AUXILIARY MAJOR
 Arrest that man!

Two auxiliaries grab hold of Mr Chandler and manhandle him roughly out to one of the trucks outside.

MR CHANDLER

Let me go! We don't have any
ammunition - you planted it.
We're Loyalists! Let me go!

An auxiliary punches Mr Chandler in the face to shut him
up.

MRS CHANDLER

You can't do this to us. We are
law-abiding citizens!

AUXILIARY MAJOR

Are you really madam? Well I'm
afraid that makes absolutely no
difference to us.

Some of the auxiliaries outside begin to fire shots into
water barrels and the pony trap.

They start a bonfire and throw clothes and furniture onto
it. The glow from the fire lights the interior of the
house and distorts the faces of the auxiliaries.

AUXILIARY MAJOR (CONT'D)

Come on men - let's get go.

MRS CHANDLER

Let my husband go you thieving
demons! I'll report you, so I
will! I'll go straight to the
Chief Constable!

AUXILIARY CAPTAIN

I'd keep my mouth shut if I were
you old woman - or we'll come
back and torch the place!

The auxiliaries board their lorry. Much laughter and
intermittent pistol shots are heard.

AUXILIARY O/S

Looks like we're going to have a
fine party tonight boys!

Mrs Chandler collapses to the floor sobbing. She looks
up with rage behind her tears.

MRS CHANDLER

Bastards!

EXT. GERAGHTY COTTAGE - DAY

Jane receives a small, official-looking parcel. Puzzled,
she opens it. Inside a small cardboard box are a silver
War Medal, a gold Victory Medal and two medal ribbons.

She lays them on the table and stares at them blankly.
She examines the rim of the Victory Medal, which reads:

6551 PTE. C. GERAGHTY. I.GDS.

She places it back on the table and turns the silver medal over to reveal the image of King George the Fifth. Jane's eyes widen madly.

With wild fury rising inside her, Jane snatches them up, storms outside. She hurls them at the dung heap.

JANE

I won't have any picture of an English king in this house - do you hear me! You can go to hell you Sassenach bastard! You killed my son! You lying, murdering British bastards! You killed my son!

INT/EXT. NAVAN POST OFFICE, FEB 1921- NIGHT

Two men, dressed in dark clothing and with English accents, hammer on the door.

GRACE HODGETT (50), wife of the postmaster, opens the bedroom window and nervously sticks her head out.

GRACE HODGETT

Who's there?

POLICEMAN #1

Police! Open up!

The two men lurk in the shadows.

An irritated Grace Hodgett closes the window and wraps her dressing gown around herself tightly. She turns to her husband, Postmaster THOMAS HODGETT (53), who is lying in bed.

GRACE HODGETT

It's alright, dear - I'll go and see what they want.

She goes down the stairs in the dark and opens the front door. The two men burst past her and sprint up the stairs.

Thuds and cries of pain can be heard as Thomas Hodgett is dragged from his bed and bundled down the stairs in his pyjamas.

POLICEMAN #1

Think you can spy on us do you?

GRACE HODGETT
Leave him be! He's done nothing!

POLICEMAN #2
Shut-up you bitch!

He violently slaps her across the face.

They try to manhandle Thomas Hodgett out of the house but he desperately grips onto the door frame.

POLICEMAN #1
Drag him to the bridge!

THOMAS HODGETT
Please stop! I've done nothing wrong! Please!

They lift Thomas Hodgett off his feet and smash his hands away from the door.

They throw him onto the pavement and kick him.

Grace Hodgett follows them frantically screaming.

GRACE HODGETT
Dear God - can't you leave him be. He's a cripple so he is!

POLICEMAN #1
He's a spy and a traitor!

THOMAS HODGETT
I'm no spy... I'm a Loyalist. I'm Protestant! I'd never spy on you.

POLICEMAN #2
You're a Fenian bastard! We know how to deal with the likes of you.

THOMAS HODGETT
Please...? I'm not a Fenian! Lord save me!

GRACE HODGETT
Leave him be for pity's sake!
He's no spy, I tell you! Have mercy on him! Please!

The men drag Thomas Hodgett to the nearby bridge.

One of the men draws a revolver and shoots Thomas Hodgett in the heart.

They tip his body into the fast flowing river Boyne and run off.

GRACE HODGETT
(screams)

NO!

EXT. RIVER BOYNE, NEAR NAVAN - DAY

Thomas Hodgett's bloated body floats face-down in the river. Two men wade in to retrieve it.

Shocked bystanders watch from the river banks.

INT. PAROCHIAL HOUSE - DAY

Eamonn looks nervous as he knocks on the door.

A dour-looking OLD LADY (late 60s) answers.

EAMONN
Oh, hello there, I've come to see
Annie Lynch. Is she here?

OLD LADY
She's gone - ungrateful little
trollop!

EAMONN
Where's she gone?

OLD LADY
How on earth should I know? She
walked-out. Left poor Father
Joseph in the lurch, she did!

EAMONN
I see... Thanks.

Eamonn walks away, looking confused. He picks up his bicycle and cycles off.

EXT. THE LYNCH HOME - DAY

Eamonn gets off his bicycle and knocks on the door. He looks around nervously.

Annie opens it. She furrows her brow.

Eamonn struggles to think of something to say.

EAMONN
Annie! I've just come to say
thank you for being at my daddy's
funeral...

ANNIE

I'm sorry for you - I really am.
I liked your daddy a lot. He was
a kind man.

EAMONN

He was. (beat) Annie, I'm on the
run from the British...

ANNIE

I know - Bridie told me.

EAMONN

But I'm desperate to see you
again.

ANNIE

No Eamonn - I can't see you...

EAMONN

Please tell me what's happened
Annie. I can fix it - I know I
can.

ANNIE

You can't fix this Eamon,
because... because I'm pregnant.
There... now you know - so you can
leave me alone. Go on... go! I
know you hate me now.

EAMONN

Pregnant! How can you be
pregnant?

ANNIE

How do you think?

EAMONN

Who's the father?

ANNIE

I won't tell you. Now please -
just go away.

EAMONN

Do I know him?

ANNIE

Eamonn... leave me alone!

EAMONN

If I find out, I'll kill him!

ANNIE

No you won't Eamonn Geraghty, do
you hear me? I'll never tell you
who the father is.

EAMONN

What are you going to do?

ANNIE

(miserably)

I don't know. My daddy will kill me if he finds out. I'll have to go away... to Dublin or somewhere... Maybe I'll go to England...

EAMONN

No Annie, you can't! You'll stay right here. You can stay with my mammy... She'll take you in.

ANNIE

Eamonn, I can't... not like this! I'll bring shame on you and your family.

EAMONN

I'll not stand by and see you leave, Annie. Marry me - be my wife... We can tell everyone the baby's mine.

ANNIE

You'd be willing to marry me - even though I'm carrying another man's child?

EAMONN

Yes... I would. If you'll have me?

ANNIE

Why would you do that for me?

EAMONN

Because I love you... I've always loved you. I'd do anything for you - don't you know that?

Eamonn looks at her expectantly. Annie hesitates, then takes a deep, despondent breath.

ANNIE

I can't marry you.

EAMONN

Why not?

ANNIE

Because it wouldn't be for the right reasons. Good bye Eamonn.

Eamonn looks utterly heartbroken as Annie shuts the door on him. She begins to sob bitterly.

Father Joseph stands silently behind the parlour door. He gently closes the door, leans against it and shuts his eyes.

Annie's sobs can be heard, followed by thumps as she runs upstairs.

Someone tries to open the door. Father Joseph jumps away from it.

Julia comes in carrying a tray of tea.

JULIA

More tea Father? Now where's that girl got to? Annie! Get in here. Now Father, we've tried to get it out of her but she won't tell us a thing. She's absolutely refusing to go back. Perhaps if you were to talk to her?

FATHER JOSEPH

Well, of course - I'd be very happy for her to come back...

Julia pours a cup of tea and hand it to Father Joseph.

FATHER JOSEPH(CONT'D)

Thank you missus Lynch.

INT. THE LYNCH HOME - NIGHT

Bernard drunkenly hurls a chair across the kitchen.

Annie cowers by the corner dresser.

BERNARD

Come here you Jezebel! You have brought shame upon my house!

JULIA

Barney - stop. It wasn't her fault!

BERNARD

Who is he? Who is he, eh? I'll kill him!

JULIA

Leave her alone! She can't tell you!

Julia tries to grab Bernard's arm.

BERNARD
What did you say?

JULIA
I told you to leave her alone!

BERNARD
How dare you speak to me like
that!

Bernard strikes Julia across the face with the back of his hand. She canons into the table.

Bernard steps forward to hit her again, but Annie jumps in front of her mother and eyes him defiantly.

ANNIE
Don't you dare touch her again -
you miserable bastard!

Bernard grabs Annie by her hair and drags her across the kitchen, slamming her into the door.

BERNARD
Get out! Get out of my house -
now! Or I'll take my fist to you
- you ungrateful little bitch!

Annie runs out, slamming the door. Bernard shouts after her.

BERNARD O/S
You're no child of mine - d'you
hear me? Don't you ever dare
come back here you filthy little
whore!

Annie runs off down the road in tears.

INT. GERAGHTY'S COTTAGE - NIGHT

It is raining heavily. There is a feeble knock on the door. Jane, in her nightclothes, answers.

JANE
Annie! What are you doing here
at this time of night? Come in,
come in. You're soaked through,
girl!

ANNIE
Thank you missus Geraghty. I'm
really sorry to trouble you, but
I've nowhere else to go and I
don't know who else to turn to.
My father - he kicked me out of
the house. I can't go back.

JANE

Oh, my poor child. You're always welcome here. You can stay with us as long as you want.

ANNIE

Thank you so much missus Geraghty!

JANE

You're best off away from that awful man. I don't know how your poor mother's put up with him all these years! Now, come on... let's get you into some dry clothes. Are you hungry?

Jane wraps her arm around Annie and guides her inside the house.

EXT. A COUNTRY LANE - DAY

On a hot, sunny afternoon, Eamonn and a group of IRA men march down the road in silence. They are miserable, exhausted and sweaty.

Each wears a holstered pistol.

A jovial looking IRA MAN with a rifle on his shoulder stands in the road just in front of them.

The man holds up his hand and the men come to a ragged halt.

IRA MAN

You lads look absolutely knackered. What unit are you?

Eamonn catches his breath

EAMONN

First Battalion fourth Meath Brigade.

IRA MAN

Where have you marched from?

EAMONN

Dunboyne.

The IRA man smiles at them.

IRA MAN

That's a fair auld slog on a hot day! You'll be wanting a rest I expect!

Eamonn nods vigorously.

The IRA man laughs as he points up a track to a farm.

IRA MAN (CONT'D)
Over there. There's tea and
supper for youse all in the barn.

EAMONN
Thanks.

Eamonn nods for his group to follow him up to the farm.

EXT. THE FARMYARD - DAY

As the sun sets, the run-down yard looks gloomy. It is surrounded with crumbling outbuildings. There is a barn to one side.

Milling around in the yard are other IRA men cleaning weapons, talking and drinking tea.

Eamonn leads his men towards the barn.

Sean Boylan emerges from the house and spots Eamonn.

SEAN BOYLAN
Eamonn! Come over here!

He waves Eamonn over to the house.

Eamonn follows him in.

INT. FARMHOUSE - DAY

In the neat parlour Eamon notices fine china in a cabinet and pictures of the British royal family on the walls.

Also on the wall is a death plaque. Eamonn stares at it.

Seated at a small table are some IRA officers arguing over a map.

EAMONN
Who's house is this.

SEAN BOYLAN
Dunno. We commandeered it for
this do.

EAMONN
There's a lot of men out there.

Sean Boylan smiles.

SEAN BOYLAN

The whole division's here. This is gonna be the biggest action of the war. How are the lads?

EAMONN

Ah, sure - they're all fine. Sore feet from marching so far... So then, what's the plan?

SEAN BOYLAN

There's a troop train coming through here tomorrow morning from Belfast, with over four hundred soldiers. We've mined the track! We blow-up the train and take all the weapons. It's gonna be huge!

Sean Boylan puts his arm around Eamonn's shoulder.

SEAN BOYLAN (CONT'D)

Make sure the lads are fed and watered. They can bed down in the barn for the night. Early start tomorrow!

Eamonn nods and starts to leave.

He casually glances into the kitchen as he passes and stops. He is shocked by what he sees.

A terrified family with wailing children is huddled on the floor in the corner of the room. Armed IRA men stand silently and menacingly over them.

ANGRY IRA MAN'S VOICE O/S

Shut-up!

The door closes.

Eamonn turns questioningly to Sean Boylan.

SEAN BOYLAN

They'll be alright. Sure, we'll let them go tomorrow, after we're finished.

Eamonn looks uneasy as he leaves the farmhouse.

INT. THE BARN - DAY

Eamonn, with mug of tea and chunk of bread, sits down on a straw bale next to Liam and some other men.

He bites into the bread.

EAMONN
They're holding the family
hostage in there.

LIAM
I know.

EAMONN
It's not right. They have young
childer.

LIAM
They're Unionists. They'd run to
the police if we let them go.

Eamonn sighs.

EAMONN
Still not right.

LIAM
I bumped into Paddy Mooney.
They've got a load of carbines
for us.

EAMONN
Good.

LIAM
And the local priest is here if
you want to go to confession.

EAMONN
I'll do that.

EXT. FARMYARD - DAY

In the cobbled yard, Eamonn forms his yawning men up with
their carbines.

They look tired and bedraggled.

A shout goes up.

IRA MAN O/S
Look! Here come the Fingal lads!

Marching into the yard come a fine-looking body of men.
All carry Lee Enfield rifles at the slope, plus
ammunition bandoliers. They march like professional
soldiers.

A general, light-hearted jeering sounds around the yard.

FINGAL COMMANDER
Fingal Brigade - halt!

They execute a perfect halt.

FINGAL COMMANDER
Fall - out!

The Fingal men disperse.

Eamonn goes up to the Fingal Commander and smiles.

EAMONN
(loudly)
Sure, you have a fine-looking
bunch of lads there. Can we join
youse lot?

Eamonn indicates his rag-tag bunch of volunteers.

The Fingal Commander laughs sarcastically.

FINGAL COMMANDER
Certainly, if you can all bring
your own Lee Enfields and ammo.

The Fingal Commander walks towards the house laughing.

A narked Eamonn goes over to his men.

EAMONN
Come on lads. We need to get
into our positions.

EXT. A RAILWAY GOODS YARD - DAY

A small, gravelled yard beside a train track contains old rail waggons and discarded wooden railway sleepers.

As Eamonn lead his men through the yard, he pulls a piece of paper from his pocket and examines it.

EAMONN
Our position is from this corner
of the yard up to the railway
siding over there on the right.
Spread yourselves out now and
find a good position.

The sound of a train whistle can be heard in the distance.

EAMONN
Everyone take cover.

The men run and take-up firing positions in cover.

LIAM
(shouts)
Is this the train?

EAMONN
No. It's not due for another
twenty minutes!

LIAM
It's stopping!

In the distance a train comes into view. It slows and stops.

EAMONN
That's not right!

Beyond the goods yard two army tenders drive at speed. They stop two hundred yards away and troops jump out into ditches.

More troops are running along the railway tracks towards Eamonn's men.

Rounds start to ping off the waggons in the yard as the soldiers advance.

EAMONN
Return fire! Aimed shots!

The IRA men begin firing as the incoming fire gets heavier.

LIAM
Eamonn! We can't win here -
there's too many of them! We
have to get out!

Eamonn looks around desperately as rounds ping near his head.

EAMONN
Everyone back! Go! Go!

IRA men leave their positions and run away. Liam runs over to Eamonn's position as Eamonn gives covering fire.

LIAM
Come on Eamonn. They'll kill us
if they catch us.

EAMONN
I won't hang from a rope.

LIAM
Neither will I. I'll keep a
bullet for myself. But only as a
last resort. Come on! We can
still get away if we go now!

Eamon pulls his trigger and hears a dead man's click.

EAMONN

I'm out of ammo anyway! Come on!

They both run away, dodging rounds as they go.

INT. IRA SAFE HOUSE, 11 JUL 1921 - DAY

Dawn breaks as an elderly lady bustles around a dark and shabby farmhouse kitchen.

Behind her Eamonn and Liam, plus two other IRA men sit at a bare wooden table as they clean their weapons.

They look thoroughly miserable.

LIAM

I'm telling you - there must have been an informer.

EAMONN

Maybe it was just too big a target.

LIAM

No - they knew we were there!

A pounding at the door makes them freeze.

They look at one another and grab their weapons.

The elderly lady looks at them nervously and leaves the room, closing the door behind her.

Eamonn jumps up with a revolver and hides behind the door

ELDERLY LADY O/S

Sean! It's Sean!

The IRA men look at each other with relief.

Eamonn steps away from the door as it opens.

In walks the smiling elderly lady followed by Sean Boylan with a grin on his face.

EAMONN

Sean!

SEAN BOYLAN

Howaya lads - it's good to see you! Are you alright?

EAMONN

We're getting by, you know.

SEAN BOYLAN

Good.

The men crowd around Sean Boylan and shake his hand.

They look at him expectantly.

Sean Boylan has a sparkle in his eye.

SEAN BOYLAN (CONT'D)

The Brits have called for a
ceasefire - and we've agreed!

The men look at each other with open mouths.

EAMONN

Seriously?

Sean Boylan nods with a big smile growing on his face.

SEAN BOYLAN

From noon today.

LIAM

Does... does that mean it's over?

SEAN BOYLAN

Yes. For now. But it's just a
ceasefire.

The men look at each other, confused.

EAMONN

Did we win?

Sean Boylan laughs out loud.

SEAN BOYLAN

I don't know!

The others begin to laugh.

SEAN BOYLAN (CONT'D)

But it means we can all go home!

The men hug and back-slap each other with delight.

EXT. GERAGHTY'S COTTAGE, JUL 1921 - DAY

Very early in the morning, a figure, silhouetted by the
misty, dawn light, hobbles down the lane.

Bridie stops feeding the chickens and worriedly runs into
the house.

An exhausted-looking Eamonn walks up to the door and tries to come in, but Annie appears and blocks his way. She folds her arms and looks at him sternly from the doorway.

ANNIE

And where on earth have you been hiding Eamonn Geraghty? We've been frantic with worry over you!

EAMONN

Annie? What are you doing here?

ANNIE

Don't change the subject!

EAMONN

I can't tell you - and since when has it been your business anyway?

ANNIE

Well that's a fine start, I must say - if I'm to be your wife! I'll not have you keeping secrets from me now, Eamonn Geraghty!

Eamonn looks confused. Annie's expression slowly changes as she lets her mask slip.

They both laugh.

EAMONN

Do you mean it?

ANNIE

If you'll still have me...

EAMONN

Of course I will! What made you change your mind?

ANNIE

I'm a woman - it's my prerogative. Anyway, your mother keeps going on about us getting married...

EAMONN

Does she know you're with child?

Annie checks no-one else is listening, then looks down as she rubs her belly.

ANNIE

It's getting obvious - but she's not said anything. She thinks you're the father for sure.

EAMONN

Don't you tell her otherwise, now
- do you hear?

ANNIE

Eamonn, I hate lying to her.

EAMONN

It would break her heart if she
knew.

Annie nods.

Eamonn embraces her and spins her round. They kiss.

Annie pushes away and looks Eamon in the eyes.

ANNIE

But I have one condition, mind.

Jane appears behind Annie, smiling broadly.

JANE

You're back!

EAMONN

For as long as the ceasefire
holds.

JANE

Come here!

Eamonn and his mother embrace.

JANE (CONT'D)

Let's get you some breakfast!

Eamonn enters and the door shuts.

EXT. MAIN STREET OF TRIM, JUL 1921 - DAY

A column of Black & Tans and auxiliaries drives through
the town.

The townspeople jeer at them.

CROWD

Piss off you murdering divils!
Good riddance! Don't come back!
You wicked heathens!
Burn in Hell you Sassenach
bastards!
Long live Ireland!
Don't be getting seasick on the
boat home now lads!

The crowd throw vegetables and stones at the lorries.

Those in the lorries look murderous but they do nothing.

The convoy passes Eamonn and Annie.

Eamonn puts his arm around Annie's shoulder as they watch.

EAMONN

They're on the ropes, Annie.
Look at them running away. Soon
we'll beat them back across the
water.

The convoy drives off into the sunset.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE CHURCH, KILDALKEY, JUL 1921 - DAY

Eamonn and an obviously pregnant Annie emerge from the church to a shower of confetti.

They kiss and the on-looking crowd cheers.

Father Joseph stands behind them in his vestments, looking nervously around.

Jane wipes away a tear and smiles. She takes Eamon and Annie's hands in her own and kisses both of them on the cheek.

EXT. GERAGHTY'S COTTAGE, JAN 1922 - DAY

Sean Boylan, dressed in Free State Army uniform, knocks on the door. Annie, holding her baby, answers.

SEAN BOYLAN

Good morning, Annie. I just
popped round to offer you both my
congratulations. Would you mind
if I borrow Eamonn for a second?

ANNIE

I'll go and get him for you.

Annie disappears into the house as Eamonn comes to the door. She worriedly looks over her shoulder.

EAMONN

Oh, howaya there Sean. What can
I do for you?

SEAN BOYLAN

Eamonn, I'm sure you've heard
there's plenty of opposition to
the Treaty?

EAMONN

Yes?

SEAN BOYLAN

There's even talk of civil war.

EAMONN

I know.

SEAN BOYLAN

We have to be ready, Eamonn. I've been asked to form a Meath Division of the Army of the Provisional Government. It's my intention to bring everyone from the Meath IRA over. There's a place for you - if you want it. It'll be steady pay. Will you join me?

EAMONN

I'm sorry Sean, but... my fighting days are over. You know I'll support you - but I've made up my mind. I've finished the job I set out to do. Besides, I'm a married man now, with a child to support - and I made a promise to Annie.

SEAN BOYLAN

A promise?

EAMONN

A promise not to fight any more.

Sean Boylan nods.

SEAN BOYLAN

I understand Eamonn. What will you do?

EAMONN

I'm going to apply for some land - start a little farm of my own.

SEAN BOYLAN

Well good luck to you then. It's been a pleasure, Eamonn.

He offers Eamonn his hand. Eamonn takes it.

SEAN BOYLAN (CONT'D)

If you ever change your mind...

EAMONN

Thanks Sean. I'm sure I'll see you around.

Annie reappears and places her arm around Eamonn's waist. She leans her head on him affectionately as Eamonn closes the door.

Sean Boylan smiles to himself and walks off.

He walks up the road and politely salutes Jane, who is walking back home with Bridie and Jack.

SEAN BOYLAN
Morning missus Geraghty, Bridie,
Jack.

Jane stops and looks around at him in total surprise.

JANE
Don't you look smart, Sean
Boylan, in your fancy new
uniform!

Sean Boylan smiles and walks on. He nods to a passing POSTMAN on a bicycle.

The postman pulls-up next to Jane and gives her a small, heavy package in an envelope marked "On His Majesty's Service".

She opens it. Inside is a brown card square containing Christy's bronze Death Plaque.

Jane traces her fingers over the name Christopher Geraghty and reads the plaque.

JANE
(quietly)
"He died for Freedom and Honour"

Jane smiles to herself and holds the plaque to her heart.

She begins to weep.

BRIDIE
What is it mammy?

JANE
It's Christy's - to help us
remember him.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. EAMONN'S KITCHEN, 1957 - DAY

Eamonn and the Interviewing Officer sit at the table.

EAMONN
So that's it. That's my story.

Eamonn leans back in his chair.

The Interviewing Officer sits there in silence, stroking his lower lip.

He leans forward and switches off the tape recorder.

INTERVIEWING OFFICER
Thanks very much mister Geraghty.

EAMONN
Do you want another cup of tea?

INTERVIEWING OFFICER
No - I'm grand thanks. I'll be off in a minute.

He gathers-up his papers and puts them back in his briefcase.

He stops and looks at Eamonn curiously.

INTERVIEWING OFFICER
So you stayed out of the Civil War entirely. Took no part in it?

EAMONN
I stayed well out of it. I mean, I had a wife and family. I had a farm to run. And I'd had enough of fighting by then. The British were gone - I was happy. Sure I wasn't ecstatic with the treaty - but it as a start.

INTERVIEWING OFFICER
And do you think it was all worth it?

EAMONN
Wait there...

Eamonn leaves the room for a second, then returns with a bronze disk and places it on the table in front of the interviewing officer.

EAMONN
Was it worth it? Yes it was. We gained our country - but at what cost? You're here now to record the memories of the people who fought against the British in the name of Irish freedom. That's fine - but did you know that two hundred thousand Irishmen, just like my brother, joined the British Army in the Great War.

INTERVIEWING OFFICER
I didn't know that.

EAMONN
They thought they were fighting
for Irish freedom too. Over
thirty thousand brave Irishmen
died fighting for the British.
That's ten times the number of
people who died in the War of
Independence and the Civil War
put together. Who remembers
those men now?

The Interviewing Officer shrugs.

EAMONN (CONT'D)
I fought against the British
because I love my country. But
so did my brother. Every day I
say a prayer for him. I shed a
tear and think how sorry I am
that I never told him I loved
him.

The interviewing officer picks up the plaque and examines
it.

FADE OUT

THE END