SECTION 6

by

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VERVE Hart
CALIBER Marshall

The secret origins of MI-6...

...based on declassified events.

THE UNION JACK FLAG

Ragged, burnt. Stitched linen from the Great War torn with bullet holes. Hung on a wall, a somber reminder of the sacrifices made. Suddenly a frayed corner lifts, revealing --

A WALL SAFE

hidden behind the flag, a heavy steel strongbox; the key is inserted, metal door CREEEAAKS as it sways open. Inside are PAPERS, WAR MEDALS, a REVOLVER -- a beat -- then in slides a CLASSIFIED FILE; we glimpse at the cover, an official stamp:

*** EYES ONLY ***
*** HIS MAJESTY'S SECRET SERVICE ***
*** MI-1(c) ***

Then the safe SLAMS SHUT as --

ENGLISH RECEPTIONIST (O.S.)
Care for tea?

INT. BRITISH EMBASSY -- DAY

A posh but stately office for diplomats, old-fashioned.

The bookish ENGLISH RECEPTIONIST at the door holds a tea tray as patrician officials pass by behind her, at leisure. Staff. Mostly quiet save for a few "G'mornings."

She smiles to a NAVAL OFFICER at the safe. He LOCKS IT, hides the key in the fabric of the flag before facing her; the look in his eyes doleful, burdened by what he just locked away.

BRITISH NAVAL OFFICER
No, ah...not today.

INT. RECEPTION, BRITISH EMBASSY -- DAY

Sitting alone the receptionist pours hot Earl Grey into a porcelain cup. Adds 2 sugar cubes, stirs. Blows. About to take a sip when -- THE FRONT DOOR BURSTS OPEN.

In from the cold stumbles a frost-covered RUSSIAN CADET (22). Young, panicked. Blood stains frozen to his husky overcoat, REVOLVER stuck to a bare hand like a tongue to a winter pole.

He CLANKS the gun on the desk; sheer terror in his eyes --

RUSSIAN CADET
(in Russian)
Hide, hide me...

BRITISH NAVAL OFFICER
(approaching)
You're in the wrong house, boy...

He shoves the cadet to the door. Beat. They share a look, brief, one of recognition ... *as if they know each other.*

RUSSIAN CADET
(his best English)
Please...

BRITISH NAVAL OFFICER
This isn't Russia. You're on British soil now, understand?

BRAKES SQUEAL OUTSIDE

The officer glances out the sash window as antique-looking ARMY TRUCKS pull up outside the courtyard, followed by a thick armor-plated PUTILOV CAR with twin turret machine guns; looks strange, as if Model-T made a tank, the world's first.

RUSSIAN SOLDIERS in husky grey coats & Ushanka hats burst out of the trucks armed with WW1 rifles, boots CRUNCHING snow.

BRITISH NAVAL OFFICER
You led them right to us...

DOORS CRASH OPEN

Dozens of "Red" troops pour in, rifles raised.

BRITISH NAVAL OFFICER
How dare you barge in here. This is the British Embassy, man, property of the Empire. You have no right to-

BLAM BLAM BLAM

The officer spasms as bullets punch his chest spitting bloody chunks of flesh & fabric everywhere.

Instantly the cadet ducks as a spray of bullets chase him into the embassy, cutting through the startled receptionist, and her tea cup. It SHATTERS. More GUNFIRE ERUPTS.

A massacre. UNARMED DIPLOMATS race for the stairs as bullets mash the balustrade, gunning them down. Bodies slump back down the stairs, rolling brokenly to the bottom as others dive under tables, quivering as the troops execute them:

BLAM BLAM BLAM

This isn't fiction - it's history.

A WOUNDED DIPLOMAT WRITHES ON THE FLOOR

Gurgling blood as an imposing Russian commander steps forth, a bald-headed figure of death. Impassively plants his boot over the diplomat's throat, squashing his larynx like a bug.

This is NIKOLA GROZNY (30s), an imperious Bolshevik for the CHEKA SECRET POLICE, early predecessors of the KGB.

GROZNY
(in Russian; subtitled)
The boy, find him.

CUT TO:

THE RUSSIAN CADET

Shaking with fear as he slips out a back door, slides on some ice near a snow drift on this bitter-cold Oktober morning.

This is LEONID KANNEGISSER (22), and though we don't know it yet he's just assassinated the Chief of the Cheka in Petrograd (Moisei Uritsky).

BLAM BLAM BLAM

Troops in the street spot the cadet, their shots ZIP by, missing by inches. As they cut him off....

EXT. REAR COURTYARD, BRITISH EMBASSY -- DAY

The cadet retreats back to the embassy when - BLAM - a single bullet punches his chest; blood drips into the snow as he drops to his knees before GROZNY, SMOKING GUN IN HAND.

His bald head cooling in the brisk air as the troops circle, form a FIRING SQUAD around the wounded cadet, taking aim...

Insert: <u>PETROGRAD, RUSSIA - Oktober 1918</u>

AS SHOTS RING OUT

EXT. BIG BEN -- DAY

CHIMES RING THE HOUR as the sprawl of WESTMINSTER PALACE lay spread before us, iconic, much as it is today.

CUMMING (V.O.)
We've lost contact with our embassy in Petrograd...

A 3-LITER ENGINE ROARS

EXT. WHITEHALL, LONDON -- DAY

...as a pristine SILVER ROLLS-ROYCE speeds past Parliament, veering around all the other puttering MODEL-T MOTORISTS, spooking the horses in DRAWN CARRIAGES. Welcome to...

Insert: LONDON, ENGLAND - November 1918

Streets here seem both oddly familiar and entirely strange; the modern sights we know plucked away like weeds as though a century of industry was simply thinned out.

This is Britain in the shadows of the First World War.

CUMMING (V.O.)
Our stations in Moscow, Kiev, Minsk. They've all gone silent.

EXT. WAR OFFICE BUILDING -- DAY

Tires SCREECH as the antique-looking roadster parks.

Out steps the driver, cane first. You might expect an old man not some rugged playboy still in his prime. Eyes searing with a hardened intelligence as he bitterly leans on his silver-tipped walking stick, refusing to let it slow him down.

This is MANSFIELD CUMMING (50s), chief director of MI-1(c), British Foreign Intelligence.

CUMMING (V.O.)
Here's what we know: two Bolshevik leaders were assassinated on the same day, both in broad daylight. Vladimir Lenin in Moscow. Moisei Uritsky in Petrograd, Chief of the Cheka there. Lenin may still pull through but Uritsky won't...

CLICK ... CLICK ... CLICK

INT. HALLWAY, WAR OFFICE -- DAY

Cumming's CANE hits the tile as he marches through a warren of maze-like passages filled with dull men in dull suits.

CUMMING (V.O.)
Shot dead by some Russian cadet, as we've just learned...

CUT TO:

INT. WAR ROOM -- DAY

A map of RUSSIA spread across a coffee-stained conference table in a windowless bunker choking with cigarette smoke.

Here sits the IMPERIAL WAR CABINET COMMITTEE led by the man at the head of the table, PRIME MINISTER DAVID LLOYD GEORGE. The distinguished faces before him too young to look so old.

CUMMING
Soon after, our embassy in Petrograd went down. Overrun by Red Army troops, possibly Cheka police...

PRIME MINISTER
Any word on the staff?

CUMMING
Presumed dead. Every soul.

Everyone at the table reacts, grim mutters.

Except for the quietly observant fellow stuck in the middle, a “young” WINSTON CHURCHILL (43) just sprouted wrinkles, recently appointed Secretary of War; new to the debriefings.

PRIME MINISTER
Who’s behind this attack?

Cumming slaps a DOSSIER FILE on the table; out spill B&W PHOTOS of the same stone face with a devilish beard:

CUMMING
General Ivan Vostok. Commanded the North Russian Front during the war. Brutal tactician. Awarded the Order of Saint George, first class. Their highest military honor. Recently assigned to oversee command of Kronstadt prison where he’s been working hand-in-hand with a cunning Cheka agent named Nikola Grozny to butcher counter-revolutionists.

Churchill stirs, twists a photo to study Vostok’s face.

PRIME MINISTER
Christ, another godless Bolshevik.

CUMMING
Vostok’s no Bolshevik. He’s Russian. His patriotism isn’t political, Prime Minister. It’s for the Motherland. To defend against invaders.

NAVY ADMIRAL
Our envoys at the embassy are hardly invaders.

CUMMING
I'm not so certain.
(off their shock)
Vostok ordered those troops to infiltrate the building in pursuit. They were hunting for someone.

PRIME MINISTER
Someone?

CHURCHILL
Uritsky's assassin.

Cumming shoots a look at Churchill, sizing the new kid up.

PRIME MINISTER
Do we know who this cadet is? Or why he shot Uritsky?

NAVY ADMIRAL
We need to respond, a retaliatory strike would-

PRIME MINISTER
Great War just ended, Admiral, I'm not about to engage England in another. I want facts. Cumming...
(turns to him)
Send your best man in to Petrograd.

CUMMING
(stirs; clearly bothered)
Respectfully, sir...our enemies have changed. Tactics, methods. Our spies are not trained to deal with this level of ... brutality.
(a beat; then)
War has shattered the old world. It's not the same as it once was.

PRIME MINISTER
Neither are you, I fear...
(notes Cumming's cane)
Not so certain it's the world that was shattered...but your nerves.

Cumming glances at his cane, looks away - *he might be right.*

PRIME MINISTER
Send your man.

EXT. A WINTER WONDERLAND -- DAY

Snow falls on a slumbering turn-of-the-century arctic town caught in a long cold winter. Over this is PIANO MUSIC, a soft melody from Tchaikovsky, familiar; *Swan Lak*e maybe...

Insert: HELSINKI, FINLAND - December 1918

INT. DINING ROOM, “ESPA” RESTAURANT -- DAY

An elegant place facing the Esplanadi, heart of the city.

Cold snow outside, warm candles inside where we find the PIANO PLAYER, a distinguished British gentleman, epitome of English aristocracy. This is THOMAS HAWTHORNE (30s).

An envelope slides over his sheet music: *** EYES ONLY *** Hawthorne stops playing, looks up at the courier, OLIVIA, an attractive British siren bundled in layers of winter gear.

He considers taking her coat, but takes the envelope instead.

HAWTHORNE
Duty calls.

EXT. BRITISH EMBASSY, PETROGRAD -- DAY

A horse-drawn SLEIGH slows outside the building we saw before only now, weeks later, smothered by drifts of snow piled high over every window, blocking them from the sun.

Off the sleigh steps a man bundled in winter gear, looks like some explorder climbing Everest. HAWTHORNE. Pays in coins. Then treks toward the snow-blocked door as...

ACROSS THE STREET, ALLEYWAY

...in a parked car sit TWO CHEKA SPIES, watching Hawthorne. Sipping Vodka to stay warm. Once he’s inside, they drive off.

INT. BRITISH EMBASSY, PETROGRAD -- DAY

Quiet as the grave. Dark, cave-like. Hawthorne CLICKS on a small BEACON LIGHT, early flashlight for soldiers in the trenches. Battery-powered. Barely works. Light flickers as it cuts past the RECEPTION DESK riddled with bullet holes.

Hawthorne removes his hood, can’t believe what he’s seeing --

HAWTHORNE
Bloody hell...

As he pans the light he finds a STAIRCASE dotted with crimson-black patches. BLOOD STAINS. Congealed pools. Hears a CRUNCH under his step, looks down; bullet casings litter the floor.

Hawthorne kneels, picks up a shell, mind racing...

CUT TO:

THE UNION JACK FLAG

Lifted by Hawthorne revealing the WALL SAFE hidden behind it.

Snow blows in through a shot out window as he inserts the key hidden in the flag, opens the safe. Reaches in and retrieves the MI-1(c) CLASSIFIED FILE: *** EYES ONLY ***

He studies the cover intensely: *this is what he came for*.

GROZNY (O.C.)
(in Russian)
Welcome to Russia...

Hawthorne spins --

GROZNY
...comrade.

GROZNY

stands in the doorway, bald head steaming. Flanked by armed CHEKA AGENTS, including the two from the parked car outside.

Hawthorne reaches into his jacket, pulls a TRENCH LIGHTER, thin, made from a bullet shell. FLICKS the flintwheel, holding it to the file: trying to burn the evidence.

But this type of lighter doesn't emit a flame like a Zippo, only SPARKS off the tip of a charred rope stuffed in the thin brass tube. He FLICKS REPEATEDLY for the embers to catch when - BLAAAM - HAWTHORNE DROPS, SHOT IN THE ARM BY GROZNY.

He loses the lighter, stumbles, RACES OUT OF THE OFFICE, bleeding down the hall; scrambling, reaching the back door; FILLED WITH SNOW. *Dead end.* Hawthorne is trapped. *Shit.*

The agents catch up, beat Hawthorne as they arrest him.

Hawthorne drops the file. Grozny approaches, patient, picks up the file, cover smeared with Hawthorne's blood --

GROZNY
(reads; in English)
Eyes Only, His Majesty's Secret Service...

INT. GULAG TORTURE CHAMBER -- LATER

The wounded Hawthorne sits tied to a chair, stripped of his coat and gear in a stone cell somewhere deep in the bowels of a dark, dank terrifying Russian fortress. A CAGE DOOR OPENS.

HAWTHORNE
(in Russian; subtitled)
I was not trespassing. Scavenging. Looting for goods to sell. Please. I am a Russian citizen-

RASPY VOICE
(in English)
You are not Russian...

From the shadows steps the raspy voice, GENERAL VOSTOK (40s), his hardened face identical to the photos we saw earlier.

VOSTOK
Your accent is from education. Oxford I imagine. Clothes tailored. No, you are a British spy...
(waves the file)
And you came for this.

Vostok thumbs the pages -- JUMBLED LETTERS, SECRET CODES -- encrypted between royal letterhead watermarks; the last page signed by KING GEORGE V...which intrigues Vostok the most.

VOSTOK
Military orders. Signed by the King of England. But they are encrypted.

Vostok approaches, closer:

VOSTOK
Tell me, do you know pain?

He presses on Hawthorne's blood-soaked bandage.

HAWTHORNE HOWLS

VOSTOK
Stings, yes? As a man of privilege you've never quite felt it before. The fear, the terror...

Next to Hawthorne, a set of gothic tools, wickedly shaped; medieval, stained in blood. INSTRUMENTS OF TORTURE.

VOSTOK
(selects one)
Here in Kronstandt...you will.

INT. WAR ROOM, LONDON -- DAY

Hawthorne's TRENCH LIGHTER clanks across the table.

The distinguished faces stare, speechless. Churchill picks up the lighter, swallows hard, wracked with guilt over it.

CHURCHILL
What will they do to him?

CUMMING
Torture. Interrogate. Execute.
Good day, gentlemen.

A grim Cumming CRUMPLES the envelope the lighter came in.

PRIME MINISTER
Cumming...
(pulls him aside)
May as well tell you this now -
I'm dissolving your position.

CUMMING
Dissolving?

PRIME MINISTER
Cutbacks, all departments. Across the board. Treasury's idea. Fewer heads, fewer hats. That sort of thing. Come New Year, Section 5 will inherit active operations.

CUMMING
Section 5? You want the army to handle intelligence services?

PRIME MINISTER
In defense of the realm, yes. MI-5 is quite capable. Besides, the armistice has been signed. League of Nations meets in Paris for the Peace Conference come January. As such, your attendance down here will no longer be needed.
(beat; explains)
War's over, Cumming. Go home.

Cumming pauses, suddenly not so ready to leave.

PRIME MINISTER
As you said, the world has changed.
So must we with it.

CLICK ... CLICK ... CLICK

INT. HALLWAY, WAR OFFICES BUILDING -- DAY

Cumming's CANE strikes the tile -- *harder than usual* -- as he carries a box stuffed under his arm, items from his office.

As he reaches the door to leave for good --

"PENNY"
Director Cumming?

Cumming stops, looks back at a strikingly attractive young PERSONAL "PENNY" SECRETARY, the only woman in sight here.

"PENNY"
War Secretary wants to see you.

CLICK ... CLICK ... CLICK

EXT. ANOTHER HALLWAY, WAR OFFICES -- DAY

Not Cumming's cane this time - <u>HIGH HEELS</u>

Hers, stepping in stride as she leads Cumming down the hall. Try as he might Cumming can't help but stare at the shapely curves of her backside; snickers like a schoolboy as --

ICE CLANKS IN A TUMBLER

INT. ANTE ROOM, OUTSIDE THE WAR SECRETARY'S OFFICE -- DAY

"Penny" pours a drink -- SCOTCH -- what spies drink. Hands it to Cumming who sits, waiting for the door to open. Casually he notices a stack of books on her desk: <u>all on PARIS</u>.

"PENNY"
Anything else you'd like?

Cumming considers her offer, coils another boyish smirk.

CUMMING
Most definitely.

"PENNY"
(playful)
Could have you reprimanded you know,
cited for improper conduct.

He shrugs, nonchalant.

CUMMING
Was already dismissed once today.
Doubt they'll sack me again.

"PENNY"
Not very gentlemanly, are you?

CUMMING
Why, you prefer men who are gentle?

He smiles, big charm. She reacts, flustered for a response when abruptly --

CHURCHILL (O.C.)
Director Cumming?

Churchill, at his door, motions for Cumming to enter.

CUMMING
Secretary Churchill.

INT. OFFICE, SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR -- DAY

At the wet bar Churchill pours himself a "Papa cocktail" - a smidgen of Johnny Walker cloaked in ice water.

CHURCHILL
Understand you're a Navy man, started out some 20 years ago in Naval intelligence I hear.

CUMMING
If there is such a thing.

Churchill feigns a polite smile, sips, then --

CHURCHILL
<u>Bolshevism</u>. It must be strangled in its cradle, wouldn't you agree?

CUMMING
I do. But did Uritsky's assassin?

Churchill pauses, forgot he was in the presence of a spymaster; proceeds with caution.

CHURCHILL
I pulled your service file from Ministry archives: war records, personal background. Strangely all the pages had been ... redacted.

CUMMING
(giving nothing away)
Hm, that is strange.

Cumming smugly sips his drink; then --

CHURCHILL
Kannegisser. Leonid Kannegisser. Uritsky's assassin. Just a boy, really. Russian cadet recruited by one of our Naval officers working outta the embassy. Lad was angry, wanted revenge for the execution of his...*friend*...an anti-Bolshevik officer. Thought we could use that to fuel a coup, topple the Cheka in Petrograd. Help the White army reclaim the city from the Reds.

CUMMING
Dangerous game.

CHURCHILL
Gets more dangerous, I'm afraid.
(sinks in his chair)
Your man Hawthorne wasn't sent on a fact-finding mission. He was there to recover a top secret file...
(beat)
Classified, Eyes Only.

CUMMING
File? What file?

CHURCHILL
The worst kind: one with the King's name on it. In ink.

Cumming stirs, knows exactly what this means:

CUMMING
Sanction papers. Orders, to *assassinate* Bolshevik leaders.

Churchill stills, won't confirm it -- *doesn't have to.*

CUMMING
If the Russians have found it-

CHURCHILL
-could be used to incite a second world war, yes I'm well aware.

CUMMING
Least tell me you had enough bloody sense to encrypt the thing.

CHURCHILL
(nods)
OTPs, One-Time-Pads.

CUMMING
Those ciphers can't be cracked-

CHURCHILL
-unless the field agent is-

CUMMING
-compromised. *Christ,* why wasn't I notified of this operation?

CHURCHILL
Because you'd've obstructed it.

CUMMING
Damn right I would have.

Cumming SLAMS his glass down on the desk, disgusted.

CHURCHILL
Council intends to fold foreign intelligence under one roof.

CUMMING
(groans; distaste)
Let me guess - Section 5.

CHURCHILL
Operations are already underway in the colonies up north, fighting the Irish. Conflicts mounting in India, Africa. All across Europe. You know better'n I that MI-5s a broadsword, not a scalpel...no precision.
(beat; sips)
How long would it take the Russians to decode the papers?

CUMMING
(shrugs)
Depends how long the agent can withstand interrogation.

CHURCHILL
Don't believe we teach that technique up at Oxford.

CUMMING
We should.

Cumming stands, heads for the door when --

CHURCHILL
What if I told you the OTP is merely a *decoy* cipher.

CUMMING
(stops)
There's an ulterior code?

CHURCHILL
Hidden on the page, unseen.

CUMMING
Buys you some time, not much.

CHURCHILL
Enough perhaps to send in another man and mop up this mess.

Beat. Cumming turns, looks back at Churchill:

CUMMING
Seem to recall I was dismissed from active duty.

CHURCHILL
I'm reinstating you, temporarily. Brief reprieve from early retirement.

CUMMING
I won't send another man to his death. I can't.

CHURCHILL
They know the risks, Cumming.

CUMMING
But not the enemy.

CHURCHILL
You do.

CUMMING
(haunted)
All too well.

As Cumming steps out --

CHURCHILL
Dammit man, where's your honor, *your loyalty?*

CUMMING
Gave both to the war. Along with my marriage, my leg. <u>And my son</u>. The hell did you give?

Cumming leaves, his cane CLICK-CLICK-CLICKS down the hall as Churchill listens, alone at his desk sipping his drink.

INT. MOVIE PALACE, LONDON -- NIGHT

A grand theater, luxurious in architecture.

Projected on the silver screen is the famous “closet scene” from DW Griffith’s silent masterpiece BROKEN BLOSSOMS. The feather-frail ingenue writhes on the floor as her drunken brute of a father POUNDS on the door in a terrible rage...

The audience is tense, everyone on the edge of their seat, everyone except CUMMING, bored asleep, awoken suddenly by a sharp elbow from his wife, MAY (40s), a graceful Scottish heiress who seems more sad and hurt than angry at him.

As the PIPE ORGAN swells --

EXT. MOVIE PALACE, LONDON -- NIGHT

The audience exits, shuffling under the marquee, passing Cumming and his wife who wait at VALET, staring in silence. Although standing together they seem a thousand miles apart.

As the Rolls Royce pulls up, May abruptly steps away, fighting tears as she flags a passing taxi.

CUMMING
May-

MAY
This isn’t going to work, Mannie. I’ve tried, I have...

CUMMING
Come back to the house.

MAY
Don’t ask me to go back there, Mansfield, please ... that’s not a house, it’s a memorial for our son.

Cumming reacts, hurt but hardly surprised.

CUMMING
Divorce then?

MAY
Separation, for now.

She slides into the taxi; it drives off, leaving Cumming behind on the side of the road.

CUMMING (V.O.)
Your mother’s finally left us...

INT. FOYER, CUMMING'S HOME -- NIGHT (RAINING)

Cumming steps in, soaking wet. And alone. A man who's lost everything: his job, wife ... and his sobriety.

CUMMING (V.O.)
S'just you'n me now, my boy,
you'n me...

INT. STUDY, CUMMING'S HOME -- NIGHT (RAINING)

SCOTCH FILLS A TUMBLER, NEAT

Cumming swigs it like medicine, pours another. Rain trickles down windows as he toasts the PORTRAIT enshrined above the mantle of a handsome young man, his son...

<u>This was ALASTAIR</u>.

CUMMING
To honor, and loyalty.

BRIEF FLASHBACK

Quick cuts, soundless memories: *a CAR speeds down a dark road in the French countryside; IT FLIPS; rolls into the ditch; CUMMING WRITHES, his LEFT LEG horribly pinched in the wreck.*

BACK TO SCENE:

CUMMING

Downs the drink, wipes his lips dry, eyes welling with pain. Anger taking hold as he THROWS the tumbler. Staggers as it SHATTERS, drunkenly bumps a GLOBE, spins it defiantly.

Then rights himself, slowing the rotation with a finger stopping on: <u>PETROGRAD</u>

CUMMING
(sneers)
Honor...

He traces his finger through the BALTIC SEA, passing Finland on his way down to: <u>GREAT BRITAIN</u>

CUMMING
(sobering)
...loyalty.

CUT TO:

INT. SMOKING LOUNGE, ROYAL AUTOMOBILE CLUB -- NIGHT

A stuffy members-only Gentleman's Club packed with pompous men of power milling around gilded Christmas trees.

CUMMING (O.C.)
I have terms...

Churchill turns, faces a mostly sober Cumming.

CUMMING
Most of our spies are recruited out of Cambridge, taught to rub elbows with the rich. Trained in diplomacy.
(a beat; then)
I need one trained to kill.

CHURCHILL
(aghast; pulls him aside)
An assassin? You must be joking.

Beat. *He's not.*

CUMMING
One man, *off* His Majesty's Service. To do what the other agents can't: *fight back*. I'll need a small section budget to prepare him. And an office to operate from. Discrete, off site.

Churchill pauses, reluctant -- but Cumming isn't budging.

CHURCHILL
Stubborn sonuvabitch. You know there's a lot more at stake here than just your career, Cumming...
(concedes)
Who exactly do you intend to recruit?

Cumming pauses, *isn't entirely sure actually* --

A CAR HORN BLARES

EXT. WHITEHALL, WESTMINSTER -- DAY

Some puttering CAR SWERVES, nearly clips a scruffy WAR VET in uniform who slaps it as it goes by, cursing.

This is ALEC DUNCAN (20s), lithe in build but lethal in the way he moves, a ferocity buried under his medal-decorated ARMY JACKET. Beard a mangled nest of snarls. Eyes piercing. Like a wolf among these sheep, *a predator seeking prey.*

EXT. SIDEWALK, WHITEHALL -- DAY

Wealthy citizens with somewhere to be and something to do. LAWYERS, BUREAUCRATS and POLITICIANS. Prey stalked by Duncan; eyes darting, searching. Always on the hunt.

OOOOMPH

Duncan bumps into a puffed up BANKER who reacts, irate at first but then softens when he sees Duncan's WAR MEDALS.

DUNCAN
Honest knock, sir, honest knock.

BANKER
You fought in the war?

DUNCAN
Bled in the trenches out on the Western Front, for King'n Country, yessir.

BANKER
Yes, King and Country. Good day.

As the banker walks off...

Duncan looks down at the GOLD POCKET WATCH he just picked, swaying like a pendulum from a fingerless glove, METAL CHAIN stuck to his palm - as if there were a magnet underneath.

DUNCAN
King and Country my ass.

INT. SHITHOLE PUB -- DAY

Shilling coins RATTLE across a sloppy table.

In the corner, a game of POKER in progress. FOUR MEN, ex-con types in rumpled working class clothes, sweating a big pot.

The fifth man is --

DUNCAN
Call.

CLAAANK

Atop the pot he drops the GOLD WATCH; players pause, crooks who know it's not enough. *By far.* They shoot looks. Duncan unpins the WAR MEDALS from his chest, adds 'em to the pile.

His face stone, unreadable.

BRUTE
Show ‘em.

Cards drop around the table.

The beefy tattooed BRUTE has trips Queens; others make smaller pairs. Duncan shows a JACK OF SPADES. They SNICKER. Then he shows them 3 MORE JACKS: *Clubs, Hearts, Diamonds*.

The snickering stops.

BRUTE
Oy, you filthy thieving cheat...

THE BRUTE FLIPS THE TABLE, ENRAGED

cards flutter as he slashes Duncan’s throat with a RAZOR, trimming his beard, *close shave;* blood trickles.

Too close.

Instantly, Duncan clamps onto the brute’s wrist before he can swing again, reaches his other hand under his belt buckle for a slab of metal; has a predatory gleam in his eye as:

THWAACK

Duncan SMASHES the brute’s nose with a lightning jab; snaps the bridge in half with a sick crunch of cartilage; *the sound of it strange;* <u>not bone-on-bone</u> -- BRASS KNUCKLES -- a close-quarters weapon for soldiers stuck in the trenches...

...the stunned brute slumps to the floor, defenseless.

DUNCAN POUNCES

kneels over his fallen foe, punching *again and again and ...* as the other players pull him off, DUNCAN SWINGS AT THEM, wild haymakers that hit hard in the ribs, gut -- solid THUDS.

From outside -- A BOBBY WHISTLE BLOWS

Duncan HEARS IT, scoops as much of the scattered pot he can -- *including the gold watch & his medals* -- then slips out a BACK WINDOW sprinting down a narrow alleyway just as...

BOBBIES BUST IN

Chase after Duncan; one kneels next to the brute lying flat on the floor, gurgling blood, face a broken bloodied mess; the Bobby, a squat bull of a man named CASTLETON, removes his helmet in disgust, eyes narrowing out the window in disgust.

CUT TO:

INT. SCULPTOR'S STUDIO -- DAY

PLASTER CAST FACES OF WAR, dozens of them, frozen in agony, haunting molds of grotesquely disfigured men hideously deformed by horrific wounds in combat; hanging on the wall...

DUNCAN STARES AT THE FACES, SOLEMN

He's seen them before. *The real ones.* In battle. Can still hear their cries ... *men he served with, bled with...*

WESTMORE (O.C.)
Duncan...you look like shit.

Duncan looks away, hands the watch to another VET IN UNIFORM, an officer, back to us, facing a paint-splattered SCULPTOR who accepts the stolen watch reluctantly.

WESTMORE
Take it. Fine gold watch it is.
Well, mostly gold anyway...

The vet exchanges the watch for a flesh-colored partial prosthetic TIN MASK, facial features painted on. Eerily real. *Eye, lashes, brow.* He puts it on, dignity restored.

THE TIN MASK FACES DUNCAN. Light reflects off the metal edges which barely cover the stretching wrinkled scars creeping out from underneath hiding some sort of hideous facial deformity.

This is MATTHEW WESTMORE (20s).

WESTMORE
Looks aren't everything these days.

EXT. LONDON BRIDGE -- SUNSET

A haze of GREY SMOG settles over a decrepit stone overpass, sooty coal smoke defining LONDON FOG in the industrial age. MOTORISTS putter by overworked masses inhaling the poisonous fumes as a STEAM BARGE drifts between the archways below.

KIDS
...falling down, falling down.
London Bridge is falling down...
My...fair...lady.

Ragged ORPHANS play "Bridge"...*on the bridge.* Their hand-held arch drops, snares a GIGGLING GIRL. Suddenly a BOBBY OFFICER appears -- CASTLETON -- shoos them along, then gazes down over the side of the bridge, assessing the site below.

As the kids scamper...

EXT. EAST END, UNDER THE BRIDGE -- NIGHT

...their footsteps patter away as we creep into the shadows along the muddy river bank and find --

SKID ROW, A COLONY OF VAGRANTS

Living under the bridge, forgotten ghosts. VETERANS mostly, wounded warriors missing limbs. Others suffering shell-shock, obvious PTSD symptoms. Quivering thousand-yard stares...

DRUNKS sharing bottles, curled fetal under blankets of newspapers. Lipless BURN VICTIMS warm by the fire, their skin peeling from white phosphorous, chemical weapon from the war.

Others wear TIN masks more crude & medieval than Westmore's.

CUT TO:

UP AGAINST THE STRUCTURE

Stringy mince meat is dropped for a STRAY FERAL CAT that steps out from a crack in the archway to scarf.

Duncan gently pets it.

WESTMORE (O.C.)
Furball brings fleas, ya know.

DUNCAN
Keeps the rats away.

WESTMORE
I like rats. Tasty. Like the ones we chewed on in the trenches...

Westmore NIBBLES his teeth.

Duncan tosses Westmore the BRASS KNUCKLES. He catches them, notes the condition in which they're returned.

WESTMORE
Came in handy, I see.

DUNCAN
So did this.

Duncan removes his fingerless glove. Underneath is the crudely constructed MAGNET GADGET we suspected. So strong, *THWIIIC*K, it picks up the BRASS KNUCKLES. Westmore smirks.

WESTMORE
Always said you had a magnetic charm.

DUNCAN
Brass isn't magnetic you know.

WESTMORE
Trench knife. Made of iron. Blade snapped off after I stuck a man with it during that raid assault. Same night you were captured...

Captured ... the word hits a chord with Duncan, deep down.

Westmore moves to an arch, slides a LOOSE BRICK out from the stone facade revealing a SECRET WEAPONS CACHE, a private arms depot collected from the war stocked with trench raiding weapons: REVOLVERS, BAYONETS, a SPADE SHOVEL, PICKAXE...

He puts the brass knuckles back in as --

DUNCAN
What is all that junk anyway?

WESTMORE
Souvenirs, from the war. Wouldn't believe half the shite all these Tommies here hung onto. Revolvers from Prague, maps from Rome...

He digs, pulls out a French-labelled bottle of CHAMPAGNE.

WESTMORE
Champagne from *Champagn*e. Found this while we were in France...

Duncan snatches the bottle.

Moves to the embankment chewing away the cork foil; looks out over the river -- LONDON AT NIGHT -- soft fog lit by early electricity; a majestic glow, picturesque...*a place worth fighting for, dying for* - which Duncan has - *and would again.*

WESTMORE
Why're you under this bridge, Duncan? Ain't ugly like me, broken like them.

DUNCAN
We're soldiers, Matty. Soldiers protect their own.

WESTMORE
I'm no soldier. Neither are you. Not anymore. The things we've done. War made us into monsters...

Duncan reacts, about to say something when --

BA-BOOOM

The sky suddenly lights up as BA-BOOOM, BA-BOOOM.

Is London being bombed?

Not quite --

FIREWORKS OVER THE THAMES

Celebrating New Years.

Duncan POPS the cork, gets a quick sip of foaming champagne before Westmore snatches the bottle, stands on the rocks.

As he HOISTS the bottle --

WESTMORE
(a soldier's hymn)
Hear-hear to the Kaiser, that sonuva bitch. May his balls drop off with the seven-year itch. May his arse be pounded with a lump of old leather. Till his arsehole can whistle...

DUNCAN & WESTMORE
BRITAIN, OY BRITAIN FOREVER!

BA-BOOOOOM, BA-BOOOOOOOOM, BOOOOOOOOOOOOM

CUT TO:

A CAGE DOOR SLAMS OPEN

INT. GULAG DUNGEON, KRONSTADT -- DAY

A NAKED BODY, dragged in, deposited on the stone floor.

Bruised, beaten; covered in burns & blood stains. Tortured. Curling onto a bed of hay like an animal. Hair & beard ragged, overgrown, filled with snarls of vomit.

Believe it or not this is HAWTHORNE, hardly the gentleman we last saw. Looks more like a vagrant now...

...eerily like a shadow of Duncan.

GROZNY (V.O.)
A British spy caught in the act of espionage, carrying royal orders signed by the King of England...

CUT TO:

INT. VOSTOK'S COMMAND QUARTERS, KRONSTADT -- DAY

Grozny hands the EYES ONLY file to Vostok who sits at his desk shaving himself - without cream. His skin like leather as he slowly erases the bristles, rinses the razor in a bowl.

Grozny notes a "CCCP" BADGE on the desk, hammer & sickle insignia identical to the one on Grozny's chest.

GROZNY
Do not forget your badge, comrade.

Vostok doesn't blink, continues grooming as Grozny moves to a shelf, selects a bottle of VODKA, pours a drink.

VOSTOK
The orders he was caught with?

GROZNY
Half decoded. Enough so to presume why after killing Uritsky the cadet sought sanctuary inside the British embassy. We believed it was for diplomatic immunity, but in truth...the boy had been recruited.

VOSTOK
(stops)
An asset? These are attack orders?

GROZNY
Yes. But it will take some time to decode the entire document.

VOSTOK
Assemble our best cryptographers, *immediately*. They work night and day to decipher every word in full.
(explains)
This is the evidence Russia needs to unite the Red and White armies and end our civil war by turning our guns on a new common enemy...
(zealous)
London will fall.

Grozny toasts his drink.

GROZNY
(in Russian; subtitled)
To peace. Land. And bread.

VOSTOK
Spoken like a true Bolshevik.

EXT. TOWER BRIDGE, LONDON -- DAY

The two platforms yawn, raising for a MERCHANT SHIP...

Insert: LONDON - January 1919

EXT. DOCKLANDS, PORT OF LONDON -- SAME

Just up river crews of DOCKWORKERS load & unload supplies. SHIFT SUPERVISORS oversee the grueling process as a hoist crane lifts a heavy wooden crate, revealing --

CUMMING, SPEAKING WITH A UNION BOSS

EXT. PITCH, UNIVERSITY FIELD -- MID-DAY

A BLUR OF LEGS kick up chunks of sod as dirt-stained bodies cluster in a RUGBY SCRUM. A crunching tackle. More pile on, rough play between heated rivals: OXFORD v CAMBRIDGE.

Like a scout, CUMMING studies the players intently as...

SCREEEEEECH

INT. LONDON UNDERGROUND -- NIGHT

A SUBWAY TRAIN ROARS BY

Off the Central Line down an adjacent tunnel CUMMING observes dozens of dirt-smeared WORKERS burrowing like ants, laying heavy steel rails in a TUNNEL SHIELD, toiling to build a new line when suddenly - ZZZZZT - an electrical generator blows.

As another train SCREEEEEEECHES by --

CUT TO:

WHAAAM

The back door of a PADDY WAGON swings open...

EXT. METRO COURTYARD -- DAY

Releasing SHACKLED IRISH PRISONERS from the transpo box; BOBBIES swing their billysticks, beating the prisoners as they are led into the METROPOLITAN POLICE STATION of...

Hanging Sign: New Scotland Yard

INT. METRO BOOKING DESK, NEW SCOTLAND YARD -- DAY

The line is stopped. A stick whacks a MANGY IRISH PRISONER who snaps, manacled hands lashing out. Constables rush in, bash the lad into submission, pinning him to the floor...

MACREADY
Damn Irish.

...where the mangy prisoner is KICKED in the gut by newly appointed Police Commissioner NEVIL MACREADY (50s), a war-time army commander; hates the Irish with severe prejudice.

MACREADY
Filthy animals'll split the Kingdom to pieces if we let 'em...
(spits on him)
Lock this trash in a box.

Macready turns to Cumming, strangely piqued by the brutality.

CUMMING (V.O.)
I hear MI-5 asked Metro to supply manpower for National Security, mobile patrolmen for surveillance...

INT. PUB, LONDON -- NIGHT

Cumming & Macready chug pints in a dive packed with Bobbies.

MACREADY
Five wants to drill holes in horse carriages, sneak around'n eavesdrop on everyone's dirty knickers. So?

CUMMING
So I'm interested in the men being recruited. <u>I need one</u>. Someone a bit...rough around the edges.

MACREADY
(smirks)
What'sa matter Cumming, run outta rich twits to pluck from academy?

Cumming pushes his pint aside.

CUMMING
Assignment is undeclared. Officially unofficial. No heirs, no offspring. <u>No family</u>.

MACREADY
Have you tried the orphanage?

CUMMING
I'm serious.

MACREADY
So am I. Orphans have nothing to lose. They're driven, determined to make a difference.

CUMMING
Not looking for a crusader.

MACREADY
No, you want a junkyard bulldog...

Macready wipes the sudsy white foam from his mustache.

MACREADY
...one you can unleash.

EXT. FLEET STREET, LONDON -- DAY

DUNCAN, BUMPING SHOULDERS IN A CROWD

Forcing his way through a zoo of humanity.

They won't get out of Duncan's way. So he BUMPS HARDER, nearly bowls an unsuspecting gentleman over.

It catches the attention of a BOBBY PATROLMAN across the street - CASTLETON - he follows Duncan, instincts on alert. Duncan senses him, spots him following. Tries to retreat --

OOOOMPH

Duncan collides with a STREET VENDOR, nearly knocks the man's tray into the gutter. Items rattle: LACES, BUTTONS, LIGHTERS.

Still standing, the vendor reaches out...Duncan braces, ready for a fight. Instead, the vendor straightens Duncan's war medals, polishes one with his thumb.

VENDOR
You're a soldier, lad...

Duncan looks him over...

Spots a VICTORY MEDAL on his collar - and a limp sleeve where his other arm should be; tray held up by shoulder straps.

He's a disabled veteran.

Flanked by other disabled EX-VET STREET VENDORS nearby, wounded warriors working for a living, prideful.

The vendor reaches into his tray, digs...

VENDOR
In the eyes of the Almighty, our King...and that poor soul you see looking back at you in that reflection each'n every morning.
(beat)
You're a soldier...

...hands Duncan a BUTTON for the one missing on his jacket, up near his heart. Duncan hadn't noticed.

VENDOR
Act like one.

CUT TO:

THE BUTTON

Backlit by the drum fire, the tiny pin holes flicking...

EXT. EAST END, UNDER THE BRIDGE -- NIGHT

Duncan stares, clearly still haunted by the vendor's words.

WESTMORE
What's with the button?

Westmore playfully tries to snatch it.

Duncan stuffs the button in his pocket, gazes into the river, lost, has that thousand-yard stare soldiers have...

WESTMORE
You okay, Alec? Look like you've seen a ghost.

Suddenly - WHISTLES BLOW

Outta nowhere a DOZEN BOBBIES storm the colony, POLICE RAID. Billysticks CRACK bones, dropping vets to the mud; boots STOMP fingers, faces; kicking them while they're down.

Among the police is CASTLETON, the squat bull patrolman who spotted Duncan; followed him here. *Looking for a fight.*

DUNCAN & WESTMORE RUN, dashing toward the other side where suddenly MORE BOBBIES APPEAR, blocking the only way out.

SUPERINTENDENT
Awright, slow down ya rotten filth, slow it right down...

The surly SUPERINTENDENT spits in disgust, twirls his stick.

Trapped like rats, a few vagrants SPLASH into the icy river to swim for it -- they don't get far -- dragged back to the muddy embankment by Bobbies, held down in the mud.

The Bobbies now have the bridge under control.

SUPERINTENDENT
This ain't no inn for the ugly, yeah. Gotta take you Tommies in fer vagrancy. Problem is, Paddy Wagon won't hold more'n six so...
(twirling his stick)
Who here wants'ta go fer a ride?

THE BOBBIES ATTACK

In the scuffle Westmore RACES for his weapons cache; but before he can reach it he's KNOCKED DOWN, his tin mask trampled into the mud. Duncan tries to help but...

DUNCAN
MATTHEW.

BOBBIES RUSH IN

6 on 1, attacking with brute force.

Duncan absorbs the blows from their billysticks, refuses to go down; the more he resists, the harder they hit. Harder they hit...<u>the angrier he becomes</u>.

DUNCAN STRIKES BACK

Crashes into the nearest Bobbie, SNAAAPS the man's wrist, wrenching away his billyclub. DUNCAN SWINGS THE STICK.

Ferocity unleashed like a lion at the circus who's been poked for the last goddamn time. BONES CRAAACK on impact*: chins, ribs, shins*. 6 on 1 - <u>and the 6 aren't winning</u>.

As the last Bobbie drops to the mud, DUNCAN RISES, chest heaving, lungs on fire from the fight...so are his eyes, searching, finding his next target --

SUPERINTENDENT
(spooked; stammers)
W-wait now, there's no need to-

CLIIICK

A REVOLVER is cocked, barrel aimed at DUNCAN'S BACK as --

WESTMORE
ALEC.

BLAAAM -- WESTMORE LUNGES INTO THE SHOT

Blood BURSTS out his back as the bullet punches through. Like a sack of rocks he drops to the mud, limbs limp.

DUNCAN
MATTHEW.

Duncan sinks to his knees, pressing his hands over Westmore's wound; BLOOD GURGLES BETWEEN HIS FINGERS.

DUNCAN
MEDIC, I NEED A MEDI-

CRAAACK

His SKULL WHIPPED from behind, Duncan flops over Westmore, slumped in the mud like soldiers killed in battle. Emerging behind him, gripping the smoking gun -- CASTLETON.

A PHONE RINGS

CUT TO:

INT. CUMMING'S HOME -- NIGHT

Bells scream like a fire alarm down the empty halls until --

"PENNY" SECRETARY
Hello?

CHURCHILL'S "PENNY" SECRETARY

Same young woman who summoned Cumming earlier, now standing naked in his foyer. Her curves slipping in and out of shadow.

"PENNY" SECRETARY
Yes, he's here.
(beat)
No, he's...asleep.
(beat; would rather not)
Hold please.

As she sets the phone down --

CUT TO:

CUMMING, IN THE STUDY

Passed out naked, rolled in a rug on the floor; nose sniffing an empty bottle of Scotch.

"PENNY" SECRETARY
Mannie...?

Gently she tries to shake him awake.

"PENNY" SECRETARY
Mansfield...
(clears her throat)
Captain Cumming?
(hates herself for this)
Sir.

Unsure what else to do -- WHAAACK -- SHE SLAPS HIS FACE

CUT TO:

EXT. NEW SCOTLAND YARD -- NIGHT

The tires on Cumming's Rolls-Royce SCREEECH to a stop, squeezing between paddy wagons as...

CLICK ... CLICK ... CLICK

INT. NEW SCOTLAND YARD -- NIGHT

CUMMING, MARCHING

still hung-over, looks like hell, collar unbuttoned as he passes a dozen OFF-DUTY OFFICERS entering the --

INT. JAIL HOUSE, NEW SCOTLAND YARD -- CONT.

Cumming studies the squad of Bobbies from the bridge. Nursing injuries. Beaten so bad it's near comical: broken arms in slings, noses jammed with cotton plugs, etc.

CUMMING
Helluva night, eh boys?

MACREADY
Cumming...

Macready nods to the man beside him.

MACREADY
Said you needed someone rough...

CASTLETON

Twirling his revolver like a cowboy, proudly patted on the back by fellow officers.

Which rubs Cumming the wrong way.

CUMMING
Rough, yes, but not reckless.

Cumming approaches, regards Castleton with disdain. SLAPS the gun from his hands. It CLANKS off the tile.

Sudden silence; tension fills the room.

CUMMING
Takes nerves to shoot a man in the back. An unarmed man without a face at that. Hardly impressive.

Castleton flares his nostrils, looks ready to charge.

CUMMING
I want to speak with the prisoners.

MACREADY
Prisoners?

CUMMING
Who caused all this carnage.

MACREADY
Well, ah, actually...

Macready isn't exactly sure how to explain this but --

MACREADY
There's just the one.

CUMMING
(immediately piqued)
One?

A CELL DOOR SLAMS SHUT

INT. JAIL CELL, NEW SCOTLAND YARD -- NIGHT

Cumming is locked inside.

Inmates SHOUT from down the hall, crying for freedom.

Damn Irish.

CUMMING
Duncan. Alec Duncan...

Cumming scans the POLICE REPORT in his hand.

CUMMING
Vagrancy, larceny. Assault with a deadly weapon on six officers-

DUNCAN
Five.

Cumming looks up, intrigued.

Deep in shadow is DUNCAN, laying on the cot; eerily still like a newly caged zoo animal, stained with mud.

CUMMING
Says here six.

DUNCAN
First one I hit with my fist, not a weapon.

CUMMING
Judging the sight of the walking wounded I passed, I'd say your fist qualifies as a deadly weapon.

Cumming studies Duncan carefully -- *he's recruiting him.*

CUMMING
What happened out there?

DUNCAN
Self defense.

CUMMING
Not under the bridge...
(beat)
I meant the war.

Cumming nods to the medals on Duncan's jacket.

CUMMING
Paths of glory lead to the grave, so they say.

DUNCAN
The hell do you want?

CUMMING
Have some work needs to be done.

DUNCAN
Work?

CUMMING
For the MI, section 1-c.

DUNCAN
(beat; puts it together)
M-I, Military Intelligence...
I'm not a spy.

CUMMING
What are you then?

DUNCAN
A soldier.

Cumming stirs, reminded of an old adage:

CUMMING
Soldiers win wars, my boy...
Spies prevent them.

Cumming opens an EVIDENCE ENVELOPE, pours out something small. Flips it to Duncan: it's his BUTTON.

DUNCAN
Why should I help you?

CUMMING
(shrugs)
King. Country. Loyalty. Honor.
Pick one.
(beat; serious)
I can offer you a clean slate.
Have all the charges dropped. Your brothers-in-arms under the bridge?
I can protect them. No more raids.

DUNCAN
If I come work for you.

Cumming nods.

CUMMING
War split the world wide open.
Zealots and extremists crawled up through the cracks. Now using terror-tactics to intimidate...
(beat; deadly serious)
Bout time jolly ol' England intimidates back.

CUT TO:

EXT. NEW SCOTLAND YARD -- NIGHT

Duncan emerges from the building like a man on a mission. Passes Cumming - and his Rolls-Royce - seemingly unimpressed, barely noticing it as he marches by.

CUMMING
Need a lift?

DUNCAN
I'll walk.

CUMMING
War Office. Bright and early.
Be there.

Duncan keeps marching...

EXT. EAST END, UNDER THE BRIDGE -- NIGHT

...his boots STOMP in the mud along the embankment, a familiar sight of the Thames along London.

A LOOSE BRICK is pulled from the structure, opening the secret WEAPONS CACHE. Duncan digs, retrieves the REVOLVER.

RIVER EMBANKMENT

Duncan SPLASHES mud off his face. Water ice-cold, jolt to the system. As his beard drips dry he spots his REFLECTION in the rippling surface. LIGHT BOUNCES OFF SOMETHING BELOW.

Sunk in the mud is WESTMORE'S TIN MASK, flesh-colored paint washing off; cracks splintered across it...Duncan's face reflected over, as if wearing it, *looks like a monster...*

Duncan plucks it from its watery grave as --

CUT TO:

EXT. NEW SCOTLAND YARD -- NIGHT

Shift change.

A handful of Bobbies arrive as others leave. Among those heading for the pub is the SUPERINTENDENT...

...and CASTLETON, still reeling from Cumming's dress down.

SUPERINTENDENT
S'all right, lad. Forget it.
Feel better after a pint or two...

SIDEWALK, DOWN THE STREET

As they walk by, a SHADOW emerges from an alleyway and follows them; walks in step to not make a sound.

SUPERINTENDENT
Filth deserved more'n a bullet to the back, I say...

THE SHADOW IS DUNCAN

Eyes sharp, *a predator hunting prey*. Getting closer, *closer*, reaches into his pocket for the revolver, tightens his grip, finger curling on the trigger when --

SUPERINTENDENT
Shame he pulled through...

DUNCAN PAUSES

SUPERINTENDENT
Ugly sonuvabitch came outta surgery o'er London Royal, still breathin'.
(beat; prickish)
Next time, aim for the head, eh?

CRAAACK

Duncan PISTOL-WHIPS the superintendent across his skull. Before he slumps to the sidewalk Duncan swings the revolver, barrel between the eyes of CASTLETON, wide with shock.

DUNCAN, EYES ENRAGED

Convinced he came to do this.

Castleton quivers; a dark patch soils his crotch as a stream trickles out the leg of his pants. He's pissed himself.

Duncan reacts, lowers the barrel...

...then walks away.

CUT TO:

INT. RECOVERY WARD, LONDON ROYAL HOSPITAL -- NIGHT

A curtain WHISKS aside, revealing a patient on the bed stirring post-operation, coming down off a morphine drip. Face sweaty, hands jittery. This is --

DUNCAN
Matthew?

IT IS WESTMORE

Alive, face wrapped in bandages. Eyes open but unfocused, mind lost in a haze of drugs. Duncan tries to scoop him from the cot, stand him up; Westmore's legs flop, knock over an empty bedpan. A young NURSE notices, rushes over --

NURSE
What in God's name...?
(sets his legs back)
He can't walk. Spine was broken.
Lucky to even be alive...

Duncan puts Westmore down. Looks away. Sets something on the bedside table: WESTMORE'S TIN MASK.

NURSE
Are you his friend?

She turns - DUNCAN IS GONE

VOSTOK (V.O.)
The endeavors of men, as time has proven, are determined not by tyrants and conquerors but by those who trade in secrets...

INT. GULAG TORTURE CHAMBER, KRONSTADT -- MORNING

A group of RUSSIAN CRYPTOGRAPHERS sit shoulder-to-shoulder hunched over a creaky table, scribbling furiously to piece together the KEY PAD used to decipher the EYES ONLY papers.

VOSTOK
Spies have always steered the fate of the world...

Over their RUSTLE speaks Vostok, pacing like a panther.

VOSTOK
In the book of Hebrews they were sent over the walls of Jericho...

As he speaks we realize it's not to the cryptographers.

VOSTOK
Before that, Sun Tzu sent men into foreign lands to learn the secrets of their enemy. Genghis Khan ordered double agents to incite war. And the Spartans of Greece often exchanged cleverly coded messages on papyrus swapped between identical batons...

Vostok moves around a body strung up, dangling like a bell.

VOSTOK
These efforts, separated by vast gaps of time and space, remain tied by a single common thread.

He stops, looks up at the face of the dangling body.

VOSTOK
Do you know what that is?

HAWTHORNE, IN STRAPPADO BONDAGE

Arms above his head -- *from behind his back* -- straining as he dangles like a fish on a hook before Vostok, feet off the ground, weighed down by a heavy sandbag...

The pain is immense.

VOSTOK
When caught, they all suffered. As you do now. As you will for quite some time...

A 3-LITRE ENGINE ROARS

EXT. WHITEHALL, LONDON -- DAWN

Cumming's ROLLS-ROYCE speeds by, swerves around a slow public bus picking up COMMUTERS, INDUSTRIAL WORKERS.

EXT. WAR OFFICE BUILDING -- DAY

The car parks. Cumming steps out, cane first. Clocks the streets, looking for Duncan.

No show.

CUMMING
Damn.

Cumming hobbles toward the door, like before, only rather than entering as he normally would, he continues walking...

CROSSING THE MALL

Passing the iconic ADMIRALTY ARCH as he makes his way toward an EMPTY APARTMENT BUILDING across the street.

CLICK ... CLICK ... CLICK

INT. WHITEHALL COURT, EMPTY BUILDING -- DAY

Cumming marches, CANE ECHOING as he weaves through a maze of empty unfinished spaces lit by beams of sunlight.

He enters the LIFT, an early industrial cage; as it rises --

CUT TO:

THE LIFT-CAGE OPENS

Cumming steps out, crosses a cavernous floor, empty save for the structural beams and a lonely mop bucket.

INT. CUMMING'S OFFICE, TOP FLOOR -- NIGHT

Dusty attic beams over a sturdy oak desk with no chair. Cumming enters, stops --

CUMMING
How the hell did you find me?

DUNCAN, GAZING OUT THE WINDOW

DUNCAN
You're slow, easy to follow.

Cumming crosses: CLICK ... CLICK ... CLICK

DUNCAN
<u>And loud</u>.

They stand side-by-side, iconic, quietly observing.

DUNCAN
King. Country. Loyalty. Honor.

CUMMING
Yes. So, which is it?

DUNCAN
Pick one.

Beat. Then --

DUNCAN
You need a chair.

CUMMING
And you a shave. Shower wouldn't hurt either.

Off Duncan's look --

INT. BATH HOUSE, ROYAL AUTOMOBILE CLUB -- DAY

Old men bob in a steam-filled hot springs pool. Relaxing. Breathing the vapors. Suddenly their eyes tense as a VAGRANT walks by wearing a stained army uniform: it's DUNCAN.

WOMAN'S VOICE (V.O.)
Alec Duncan, BEF, Expeditionary Force on the Western front...

DUNCAN SHOWERS

High-pressure hot water PATTERS on the pure-white basin floor as Duncan steps naked into the stream. You wouldn't believe the layers of filth that wash off. As the much soaps away...

WOMAN'S VOICE
Spent a few winters halting the German advance. Honored for his efforts. War Medals for Valor, Gallantry. Victoria Cross.

SCARS APPEAR

Scattered over his body, a long history with violence.

WOMAN'S VOICE (V.O.)
Was captured near the end of the campaign in a chemical attack, mustard gas in a trench raid. Saved his Quartermaster, Matthew Westmore. Couldn't save himself...

CROSS-CUT:

CUMMING, MARCHING DOWN THE CLUB HALLS

Trying his damndest to ignore the CLUB MANAGER trailing him, buzzing like a fly, won't go away.

CLUB MANAGER
...rules are rules, sir. This club is for *members-only*. Guests are not permitted to use the facilities.

BACK TO DUNCAN, IN A CHAIR

Tense as a RAZOR BLADE pauses near the scruff on his throat, the poor CLUB BARBER staring: *where to begin?*

WOMAN'S VOICE
He was taken to a German POW camp. Year later...he escaped. Found his way home after the war ended.

BACK TO CUMMING, IN THE HALLWAY

He reaches a door, unable to shake the pest as he enters.

CLUB MANAGER
Sir, I'm afraid I must insist...

INT. LIBRARY, ROYAL AUTOMOBILE CLUB -- DAY

One of the finest collections in all of London.

CLUB MANAGER
Your guest cannot stay.

A beautiful British siren looks up, her nose buried in one of the many books here. This is ELLIE LOCKHART (20s). It's *her* they were discussing (and her VOICE we've been hearing).

CLUB MANAGER
<u>Women are not permitted</u>.

LOCKHART
Article nine-clause two, club rules.
On matters of National Security all facilities within shall be opened to those who serve the crown loyally.
(stern; with authority)
Including women.

The Club Manager snatches the book away from her.

CLUB MANAGER
Preposterous. What idiot would write such a ridiculous clause?

LOCKHART
His Majesty, King George V.
He's a charter member.

Lockhart steps by, approaches Cumming who smirks, impressed.

CUMMING
You must be my secretary, Mis'ess...?

LOCKHART
Lockhart. *Miss* Lockhart. And I'm <u>not</u> your secretary. Churchill sent me, to evaluate your recruit. Now...
(holds up an army dossier)
Shall we begin?

BACK TO:

DUNCAN, BEING SHAVED

Beard trimmed down first, then splashed with foamy cream. As the razor slowly SCRAAAPES away the stubble...

LOCKHART (V.O.)
Duncan's a combat soldier, trained in trench warfare...

QUICK INSERT:

CUMMING, IN THE LIBRARY

Sitting with Lockhart at a reading table.

LOCKHART
Personally I doubt he's qualified to complete the assignment.

CUMMING
You mean <u>survive</u> it.

LOCKHART
It doesn't matter if he survives, from what I understand.

CUMMING
It matters to me.

LOCKHART
Why?

CUMMING
Because the last man I trained for this sort of thing never came home.

LOCKHART
Last man?

BRIEF FLASHBACK

Quick cuts, soundless: *same speeding CAR as before only now we see it being chased by another car; exchanging GUNFIRE; shots salt the doors, shatter windows; a TIRE BLOWS; the lead car FLIPS again, same as before, rolls into the ditch...*

BACK TO SCENE:

Cumming, haunted, looks away as --

CUMMING
<u>My son</u>.

CUT TO:

STEAMED MIRROR

A hand wipes a streak through the condensation, revealing --

DUNCAN, CLEAN CUT

Is this even the same guy?

CUT TO:

DUNCAN'S ARMY JACKET

Washed & ironed flat; medals polished ...

AND THE BUTTON SEWN IN

DUNCAN
Good as new.

END SEQUENCE

INT. LIBRARY, ROYAL AUTOMOBILE CLUB -- DAY

Duncan enters wearing his newly pressed jacket, looks sharp. Much to the surprise of Cumming and Lockhart.

CUMMING
Duncan, you look...groomed.

Duncan eyes Lockhart, immediate chemistry between them:

DUNCAN
Don't believe we've had the pleasure.

CUMMING
This is Miss Lockhart. She's here to supervise your evaluation.

DUNCAN
Evaluation?

LOCKHART
To observe your qualities. Mental and physical. Decide if you're mission-ready. Or not.

DUNCAN
Think I can decide that for myself.

LOCKHART
Let's leave the determinations to those most qualified to make them.

She stands, passes Duncan on her way to the door as:

LOCKHART
You've been out of commission some time now. Living under a bridge. Fighting cops and card players. Not planning to have you pickpocket watches off the street, you know.

She pauses at the door --

LOCKHART
If in three days I'm not convinced you're ready for this assignment, I'll find someone else who is.

Duncan glares, not sure he trusts her. She glares back, definitely *doesn*'t trust him.

She steps out, leaves.

CUMMING
I procured a room for you upstairs. You'll stay here while we run a few tests, shake off the rust.

DUNCAN
Tests?

BLAM BLAM BLAM

INT. MID-FLOOR, EMPTY BUILDING -- DAY

BLAM BLAM BLAM CLICK

Six shots and the cylinder of Duncan's REVOLVER is spent. The target on the far wall peppered, evenly grouped shots.

CUMMING
Reload.

Duncan shakes out the shells from the wheel, reloads six new shots. As he does, Cumming walks toward him from the target. By the time Duncan loads the last bullet CUMMING REACHES HIM, puts a small gun to Duncan's head, pulls the trigger: CLICK.

CUMMING
You're dead.
(off Duncan's glare)
Need to be faster. Few paces is all it took for me to close the gap on you - and I've only got one leg.

DUNCAN
Was fast enough in the trenches.

CUMMING
You're not in the trenches anymore.
This...is far more dangerous.

Duncan glances around the empty site, hardly agrees.

DUNCAN
Buildings aren't battlefields.

CUMMING
Where I'm sending you, they are.
Here...

Cumming takes the revolver, gives Duncan his smaller gun -- a WEBLEY SELF-LOADING .455 MK I -- pistol of the Royal Navy. Duncan hefts it, heavier than it looks.

CUMMING
Webley self-loader, semi-automatic.
Beats your bulldog revolver any day.
Compact, easy to conceal. Short range
accuracy spot on. Rate of fire much
faster. Reload speed no contest...

Cumming hands him a BOX MAGAZINE. Duncan SLAPS it in, cocks the slide. Aims. Fires -- BLAM -- his shot misses completely.

Cumming bats an eye; *you missed?*

DUNCAN
Recoil's a bit different.

Duncan adjusts his stance, FIRES again: BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM. Every shot punches the target. A dead eye display.

DUNCAN
That's better.

ON THE TARGET

Close enough to see the ends of the slugs sticking out, failed to penetrate the target as deep as those from the revolver which punched clean through.

DUNCAN
Stopping power isn't quite the same.

Cumming snatches the Webley, fires a shot POINT BLANK at the target -- BLAAAAAM -- the target is thrust across the floor.

Cumming hands the pistol back to Duncan, satisfied.

CUMMING
Stops fine to me. Best of all, slide won't breach on an empty clip. Means your enemy won't know when your gun is dry. Just you.

Duncan, sly grin at the gun, starting to appreciate it as --

CUMMING (V.O.)
You already know how to shoot a man...

MONTAGE SEQUENCE:

Duncan FIRES his new Webley at a MOP BUCKET, each shot punching it across the floor, rickety wheels squeaking as the last shot drops the bucket down the OPEN LIFT SHAFT.

CUMMING (V.O.)
I can show you how to flush him out of position, move him like a pawn across a chess board...

Lockhart observes, ears muffled in this crude indoor SHOOTING GALLERY lined with sacks of cement bags & boarded windows.

As the mop bucket crashes below --

DUNCAN
You're expecting more mop buckets in the field?

EXT. ROOFTOP, EMPTY BUILDING -- DAY

BLAM -- Cumming shoots at the ground -- BLAM -- boots jump backwards as the shots hit inches from -- BLAM -- Duncan's toes, jumping again, heels slipping on the building's edge -- DUNCAN NEARLY FALLS -- at the last second, Cumming grabs him:

CUMMING
Always look before you leap.

Duncan reacts -- *it's the lesson he needs to learn most.*

INT. DUNCAN'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Duncan, SHIRTLESS PUSH-UPS NEAR HIS COT, scars showing. He struggles, clearly out of shape; no rhythm whatsoever; eyes trying to focus on something below his chin as --

DUNCAN (V.O.)
Some cocktail ya got there...

EXT. ROOFTOP, EMPTY BUILDING -- DAY

A wad of cloth is jammed into a BOTTLE OF FINE SCOTCH.

LOCKHART
It's an improvised incendiary.

LOCKHART FLICKS A TRENCH LIGHTER

An ember catches the cloth; as it burns --

DUNCAN
Incendiary...you mean a bomb?

Duncan takes a cautious step back.

So does Cumming.

LOCKHART
Use any bottle, breakable container.
Fill it with flammable liquids.
Alcohol, gasoline. Wad the bottle
neck for a wick. Light it, throw it.

She does.

CRAAAACK. The bottle SMASHES on a wall and -- *WHOOOOOSH* -- a FIREBALL BURSTS instantly into the air then disappears.

DUNCAN
Wasn't very lady-like.

LOCKHART
My purview is psychological warfare,
not parasols and proper etiquette.
You want a lady, I suggest you go
solicit one on Regent street.

She tosses him the TRENCH LIGHTER, walks off.

DUNCAN
(aside; to Cumming)
She scares me.

CUMMING
Yeah.

DUNCAN
I kinda like it.

CUMMING
Me too.

Off Duncan's look --

INT. CUMMING'S OFFICE, ATTIC ROOM -- NIGHT

Cumming uncurls a map, pins it to the wall. A lamp spotlights the borders of PETROGRAD, inland from the BALTIC HARBOR.

Several X's mark the city's entry points.

DUNCAN
Targets?

CUMMING
Access points.

CROSS-CUT:

DUNCAN, MORE PUSH-UPS

Fluid now, arms pumping like pistons, finding his rhythm, eyes fixed like a hawk on whatever's below his chin --

CUMMING (V.O.)
I know how to slip you into any city, any country. Any time of day. But...how you get out is up to you.

DUNCAN (V.O.)
You want me to *improvise* my escape?

BACK TO SCENE

CUMMING
It's not improvising if you prepare for every possible scenario.

DUNCAN
And if there is no escape?

CUMMING
There's always an escape. Just have to look for it.

Cumming shoves a DOSSIER FILE at Duncan.

CUMMING
Homework. Know your enemy. Odds are he knows us.

CROSS-CUT:

DUNCAN STOPS, SWEAT POURING

muscles bulging raw strength; winded, sore; picks up the thing on the floor he's been staring at: a photo of VOSTOK.

He takes it, sets it in a pile on the cot next to Cumming's DOSSIER FILE, spread out; sifts for another photo...

KRONSTADT

Aerial view of the fortress. He lays it down to study, then repositions for more push-ups...only this time puts his feet up on the cot, ELEVATED, more excruciating; veins throb as:

CUMMING (O.C.)
Daimler, Crossley, Bentley, Austin...

INT. GARAGE, WAR OFFICE MOTOR POOL -- NIGHT

A stored collection of British MOTOR VEHICLES from the war.

Cumming stands near an AUSTIN CAR, sleek chassis, used mainly as transportation for officers to and from the front lines.

DUNCAN
Already know how to drive a car.

CUMMING
But can you escape one, say it's on fire? Because your father couldn't.

Daggers shoot from Duncan's eyes as Cumming tries to remove the car's wooden floorboards. He struggles, board stuck:

CUMMING
Simply lift and remove the floorboard...
(can't; tries again)
Simply lift...

Duncan steps forward, raises his boot - seemingly to stomp Cumming's head but -- *THUMP* -- KICKS OUT THE FLOORBOARD.

As he steps away, Lockhart approaches Cumming, makes a note.

LOCKHART
He has a lot of hostility.

CUMMING
I noticed.

LOCKHART
Curious...are *you* training *him?*
Or is he training you?

Cumming reacts, *isn't entirely sure.*

END SEQUENCE

EXT. WAR OFFICE BUILDING -- NIGHT

Exhausted from the day Cumming labors toward his ROLLS-ROYCE. Senses someone behind him, following...

DUNCAN
Nice ride.

CUMMING
Your father was a chauffeur, died in a car fire during the bomb raids back in ‘14. He teach you to drive?

DUNCAN
Let me park the car in the garage a few times.
(a beat; then)
You know how he died?

CUMMING
(nods)
I’m the reason he’s dead.

BRIEF FLASHBACK

Quick cuts, soundless: *aftermath of the CAR CRASH, a burning wreck as a BLOODIED CUMMING struggles to crawl out; trapped, leg pinned down, won't budge. FLAMES INTENSIFY. Desperate he picks up a shard of metal, stares at the razor-sharp edge, then glances at the ankle of his trapped leg...*

BACK TO SCENE:

CUMMING

looks away, wracked with guilt, the memory all too painful.

CUMMING
Couldn’t get back to London in time to warn anyone about the air raids. Tried. Lost my car, my leg. <u>My son</u>.
(shrugs)
Guess we both lost someone that day.

Duncan shifts, uncomfortable.

DUNCAN
Why me?
(off Cumming’s look)
Had to be other recruits out there, more qualified. Trained for this sort of thing...

CUMMING
I scoured greater London in search of England's best'n brightest...
(shrugs)
All I found was you.

DUNCAN
Not very reassuring.

CUMMING
You're a raging bull in a bloody china shop, Duncan. Trained to charge into battle, loyally, for King'n Country. Which you did, many times. But it's not your skills in combat that interest me...it's your ability to survive I admire most.
(beat)
I know about the POW camp. You spent a year there before you escaped. *Torture. Interrogation.* Conditions most men would find intolerable. Yet somehow...you found your way home.

He steps closer, drilling deep into Duncan --

CUMMING
I'm not looking for the man who knows the road to hell, Duncan...
(earnest)
I'm looking for the one who rode his way out.

Off Duncan's look --

EXT. OPEN TOP, DOUBLE-DECKER BUS -- NIGHT (DRIVING)

A wobbly passenger bus bounces down cobbled London streets. Duncan sits alone in back as a WORKMAN disinfects empty seats with a handheld pump spray, sterilizing for Spanish flu.

As the bus drives on --

CUT TO:

INT. RECOVERY WARD, LONDON ROYAL HOSPITAL -- NIGHT

Duncan crosses to the corner where he last saw Westmore but: THE COT IS EMPTY.

DUNCAN
Matthew...?

WHEELS SQUEAK

Duncan turns, sees a young NURSE pushing an empty wheelchair.

DUNCAN
The man who was in this bed, Westmore. *Matthew Westmore*. Where is he?

NURSE
This is a hospital. We hold patients here, not prisoners.
(pushes on)
S'cuse me.

As she wheels the empty chair away --

CHURCHILL (V.O.)
Miss Lockhart approved your recruit fit for assignment...

INT. SMOKING LOUNGE, ROYAL AUTOMOBILE CLUB -- NIGHT

Churchill, deep in thought, sitting fireside with a cigar. Flames CRACKLE as Cumming rests in the chair next to him.

CHURCHILL
She likes him. I, however, *do not*.
(explains)
Men of lower class standing have less at stake than a nobleman. Commoners. Vagrants, criminals. They could never be as loyal to King and Country as men of high moral-social standing. Men like us. Men who have proven their loyalty with honor, and not just blood.
(puffs; gestures)
Which is why...

Churchill motions for a NAVY CADET (maybe 19) in uniform to approach. Young handsome. Stands between them.

CHURCHILL
Vetted this sailor myself. Quite qualified for our mission abroad. Speaks Russian. And his family pedigree is...impressive. As such, he has much at stake here, like us.

CUMMING
(scrutinizing the cadet)
Stakes...

Abruptly, Cumming kicks his foot up on a table, unsheathes a thin DAGGER hidden in the hilt of his cane and -- *THUNK* -- CUMMING STABS HIS OWN LEG. The blade wobbles in his shin.

On cue, the cadet PUKES behind Churchill's chair.

CUMMING
Stakes is precisely why I picked the man I did: *he doesn't have any*.
(the point)
With nothing at stake, he has nothing to lose.

As Cumming PLUCKS the dagger from his fake leg --

CUT TO:

A CATAPULT SNAPS

Slingshot triggered by mechanical hydraulics; a RUSSIAN SEAPLANE launches off a cliff, then drops like an anvil onto a rocky seaside outcropping, EXPLODING on the waves below...

EXT. LAUNCH PAD, KRONSTADT FORTRESS -- NIGHT

The flames arc, nearly singeing VOSTOK who turns away in disgust. Lights flicker, power surge in the generator as Grozny approaches, a PAGE from the Eyes Only file in hand.

GROZNY
(of the crash)
Your aerial surveillance program is proving costly for Mother Russia, comrade. Is it necessary? Already our battleships patrol the northern passage. Minefield along the south. Watch towers on all four corners armed with anti-aircraft artillery.
(certain of it)
Nothing can escape Kronstadt.

VOSTOK
I command the defenses of this fortress, *comrade*. Not Lenin. Not Trotsky. Not Stalin. Certainly not Dzerzhinsky and your Cheka police.
(beat; cools)
Our prisoner, has he divulged the ulterior cipher?

Grozy nods, FLICKS a lighter. Holds the flame to the page. Suddenly, between the jumbled lettering, WRITING APPEARS, scorched into print on the page. MORE JUMBLED WORDS.

GROZNY
Invisible ink. The new code is impossible to crack without the key.

VOSTOK
You're certain?

GROZNY
Quite. Which is why I've ordered an agent to London to purchase the code from an old contact of mine.

Vostok sours, faces the KRONSTADT NAVAL HARBOR behind him.

Beyond the launch pad are dozens of RUSSIAN SAILORS scraping ice off the decks of BATTLESHIPS gathering in the bay.

VOSTOK
Enough time for the navy to gather in full, prepare for launch...

He turns, faces Grozny --

VOSTOK
Return to the headquarters. Post extra watchmen outside the embassy, as a precaution.

GROZNY
You believe the British will come for the prisoner?

VOSTOK
They will come for this.
(taps the decoded page)
I would.

A PHONE RINGS

INT. CUMMING'S OFFICE -- NIGHT

Cumming takes down the portrait of his son, stares...*as if this is goodbye;* other items nearby packed in a box.

The phone continues to RING, like an alarm...

IN THE FOYER

CUMMING
(answers ... listens)
Yes ... boat, which boat?

EXT. LONDON DOCKLANDS -- NIGHT

Looking up at the icy hull of a Finnish CARGO VESSEL moored on the Thames; ropes CREAKING; waving a FINNISH FLAG.

CUMMING (V.O.)
My contact in Finland says there's a Russian spy aboard this ship...

INT. SHIPPING OFFICE, DOCKLANDS -- NIGHT

Seeing the same vessel out the window as the CREWMEN step down the gangplank, given coins, a day's pay for shore leave. Watched by Cumming who CRUMPLES the ship's manifest; *no help.*

CUMMING
I need you to find him.

LOCKHART (O.C.)
What about Duncan?

Cumming turns to LOCKHART who smears dabs of rouge onto her cheeks and lips; rosy red like a street tart, a tightly wound corset hidden under an overcoat, rather seductively.

Hard to believe this is the same bookish woman from before.

CUMMING
He's not trained for this...
<u>You are</u>.

CUT TO:

THE CREWMEN, STEPPING OFF THE PIER

Salty Finnish sailors, welcomed to London by PROSTITUTES, waiting as they do most nights. Flirting, fawning. Taking men by the arm, escorting them to a nearby shithole pub.

LOCKHART, AMONG THEM

silky smooth leg poking out as she adjusts her stocking; unlit cigarette stick dangling from her mouth.

LOCKHART
(in Russian; subtitled)
Match? Any of you boys have a match?

A MATCH IS LIT

By a bald man with a square jaw, hard Eastern European features -- KOUROV -- blows out the match.

EXT. SHITHOLE PUB -- NIGHT

A rowdy, raucous crowd HOWLS inside, DRUNKS in various moods of intoxication: angry, giddy; LAUGHING, mugs SHATTERING.

Suddenly the door SWINGS OPEN; out spills --

LOCKHART

Glancing, every direction; a drunk reaches out for her to come back in; she SLAPS his hand away, not interested.

LOCKHART (V.O.)
I lost him...

INT. SHIPPING OFFICE, DOCKLANDS -- NIGHT

Lockhart, washing off her make-up, clearly frustrated.

LOCKHART
He went to get a couple pints,
never came back.

CUMMING
Did you identify him?

LOCKHART
No. But I found this.

She holds up a RUSSIAN MATCHBOOK, written in Cyrillic, propaganda for the Bolshevik party. Cumming takes it, flips it open; scribbled on the inner flap we see: MARTOV-OXFORD.

MATCH CUT:

PROF. MARTOV - UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

A faculty sign etched with the school’s iconic badge...

INT. FACULTY OFFICE -- DAY

The door opens; in steps MARTOV (50s), wiry intellectual, tweed jacket, horn-rim specs. Looks like a MARXIST, *is one.*

Sets his briefcase on a desk stacked with POLITICAL DOCTRINES most notably the “Communist Manifesto” by Karl Marx. Closes his door, locks it; opens the Manifesto, revealing a HOLLOWED CORE with a smaller book inside, tightly bound...

Martov removes the smaller book, flips the pages: jumbled lettering just like in the EYES ONLY file...*only this book has the full encryption alongside it:* a CIPHER CODE BOOK.

INT. DINING HALL, ROYAL AUTOMOBILE CLUB -- NIGHT

An upscale supper club, packed, elite patrons chattering.

At a table for two sits Duncan. In a dinner suit. Itching at the bow tie around his neck, as if it were a noose. He flips the FRENCH MENU over, confused, as if he can't read it.

Heads turn as a STUNNING WOMAN enters, wearing an elegant evening dress. She passes a wiry man wearing horn-rimmed specs -- it's MARTOV -- clutching the CODE BOOK, anxious.

Must be Duncan's lucky day because the stunning woman crosses to his table and stops. Duncan looks up, likes what he sees:

DUNCAN
(soaks her in; smirks)
Now that's more lady-like.

THE STUNNING WOMAN IS LOCKHART

LOCKHART
Try not to get the wrong idea.

She sits, the WAIT STAFF pulling her chair.

DUNCAN
Wrong idea? So this isn't a test?

LOCKHART
A test?

DUNCAN
To see if a soldier like me can handle high society situations. Infiltrate the upper class. Mingle with distinguished men, maybe even charm a beautiful woman...

He takes her hand...

Kisses it like a gentleman. She softens, wasn't expecting to. Quickly JERKS her hand away. Duncan smirks, amused; clearly not as uncomfortable in here as she had assumed.

LOCKHART
Have you ordered?

DUNCAN
No, I ah-

LOCKHART
You can't read the menu. It's fine. I'll order.

DUNCAN
(in French; fluent)
Je peux lire l'amende menu...
(shrugs; explains)
Just nothing on it I wanna eat.

She reacts, impressed, immediately tries to hide it.

LOCKHART
Parlez-vous français?

DUNCAN
Oui, parfaitement.
(German; Italian; Spanish)
Ich spreche auch Deutsch...
E italiana...
Y un poco de español.

LOCKHART
Cunning linguist. You learn all that in school?

DUNCAN
POW camp mostly, back in the war. I was the only Englishman there. No choice but to listen, and learn. From the guards, other prisoners...

LOCKHART
Were any of them Russian?

DUNCAN
(in Russian; fluent)
Like the Marxist behind you?

Duncan nods to Martov, still at his table across the floor. Lockhart reacts without looking, surprised he knew:

DUNCAN
(explains)
His drink. Vodka, chilled. Better suited for the proletariat than the *bourgeoisie* in here...
(baiting her)
Ex-boyfriend?

LOCKHART
Ex-colleague. Martov. Cryptanalyst. Code-breaker in the war, Room 40 under Admiral Hall. Sold a few of those secrets to our Allies: French, American. *Russians*. Back before the Bolsheviks took over. Seemed harmless enough at the time.

DUNCAN
So what's he doing here?

CUMMING (O.C.)
Old habits die hard.

Cumming steals a chair from a nearby table, joins them.

CUMMING
Martov likes to wine-n-dine before he makes his deals.

DUNCAN
You knew he'd be here?

LOCKHART
I tracked him from his office on campus.

DUNCAN
So this isn't a test?

CUMMING
Test's over...
(beat)
So's your training.

SCREEEEEEECH

INT. PLATFORM, LONDON UNDERGROUND -- NIGHT

A metal shriek trumpets the train's arrival.

CUMMING (V.O.)
A Russian spy slipped into London last night on the docks...

Tired COMMUTERS line up. Among them is MARTOV, nervous, trying not to be as -- *WHOOOSH* -- the train doors open. Commuters spill out. Martov rudely pushes his way through the crowd, fighting to get onboard before the doors close.

CUMMING (V.O.)
We know he intends to meet Martov but don't know where.

As the doors close -- DUNCAN SLIPS ONBOARD -- his dinner suit replaced with his ARMY JACKET, much more comfortable.

CUMMING (V.O.)
I need you to shadow the professor, identify his contact. And observe their meeting without being seen.

OOOMPH

Duncan “accidentally” bumps into Martov.

DUNCAN
Honest knock, sir, honest knock.
S’cuse me.

Martov HUFFS as Duncan steps by, finds another spot in the over-crowded car.

As the train JERKS to depart --

CUMMING (V.O.)
Truthfully, I’d prefer Lockhart be sent on this, but considering their shared professional history-

DUNCAN (V.O.)
Are you asking me to help...

QUICK CROSS-CUT:

BACK IN THE RESTAURANT

At the table --

DUNCAN
...or are you ordering me to?

Cumming smirks.

CUMMING
Pick one.

INT. SUBWAY CAR -- CONT.

Bouncing along the tracks, not nearly as level as today.

As the car speeds along, DUNCAN glances over at Martov just as he’s approached by KOUROV, the bald man from the docks; after Kourov hands him a padded envelope Martov reaches into his jacket for the CODE BOOK he brought...

...only it’s not there; Martov pats his pockets, befuddled, suddenly realizing he’s been pickpocketed...Martov clocks the car, skittish now as he searches for --

DUNCAN
Lose something, comrade?

Duncan flashes him a cocky grin, raising the CODE BOOK he lifted off Martov, waving it.

KOUROV

Instantly pissed, shoves Martov aside, the padded envelope spilling onto the floor, CASH NOTES at people's feet as --

Duncan elbows past COMMUTERS as Kourov pursues him; Duncan quickly reaches the forward door for the next car, glances back at Kourov -- THEY LOCK EYES -- the chase is on.

BETWEEN CARS

Duncan steps out, NOISE DEAFENING before he steps into --

THE NEXT CAR

Duncan slides in, keeps moving, shuffling between commuters; Kourov right behind him, doesn't bother to shut the door, barrels through the crowd, knocking people over, gaining...

KOUROV WIELDS A KNIFE

A thin stiletto hidden up his sleeve, sliding into his palm, weapon of a well-trained assassin.

Duncan doesn't see it, reaching out for the next forward door when suddenly -- SHIIINK -- Kourov stabs the stiletto deep into Duncan's arm, immediately releasing his grip on the --

CODE BOOK

Kourov catches it, retracting the stiletto as he stealthily continues through the door Duncan opened.

Duncan, stunned, arm strangely limp all of a sudden; glances down at his hand, BLOOD DRAINING DOWN HIS ARM, dripping off his fingers onto the floor; he looks up as --

KOUROV MOVES INTO THE NEXT CAR

Casual, as if nothing happened -- Duncan reacts, pissed -- grits his teeth, then staggers into the NEXT CAR as...

KOUROV

Glances at the CODE BOOK, then quickly -- and discretely -- folds and <u>inserts a few DOCUMENT PAGES inside</u> before stuffing the whole thing in his jacket pocket; *mission accomplished*.

SUDDENLY -- WHAAAM -- DUNCAN SMASHES KOUROV INTO THE WALL

Headfirst, glass from the nearby window SHATTERING, lets in a GUST OF WIND, air in the tunnel screaming as the train speeds down the rails while they fight.

KOUROV, STUNNED -- GRABS A HOSTAGE

Human shield, tip of his stiletto pressed to their throat; bleeding from his forehead, Kourov blinks when he sees Duncan still coming at him -- other commuters GASP as -- DUNCAN SMASHES THE HOSTAGE'S HEAD BACK INTO KOUROV'S FACE -- no hesitation, breaking Kourov's grip. AND NOSE. Blood gushes.

Kourov -- *wasn't expecting that either* -- suddenly outmatched he stumbles for the forward door, wipping blood as he trips and staggers into the --

CONDUCTOR'S CAB

Dead end; no more cars.

Just an old MOTORMAN at the controls, leaning out the window, watching tracks; turns as Kourov enters.

MOTORMAN
(said it a thousand times)
Sorry lad, no civilians allow-

KOUROV SHOVES HIM ASIDE

peers out at the tracks, trapped; the motorman is about to cuss him out, notices the stiletto, thinks better of it; slips out the door past --

DUNCAN

He enters, locks the door with his bloodied arm...

...it's just the two of them now.

KOUROV SWINGS THE STILETTO

Cuts Duncan across the leg; BLOOD SPEWS; Duncan RAMS Kourov into the controls; knocks the THROTTLE forward -- *the train accelerates* -- REACHING TOP SPEED AS --

THE TRAIN VEERS AROUND A SHARP TURN, nearly derails, the entire cab sways like a liferaft on the ocean.

Kourov thrusts at Duncan, cuts him again; Duncan GROWLS, swings but Kourov dodges and stabs again and again, a blur of quick pricks along the meat of Duncan's shoulder.

Duncan drops to a knee. KOUROV CIRCLES. A shark about to strike when suddenly -- LIGHT FLOODS THE CAB -- bright, getting brighter; OUT THE WINDOW Kourov & Duncan both can see the next PLATFORM STATION dead ahead...

WITH ANOTHER TRAIN ON THE TRACKS

Ohshit...

DUNCAN REACHES OUT, PULLS THE BRAKES

SCREEEEEEECH

... too late ...

THE TRAINS COLLIDE -- *WHOOOOOOOOMPHHHHH* -- tremendous impact, cars SMASH together; steel frames bend, SNAPPING, rivets BURSTING, shrieks of twisted metal; an unbelievable ROAR.

AWAITING COMMUTERS on the platform react, SCREAMING as they scramble for cover before a HAZE OF DUST kicks up, smothering the entire station in a dense smog as...

DUNCAN & KOUROV

Are tossed in the cab like socks in a dryer; crashing to the floor before everything stills; SILENCE.

Beat.

That unnerving calm after an accident when nobody's sure what in the hell just happened.

Then --

DUNCAN CHOKES DUST

Banged up, bleeding, *still alive*; ears BUZZING as he hears a noise, looks up to see KOUROV CLIMB OUT A WINDOW, stumbling from the derailed wreck, disappearing into the haze.

As Duncan peels himself off the crooked floor --

INT. SUBWAY PLATFORM -- CONT.

A dust-filled haze as Duncan wafts for air, can't see shit; smog blocking the light; people on the ground, hurt, dazed, bloodied; eyes wide with shock; terrified victims.

DUNCAN

caked in dust, scanning for KOUROV; spots him as he hops off the ledge of the platform, limping on a BROKEN LEG past the derailed wrecks before disappearing into the SUBWAY TUNNEL.

DUNCAN
(wincing)
Shit...

CUT TO:

IN THE SUBWAY TUNNEL

Pitch black. Flickers of light from low voltage bulbs, current glitches from early electricity. Hard to see, easier to hear: BOOTS CLOMP, echoing as Duncan enters the tunnel.

He stops, listens. *The other boots stop*. Silence. Cautious, Duncan moves deeper, what little light there is from the platform nearly fading when -- ANOTHER TRAIN ROARS BY.

Streaking down another track -- LOUD AS HELL -- which is precisely when the STILETTO SLASHES AT DUNCAN'S THROAT.

KOUROV

striking from the shadows, swinging wildly -- a wounded animal is a dangerous one -- HE STABS AT DUNCAN'S WINDPIPE -- going for the jugular, every ounce of strength he has left; tip pricking Duncan's throat -- BUT GOING NO FURTHER...

Unbelievably: DUNCAN HAS CAUGHT THE BLADE WITH HIS BARE HAND

He SQUEEZES tight -- HIS CLENCHED FIST OOZING BLOOD -- won't let go ... *the more it hurts, the angrier Duncan gets* ...

A helluva fight: two brutal warriors locked in mortal combat.

Until - POP - a flickering BULB BURSTS; the two backlit now as Duncan, as if energized by the moment, bends Kourov's arm back and -- CRAAACK -- snaps Kourov's elbow the wrong way...

KOUROV HOWLS

Doesn't scream long as -- *THUNK* -- Duncan buries the stiletto up to the hilt in Kourov's chest. Kourov staggers, shocked to see his own knife stuck in him. Then --

SCREEEEECH -- ANOTHER TRAIN SCREAMS AROUND THE TRACK

Headlights SHINE on the two of them -- *ohshit* -- quick Duncan digs into Kourov's pocket, grabbing the CODE BOOK just as --

THUUUUUD

DUNCAN LEAPS OUT OF THE WAY as the train explodes through Kourov who instantly disappears with a sick THUUUD.

As the train ROARS by, Duncan glances at the CODE BOOK in his hand, opens it to find the DOCUMENT PAGES Kourov hid inside.

Duncan reacts to what he's found, mind racing as we --

CUT TO:

INT. PUBLIC REST ROOM, LONDON UNDERGROUND -- NIGHT

Water rushes as Duncan rinses a BLOODIED TOWEL over the sink; blood drains. He soaks it again, blots the dozen or so fresh pricks dotting his body...

...new scars to go with the old.

DUNCAN (V.O.)
Haven't killed a man since the war.
Broken a few bones along the way,
nothing lethal though.

CUMMING (V.O.)
Does it bother you, killing?

Duncan glances into a broken mirror, studies himself --

DUNCAN (V.O.)
(matter-of-fact)
No.

EXT. STAIRWELL - LONDON UNDERGROUND -- NIGHT

Duncan hands the CODE BOOK over to Cumming.

DUNCAN
This bothers me though.

He shows Cumming the DOCUMENT PAGES he found; Cumming snatches them, reading as --

DUNCAN
What do they say?

Cumming looks up, uncertain if he should tell him --

CUMMING (V.O.)
Russians found the ulterior cipher
in the file...

INT. OFFICE, SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR -- DAY

At last we see Kourov's DOCUMENT PAGES: carbon copies of MI-1c's ENCODED FILE complete with jumbled invisible ink.

Holding them, Churchill sinks in his chair.

CHURCHILL
They have the assassination orders
then...

CUMMING
But haven't decoded them, *not yet*.
That's why they sent a spy to
London - <u>to buy the translation</u>.

Churchill shifts, *something must be done ... <u>now</u>*.

CHURCHILL
Your recruit left quite the mess.
Derailed two trains in the tube.
Sheer miracle no one was killed.

CUMMING
(protective)
He did his job.

CHURCHILL
Yes, well, let us hope he doesn't
leave an alike trail of destruction
on his way to Russia. <u>Is he ready</u>?

CUMMING
Nearly. Another week-

CHURCHILL
Another week and our worst secrets
spill out, *in detail*. Could be used
against us to wage another World War.
Our embassy in Petrograd was already
butchered. Next strike may hit our
very shores. England cannot wait...
(gravely serious)
<u>Send your man</u>.

CUT TO:

BRASS KNUCKLES

Removed from the secret cache in the stone wall as --

WESTMORE (O.C.)
Thief.

EXT. EAST END, UNDER THE BRIDGE -- NIGHT

Duncan reacts, looks over at WESTMORE, cracked mask back on, <u>stuck in a wooden wheelchair</u>. Warming himself with a bottle of booze, clearly drunk.

DUNCAN
Matthew...
(takes him in)
How are you?

WESTMORE
Crippled.

DUNCAN
I can get you help.

Westmore tries to wheel away, but gets stuck in the mud. Duncan pushes him free.

WESTMORE
Don't need your charity, mate. *All the king's horses and all the king's me*n...<u>can all go rot in hell</u>.

Westmore digs out a crushed cigarette, pats for a match. Duncan FLICKS the trench lighter. Westmore PUFFS, takes in his old friend's new clean-cut appearance, amused by it.

WESTMORE
New face. Clothes. Seems as though England gave you everything...and left nothing for me.

DUNCAN
You were my Quartermaster back in the war...

WESTMORE
I was your superior officer. What of it?

DUNCAN
You may not want my help, mate. But I sure as hell need yours.

Westmore reacts, takes the lighter, studies it; then --

WESTMORE
Might have a few souvenirs lying around, could come in handy...with a few modifications, of course.

Off Duncan's smirk --

CUMMING (V.O.)
Officially you're unofficial...

EXT. LONDON DOCKLANDS -- DAWN

As sunlight rises over the Thames...

CUMMING (V.O.)
Caught there will be no rescue...

DUNCAN

crosses the gangplank onto a weathered CARGO VESSEL loading crates of tea for export.

CUMMING (V.O.)
No recognition of your existence. No prisoner exchange. You'll be tortured, interrogated. Executed.

DUNCAN (V.O.)
So...don't get caught.

A SHIP HORN BLARES

BEGIN CROSS-CUT:

BACK UNDER THE BRIDGE

Westmore digs into the cache, hands Duncan some gadgets: BRASS KNUCKLES, HAND MAGNET ... and a COAT HANGER.

Duncan gives him a crooked look: *a coat hanger?*

CUMMING (V.O.)
Sounds like a raw deal, but being *off* his Majesty's Service does give you one distinct advantage...

DUNCAN (V.O.)
Which is?

INT. BAR LOUNGE, ROYAL AUTOMOBILE CLUB -- NIGHT

CUMMING & DUNCAN, sharing a drink; the conversation they've been having is taking place right here:

CUMMING
License to kill.

Duncan pauses mid-sip - Cumming is deadly serious.

CUMMING (V.O.)
His name is Thomas Hawthorne...

INT. PRIVATE QUARTERS, CARGO VESSEL -- DAWN

Duncan sets his bag on the cot. Clocks the cramped space. Steel walls and a porthole. Not unlike a prison cell.

Home Sweet Home.

CUMMING (V.O.)
Piano teacher, was giving lessons in Helsinki. Spying on the emerging Finnish government there before we ordered him to Petrograd.

DUNCAN (V.O.)
So it's a rescue mission then.

BACK IN THE BAR

Now Cumming pauses mid-sip:

CUMMING
Not quite. You need to find him, if he's still alive. And the file he was caught with. Both are likely being held in the Kronstadt naval yard in the bay outside Petrograd.

DUNCAN
How do you know?

CUMMING
Because that's where I'd hide them. Most heavily guarded fortress in the world...

Cumming slides Duncan a cigar-sized METAL TUBE, tiny holes dotted along the tip, air vents for an early-mod SUPPRESSOR.

CUMMING
Find the man. Find the papers. Destroy both.

Duncan reacts, wrestles with what he's being asked to do.

DUNCAN
I'm not an assassin.

CUMMING
You're whatever England needs you to be.

EXT. STERN - CARGO VESSEL -- DAWN

Seeing the ship leave port.

Duncan at the railing dressed like a crewman; thick coat, knit hat. Alone he sifts an EYES ONLY mission file, finds a photograph of a handsome regal man we recognize: HAWTHORNE.

The look on his face tells us he's conflicted about this.

CUMMING (V.O.)
You'll travel as part of the crew. A contact will meet you on the docks, take you across the Baltic into Russia. A courier I've used. Knows the way to the embassy...

EXT. UNDER THE BRIDGE -- NIGHT

QUICK SHOTS: Westmore unwinds the neck of the hanger, cuts the wire in half; SMASHES one end flat with a brick; curls the half-wire around the trench lighter, slides it off...

CUMMING (V.O.)
Once there you may need to crack the safe, empty it, if it isn't already. Can you handle that?

INT. CARGO HOLD, CARGO VESSEL -- BELOW DECK

...Duncan inserts Westmore's self-made SNAPPER PICK into the lock on a shipping crate; *flicks the spring;* THE BUMPER HITS; *flicks again, again* -- the lock drops -- CLANKS on the floor.

Damn thing works.

DUNCAN (V.O.)
I know a few tricks.

BACK IN THE BAR

CUMMING
Leave no trail. Nothing that can link England to the papers... Yourself included.

DUNCAN
And the embassy?

CUMMING
(downs his drink)
Burn it.

INT. PRIVATE QUARTERS, CARGO VESSEL -- DAY

Duncan sits on the cot, cleaning the WEBLEY; slides the breach rapidly, spreading oil evenly across the gun metal.

DUNCAN (V.O.)
This man of yours, Hawthorne-

CUMMING (V.O.)
You can't save him so don't even try. If he's still alive he'll have been tortured so severely I doubt he'll have enough strength to stand. Better you kill him, *for his sake*. And yours.

Finished, Duncan grabs the SILENCER, screws it in...

DUNCAN (V.O.)
I can't just leave a man behind.

...aims at a LIFE VEST hanging on a hook, fires - BLAAAAM - the shot echoes in the cabin, LOUD, anything but silent.

Ears ringing, he inspects the vents on the barrel tip as --

CUMMING (V.O.)
Soldiers win wars, Duncan...

BACK IN THE BAR

CUMMING
Spies prevent them. This is how.
(knows it's distasteful)
If I was ten years younger I'd send myself ... don't make me regret sending you.

CUT TO:

CARGO SHIP - CARGO HOLD, BELOW DECK

Duncan manually DRILLS more holes into the suppressor tips, blows away the shavings. Screws it back into the Webley; aims at a wooden crate, FIRES -- PFT -- *much better.*

CUMMING (V.O.)
Boat to Helsinki leaves at dawn...

BACK IN THE BAR

CUMMING
Be on it.

END SEQUENCE

EXT. CARGO VESSEL, NORTH SEA -- NIGHT

Lightning FLASHES as the ship crashes into a wall of water, violent swells splashing the deck.

As the THUNDER bellows --

INT. CARGO HOLD, CARGO VESSEL -- SAME

Duncan helps the crew keep the cargo locked down. We don't notice at first, but as enough bodies pass by we suddenly realize Duncan is the only one with a LIFE VEST on.

As the boat sways, Duncan is knocked backwards into a crate. The strap of his vest gets caught on a nail. Duncan tries to rip it free; can't. Suddenly, the gruff CAPTAIN appears holding a knife to Duncan's throat. HE SLASHES.

Cuts the strap of Duncan's vest, which falls away.

BRITISH CAPTAIN
We sink, we drown.
(snickers)
Better that way, believe me.

As the boat SWAYS again --

CHURCHILL (V.O.)
Does your man understand what he's been asked to do?

INT. CHURCHILL'S OFFICE, SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR -- DAY

Cumming nods, exhausted. Looks ready to retire, willingly.

CUMMING
He'll do it, whether he understands it or not. Question is, do we understand what we've asked of him?

CHURCHILL
He knows the risks.

CUMMING
And the enemy. <u>All too well</u>.
Better than I ever did.

Churchill studies him, carefully.

CHURCHILL
This wasn't about your son, was it?
Because it won't bring him back.

BRIEF FLASHBACK

Quick cuts, soundless: *CUMMING, trapped in the car. Flinching as GUNSHOTS pop along the wreckage. Cracked glass shatters. GERMAN SPIES firing from the road, at their car. Rushing in.*

Cumming digs out his REVOLVER. Fires six shots. Not enough. Two spies left. Still coming, have Cumming dead to rights. Suddenly the spies SPASM, riddled with bullets. Drop dead.

Cumming looks over his shoulder at the smoking barrel of a WEBLEY PISTOL -- THE EXACT SAME GUN HE GAVE DUNCAN -- held by the driver of the wreck, crushed under the steering wheel. Bloodied, broken. Dying. Just saved his father's life.

This was ALASTAIR CUMMING.

BACK TO SCENE:

CUMMING

forever haunted by the worst memory of his life...

...turns toward the door to leave when --

CHURCHILL
Cumming, one last thing...

Cumming stops, pausing at the door.

CHURCHILL
(curious)
The hell happened to my secretary?

Cumming glances at the RECEPTION DESK outside...

All the books on Paris are gone -- as is “Penny” -- replaced by a much older and meaner-looking RECEPTIONIST who has neatly arranged the desk...and removed all the booze bottles.

CUMMING
Requested a transfer, so I heard.
To Paris for the peace accord.

CHURCHILL
That request was denied. *By me*.
Twice in fact. How strange.

CUMMING
(giving nothing away)
Yes, strange.

With that, CUMMING BOWS OUT, cane echoing down the hall:

CLICK ... CLICK ... CLICK

CUT TO:

EXT. GRAVEYARD, OUTSIDE PETROGRAD -- NIGHT

Clouds of HOT BREATH cool in the arctic air as PRISONERS are lined up in a frigid field of crumbling tombstones along the crooked treeline of a black forest. Detainees from Kronstadt.

GROZNY (O.S.)
(in Russian; subtitled)
You are not citizens of Russia, nor martyrs of this Civil War...

Grozny paces before the headlights of the ARMY TRUCKS we saw outside the embassy earlier. Flanked by a squad of armed CHEKA AGENTS, rifles ready but strangely not aimed.

GROZNY
You are insects...and insects must be exterminated.

Suddenly the twin turrets on the armor-plated PUTILOV CAR CRANK-CRANK-CRANK forward; the Gatling-like muzzles fire:

BOOOM BOOOM BOOOM BOOOM BOOOM BOOOM BOOOM BOOOM

The thunderous ROAR of heavy machine gun fire unleashes a wall of shock & awe; twin PM-M1910 MAXIM PULEMYOTs.

Grozny watches the slaughter with sick glee as the bodies are pummeled, geyers of blood erupting as they drop, hitting the frozen earth hard, without mercy. Finally the guns stop.

Silence. Then a CHEKA AGENT approaches Grozny --

CHEKA AGENT
Sir, the ground is too frozen to dig any deeper.

An exhausted GRAVEDIGGER stands near a shallow MASS GRAVE.

GROZNY
Let them freeze. A lesson for the others in town.

CHEKA COURIER
Sir, this just arrived. Sent to headquarters at the Winter Palace.

The CHEKA COURIER hands Grozny an envelope with a British flag stamped on it, postmarked from ENGLAND.

GROZNY (O.C.)
This came from London...

CUT TO:

INT. VOSTOK'S COMMAND QUARTERS, KRONSTADT -- DAWN

Vostok reaches into the envelope, finds a pair of horn-rimmed GLASSES, same specs worn by the Marxist in London.

Cumming's response to the envelope Vostok sent earlier.

VOSTOK
Alert security. Every port in the Baltic. Post watch guards outside the embassy night and day...

Vostok CRUSHES the wire frame in his hand.

VOSTOK
(in English)
The British are coming.

EXT. A WINTER WONDERLAND -- DAY

Snow falls on an arctic harbor in the Gulf of Finland as the weathered CARGO VESSEL pulls into port.

Insert: HELSINKI, FINLAND - January 1919

EXT. BOW, CARGO VESSEL -- SAME

Duncan, at the railing, breath puffing in the chilly air...

Holds out the EYES ONLY file on Hawthorne, puts his TRENCH LIGHTER to it, *flicks;* a FLAME APPEARS, soft orange, an early Zippo-like modification by Westmore. Duncan grins, likes it.

As the FILE BURNS --

EXT. DOCKS, HELSINKI PORT -- DAY

ICE CRAAAAACKS as the cargo vessel tugs on the frozen mooring lines. CREWMEN in winter boots CLOMP off the gangplank, unloading the ship's cargo; icicles shake off as they work.

Duncan breaks away, moves toward the mainland passing --

FINNISH FERRYMAN
Need boat to Russia, friend?

Duncan stops, regards the lanky FERRYMAN stomping his feet to keep warm, flashing a toothy grin -- *this is his contact?*

FINNISH FERRYMAN
Come, I take you.

INT. FERRY BOAT -- SAME (DOCKED)

As the Ferryman unmoors the line to disembark, DUNCAN BOARDS. Clocks the empty deck. Same ferry from Petrograd only here there are no other passengers onboard. *Strange.*

DUNCAN
This a private charter?

CLICK

Ferryman turns, levels a revolver at Duncan as a trio of husky Russian CHEKA AGENTS appear, blocking every escape.

Duncan reacts, pissed he walked right into a trap.

FINNISH FERRYMAN
You come quietly, *da*? You make no trouble.

Ferryman's thick Finnish accent is now a thick RUSSIAN one.

As they close in, Duncan discretely removes a snow glove, reaches under his belt buckle...

DUNCAN
No trouble.

THWAAACK - A BRASS KNUCKLE PUNCH

The nearest Russian drops, nose gushing blood.

With a fury Duncan stuns the other two Russians with body blows as the startled Ferryman aims, about to fire. Duncan bowls him into the wall; Ferryman hits hard, drops his gun.

We've seen Duncan angry before, *never this lethal*. Whereas the Bobbies under the bridge were beaten, these men are absolutely brutalized. *Given license to kill: HE USES IT.* The Cheka agents pause, weren't expecting a death match.

DUNCAN ATTACKS; grabs a fistful of someone's hair, drives his brass-fist into the back of their neck, crushing the cervical vertebrae. Gushing Nose tries to rush Duncan, gets tossed out the port window; GLASS SHATTERS as he SPLASHES into the sea.

Dazed, the Ferryman goes for his gun -- DUNCAN REACHES WITH HIS GLOVED HAND -- way out of reach, *yet somehow...*

THE GUN SLIDES A FEW INCHES INTO DUNCAN'S GLOVE

Ferryman reacts, bewildered. *How'd that happen?* Quick, DUNCAN COCKS THE GUN, aims, about to fire when -- *CRAAAACK* -- FERRYMAN DROPS, knocked out cold from behind by:

NIGHTINGALE
Didn't your mother warn you about accepting rides from strangers?

OLIVIA NIGHTINGALE (20s), a seductive British femme fatale, wielding a spring-loaded BLACKJACK stick. Looks familiar, she's the same female courier we saw at Hawthorne's piano.

DUNCAN
She should've warned the strangers about me.

She smirks, collapsing her BLACKJACK as --

NIGHTINGALE
Welcome to Helsinki.

INT. BOATHOUSE, DOCKS -- DAY

Nightingale pulls Duncan in from the cold, locks the door. He comes face-to-face with a RUSSIAN NESTING DOLL as:

NIGHTINGALE
That display back there, you enjoy waltzing right into traps like that?

DUNCAN
Best way to spring 'em.

She moves to a small icehouse FIRE PIT, flames snuffed. Adds a handful of COAL from a bag; reaches for a fuel can marked HIGH OCTANE. Pours. Then SCRAAAAPES a metal stick along the pit -- SPARKS FLY -- ignite a fire: WHOOOOOOOSH.

As the coal burns --

DUNCAN
Who are you?

NIGHTINGALE
A courier, for the War Office. Been stationed here at this frozen outpost a few months now. Guess that makes this the British embassy in Finland, unofficially anyway.

Duncan notices the EMPTY BOAT RAMP, *strange.*

DUNCAN
Courier...so where's your boat?

NIGHTINGALE
Long story...

DUNCAN PINS HER TO THE WALL

Buries his Webley pistol under her chin, startlingly fast.

DUNCAN
So start with your name.

CLICK - she presses her own pistol to his.

NIGHTINGALE
Olivia. Olivia Nightingale.

DUNCAN
Nightingale. Like the nurse?

NIGHTINGALE
I volunteered for the Red Cross,
back in the war. Boys needed hope.
Name seemed to inspire them.

DUNCAN
So what's your real name?

NIGHTINGALE
What's yours?

DUNCAN
Duncan. Alec Duncan.

NIGHTINGALE
(doubts it)
You're real name ... is the same as
your cover?

DUNCAN
Never thought about it.

NIGHTINGALE
You should.
(beat)
Cumming said you were different.
Unlike any spy he's sent before.

DUNCAN
How's that?

NIGHTINGALE
They were all gentlemen...
You're anything but.

Duncan senses her sincerity, lets go.

CUT TO:

A CHARTER MAP ROLLS OUT: GULF OF FINLAND

Shows just how damn close they are to Russia; only thing between Helsinki and Petrograd are a series of small skerries and rocky islands, the last one being --

NIGHTINGALE
Kronstadt...
(beat)
An island Naval fortress off the coast of Petrograd. Patrolled by skiffs night and day. Honestly, if your goal is to slip into Russia, be easier to enter from Siberia by crossing the Arctic circle.

SHE ROLLS OUT ANOTHER MAP: KRONSTADT

The fortress sits high above a jagged shoreline of rocks, WATCH TOWERS jutting from all four corners.

Almost looks like a RUSSIAN ALCATRAZ.

NIGHTINGALE
Battleships patrol the bay here. Anti-aircraft guns watch the skies. Can't fly over it, can't sail around it. Leaves one option. Here.

She points again, this time at a MINEFIELD, drawn on the map; doodles of explosions, skull & bones...

DUNCAN
Minefield?

Duncan pours HIGH OCTANE fuel into his TRENCH LIGHTER as:

NIGHTINGALE
Before Russians closed the borders I was crossing the gulf two, three times a week for drops. Know every skerry, sandbar and breakwater along the way. And I'm telling you, *right now*, this is the only way in.

Duncan turns, faces the EMPTY BOAT RAMP again, wondering --

DUNCAN
So...where's your boat?

Off her look --

NIGHTINGALE (V.O.)
There, on the pier...

EXT. FINNISH NAVAL YARD -- NIGHT

Under the cover of night, lit by pulsing lights powered by humming generators, a small fleet - FINNISH COASTAL DEFENSE. A few NAVAL GUARDS patrol the docks. All seen from behind...

A CONCERTINA WIRE FENCE

Crude obstacle from the war, barbs spooled along trenches. Duncan & Nightingale approach, locked out as --

NIGHTINGALE
Docked inside that boathouse.

She points to a BOATHOUSE on the end of the farthest pier. Duncan studies the fence, looking for a way in...

DUNCAN
Plenty of other boats we could take.

NIGHTINGALE
Not like this one. Agile enough to evade, fast enough to escape...

DUNCAN
Yeah? Then how'd it end up in here?

Duncan has an idea...

Slides on his HAND MAGNET, reaches for the wire - *eeeerrk* - pulls the concertina close, wooden post straining as he digs out his TRENCH LIGHTER, holds it to the barbed wire...

FLICKS THE FLINTWHEEL -- *WHOOOOOSH* -- A BLUE FLAME SPITS OUT

intensely hot, the high octane fuel melting the wire just LIKE A TORCH WELDER; as the wires SNAP free --

NIGHTINGALE
Fins spotted me returning from Russia. Thought I was a Cheka spy. Was delayed on a pick up in Petrograd. Agent never showed...

THE FENCE COLLAPSES

As they cross over it, carefully minding each step --

NIGHTINGALE
I waited. Longer'n I should have. Didn't get back before dawn. Was outta fuel when they caught up. Had to jump ship, barely got away.

EXT. DOCKS, FINNISH NAVAL YARDS -- NIGHT

Ice clings to everything as Duncan & Nightingale discretely make their way down the pier toward the BOATHOUSE.

As a pair of guards pass by, they dart toward the door; padlocked shut. Nightingale looks around for another way in. Points to a narrow window high above, reaches for it.

Duncan has a better idea. Pulls out the SNAPPER PICK, inserts it, flicks, hits the bumpers, flicks again...padlock opens.

Slipping inside, Duncan quietly closes the door as one guard reappears, looking back across the docks, scratching his head as if he heard something...

INT. BOAT HOUSE, FINNISH NAVAL YARDS -- NIGHT

Eerie creaks, cold metal chains, frozen ropes and wood. Looks more like a storage garage than launch pad. Engine blocks dangle from the rafters like 2-ton Christmas decorations; DAMAGED BOAT HULLS, flipped over, awaiting repairs.

Duncan & Nightingale scurry along, quiet as mice.

NIGHTINGALE
(whispering)
Should be right back here...

Rounding a corner they stop before a 40-foot toothpick hanging from rail chains. It's a CMB, Coastal Motor Boat. Wave skimmer with a massive engine borrowed from an airplane.

And it's real. Revolutionary hydroplane hull constructed of lightweight plywood. *Yes, plywood.*

DUNCAN
That? That's not a boat. It's a pile of driftwood the ocean spit out.

NIGHTINGALE
Thin. Lightweight. Incredibly fast. Fifty knots, open sea. Outrun any battleship, evade any cruiser.

DUNCAN
Not from the ceiling it won't.

Nightingale finds the crank-controls; moves the chain-rail rack manually. Each turn echoes a CLICK-CLICK-CLICK as...

CUT TO:

OUTSIDE THE BOATHOUSE

Seeing the padlock dangling on the door, unlocked.

Studied by the suspicious FINNISH GUARD; *knew he heard something.* Reacts when he hears the muffled CLICK-CLICK-CLICK of the manual rail echoing inside...

BACK TO:

INT. BOAT HOUSE, FINNISH NAVAL YARDS -- NIGHT

As the CMB shifts sideways over the narrow wet launch --

NIGHTINGALE
Year ago Royal Navy sent a flotilla of these to sink German U-boats. Bee stingers, torpedo-charged runs. But to achieve top speed the hull had to be shaved razor thin. So thin, in fact, one shot too close to the fuel tanks and...
(gestures *Ka-Booo*m)
Only skimmer left in one piece.

DUNCAN
You speak like you were a sailor.

NIGHTINGALE
Father was. And my brothers. All three of 'em.

THUUNK

The rails align, the CMB now dangling directly over the water of the wet launch.

NIGHTINGALE
There. Now to bring her down...

She cranks another lever, starts lowering the CMB.

DUNCAN
Careful.

NIGHTINGALE
I got it, I got it...

As the boat drops halfway - THE FINNISH GUARD APPEARS - behind them, watching. Stunned. Not quite sure what to do.

Duncan smirks, caught red-handed.

DUNCAN
(Finnish accent)
Haloo.

Panicked, the guard reaches around back for his slung rifle. Duncan beats him to the draw, whips out his WEBLEY SILENCER, aims and fires - PFT PFT PFT - not at the guard...

...but at the chain above him, holding up an ENGINE BLOCK; they SNAP loose, engine dropping -- *WHOOOOOMPH* -- hitting loud, nearly crushing the guard who leaps outta the way.

DUNCAN
Time to go.

DUNCAN

throws Nightingale into the dangling boat -- PFT -- shoots the rail release, dropping the CMB; Nightingale reacts, falling as the boat SPLASHES into the water below.

Chains RATTLE, still hooked to the CMB.

DUNCAN
REMOVE THE CHAINS.

Nightingale, stunned, unsnaps the chain-hooks as Duncan keeps his silencer trained on the guard who peeks out from behind cover and -- PFT, PFT, PFT -- Duncan pushes him back toward the door, moving him like a pawn on a chessboard...

...just like Cumming showed him, in training.

The guard stumbles out the door, calling for help. Quick, Duncan SLAMS his shoulder into a tall shelf, knocking it over to block the door; stopping the other guards outside who now BANG on the door, trying to get in.

Duncan RELOADS, slaps in a new clip lighting quick as --

NIGHTINGALE
C'MON.

Nightingale REVS the engine.

It ROARS in the warehouse, loud, like an airplane -- *which is where the engine comes from.* As she reaches for the throttle, DUNCAN RUNS, sprinting toward the speeding boat as...

THE DOOR BUSTS OPEN, Finnish guards breaking through, watching in amazement as DUNCAN LEAPS from the walkway...

AND LANDS IN THE CMB, HARD

DUNCAN
GO, GO, GO.

NIGHTINGALE THROTTLES UP

The powerful engine ROCKETS them out of the boathouse just as the guards OPEN FIRE, guns blazing, shots peppering the water alongside the CMB as it leaves the boathouse, escaping.

ON THE CMB - FLEEING THE NAVAL YARDS

NIGHTINGALE
(over the noise)
TOLD YA SHE WAS FAST.

DUNCAN
AND LOUD. ALL OF RUSSIA IS GONNA HEAR US COMING.

NIGHTINGALE
NOT IF WE USE THESE.

She tosses an OAR to Duncan who reacts:

DUNCAN
(incredulous)
WE'RE GONNA PADDLE INTO PETROGRAD?

NIGHTINGALE
TRUST ME, I'VE DONE THIS BEFORE.

As the CMB speeds off into the night --

DISSOLVE TO:

DARK WATERS

A thin sheet of floating ice cracks apart against the thick hull of a RUSSIAN PATROL SKIFF. Though faint, in the distance we hear the rumble of ANOTHER ENGINE bouncing over the waves.

RUSSIAN SAILOR (O.C.)
(subtitle)
Hear that comrade...?

EXT. RUSSIAN PATROL SKIFF -- NIGHT

The young RUSSIAN SAILOR perks up, lifts his hat to hear. Shivers. Cold to the bone. Noise of the other engine fades.

RUSSIAN SAILOR
Cut the engine, cut the engine...

The RUSSIAN SKIFF PILOT complies.

It's quiet, except for the waves slapping the sides. The sailor flips on a SEARCHLIGHT, pans it over the water, into a DENSE FOG, the evening mist spreading thick...

...through it we catch a glimpse of another boat's wake.

RUSSIAN SAILOR
He went into the mist...

RUSSIAN SKIFF PILOT
Radio the other side to intercept.

Suddenly, a shadow appears in the mist, drifting closer...

The two Russians fumble for their rifles, muscles slowed by the cold as they try to steady their aim; out of the fog a steel-spiked floating shell appears: a NAVAL MINE.

Both sailors react, properly spooked --

RUSSIAN SAILOR
They're in the minefield.

RUSSIAN SKIFF PILOT
Who would be so crazy to cross it at night?

CUT TO:

DUNCAN, IN THE COLD FOG

Frost nipping at his nose as he steers; staring at NIGHTINGALE, laying flat on the bow of the CMB, a lookout, points which way to turn...

DUNCAN CRANKS THE WHEEL

Silently - emphatically - she points to turn the other way.

He does. Glances over the starboard as a spiked RUSSIAN NAVAL MINE drifts by, close. *Too close.* Quick, DUNCAN GRABS AN OAR, pokes it between the horns, carefully pushing it away.

That's not frost on his nose - *it's frozen beads of sweat.*

NIGHTINGALE POINTS AGAIN

Too late. *WHOOOOMPH.* They hit something. Duncan cringes, waits for the explosion...*it doesn't come.* Beat. Duncan opens an eye, looks -- sees two RUSSIAN SAILORS -- cringing like him, both realizing it's not a mine they hit: BUT EACH OTHER.

DUNCAN JUMPS ONTO THE RUSSIAN SKIFF

No hesitation as he leaps over Nightingale swinging the OAR -- CRAAAACK -- solid blow to the first Russian sailor, nearly flips him over into the icy waters as...

ANOTHER MINE DRIFTS BY

Misses the skiff by inches, detonator horns narrowly scraping past the hull -- NOW HEADED DIRECTLY TOWARD THE CMB.

Nightingale sees it --

NIGHTINGALE
Ohshit...

DUNCAN TOSSES HER THE OAR

She catches it, stabs at the mine to push it outta the way; wooden tip squeezing between the spiked-horn detonators, nearly triggers one; an incredibly tense moment as...

Duncan disarms both Russians, tosses them overboard into the sea; ICE CRACKS, splashing as they slap the water swimming back to their skiff before their muscles freeze up.

Thinking quick, Duncan RIPS OUT the skiff's fuel line, tossing the hose as he hops back into the CMB; shares a look with Nightingale to make sure she's ok, then REVS the engine.

As the CMB disappears into the fog...

DUNCAN
Bet you haven't done that before.

EXT. BLACK FOREST SHORELINE -- SUNRISE

Duncan hops off the boat onto the rocky shores of --

Insert: PETROGRAD, RUSSIA - January 1919

He turns to push the CMB back out to sea when Nightingale debarks to anchor the boat, wrapping a rope around the shedding bark of a thick pine tree nearby.

The wooden CMB perfectly camouflaged in the treeline.

DUNCAN
You're not coming.

NIGHTINGALE
You want to find this man, you'll need my help.

DUNCAN
Too dangerous. You could get hurt.

NIGHTINGALE
Chivalry, from you?

Duncan ignores her, makes his way toward a GRAVEL ROAD when --

NIGHTINGALE
Cheka patrols drive that road.
All day. Standing orders to shoot
on sight at anyone suspicious.

He stops.

NIGHTINGALE
We can cut through the forest.
Know a shortcut into the city.
(beat)
This way.

She skips over the road, ducking into the forest.

Duncan glances back at the road, debating whether or not he should follow her...

EXT. BLACK FOREST -- DAY

Duncan, following her.

Pushing through thistly frost-covered pine branches, BRANCHES WHIPPING his face, hard, *sting like hell.*

DUNCAN
Should've taken my chances on the
bloody road.

EXT. GRAVEYARD, OUTSIDE PETROGRAD -- DAY

Nightingale emerges from the trees, leads Duncan cautiously through the burial grounds. They pass a shallow grave packed with CORPSES frozen stiff, arms & knees crooked in the cold. Gruesome to see. We've been here before: <u>the execution site</u>.

Nightingale looks away; Duncan doesn't. Studying the faces, frozen in agony -- <u>looking for someone</u> -- HAWTHORNE.

NIGHTINGALE
Victims of the Red Terror campaign.
Thousands executed by Cheka police.
Mass slaughter across the country.
Russia's civil war...

Duncan moves on, least bit bothered.

NIGHTINGALE
You act as though you've seen all this before.

DUNCAN
Escaped it, POW camp outside Berlin near the end of the war. Easier to kill prisoners than to feed them.

She catches up, studies his face - *as cold as the air.*

NIGHTINGALE
You're not afraid of death, are you?

A TRUCK APPROACHES, PARKS

They hear it, duck for cover as the GRAVEDIGGER steps out.

NIGHTINGALE
(has an idea)
You know how to drive?

Duncan shrugs.

DUNCAN
Took the Family out for a spin a few times.

Off her look --

EXT. STREETS OF PETROGRAD -- DAY

Blanketed in snow, a typical winter day here.

Horse-drawn SLEIGHS carry people across town; very few autos. It almost looks like London save the storefront signs all written in Cyrillic. As the gravedigger's TRUCK speeds by --

NIGHTINGALE (V.O.)
You have a family?

INT. TRUCK -- SAME (SPEEDING)

Bouncing along. Duncan shifts, a natural at the wheel.

DUNCAN
Served one, a long time ago. Before the war. Was just a boy then. Father was a chauffeur.

NIGHTINGALE
And your mother?

DUNCAN
Died when I was born...
(beat)
Family let us stay on.

NIGHTINGALE
Nice of them. Must've given you some sense of loyalty, I hope.
(curious)
This family, where do they reside?

DUNCAN
Buckingham Palace.

Beat.

Nightingale's jaw drops.

NIGHTINGALE
Family...you drove the *Royal Family?*

DUNCAN
Father did, mostly. I filled in on occasion. Took the Queen mum for a spin in the country once. Got lost.
(smirks, remembering)
That was a helluva day.

DUNCAN SHIFTS AGAIN

EXT. BRITISH EMBASSY, PETROGRAD -- DAY

Same courtyard, now packed with SNOW DRIFTS curling up over the roof, smothering the entire building.

NIGHTINGALE (O.C.)
There's the embassy...

Rolling tires CRUNCH SNOW as the truck slows, coasting.

Duncan studies the grounds; spots a PARKED CAR with two heads inside, hot breath puffing on the cold windshield.

DUNCAN
It's being watched.

NIGHTINGALE
I've got an idea.

CUT TO:

INT. PARKED CAR -- DAY

Two uniformed CHEKA AGENTS sit inside, cold & utterly bored. Sipping Vodka to keep warm. One HUMS a familiar tune; Tchaikovsky's 1812 Overture, off-key; annoys the other.

TAP TAP TAP

Knuckles wrap the glass; the driver rolls the window, revealing NIGHTINGALE, cigarette dangling from her lips.

Cheka driver smiles, his lucky day --

NIGHTINGALE
(in Russian; subtitled)
You boys have a match?

CUT TO:

BLACK

Hearing a CRUNCH of snow, shovelled by hand; suddenly a beam of light EXPLODES through as Duncan punches a hole in the packed drift, the sheen of his BRASS KNUCKLES shimmering...

INT. LOBBY - BRITISH EMBASSY -- DAY

Duncan slides in through a snow-hole in the front door; cave-like, windows all blacked by snow, as if an avalanche swallowed the place whole.

WHOOOSH

Duncan ignites his TRENCH LIGHTER, a torch in the darkness, eyes adjusting, seeing BULLET-HOLES in the reception desk, stains of blood frozen to the floor.

The same sight Hawthorne witnessed.

DUNCAN
Bloody hell...
(what Cumming said)
<u>Buildings are battlefields</u>.

CUT TO:

OUTSIDE THE EMBASSY - ON THE CHEKA PATROL CAR

Windows fogged, hearing LAUGHTER inside...

...in the backseat, a wild party underway, smoke hovering, Vodka spilling as Nightingale pours another shot into the bottle's cap, swigs it; hands it to the driver, his turn.

BACK IN THE EMBASSY

Duncan enters one of the offices, ransacked, spots what he's looking for -- UNION JACK FLAG -- on the wall; Duncan lifts it, revealing the WALL SAFE behind it, wide open, emptied.

BACK TO:

THE CHEKA PATROL CAR

Nightingale climbs over the seat -- and the Russians -- not nearly as drunk as she's pretending to be.

They are.

NIGHTINGALE
(in Russian; subtitled)
Thanks for the drink boys, next round's on me...

She reaches for the door when it suddenly opens; she spills out into the snow, looks up at --

GROZNY
(in Russian; subtitled)
Clever girl...

GROZNY GRABS A FISTFUL OF HAIR

Lifts Nightingale to her feet; she's about to scream when a RUSSIAN ARMY TRUCK pulls up, ARMED CHEKA AGENTS HOP OUT, surround the building; making way as the PUTILOV ARMORED CAR arrives, turrets turning, *CLANK CLANK CLANK,* on the embassy.

GROZNY
(in Russian; subtitled)
...but not clever enough.

BACK TO:

DUNCAN - INSIDE THE EMBASSY

Rips the UNION JACK FLAG off the wall; unscrews the cap on his trench lighter, pours the high octane fuel over it as...

GROZNY (O.C.)
Looking for something, comrade?

Duncan spins, behind him -- GROZNY, GUN TRAINED -- flanked by a squad of armed CHEKA AGENTS stomping through the snow-hole.

GROZNY
Or some one perhaps?

DUNCAN THROWS THE FLAG ON THE FLOOR, SURRENDERING

It lands at the feet of the Cheka agents, sniffing fumes...

GROZNY
You are the second man I've caught in here. Third counting the boy I killed. You realize of course you are too late. We already seized the papers ... and have decoded them.

DUNCAN
I doubt that.

GROZNY
Why would you doubt it?

DUNCAN
Because if you had decoded them... You wouldn't need to be here.

DUNCAN FLICKS THE LIGHTER

Tosses it on the fuel-soaked flag -- *WHOOOOOSH* -- a fireball erupts, scorching the Cheka agents who drop their rifles, fingers singed; as they CLANK on the floor Duncan immediately takes a step toward Grozny who FIRES -- BLAM

The WILD SHOT grazes past Duncan's ear as Grozny's aim is pulled wide, the gun yanked into -- DUNCAN'S HAND MAGNET

Duncan wrenches Grozny's gun away -- AIMS IT AT HIM -- the building BURNS around them, FLAMES SPREADING fast as...

GROZNY
What kind of spy are you?

DUNCAN
I'm not a spy.

DUNCAN FIRES -- BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM -- AT THE WINDOWS

The instant they crack -- *WHOOOOOOOSSHH* -- an AVALANCHE floods the floor, burying the Cheka agents under several feet of compacted snow; Grozny barely manages to leap clear as...

SUNLIGHT FLOODS THE EMBASSY

Blinding; windows letting in a cool breeze with a full view of the courtyard outside; Duncan squints, eyes adjusting on the PUTILOV ARMORED CAR on the street, guns trained...

...Duncan only has a split-second to drop before...

BOOOM BOOOM BOOOM BOOOM BOOOM

HEAVY MACHINE-GUN FIRE RAKES THE EMBASSY

A wall of rapid fire explodes from the turrets, streaking through the open windows, shredding everything in sight.

DUNCAN ROLLS FOR COVER

Grozny grabs a scorched rifle off the floor, hunts for Duncan -- THEY EXCHANGE FIRE -- brief, cut off by the roaring fire, FLAMES FANNED by their gunfire and sudden surplus of oxygen.

THE EMBASSY IS NOW A RAGING INFERNO

Grozny, can't stand the heat, flees out the front door, snow drift around the hole melting as...

BOOOM BOOOM BOOOM BOOOM BOOOM BOOOM BOOOM BOOOM BOOOM

Both Putilov turrets concentrate on Duncan, rip through the burning walls as he retreats back into the...

RANSACKED OFFICE

Gunfire still coming, relentless, shredding the room's WOODEN SUPPORT BEAMS; Duncan reacts, hears the structure MOAN as...

THE BURNING CEILING COLLAPSES

Duncan rolls under the desk, covered from the flaming debris -- BOOOM BOOOM BOOOM BOOOM -- <u>but not from gunfire</u>; shredding the desk to splinters, flushing Duncan out...

DUNCAN CLIMBS THE COLLAPSED CEILING

Shots streaking under his boot heels as...

CUT TO:

THE FLOOR ABOVE - DUNCAN

...pulls himself up, racing toward a STORM WINDOW, never slows as he SLAMS HIS SHOULDER INTO IT, <u>full force</u>; EXPLODES out it; *fresh air;* tumbling wildly down a tall snow drift, arms & legs flailing as he spills out onto the street...

...directly into the path of the --

<u>PUTILOV ARMORED CAR</u>

DUNCAN

Shit.

CLANK CLANK CLANK

Turrets swivel into position, about to fire when unbelievably -- DUNCAN SPRINTS AT THE ARMORED CAR -- a mad charge, nose flaring like a bull as -- BOOOM BOOOM BOOOM -- turrets fire

DUNCAN HITS THE DECK, SLIDES ON THE STREET

Glides on a patch of ice, slipping right under the car, looking up, seeing the WOODEN FLOORBOARD above his head...

DUNCAN WHIPS OUT HIS WEBLEY SILENCER

Aims up at the floorboard and FIRES: PFT PFT PFT PFT PFT PFT

INSIDE THE PUTILOV

Both TURRET GUNNERS SPASM, shot from below, slumping dead as Duncan empties the full clip of his automatic.

Silence. The guns stop firing.

DUNCAN

catches his breath, lungs heaving ... *BLAAAAM* ... a shot ricochets next to his head, close; quick he rolls out from under the stalled Putilov, whipping around as --

GROZNY FIRES AGAIN - *BLAAAAM*

The shot misses, *barely*; Grozny crosses the “battlefield” toward Duncan, levering the bolt-action rifle as...

DUNCAN RELOADS

ejects the clip, SLAPS in a new one -- *realfuckinfast* -- beats Grozny to the draw, SILENCER inches from Grozny’s head. Grozny stops dead in his tracks; surrenders.

As the embassy burns behind them --

EXT. RUSSIAN ARMY TRUCK -- DAY

Grozny THUDS on the back carriage, thrown down next to NIGHTINGALE, bound like a prisoner. As Duncan frees her --

NIGHTINGALE
The embassy’s on fire...

DUNCAN
I know.

CUT TO:

GROZNY, GAGGED

Tied to the truck carriage like a POW as Duncan & Nightingale climb into the cab.

NIGHTINGALE
You know? Whaddya mean you know?
Did you burn it down on purpose?

He did.

NIGHTINGALE
WHY?

Duncan REVS the diesel engine.

DUNCAN
Orders.

NIGHTINGALE
Orders???
(exacerbated)
What else were you ordered to do?

CUT TO:

GROZNY, HEAD LIFTED FROM ICY WATERS

Face blue from being dunked in the cold once too often; stings like hell, deep down...

GROZNY
(shivering)
... go ... to ... hell ...

EXT. BLACK FORREST SHORELINE -- SUNSET

Duncan dunks Grozny again, been at this a while now; Nightingale looks away, can't stomach the interrogation.

WIDER we see Grozny's been tied to the trough of the CMB, still anchored at the shoreline; MUFFLED SCREAMS UNDERWATER; air bubbles bursting at the surface as DUNCAN PULLS HIM UP.

Grozny GASPS, mouth nearly frozen shut, can barely speak:

GROZNY
(teeth clattering)
KRONSTADT ...
(beat)
They are in Kronstadt ..
(beat)
... papers, the agent ...

INT. VOSTOK'S COMMAND QUARTERS, KRONSTADT -- DUSK

Vostok sips a glass of vodka, stares out the window in his tower as an ASH-COVERED SKY spreads across the horizon, almost look like storm clouds, spreading for miles...

RUSSIAN OFFICER
(subtitled)
General, reports from Petrograd say the British embassy was burned to the ground. The city is under attack.

VOSTOK
The city isn't under attack...
...<u>the attack is coming here</u>.

Vostok holds up the EYES ONLY file:

The INVISIBLE INK CYPHER hidden between the lines has been burned into view but ... <u>every word is still encrypted</u>.

VOSTOK
Move the fleet from the island.
Give passage to any boat that attempts to enter our harbor...
(ominous; in English)
<u>We'll draw them to us</u>.

Vostok faces the window again as...

NIGHTINGALE (V.O.)
This is insane...

EXT. CMB -- DUSK (DRIFTING)

Nightingale, at the wheel, breath puffing as --

NIGHTINGALE
You plan to sneak into Kronstadt, the most heavily guarded naval base in the entire world...<u>alone</u>?

DUNCAN TURNS, WEARING GROZNY'S CHEKA UNIFORM

DUNCAN
Not alone...right, comrade?

He faces GROZNY -- <u>wearing Duncan's winter gear</u> -- his hands bound like a prisoner, face red from the cold.

As Duncan GAGS him --

DISSOLVE TO:

KRONSTADT

Appearing in the mist, fortress searchlights panning the waters around it revealing an armada of PATROL SKIFFS and BATTLESHIPS circling the island like sharks.

Insert: KRONSTANDT NAVAL FORTRESS - January 1919

NIGHTINGALE (V.O.)
I take it back - this isn't insane...

EXT. CMB -- NIGHT (DRIFTING)

Nightingale cuts the engine.

NIGHTINGALE
It's suicide.

Duncan scans the jagged rocks surrounding the island.

NIGHTINGALE
What're you doing?

DUNCAN
Improvising.

NIGHTINGALE
For a way in?

DUNCAN
Way out, actually. Need an escape.

DUNCAN'S POV

Seeing a DRAINAGE PIPE sticking out near the rocks...

That'll do.

NIGHTINGALE
You sure about this?

Duncan stands, suits up...

HAND MAGNET under his glove; BRASS KNUCKLES under his belt; SNAPPER PICK in a pocket; WEBLEY SILENCER in his jacket.

A soldier-spy geared for war.

DUNCAN
I'm sure.

CUT TO:

EXT. KRONSTADT HARBOR -- NIGHT

The CMB drifts past a REFUELING SKIFF tugging a huge gas hose to one of the larger BATTLESHIPS in the bay. As it approaches the DOCKS, a pair of RUSSIAN SOLDIERS toss mooring ropes to --

DUNCAN
(in Russian; subtitled)
Catch of the day comrades...

ON THE DOCKS

Duncan shoves Grozny onto the planks like a prisoner.

DUNCAN
British cod, from London. Caught him at the embassy...

Grozny wriggles, squirming to alert the two soldiers when - *THWAAACK* - Duncan kicks him, hard.

DUNCAN
Help me take him inside to the prison cells.
(to Nightingale; sincere)
Dasvidaniya.

They exchange looks. Brief nod of thanks before she clears the boat away from the dock, leaving him behind...

A CELL DOOR CREAKS OPEN

INT. GULAG DUNGEON, KRONSTADT -- DAY

The two Russian soldiers drag Grozny, drop him on the floor.

RUSSIAN SOLDIER
You must sign over his custody. Official documentation.

DUNCAN
Of course...
(reaches into his jacket)
Here's my pen.

CRAAAAACK

In a blur, Duncan draws his Webley silencer, striking the two soldiers quick. They slump on the floor, knocked out cold next to Grozny who looks up at --

DUNCAN
Which cell?

INT. VOSTOK'S COMMAND QUARTERS, KRONSTADT -- DAWN

Vostok slaps the EYES ONLY file on his desk.

Next to it -- a MAP OF THE BALTIC -- strategic, spread out with clusters of SILVER WARSHIP TOKENS surrounding Kronstadt like some kind of board game. This is the RUSSIAN FLEET.

Vostok "sails" one of the warship tokens out of the Baltic, down to another island -- GREAT BRITAIN -- where he moves the piece up along the Thames and...stops on London.

Vostok steps away from his desk, grabbing the PRISON KEYS as he leaves his office...

INT. GULAG DUNGEON CORRIDOR, KRONSTADT -- MOMENTS LATER

Duncan inserts the SNAPPER PICK into the locked door, flicks the bumpers, UNLOCKS the door.

It CREEEEAKS open slow...

INT. GULAG DUNGEON CELL, KRONSTADT -- SAME

...light spills over a ragged prisoner curled on a pile of hay like an animal.

DUNCAN (O.C.)
Hawthorne...

HAWTHORNE ROLLS OVER

Beaten, bruised; a ghost of the man he once was.

Duncan approaches, an executioner, aims the long barrel of the silencer at Hawthorne's head.

HAWTHORNE
Finally, thank god...

Hawthorne closes his eyes, mercifully relieved.

Duncan tightens his finger on the trigger, about to fire; can't; Hawthorne's disheveled face haunting him, reminding him of his brothers-in-arms under the bridge...

DUNCAN THROWS GROZNY DOWN

He lands next to Hawthorne who looks up, surprised --

DUNCAN
Can you walk?

INT. GULAG DUNGEON CORRIDOR, KRONSTADT

Hawthorne stumbles, legs weak. Duncan helps him walk, approaching the stairs.

HAWTHORNE
What are you doing?

DUNCAN
Rescuing you.

As they near the STAIRS...

DUNCAN ABRUPTLY TURNS DOWN ANOTHER HALL

HAWTHORNE
Isn't that the way out?

DUNCAN
Trust me, I've done this once before.

As they move off -- VOSTOK APPEARS ON THE STAIRS

Keys rattling as he steps down the stairwell with two guards, marching toward Hawthorne's cell. Vostok unlocks the door, enters thinking he'll find Hawthorne...

FINDS GROZNY INSTEAD

HAWTHORNE (V.O.)
London sent you?

INT. ANOTHER CORRIDOR, KRONSTADT -- SAME

Duncan nods, stops next to a FLOOR DRAIN grate.

HAWTHORNE
What year is it anyway?

DUNCAN
Year?

HAWTHORNE
How long have I been here?

DUNCAN
Few months.

Duncan YANKS the grate off, lowers Hawthorne down as --

HAWTHORNE
Months? That's all?

DUNCAN
(empathizes; been there)
Feels like years...I know.

Duncan lets go.

Hawthorne drops into the DRAIN TUNNEL below, splashes in a puddle of dirty storm water; WHIFFS an awful stench.

Duncan is about to lower himself down when --

VOSTOK
(in Russian)
THERE, STOP HIM.

VOSTOK

Down the corridor, flanked by the guards who spot Duncan, racing after -- DUNCAN DROPS DOWN THE HOLE

INT. DRAIN TUNNEL, KRONSTADT

SPLASHES THE SAME DIRTY PUDDLE -- picks himself up quick, hustling Hawthorne deeper into the tunnel as...

THE KRONSTADT GUARDS JUMP DOWN THE HOLE

CUT TO:

DOWN THE TUNNEL

Duncan splashes blindly through ankle-deep sluice; slows at a forking tunnel, checks the water for which direction it's flowing, follows it out...

DUNCAN
This way.

THE KRONSTADT GUARDS reach the forking tunnel, not sure which way they went; they stop, listen for a clue --

HAWTHORNE SLIPS

Slides down a slick downslope in the tunnel; the guards hear him, immediately pursue.

DUNCAN

helps Hawthorne up, hears their FOOTSTEPS splashing, catching up -- trapped, he draws his WEBLEY SILENCER, takes aim...

HAWTHORNE
Over here...

HAWTHORNE

Stumbles toward an orb of light where the tunnel ends; stops at the edge; water pours over the spillway of the same DRAINAGE TUNNEL we saw earlier outside the island.

As Hawthorne starts to climb down --

DUNCAN
There's a boat waiting, over by the rocks. The pilot-

HAWTHORNE
Olivia?

DUNCAN
She'll take you home.

HAWTHORNE
What about you?

DUNCAN
Have to hold 'em off here, buy you enough time to get away.

HAWTHORNE
What do I tell London?

A beat. Then --

DUNCAN
That you escaped...on your own.

THE KRONSTADT GUARDS APPEAR

DUNCAN
GO.

DUNCAN FIRES - PFT PFT PFT

Not to kill them, to slow them down; push them back for cover long enough for HAWTHORNE TO CLIMB OUT THE TUNNEL, down onto the rocky shoreline where he looks around as ... CLICK

DUNCAN, OUT OF AMMO

Drops the gun; the guards step out, rifles raised as --

VOSTOK (O.C.)
You nearly made it...

VOSTOK APPEARS

Steps out from the shadows of the tunnel as...

VOSTOK
But nobody escapes Kronstadt.

Behind Vostok -- 10 MORE GUARDS APPEAR -- Russian soldiers, Vostok's best infantry, moving in on...

DUNCAN

Clearly outnumbered, hardly intimidated; reaches for his BRASS KNUCKLES, slides them on...

...predatory gleam in his eye.

VOSTOK
(in Russian; subtitled)
Arrest him.

DUNCAN FIGHTS THE KRONSTADT GUARDS

Knocks out the first guard with solid strike to the chin; drops like a sack of rocks as Duncan pummels the next guard with a series of body blows so ferocious we can hear RIBS BREAKING with each colossal punch.

For a moment, it almost seems like Duncan is going to punch his way out of this...

...then the other 10 guards rush in.

DUNCAN FIGHTS THEM ALL

Vostok watches, piqued by the brutality of this man, intrigued to see such a savage foe.

DUNCAN TIRES, starts to take a few more blows than he can handle, beaten down to the ground until...

He stops fighting back.

VOSTOK (V.O.)
I must admit, you are nothing like any of the other agents I've ever encountered before...

CUT TO:

INT. GULAG TORTURE CHAMBER, KRONSTADT -- NIGHT

Duncan's arms lift up behind his head, wrists tied to a hook; shirt stripped away, chest naked; body beaten, bruised.

VOSTOK
Savage, brutal...

Vostok circles, noticing the scars on Duncan.

VOSTOK
...such violence for a British spy.

DUNCAN
I'm not a spy.

Vostok stops, faces him.

VOSTOK
No. You are a soldier, like me. Honorable. Loyal to your country. You would die for it, yes? In this way, we are not so different...

He steps aside; glances at Duncan's WEAPONS & GADGETS laid out on a table one by one.

Vostok inspects the Webley, unscrews the silencer.

VOSTOK
I like your toys.
(beat)
The British Secret Service must be more desperate than I thought. My spies say they have shut down their intelligence program. MI-1c, I believe it was called...
(beat)
Like you, it is no more.

He sets the Webley down.

Picks up the BRASS KNUCKLES, approaching Duncan with them.

VOSTOK
Do you know pain?

THHHWAAAACK

Vostok punches Duncan with the brass knuckles.

Duncan winces, doesn't scream.

VOSTOK
Yes, you know it well.

Vostok removes the brass knuckles.

Hands them to GROZNY, mad as hell, waxy blotches of blisters scar his face -- nose, ears, chin -- third degree frostbite, ugly but painless, nerves damaged beyond repair.

VOSTOK
You crossed the Baltic, slipped past the minefield onto Russian soil... *my soil* ... set fire to the embassy. Interrogated a Cheka officer, then used him to infiltrate this fortress and rescue your fellow agent...
(beat)
All for this.

Vostok holds up the EYES ONLY file.

VOSTOK
Sanction orders to assassinate Russian leaders. Took quite the effort to decode. Though unfinished there's enough evidence here for my superiors to declare war on England, which they will, having no choice but to do so...once I invade London.

Duncan scowls, eyes like daggers wanting to strike.

VOSTOK
This will end Russia's civil war. The Red and White armies that have torn my homeland in half because of the damn Bolsheviks will unite behind me against a common enemy.

DUNCAN
You want to end a war...by starting another.

Vostok smiles, a sly grin - his plan finally understood.

VOSTOK
Wars never end, as history shows. They continue, from one enemy to the next. Peace is impossible. These pages prove it. As do you.
(explains)
Your actions will motivate my men. They will see what you've done to your embassy as an act of terrorism and they will want revenge.
(beat)
Ironic how your capture will ignite the very war you came to prevent.

DUNCAN
Quite right, but for one thing...

Vostok leans closer, curious as:

DUNCAN
I know pain - and this isn't it.

DUNCAN HEADBUTTS VOSTOK

snaps his hands up over the hook, falls, lands on his feet, hands still tied behind his back as he CHARGES VOSTOK, bowls him over as -- THWAAACK -- GROZNY HITS DUNCAN, hard.

Swinging the brass knuckles wildly, *payback*; Duncan rolls, swings his arms under his legs, brings them forward to swing like an anvil hammer; Grozny swings right back; not so much a fight as it is a lumbering slugfest between mad brutes.

Duncan rattles into the table with his gadgets; Grozny pins him to it, raising his fist to strike at Duncan's skull -- *THUUUUD* -- hits the table next to his ear instead, punch pulled wide, brass knuckles landing in the HAND MAGNET.

Grozny reacts, stunned; *so are we.*

DUNCAN
(what Westmore said)
Made of iron, not brass.

Duncan hammers down on Grozny as -- VOSTOK SLIPS AWAY -- carrying the EYES ONLY file as KRONSTADT GUARDS CHARGE IN

About to be overrun, Duncan gnaws at his ropes, chews through them to free his hands; the instant the rope falls, Duncan grabs the first guard and, instead of fighting past him...

DUNCAN DISARMS HIM, takes the rifle, swings it like a club smashing the guard's skull, knocking him out; Duncan flips the rifle around, FIRES -- BLAM -- drops the nearest guard;

The other guards flinch, fumbling for their own rifles as DUNCAN COCKS THE BOLT ACTION ON HIS, FIRES AGAIN -- BLAM -- he cocks the carbine again and -- BLAM -- again -- BLAM.

Their numbers suddenly cut in half, the last five guards finally manage to RETURN FIRE -- BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM -- the noise deafening as DUNCAN DUCKS FOR COVER.

He FLIPS the table, slides behind it; shots impacting the thick wooden top, unable to penetrate.

Like a soldier in the trenches, Duncan aims over the table and FIRES -- BLAM -- takes out a guard. Four left. He ducks again as they RETURN FIRE -- BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM.

Duncan slides to the other end of the table, surprising the next guard who expected him to pop up somewhere else -- BLAM.

Duncan ducks again as -- BLAM BLAM BLAM -- three to go.

Duncan slides to the other side, pops up to fire when -- *THWAAAACK* -- Grozny blind sides him, knocks the rifle away. Duncan reacts, clinching Grozny like a boxer so he can't land another blow. Pull him to the ground, hitting it hard as...

The three guards approach, rifles trained.

Duncan lets go of Grozny, reaches out, grabs something metal, we can't quite see what exactly as...HE STABS THE FIRST GUARD IN THE CHEST -- TAKES HIS RIFLE, SWINGS IT INTO THE CHIN OF THE NEXT GUARD -- BLAM -- SHOOTS THE THIRD.

Beat. Duncan, lungs heaving, last man standing.

Well, almost last. The first guard is still there, in shock, looks down at his chest -- SNAPPER PICK -- buried there, the flat end stuck deep as he slumps dead, killed by coat hanger.

Duncan spins his rifle at Grozny, FIRES -- BLAM -- too late, as Grozny slips out, the shot missing behind him.

ALARMS SOUND

The entire base alerted; Duncan hears it -- reacts as if they were Bobbie whistles -- grabs a shirt, and his Webley before skipping out of the room.

EXT. KRONSTADT HARBOR - BATTLE STATIONS -- DAWN

A hornets nest kicked; RED ARMY TROOPS react to the ALARM, take positions all over the base -- WATCH TOWERS, DOCKS -- crews of RUSSIAN SAILORS board PATROL SKIFFS, buzzing around a brigade of NAVAL WARSHIPS circling the fortress.

A flurry of activity, all for one man...

CUT TO:

DUNCAN

Racing down the corridor, hunting for Grozny who slips toward the GUARD STATION -- reaches a WEAPONS CACHE -- grabs the first gun he sees, FIRES back at Duncan -- BLAAAM.

The two EXCHANGE FIRE, moving each other down the hall like a game of chess -- *only Duncan is a better player* -- and shot.

GROZNY

Flushed out; scrambles up the STAIRWELL toward...

INT. VOSTOK'S COMMAND QUARTERS, KRONSTADT -- DAWN

Grozny steps toward the desk; expects to find Vostok...

...finds only a bottle of VODKA instead; grabs it, bites off the cork, takes a swig...

Duncan appears behind him in the doorway; Grozny senses him, doesn't turn to face Duncan as --

GROZNY
You say you are a soldier...
(sets the bottle down)
Soldiers fight with honor, loyalty.
They do not shoot men in the back.

Grozny raises his hands into the air, slow...

GROZNY
If you are a soldier, a true soldier...then I surrender.

Duncan steps closer, point blank range.

Ejects a single bullet from his carbine, then tosses the rifle to the floor; it CLAAANKS; Grozny hears it hit, gazes at the gun in his hand...SPINS.

FAST

Duncan draws the Webley from his waist, loads the bullet, then FIRES -- BLAM -- beats Grozny to the draw.

The point blank shot punches Grozny square in the chest, barreling him backwards over the desk; knocks the VODKA bottle onto the floor.

Duncan reacts, impressed by the small gun when --

BLAM

A shot from behind spins Duncan to the ground.

VOSTOK, GUN SMOKING

VOSTOK
Fool...

Duncan rolls over, shoulder bleeding from the socket...

...looks for a weapon, sees only the VODKA BOTTLE rolling on the floor nearby...

Vostok approaches, waves the EYES ONLY file.

VOSTOK
Once I reach London, I will burn it to the ground and rebuild a new empire over its ashes, *my empire*...
(zealous)
The first Tsar of Great Britain.

Duncan winces, bleeding, bad.

DUNCAN
You're right about thing...

DUNCAN GRABS THE VODKA BOTTLE, THROWS IT

It SHATTERS, booze soaking Vostok -- and the EYES ONLY FILE

DUNCAN
You will burn.

And with that...

Duncan SCRAAAAAAPES the barrel of his Webley along the floor, strikes it like a match -- SPARKS FLY -- catching the puddle at Vostok's feet and -- WHOOOOOOOOOOOSH

A FIREBALL BURSTS OVER VOSTOK, BURNS HIM ALIVE

The sudden alcohol-fueled inferno torches the entire office -- AND THE FILE -- pages burning as flames arc to the ceiling...

DUNCAN LEAPS OUT THE WINDOW

Glass shatters, a FIREBALL chasing after him as he FALLS...

EXT. LAUNCH PAD, KRONSTADT FORTRESS -- DAWN

ONTO THE SHORT RUNWAY; Duncan peels himself off the asphalt, lungs heaving -- still alive, glancing back up at the window he fell from, suddenly remembers what Cumming said to him:

DUNCAN
(cheeky)
Look before you leap, my ass...

BLAM BLAM BLAM

Shots pepper the asphalt around Duncan as the runway is surrounded by --

RED ARMY TROOPS

Armed, blocking Duncan's only escape off the base.

DUNCAN, PINNED DOWN

Takes cover behind a hunk of metal; Webley out of ammo, stuffs it in his waist as he looks around for a way out...

There isn't one: he's trapped.

As a squad of soldiers encroach on his position, Duncan notices a set of TIRES under the hunk of metal he's hiding behind. Duncan reacts, looks up at the propeller of a...

SEAPLANE, ON THE CATAPULT LAUNCHER

Attached to the mechanical slingshot we saw earlier...

...Duncan's only way out.

Quick, he swings the propeller then climbs into the cockpit, hits the ignition, contact -- THE ENGINE REVS -- but the plane isn't moving.

The soldiers cautiously approach, screaming for Duncan to step out; he doesn't, pulling all the levers on the controls hoping one of them...

DUNCAN TRIGGERS THE CATAPULT

The SLINGSHOT SNAPS, prompting the mechanical hydraulics to LAUNCH THE SEAPLANE DOWN THE RUNWAY...soldiers hit the deck as it shoots down the runway, HIGH SPEEDS.

Duncan, thrown back in his seat as...

THE SEAPLANE FLIES OFF THE RUNWAY

Looks like it might take off...then plummets over the cliff, dropping like an anvil toward the jagged rocks below.

DUNCAN

Reacts, grabs the control stick, yanks the yoke to level out; a split-second before impact -- IT PULLS UP -- curling over the rocks, TIRES CLIPPED, torn away as it sails inches above the jagged outcropping before gliding over the water...

A moment of exhilaration -- HE MADE IT -- then the seaplane starts to sink toward the sea, unable to maintain speed, belly of the fuselage skipping over the pond, SPLASHING as...

THE SEAPLANE CRASHES INTO THE ICY WATERS OF THE BALTIC

A wicked wreck, WINGS RIPPED APART, fuselage skipping over the waves like a rock before it SINKS; as it does...

DUNCAN

rattled in the crash, senses returning the moment the ice-cold water hits his face; freezing...

He climbs out of the plane as it slips below the surface; swims for a piece of the wing nearby, bobbing in the water.

Grabs the wing; won't hold his weight, sinks; Duncan can't hold on anyway, muscles already slowing from the cold, shivering, involuntary shakes, lips turning blue...

DUNCAN SLIPS UNDERWATER

Muscles frigid, kicking feebly for the surface, can't get there -- he's drowning -- body going still, a calm quiet moment as he shuts his eyes and...

IS YANKED UP

Pulled above the surface, Duncan GASPS as he's dragged up onto the CMB by --

NIGHTINGALE
ALEC.

NIGHTINGALE

pulls Duncan close, rubbing his arms to keep him warm; Hawthorne in the boat behind her, at the wheel.

Duncan COUGHS, shivering as --

NIGHTINGALE
SAY SOMETHING.

Beat.

DUNCAN
(teeth clattering)
Never...learned...your real name.

NIGHTINGALE
Sinclair. Karrina Sinclair.

DUNCAN
Karrina...
(beat)
Let's go home, Karrina.

They share a smile.

A tender moment all too brief as --

BOOOM BOOOM BOOOM BOOOM BOOOM

Heavy machine gun fire RAKES the boat; pieces of the plywood hull burst to pieces as if spit out a wood chipper.

HAWTHORNE
They’re coming after us.

Duncan spots a RUSSIAN SKIFF BOAT speeding towards them, firing a MOUNTED MACHINE GUN: BOOOM BOOOM BOOOM BOOOM BOOOM

More shrapnel, splinters everywhere.

A large chunk pierces Hawthorne in the shoulder, stabs through him like a stake; he HOWLS, writhing.

Duncan moves to him like a soldier.

DUNCAN
Don’t move...

DUNCAN RIPS OUT THE STAKE

Hawthorne screams in pain, nearly passes out.

DUNCAN
(to Nightingale)
Keep pressure on it.

NIGHTINGALE
What are you going to do?

DUNCAN STANDS, TAKES THE WHEEL

DUNCAN
Said this boat was fast right?

DUNCAN REVS THE ENGINE, THROTTLES

The engine ROARS, the lightweight boat nearly shooting up into the air as it takes off.

THE RUSSIAN SKIFF PURSUES

Firing -- BOOOM BOOOM BOOOM

Duncan veers.

Shots plunk the water as he speeds between two massive WARSHIPS in the harbor outside Kronstadt.

DUNCAN
HANG ON.

A GAUNTLET RUN

RUSSIAN SAILORS in the warships above FIRE down at the CMB...

...too thin to hit, too fast to catch.

DUNCAN SPEEDS PAST THE WARSHIPS

Escapes the blockade, making a break for the open sea.

Duncan smirks: *they made it.*

NIGHTINGALE
WHERE THE HELL'RE YOU GOING?

He turns to her with a look: *whaddya mean?*

NIGHTINGALE
YOU'RE TAKING US RIGHT INTO THE MINEFIELD.

Duncan reacts, whips his attention back to the wide open sea, realizing now why it's so incredibly wide open.

DUNCAN
Shit.

THE CMB SHOOTS PAST A MINE

The prickly spiked-horn detonators rocking in the wake as the Russian skiff speeds past it, dogged pursuit.

DUNCAN
HANG ON.

DUNCAN SWERVES

Weaves around a pair of FLOATING MINES at breakneck speeds; missing the shells by inches.

Close call.

THE RUSSIAN SKIFF ISN'T NEARLY AS AGILE

Instead of swerving -- IT FIRES AT THE MINES -- exploding them before impact: BOOOM BOOOM BOOOM ...

KA-BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOM

Duncan glances back, sees the FIREBALL -- THEN THE SKIFF -- punching through the fire & black smoke.

DUNCAN WHIPS THE WHEEL

NIGHTINGALE
WHAT'RE YOU DOING?

THE CMB CIRCLES AROUND A MINE, CURVES BACK AROUND

DUNCAN
MAKING SURE THEY DON'T FOLLOW US.

Russian skiff is gaining on the CMB when --

DUNCAN THROTTLES FULL SPEED PAST THE MINE

The wake of his first turn pushes the mine away -- BUT -- the wake of his second PUSHES IT BACK as...

THE RUSSIAN SKIFF

In the wake of the CMB -- GUNNER HAS A CLEAR SHOT -- about to fire when -- THE MINE FLOATS BACK INTO THE SKIFF'S PATH -- pushed there by Duncan's circling maneuver -- gunner sees it, *too late* -- BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOM

THE SKIFF COLLIDES WITH THE MINE, EXPLODES

Duncan never looks back as the FIREBALL erupts BEHIND HIM, the CMB speeding away, escaping into the open sea...

DISSOLVE TO:

BUCKINGHAM PALACE

Outside gates opened for a ceremony inside...

KING GEORGE V (V.O.)
The spy is the greatest of soldiers...

INT. BALLROOM, BUCKINGHAM PALACE -- DAY

A traditional Investiture in progress: a gentleman kneels, looks like Duncan -- KNIGHTED by KING GEORGE V -- bows his head for the ribbon to be placed around his neck as...

KING GEORGE V
If he is the most detested by the enemy, it is only because he is the most feared. Arise.

He stands, faces the APPLAUDING CROWD ... it's *not Duncan* -- it's HAWTHORNE -- clean cut, wearing the GRAND CROSS.

CHURCHILL (O.C.)
Your man came through...

IN THE CROWD

Churchill, handsomely dressed, alongside a rested Cumming who looks a bit more chipper than usual, *dare say pleased*.

CHURCHILL
His endeavors provided considerable intelligence on the Russians. Seems you've put things in motion here. Couldn't retire now even if you submitted the request yourself.

He nods to the PRIME MINISTER, seen across the hall with the other esteemed cabinet members of the war room.

CHURCHILL
You were right, you know - world's not the same as it was. Our enemies have changed. *Communists. Fascists.* Madmen rising up through the cracks of a shattered Europe...

CUMMING
You bringing me back aboard... <u>*On*</u> His Majesty's Service?

CHURCHILL
You and your man. His skills may be of some benefit after all.

Churchill steps away; Cumming sticks out his cane, stops him.

CUMMING
I have terms.

CHURCHILL
Yes, thought you might.

CUMMING
I'll need a few hands to help out. And a bigger section budget.

CHURCHILL
Curious, this section of yours, what will you call it?

Cumming pauses; knows EXACTLY what to call it:

CUMMING
<u>Six</u>.

CUMMING LIFTS HIS CANE

able to walk without it, <u>spring in his step</u>, a subtle change.

MAY (V.O.)
Hello Mansfield...

EXT. GARDENS, BUCKINGHAM PALACE -- DAY

An elegant reception on the spacious grounds of the WEST LAWN out back. Tea is served as --

MAY
You look spruce.

Cumming turns to her, feeding crumbs to a flock of flamingos near the WATERLOO VASE along the lake.

CUMMING
(smiles)
I'm glad you came.

MAY
(smiles back)
So am I.

They stand together, still apart...

...but not quite a thousand miles this time.

CUMMING
Come home.

She wants to, sincerely, but can't. Isn't ready to.

MAY
No.

She steps away...

...about to leave she stops, looks back --

MAY
<u>But keep asking</u>.

Cumming nods, dare say he smiles; it's a small victory but clearly the most important one of all to him.

As he keeps feeding flamingos --

DUNCAN (V.O.)
Brought you a new souvenir,
from Russia...

CUT TO:

EXT. EAST END, UNDER THE BRIDGE -- DAY

Duncan tosses the RUSSIAN NESTING DOLL to Westmore.

DUNCAN
Well, Finland actually. Russia wasn't all that much fun, honestly.

Westmore stares at it, curious, starts to take it apart, tinkering, removing the heads one-by-one as --

DUNCAN
Have another assignment coming. May need to borrow a few more souvenirs. Modified, of course.

WESTMORE
You never returned the last ones.

Duncan smirks, glancing at the dour muddy surroundings -- seeing it in daylight makes it especially harsh.

DUNCAN
Could find you a proper work space, if ya like. Something with...walls.

Westmore puts the dolls back together.

WESTMORE
Want me to re-enlist, come work for King'n Country again, like you?

DUNCAN
For King'n Country.

Westmore looks away, rejecting the idea; Duncan reacts, clearly disappointed but seems to understand.

Then --

WESTMORE
Hear-hear to the Kaiser, that sonuva bitch...

Duncan perks up as Westmore cracks a smile under his mask:

WESTMORE
May his balls drop off with the seven-year itch. May his arse be pounded with a lump of old leather. Till his arsehole can whistle...

DUNCAN
Britain, oy Britain forever.

INT. SECTION 6 OFFICES -- DAY

A LIFT CAGE OPENS

Out steps CUMMING, confident in a way we haven't seen before, crossing what was once an empty floor in an empty building...

Now buzzing with a dozen or so INTELLIGENCE ANALYSTS and ENGINEER-SCIENTISTS unpacking in their offices; among them is NIGHTINGALE, delivering an envelope. Nods to Cumming.

They're about to speak when --

LOCKHART (O.C.)
We have a problem in the Mediterranean...

Lockhart interrupts.

Hands Cumming a new EYES ONLY file, slightly different than the ones we've seen previously.

Cover officially stamped: *** MI-6 ***

CUMMING
(reads; reacts)
Who the hell is Benito Mussolini?

INT. CUMMING'S OFFICE, TOP FLOOR -- DAY

The door swings open.

As Cumming & Lockhart enter they are startled by --

DUNCAN (O.C.)
Finally gave you a chair I see...

Duncan, at the window next to a new office chair.

Stands tall, sporting a new suit, functional not fitted. Could almost pass for a gentleman. *Almost*.

LOCKHART
(fondly)
Alec...

DUNCAN
Elle.

There's a clear attraction between them, albeit unrequited...

...for now.

CUMMING
This is *my* bloody office, you know. Can't just sneak in here unannounced any damn-well time you please...

He cuts between them, crossing, sees the WEBLEY PISTOL on his desk -- takes it -- hands it back to Duncan.

CUMMING
It's yours now. Keep it.

DUNCAN
Thought it might hold some sentimental value for you.

CUMMING
It did.

He isn't about to explain it was once his son's - and Duncan isn't about to ask. Some things are better left unsaid.

As the two stare out the window again, side-by-side:

CUMMING
There's more work needs to be done. Much more...

Beat.

DUNCAN
Soldiers win wars, right?

CUMMING
And spies prevent them.

Cumming hands Duncan the MI-6 file.

CUMMING
Your next assignment. From here on you'll refer to me by my codename: C. Find yours inside.
(beat)
Welcome to Section 6.

Beat.

As Duncan looks up --

DUNCAN
Codename?

BLACK

001 will return...