

# HARTLEY 'S WAR

by

Michael Faunce-Brown

[mrfbrown@hotmail.com](mailto:mrfbrown@hotmail.com)

01672811918

77 Eastcourt Road,  
Marlborough, SN8 3AJ  
Wiltshire, UK

FADE IN:

SUPERIMPOSE: PARTLY BASED ON TRUE EVENTS.

JAPANESE DIALOGUE TO BE IN JAPANESE WITH ENGLISH SUB TITLES IN ITALICS.

EXT. JUNGLE - SINGAPORE 1942 - DAY

The slouch hat of an Australian SOLDIER peeps through undergrowth. An unseen observer. Silence apart from jungle insects CLICKING. Beautiful jungle.

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

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

A SHOT rings out. The first soldier falls dead. The others spread out on foot, firing rifles in all directions. A ferocious Fire fight.

Two more Japanese fall dead. Much heavier fire comes from the Japanese side. Single shots from the defenders, hidden in the jungle.

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

Clearing: An AUSTRALIAN SOLDIER flies backwards into the clearing, shredded by machine gun FIRE.

THREE other AUSSIES sprint through the clearing, away from the Japanese, outnumbered. One CLICKS on an empty magazine as he tries to slow the Japanese.

TWO Aussies stagger to the ground, wounded. SIX Japanese surround the wounded lying on the ground. The Japanese SERGEANT studies them for a moment.

Young Aussie SOLDIER, lies on the ground clutching his bleeding leg. Only a flesh wound. Vulnerable, and so young. LOOKS 16.

The sergeant pulls out his pistol, cold as ice.

YOUNG SOLDIER

(trusting)

No mate. Leave me. I'm okay. Give me a stick. I can walk.

He staggers to his feet. Young soldier is horrified as he sees what's coming. The sergeant SHOTS him and the other wounded once in the heart. The bodies twitch, then lie still.

JAPANESE advance out of the clearing.

A bush behind them stirs. Aussie/American, CAPTAIN TOM HARTLEY, 20, five foot ten, athletic, Short cut light hair, and handsome tanned face, observes them go, seething hatred.

NOISE of Japanese soldiers fades. Distant sporadic SHOOTING only. Someone crunches through the jungle.

Tom blends into the jungle.

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

Tom stalks, then dives onto the colonel, driving his bayonet into his back. The colonel falls dead.

TOM  
(whispers)  
And counting.

His face snaps to its usual granite. He searches the body before it stops twitching.

A Japanese REPORTER emerges with caution from the far side of the clearing, with camera. He almost disappears as he steps back under cover. He snaps oblivious Tom.

Tom snatches out of the colonel's breast pocket a small notebook and maps. He studies them.--- We see arrows showing routes towards India. Proposed attack on British lines.

Tom opens the notebook and reads. He WHISTLES, amazed. He nods to himself. It has columns of codes. He forces both into his pack.

Tom runs over to the two slaughtered Australians.

TOM (CONT'D)  
Bastards! Only a kid! ... Right! No  
Prisoners!

Tom crosses himself. He wipes away a tear. He folds the boy's arms across him with care. Tom flares the colonel's body a flash of hatred enough to fry it. He slides into the jungle.

The reporter reappears, pleased with himself.

INT. BAR IN SINGAPORE - EVENING

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

The soldiers' weapons, a rifle and a bren gun, (A LIGHT MACHINE GUN) lie on a table beside them, their packs dumped on the floor.

ASH JENKINS, a Pommie, (Brit.) 30, about six feet tall. A committed soldier. Smile lines. REME on his cap badge marks him as an Engineer. He tosses back a whisky, his face tense.

CHARLIE BROCK, 21, An Aussie infantryman, sense of humour, shorter, softer, with a lance corporal stripe on his arm. He has sun bleached hair. He needs a shave.

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

CHARLIE  
(wincing)  
Bloody Japs running all over us.  
Units scattered. God knows where  
mine's got to. Yours, Ash?

ASH  
No chance, Charlie. Outnumbered.  
Why no tanks for us?

Charlie nods and sticks two fingers upwards.

CHARLIE  
Yeah, and where are our fuckin'  
planes?

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

Sporadic rifle and machine gun FIRE draws closer. Charlie aims his bren gun through the window. He pulls the trigger. An empty CLICK. Out of ammunition. Charlie shrugs and lays down the weapon. He flashes a wry smile, snatches up his glass and drains it.

Tom Hartley, the observing captain, blasts in. His cap badge announces "2nd/14th Light Horse".

GREG TOPPING 28, Aussie, tall, thin, same unit, shadows Tom.

Tom takes one glance. He strides to the bar, and sweeps all glasses onto the floor. Tom looks with contempt, at the relaxed scene.

TOM  
Having a bloody picnic?... Japs!

He points through the window.

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

ASH  
That was my drink!

Tom isn't fazed.

TOM  
Find a boat out, or die.

Ash picks up his rifle and pack.

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

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

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

The Colonel is Pomposity personified.

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

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

ASH  
We've not been taught how to  
surrender, Sir.

Charlie winks at Ash.

CHARLIE  
(affected)  
What do we do? I say, old chap.  
Would you like my rifle? It's no  
bloody good with no ammo.

The colonel bristles.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)  
What ho, old fella. Jolly good war,  
eh? Well played, Sir.

Charlie grins at him. Ash gives a mock Nazi salute.

The colonel bristles with anger.

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

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

CHARLIE  
Fuckin' hell!

GREG  
Enjoy Jap hospitality, Mate.

Tom vanishes out of the door. They grab their weapons and packs. Led by Greg, Charlie and Ash run out, brushing past the colonel.

Ash makes him stagger backwards. In an adopted Aussie tone:

ASH  
'Bye, Sir. Enjoy your jankers,  
wanker!

The colonel is ready to explode.

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

A stray bullet smashes the gin bottle.

EXT. QUAYSIDE

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

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

SCREAMS come from another building, the HOSPITAL with a large Red Cross on its wall.

ASH  
Bloody hell. Cold blooded murder!  
Can't we do something like now!

Ash clenches his fists.

GREG  
Fucking Japanese butchers!

TOM  
You'll get your chance.

ASH  
You're yellow, Yank!

Tom's venom could kill him.

TOM  
Sure! The four of us with no  
bullets! Get real!

Ash is shaken.

TOM (CONT'D)  
 I gotta reach Australia, fast. Find  
 a boat, provisions, water cans.  
 I need you guys to row.

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

CHARLIE  
 Obey a Yank? Why not follow the  
 Colonel and give ourselves up?  
 He'll buy us a gin and tonic.

Charlie chuckles. Tom burns Charlie with Contempt.

ASH  
 We spend years in a prison camp  
 being dictated to by Colonel Blimp!  
 Can't wait.

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

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

Ash nods.

Tom whispers in Greg's ear:

TOM (CONT'D)  
 Watch Charlie. We need him.  
 (louder)  
 Meet us by the Customs shed, and  
 watch your backs.

Greg gives a casual salute ending in two fingers, as Tom and Ash sprint along the Quay-side. Greg pushes Charlie towards dark buildings, his hand on his shoulder.

EXT. QUAYSIDE - FURTHER ALONG

Tom leads, crouched, slinking between vessels. He stops and points. Ash cannons into him.

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

TRAMPING FEET. Tom and Ash scuttle behind a couple of fuel barrels, Ash shrinking. Tom's finger twitches on the trigger. A squad of TWENTY Japanese SOLDIERS runs by. They fade into the distance.

A flame thrower lights up the far end of the street. Tom's face twitches. He gestures towards the boat.

EXT. BOAT

Further along: Tom and Ash dive down steps to the boat. Water sloshes in it.

TOM  
Find another. Quick!

Running BOOTS DRUM on the quay above. Tom and Ash take cover against the quayside wall. Shadows of Japanese SOLDIERS run by.

Tom and Ash's faces tense. The BOOTS fade into the distance. Tom gestures to the steps. Tom leads their sprint up them.

EXT. QUAYSIDE - FURTHER ALONG

Tom and Ash clamber into a boat. It's dry. It has a small rudder. Ash checks the two oars. It has no engine or sail, but a tarpaulin.

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

Ash nods. He murmurs:

ASH  
Tea party!

They disappear up the steps to the Quay-side. More GUNFIRE sounds close.

EXT. SHOP

Greg tries to force open the door of a grocer's, with his bayonet. No luck.

The SOUND of MARCHING FEET approaches. Greg looks indecisive. Like "Run?" Or "in?"

CHARLIE  
It's not worth it. We should give ourselves up now.

Greg shakes his head and draws his hand across his throat. Frantic, Greg hacks at the door. He splinters the wood round the lock. The door opens. He pushes Charlie ahead of him.

INT. SHOP

Greg and Charlie enter. Greg closes the door behind them. The feet TRAMP closer. Their faces show the strain. The feet MARCH by.

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



Greg disappears into a room behind. Charlie continues searching for food tins and filling the sack. The PING of a telephone being replaced makes Charlie curious.

Greg re-appears holding two mugs and a funnel. He throws them into the sack, already part full of tinned food. Charlie looks at Greg, questioning. Greg ignores him.

Greg leads the way out, carrying the sack. Charlie shuts the door behind him. Machine gun FIRE smashes a shop front next door. Greg clenches his teeth. Charlie crouches lower.

CHARLIE  
Shit! Flying shit!

O.S. Glass SHATTERS.

EXT. STREET

Tom enters a phone box. A quick glance around for the enemy. He feeds in coins. He presses the button with the receiver to his ear. Nothing. He slams down the phone.

EXT. HOSPITAL

JANICE HARPER, 20, an English nurse, in uniform, slim, well educated bursts from the hospital, chased by two Japanese SOLDIERS.

They close on her when SHONA SING, a Malayan, 25, slim and desirable with flowing black hair, steps out of an alley and knifes one soldier in the belly, ripping upwards. He folds, dead on the ground.

The other soldier levels his rifle at Shona and a shot RINGS out. The soldier falls dead. Greg emerges from a street corner, lowers his rifle, followed by Charlie.

Shona wipes her knife on her victim's body, casually. She nods at Greg. Janice freezes, as Greg approaches.

GREG  
Come, now!

EXT. CUSTOMS SHED

Greg and Charlie arrive at the shed ahead of the girls, some distance behind. They search ahead.

CHARLIE  
They've been caught?

Greg shrugs, palms upwards. A mortar THUMPS further down the street. Charlie and Greg take shelter behind large canvas bales. The girls follow them. Janice looks to Greg for a decision.

GREG  
Tom's finding a boat. Escape.

CHARLIE  
The hospital?

Shona in broken English:

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

Machine GUNFIRE sounds closer. A burst RICOCHETS off a nearby building. They duck. Both girls are petrified.

JANICE  
Do you need a nurse?

Greg's not keen.

GREG  
Try the captain. That depends on  
the size of the boat, if he finds  
one.

On cue, Tom and Ash arrive out of the shadows. Each carries a full jerry can. Tom has a pack. Hard ammo magazines' outlines show through the canvas. Tom reacts to the girls in surprise.

CHARLIE  
(grins)  
Passengers first class.

TOM  
Never fit.

ASH  
We can't leave them here.

Tom gestures to the girls to follow. They dart along the quay to his boat.

EXT. BOAT - QUAY

Tom hesitates, looking at the boat. It's very small. His face melts.

TOM  
Oh, come on girls. We may have  
to amputate.

Charlie chuckles.

CHARLIE  
She killed a Jap, just like that.

He gestures, as with a knife.

Tom remains unimpressed.

TOM  
You'll have to work your passage.

INT. BOAT

Tom stows his can in the boat. He looks, questioning.

JANICE  
I'm Janice, a nurse. She's Shona.  
They've been beheading women as  
well as men. Bayoneting patients,  
doctors, nurses, everyone in the  
hospital.

She shudders. Tom frowns. Machine gun tracer FIRE reflects in  
a nearby window. Tom points to the boat.

TOM  
Move it.

INT. BOAT - MOVING

Buildings burn in the distance. A new moon gives a little  
light in a cloudless sky.

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

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

TOM  
Stuffed. Your turn, mates.

The boat stops. Greg and Charlie take the oars.

CHARLIE  
Did you get through to anyone Greg,  
in the shop?

Greg flashes an uncomfortable glance.

GREG  
Just trying to see if any one had  
seen my bro. Phone was dead.

He looks at Charlie as if a half-wit.

Try matching your oar with mine.  
It's easier that way.

Tom looks at Greg. He points to their same cap badges,  
questioning?

Greg is casual.

GREG (CONT'D)

I only caught up with your lot last night. A platoon of reinforcements. The others were taken apart in an ambush.

Tom nods.

TOM

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

Shona nods, and takes her place aft.

LATER

EXT. BOAT (MOVING)

Open sea rolls. Not a ship in sight. Tom and Ash row exhausted. The rest sleep.

Janice wakes up and stretches.

JANICE

Do you want a spell?

Tom is amused.

TOM

Huh. Thanks but this is men's work.

JANICE

I've done it before. I used to row with my brother. He was at Radley, a famous school for rowing.

She smiles at Tom. He looks at her, analysing.

TOM

Shona?

SHONA

Give it a go.

Tom and Ash stop rowing. Ash grins. He looks at Tom, like "Watch this." They swap places with the girls.

JANICE

Take it steady. Don't catch a crab.

SHONA

No find them this far out at sea.

Janice giggles.

Janice and Shona grab their oars. Shona makes a sweep with the oar, misses the water and lands on her back.

Laughter all round except for Tom, dead-pan.

FLASHBACK of the murdered wounded in the jungle. The kid's soft face, eyes still open.

FLASHBACK ENDS.

Janice searches Tom's face, wondering. Shona smiles. She rows with more care. Janice matches Shona's uncertain pace. Spray from the oars wets everyone.

Greg wakes. He can't believe his eyes.

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

Tom hesitates.

TOM  
Only seconded to your mob -  
Intelligence.

Greg looks for more, in vain. Tom and Ash slide under the tarpaulin.

Greg finds a line. He throws it off the stern. BEAT. The line jerks. He pulls in a small fish. Greg grins and shows it to the girls. He smiles at Shona.

Charlie, jealous, notices and scowls. Shona is indifferent to Greg. He unhooks the fish and threads a larger hook through it. He throws the baited hook into the sea.

INT. PLANE - (MOVING) - DAY

Inside the Zero's cockpit: the Japanese PILOT scans the sea ahead. He stiffens as he sees a boat. He SHOUTS into his chest mic. He receives no reply as he searches the wave bands with a knob on the fascia.

INT. BOAT - (MOVING)

Inter-cut as needed.

Greg points to the plane in the distance. It zooms towards their boat.

GREG  
Get under the tarp, girls. Quick!

Greg nudges sleeping Tom with his foot.

GREG (CONT'D)  
Tom!

The boat rocks as the girls squeeze under the tarp.

Tom and Ash wake up. Tom sees the plane. He straightens up.

TOM  
Greg. My pack!

Greg rips open the pack. He extracts two bren magazines, smiling. He hides them under the tarpaulin.

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

TOM (CONT'D)  
Greg, wave as it gets closer.

Tom and Greg wave. The plane passes overhead. --- It returns, lower. Greg waves again. Ash pulls in on his line, and has to fight a large fish.

Tom grins.

TOM (CONT'D)  
A great sense of timing, Buddy

Tom helps land the fish with his bayonet. The plane disappears into the distance.

Ash in his best Australian:

ASH  
So long, Mate.

They all laugh from relief. Tom allows himself a grim smile.

INT. BOAT MOVING - DAY

Charlie is worried.

CHARLIE  
What if that plane comes back?

TOM  
We'll invite him to fish and chips.  
He'll get his chips.

Tom taps the bren.

They tuck into a meal of tinned meat apart from Charlie and Greg, who row as in a boat race. Shona slices off a piece of raw fish. She offers it around. Janice gestures it away. Tom and Ash try it, then eat. Shona eats with relish.

Charlie, puffing, accuses Ash:

CHARLIE  
How come you Poms gave up  
the fight?

Tom's stare freezes Charlie. Charlie wilts. Ash looks like he'll give as good as he gets.

ASH

The Japanese have complete air and sea supremacy. We have nothing to stop their tanks. Short of ammo too.

TOM

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

CHARLIE

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

Tom interrupts:

TOM

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

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

TOM (CONT'D)

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

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

CHARLIE

How far back to Aus.?

TOM

(smiling)  
About 3000 miles.  
Only 2950 now.

Charlie looks staggered.

CHARLIE

Jeez! We'll never row that far.

Ash looks at Charlie, pitying.

TOM

Won't have to Charlie. Half of it's land. Have faith in yourself.

Charlie's not too sure about that.

The wind increases fast.

JANICE

Couldn't we rig a sail?  
The tarpaulin?

TOM  
Nice one, Janice. Oars in.

Tom raises an oar, as Ash disengages it from the rowlock. Tom holds it in the centre of the boat. Ash pulls out the roll of rope, and ties one side of the mast to the rowlock.

Charlie ties the other side. Ash ties it so fast the mast leans his way, as Charlie's rope comes undone. Charlie gives him a dirty look. Ash looks at Charlie with a contemptuous grin.

EXT. DESTROYER - DAY

The empty sea stretches for ever. In the distance a destroyer appears. It thrusts through the waves at full speed.

INT. BOAT - MOVING

Tom scans the horizon.

DISTANT SOUND OF PLANE'S ENGINE.

TOM  
If that plane was sent after us,  
it should be closing fast.

JANICE  
It might have reported "only  
fishermen".

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

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

GREG  
How far ahead should we aim?

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

Tom passes rifle magazines to Ash and Charlie, clicking one into his rifle. There's dried blood on one. Ash and Greg's eyes meet on the blood, then at Tom, then at each other. They pick up the weapons and hold them ready.

TOM (CONT'D)  
Janice, think you can hold the  
tiller steady with one hand up?



JANICE  
(unsure)  
I'll try.

The SOUND of the distant plane closing in.

ASH  
There. Aw, Hell!

Ash points as the Destroyer breaks the haze, about five miles distant. Tom watches it, shading his eyes with his hand.

CHARLIE  
One of ours?

Charlie blanches, biting his lip.

TOM  
Unlikely. The Japanese will have  
sunk everything of ours in  
these waters.

GREG  
(challenging)  
How do you know?

Tom freezes Greg, daring him to question him. Ash looks at Tom with growing interest.

EXT. FIGHTER PLANE

The plane flies between their boat and the destroyer.

INT. BOAT - MOVING

Tom tries to raise their spirits.

TOM  
A little prayer, everyone.

Greg appears sardonic. Janice's lips murmur in prayer. The plane zooms closer. SILENCE reigns in the boat. The plane dives towards them.

TOM (CONT'D)  
Hold it --- Wait --- Wait --- Fire!

Janice jolts up, and pulls on the tiller with all her might. The boat swings away from certain death. Machine gun bullets HIT the water where they should have been.

Greg OPENS UP with the Bren gun, followed by the RIFLES. Their bullets miss the plane.

ALL  
Yahoo!

Janice swings the boat back on course. Tom looks his approval.

ASH  
Brilliant, Janice.

CHARLIE  
It's bound to get us before we reach land.

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

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

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

The plane swoops in again. Greg loads his last magazine. The others follow the plane in. Greg FIRES earlier this time. He aims well in front. He holds his bren-gun steady so the plane has to fly through his bullets.

The plane STRIKES the side of their boat with bullets above the waterline. One STRIKES Tom in the arm. He GASPS. He drops his rifle. He holds his wound tight. The others don't notice Tom's wound. They watch the plane with apprehension.

Greg's gun RUNS OUT of ammunition. The plane flies straight on over land.

They regard each other, wondering. The SOUND of an engine, cutting and spluttering, wafts back. Charlie gives a thumbs up. The plane's engine STARTS again. All look downhearted.

A BANG, and smoke billows up over a ridge. They CHEER.

Shona notices blood streaming down Tom's arm. She nudges Janice. Janice rummages through a pack, finds a tin of sulphonamide powder. She sprinkles the powder on the wound, and straps on the field dressing.

Tom winces.

JANICE  
Missed the bone. Straight through.  
Painful? It'll keep you right.

Tom smiles through gritted teeth.

TOM  
I'll live... But it's bloody sore!  
Good shooting everyone.

Charlie points at the destroyer.

EXT. DESTROYER

The destroyer closes on them.

EXT. ISLAND

The island looms closer.

INT. BOAT - MOVING - BEACH

Charlie is white with apprehension.

CHARLIE  
It'll mince us. Why not give  
ourselves up?

Tom's face shows contempt for that one. Tension shows on every face.

TOM  
We'll land; find cover.

A long, sandy beach stretches into the distance.

TOM (CONT'D)  
Take rifles, provisions and water.  
Drop the bren over the side, Greg.

Greg does so.

CHARLIE  
Sink the boat? They might think  
we drowned.

TOM  
Worth a try. Good one, Charlie.

Charlie looks pleased.

EXT. REEF

A reef bars them from the shore. Ash commands the helm. About three feet of surf explodes on the reef. The boat pitches and tosses.

Tom slides against the side of the boat, banging his wounded arm. He winces, but remains stoic. Ash takes the boat parallel with the reef. --- They roll worse as the waves hit them broadside. All are tense.

EXT/INT. BOAT - GAP IN REEF

Ash spins the boat towards where the surf lessens. Ash guides the boat through a narrow gap in the reef. An audible SIGH of relief from everyone. All are silent while Ash steers towards rocks. Tom pats Ash on the back.

Tom watches the destroyer through slit eyes into the sun.

CHARLIE

What're you doing, you moron! We've got to get out before you sink her.

Ash gives him a pitying look, like he knows what he's doing. At the last moment, Ash steers the boat onto a patch of sand.

EXT. BEACH/BOAT - DAY

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

Tom grabs his rifle. Greg carries the jerry cans. Janice struggles to carry Greg's pack plus Tom's. Shona follows with two more rifles.

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

ASH

Heave!

They overturn the boat. It fills with water and sinks. They run up over the rocks. From the cover of trees they halt to catch their breath.

EXT. SEA - DAY

The destroyer churns forward less than a mile out.

ASH

Why they're not firing?

TOM

Be thankful for small mercies.

EXT. JUNGLE EDGE

Tom is grim as they face the jungle.

TOM

Girls, carry what you can, and get under cover, now.

Each face registers concern. They pick up their rifles and packs.

TOM (CONT'D)

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

Greg nods. He starts off into the jungle, using his bayonet to slash through creepers. The jungle thickens. Tom slashes the jungle with a bayonet with his good arm, his rifle slung on his back. They sweat and slap at flies.

A snake slithers out of their path.  
Janice gives a little YELP. Smiling, Shona taps  
Janice's shoulder.

SHONA

A green snake. Not poisonous.

Janice looks at her shaking her head, smiling. They continue  
on their way. Ash stops and listens for sounds of pursuit,  
every couple of minutes.

EXT. CLEARING

Relentless rain drenches Tom's party. They pause for breath  
in a tiny clearing. Each slumps to the ground.  
They look at Tom.

TOM

They may only send one boat load.

ASH

Ambush?

Tom nods.

TOM

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

GREG

Sure. Give me five.

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

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

TOM

Neat one, Greg.

Greg shows his pleasure. Charlie and Ash look impressed.

TOM (CONT'D)

No prisoners.

The other men nod. Janice is horrified.

JANICE

That's murder!

TOM

It's not tea with the vicar. Greg.  
Take care. They'll expect it.

Ash stifles a smile.

SHONA

Me go with Greg.

Tom looks dubious.

SHONA (CONT'D)

I'm a street girl. Shoved onto the streets at twelve. Kept my virginity with a knife.

Tom raises his eyebrows and nods. He hands Shona his bayonet. She kisses it. Shona and Greg disappear back the way they came.

TOM

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

He signals to Janice to keep low. She nods. Tom, Ash and Charlie hide one side of the track. Janice slides under the undergrowth, behind them. Her face, tense.

EXT. BEACH

A motorboat grounds on the beach. TWELVE Japanese SAILORS including an OFFICER, scramble out, holding their weapons high, above the water. The officer gestures towards the trees.

They spread out to search for footprints. They follow up the rocks to the trees. They stop, at a loss.

One points to a mark on the ground. He shouts:

JAPANESE SAILOR

*Ai.*

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

EXT. JUNGLE

Greg and Shona hide off the track, listening. Shona lifts her finger and points. Greg nods. Feet TRAMPLE through the undergrowth. Japanese SAILORS file by. They are strung out, several yards between each. They peer through the jungle. TEN pass by.

Greg rises to pounce when another appears. Greg sinks back. He gives a thumbs up. Shona nods. Followed by Shona, Greg springs on the Japanese, as soon as he has passed. He drives his bayonet through the Japanese's spinal cord. The Japanese GRUNTS and slumps to the ground.

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

He falls to the ground, dead. Greg gives Shona, a fleeting smile. They drag the bodies off the track. They take the rifles into the jungle.

EXT. CLEARING

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

There's a distant scream.

ASH  
(murmurs)  
One to Greg.

The others nod.

Ash and Charlie are on either side of Tom, their fingers on their triggers. Tom points, Ash to fire at the left, Charlie, the right. They nod. We hear the undergrowth CRUNCH of Japanese approaching.

The officer appears on the clearing's edge. He stops and peers at the other side. Three others appear beside him. They scan the jungle.

Tom nods. They FIRE as one. The Japanese Officer and two others fall. The other FIRES into the jungle. A bullet HITS a tree trunk in front of Janice. She winces.

Charlie and Ash FIRE together. The fourth Japanese falls dead. The remaining Japanese can be heard RUNNING AWAY.

EXT. JUNGLE

Charlie points to his rifle. He shakes his head. No ammo.

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

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

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

Tom checks the Japanese are all dead, rolling some over. Some in their late teens.

He shows a sudden flash of sorrow... His war front kicks in again. Hard as a rock. Tom looks behind him.

TOM  
Okay, Janice?

Janice emerges from the jungle, shaken. Tom rests his hand on her arm.

TOM (CONT'D)

Good girl.

She pulls away from Tom, as having revealed his dark side.

TOM (CONT'D)

You haven't seen the Japs killing  
helpless wounded. I have.

JANICE

You weren't in the hospital.  
It doesn't mean we have to stoop to  
their level.

TOM

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

EXT. JUNGLE

Greg and Shona wait off the track. Japanese RUN towards them. Two CRASH through before them. They trip over the vine Greg has stretched about nine inches high across the path.

A third falls over them, pinning the first two to the ground. Greg and Shona spring on the Japanese. They kill the man on top. The other two rise to their feet. There's a fierce struggle. Greg tries to knife his opponent.

Shona strives to break free from hers. Greg falls on his back. The Japanese dives on top of him. Greg kicks him in the groin as they fall. The Japanese curls up in agony.

Shona's opponent scratches her thigh with her bayonet, as they wrestle. She GASPS. Greg knifes his opponent, dead.

Shona uses both hands to try to keep the bayonet from going into her thigh. Greg springs on Shona's opponent, killing him with his bayonet. Shona looks shaken as she picks up the bayonet.

RUNNING FEET are closing on them.

Greg snatches Shona back into the jungle. Three other Japanese stop short before the bodies. They GASP. They FIRE into the jungle.

The Japanese disappear down the path, pursued by Ash and Charlie. Two rifle SHOTS and a SCREAM.

Tom appears carrying his fresh weapon. He checks the pile of bodies. No sign of life. For a beat he looks shocked. He shakes his head, then collects weapons.

Greg reappears with Shona, her thigh bandaged, limping.



TOM

Bad?

Shona shakes her head. Another distant SHOT rings out.

GREG

I reckon that's the lot.

Janice appears. She sees the bodies and blanches.

JANICE

Hm!

TOM

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

JANICE

Aren't you going to bury them?

TOM

No time. Leave them for the next boat-load to think about. Take their weapons and ammo. We'll hug the shore, keeping under cover.

JANICE

(shocked)

For the birds of prey?

BEACH

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

TOM

We'd better put some distance between us and the next patrol.

Shona limps up, looking fragile. Janice beckons Shona to a pack. She pulls out a field dressing from the pack plus a tin of sulphonamide powder.

Janice removes the dirty bandage. She sprinkles the powder on the wound and straps on the dressing, like she treated Tom.

JANICE

That'll kill any infection.

Shona smiles and nods her thanks.

They pull out the tinned food they'd hidden from under the bushes, and stuff them into their packs. Ash leading, they stride up the original path into the jungle.

EXT. CLEARING - EVENING

Tom raises his hand. They slump down round him.

GREG  
What now?

He looks like he reckons Tom is lost for ideas.

TOM  
We seem to have shed any pursuit  
for the time being.

He looks at his compass.

TOM (CONT'D)  
So we bear left and follow the  
coast. Jungle's too slow. We need  
another boat. Island hop,  
travelling at night.

GREG  
The jungle's safer. They'll never  
find us.

ASH  
He's got a point, Tom. I'd like to  
stay alive.

JANICE  
I'd second that.

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

TOM  
For Pete's sake, so do I! We could  
fall into an ambush in the jungle  
as easily as be spotted at night in  
a boat.

He glances at each again.

TOM (CONT'D)  
Those that want to chance the  
jungle, go with Greg. The rest,  
follow me.

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

EXT. COAST/JUNGLE - EVENING

Tom and Co. stagger through the jungle fringe. They are beat,  
Tom more than the rest. All are dirty and sweating.

Charlie and Shona watch the sides of their home made track  
for the enemy.

Janice jolts to a stop, Ash lurching into her. She points into the jungle. They all freeze.

JANICE  
Eyes watching us!

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

CHARLIE  
It's a monkey, you twit.

They all laugh/smile, push on.

EXT. MORE JUNGLE

The vegetation thins.

JANICE  
Can't we stop? I've had it.

Tom gives her an encouraging tap on the shoulder. Ash takes the lead. He scans ahead.

ASH  
Village. There.

Ash points ahead.

TOM  
Keep going everybody.

They lengthen their strides.

EXT. VILLAGE

A clearing reveals 5/6 huts on stilts around the edge. They are one storey, with thatched roofs.

Tom signals to take care, waving and pointing. They spread out and search the huts, covering each other. The girls wait in the jungle. Shona has a rifle at the ready.

The village appears deserted. Tom is watchful but bleary eyed. He leans against a veranda support.

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

CHARLIE  
Paradise.

JANICE  
Thank God.

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

A cute 10\12 year-old BOY, SUBUL, dressed only in a pair of tattered shorts, part hidden by shade, SCREAMS and runs inside a hut.

His MOTHER, MARIA 35, a native, peeps out. She comes down the steps, smiling.

MARIA  
Welcome... Maria. British?

ASH  
Plus allies. Any Japanese?

Maria shakes her head. She takes in Tom.

MARIA  
Bring him inside.

She sniffs.

MARIA (CONT'D)  
The rest of you a shower.  
It's round the back.

Janice moves to help with Tom.

MARIA (CONT'D)  
He'll be okay.

Ash flashes a "Will he?" Maria helps Ash carry Tom up the steps.

INT. HUT

Tom lies in a hammock, delirious. Janice sits beside him on a stool. She bathes his forehead from a bucket.

TOM  
Kill the bastards. Kill.

Janice shrinks away, alarmed. He slumps back exhausted.

The room is furnished simply. A lit oil lamp hangs from a rafter. Ash slumps on a mat.

Subul watches from the other side of the room. Maria squats beside Tom. She regards the bloody bandage.

MARIA  
This'll have to come off.

Tom is alarmed.

TOM  
My arm?

MARIA  
No, silly, your shirt.

She takes off his shirt with care and inspects his wound, concerned.

Janice moves to help. Maria waves her back. Tom drifts in and out of consciousness. Janice sees a crisscross of scars on Tom's back. She opens her mouth, then shuts it.

MARIA (CONT'D)  
Lie there while I boil up  
medicine. Better than any you've  
got. I have to find plants.

ASH  
(concerned)  
Will he be okay?

MARIA  
If he doesn't get a fever.  
Maybe just in time.

Ash nods his thanks.

Maria smiles.

TOM  
(gaining consciousness)  
Japs? Have they been here already?

Maria crosses herself.

MARIA  
No, thank God. Some villagers are  
hiding in the jungle. The rest've  
gone east... Subul.

Subul emerges from the shadows. They exit.

Ash approaches Tom. He looks at Tom, questioning?

TOM  
She speaks good English. I guess  
she's worked for them.

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

TOM  
Ash, can I leave you to carry on if  
anything happens to me?

ASH  
Too right, Tom. But it won't.

TOM  
Listen.

(lowering his voice)

(MORE)

TOM (CONT'D)

I'm carrying vital information for the Allies. It could save many lives, if we get back in time.

ASH

Yeah?

TOM

Keep it to yourself.

Ash is puzzled. Greg wanders by outside.

ASH

(surprised)

I'll watch your back, Tom.

Maria enters with a basket of plants.

EXT. SHOWER - EVENING

The shower: a jerry can with the top chiselled off and its bottom pierced with little holes. Greg fills it from another jerry can.

Under the shower stands Shona, hidden in part by the screen of wood. Her bandage drops from her leg. The wound is healing already.

Charlie grins and tries to see more of Shona. She rinses off some soap.

SHONA

Wonderful.

CHARLIE

(murmuring and grinning)

Could be.

Charlie drops to his knees for a closer look.

INT. HUT - NIGHT

Ash, Charlie and Greg recline on a mat/bench.

CHARLIE

What happens if Tom dies?

GREG

One of us has to take command.

Ash looks at Charlie, derisory.

CHARLIE

I'm the fucking Corporal!

Greg roars with laughter. Charlie gives him a "killer" look.

ASH  
Tom's delegated me.

GREG  
Yeah? He's only a kid.  
A captain? How?

ASH  
I reckon he earned it some way.  
Not so bad so far.

They watch each other with mutual distrust.

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

ASH  
Not bloody likely. They've a huge  
area to search. One of the biggest  
islands in the world.

CHARLIE  
Real?

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

ASH  
Or anything else?

CHARLIE  
Wasn't there much, was I?

GREG  
I believe you.

ASH  
I'll take first watch, you second,  
Greg. Wake you at twelve.  
Charlie at four.

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

Another Japanese patrol of c. 20 SOLDIERS searches for the missing patrol. Their OFFICER, LIEUTENANT SAITO, 20's, leads, taking a few steps forward, then stopping and listening.

They happen upon bodies of their comrades. Saito looks shocked, then furious. He gestures to four men to take guard ahead, and others to search the jungle on either side.

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

Saito talks on a walkie-talkie, gesturing in fury.  
He listens, nods and switches it off.

INT. HUT

Tom lies on a mattress on the floor. Maria observes him from a stool.

MARIA  
How're you feeling?

TOM  
Okay, thanks to you... How come you  
speak such good English?

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

TOM  
Subul's dad?

MARIA  
Lost at sea in a fishing accident.

She refuses to cry.

MARIA (CONT'D)  
Do you hope to reach Australia?

Tom looks round to see they're alone. He lowers his voice.

TOM  
(determined)  
All of us? Not a chance in Hell,  
but we've got to try.

Maria searches his face, not understanding.

EXT. HUT - MORNING

Tom sits in a cane chair in the shade, fitter, his arm in a  
crude sling.

Janice sits in the shadows behind him. Her fingers trail down  
his back, unseen by the others. Tom stifles a smile,  
enjoying it. They sit out of earshot from the others.

JANICE  
The scars on your back? Terrible.

TOM  
I've had my troubles.

His face hardens. Janice pulls back as Tom's dark side  
surfaces.



FLASHBACK

EXT. VEGETABLE PATCH - DAY

Tom in shorts and boots only, long hair, sweating, digs fresh ground, as for planting. KIT, 30, lean and fit, stands over him.

Tom pauses in his work. Kit whips him. Tom snarls at him. Kits whips him harder.

FLASHBACK ENDS.

EXT. HUT - DAY

Janice looks horrified. Tom turns away.

Charlie and Greg eat out of tin/enamel bowls.

Ash plays with Subul, on all fours, backing him into a corner. He GROWLS like a tiger. Subul pretends to be frightened. Subul dashes past Ash to freedom --- the doorway at least.

ASH

Okay Subul, enough. You're too fast for me.

Ash slumps down with the others.

Maria enters. She sits in the remaining chair.

Tom looks at Subul.

TOM

Oh Subul, don't grow up before this bloody war finishes.

CHARLIE

I could stay here and last it out.

ASH

You're a soldier. We kill Japanese.

CHARLIE

And stay alive. We could live off the jungle till the end of the war.

Janice joins them.

JANICE

Not a bad idea. It's so peaceful. But I want to get home to England.

Parrots make a CACOPHONY. They all laugh.

CHARLIE

I wonder what goes in Europe?

TOM  
Last I heard, the Ruskies are  
giving the Jerries a hammering.

GREG  
(Sarcastic)  
Japanese are our problem.

MARIA  
You can't stay here. They've landed  
round Jakarta and Pedang. Heard it  
on my radio.

TOM  
You reckon? We're not worth  
their time, unless they follow up  
their patrol.  
(He glances into the jungle.)  
Better be out of here.

MARIA  
They're spreading everywhere.

CHARLIE  
Like a rash.

They smile.

TOM  
Keep your weapons with you at all  
times. We'd better move out soon.

Janice points to his arm. Tom gives a thumbs up.

Greg is rebellious.

GREG  
You're not fit to lead.

Tom's face hardens.

TOM  
(icy)  
So you think you'd do better? Damn  
you. I got you here, didn't I?

GREG  
Just.

Tom freezes Greg with a scary expression. DANGEROUS.

Greg takes a step backwards, startled.

TOM  
Rest up till it's cooler. We move  
out tomorrow, first light. Greg,  
you keep watch and listen. Two  
hours, then Charlie.

Greg nods, grudging.

ASH  
Suits me.

Ash stares at Greg, expressionless. Greg avoids his stare. Ash sharpens his bayonet on a rock.

JANICE  
One for me too. Self defence.

The others show their surprise.

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

The Japanese patrol cuts its way through dense vegetation. Saito leads, his face savage. He discovers the path cut by Tom's group and stops, excited. He waves his men forward, and plunges on.

EXT. STREAM BANK - DAY

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

CHARLIE  
Great spot.

JANICE  
A port in a storm.

Janice searches for something safe to say.

JANICE (CONT'D)  
What did you do at home?

Charlie's embarrassed.

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

Janice laughs.

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

CHARLIE  
A vicar? Can't be very exciting.

JANICE  
He did nearly drown a baby in the font at a baptism.  
(MORE)

JANICE (CONT'D)

It slipped and wouldn't stop howling. I wondered whether he did it on purpose.

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

CHARLIE

I heard my young brother was reported missing, just before we left.

Janice shows genuine compassion.

JANICE

I'm so sorry. Maybe the enemy have him in a P.O.W. camp.

CHARLIE

Maybe. Anything's better than dodging the Japanese... I hope we survive.

Ash strides into the picture. He's steamed up.

ASH

Leave her alone, Charlie and keep watch.

Charlie bristles.

CHARLIE

Only chatting. Been spying on us! Fucking peeping Pom!

Charlie jumps to his feet.

JANICE

Leave it Ash. He's no harm.

Ash stalks off. Charlie looks to follow.

JANICE (CONT'D)

Take five. We need each other.

Charlie, not sure about that, waits a beat, and strolls towards the village.

Tom drifts out of the jungle. He sits on a log, near Janice. She smiles.

JANICE (CONT'D)

Tell me more about yourself, Tom.

Janice looks, encouraging him to expand, but no dice.

Tom glances away. His face shows sadness/horror.

Janice takes his hand and strokes it.

JANICE (CONT'D)  
You poor boy.

Tom removes his hand and stands.

TOM  
Time for some shut-eye.

INT. HUT - DAY

Everyone sleeps/relaxes. Charlie is absent, on watch.

Subul dashes in. He runs round shaking everyone. They all jump up.

GREG  
Damn you, Subul.

SUBUL  
Men come. Japanese.

The men snatch up their weapons.

Maria dashes in. She ties up the hammocks.

TOM  
Follow me, Subul and Maria.

MARIA  
I'll stay. They'll not touch me.

TOM  
Come Maria. No time.

MARIA  
Take Subul. Just coming.

Maria ignores Tom. She stuffs the hammocks under a table.

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

Maria grabs some mugs.

INT./EXT. HUT

Tom leads out, Subul's hand in his. Ash throws on a pack and exits, holding Tom's pack.

Ash kicks their "watchman" Charlie awake as he slumbers in the shade of a tree.

ASH  
Waste of space! Japs!

EXT. JUNGLE

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

(O.S.) A Japanese voice SHOUTS commands.

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

Maria follows them. She remembers their washing on a line. She rushes back and grabs their clothes off the line. She disappears inside her house with them.

Japanese COMMANDS AND SHOUTS. (O.S.)

Maria SHRIEKS. A shot RINGS OUT.

Subul wriggles out from the cover. Tom snatches him up just in time to keep him from running back to the village.

Subul opens his mouth to yell. Tom claps his hand over it. He drags the squirming child into the jungle. They disappear.

Further in, Janice lies next to Shona. Only their tense faces show. Janice looks questioning? Shona shrugs.

Janice buries her head in her hands, refusing to cry. She trembles. Shona puts her arm round Janice's shoulders.

VILLAGE

JAPANESE SOLDIERS run in and out of the empty houses. Lt. Saito leaves Maria's house. A wisp of smoke turns into an inferno behind him.

He gestures to soldiers to light the rest. The village disappears in a Hell of flames. Saito watches for a beat, smiling.

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

SAITO

*Sir, yes Sir. Take the American  
alive. Kill the rest... Yes Sir...  
Get the info. out of him. (He  
continues to himself) Bayonet  
practice.*

Saito laughs, demonic. Saito leads them in the direction Tom has taken.

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

The Japanese soldiers search close to where Tom and the others hide. A heel stamps down inches from Charlie's face. The foot brings down more vegetation over Charlie.

Ash and Greg hide, their weapons at the ready. Tom signals with his hand downwards, not to fire. Subul lies dead still under Tom's arm.

Janice tries not to sneeze. BEAT. As she appears to be losing the battle, rain falls in a TORRENT. Its noise would cover the most explosive sneeze.

The Japanese search continues for ever. They must discover Tom's party if they smash one yard deeper. The Japanese give up the search and disappear into the jungle.

Tom listens. Subul tries to lift his head. Tom forces him flat.

--- Tom rises to his feet. He listens. He waves to the group to stay down. He listens. ---

NOTHING apart from jungle NOISES.

Tom signals to them to rise, pointing to his lips for quiet. They emerge from their hiding places, weapons at the ready. They creep towards the smouldering village. Tom gestures for them to wait.

VILLAGE

Tom sneaks round the perimeter. Only blackened frames remain. Smoke survives the rain. The Japanese have gone. Tom disappears behind trees.

VILLAGE/JUNGLE

Janice, Shona, Subul and the men emerge, soaked. The warm sun raises steam from their clothes.

JANICE

Tom?

SUBUL

Mum?

Tom reappears from the path. He shakes his head. Janice tries to cuddle Subul. Subul SCREAMS and runs to his mother's hut. Only charred remains of the hut are left.

Shona gazes slit eyed at Maria's body outside. God help any Japanese, who cross her path.

Janice follows and puts her arm round Subul. She lets him grieve by the body for a BEAT, then pulls him away.

Janice sits with Subul. We cannot hear what she says. Subul sobs his heart out. Janice puts her arm round Subul's shoulders. Subul shakes her off. He runs back to the body.

Janice rises to her feet, white faced.

TOM  
Care for the boy. (to the others)  
Let's do this quick.

Janice nods and follows Subul.

Shona's street-wise hardness surfaces. Like a cornered leopard.

SHONA  
Japanese!

Tom's face is savage.

TOM  
(growls)  
Maria. What harm has she done to anybody?

ASH  
We'd better be out of here fast.

TOM  
Cremate Maria first.

ASH  
The Japs'll see the smoke.

TOM  
They'll reckon it's still the village burning. In their place I'd return to the coast for more men, and watch for us seeking a boat.

#### BURNT HUTS

They rush to collect dry wood from the remains of huts for Maria's cremation. Ash lays Maria's body with reverence on the pile. Janice and Subul join them.

SUBUL  
No, you can't!

Subul runs to the pyre to touch Maria's body. Janice runs after him. She puts her arm round Subul's shoulders.

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

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



JANICE (CONT'D)  
 Someone say a prayer.

They line up by the wood pile. Tom is moved. Janice looks at his face, surprised.

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

Tom crosses himself. The others are surprised.

ALL  
 Amen.

Charlie lights the pile with his lighter. The fire catches. Tom keeps his distance.

They wait till it ROARS, then back off. Ash remains, staring into the flames, wooden. Tom forces himself forward and places his hand on Ash's shoulder.

TOM  
 Time to go.

Greg joins them. Charlie looks at Subul, then Tom, questioning.

Subul is lost in his misery.

TOM (CONT'D)  
 We'll take him with us till we can  
 find his people.

GREG  
 He'll slow us down.

Janice looks at Greg, astounded. Shona is absorbed in the blade of her knife.

Ash's sarcasm bites. Animosity builds.

ASH  
 Excess baggage.

TOM  
 Sit everybody. Quick.

JUNGLE EDGE

They form a half moon round Tom.

TOM  
 Ash keep watch.

Ash hides in the undergrowth, his weapon ready.

Subul stares into space, traumatized.

TOM (CONT'D)  
 I need to know you're all with me --  
 and with each other.

He pauses, gauging their reactions, with long gazes at Greg and Charlie.

TOM (CONT'D)  
 Two choices: One, you stay here,  
 wait for the Japanese if they  
 return, and give yourselves up.  
 Good luck.

ASH  
 Torture. Death.

Tom nods.

TOM  
 I go on solo with information  
 that'll save lives and shorten  
 the war.

Greg acts disbelief.

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

He pauses to gauge their reactions again.

TOM (CONT'D)  
 The Japanese'll be after us like  
 hornets and we'll have to fight for  
 survival... If you come with me,  
 you take my orders, whatever.

He stops and stares at Charlie; then at Greg.

CHARLIE  
 I'll come, Boss.

TOM  
 And?

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

Tom notes Greg's hesitation, but says nothing, not happy.

TOM (CONT'D)  
 Here's the plan:  
 We'll island hop. Find a boat.  
 Avoid the Japs if we can.  
 Any questions?

Shona looks none too happy about "avoiding the Japanese".

Tom looks at each in turn. Greg looks as if he might ask. He gets a cutting glance from Ash, and changes his mind.

TOM (CONT'D)

Right. Let's go.

They jump up to follow Tom. They pick up their weapons. With a quick glance at the village ruins, machetes in hand, they follow Tom into the jungle.

EXT. JUNGLE

Tom leads, hacking his way through the undergrowth, using Maria's machete. Jungle SOUNDS surround them, monkeys CHATTERING.

Subul tracks Ash. Janice feels the pace. Shona waits for her to catch up.

Tom listens and watches for enemy every few steps. He controls his reactions, as tendrils snag his wound.

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

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

Saito leads a weary troop of fed up Japanese soldiers. He searches for traces of Tom's party. None.

Saito waves them to halt and beckons them to the ground. He remains standing.

SAITO

*I'll give 1,000 pesos to the first  
man to discover our enemies' trail.*

The men give mixed reactions, as some are past caring, while others show interest. Their faces display it all.

Saito looks disappointed.

SAITO (CONT'D)

*200 pesos for each head of our  
enemies and 2,000 pesos for the  
American Captain dog brought to me  
alive... Alive.*

A little more interest.

Saito looks at a copy of the reporter's photo of Tom. He shows it to his sergeant. He murmurs:

SAITO (CONT'D)

*A beautiful head.*

The sergeant smiles, nodding.

SAITO (CONT'D)  
*You know which one, if I die.*

The sergeant nods again.

EXT. JUNGLE CLEARING - DAY

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

GREG  
How far do you reckon we've come?

Tom consults his watch.

TOM  
Five miles. We've been walking five hours. Good going.

ASH  
Gives us a start on the bastards.

TOM  
They may not be following us. Not right off. Maria covered our tracks, poor thing.

JANICE  
How far have we got to leg it?

TOM  
About five hundred and fifty miles, if we stick to the island. Then sail for Java. Three thousand in total as I told you.

A shocked silence as they absorb it.

SHONA  
Bit far for city girl.

She smiles.

Janice looks like she's falling apart.

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

TOM  
You will make it. The Japs could find you here. No way are we leaving you.

He looks at her very straight.

JANICE  
You reckon?

TOM  
You're doing all right, girl.

Charlie's face shows interest. Greg is coldly amused.

Tom's face softens. Janice smiles.

Ash watches Greg, taking in his attitude.

EXT. BEACH - EVENING

Tom and company arrive at the beach.

TOM  
Have a drink everyone. Make it a small one. By my calculations we should be about twenty miles from where we landed.

They use their water bottles.

TOM (CONT'D)  
We'll keep going whatever.  
Same speed. Ten minutes break.

CHARLIE  
What now?

Tom gestures up and along the beach.

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

A full moon reveals Tom's party. They eat bananas around a small fire, concealed from the sea by a large rock.

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

Tom glances at him with impatience.

TOM  
No Charlie, we'd be sitting ducks if they sent another plane. These weapons haven't the bren's punch.

Greg regards Charlie with contempt.

GREG  
I don't rate taking on a destroyer.

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

She eyes Tom. He ignores her.

TOM  
You're all doing well. Keep faith  
in yourselves. We'd better return  
to the jungle.

Tom glances at Subul, gazing into space.

JANICE  
He'll come right.

Tom nods.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Saito and men advance along the beach, searching for enemy traces. Saito freezes as he finds fire remains. He gestures to his men to spread out, some into the jungle. They advance with caution.

EXT. JUNGLE/CLEARING - DAY

Tom's party moves with caution through the trees. They halt. Tom gestures downwards. They slump to the ground and relax.

Tom, still suffering from his wound, points to it to Janice. She places a fresh bandage/field dressing on it. He looks grateful with a grim smile.

Tom's P.O.V. : The jungle shimmers and the break in the canopy of trees swirls. He shakes his head to maintain consciousness.

Greg notices.

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

Subul perches on Ash's shoulders. He swings Subul down.

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

Greg pulls his bayonet from his belt. He hacks down bamboos and hands them to Tom, Ash and Charlie, keeping one for himself.

TOM (CONT'D)  
What were you Ash, before this  
mess?

ASH

An engineer for a small boat firm.  
I guess survival's all I want. Get  
back to my wife and watch my boy  
grow up. If we kill some enemies,  
a bonus.

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

Ash sharpens his spear with his bayonet, before offering to  
do the same for the others. He takes great care with the  
deadly points.

TOM

So we steal a motor launch and you  
could work it?

ASH

Piece of cake.

JANICE

What about us?

SUBUL

One for me.

Greg cuts Subul a spear. Ash sharpens it with his usual care.  
Subul aims it at an imaginary foe. Greg looks: Useless child.

TOM

Check first.

He creeps through the last trees.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Tom scans the deserted beach. The sea swirls lazily on the  
sand.

Tom gives a thumbs up.

CHARLIE

I'm hungry and thirsty.

SHONA

Water. Anyone with me?

CHARLIE

Count me in.

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

TOM

(calling after them)  
Be back within the hour.

EXT. BEACH

Greg and Tom try spearing fish with no luck. Janice likewise. Subul perches on a rock. He stabs his spear at a fish. Ash sits on a rock nearby, keeping watch for the enemy.

ASH  
You remind me of my boy.  
He's about your age.

Subul pulls his spear from the water. He has a fish on the end of his spear. He smiles, showing it to Ash.

An aircraft approaches. They all dash for the trees. They just make it as the plane passes overhead.

JUNGLE

Charlie and Shona break from the trees onto the edge of a pool, an idyllic spot with a waterfall and palm trees.

Charlie strips to his underpants and dives in.

CHARLIE  
Make it quick or Tom'll have our  
guts for garters.

SHONA  
Any alligators?

CHARLIE  
Not yet. Enjoy.

Shona, in her pants, joins him.

Shona swims faster than Charlie. She keeps just out of his reach, flirting. He chases her. Shona LAUGHS.

She dives. Charlie searches for her. There's no sign. Charlie is worried. She surfaces behind him and ducks him.

They swim closer till Charlie puts his hand up and Shona matches it, pressing hers against his. They kiss. They are face to face nibbling at each other. They swim to shallow water.

Charlie slides down their pants. They join and make love --- ecstatic.

CLEARING

The group hides in the shelter of large palm trees. Tom studies a map, headed by Japanese writing.

Greg tries to see what Tom is reading, concealing his interest. Tom looks up.



GREG  
I wonder where those two are?

SOUND of a distant plane.

TOM  
The planes. Hm... They'll  
slow us.

The rest take on where he's going. Greg glances at Ash,  
shaking his head as if Tom is mad.

ASH  
(ignoring Greg)  
Travel by night?

TOM  
We'll never get to Aus in time.  
Remove obstacles.

JUNGLE

Charlie and Shona climax in the pool.

A fighter plane flies overhead, its wing-tip visible. They  
freeze.

SHONA  
Dive.

They sink below the surface. Bubbles mark the spot.

CLEARING

Greg pulls out a photo. He shakes his head. Fighters pass  
above the trees. Greg pockets the photo.

Ash seizes the billycan. Tom scatters the embers.

Fighter/bombers keep flying inland. We hear their engines  
change to a rougher PITCH.

GREG  
An airfield?

TOM  
Know what I'm thinking?

Greg nods.

TOM (CONT'D)  
(vicious)  
Debts to repay.

Greg is wary of Tom.

Charlie and Shona stride into the clearing with the water bottles suspended from their shoulders by vine loops. Charlie gives a thumbs up.

CHARLIE  
(Grinning)  
Great scenery.

TOM  
(angry)  
Took your time. Far?

CHARLIE  
About half a mile. Beautiful water.

TOM  
Right, we go. Now!

Greg looks angry. To Charlie:

GREG  
Thanks a million.

Shona and Charlie give each other a twitching smile.

EXT. JUNGLE - EVENING

Tom, his LMG, (light machine gun) at the ready, leads. Ash keeps Subul close enough to lift over low creepers.

The girls hold their fishing spears.

Charlie, carrying a semi automatic, brings up the rear. He stops and listens; then continues.

Tom puts up his hand and waves it up and down, directing them to take cover. A six foot fence bars their way. They crouch and listen.

GREG  
(in a low tone)  
I'll go forward and recce?

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

Tom gets to his feet and strides forward. Ash and Tom disappear into the jungle. Greg bottles his irritation.

SUBUL  
I kill a Japanese?

JANICE  
No, love. You stay with me.

Subul is furious.

A plane skims the jungle. It LANDS not far away.

AIRFIELD

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

TOM  
(whispering)  
Watch out for my signal and fetch  
Shona and Charlie. Meet me at the  
petrol drums.

ASH  
Take care.

TOM  
Sure.

Ash strains at lifting the fence. Tom helps him. It gives. Tom scrambles underneath.

Lights flick on near the planes. There are no hangers, just an airstrip cut out of the jungle.

Masses of petrol drums cast shadows ahead of Tom. Two Nissen huts are about one hundred yards further on.

Tom slinks along the perimeter fence till he's opposite the Nissen huts.

TWO SENTRIES stroll round the planes. They carry weapons.

The two seater fighter/bombers are laid out in two straight lines, the nearest only twenty yards from the petrol drums, forty in number.

Tom approaches the petrol drums, keeping them between him and the sentries. A petrol filler hose stands alone. He creeps towards the huts.

TWO MEN exit them. They lean against a wall and light up cigarettes.

Tom hugs the ground. He rolls behind a runway light in deep shadow. He lies there. ---

JUNGLE

Only outlines show in the fading moonlight.

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

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

SHONA  
I'll help.

SUBUL  
Let me, please.

CHARLIE  
Not for kids.

Subul picks up a spear. He jabs with it.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)  
(Chuckling)  
Stick to fish.

#### AIRFIELD

The men stroll towards Tom. He flattens himself behind the light, in its shadow. One flicks a cigarette butt, close to Tom. They must see him.

The men wander back inside the hut.

Tom creeps across the close cut vegetation towards the huts. He stops and observes. He gets to his feet and runs to the huts again in deep shadow. He rounds a hut.

Tom nods to himself. Tom lifts crates of empty beer bottles.

He looks towards the guards. They walk back towards him. Tom freezes close to the ground. Tom crouches in the shadow.

The guards turn and stroll towards the far planes.

He slinks with his crates over to the drums, avoiding rattling them. Tom puts down the bottles. Tom fills them with petrol. His hands are shaking, spilling petrol. Will he ever get control?

Tom clenches his teeth. He continues filling the bottles, his hands less shaky.

#### JUNGLE

Charlie, Shona, Janice and Subul sit waiting.

A faint WHISTLE from Ash.

CHARLIE  
Shona, let's go.

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

#### PLANES

Charlie sees the airfield plus planes:

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

SHONA  
(smiling)  
Tom. He can do anything.

CHARLIE  
Yeah, like get us all killed.

AIRFIELD

Tom hides the filled petrol bottles behind the drums. He pulls out his handkerchief, watching the guards. Their backs are still towards him.

Tom glances back to check the huts. He steps out from the shadow and waves his handkerchief.

EXT. FENCE/DRUMS

Ash sees Tom's handkerchief. He backs into the jungle and into Greg.

ASH  
What the...!

Greg crouches over Tom's pack, hiding it. Ash dives under the fence, which Charlie stretches up.

Greg, Shona and Charlie follow, as Ash holds up the fence. Ash beckons them to follow him and they sprint to the petrol drums.

They reach Tom without incident.

TOM  
(whispering)  
Charlie, give covering fire.  
Ash and Greg, drums, as close as  
you can.

CHARLIE  
Willco!

Ash and Greg nod.

TOM  
Shona, come with me.

SHONA  
Light them?

TOM  
Hell no! Don't want to fry.

He freezes, shivering. He keeps up the pretence.

TOM (CONT'D)  
 Bloody malaria.

He leads off with the two bottle crates.

AIRFIELD

Ash and Greg roll two drums towards the huts. They get closer.

Charlie hugs the ground. He sights his weapon on the nearest hut doorway. We see through his sights.

Tom holds out the crates to Shona, who takes two bottles. They approach, crouching, towards the planes.

INT. HUTS

In the filtered moonlight through the curtains, men sleep in hammocks. Approaching petrol drums RUMBLE.

A PILOT opens his eyes and stretches. He listens to the RUMBLE getting closer. --- He shakes his head. He rolls out of his hammock, and runs to the window.

EXT. FENCE AREA

Janice watches Tom and Shona with tense interest.

JANICE  
 You'll get revenge tonight, Subul.

No answer.

JANICE (CONT'D)  
 Subul, Subul!

He's disappeared.

JANICE (CONT'D)  
 Oh God!

She searches around in a panic. No Subul.

INT. AIRFIELD/HUT

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

PILOT  
*Ai! The planes! Someone!*

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

The pilot throws on his clothes.

PILOT  
*Quick! Planes!*

The pilot dashes to the door. Other PILOTS rush to get dressed.

Two seize their weapons and make for the door, clad only in underpants. The pilot opens the door, a pistol in his hand.

EXT. AIRFIELD/HUT

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

A SWISH, A THUD. A spear sticks out of the pilot's back. He falls dead. Subul yanks his spear from the body.

SUBUL  
One for Mum.

Subul vanishes into the shadows.

Greg and Ash have their drums within ten yards of the huts. They trundle them along at top speed. The doors open in both huts. Men stream out blinking, many carrying pistols.

A siren SOUNDS. More lights flick on round the runway.

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

Charlie waits. --- Then opens up with TWO SHOTS on the drums. They EXPLODE creating a curtain of fire, preventing the pilots from running into the dark.

Charlie uses single SHOTS on stragglers. As one clip empties, he snatches another. A turkey shoot.

Burning Pilots roll on the ground; the ground crews from the other hut do the same.

PLANES

Tom freezes.

FLASHBACK

EXT. GUM TREES/CREEK - DAY

TOM aged 15, watches a wall of fire approaching fast. He runs to a creek and dives in. The fire jumps the creek. Tom's head comes up for air, then vanishes under water again.

END OF FLASHBACK.

Tom shakes his head violently, to clear the vision.

AIRFIELD

Bullets fly in all directions. Tom and Shona turn from the last plane.

SHONA  
Shit. We'll never make it.

TOM  
(pointing towards the fence.)  
Run!

Shona runs into the darkness towards the fence.

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

Tom turns and fires at the nearest petrol drum. It EXPLODES causing a chain reaction of EXPLODING drums.

The petrol chain LEAPS from plane to plane, reaching the bottles, which EXPLODE one after another, causing every plane to become a raging INFERNO.

Tom's face twitches. He shakes his head violently. Tom reaches Charlie, diving to the ground. Bullets fly.

EXT. HUT

A little hut beyond the other two has its lights on.

OFFICERS dash out, FIRING THEIR WEAPONS.

EXT. AIRFIELD/FENCE AREA

Ash and Shona scramble under the fence. Janice watches the action. She helps hold up the fence.

JANICE  
Where's Subul?

Subul emerges from the jungle.

SUBUL  
Here. Been busy.

Janice clasps him.

AIRFIELD

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

Tom rushes the hut. He stumbles and collapses. Charlie sprints after him. He halts at Tom.



TOM  
I'm okay. Check the hut.

Charlie dashes forward.

TOM (CONT'D)  
And Charlie. ---

He's too late. Charlie mounts the hut steps.

INT. HUT

One last OFFICER tries to get through on the radio.

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

The door opens. Charlie enters, weapon in hand.

Greg emerges from darkness, entering the far end of the hut. The officer keeps talking. He tries to draw his pistol.

Charlie FIRES into the radio. Charlie SHOOTS him once in the head. He looks at Greg in amazement.

Greg lowers his weapon.

GREG  
I was hoping to contact our guys.  
We need help.

Charlie turns to the door and exits. Greg follows him and they race to the fence.

EXT. AIRFIELD/OFFICERS' HUT

Two Japanese remain alive outside the hut. Charlie SHOOTS one. The other aims at Charlie. He freezes.

A SHOT rings out. The Japanese falls dead. The bullets cease. Charlie checks ahead. Tom lets his rifle fall. Charlie runs to him.

CHARLIE  
Thanks.

TOM  
A radio in the hut?

CHARLIE  
Not now.

Tom rises shivering, in turmoil from the flames. He shakes his head.

TOM  
I needed that radio.  
Let's go.

Charlie scans the mayhem round them. Planes burn in an inferno and explode.

CHARLIE  
Not bad.

TOM  
Go! That radio op. might have called in reinforcements.

Tom sprints towards the fence, gasping.

CHARLIE  
Not hit, Boss?

TOM  
No. Out of here.

EXT. JUNGLE - NIGHT

The party stops for a breather.

Janice toys with a spear. She starts.

JANICE  
How come this spear's got blood on it?

Subul pretends not to hear, retreating into spaced out mode.

JANICE (CONT'D)  
Ah.

She looks hard at Subul, then drops the subject.

TOM  
Up now. We'll try the sea route.  
Move it.

Greg groans. Tom ignores him. Tom's party heads off towards the sea. They make slow progress due to the creepers and exhaustion.

Insects CLICK.

CHARLIE  
Can't we stop for a rest, Boss?

Charlie is shattered.

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

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

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

They turn to Tom as he pauses in a clearing.

TOM  
Wait here.

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

SHONA  
Thanks.

CHARLIE  
(chuckles)  
It shows good taste.

They all drop where they are.

Subul, perched on Ash's shoulders, is the only fresh member.  
Ash swings him to the ground and slumps down.

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

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

All are stunned, but for Tom and Shona. She smiles.

JANICE  
Has fear no meaning for you?

Tom grins.

TOM  
Trying to give it up.

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

Charlie crosses himself. Tom doesn't notice Charlie.

TOM  
I wouldn't have wanted that one.

The HUM of a distant plane freezes everyone.

All await Tom's orders.

TOM (CONT'D)

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

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

ASH

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

Tom laughs.

TOM

I might start a demolition firm.

CHARLIE

Or an undertakers.

They laugh.

EXT. JUNGLE/AIRFIELD - DAY

Saito and men arrive at the airfield fence. They stare at the  
bedlam of twisted wreckage and bodies, amazed.

Saito is beside himself with rage. He searches around for  
Tom's path away. He finds the broken bushes and gestures his  
men to follow him. They hurry away.

CLEARING

Tom's group lie around a fire. Tom scans the jungle, his eyes  
constantly roving.

It has glowing embers and no smoke. A roasting lizard swings  
above from a pyramid of branches.

SHONA

Smells good.

ASH

(smiling)

I only select the best.

TOM

No talking. Just listen.

He points to the jungle around them.

Ash cuts the vines suspending the lizard and places it across  
two mess tins. He divides it into seven portions.  
He offers a portion to each of them.

Ash joins Tom further, off from the others. He crouches  
beside Tom. They eat in silence. Tom looks disturbed.

TOM (CONT'D)  
The girls? I'm putting them  
at risk.

ASH  
Better than a prison camp ---  
For us all.

Tom instinctively reaches for his hat. Then stops. Tom nods.  
He's more relaxed.

ASH (CONT'D)  
That wasn't malaria, was it Tom?

Tom is startled. He says nothing ---.

ASH (CONT'D)  
Was it?

Tom shudders.

TOM  
In my early teens, I had a bad  
experience.

Ash looks at him, wanting more of the story.

TOM (CONT'D)  
Since then, I've been petrified  
of fire.

Ash stares at him, incredulous.

TOM (CONT'D)  
The planes --- It had to be done.  
Don't tell the others.

Ash stares at Tom; he shakes his head. Tom strides towards  
the others.

TOM (CONT'D)  
Time everybody. Clear away any  
signs we've been here. Leave in  
five minutes.

Ash scatters soil over the fire embers.

EXT. JUNGLE - EVENING

Tom leads but is slower with every step.

All look on their last legs.

GREG  
Do you know where we are, Tom?

EXT. ROCKS

Tom points to an outcrop of rocks, showing through the trees.

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

JANICE  
Find a home for Subul?

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

He links his arm through Ash's.

TOM  
Too dangerous, Subul. You'll be okay with your own people.

Subul shakes his head. He looks at Ash for support. Ash winks.

INT. JAPANESE ARMY OFFICE - NIGHT

CAPTAIN SAITO - PROMOTED in a crisp army uniform, sits at his desk. He is on the phone, nodding.

SAITO  
*Understood. I'll get his mission out of him one way or another. We've found signs of where they've been.*

He listens to the phone.

SAITO (CONT'D)  
*Very soon.*

EXT. JUNGLE - CLEARING - NIGHT

Tom, Ash, Greg, Charlie, Subul, Janice and Shona shelter under a tree.

TOM  
We'd better leave at first light.

CHARLIE  
Why not now?

TOM  
Stumble around in the dark? I'll take first watch till ten. Shona and Janice can take second. Ash and Charlie, last.

Greg looks at Tom, questioning, like "my watch?" Tom ignores him and takes cover under bushes.

Greg draws Ash away from the others. Ash looks at him suspiciously. They sit under cover of bushes.

ASH

Well?

GREG

I guess Tom's losing it. Doesn't know where we are or where we're going.

ASH

He's done pretty well so far.

Greg looks cunning.

GREG

I reckon we're going up shit street.

Ash stands, looking aggressive.

ASH

I don't know what you're up to, searching his pack before the airfield. Yes, I saw enough.

Greg stands, equally aggressive.

GREG

You saw bugger all. I was hiding it from any Japanese sentries.

His hand slips to his bayonet, unseen by Ash. Ash looks like: "Pull the other one."

TOM (O.S.)

Get under cover and shut it.

They slide under separate bushes.

EXT. JUNGLE/BUSHES

Tom murmurs.

Janice creeps up, unseen and listens.

TOM (O.S.)

... and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us... And Lord, keep us safe and let our mission succeed.

Janice is amazed. She smiles. She slinks off into the darkness.

Janice and Shona hide under the same bush a short distance from the men, on watch. Subul disappears under another bush, a little remote from the rest.

Greg emerges from bushes to rejoin the other men. Janice watches him with interest.

JANICE  
Where's he been to so long?

SHONA  
Call of nature?

JANICE  
I don't like the way he looks at Tom as if he's lost confidence in him.

SHONA  
If he ever had any ---

Weapons are being COCKED. Figures circle the four men. Bayonets flash in the moonlight.

SAITO  
Up. Now.

The men wake up.

TOM  
Oh hell!

SAITO  
Come.

SOLDIERS prod them with their bayonets.

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

TOM  
Okay. Okay.

SAITO  
Where's the rest of you?

TOM  
Only us. The rest died of sickness and their wounds.

Soldiers prod them away into the dark.

EXT. JUNGLE/MORE BUSHES

Moon shadows loom above the girls. A bayonet pricks Janice.

SHONA  
Pigs!



A bayonet tears her sarong. She jumps to her feet. She reaches for her bayonet. It's knocked out of her hand.

Soldiers handcuff them both and march them away.

INT. MEN'S CELL - NIGHT

Tom and the other men lie in a small cell on the concrete floor. A bucket in the corner.

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

TOM  
Hmm. At least they'll be free.

CHARLIE  
The girls aren't trained soldiers  
like the Japs.

TOM  
In the can, at best. I should have  
gone solo. So sorry mates.

He thumps the wall in desperation.

ASH  
Tell them what they want to hear.  
Might save our skins.

The door opens. FOUR Japanese SOLDIERS enter, rifles at the ready. They search Charlie, Tom, Ash and Greg's pockets. One takes Charlie's lighter. Another approaches Tom.

SOLDIER  
Come!

Tom staggers to his feet. He leaves, followed by the soldiers.

We hear the KEY turn in the lock.

INT. JAPANESE ARMY OFFICE

Tom stands handcuffed in front of a basic desk. Two soldiers to his rear, their rifles pointing at him.

Saito sits behind the desk.

SAITO  
Captain Tom Hartley?

Tom shows his amazement.

SAITO (CONT'D)  
*Search him.*

The sentries rummage through his pockets. They drop his shorts. They rip off his shirt. Nothing. His hat falls to the floor.

TOM  
See! Nothing!

SAITO  
Cooperate or else---

Saito makes a throat slitting motion.

Tom turns away, revealing his scarred back. Saito reads the scars, approving.

SAITO (CONT'D)  
We'll finish the job. Skinless.

TOM  
(wincing)  
Prisoners of war.

SAITO  
Where's the rest of your group?  
The maps?

Tom struggles to pull up his shorts.

TOM  
We're all that's left. The maps  
burnt in the fire when your men  
destroyed the village.

SAITO  
Don't lie to me. There must have  
been many of you to kill that  
patrol. We've found your women.

Tom hesitates, deadpan.

TOM  
I'm telling you the truth.

Saito motions to the soldiers.

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

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

Tom GROANS on the floor.

TOM

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

SAITO

Where're you heading?

TOM

We're trying to get home to Australia.

Saito nods to the soldiers. They kick Tom again and beat him with their rifle butts.

He GROANS. Saito enjoys Tom's pain.

SAITO

Tell me the truth. It's impossible to get from here to Australia. You were spying for the Americans or you were going to sabotage something else.

TOM

I am telling you the truth.

SAITO

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

Saito looks as if he'll enjoy the prospect --- New idea:

SAITO (CONT'D)

We'll see how you take the fair girl ripped apart first --- Sleep well.

The soldiers kick Tom again. He passes out.

They drag Tom out.

INT. MEN'S CELL

Ash, Greg and Charlie are shocked at the state of Tom as he's dragged into the cell.

The soldiers remove his cuffs and drop him on the floor. They throw his hat and shirt in after him.

The soldiers drag Greg out. As soon as the door closes, Ash strides over to Tom. He lifts him up, his back against the wall. Tom shakes, unconscious.

He murmurs, dreaming:

TOM  
Get to Aus.

ASH  
Bastards!

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

TOM  
They've got the girls.

CHARLIE  
That's it then.

Ash gets up. He strides to the door.

ASH  
Water.

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

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

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

The girls KNOCK in a cell next door.

Charlie KNOCKS back.

CHARLIE  
No escape then! We should have  
stayed in Singapore.

Ash gives him a hostile look.

EXT. MEN'S CELL

A quarter moon illuminates the camp: concrete, featureless, one storey buildings. Subul crawls towards the cell in deep shadow. He reaches the wall of the women's cell.

EXT. WOMEN'S CELL

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

EXT. CELL CORNER

The sentry searches round the corner. His eyes look above the boy, and in the distance.

Subul freezes in the shadow --- The Sentry turns and disappears around the corner.

MEN'S CELL

The door opens. Greg is thrown in. His face is bloody, not bruised. The others awake from their sleep.

GREG

No worries. They got nothing from me.

EXT. WOMEN'S CELL

Subul lets out his breath. He tiptoes near the window. No glass. Only bars. He whispers:

SUBUL

You there?

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

SUBUL (CONT'D)

Janice, Shona.

JANICE (O.S.)

Subul! Don't get caught love.

SHONA (O.S.)

Find a piece of wire.

SUBUL

Be back.

Subul crawls off into the dark.

INT. WOMEN'S CELL

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

JANICE

We'll never open that lock with wire.

SHONA

Watch me.

Janice sounds angry.

JANICE.

He'll never find any in the dark.

SHONA

Wanna bet?

EXT. WOMEN'S CELL

Subul crawls towards the cell with a piece of lead pipe/a log in his hand. He reaches the window.

SUBUL  
Anyone home?

SHONA (O.S.)  
Hi.

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

Subul throws the pipe through the bars. No sound.

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

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

INT. WOMEN'S CELL

Shona gestures to Janice. She passes her the pipe.

SHONA  
You do it. Up on my back.

JANICE  
I can't. I might kill him.

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

Janice crouches. She holds her hands as a step up for Shona. Shona steps onto Janice's back with the pipe level with the window.

Janice crouches, back to the wall, bracing her hands on her knees.

EXT. WOMEN'S CELL

Subul disappears round the corner --- He returns, the sentry chasing him. Subul collapses outside the window. The Sentry hauls him to his feet by his hair and twists his hair.

SUBUL  
(loud)  
Ow! You're hurting me!

The sentry SLAPS Subul.

Shona CRACKS the sentry over the head. He collapses on the ground.

Subul checks the sentry... still out cold. He retrieves his keys and runs to the corner.

EXT. WOMEN'S CELL

The doorway lies in shadow. Subul looks to see whether anyone else approaches. He runs to the door.

A relief SENTRY approaches in the distance. Subul fumbles with key after key. He drops them. He retrieves them. At last the latch opens. The Relief Sentry strides closer. Subul dives into the cell.

INT./EXT. WOMEN'S CELL

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

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

RELIEF SENTRY (O.S.)  
Hito! Where are you?

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

EXT./INT. WOMEN'S CELL

Shona and Janice run to the near corner. They peep round it. They each take an arm of the unconscious Sentry, and drag him into the cell.

INT. WOMEN'S CELL

Subul seizes the keys from Shona. He locks the door. They sink PANTING to the floor.

RELIEF SENTRY (O.S.)  
Hito!

They hear the New Sentry ROUNDING the building to their door again. Shona picks up the pipe. She waits beside the door.

SHONA  
(whispers)  
Open it Subul.

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

JANICE  
Water, water.

She mimes drinking from a cup.

NEW SENTRY

Hey!

The New Sentry doesn't buy it. He fumbles for his keys. Subul pushes past him, punching him in the stomach as he passes.

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

JANICE

The men. Quick.

They run out.

EXT. WOMEN'S CELL

Shona locks the door on the unconscious sentry. They race to the men's cell.

EXT. MEN'S CELL

Shona unlocks the door. She checks round the outside. There is a distant NOISE of Subul, and the New Sentry CRASHING through the bushes.

The girls enter the cell.

INT. MEN'S CELL

A glimmer of moonlight shines through a window. Shona and Janice astonish the men, putting their hands over their mouths.

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

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

SHONA

Quick.

Ash and Charlie hoist Tom to his feet. Tom smiles. He gives a thumbs up.

ASH

Let's go. Keys.

Shona picks up the sentry's gun, slots his bayonet in her belt, and hands the keys and gun to Ash.

They exit the cell. Ash closes and locks the door behind them.

EXT. MEN'S CELL

Janice puts her hand up, like "wait".



JANICE  
Subul. Where's he...?

TOM  
We can't hunt for him now.

Janice is aghast.

JANICE  
We can't just leave him.

TOM  
How the Hell do we find him in the  
jungle in the dark, without  
torches, unable to shout?

Tom shrugs his shoulders, sadly.

EXT. JUNGLE - DAWN

Tom and party arrive under the trees, next to the bushes  
where Shona and Janice hid on sentry duty.

Shona searches for their weapons and packs.  
She shakes her head.

ASH  
I guess we find that high ground.

INT. JAPANESE ARMY OFFICE

The Relief Sentry enters Saito's office, dragging Subul by  
his arm.

He shuts the door behind him. He throws Subul to the ground  
in front of Saito.

Saito looks up, irritated.

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

NEW SENTRY  
*He was with the prisoners, Sir.  
They've...*

SAITO  
*He's a native.*

NEW SENTRY  
*He was their decoy, Sir.  
They've escaped.*

Saito sparks:

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

NEW SENTRY  
*A kid!*

SAITO  
 (melting)  
*I'll make use of him. He can be a  
 plaything for my son.*

The New Sentry exits.

Saito beckons Subul to him. Subul eases to his feet. He approaches Saito as if the man is a snake.

SAITO (CONT'D)  
 Do you want to live, boy?

SUBUL  
 Yes.

SAITO  
 So tell me all you know about  
 the American.

SUBUL  
 What?

Saito puts on a friendly front. He strokes Subul's hair.

SAITO  
 You know it's good to be on the  
 winning side.

Subul is deadpan.

SAITO (CONT'D)  
 Just tell me where the American's  
 heading.

Subul stares straight ahead, as if he hasn't heard. Saito slaps him.

SAITO (CONT'D)  
 I'll make your leader cooperate  
 when he watches me work on you.

Subul trembles, but still stares.

EXT. OUTCROP/SEA - DAY

Tom and company emerge from jungle onto a rocky outcrop. Tom waves them back under cover, apart from Ash.

The two crouch to find their bearings. Tom points to the sun and then finds the sea about two miles distant.

Distant SHOUTS from Saito's men as they search. They sound from all directions.

TOM  
We need to slow them down. Ash,  
Shona.

Tom beckons towards the jungle.

TOM (CONT'D)  
Back shortly.

He waves the others under cover. Ash and Tom dive back into the trees. Shona fades into the jungle.

GREG  
I reckon we're surrounded. Tom'll  
get us all killed. Better give  
ourselves up.

CHARLIE  
You wanna lose your head?  
I'm sticking with Tom.

Janice looks hostile.

JANICE  
Do your own thing, Greg. I'm  
staying. He's got us here so far.

Greg scowls.

GREG  
So far.

EXT. JUNGLE

A Japanese patrol of 10 MEN, well strung out, cuts its way.

The last man GRUNTS as Shona slices him. She lifts his body into the foliage. She vanishes.

The now last man looks behind him. He searches for his dead comrade. He opens his mouth to call and slumps to the ground as a bayonet cuts his throat.

EXT. JUNGLE - FURTHER ON

The remaining EIGHT of the patrol CHATTER, frightened, clustering around their OFFICER.

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

Shona is back under cover. The final six search back for their comrades. They gasp as a suspended corpse swings above them.

EXT. OUTCROP/RIDGE

Tom and Ash return, carrying bamboo cuts, and strips of vine.

CHARLIE

What the fuck? Going to start a market garden?

Tom and Ash drop their cuttings and sit.

TOM

Quick. Bows and arrows. They are silent. Pick off the last man each time. We only wound some, so they slow pursuit, carrying their comrades.

He and Ash hurry to strip off the leaves and fashion bows. Charlie grins at the idea, and makes arrows. Janice helps string the vines.

GREG

Surrounded.

TOM

So we break out.

Greg moodily joins in sharpening arrows.

TOM (CONT'D)

(pointing along the ridge.)  
They won't expect us to split.  
Ash and Charlie take that route.  
Avoid trouble. Reach the sea and find a boat.

Ash nods.

TOM (CONT'D)

If you hear us up the creek, create a diversion.

Tom looks at the sun. He points at it.

TOM (CONT'D)

We'll meet you in about an hour.  
The sun'll be about that high.  
(gestures) Beyond the headland.  
Listen well.

Shona emerges from the jungle, wiping clean her bloodied bayonet on a plant.

SHONA

Not quite surrounded.

The others shake their heads in wonder.

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

Shona leads with her bayonet, a bow on her back. She oozes through the jungle, snake-like, soundless.

Tom is next with Janice in tow. Greg watches their rear. Both he and Tom have bows at the ready. Their rifles are slung on their backs.

They stop and listen every few yards and are rewarded by Shona, stopped and gesturing into cover. Jungle SOUNDS help conceal their progress.

As they fade into the undergrowth, an equally silent PATROL of six passes by. It stops right by them.

Janice looks at Tom, beside her. She's ready to fire. Tom pulls back his arrow. He fires, copied by Shona and Greg.

Janice misses with hers. Three Japanese grunt and fall. Three more arrows follow and two more enemy fall.

The remaining man fires blindly into the jungle and runs, dragging a wounded comrade. He falls to Janice's next arrow. They all look surprised.

TOM  
(whispers)  
Join the club.

Both smile.

EXT. MORE JUNGLE - DAY

Tom, Shona, Janice and Greg ease through the jungle. Tom leads. He halts, and waves the others down.

THREE NATIVES almost plough into them. Tom reaches for his rifle.

Shona pushes Tom's rifle down and smiles at them. Shona says a few words in Bahasa Indonesia. (Native tongue) The big native, who appears to be their leader, smiles and replies.

TOM  
(whispering)  
What's all that about?

SHONA  
They say they will show us the best way of avoiding the Japs. They hate them for taking over their country.

TOM  
Can we trust them?

SHONA  
We have to. Be on our guard.

Tom looks at Greg, and Janice. She looks worried. Greg gives a thumbs up. Tom smiles at the natives and waves them on.

Tom keeps close to the Natives, and Shona, appearing to be relaxed. Tom stops. The native Leader stops and smiles. He shows five fingers, pointing down the track. Tom listens.

The natives all chatter, drowning any local sounds, apart from the jungle.

TOM  
Shut them up, Shona.

SHONA  
Sh!

The natives ignore her. Tom listens.

GREG  
Seem okay by me.

Tom puts his finger to his mouth. Shona turns from the natives, concealing her reaching for her bayonet. Tom readies his bow. Likewise Greg following Tom.

Shona leaps on the big native, her bayonet at his throat. The others look ready to leap into the jungle. Shona makes a cutting motion and they freeze.

All is silent except for the SOUND OF A TANK. It smashes its way through the jungle and fades away, unseen.

TOM  
Tie them up. Probably going to sell us to the enemy.

Shona gags them with leaves. Greg helps. Tom ties them to trees. Then waves Greg and the girls back the way they had come.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Saito reaches the beach. There are several fishermen's boats and launches. He instructs his 10-20 men:

SAITO  
*Kill them all but for the women and the blond American. We work on the women, and he will talk.*

He places his men behind the vessels.

EXT. JUNGLE/BEACH

Shona, her head only showing, ahead of Greg, Janice and Tom, watches Saito. Shona waves and they join her in the jungle fringe. She signals the enemy numbers and positions.

Tom looks at Shona and Janice. He shows five fingers. They nod. They melt into the jungle.

EXT. BEACH FURTHER ALONG

Ash and Charlie emerge by another cluster of boats. Some are already in the water, their OCCUPANTS ready for fishing. Ash looks at the sun, worried.

CHARLIE

No worries. No shooting. They must be okay.

Ash appears doubtful. The SNAPPING of rending branches behind them makes them both jump. Tom, Janice and Greg appear, carrying captured guns.

TOM

See that launch? Looks in good order. Charlie, tell Greg and the girls a joke, strolling down the beach. Ash and I'll check it out.

GREG

Suppose the locals cotton on?

TOM

No firing. Our mutual friends are just round the headland.

Tom and Ash, carrying weapons concealed by palm fronds, run down to the sea near the launch.

Charlie smiles at the FISHERMEN and pretends to be telling a joke. Greg is too worried to smile.

SHONA

(emerging from the shadow of a boat)  
Smile, Greg. Could be your last.

Greg forces a smile. Shona peals with laughter.

Ash and Tom swerve to the launch, fooling around.

LOCALS appear suspicious.

INT/EXT. LAUNCH

Ash starts up the engine. Tom is also aboard and helps Janice and the others inboard. A fisherman runs towards the launch, SHOUTING in anger.

Shona flashes her blade and he halts, shouting obscenities. She smiles as if he were her great friend. She jumps into the launch.

Ash backs the launch out to sea and swings her round.

A soldier rounds the headland and FIRES. Tom fires back. His target falls.

Ash opens it out to full THROTTLE.

INT. LAUNCH MOVING

Another rifle shot RINGS out. All duck.

TOM

As fast as you can go, Ash!

ASH

Not stopping for breakfast!

Another SHOT SPLASHES wide. The launch smacks down on the waves.

EXT. SEA - DAY

Greg takes the helm and Charlie searches ahead for other vessels.

INT./EXT. CABIN - DAY

Tom flourishes a chart, and Janice holds it flat, while he pores over it.

ASH

I reckon we've got fuel for a couple of hundred miles at least.

CHARLIE

If we don't get attacked.

Ash looks at Charlie like, Here we go again!

TOM

Stick with the fishing fleet. We'll hide out among the islands for a couple of days.

EXT. BEACH

Saito, furious, runs to another launch, and leads his men into pushing it towards the sea. They struggle but succeed.

Saito strides to the engine. He cranks it but there's no response. He finds four oars. His men row for life. Saito tinkers with the engine.

He searches the jungle edge for his missing men. No sign.

EXT. SEA/ISLAND - DAY

Tom's launch has reached the far side of the fleet. It drifts further away.



A small island appears through the mist, half a mile distant. Sharks cruise close by.

INT.\EXT LAUNCH DRIFTING

Mist thins. They all look spent. Ash cat-naps. Likewise the girls. Charlie watches into the mist.

Greg urinates, his back to the others. He checks the weight of the fuel cans.

TOM

We need to put that island between us and the fleet. Then they won't see where we head next.

SHONA

Where Subul now?

GREG

He'd only get in the road.

CHARLIE

He saved your life, Greg.

GREG

(disbelieving)

Mine?

Janice remembers, and makes a spear throwing movement.

Ash tops up the engine's fuel tank. He starts the engine and it chugs on, switched to SLOW. The launch's engine SPLUTTERS.

Ash opens the throttle. It dies. They rise and fall in a greasy swell.

Ash accuses Greg.

ASH

Water in the petrol I guess.  
How'd it get there?

Greg shrugs like "How would I know?" Tom is steely eyed.

TOM

It's time you told us what you're up to, Greg.

Greg looks like: "Me?"

SHONA

You returning from somewhere the night we were captured.

They all regard Greg with suspicion.

GREG  
Having a leak.

SHONA  
A long one.

Greg is shaken.

GREG  
Okay, I ran into the Japs. They  
already had you surrounded. They  
told me to go back and act normal  
so you'd be captured with no  
bloodshed, or we'd all die.

TOM  
Sure, they'd worry about bloodshed.  
Now tell us the truth. Last chance.

Charlie looks at Greg with new understanding. Shona fiddles  
with her bayonet.

Ash drains the petrol tank into a can.

More sharks cruise near the helpless vessel.

GREG  
Okay, I'll deliver. The Japs  
captured my bro. and me, and would  
have killed him if I hadn't agreed  
to work for them.

TOM  
(through gritted teeth)  
A traitor.

GREG  
What would you have done in  
my place?

ASH  
Pretended to do so.

The others nod.

INT. LAUNCH MOVING

Greg whips out a pistol. He rises, steadying himself against  
the side of the boat.

TOM  
So you went through my pack.  
I thought it was you. And your Jap  
mates went through my pockets so  
you know I'm not carrying anything.

GREG  
 You've committed it to memory or  
 your hat. No one thought to check  
 your hat.

Ash clenches his fist. Gimlet eyes drill Greg.

GREG (CONT'D)  
 I hate the bloody Japanese. I've  
 killed enough haven't I.

TOM  
 You might have let us know.

GREG  
 And risk losing my brother?

Greg looks hard at each in turn.

TOM  
 We'd have thought of something.

GREG  
 They know about you, Tom. I rang  
 them in Singapore.

Charlie nods:

CHARLIE  
 Ping!

TOM  
 So what now? Manage this boat on  
 your own?

GREG  
 No, you're going to take it back to  
 the Japanese patrol boats and give  
 yourselves up.

Tom looks at him like "No way!"

Greg waves his pistol towards Tom.

GREG (CONT'D)  
 First, Tom, you're going to tell me  
 what you know about the code books.  
 Show them.

They stare at Greg, like he's from a cess pit.

GREG (CONT'D)  
 And Shona, you keep up the far end  
 of the boat.

Shona looks to kill.

JANICE  
 (Shrugs)  
 I guess Greg's got us now. Make the  
 best of it.

She pulls out a fishing rod. She dangles the hook in the water.

GREG  
 Ash, the far jerry-can has clean  
 petrol.

Ash scowls at Greg. He picks up the can and fills the tank. BEAT. He tries to start it. It SPLUTTERS, then CATCHES.

Janice winks at Ash out of Greg's vision. She stands, blocking Greg's view of Ash. Ash nods. Janice drops as Ash GUNS the engine, pulling hard on the tiller at the same time.

The launch lurches in a new direction. Greg stumbles off balance. Janice whips Greg across the face with her rod. He backs away and lurches over the side.

Greg swims after the boat, yelling:

GREG (CONT'D)  
 You can't leave me!

Sharks circle Greg.

TOM  
 Better pick him up.

ASH  
 (amazed)  
 You sure?

TOM  
 Now!

Charlie and the girls look at Tom, disbelieving.

Ash GUNS the engine flat out. He circles towards Greg. Greg swims flat out towards the boat. It looks like he'll make it.

GREG  
 Quick.

A large fin beats them to Greg. A shark drags Greg under water. He surfaces again, his arms flailing. Greg YELLS and throws up his hands as he's dragged under.

All look shattered.

INT. JAPANESE ARMY OFFICE - DAY

At his desk, Saito studies a map of islands, a SERGEANT beside him.

Subul polishes a pair of shoes in a corner. He can't understand Japanese, but glances at the map.

SAITO

*One force to search the mainland's north, another the south and a third the sea. And I need a bigger vessel with machine gun.*

SERGEANT

*Yes Sir.*

Captain Saito points to the map.

SAITO

*You take the north, Sergeant Hogo will search the south. I will coordinate the sea search. These men are making fools of us.*

Subul gets the message, and flashes a smile.

SERGEANT

*Sir.*

SAITO

*Go.*

The Sergeant salutes and exits. Saito walks over to inspect his shoes. Subul snaps to attention. Saito ruffles Subul's hair.

SAITO (CONT'D)

*I've got a son like you. When we've won the war, you will play with him.*

Subul keeps deadpan, anger simmering.

SAITO (CONT'D)

*You will play with him.*

Subul remains deadpan. Saito shrugs and returns to his map.

EXT/INT. LAUNCH

The launch takes shelter between two little islands.

Janice looks guilty for Greg's death. She bites her lip.

TOM

*Don't lose sleep. His own fault.*

She looks grateful.

EXT. SEA - FISHING FLEET AREA

A MOTOR TORPEDO BOAT (MTB) PUTTERS to a halt. A heavy machine GUNNER covers the boats. Saito paces the deck.

A spotter plane flies overhead in the direction of many little islands.

Saito searches the horizon with binoculars. He mutters to himself, frowning.

EXT. LAUNCH/SEA - MOVING

The launch emerges from the shadow of an island. A sea mist. Charlie kneels on top of the cabin.

TOM  
See anything, Charlie?

Charlie shakes his head.

CHARLIE  
No, too thick.

EXT. SAITO'S MTB ANCHORED

Sea mist. The water LAPS the boat's side.

Saito is on watch with two SAILORS nearby, one behind the mounted machine gun.

SAITO  
*Keep your eyes open. I can almost feel they aren't far away. When you see them, don't sink them. I want the American alive. You can have him later.*

SAILOR  
*Sir.*

INT/EXT. LAUNCH MOVING - DAY

Charlie is on watch. He peers through the mist.

Ash has the launch at slow ahead. No other sound but for the PUTTER of their motor. Charlie stiffens. He points ahead to the right.

CHARLIE  
(low)  
Boss, there's something out there.  
Not moving. No lights.

TOM  
Dead quiet everyone.

Shona polishes a bayonet.

Ash turns the tiller so they head away from the other vessel. He reduces the engine noise. They drift, each face tense.

A powerful engine STARTS UP.

ASH  
What now?

TOM  
Got a white flag? Anything'll do.

All look surprised. Janice rips off her blouse, and hands it to Tom. He takes it and passes it up to Charlie.

TOM (CONT'D)  
When you see them, wave this and keep waving it.

SHONA  
Die. No fall into their hands.

TOM  
(whispers)  
Give me your water bottles, everyone, quick. Take a drink first. Then empty them.

They obey. The MTB engine THROBS closer.

CHARLIE  
Bloody hell. An MTB. We've had it.

INT. SAITO'S MTB - MOVING

The mist clears in patches. Saito peers through his glasses. He spots the launch. He gestures towards it to his machine gunner.

The man nods. He FIRES a burst, clipping the launch's bow.

SAITO  
*It might not be them. Wait.*

Saito picks up a loud-hailer.

SAITO (CONT'D)  
We're coming aboard.

Subul, unnoticed, slinks to the rear of the MTB. He checks and slides into the water.

He swims with difficulty towards the launch.

INT. LAUNCH - MOVING - DAY

Charlie whirls his white "flag".

Ash has the engine at Slow.

Hidden behind the cabin, the girls help Tom fill the water bottles with petrol. He takes his time to avoid spilling it. His hands tremble.

Shona tears small rags from her sarong with her knife. Tom "corks" each bottle with a piece of rag.

TOM  
(whispers)  
Charlie, tell me when they're  
twenty yards away.

Charlie nods.

Tom lines up the bottles on the seat nearest the MTB, so they are concealed by the edge of the boat.

TOM (CONT'D)  
A match or lighter?

Charlie pulls out his empty pocket. There's a deathly silence, apart from the water LAPPING and the engine's dull THROB.

Charlie looks resigned to capture, shrugging his shoulders.

JANICE  
Oh no.

ASH  
Give me a piece of rag. Now.

Shona hands Ash one. Ash soaks one end in petrol. He points to an engine spark plug.

Tom nods. Charlie makes a vigorous sign behind his back.

The MTB edges alongside, throwing its engine into reverse. It BUMPS them.

Ash lights the rag for Tom, from the spark plug. He hands the burning rag to Tom, keeping the burning end away from him and the bottles.

INT. MTB - STATIONARY

SIX SAILORS are poised to jump into the launch, their weapons at the ready.

SAITO  
*Steady. Wait.*

He recognizes Charlie's tattered uniform and smiles.

INT. LAUNCH/MTB EXPLODING

Charlie jumps down from the roof of the cabin.



Four petrol bottle bombs fly through the air, fuses burning. They fall on the deck of the MTB. They BURST into flames and EXPLODE.

INT. LAUNCH MOVING - CONTINUOUS

Ash GUNS the engine. The launch shoots forward, throwing everybody onto their knees.

TOM

Duck!

The MTB EXPLODES with a giant BLAST.

Tom and group all cover their heads from falling DEBRIS. They hold onto each other and the edge of the launch, which Ash has at top speed.

EXT. SEA/LAUNCH

Pieces of MTB SHOWER onto the sea.

A small piece of debris knocks Subul unconscious. He floats, face up.

Tom and crew dodge falling debris.

JANICE

Look!

A small body floats in the water. It's motionless.

TOM

Ash!

Ash slows the boat by the body. A shark closes. Shona reaches out and snatches the body into the launch, just in time.

Tom carries Subul into the cabin.

JANICE

Subul. Is he dead?

Tom feels his chest for breathing.

TOM

I guess so. Poor boy.

Tom strokes Subul's hair out of his eyes.

INT. LAUNCH CABIN

Tom lays Subul on the bunk. He looks down at him, sad. Janice pushes past Tom. She blows into Subul's mouth, then pumps his chest.

Water trickles out of Subul's mouth. Janice repeats. Nothing happens, apart from more water.

TOM  
Sorry, love. He's a goner.

Janice keeps pumping and blowing, ignoring Tom. --- Subul opens one eye.

JANICE  
Oh Subul.

She bursts into tears as she hugs him.

TOM  
Good lad.

He kisses Subul's forehead. Then wipes a tear away. Janice's eyes widen.

Subul opens both eyes. He smiles.

SUBUL  
Big bang.

Subul closes his eyes, and falls asleep. Janice strokes his face and rises to her feet.

Tom pulls off his shirt and lays it over Subul. Janice hugs Tom. He responds. Both are thrilled.

INT. LAUNCH - MOVING - DAY

Tom spells Ash at the helm; the engine drives at full bore.

The others sit on the bench seats. Charlie sits up in front of the cabin with binoculars.

ASH  
Where now?

TOM  
We head south east into our shipping lanes, and hope for a friendly vessel.

Subul trails his hand in the water. Ash pulls Subul's hand from the water.

ASH  
No. Shark bait.

Subul shudders.

A heavy bank of cloud threatens ahead; the waves heighten.

The fishing lines stream from behind the boat.

TOM

Good to have Java behind us. Reckon we'll be in Darwin in another week or two.

ASH

We're getting low on fuel.

Tom points to the cloud, thickening.

Janice clenches her fingers.

JANICE

Will the launch take a storm?

ASH

Need to keep her head into the waves.

TOM

Just enough revs and no more.

The boat rises and thuds down. The sky darkens. Water comes aboard.

Charlie bales with a large baked bean tin. Tom uses a metal bucket with better effect. He pants.

The sky becomes even darker and the waves tower.

TOM (CONT'D)

Take it in turns baling.

Janice takes over from Tom. He slumps.

Shona snatches the bean tin from Charlie. She bales water; it flies away. Charlie is exhausted. The wind worsens.

CHARLIE

The Japanese planes won't see us in this.

TOM

They won't need to if it gets any worse.

They drift through increasing darkness, the sea calmer as they reach the lea of an island.

The engine splutters and dies.

ASH

Shit!

The launch rolls as it lies broadside to the waves, threatening to overturn. It just weathers the sea.

Subul is sick over the side.

The tide drifts them towards the island.

CHARLIE  
Here we go again.

TOM  
Keep baling. That's a mile away.

Shona hands the can back to Charlie.

SHONA  
A ship!

TOM,  
Where?

Shona points towards the rain blurred horizon.

TOM  
Hell, not a prison camp after  
all this.

ASH  
It's not an MTB. Looks bigger.

TOM  
It must be a Jap vessel. Our mob  
won't be this far from home.

CHARLIE  
A Bathurst class corvette.  
80 crew... One of ours.

They all YELL and wave. As the vessel closes, a rubber dingy, with tow rope, is thrown towards them, just in time as their boat turns over, hit by a larger wave.

TOM  
Together!

They struggle to the dinghy. Tom steadies one end and Ash the other as the girls, Subul and Charlie clamber in. Charlie helps Ash and Tom up its slippery side.

EXT/INT. DINGHY - DAWN

The corvette looms out from the murk. A large meshed scrambling net hangs from the corvette's side.

LIEUTENANT JONES, (20'S) in smart naval uniform, speaks into his loud hailer, breaking the SLAP of the waves.

LIEUTENANT JONES  
*Climb onto the net everyone. Hold  
on tight. Tie the dinghy to the  
net.*

The sea is a little calmer in the corvette's lea.

TOM  
Girls first.

Shona rolls off the dinghy. Janice follows closely. Janice's hand slips by degrees from the net. Shona hauls her further into the net.

Ash grabs Subul and slides into the water.

EXT. NET - DAWN

The net has all of Tom's party holding onto it.

The bottom rope is pulled up on both ends so they are ensnared like fish inside it. The net rises up the vessel's side, the dingy attached to the net.

EXT. DECK

Tom rolls out of the net.

Lieutenant Jones pulls him to his feet.

LIEUTENANT JONES  
A motley crew. Where the blazes  
have you come from?

INT. CORVETTE'S CABIN - DAY

Two bunk beds and two upright chairs furnish the cabin.

Janice and Shona towel their hair dry. They wear naval ratings tunics and trousers.

INT. CORVETTE'S CABIN 2

There are four bunks. Ash, Subul and Charlie lie on theirs.

Tom sits on an upright chair facing them. They have shaved and wear Naval tunics and trousers. Tom stands and paces up and down.

ASH  
At least we're heading for Darwin.

TOM  
The brainless Lieutenant won't even  
let me use the radio. By the time  
we land, it could be too late.

Ash is amused by Tom's stress.

ASH  
Doesn't want to attract  
enemy attention?

Tom nods. He drums with his fingers on the table.

TOM  
Can't this tub go any faster?

CHARLIE  
Corvettes's max speed's only 15  
m.p.h. Still, we're not  
Jap prisoners.

Tom smiles at Charlie and gives a thumbs up.

ASH  
How do you know, Charlie?

CHARLIE  
My uncle's on a corvette.  
Minesweeper.

A Klaxon BLASTS across the ship.

A young SEAMAN bursts into their cabin.

SEAMAN  
Stay in your cabins.  
Action stations.

He slams the door after him. Tom, Ash and Charlie look at each other, stunned.

Heavy machine gun fire is incoming somewhere above.  
The corvette's 4 inch gun responds, plus its Pompom.

Tom jumps up.

TOM  
Come on. Can't miss this. Might be  
a boarding party. Stay there,  
Subul.

Subul looks happy to stay.

CHARLIE  
Some party!

Ash tries to restrain Tom, without success. Ash and Charlie follow Tom out.

EXT. CORVETTE - DECK/ ENEMY MINELAYER - DAY

Tom, Charlie and Ash shelter behind a gun housing. Twin Lewis guns are firing just above them. They stop as incoming machine-gun fire kills their crew.

Tom waves to the others to stay. He races up to the platform and shifts a body off the gun.

He cocks the gun and fires at the enemy bridge. Then swivels the gun to rake their machine-gun post.

The incoming fire continues, but into the sky, as its gunner dies. As Tom's gun runs dry, Charlie hands him a fresh ammunition drum.

More accurate fire endangers Tom. Ash pulls him behind the steel gun emplacement.

ASH  
Leave it to the navy.

Tom struggles. Ash overpowers him.

ASH (CONT'D)  
You've done your bit "sonny".

Tom looks overcome as Ash hugs him.

A shell from the corvette's 4 inch gun completes the enemy's destruction as it explodes inside the bridge.

Lieutenant Jones arrives beside Tom.

JONES  
What the Hell! Who gave you permission to ...

He can't stop smiling.

JONES (CONT'D)  
You are seconded to my crew as machine gunner first class.

Tom grins.

TOM  
What about my mates?

Lieutenant Jones slaps Charlie and Ash's backs.

JONES  
Ammo carriers second class.

INT. GENERAL HEADQUARTERS DARWIN - DAY

Tom, Ash, Subul, Charlie, Janice and Shona wait on a bench outside the General's office. The men are dressed in smart, pressed uniforms. The girls wear new dresses. Subul in T-shirt and shorts.

Tom paces up and down. Ash glances at Charlie, amused. Tom strides to the door and is poised to knock on it.

CAROL, (30's) the secretary dressed in army uniform, opens the door.

CAROL  
The General will see you now,  
Captain Hartley.

The others make to rise.

CAROL (CONT'D)  
The captain only.

The others sit back, disappointed. Tom charges in.

INT. GENERAL'S OFFICE

The GENERAL, 40, is enthroned at a large desk, with IN and OUT trays full of documents in front of him.

Carol sifts documents at a smaller desk.

The General rises and shakes Tom's hand.

GENERAL  
General Robert Ashton. Good to meet you, Hartley. I believe you've survived an epic journey.

TOM  
Yes Sir.

GENERAL  
I've looked at your maps and code book. I'm afraid you're too late for the Jap's push to India. A pity. Knowing their numbers and proposed routes could have saved many British lives.

Tom is devastated.

GENERAL (CONT'D)  
However you'll be pleased to know the British have held them and are driving them back.

TOM  
All for nothing.

Tom strikes his fist into the palm of his other hand, wasted.

General Ashton smiles.

GENERAL  
Not quite. Will you call the others in now, Carol.

The secretary rises, opens the door, and waves the others in. She indicates they stand in a row, next to Tom.

GENERAL (CONT'D)  
I want to congratulate you all on a wonderful effort. Tom Hartley will be in for a medal in due course, and maybe others of you too.



Tom is gutted.

GENERAL (CONT'D)

Although you failed to make any impact on the enemy's Burma campaign, I am delighted to inform you, your heroic efforts, wiping out the airfield, saved Darwin from a much worse bombing.

All are delighted.

GENERAL (CONT'D)

Your country salutes you as heroes.

EXT. UNDER TREES IN A DARWIN PARK - DAY

The group relax on a well kept lawn near a pond. Tom joins them. He is bottling up his emotions.

TOM

Charlie, you're wanted in the office.

Tom makes for Janice. She looks at him, wondering.

Charlie smiles.

CHARLIE

A medal?

Charlie disappears towards the office.

SHONA

Tom, hiding something?

Tom just controls his emotions.

Charlie joins them with a young MAN, 25, holding a walking stick, emaciated but managing to stagger alongside Charlie. Charlie has his arm round him.

CHARLIE

Meet my bro. George. Just released by the Allies from a Jap prisoner of war camp.

Charlie struggles to hide his tears.

Tom carefully shakes George's hand and claps Charlie on the back. Then, lost for words, embraces Janice.

George slumps onto a bench, joined by Charlie, looking as if he's seen a ghost.

TOM

So how'd you get free, George?

GEORGE

Just thank the Brits in Burma.  
Less than half of us survived a  
death march. Tens of thousands.

He too is close to tears. Tom opens his mouth to question George further but Charlie shakes his head.

CHARLIE

We'll see you later Tom, and mates,  
in the pub.

Shona shadows Charlie.

Tom backs off with a smile.

Ash nods at Charlie and George, thumbs up as they stroll away with Shona in tow.

SUBUL

(worried)

Where do I go?

Tom, smiling, gestures towards Ash.

ASH

Like to come and live with us?  
You'd be good for my son.

Subul says nothing. Tears glisten in his eyes. He rushes to hug Ash.

Shona takes Charlie's arm. They stop.

CHARLIE

You'll hang your hat with me?

SHONA

Oh yeah!

They have a hug in, to George's amusement.

Tom and Janice laugh and wave to Ash strolling away with Subul.

TOM

Great, he'll be fine with Ash.

Janice is struck.

JANICE

Just us. I can't wait to get back  
to England but I guess my folk'll  
be okay in the country. I'll do  
some nursing right here.

TOM  
After the air-raids, the Darwin  
people will welcome you. Your  
folk'll be there after the war.

JANICE  
You won't have to go back and  
fight, will you?

Tom waits to answer --- amused by her tension.

TOM  
And leave you? The General's asked  
me to stay here on his staff.  
Intelligence liaison with the USA.

JANICE  
And?

TOM  
(smiling)  
I guess it's time to get to know  
you better? If you're on?

Janice backs away from him, teasing.

JANICE  
Well, I'd have to think about that.

Tom looks disappointed.

JANICE (CONT'D)  
But only for ten seconds.

They kiss, break for air, and kiss again.

FADE OUT