New Washington

1. Those Below

By
Asa O'Leary

asagip@gmail.com
FADE IN:

EXT. DECK - STANLEY’S BOAT - SEA - NIGHT

A 15 metre long fishing trawler bobs on the choppy waters.

Bulging fifteen stone STANLEY (70s) ascends some stairs and goes to the moonlit bulwark.

He wears a black pea coat with gold cuffs, decorated with many medals, over a white shirt and tie.

He raises an old spyglass to his comparatively young eye.

THROUGH THE SPYGLASS: A big white castle on a hill’s summit.

A figure ascends the stairs in the gloom behind him.

Stanley lowers the glass and looks back into the face of a MARINE (30s) as he joins him at the bulwark.

The marine wears green camouflage and a green beret.

Stanley hands him the glass.

EXT. CASTLE - NIGHT

The Norman castle, situated atop and on the edge of a cliff, has been converted into a manor house.

The beach and sea can be descried a mile or so ahead.

What lies at the bottom of the cliff, between the beach and the castle, the camera shows not.

The castle’s rear side, the side facing the sea, has five large windows, upstairs and downstairs – the upper-middle being an oriel window.

A turret with arrow loops, twice as tall as any other part of the building, rises to prominence from the east wing. It flies the British flag.

TURRET

JOHN (65) and ALEXANDRINA (37) stand at a crenel [gap] in the battlements [parapet with gaps].

Ash blonde Alexandrina is full-figured and ripe-lipped. Winterhalter would have been glad to paint her.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

She tucks a stray piece of hair behind her ear. In doing so she gives us the chance to admire a diamond wedding ring.

JOHN
You see all those lights?

John points down, towards the bottom of the cliff.

He, overweight and ruddy, a heavy opal ring on his little finger, smooths back the hair of his white club wig - it has two curls on each side and a pigtail in the back. We will never see him without this wig.

Alexandrina leans forward and peers over the crenel.

ALEXANDRINA’S POV - ENCLOSURE:

An enclosure contains mobile homes big and small; this strange hamlet contains 100 dwellings judging by the lights.

The same amount of land again lies unoccupied to the east.

These two spaces are enclosed as one by a tall chain link fence topped with barbed wire.

Beyond this fence, on all four sides, are tall fir trees.

A narrow road winds through the trees to the enclosure’s entrance - one big gate, currently open.

Alexandrina’s speaks like a Windsor princess.

ALEXANDRINA
Yes?

JOHN (O.S.)
I own them all.

A taxi stops outside the caravan yard’s entrance and DELIA and BETH (both 20), no bigger than bugs from this vantage point, get out and walk across the yard.

ALEXANDRINA (O.S.)
What do you mean?

Alexandrina’s gaze follows the girls’ figures.

JOHN (O.S.)
Well, I’m their landlord. Every one of them gives me rent.

The girls step into a small, black caravan.

(CONTINUED)
Alexandrina turns her attention to John, who scowls at the lights below.

JOHN
Get in your little hut and stay there for the rest of your little lives!

John picks up a champagne bottle and pops the cork over the edge of the turret.

It plummets into the darkness below.

ALEXANDRINA
I’d rather die than live in one of those horrible things.

JOHN
Last month they all got together and said they’d leave if I raise rents.

ALEXANDRINA
Diabolical! What did you do?

JOHN
(gloomily)
I didn’t raise rents.

Alexandrina rubs his bicep as he glares at the lights.

JOHN (CONT’D)
But I’ll tell you something, I’ll have my revenge.

He points at the beach (beyond the enclosure).

ALEXANDRINA’S POV – BEACH:

One can make out Stanley’s ship, through the tops of the trees, docked at an otherwise unoccupied jetty.

JOHN (O.S.)
Lifelong disgrace to me if I let those chavs beat me in a battle of wits!

John pours some champagne for them and raises his glass.

JOHN
To those below.

(CONTINUED)
ALEXANDRINA
(confused)
To those below.

INT. LOUNGE/KITCHEN – ROBBIE’S CARAVAN – NIGHT

Cardboard boxes, with either "MUM" or "DAD" scrawled across their sides, are scattered about the place.

On the windowsill is a framed photo of a couple, KEITH and FLORENCE (both 60s), making the lens the object of benign interest.

Next to the photo are some dead white roses.

The room shakes as the door receives a resounding THUMP from outside. A manly GRUNT follows.

ROBBIE (O.S.)
I told him to leave this chuffin’ door open! Hold on.

There is a JINGLING of keys. The door flies open.

ROBBIE (30s) stands in the doorway with tiny Lucy (25) in his arms.

Their attire betrays the events of the day – the bride’s dress is faded by time rather than design.

Robbie steps over the threshold and Lucy HITS her head against the door frame; he notices not.

The bulky husband is a young giant, the top of his shaved head reaches six feet six inches.

He puts down his wife and she rearranges her dress.

She exchanges a tender look with Florence’s photo.

ROBBIE
(pointing at the boxes)
A bloke’s coming for them tomorrow.

LUCY
Where are they off?

ROBBIE
Car boot – but as far as our Chris’s concerned they’re off charity.

He exits.
Lucy drops the dead roses into the bin.
She pauses at the window and narrows her eyes at something.
Robbie bursts back in with two suitcases in each hand.

LUCY
(pointing at the window)
I wonder who lives in that black one!

ROBBIE

Robbie opens the master bedroom door, at the far end of the caravan, and presents its contents to Lucy:

MASTER BEDROOM
Lucy steps inside and examines the old-fashioned double bed, which fills the entire room.

ROBBIE
I put that telly in there for her birthday. She paid me for it an’ all.

He suddenly picks up Lucy and throws her onto the bed.

She looks flustered in a good way.

Filling the doorway, he stares at her exposed thighs like a man possessed.

INT. HALLWAY – CASTLE – NIGHT
Against the wall are oblong fish tanks, containing colourful and tiny creatures, that reach the ceiling. Not an inch of the corridor’s parallel side walls are exposed.

ALEXANDRINA (37) walks down the corridor and through an archway at its end.

HALLWAY 2
Alexandrina taps gently on a closed door.

(CONTINUED)
ALEXANDRINA
Albert-dear?

She waits, and gets no reply.

ALEXANDRINA
Would you like to talk to me?

She scowls at the door.

ALEXANDRINA
I’m not cross with you.

She waits for a few seconds before going away.

LOUNGE

The room is oval-shaped. It has sofas against the walls that follow their curvature exactly.

Above the curved fire is a curved portrait of GEORGE WASHINGTON.

John stands before fire and portrait.

Custard blonde and pale HENRIETTA (17) stands behind him.

A flat, curved television screen shows a video of the castle grounds’ fortified gateway.

HENRIETTA
And when will she get here?

JOHN
Five in the morning. Your uncle’s docked already, though. You’ll see him when he comes over later.

John sips his champagne.

HENRIETTA
Dad?

JOHN
Mm?

HENRIETTA
Go talk to Albert.

John SNORTS contemptuously.
HENRIETTA (CONT’D)

Please!

JOHN
After that performance? No chance!

HENRIETTA
It’d mean a lot to him. Can’t you see?

JOHN
Why should I see?

HENRIETTA
He’s tired and upset.

JOHN
I’m tired and upset. Stop mithering me.

John sees Alexandrina come in.

JOHN
Rina, I was just saying that you’ll meet my eldest, Lily, tomorrow.

ALEXANDRINA
Really?

JOHN
Mhmm. She just rang to say she’s set sail from Rotterdam. Bringing some things over for me, you see. Weather’s been a bit unpredictable lately.

John gets on all fours and stokes the fire’s embers.

He glances at Alexandrina. She sips pensively from an emerald-encrusted champagne flute.

JOHN
Nice anklet.

ALEXANDRINA
He won’t talk to me.

JOHN
Teenagers for you.

HENRIETTA
He’s twenty-two!

(CONTINUED)
JOHN
Well, he should act like it, then.

John fixes his gaze on Alexandrina’s anklet, now at eye level, as she settles into the sofa.

JOHN
(to Henrietta)
Pass me the champagne.

Henrietta picks up an empty champagne bottle.

HENRIETTA
No more left.

JOHN
Then get another bottle!

HENRIETTA
Which bottle?

JOHN
I don’t know!

John resumes his inspection of the anklet.

JOHN
Just make sure it’s not one of the old ones...

Henrietta leaves the room.

John crawls over to Alexandrina’s legs and stares into her eyes.

She forces a smile and then becomes contemplative.

ALEXANDRINA
Do you think the engagement’s just taken him by surprise? He’ll get used to it, surely?

JOHN
Mhm.

ALEXANDRINA
What things is Lily bringing over?

JOHN
Beer and cigarettes.

John kisses her shin over and over again.

(CONTINUED)
ALEXANDRINA
John! The kids! What if they see??

JOHN
(in between kisses)

John smooches her knees and then her thighs.

She keeps glancing anxiously between the door and John.

ALEXANDRINA
They’ll see! John!

JOHN
Hang them! They won’t understand what they’re seeing!

BATHROOM

ALBERT (22) sits on the edge of a jacuzzi with his face buried in his hands.

The occasional SNIFFLE escapes him.

Someone HAMMERS on the door.

HENRIETTA (O.S.)
Bert?

Albert looks up. The skin around his eyes appears sore.

ALBERT
Is it just you?

HENRIETTA (O.S.)
Yeah.

ALBERT
Hold on.

Albert splashes his face with water.

He lets her in. She carries a bottle of champagne.

ALBERT
I’m fine, look. Go tell them I’m coming.

HENRIETTA
What was all that about?

(CONTINUED)
ALBERT
He can do what he wants. It doesn’t bother me.

HENRIETTA
Is it her?

ALBERT
I wish that was all that’s bothering me. Hen, he’s unbearable.

HENRIETTA
He’s just wrapped up in this thing with the caravans. Come on, come make the peace.

LOUNGE

Alexandra stands before the fireplace, regarding the first president’s portrait.

John fidgets on the sofa, watching her.

ALEXANDRINA
Such a noble, sloping forehead.

JOHN
Yes, I know. Come sit down.

ALEXANDRINA
I wish I were related to someone this special.

JOHN
Yes, well, you will be, soon enough. Come back over here!

ALEXANDRINA
They’ll be back any minute. So, why didn’t he have any children?

JOHN
I don’t know but I can guess! Come sit down!

ALEXANDRINA
What was his brother’s name?

John SIGHS.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

JOHN
Samuel.

ALEXANDRINA
And when did your family come here?

Albert and Henrietta enter quietly.

JOHN
During the civil war, towards the back end.

Albert looks between his father and Alexandrina.

ALBERT
I’m sorry, Alexandrina. I’m sorry, dad. I didn’t mean what I said.

Henrietta passes John the bottle of champagne.

ALEXANDRINA
It’s okay. Already forgotten about isn’t it, John?

JOHN
Henrietta, pass me my glass.

Henrietta obeys.

JOHN
(pouring)
Why’d you say it then — if you didn’t mean it?

ALBERT
I don’t know, I...

Albert’s lip starts to quiver.

JOHN
You’re a grown man for God’s sake!

ALEXANDRINA
(to John)
Come on, don’t be cross. Let’s have a nice evening.

JOHN
Fine by me.

John pours Alexandrina a glass of champagne.

Albert gnaws his bottom lip, his blank eyes on the fire.

(CONTINUED)
JOHN
(to Albert)
You want a glass?

ALBERT
(mumbled)
No, thanks.

JOHN
Please yourself.

John takes a distracted and drawn out sip from his flute as Albert leaves.

GEORGE’S BEDROOM

A lonely, dusty garret (indicated by sloped wooden beams).

Certificates (marked with "TUC"), framed pictures of forgotten ceremonies, and medals decorate the wall.

GEORGE (90s) sits up in bed, his back against the headboard and his crown resting on a pillow.

He watches a small television, glassy-eyed.

Albert sits and reads in a window seat across the room.

A photo of their honoured ancestor is on the bedside table.

The two men sit in silence, their thoughts moving in their own respective spheres.

George suddenly GASPS and looks in Albert’s direction.

GEORGE
Hem, hem! Mr. Speaker!

ALBERT
What’s wrong?

George eyes widen as he stares at the window.

Albert turns and looks through the window.

ALBERT’S POV - THROUGH THE WINDOW - GROUNDS: A dark forest roof disturbed by powerful gusts, and a starless night sky
TURRET

John paces back and forth with his arms behind his back like Nelson on his deck.

His footsteps are unsteady; his head bobs up and down; he keeps stopping and narrowing his eyes at the enclosure.

He squats down and studies the white stone ground: some dandelions have flourished in a crevice. It being nighttime, they are closed.

He grimaces and drowns the weeds in champagne from the bottle.

He does not stop until the bottle is empty.

EXT. ENCLOSURE - NIGHT

Bony DAEGO DIEGO (70s) walks at a slow pace. His walking stick, with a small crystal ball for a handle, sinks into the mud at intervals.

His dark skin is drawn tight on his face.

There are bits of scrap metal and household waste everywhere. He bats away a paper bag with his stick.

A grimy caravan across the yard wiggles on its axle like jelly.

The faint sound of CHUCKLING echoes from above.

JOHN (O.S.)
(yelling)
Tiny! You are tiny!

Daego stops and looks up at the WHITE CASTLE on the cliff.

DAEGO DIEGO
(softly)
Maybe to you.

INT. LOUNGE/KITCHEN - DAEGO’S CARAVAN - NIGHT

Beth monitors and stirs two bubbling pans.

A shower RUNS behind a closed door.

Beth goes to the sink and fills the kettle.

(CONTINUED)
A girlish SCREAM and then a CRASH comes from behind the closed door.

The shower STOPS RUNNING.

    BETH
    Sorry!

    DELIA (O.S.)
    (calling)
    What did I say about the hot tap?

    BETH
    I know. I forgot, sorry.

EXT. TURRET – CASTLE – NIGHT

John stands on a step ladder and urinates over the edge of the turret.

INT. LOUNGE/KITCHEN – DAEGO’S CARAVAN – NIGHT

Daego enters and removes his fingerless gloves.

    BETH
    Tea’ll be ready soon.

His boots are caked in wet mud and leave brown prints.

    DAEGO DIEGO
    Hiya, love.

He takes off his boots.

The closed door opens.

    DELIA (O.S.)
    Shut that door!

Delia comes forth, wet and in a dressing gown.

Daego closes the door.

The girls are evidently identical twins. They both have voluminous black curly hair.

    DAEGO DIEGO
    (to Delia)
    What’s wrong with you?

(CONTINUED)
DELIA
Beth made the water go cold.

Daego CHUCKLES heartily, stifling a series of COUGHS.

Delia SNEERS and goes into the bedroom, sliding the door nearly shut. Now and again unidentifiable parts of her body become momentarily visible through the chink there created.

BETH
We’ll do it to you next time you’re in there, see if you like it!

DAEGO DIEGO
(triumphantly)
I have baths.

BETH
Not judging by the colour of your hands.

Daego wanders over to a white rabbit, HATTY, unwinding in her cage with a bit of straw between her teeth.

DAEGO DIEGO
Hiya, Hatty. Ya little bugger. Yes, yes.

Daego turns to Beth.

DAEGO DIEGO
I have a wash every Sunday whether I need one or not.

Daego bends to scratch behind Hatty’s ears.

DAEGO DIEGO
You’re a little bugger, aren’t ya? Yes, yes. Bugger.

Daego examines his grubby fingers.

DAEGO DIEGO
It’s getting the kit together that’s done this. Doesn’t half get mucky.

Daego turns his attention to Delia’s door.

DAEGO DIEGO
Where you off, anyway?
DELIA (O.S.)
Nowhere special.

DAEGO DIEGO
(affecting boredom)
What’s his name?

No answer.

DAEGO DIEGO
(to Beth)
You know owt?

BETH
No, she won’t tell me anything. But - I’ve got a feeling that he’s coming tomorrow, and been told to stay anonymous.

DAEGO DIEGO
Ooh-eye, could be.

DELIA (O.S.)
I can hear you! Listen, which do you prefer...

Delia emerges in a short dress and a pair of heels, carrying another pair of heels.

DELIA (CONT’D)
These...

Delia stands and twists her ankle back and forth.

DELIA (CONT’D)
or these?

Delia changes her shoes and repeats the action.

BETH
The first ones, definitely the first ones.

DELIA
Granddad?

DAEGO DIEGO
Trousers, definitely trousers.

Delia sticks out her tongue at her granddad and goes back into her room.

(CONTINUED)
DAEGO DIEGO
It’s threatening rain, you daft sod!

EXT. ENCLOSURE - NIGHT

A decaying car pulls up outside a tiny pop top caravan.

Skeletal SUSAN (50s) gets out and closes the door. She wears smart office clothes.

Again, a faint CHUCKLE reverberates through the yard, followed by -

    JOHN (O.S.)
    (yelling)
    Nice car!

Susan casts an anxious glance upwards and then hastens inside her pop top.

INT. LOUNGE/KITCHEN - ROBBIE’S CARAVAN - NIGHT

A small, inane DOG zooms about the place, YAPPING incessantly. It crashes into a box marked "DAD".

    ROBBIE
    I’ve got it.

    LUCY
    Mm?

    ROBBIE
    Why don’t we name him after mi dad?

    LUCY
    ... Keith?

Robbie picks up the dog, cradling it like a baby.

    ROBBIE
    Keith... Yeah, he looks like a Keith. Doesn’t he?

    LUCY
    Don’t forget to sign on on Monday, will you? Otherwise we won’t be able to feed him.
ROBBIE
   (rocking Keith)
   Yeah...

EXT. ENCLOSURE - NIGHT

Robbie exits his caravan with a full bin bag and tosses it in a dustbin.

   JOHN (O.S.)
   (yelling)
   Get back in your box! Ha-ha-ha!

Robbie looks up at the white castle.

   ROBBIE
   (yelling)
   Shut the fuck up!

John HOWLS with LAUGHTER as Robbie re-enters his dwelling.

INT. SUSAN’S POP TOP - NIGHT

A car’s RUNNING ENGINE can be heard outside.

The car’s horn BEEPS.

The one-room dwelling contains a bed, mini fridge, several novels, and a set of plastic drawers.

Susan turns off a lamp and gets under the covers.

There is a KNOCK at the door.

Susan sits up and moves to the door, anxious.

EXT. ENCLOSURE - NIGHT

Susan opens her door.

A BALD MAN (60s) with a venerable moustache points at the taxi behind him.

   TAXI DRIVER
   You ordered a taxi, love?

   SUSAN
   No?

A LAUGH echoes from above.

(CONTINUED)
JOHN (O.S.)
(yelling)
Nice pajamas!

INT. ALBERT’S BEDROOM – CASTLE – NIGHT

Albert WEEP into his pillow.
The faint sound of John LAUGHING on the turret can be heard.

FADE TO:

EXT. BEACH – SUNRISE

TWO SOLDIERS in uniforms that do not match walk beside the sea.

AUBREY (20s) wears desert camouflage while STEVE (50s) wears green camouflage. The uniforms’ designs also differ.

In the distance, behind the soldiers, is the jetty - the docked boat.

Steve holds a mobile phone aloft and squints at its screen.

STEVE
Come on! Bleedin’ thing.

AUBREY
That’s the problem, though, mate. She just won’t have it. I’ve said sorry, what more can I do?

STEVE
How long’s it been?

AUBREY
Three weeks since she went to her mum’s.

Steve GRUNTS and lowers the phone in defeat.

STEVE
 Doesn’t sound like you were right happy.

AUBREY
I s’pose you’re right. Ever since we got engaged it were arguments day in, day out.

(CONTINUED)
STEVE
You rushed into it.

AUBREY
Maybe I did. See the --

A faint high-pitched WAIL stops them both.

STEVE
The bleedin’ hell did it come from?

The brave soldiers hear another WAIL and both fix their eyes on the unsettled ocean.

A boat rides the waves 500 metres out to sea.

Once again, a WAIL drifts over on the wind.

Steve reaches into his bag and retrieves some binoculars.

He levels them over the sea. Aubrey glances impatiently between his companion’s face and the sea.

AUBREY
Well?

STEVE
She’s in the water.

AUBREY
Near the boat?

Steve gives Aubrey the binoculars.

STEVE
More to the right.

AUBREY
Okay, what do we do?

STEVE
I dunno! Wind’s against us, water’s pretty wild...

AUBREY
Can you swim?

STEVE
No, you?

Aubrey shakes his head as another WAIL reaches them.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

STEVE
Let’s go back.

Steve sets off in the direction of the jetty.

AUBREY
To wake the boys?

STEVE
Listen, lad. Nobody’s seen us, have they?

AUBREY
Well, no? But --

STEVE
No, they’re all asleep. What if we just go get back in bed?

AUBREY
And let her drown!?

STEVE
I know, I know. And it breaks my heart to say it, it really does.
But we can’t do nothing! She’s got no chance, either way.

AUBREY
We have to try!

STEVE
Think about it: if she dies - which she will - you could get ten years,
my son! Or you could die an’ all! Think of your little baby.
You don’t want her to grow up without a dad, do ya? Because
that’s what’ll happen, I’m telling you.

Steve carries on walking towards the jetty.

Aubrey watches the boat as it rides a great wave.

This evidently prompts Aubrey to catch up with his fellow warrior, and they hasten towards the jetty side-by-side.

FADE TO:
EXT. TURRET - CASTLE - DAY

John runs his palm along an artillery cannon that is probably familiar with Belgian winters.

The cannon is pointed skyward, in the direction of the enclosure, and takes up most of the floorspace.

Stanley narrows his eyes on the sea.

    JOHN
    What’s the matter?

Stanley raises his spyglass and bends it on the sea.

John rubs the cannon while absent-mindedly watching Stanley.

THROUGH THE SPYGLASS - SEA: The boat Aubrey and Steve saw earlier still rides the waves.

    STANLEY
    Lilieth’s ship is further away than it was ten minutes ago.

    JOHN
    (uneasily)
    Perhaps they were rocked to sleep by the waves.

INT. DINING ROOM - CASTLE - DAY

Albert and Henrietta have breakfast together at the table.

Henrietta pours a sullen-looking Albert some coffee.

    HENRIETTA
    You look washed out. Are you okay?

    ALBERT
    Didn’t get much sleep.

    HENRIETTA
    Thinking about tomorrow?

    ALBERT
    No, dad was yelling stuff at the caravans again.

Alexandrina, with flushed cheeks, enters in riding gear (breeches and boots).

(CONTINUED)
ALEXANDRINA
It’s mornings like this that make me wish we had some game to pick off. Where’s your father?

ALBERT (gloomily)
On the turret with uncle Stan, inspecting the cannon.

HENRIETTA (to Alexandrina)
He’s having doubts about tomorrow.

ALEXANDRINA
Doubts about tomorrow?

Alexandrina grips and then rubs Albert’s shoulder.

ALEXANDRINA (CONT’D)
What doubts?

Albert looks disconcerted by her touch.

HENRIETTA
He doesn’t think the tenants will like it.

ALBERT
And what if someone gets hurt?

ALEXANDRINA
Nobody’s going to get hurt. You heard your dad, it’s going to be bloodless.

HENRIETTA (to Alexandrina)
I don’t know what’s wrong with him. He used to worship Trotsky...

ALEXANDRINA (to Albert)
You can watch from the turret if you want. You don’t have to be there.

ALBERT
Mmm.

ALEXANDRINA
Right, I’m going to go see this cannon!
Albert ruminates over a raspberry.

**EXT. ROWING BOAT - SEA - DAY**

Aubrey moves the oars, their blades cleave the water.

John and Stanley sit together at the back of the boat. They keep their eyes on Lily’s boat, 30 metres ahead.

STANLEY
The sails are all twisted.

John and Stanley share a concerned glance.

Aubrey glances back at the boat and takes a deep, shaky breath.

Lily’s ship is a medium-sized merchant vessel, with "HENRY HUDSON: BOOTVERHUURDERS [BOAT RENTAL]" on its side.

JOHN
Lily!

The silent ship bobs on a wave.

JOHN (CONT’D)
Bram!

Aubrey turns to Stanley.

AUBREY
Bram, sir?

STANLEY
Her husband.

Aubrey looks behind his shoulder uneasily.

**DECK - LILY’S BOAT - SEA**

A deck in disarray: broken rope hangs from the twisted and ripped sails, on the floor lay many bits of splintered wood.

John and Stanley climb aboard via the ladder.

John goes to the wheelhouse and pokes his head inside.

Stanley picks up a miniature spyglass.

John goes down some stairs (that lead to the cabin) and then comes straight back up again.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

JOHN
No-one.

STANLEY
Could be pirates.

JOHN
Could be. But my cigarettes and beer are still here.

STANLEY
I’ll get the boys to tow it. Should we alert the coastguard?

JOHN
We’ll wait and see.

INT. EAST SANDS THEATRE - DAY

The theatre was built in the Victorian period. It contains the gallery, first circle, balcony, and then stalls; crimson stage curtains are currently together.

The AUDIENCE consists of about a hundred people, occupying the balcony and stalls only.

The curtains part to reveal:

Daego wearing a yellow cape, black top hat, and bow tie. His face is painted all white, no inch of skin is visible.

He stands next to a metre-high raised platform - with three steps on either side - on top of which, facing the audience, is a chair.

The audience APPLAUDS.

DAEGO DIEGO
Do we have a volunteer?

Several audience members raise their hands.

DAEGO DIEGO
(pointing)
You, the young lady in sky blue.

Beth comes onto the stage to APPLAUSE.

DAEGO DIEGO
What’s your name, young lady?

(CONTINUED)
BETH

Fiona.

DAEGO DIEGO

If you would like to just step up there, Fiona.

Beth climbs the stairs and sits on the chair.

DAEGO DIEGO

You are about to see one of the most famous illusions in magic - the de Kolta chair! Prepare to be astounded when I make this sweet young girl... disappear.

Daego drapes a large sheet over Beth and the chair. He lowers the sheet to reveal Beth above the shoulders. He drapes the sheet over her again - the crown of her head bulges out from under the sheet. He orbits the chair, moving his arms like swimming eels. He stops suddenly, yanks off the sheet, and...

The chair is empty.

The audience GASPS and APPLAUDS.

Daego takes a slow, creaky bow and sits on the chair. He points to the back of the room.

The audience turn their heads:

Delia, dressed and looking exactly the same as Beth did, looks around in confusion.

The audience APPLAUDS.

But, wait! SOMEONE watches from the gallery.

UNKNOWN SPECTATOR’S POV:

They watch, as do we, as Delia walks over to the stage. She gets onto the stage, soaking up the APPLAUSE, and bows to the audience. She glances up at the lonely figure in the gallery and blushes.

Daego follows her gaze.

(CONTINUED)
There stands an applauding Albert!

Albert sees that he has been noticed by Daego and recedes into the darkness.

Daego bears his yellow, crooked teeth in a grin.

**EXT. BEACH – DAY**

John, Stanley, and Aubrey the oarsman reach the jetty and Stanley’s boat.

John points at something on the beach (roughly where Aubrey and Steve made their choice).

The tide washes over the thing, not discernible from this perspective.

Stanley jumps from the boat.

John follows with less urgency.

They swim until the water reaches their waists.

Stanley stumbles and falls but gets back up and carries on.

Aubrey watches Stanley reach the thing.

Stanley puts his hand to his mouth and falls to his knees.

John reaches the thing and Stanley, impassive. He calmly motions for Aubrey to go get the soldiers.

    **AUBREY**
    Oh, God!

Aubrey WEEPES.

**INT. LOUNGE – CASTLE – DAY**

Henrietta snoozes on the sofa.

She rolls over and opens her eyes.

She looks at the clock, which reads: "14:25".

Her gaze drifts to the window – which looks out onto the garden.

**HENRIETTA’S POV – THROUGH THE WINDOW – GARDEN:** Albert and Alexandrina, in deep discussion, are walking together.
Henrietta closes her eyes and rolls back over.

EXT. BEACH – DAY

A circle, comprised of John and Stanley and THIRTY SOLDIERS, has formed on the beach.

Each soldier’s attire differs, significantly (colour/style) or slightly (hat, boots, equipment), from the next:

EIGHT YOUNG SOLDIERS (20-30), including Aubrey, wear desert camouflage.

FIVE MIDDLE-AGED SOLDIERS (30-55), including Steve, wear dark green camouflage.

FIVE MARINES (20-55), including the marine with whom we are familiar, wear green berets with different uniforms: one light blue, three variations of green, and one black.

The rest wear a selection of uniforms that I will not describe for brevity’s sake.

The crucial point is that all the soldiers’ uniforms were worn by British forces, on land or at sea, at some point in the past thirty-five years.

In the middle of their circle is an object, five feet long, that bulges under a white sheet, an object at which every man stares.

Most of the men have tears in their eyes – John does not.

Steve avoids Aubrey’s eyes.

FADE TO:

INT. LOUNGE – CASTLE – NIGHT

The great ancestor’s painted eyes watch on from the wall.

Stanley and Henrietta sit together, their eyes red, their complexions wan.

Henrietta holds a phone to her ear.

HENRIETTA

No answer.

She puts the phone down.

(CONTINUED)
STANLEY
Where could he be?

HENRIETTA
I don’t know. He’s been going off a lot lately. Could be at his friend Edmund’s. I don’t know. Oh, Uncle!

Henrietta buries her face in the breast of Stanley’s pea coat and WEEPS.

STANLEY
I know.

MASTER BEDROOM

Alexandrina sits at a dressing table before the oriel window.

She removes a sizeable coil of blonde hair from her crown.

John watches her from the bed.

JOHN
I didn’t know about that. You little trickster.

Alexandrina GIGGLES.

ALEXANDRINA
It’s hardly a wig, is it?

JOHN
True.

John’s eyes are drawn to her calves.

ALEXANDRINA
What about her husband? Are they looking for him?

JOHN
Probably.

ALEXANDRINA
And Albert?

JOHN
He can please himself.

John glares at her anklet as she applies cream to her face.

(CONTINUED)
JOHN (CONT’D)
As soon as you’ve done, get over here.

ALEXANDRINA
Now, dear? Really? Can’t you wait till the morning?

JOHN
No. We’re rising early.

ALEXANDRINA
Ha-ha! I don’t have a choice then?

JOHN
There’s never a choice.

EXT. TURRET – CASTLE – NIGHT
Stanley closes his eyes and puts his forehead on the cannon.

FADE TO:

EXT. ENCLOSURE – SUNRISE
A small bird hops from caravan to caravan, rejoicing in the total silence.

The sound of TIRES on DIRT gets steadily louder, until –

Two big armoured trucks drive through the entrance gate.

The small bird flies away in alarm.

The soldiers, still dressed in uniforms from their own wardrobes, file out of the trucks’ rears carrying rifles.

They wait in silence by the trucks.

Before long, a gold open top jeep drives through the gate and comes to halt slightly ahead of the trucks.

In the jeep sits John, Alexandrina, Henrietta, and, hands on the wheel, Stanley.

John channels Monopoly’s Rich Uncle Pennybags: he wears a top hat, a white shirt, a red bow tie, and a black suit.

Alexandrina and Henrietta sizzle in award ceremony dresses.

The Washingtons climb out of the vehicle.

(CONTINUED)
JOHN (V.O.)
Let’s say you rent a car and I buy a car. The exact same car.

Two soldiers carefully close the gates. After this they stand guarding them.

JOHN (V.O.)
After a year, which car will have had better care taken of it? Which one will be in better shape? Yours or mine?

Another pair of soldiers plunge a tall pole – with a limp unidentifiable flag at its base – deep into the mud.

JOHN (V.O.)
It will, obviously, be mine. The car that was bought and not rented.

John gives Stanley a rapid glance.

Stanley nods at the soldiers and they instantly disperse.

JOHN (V.O.)
The point is: you take better care of things when you own them.

Each soldier POUNDS on a different caravan door.

John gives Alexandrina’s backside a surprise pinch, she YELPS and GIGGLES.

Stanley grabs hold of sombre-looking Henrietta’s hand.

FADE TO:

A huge mound, consisting of mobile phones, internet routers, and laptops, has formed next to the trucks.

JOHN (V.O.)
Up until now, you have been rented by the capitalist system. Your bosses have not taken care of you because you are not their capital.

The Washingtons stand in front of the pile.

Soldiers move all around them, adding items to the pile.

JOHN (V.O.)
They treat you as tools. They can throw you away and replace you.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

JOHN (V.O.) (cont’d)
Just like you can rent another car when your lease ends.

They face a crowd of 200 bedraggled RESIDENTS.

The residents, many of whom wear pyjamas, look around with confused faces and MURMUR to one other.

John’s hand encircles Alexandrina’s waist. They face the residents like a celebrity couple posing for the cameras on the red carpet.

JOHN (V.O.)
You were always subjects. You always will be subjects.

CUT TO:

John speaks from a lectern in front of the flag pole.

The residents sit on an assortment of domestic chairs, forming an audience.

JOHN (V.O.)
But from now on you will be treated better. You will have the dignity that wage slavery denies you.

A soldier starts to raise the flag by way of a pulley.

Residents give the perimeter of armed soldiers furtive glances.

JOHN (V.O.)
Dear little people. Welcome to a new and honest way of doing things.

John watches the flag unfurl and wave as the wind takes it.

[See title page] It is dark blue with a yellow "X" cross [like the saltire’s]. The bottom portion of the "X", between the legs, so to speak, is coloured green instead of dark blue. On the green’s "peak" sits a small white turret.

JOHN (V.O.)
Welcome to New Washington!

Alexandrina notices Daego, and then Delia and Beth.

Daego notices her interest and gives her a menacing smile.

Alexandrina looks elsewhere.
EXT. TURRET - DAY

There has been great deal of progress in New Washington:

Instead of mobile homes there are five rows of ten half-completed, back-to-back, two-storey terraced houses.

Ten huge, long tents are pitched on the soon-to-be network of streets (the avenues of mud between the terraced houses).

So, it goes houses, tent, houses, tent, and so on.

To the east, in the formerly barren zone, are several large half-constructed buildings.

The fence has been replaced by an unscalable stone wall.

INT. ALBERT’S ROOM - CASTLE - DAY

Pale and impassive Henrietta sits on Albert’s made bed.

CUT TO:

She goes through coat pockets and drawers.

CUT TO:

She removes something from the bedside table’s drawer.

She wipes away tears so that she can read the text of...

A ticket: "EAST SANDS THEATRE: VARIETY SHOW -- 19.05.16."

FADE TO:

INT. HALLWAY 3 - CASTLE - NIGHT

Henrietta crosses to an ajar curved [lounge] door.

She raises her hand to push it when a voice stops her -

ALEXANDRINA (O.S.)
John! What if Henrietta sees?

JOHN (O.S.)
She’s at oboe practice, I think. Or was that Albert’s thing?

(CONTINUED)
ALEXANDRINA (O.S.)
Just imagine, this time in two weeks I’ll be a Washington!

JOHN (O.S.)
Yes, splendid. You have very nice thighs.

ALEXANDRINA (O.S.)
Do you think she wants to be a bridesmaid?

JOHN (O.S.)
Mm?

ALEXANDRINA (O.S.)
Henrietta.

JOHN (O.S.)
No-oo.

ALEXANDRINA (O.S.)
Really?

JOHN (O.S.)
Ye-es.

ALEXANDRINA (O.S.)
Oh, John! I’ve pressured the poor girl, haven’t I?

JOHN (O.S.)
I’ll be honest, love. I don’t know what we’re talking about. Not a clue.

ALEXANDRINA (O.S.)
Oh, you are useless.

Henrietta walks away from the door.

ALEXANDRINA (O.S.) (CONT’D)
Do you think Henrietta doesn’t mind having to be a bridesmaid?

JOHN (O.S.)
Oh, right. I don’t know, ask her.
INT. TENT - ENCLOSURE - DAY

Twenty beds are arranged, like a hospital ward, into two rows, one on either side of the space.

Dozens of rugs have been laid over the grass and mud to form a makeshift carpet.

Daego, Beth, and Delia share a small sofa that faces an eighty inch television.

There are five unoccupied sofas behind their sofa.

Daego sleeps with his head lolling back and his mouth agape.

Hatty sleeps in his lap.

He CHOKES on a SNORE, looks around, and goes straight back to sleep.

Beth and Delia share a GIGGLE. They sip from Starbucks cups.

Susan sleeps in a bed; Lucy folds clothes on a double bed; and a rifle wielding Steve guards the tent’s entrance.

Robbie, with a jovial bop to his gait, appears at the entrance carrying a spade covered in wet mud.

Steve motions for him to leave the spade outside.

Robbie enters, removes his rigger boots, and goes to Lucy.

Keith follows on his heels, YAPPING incessantly.

ROBBIE
Good news! They’re building a pub!

LUCY
They never are!

ROBBIE
Yep. They’re naming it The Quiet Hunter.

Susan suddenly sits up in bed, scowling.

SUSAN
Shut that dog up!

ROBBIE
Sorry, Susan love. We’re not stopping.

Robbie picks up Keith and feeds him a dog biscuit.

(CONTINUED)
LUCY
You off back to work?

ROBBIE
No, they’ve got me and you a McDonald’s in the canteen. A reward for all my hard graft.

Lucy turns to Robbie with a face full of wonder.

LUCY
A free house, a free apprenticeship, and now this!

ROBBIE
You forgot the beer and cigs!

LUCY
It’s paradise!

Beth and Delia exchange ridiculing smiles.

SUSAN (O.S.)
It would be if you’d let me sleep a little!

ROBBIE
Sorry, Susan love. We’re off now.

Robbie looks at Daego.

ROBBIE
Ay, Daego!

BETH
He’s asleep.

ROBBIE
Oh... Well, when he’s up, ask him if I can have some of his cig tokens, will you?

BETH
Yeah, sure.

Robbie celebrates like he has bowled a strike.

Lucy and Robbie leave the tent arm in arm.

Beth and Delia exchange another smile.

The BBC NEWS OPENING THEME comes from the TV.
CONTINUED:

SUSAN (O.S.)
Turn that thing down.

EXT. ENCLOSURE - DAY

Lucy and Robbie pass a row of half-built terraced houses.

THIRTY BUILDERS work on the site: carrying bundles, girders, wood, and toolboxes; hammering; drilling; LAUGHING.

Robbie gives Stanley, who stands observing the builders, next to Henrietta, a jovial nod.

The builders do not appear to interest Henrietta. She prefers to look at the tents.

She searches the residents’ faces as they pass with spades and beer cans.

STANLEY
Did you notice that chap? They’re beginning to see, you know.

The marine approaches Stanley with hesitant steps.

MARINE
Sir?

STANLEY
Yes, what is it?

The marine WHISPERS something into Stanley’s ear.

STANLEY
Right. I’ll come directly.
(to Henrietta)
Be sure to stay within sight of a soldier.

Stanley hurries away with the marine.

Henrietta watches the men disappear behind another row of half-built terraced houses.

She crosses to the nearest tent.

The HUM of MANY VOICES gets louder as she gets closer.

Aubrey guards the tent’s entrance.

He bows obsequiously to her.

She blushes and focuses on the mud.
He steps aside to let her enter.

**INT. TENT 2 - ENCLOSURE - DAY**

Henrietta enters, trying in vain not to muddy the rug.

TWO CHILDREN (11) clumsily knock a ping pong ball to each across a (ping pong) table.

EIGHT CHILDREN (7-11) surround the table, enthusiastically CHEERING, BOOING, and SHOUTING.

TWO CHILDREN (9) have an impassioned third act lightsaber fight with toy lightsabers.

SIX TEENAGERS (13-18) play an FPS video game on the eighty inch TV [this tent has the same arrangement as the twins’ tent].

A DOZEN GUFFAWING and SHRIEKING ADULTS (20s-50s) sip pints and smoke cigarettes at an elongated table hard by.

Nobody sees Henrietta.

She turns to Aubrey.

He tries, unsuccess fully, to look as though he has not had his eye on her.

HENRIETTA
Do you know which tent the magician lives in?

aubrey
Yes, I do.

Aubrey holds out his hand.

Henrietta hesitates before taking it.

**INT. TENT - ENCLOSURE - DAY**

Henrietta apprehensively approaches the sofas.

Beth and Delia sit, and Daego sits and sleeps, as before. Henrietta sits down on the sofa behind them.

Beth and Delia both turn to look at her.

(CONTINUED)
BETH
What’re you doing here?

HENRIETTA
I’m here to ask the magician something.

BETH
Yeah, well, he’s asleep, isn’t he?

DELIA
We’ll pass it on, whatever it is.

HENRIETTA
Sure. The magician, he... erm... did a show in East Sands about ten weeks ago. Now, my brother, Albert,

Delia’s face becomes glum.

HENRIETTA (CONT’D)
paid three times the normal price to sit in the gallery and only stayed for his part, his bit, according to --

DELIA
So what?

Tears gather in Delia’s eyes. Beth appears frustrated. Henrietta’s eyes widen with a realisation.

HENRIETTA
You? You and Albert?

DELIA
(bitterly)
Yes. Me and Albert.

HENRIETTA
When did you last speak to him?

A tear rolls down Delia’s cheek.

BETH
(to Henrietta)
Alright, leave it now.

Henrietta keeps her eyes on Delia.
HENRIETTA
(to Delia)
Listen to me: I think something’s happened. Did he stop answering his phone? Is that how he ended it?

Delia nods.

HENRIETTA
Ten weeks ago? On that Saturday night?

Delia nods.

HENRIETTA
I haven’t been able to reach him since then either. He’s disappeared. So if there’s anything you can --

DELIA
(tearfully)
He came to ours for dinner... on that afternoon.

Beth gives Delia a look of disapproval.

HENRIETTA
Right, okay. Did he say anything about where he’d be going after?

DELIA
No. I don’t think so.

SUSAN (O.S.)
No wonder he left! With you two yabbering on non bloody stop!

Henrietta looks back at Susan. She has wrapped a pillow around her head, creating makeshift earmuffs.

Henrietta turns back to Delia.

Daego has gone. Hatty sleeps in his former seat.

HENRIETTA
Where’s the magician!?

Beth and Delia both shrug.
A completed bronze statue of John, Alexandrina, Stanley, and Henrietta in the open top jeep has been erected in the middle of a small incomplete square, a future gathering place for the residents of New Washington.

Henrietta examines her face’s bronze equivalent.

DAEGO DIEGO (O.S.)
He was a nice lad.

Henrietta jumps in surprise.

Daego stands behind her, leaning on his stick. He carries something book-shaped and wrapped in newspaper under his armpit.

DAEGO DIEGO (CONT’D)
I took to him right away. Such a shame. I had a daughter go missing, donkey’s years ago. Tracey. Seventeen she were. Left two little babies. Excuse the glass, your highness.

He removes the paper and passes her a smashed photo frame.

DAEGO DIEGO (CONT’D)
Your soldiers trampled on it during the coup.

PHOTOGRAPH: Unmistakably, a teenage Alexandrina!

HENRIETTA
It’s her!

DAEGO DIEGO
That’s exactly what he said.

HENRIETTA
Who?

DAEGO DIEGO
Your brother, when I showed it to him.

CROSSFADE:
INT. DINING ROOM - CASTLE - DAY - FLASHBACK

THROUGH THE WINDOW - GARDEN: Albert and Alexandrina, in deep
discussion, are walking together.

Henrietta closes her eyes.

CROSSFADE:

EXT. SQUARE - ENCLOSURE - DAY

Henrietta touches Alexandrina’s supercilious bronze
features.

FADE OUT.

END OF EPISODE