

BENEDICTION

Written by

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SHOOTING SCRIPT

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BLUE REVISIONS

EMU Films
77 Fortress Road
London NW5 1AG

FADE UP ON

THE OLD BBFC CERTIFICATE WITH THE RELEVANT DATE AND RATING.

FADE TO

TWO POSTERS FILLING THE SCREEN. SCREEN LEFT AND SCREEN RIGHT.

FIRST POSTER READS, "IGOR STRAVINSKY. THE RITE OF SPRING."

SECOND POSTER READS, "DIAGILEV'S RUSSIAN BALLET."

HOLD

THEN

THESE TWO POSTERS MOVE APART LIKE CURTAINS TO REVEAL

1 EXT. EVENING. THEATRE (1913)

1

CRANE DOWN to the entrance to the theatre.

A large crowd entering the front of theatre. Amongst them SIEGFRIED SASOON and his brother HAMO.

TRACK BACK WITH THEM TO A WIDE SHOT OF THE THEATRE ENTRANCE, THEN TRACK IN WITH THEM AS THEY ENTER THE THEATRE.

SUPERIMPOSE CARD, "1913"

*

CUT TO:

SOUNDTRACK:

SIEGFRIED SASOON V/O
"The audience pricks an
intellectual ear...
Stravinsky quite the concert of the
year!"

2 INT. NIGHT. THEATRE. 1913

2

SHOT of the audience taking their seats in the stalls.

SOUNDTRACK:

SIEGFRIED SASOON V/O
"Forgetting now that non so distant
date..."

Balcony audience takes it's seats.

SOUNDTRACK:

SIEGFRIED SASSOON V/O (CONT'D)
 "When they (or folk facsimilar in
 state
 Of mind) first heard with hisses -
 hoots - guffaws
 This abstract symphony: (They booed
 because
 Stravinsky jumped their Wagner
 palisade
 With modes that seemed cacophonous
 and queer;)
 Forgetting now the hullabaloo they
 made,
 The audience pricks an intellectual
 ear."

SIEGFRIED SASSOON & his brother HAMO seated.

CUT TO:

3 INT. NIGHT. THEATRE (1913) 3

SHOT OF CONDUCTOR COMING INTO THE PIT.

Audience applauds.

CUT TO:

4 INT. NIGHT. THEATRE (1913) 4

TWO SHOT SIEGFRIED SASSOON AND HAMO

The lights go down. The audience becomes silent.

CUT TO:

5 INT. NIGHT. THEATRE (1913) 5

BACK VIEW OF THE CONDUCTOR. He lifts his hands to start to conduct.

S/TRAX

SIEGFRIED SASSOON V/O
 "Bassoons begin...Sonority
 envelopes
 Our auditory innocence; and brings
 To me, I must admit, some drift of
 things
 (MORE)

SIEGFRIED SASSON V/O (CONT'D)
 Omnific, seminal, and
 adolescent..."

BEGIN TO FADE HIS V/O

Conductor beats time and we hear the bassoon.

The curtain rises.

CRANE UP TO CGI

As the curtain rises it reveals the following WW1 footage.

- 1) People in the park by a river
- 2) Toy boats on a pond
- 3) Henley Regatta
- 4) Oars in water

SOUNDTRACK OVER ALL OF THE ABOVE:

SIEGFRIED SASSON V/O
 In that long summer I hunted,
 played cricket but only watched
 tennis...
 ...men in boaters...far from
 Henley, girls in pink and blue
 taffeta...
 ...God was in His heaven and there
 were sausages for breakfast...

WW1 FOOTAGE CONTINUES:

- 1) Kitchener's poster "Your Country Needs You!" (1914)
- 2) INTERIOR RECRUITING OFFICE (1914)

SOUNDTRACK:

SIEGFRIED SASSON V/O (CONT'D)
 And in small Recruiting Offices
 dull young men wait to inscribe (in
 paper quires) the names of the
 living and the dead.

WW1 FOOTAGE CONTINUES:

- 1) INTERIOR RECRUITING OFFICE (1914)

A soldier swearing on a bible.

2) EXTERIOR RECRUITING OFFICE (1914)

Soldiers coming towards the camera.

CUT TO:

6 INT. MILITARY TAILORS SHOP. DAY. (1915)

6

TWO SHOT OF SIEGFRIED SASSOON AND HIS YOUNGER BROTHER HAMO

CUT TO:

TAILOR
Mister Sassoon?

CUT TO:

TWO SHOT

SIEGFRIED SASSOON & HAMO
Yes.

CUT TO:

Tailor clearly flumoxed

CUT TO:

TWO SHOT

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
I'm Siegfried.

HAMO
And I'm Hamo - younger brother.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
We've both come for a fitting.

CUT TO:

TAILOR
Just so sir. I think we should
start with the shirts. You can't
have your shirts too dark sir.

CUT TO:

TWO SHOT

HAMO
Ah war! A la mode!

HAMO smiling

SIEGFRIED SASSOON V/O
I never said goodbye to him.

DISSOLVE TO:

7 EXT. NIGHT. VICTORIA STATION. (1915)

7

A shot of a locomotive engine hissing steam and getting ready to move off.

A swirl of steam.

HAMO (in uniform at the train window).

He's waving and smiling.

The train pulls out (R to L).

SIEGFRIED SASSOON V/O
(reading poem "To my
brother")

"Give me your hand, my brother,
search my face;
Look in these eyes lest I should
think of shame;
For we have made an end of all
things base.
We are returning by the road we
came.

A swirl of steam blots out the train.

DISSOLVE TO:

SIEGFRIED SASSOON and MOTHER emerge from the steam.

They wave goodbye to HAMO.

DISSOLVE TO:

8 EXT. NIGHT. VICTORIA STATION. (1915)

8

A swirl of steam. A shot of a locomotive engine hissing steam and getting ready to move off.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON in uniform at the train window. He waves goodbye to his MOTHER.

The steam engine begins to move off, R to L, track with it.

SIEGFRIED SASSON V/O
 "Your lot is with the ghosts of
 soldiers dead,
 And I am in the field where men
 must fight.
 But in the gloom I see your
 laurell'd head
 And through your victory I shall
 win the light."

DISSOLVE TO:

MOTHER watching the train move out. She is in a swirl of steam.

CUT TO:

WW1 FOOTAGE, AND OVER ALL THE FOLLOWING WW1 FOOTAGE
 SOUNDTRACK OF SIEGFRIED SASSOON READING "A SHROPSHIRE LAD":

SIEGFRIED SASSON V/O (CONT'D)
 "On the idle hill of summer,
 Sleepy with the flow of streams,
 Far I hear the steady drummer
 Drumming like a noise in dreams...
 Far and near and low and louder
 On the roads of earth go by
 Dear to friends and food for
 powder,
 Soldiers marching, all to die...
 East and west on fields forgotten
 Bleach the bones of comrades slain,
 Lovely lads and dead and rotten;
 None that go return again...
 Far the calling bugles hollo,
 High the screaming fife replies,
 Gay the files of scarlet follow:
 Woman bore me, I will rise.

- 1) Soldiers on station platform.
- 2) Soldiers on train.
- 3) Soldiers marching (Scots wearing kilts).
- 4) Several explosions.
- 5) Cavalry amidst explosions.

- 6) More explosions.
- 7) Soldiers moving through heavy cordite mist.
- 8) More explosions.
- 9) British troops, very weary, moving L to R.
- 10) More explosions.
- 11) Dead horses.
- 12) Dead bodies lining the road.

DISSOLVE TO:

9 EXT. DAY. GARSINGTON MANOR. (1916/17) 9

TWO SHOT SIEGFRIED SASSOON AND ROBBIE ROSS.

TRACK BACK WITH THEM.

ROBBIE ROSS & SIEGFRIED SASSOON walking towards the monastery studio where LADY OTTOLINE MORRELL is posing for her portrait painted by DOROTHY BRETT. OTTOLINE (in a very rigid pose) is wearing voluminous pale pink Turkish trousers, a purple hat, purple hair and an orange tunic.

CUT TO:

TWO SHOT ROBBIE ROSS & SIEGFRIED SASSOON

ROBBIE ROSS

The woman posing - who appears to be wearing a spinnaker - is LADY OTTOLINE MORRELL. More hair than self restraint but definitely nobody's fool.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

She looks as though she hasn't heard a joke since the Boer War.

ROBBIE ROSS

For Ottoline the Boer War was the joke.

ROBBIE ROSS walking out of shot.

ROBBIE ROSS (CONT'D)
(completely insincere)
Ottoline!

CUT TO:

THREE SHOT OTTOLINE MORRELL, ROBBIE ROSS & DOROTHY BRETT

OTTOLINE MORRELL
(to DOROTHY BRETT)
May we pause for a moment Dorothy
before rigor mortis sets in?

DOROTHY BRETT
Of course Ottoline.

OTTOLINE MORRELL
(to ROBBIE ROSS but
looking at SIEGFRIED
SASSOON)
Who is this extremely beautiful
young man, Robbie?

CUT TO:

SIEGFRIED SASSOON looking uncomfortable.

ROBBIE ROSS V/O
Sassoon...Siegfried...

CUT TO:

THREE SHOT

OTTOLINE MORRELL
It sounds Wagnerian.

CUT TO:

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
Just Home Counties I'm afraid.

CUT TO:

OTTOLINE MORRELL

OTTOLINE MORRELL
So you are not a keeper of the
flame at Bayreuth?

CUT TO:

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
I'm afraid not.

CUT TO:

OTTOLINE MORRELL
What are your musical tastes then?

CUT TO:

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
Ravel, Albeniz, Chausson...Scriabin
if I must, Caesar Franck when I'm
in the mood.

CUT TO:

OTTOLINE MORRELL
And Bartok?

CUT TO:

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
Never Bartok. His music always
sounds to me like a lunatic playing
the xylophone.

CUT TO:

OTTOLINE MORRELL
Or vice versa.

CUT TO:

GROUP SHOT

Everyone laughs. The ice broken.

ROBBIE ROSS
I once heard Paderewski play at
Tunbridge Wells - but I found it
rather disappointing.

OTTOLINE MORRELL
Well what did you expect? It was
Tunbridge Wells.
Come into the main house and have
tea.

DOROTHY BRETT
May I join you Ottoline?

OTTOLINE MORRELL
Of course, Dorothy. You are not a servant but an "Honourable".

They all walk towards the main house.

OTTOLINE with SIEGFRIED SASSOON slightly ahead. She slips her arm through his.

OTTOLINE MORRELL (CONT'D)
Now come along Mr. Bassoon and tell me what you really have against Mr. Bartok.

ROBBIE ROSS (V.O.)
Oh, a word in your shell-like - she'll ask you to stay the night...she always asks attractive young men to stay the night. So lock your bedroom door or wear something very, very severe.

CUT TO:

10 INT. NIGHT. GARSINGTON MANOR. BEDROOM. (1916/17) 10

SIEGFRIED SASSOON in his comfortable bedroom, reading.

A knock on the door. OTTOLINE MORRELL opens the door and is standing there in something diaphanous. *

OTTOLINE MORRELL
I thought that I might be more interesting than cocoa.

CUT TO:

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
(shocked but composed)
I'm afraid I prefer cocoa.

OTTOLINE MORRELL
Sleep badly.

She exits.

*

CUT TO: *

SIEGFRIED SASSOON smiles and continues reading. *

MID-WIDE SHOT

HOLD

THEN

SOUNDTRACK: We hear low moaning of someone in terrible pain.

TRACK IN on SIEGFRIED SASSOON in bed.

SOUNDTRACK: The moaning continues, delirium.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON V/O
 (reading "Died of wounds")
 "His wet white face and miserable
 eyes
 Brought nurses to him more than
 groans and sighs:
 But hoarse and low and rapid rose
 and fell
 His troubled voice: he did the
 business well."

When in CLOSE UP, TRACK L to R, THEN

DISSOLVE TO:

11 INT. NIGHT. HOSPITAL WARD. (1916)

11 *

SIEGFRIED SASSOON V/O
 "The ward grew dark; but he was
 still complaining
 And calling out for..."

Continue PANNING & TRACKING L to R

SOUNDTRACK:

SOLDIERS V/O
 "...Dickie. Curse the Wood!
 It's time to go. O Christ, and
 what's the good?
 We'll never take it, and it's
 always raining."

The soldier's bed is surrounded by screens and the nurses come running up the ward to him.

Continue PANNING & TRACKING L to R

SOUNDTRACK:

SIEGFRIED SASSOON V/O
"I wondered where he'd been; then
heard him shout,"

SOLDIERS V/O
(delirious)
They snipe like Hell! O Dickie,
don't go out...

Continue PANNING & TRACKING L to R

To empty hospital bed

Continue PANNING & TRACKING L to R

SOUNDTRACK:

SIEGFRIED SASSOON V/O
"I fell asleep...next morning he
was dead;
And some Slight Wound lay smiling
on the bed."

DISSOLVE TO:

12

INT. DAY. SOMERVILLE COLLEGE. (1916)

12

The college has been turned into a hospital.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON descends the staircase to meet his MOTHER
at the bottom.

MEDICAL OFFICER'S V/O
Where the symptoms of diarrhoea are
concerned he has not regained his
strength. He has a cough and some
breathing difficulty.

TWO SHOT MOTHER AND SIEGFRIED SASSOON.

TRACK BACK WITH THEM.

MOTHER
I was anxious to know what you were
suffering from.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
Only "trench fever". Nothing fatal.
Just debilitating.

MOTHER

I dread everything now...the telephone...the telegram...

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

There's only one thing worse than remaining in the past mother, and that's begrudging the future.

MOTHER

The future, without either of my sons, is to be dreaded, not enjoyed. Robbie Ross rang me as soon as you were admitted.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

He's a good man. And a loyal friend.

DISSOLVE TO:

13 INT. NIGHT. LADY SYBIL COLEFAX HOUSE/SALON. (1921) 13

ROBBIE ROSS & SIEGFRIED SASSOON coming into the room

ROBBIE ROSS

(indicating IVOR NOVELLO)

Ivor Novello of "Keep the home fires burning" fame.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

Yes. That loathsome little tune.

ROBBIE ROSS

He always writes at the top of his voice but we must try to be charitable.

CUT TO:

Their POV of the piano being played by IVOR NOVELLO. Standing by the piano a young actor GLEN BYAM SHAW looking very lovingly at IVOR NOVELLO as he plays Scott Joplin.

CUT TO:

SIEGFRIED SASSOON & ROBBIE ROSS being joined by LADY SYBIL COLEFAX.

NOVELLO continues playing ragtime.

ROBBIE ROSS (CONT'D)

(to SYBIL)

Sybil, you ought to be ashamed of
yourself...

(indicating IVOR NOVELLO)

...ragtime indeed!

LADY SYBIL COLEFAX

Yes, I know...but Mr. Novello plays
it so well it's almost music.

Besides, at the moment, he's
appearing in the West End in a very
successful play called "The Rat".

ROBBIE ROSS

I know. Someone asked me was it
autobiographical, but I said I
wasn't sure.

LADY SYBIL COLEFAX

(pleasantly)

One day Robbie you will go too far.

ROBBIE ROSS

(pleasantly)

One day Sybil we will all go too
far.

LADY SYBIL COLEFAX

Thank you for coming Mr. Sassoon.
We're all very eager to hear your
recitation.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

(rigid with embarrassment)

Thank you Lady Colefax.

CUT TO:

WIDE SHOT

LADY SYBIL COLEFAX

Ladies and Gentlemen, pray silence
for one of our greatest poets, Mr.
Siegfried Sassoon.

Applause

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

(beginning reciting a poem
"When I'm among a blaze
of lights")

"When I'm among a blaze of lights,
(MORE)

SIEGFRIED SASSOON (CONT'D)
 With tawdry music and cigars
 And women dawdling through
 delights,
 And officers in cocktail bars,
 Sometimes I think of garden nights
 And elm trees nodding at the stars.

I dream of a small fire lit room
 With yellow candles burning
 straight,
 And glowing pictures in the gloom,
 And kindly books that hold me late.
 Of things like these I choose to
 think
 When I can never be alone:
 Then someone says, "Another drink?"
 And turns my living heart to stone.

CUT TO:

SHOT of listeners.

There is genuine but polite applause, but LADY COLEFAX isn't quite sure what to make of the poem.

LADY SYBIL COLEFAX
 Thank you Mr. Sassoon...that was
 very...touching.

ROBBIE ROSS
 We both thank you Sybil...now go
 and rejoin Lady Cunard before she
 starts launching something.

She moves away.

CUT TO:

MID LONG SHOT

ROBBIE ROSS & SIEGFRIED SASSOON POV

IVOR NOVELLO is joined by LADY COLEFAX and she clearly asks him to play some more. He sits back down at the piano and begins to play the introduction to his song, "And her mother came too".

CUT TO:

TWO SHOT ROBBIE ROSS & SIEGFRIED SASSOON

ROBBIE ROSS (CONT'D)
He's considered very beautiful.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
Look at those shoulders!

ROBBIE ROSS
Yes - and look at his.

CUT BACK TO:

Their POV of IVOR NOVELLO at the piano.

TRACK IN ON HIM.

As he begins to sing a ripple of laughter and applause.

IVOR NOVELLO
(singing)
"I seem to be the victim of a cruel
jest,
It dogs my footsteps with the girl
I love the best.
She's just the sweetest thing I've
ever known,
But still we never get the chance
to be alone.

My car will meet her - and her
mother comes too!
It's a two seater - still her
mother comes too!
At Ciro's when I am free, at
dinner, supper or tea,
She loves to shimmy with me - and
her mother does too!
We buy her trousseau - and her
mother comes too!
Asked not to do so - still her
mother comes too!
She simply can't take a snub, I go
and sulk at the club,
Then have a bath and a rub - and
her brother comes too!

There may be times when couples
need a chaperone,
But mothers ought to learn to leave
a chap alone.

(MORE)

IVOR NOVELLO (CONT'D)
 I wish they'd have a heart and use
 their common sense
 For three's a crowd, and more, it's
 treble the expense.

We lunch at Maxim's - and her
 mother comes too!
 How large a snack seems - when her
 mother comes too!
 And when they're visiting me, we
 finish afternoon tea,
 She loves to sit on my knee - and
 her mother does too!
 To golf we started - and her mother
 came too!
 Three bags I carted - when her
 mother came too!
 She fainted just off the tee, my
 darling whispered to me
 "Jack dear, at last we are free"
 but her mother came too!

TRACK ENDS ON HIM AND LADY COLEFAX.

He finishes the song. Then applause. He stands and bows with
 LADY COLEFAX.

CUT BACK TO:

TWO SHOT ROBBIE ROSS & SIEGFRIED SASSOON

ROBBIE ROSS
 (looking at IVOR NOVELLO)
 And to think he once played the
 triangle so beautifully.
 (shakes head)
 What a waste!

CUT TO:

IVOR NOVELLO COMES TOWARD ROBBIE ROSS AND SIEGFRIED SASSOON
 FOLLOWED BY GLEN BYAM SHAW

GLEN BYAM SHAW
 Are we leaving Ivor?

IVOR NOVELLO
 No precious. I'm anxious to meet
 our distinguished guest.

CUT TO:

FOUR SHOT ROBBIE ROSS, SIEGFRIED SASSOON, IVOR NOVELLO AND GLEN BYAM SHAW

IVOR NOVELLO (CONT'D)
(very charming, ushering
SIEGFRIED SASSOON further
out of the room)

Mr. Sassoon, I'm eager to have your
advice about my next musical which
I'm thinking of writing in terza
rima.

ROBBIE ROSS
That's near Naples isn't it?

IVOR and SIEGFRIED SASSOON going out of the room, their backs to ROBBIE ROSS and GLEN BYAM SHAW

IVOR NOVELLO
Dear Robbie whose silences are
always so much more eloquent than
speech.
(to GLEN BYAM SHAW)
Robbie will give you a paw to guide
you home Glen.

They walk off.

CUT TO:

TWO SHOT ROBBIE ROSS & GLEN BYAM SHAW

ROBBIE ROSS
C'est la vie.

GLEN BYAM SHAW
(looking from IVOR NOVELLO
and SIEGFRIED SASSOON to
ROBBIE ROSS)
C'est la guerre.

CUT TO:

14 INT. NIGHT. IVOR NOVELLO'S BEDROOM. (1921) 14

SIEGFRIED SASSOON and IVOR NOVELLO in bed together.

IVOR NOVELLO leans across and completely covers SIEGFRIED SASSOON and starts to kiss and caress him.

Silence.

Then

CUT TO:

15 INT. NIGHT. IVOR NOVELLO'S BEDROOM. (1921)

15

The bedroom door opens and GLEN BYAM SHAW stands there looking at the bed.

GLEN BYAM SHAW

Oops!

CUT TO:

SIEGFRIED SASSOON AND IVOR NOVELLO IN BED.

SASSOON is terribly embarrassed but IVOR NOVELLO takes no notice at all of GLEN BYAM SHAW but keeps kissing SIEGFRIED SASSOON'S face and neck.

IVOR NOVELLO
 (to GLEN BYAM SHAW but not
 looking at him - he
 delivers his dialogue as
 if he were making love)
 Just leave the keys on the
 dresser...you know how absent
 minded I am with them...

He continues to caress SIEGFRIED SASSOON who lays there motionless with embarrassment.

CUT TO:

GLEN BYAM SHAW at the bedroom door.

He takes the keys from a chain and drops them on the floor and exits.

CUT TO:

16 INT. DAY. IVOR NOVELLO'S BEDROOM. (1921)

16

IVOR NOVELLO is still in bed but SIEGFRIED SASSOON is fully dressed.

He walks towards the bedroom door, sees the keys on the floor and picks them up.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
I think he's still in love with
you.

CUT TO:

IVOR NOVELLO

IVOR NOVELLO
The main drawback with love is that
it descends, all to quickly, into
possessiveness...and that really is
a BORE!

CUT TO:

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
(showing IVOR NOVELLO the
keys)
What shall I do with these?

CUT TO:

IVOR NOVELLO

IVOR NOVELLO
Oh...they're for you...

CUT TO:

SIEGFRIED SASSOON AT THE DOOR OF IVOR NOVELLO'S FLAT
(INTERIOR). (1921)

SOUNDTRACK: A man screaming and wailing.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON exits.

CUT TO:

17

INT. DAY. CAMP BASE ROUEN. (1917)

17

SIEGFRIED SASSOON comes through the door in full military
uniform.

SOUNDTRACK: Man screaming and crying continues.

PAN WITH SIEGFRIED SASSOON L to R. He stops in the middle of the room.

CONTINUE TRACKING L TO R TO A MAN ON THE FLOOR SCREAMING. THERE'S A SERGEANT NEAR HIM.

SOUNDTRACK:

SIEGFRIED SASSOON V/O
 (reading the poems
 "Lamentations")
 "I found him in the Guardroom at
 the base.
 From the blind darkness I heard his
 crying
 And blundered in. With puzzled,
 patient face
 A sergeant watched him; it was no
 good trying
 To stop it; for he howled and beat
 his chest.
 And, all because his brother had
 gone west,
 Raved at the bleeding war; his
 rampant grief
 Moaned, shouted, sobbed, and
 choked, while he was kneeling
 Half-naked on the floor. In my
 belief
 Such men have lost all patriotic
 feeling."

Underneath this a man shrieking.

DISSOLVE TO:

18 INT. NIGHT. MOTHER'S LIVING ROOM. (1919) 18

SHOT OF A SWORD HANGING ON THE WALL. GLINTING IN THE FIRELIGHT.

CRANE DOWN L to R to MOTHER.

MOTHER and SIEGFRIED SASSOON sitting in the firelight. MOTHER reading. SIEGFRIED SASSOON looking at the fire.

Christmas and a tree.

Silence.

MOTHER

Hamo died so far away...while I
have his sword I still have him.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

We never grieved properly for him.

MOTHER

Before grief there's anger.

She continues reading.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON looks at her.

SOUNDTRACK:

SIEGFRIED SASSOON V/O
(reading "To my mother")
"I watch you on your constant way,
In selfless duty long grown grey;
And to myself I say
That I have lived my life to learn
How lives like your unasking earn
Aureoles that guide and burn
In heart's remembrance when the
proud
Who snared the suffrage of the
crowd
Are dumb and dusty browed...
For you live onward in my thought
Because you have not sought
Rewards that can be bought.
And so when I remember you
I think of all things rich and true
That I have reaped and wrought."

CUT TO:

SIEGFRIED SASSOON THEN A WIDER SHOT

MOTHER gets up crosses to SIEGFRIED SASSOON kisses him then leaves.

MOTHER

Thank God you survived. Good night
darling.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

Good night mother.

HOLD on SIEGFRIED SASSOON

Silence.

Then start to TRACK AROUND from front of sofa on which SIEGFRIED SASOON is sitting to see his POV of the fireplace but in it's place the whole wall is filled with WW1 archive footage of Christmas 1914.

TRACK STOPS when we get directly behind SIEGFRIED SASOON.

A snowscape of WW1 Christmas.

THEN

DISSOLVE TO:

A series of still photographs of:

- 1) No Mans land in snow
- 2) Trenches in snow
- 3) British and German soldiers meeting
- 4) Snow covering all

Each photograph is linked by a dissolve.

SOUNDTRACK:

German soldiers singing the German version of "Silent night", then halfway through the dissolves on the still photographs CROSS FADE to English soldiers singing the English version of "Silent night".

DISSOLVE TO:

TRACK L TO R FROM WW1 SNOW SCENES.

CONTINUE TRACKING UNTIL WE ARE BACK WITH SIEGFRIED AT MOTHER'S HOUSE.

TRACK STOPS ON SIEGFRIED SASOON STILL ON THE SOFA FRONT VIEW.

HE STANDS UP.

A SHOT RINGS OUT AND HE FALLS BACKWARDS BUT NOT ONTO THE SOFA.

DISSOLVE TO OR
MORPH TO:

20

INT. DAY. HOSPITAL IN ENGLAND. (1917)

20

SIEGFRIED SASOON in bed recovering from his wound, ROBBIE ROSS at his bedside.

ROBBIE ROSS
3,500 copies of "Counter-attack"
sold - your fame is spreading
Siegfried.

SIEGFRIED SASOON
Like a virus.

ROBBIE ROSS
Don't be contrary.

SIEGFRIED SASOON
So I wake up famous.

ROBBIE ROSS
Like Byron. And I believe you've
been overwhelmed by visits from all
the great and good...Massine, Lydia
Lopokova, Keynes, Winston Churchill
(and mother) even "boy actor" Noel
Coward. Have I left anyone out?

SIEGFRIED SASOON
The Pope.

ROBBIE ROSS
That's right Siegfried, think
small. How did you find Mr.
Churchill?

SIEGFRIED SASOON
Imperial.

ROBBIE ROSS
And Mr. Coward?

SIEGFRIED SASOON
Gushing.

ROBBIE ROSS
What would you have done if Royalty
had paid a call?

SIEGFRIED SASOON
I'd have tried to curtsey from a
sitting position.

ROBBIE ROSS

Speaking of Royalty, I've come with
a command from Her Majesty Edith
Sitwell. You are to attend a
performance (at Carlyle Square) of
her "Entertainment - Facade".

Poetry - by Edith.

Music - Willie Walton

I've gone to a great deal of
trouble to get this so don't let me
down. If you don't attend La
Sitwell has threatened to go to
your flat at Half Moon Street and
hum the whole of "Tannhauser" to
you.

You have been warned.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

Oh I forgot - Ottoline Morell
popped in and wished to be
remembered to you.

ROBBIE ROSS

How was she?

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

Let's just say I've always found
lime green a very unforgiving
colour.

ROBBIE ROSS

Poor Ottoline! She'll go to her
grave overdressed.

(Goes out)

CUT TO:

21 INT. DAY. SIEGFRIED SASSOON'S FLAT AT HALF MOON STREET. 21
(1921/22)

SHOT of IVOR NOVELLO dressed in an overcoat sitting and
waiting.

IVOR NOVELLO

I'm looking forward to meeting your
mother.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON comes out of his bedroom finishing
dressing.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

What?

IVOR NOVELLO

I said I was looking forward to meeting you mother. Mothers - good or bad - are always fascinating. I once tried to set fire to mine - but she was all asbestos.

(getting up)

Come on! We'll never get down to Kent at this rate.

(handing SIEGFRIED SASSOON an envelope)

I found this on the floor when I came in.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

(looking briefly at it)

Oh - it'll be from Robbie Ross...

IVOR NOVELLO pulls a face.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON (CONT'D)

Why are you so antipathetic towards him?

IVOR NOVELLO

I resent the way he speaks to me - as though he's always putting me in my place. And the only problem with knowing "one's place" is that other people never know theirs.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON laughs out loud.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

He's acerbic, I grant you, but never malign and, as a friend, very steadfast. Robbie Ross took some considerable risk when he openly supported Oscar Wilde...he's been hounded ever since by Lord Alfred Douglas.

IVOR NOVELLO

Bosie was always vindictive...Robbie should have known that from the beginning...he's got no one to blame but himself.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

That's really unfair! His loyalty to Wilde was exemplary.

IVOR NOVELLO
 Alright, alright - Robbie's a
 saint! Let's drop the subject!

IVOR NOVELLO and SIEGFRIED SASSOON exit. SIEGFRIED SASSOON smiling.

CUT TO:

22 EXT. DAY. WEIRLEIGH (MOTHER'S HOUSE). (1921/22) 22

IVOR NOVELLO on a horse.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
 What on earth are you doing up
 there?

IVOR NOVELLO
 Trying to be a gentleman.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
 How does it feel?

IVOR NOVELLO
 Horrible! Any higher my nose will
 bleed.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON laughing.

IVOR NOVELLO (CONT'D)
 Will you please help me down - I
 refuse to look ridiculous!

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
 I'll get a hoist!

IVOR NOVELLO
 That was insensitive.

The horse suddenly bolts.

IVOR NOVELLO (CONT'D)
 AARRGGHH!!

CUT TO:

23 INT. NIGHT. WEIRLEIGH. (1921/22) 23

SIEGFRIED SASSOON and his MOTHER laughing - IVOR NOVELLO loving the attention.

MOTHER
How was your first experience on a
horse?

IVOR NOVELLO
Bruising.

MOTHER
I take it then that you don't hunt.

IVOR NOVELLO
No...well not foxes anyway.
(winks at SIEGFRIED
SASSOON)

Silence.

IVOR NOVELLO (CONT'D)
(noticing HAMO'S sword)
That's a very fine sword.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
It was my brother's.

MOTHER
He was killed in Gallipoli.

Silence.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON, IVOR NOVELLO & MOTHER sitting in the
firelight.

Silence.

Then suddenly.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
(looking at his watch)
Oh God!

MOTHER
What is it?

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
It's the first performance of
"Facade" and I was supposed to go
to it!

IVOR NOVELLO
Where is it being performed?

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
At a private performance in Carlyle
Square.

IVOR NOVELLO

Chelsea -

(looking at his watch)

Well even if I drive like the wind,
we'll never get back to town in
time now.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

Oh God. Robbie will be furious. And
so will Edith Sitwell - it's being
given to a very select audience.

MOTHER

I'm sure she'll understand once
you've explained why you weren't
able to attend.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

I don't think so mother. Edith can
be a very captious woman.

IVOR NOVELLO

She isn't a woman - she's an
animated meringue. And those teeth!

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

Don't be horrible Ivor. She
suffers, I believe, from a
complaint known as "receding gums".

IVOR NOVELLO

She's so autocratic, I'm surprised
she gave them permission to.

IVOR NOVELLO gets up.

IVOR NOVELLO (CONT'D)

Come on - we'll see if we can catch
some of it.

He goes out.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

I'm sorry to leave in such a rush
mother.

MOTHER

It doesn't matter.

Silence.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

Is he just another one of your
pretty boys?

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
No. It's deeper than that...Much
deeper.

Silence.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON (CONT'D)
You don't like him do you mother?

MOTHER
He's amusing but unpleasant. It's
the eyes, I think, they're cruel.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON doesn't know what to say.

Pause.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
Good night mother.

MOTHER
Good night Siegfried.

CUT TO:

24 INT. DAY. EDITH SITWELL'S HOUSE. (1922)

24

EDITH SITWELL'S bedroom. The sun is coming through blinds and
the air is stuffy and stale.

CLOSE UP EDITH SITWELL.

Silence.

She is lying in bed under a mosquito net. She is wearing an
oversized turban and a large ring on one of her fingers.

EDITH SITWELL
You never came.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
Please forgive me Edith.

EDITH SITWELL
I shall try.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
I'm entirely to blame. We visited
my mother in Kent and lost all
sense of time.

EDITH SITWELL

We?

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

Me...and Ivor Novello...

EDITH SITWELL

A man at the cheaper end of poetry.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

I do hope you can forgive me, for I
am mortified by my thoughtlessness.

Silence.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON (CONT'D)

How was the work received?

EDITH SITWELL

They tittered.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

Tittered?

EDITH SITWELL

Tittered. I overheard someone say
(in the most odious manner), "It's
this sort of thing that makes one
glad to be semi-conscious." I was
deeply wounded. My poetry has
wonderful assonances and
dissonances...I use words for their
colour not merely for what they are
supposed to mean.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

Great art may sometimes be so ahead
of it's time, Edith, that it's
initial reception can sometimes be
considered a *Suces d'Estime*...think
of Stravinsky.

EDITH SITWELL

But I do not wish to think of
Stravinsky.

Silence.

EDITH SITWELL (CONT'D)

We are performing "Façade" at the
Aeolian Hall next week. I shall
expect you there.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
Of course Edith. I shall come with
the speed of a thousand gazelles.

EDITH SITWELL
There's no need for hyperbole
Siegfried...a taxi will do.

SOUNDTRACK: The introduction to "En Famille" is heard.

EDITH SITWELL'S V/O
"In the early springtime after
their tea,
Through the young fields of the
springing Bohea,"

TRACK BACK from her.

DISSOLVE TO:

25 INT. NIGHT. AEOLIAN HALL. (1922) 25

CLOSE UP EDITH SITWELL. She is seated behind a gauze wearing another outrageous turban. She is reciting the end of "En Famille".

EDITH SITWELL
"....To scratch you, my dears, like
a mandoline."

CONTINUE TRACKING BACK.

DISSOLVE TO:

26 INT. NIGHT. ENTRANCE TO THE AEOLIAN HALL. (1922) 26

TWO SHOT SIEGFRIED SASSOON & IVOR NOVELLO coming out of the auditorium.

CONTINUE TRACKING BACK WITH THEM.

IVOR NOVELLO
(saying one of the lines
from one of the poems)
"Gone the sweet swallow, gone
Philomel!"
Oh Christ!

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
I'll have to go backstage.

IVOR NOVELLO
Rather you than me.

DISSOLVE TO:

27 INT. NIGHT. AEOLIAN DRESSING ROOM. (1922) 27

TRACK BACK FROM EDITH SITWELL looking into her mirror. Next to her ROBBIE ROSS. She turns to look at the door.

EDITH SITWELL
Ah, The Prodigal!

CUT TO:

28 INT. NIGHT. AEOLIAN DRESSING ROOM. (1922) 28

TRACK TO DOOR.

It opens and SIEGFRIED SASSOON is standing there.

TRACK STOPS ON HIS CLOSE UP.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
(beaming)
Well Edith - you've done it again!

DISSOLVE TO:

WW1 FOOTAGE.

SOUNDTRACK OVER THE DISSOLVE:

EDITH SITWELL'S V/O
(From "En Famille")
"For Hell is just as properly
proper
As Greenwich or as Bath or Joppa!"

DISSOLVE TO:

WW1 FOOTAGE: 1917

Over all this WW1 footage we will hear the letter and statement by SIEGFRIED SASSOON to his commanding officer.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON V/O

(Letter)

I am writing you this private letter with the greatest possible regret. I must inform you that it is my intention to refuse to perform any further military duties. I am doing this as a protest against the policy of the Government in prolonging the War by failing to state their conditions for peace.

I have written a statement of my reasons, of which I enclose a copy. This statement is being circulated. I would have spared you this unpleasantness had it been possible.

My only desire is to make things as easy as possible for you in dealing with my case. I will come to Litherland immediately I hear from you, if that is your wish.

I am fully aware of what I am letting myself in for.

- 1) British soldiers firing field guns.
- 2) No mans land.
- 3) British soldiers and cavalry marching towards us.
- 4) Cheering crowds.
- 5) More marching soldiers.
- 6) Troops on train.
- 7) Soldiers embarking on ship.
- 8) More marching soldiers.
- 9) British troops in waterlogged trenches.
- 10) More waterlogged trenches.
- 11) More explosions.
- 12) British soldiers moving through cordite mist.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON V/O (CONT'D)

(Statement)

I am making this statement as an act of willful defiance of military authority because I believe that the war is being deliberately prolonged by those who have the power to end it. I am a soldier, convinced that I am acting on behalf of soldiers. I believe that the war upon which I entered as a war of defence and liberation has now become a war of aggression and conquest. I believe that the purpose for which I and my fellow soldiers entered upon this war should and have been so clearly stated as to have made it impossible to change them and that had this been done the objects that actuated us would now be attainable by negotiation.

I have seen and endured the sufferings of the troops and I can no longer be a party to prolong these sufferings for ends which I believe to be evil and unjust. I am not protesting against the conduct of the war, but against the political errors and insincerities for which the fighting men are being sacrificed.

On behalf of those who are suffering now, I make this protest against the deception which is being practised upon them; also I believe it may help to destroy the callous complacency with which the majority of those at home regard the continuance of agonies which they do not share and which they have not enough imagination to realise.

ROBBIE ROSS V/O

(Disturbed)

Do you intend to send this?

SIEGFRIED SASSOON V/O

Yes.

ROBBIE ROSS V/O
I'd think this over very carefully
if I were you.

DISSOLVE TO:

29 INT. EARLY EVENING. THE REFORM CLUB/LIBERAL CLUB. (1917) 29

SIEGFRIED SASSOON comes into one of the main reception rooms and is clearly furious.

TRACK BACK WITH HIM UNTIL HE SITS DOWN. As he does so he throws a copy of The Times to ROBBIE ROSS who is sitting opposite.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
I suppose you had a hand in this?

ROBBIE ROSS
Yes, and Eddie Marsh.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
I take this very ill Robbie! Why
did you involve Marsh?!

ROBBIE ROSS
Because he's Principal Private
Secretary to Winston Churchill and
he wanted to help. He was
instrumental in getting you a
Medical Board examination instead
of a Court Martial.

A tense silence.

ROBBIE ROSS (CONT'D)
If you were found guilty at a Court
Martial you could be shot.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
That was a risk I was prepared to
take.

ROBBIE ROSS
But there are those who care for
you and who were not.

Silence.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
A Court Martial would have been a
platform to state my opposition to
the conduct of the war.

(MORE)

SIEGFRIED SASSOON (CONT'D)
 And you have prevented me from
 doing so not only for The Times
 article but for my statement read
 out on the floor of the House. You
 have rendered me impotent. You have
 robbed me of my dignity.

ROBBIE ROSS
 Better than than a firing squad.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
 That is a matter of opinion.

ROBBIE ROSS
 Don't be angry with me Siegfried.
 My intentions were honourable.

PAN AWAY FROM THEM R TO L.

DISSOLVE TO:

30 INT. TRAIN. EARLY EVENING. (1917) 30

SIDE VIEW SHOT OF SASSOON AT THE WINDOW.

He looks out of the window lost in thought.

ROBBIE ROSS V/O
 I'm quite appalled by what you've
 done. I can only hope that your
 C.O. in Liverpool will ignore your
 letter. I am terrified that you
 will be put under arrest.

DISSOLVE TO:

31 INT. DAY. OFFICE AT ARMY HQ, LITHERLAND. (1917) 31

C/U of MAJOR MCCARTNEY-FILGATE.

He picks up a cup of tea from his desk.

MAJOR MCCARTNEY-FILGATE
 (Very amiable)
 Now then Lieutenant Sassoon...
 (He sips his tea)
 ...what seems to be the trouble?

CUT TO:

32

INT. DAY. MEDICAL BOARD. (1917)

32

C/U OF SIEGFRIED SASOON.

MAJOR MCCARTNEY-FILGATE'S V/O
 You may sit if you wish Lieutenant.

SIEGFRIED SASOON
 Thank you Sir.

He sits.

CUT TO:

WIDE SHOT of Medical Board consisting of 2 army doctors and
 MAJOR MCCARTNEY-FILGATE who is the President of the Board.

MAJOR MCCARTNEY-FILGATE
 We read your statement Lieutenant,
 with some alarm. Why did you make
 it?

SIEGFRIED SASOON
 I wanted to state my position
 regarding the conduct of the war.

FIRST ARMY DOCTOR
 It is not your place to question
 how the war is being prosecuted.
 Your duty lies in obeying orders.

SIEGFRIED SASOON
 Duty. That word covers a multitude
 of sins. In the face of such
 slaughter one cannot "order" ones
 conscience.

FIRST ARMY DOCTOR
 One can do better than that - one
 can ignore it.

SIEGFRIED SASOON
 That reply was so disgraceful - you
 ought to be in politics.

MAJOR MCCARTNEY-FILGATE
 That was impertinent Lieutenant.

SIEGFRIED SASOON does not reply or apologise.

Silence.

SECOND ARMY DOCTOR
 Are you pro-German?

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
No. I'm pro-human.

SECOND ARMY DOCTOR
We are not here to discuss humanity
- that is religion's sphere of
operations.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
(Heated)
And what of morality?

SECOND ARMY DOCTOR
(Heated)
Morality is a luxury that we can
only afford during peacetime!

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
(Heated)
I would be grateful if you could
take that offensive tone out of
your voice. Voices raised in anger
only perpetuates war!

SECOND ARMY DOCTOR
And passive resistance only invites
defeat!

A tense silence.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
(More controlled)
I simply cannot remain silent in
the face of such casualties -
someone should, must be brought to
book.

FIRST ARMY DOCTOR
The casualties young man, are a
matter for the Imperial General
Staff and your statement, indeed
your entire attitude, is both
offensive and detrimental to
military discipline.

MAJOR MCCARTNEY-FILGATE
My colleague is quite right. It is
not your place to question your
superiors, much less to imply that
they are not honourable.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

Perhaps, Sir, if any of you visit
the front you might, at least,
spare some thought for the many
bereaved families and the pain they
suffer.

FIRST ARMY DOCTOR

(Shouting)

You are out of order sir!

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

(Calm)

I thought that was the very reason
for my being brought before you.

MAJOR MCCARTNEY-FILGATE

This has gone far enough.

The Major looks at his fellow officers and they confer sotto
voce.

MAJOR MCCARTNEY-FILGATE (CONT'D)

Myself and my fellow officers feel
that your mind is still in chaos
and that you are unfit to be
trusted with mens lives. It is
therefore the Board's decision that
you should be sent to a hospital
for nervous diseases in Scotland.

The two army doctors nod in agreement.

MAJOR MCCARTNEY-FILGATE (CONT'D)

We therefore order you to report
immediately to Craiglockhart, in
Edinburgh.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON stands and salutes.

DISSOLVE TO:

33

INT. TRAIN. DAY. (1917)

33

SIDE VIEW OF SIEGFRIED SASSOON looking out of the window.

HOLD

SOUNDTRACK:

SIEGFRIED SASSOON V/O
 Thank you. They had, at least,
 spared me from having to sing,
 "Jerusalem".

MAJOR MCCARTNEY-FILGATE'S V/O
 His mental condition is abnormal.
 His conversation is disconnected
 and somewhat irrational. His manner
 nervous and excitable. In addition
 to this his family history is
 neuropathic. He is suffering from a
 nervous breakdown and we do not
 consider him responsible for his
 actions.

DISSOLVE TO:

PANNING R TO L FROM TRAIN WINDOW TO THE ENTRANCE OF
 CRAIGLOCKHART.

A doorbell is heard.

The doors open.

SASSOON is met by the Chief Medical Officer and the Matron. *

CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER
 (Curt)
 Good morning Lieutenant.

He is one of those officers who thinks that shell-shock is
 just cowardice.

DISSOLVE TO:

34 INT. DAY. CRAIGLOCKHART. (1917)

34

TWO SHOT MATRON AND CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER THEIR BACKS TO
 CAMERA; SIEGFRIED SASSOON'S POV; (invent a regiment for CMO
 at the rank of Captain).

TRACK FORWARD WITH THEM

During this track 2 or 3 men come towards the camera. They
 have prominent blue marks on their faces.

SOUNDTRACK:

CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER V/O
 Name?

SIEGFRIED SASSOON V/O
Sassoon, Siegfried.

CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER V/O
Rank?

SIEGFRIED SASSOON V/O
Second Lieutenant.

CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER V/O
Age?

SIEGFRIED SASSOON V/O
30.

CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER V/O
Years of complete service?

SIEGFRIED SASSOON V/O
2 years 11 months.

CUT TO:

35 INT. DAY. CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER'S OFFICE. (1917) 35

TWO SHOT CMO AND MATRON BOTH SITTING.

MATRON writing, CMO dictating. SASSOON standing.

CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER
Completed months with Field Force?

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
13 months.

CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER
Disease?

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
I've had some sort of breakdown.

CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER
Nervous debility?

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
Yes, I believe that's what they
called it.

CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER
(To Matron)
Enter it as neurosthenia Matron.

SASSOON lingers for a moment.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
As we came in I noticed that
several men had blue dots on their
faces.

MATRON
Morphine.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
Morphine?

MATRON
The dots denote that they've had
their doses, so that they are given
no more until the appropriate time.

CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER
(To Matron)
Who will be treating this man?

MATRON
Dr. Rivers.

CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER
(To Siegfried Sassoon)
Dr. Rivers' office is next door. I
think it would be polite if you
introduced yourself.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
Yes sir.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON goes to leave then stops.

CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER
(Sarcastic)
I nearly forgot to give you your
armband. It must be worn at all
times, especially outside the
hospital grounds. It is to show
that you are a serving soldier in
hospital and not a conscientious
objector. We wouldn't want you to
be attacked in Princes Street now,
would we?

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
Which arm should I wear it on sir?

CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER
The pleasure of that choice,
Lieutenant is entirely yours.

MATRON

Your room is on the upper floor at
the end of the corridor.

CUT TO:

36 INT. DAY. DOCTOR RIVER'S OFFICE. (1917)

36

C/U DR. RIVERS.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON V/O
Sassoon...Siegfried...Lieutenant.

DR. RIVERS

Your burgeoning fame precedes you.
I enjoyed "The Old Huntsman" very
much. You may not know but we have
a house magazine, "Hydra". I'm sure
it would welcome a contribution
from you.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
I'll try to write something light
and amusing.

DR. RIVERS

There's no need to go that far.
You have an appointment to see me -
10:30 - in the morning.

CUT TO:

37 INT. DAY. SIEGFRIED SASSOON'S ROOM AT CRAIGLOCKHART. (1917) 37

He comes in, sits down and looks around. It's rather a dismal
room.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
(Rather downcast)
Dear Mother...have arrived in
Dottyville...wish you were here...

CUT TO:

38 INT. DAY. DOCTOR RIVER'S OFFICE. (1917)

38

It has huge windows looking out over the grounds.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
Good morning doctor.

DR. RIVERS

Good morning Sassoan. Please sit down, we are quite relaxed here.

Silence.

DR. RIVERS (CONT'D)

Although I must say, we do seem to go through rather too many Chief Medical Officers. Some are more flexible than others, then they are replaced by someone who wants everything to be as taut as Aldershot. Then they too are replaced.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

And what is your persuasion?

DR. RIVERS

Oh, I prefer a certain measure of laxity...one can't be at attention forever...it plays havoc with the nerves.

Silence. Tense but not unpleasant.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

From what little I know of your method of treatment here, I understand that from whatever I say you can deduce whether or not my grandmother was a dipsomaniac.

DR. RIVERS

Was she?

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

Alas, no. Just a sweet sherry at Christmas and on birthdays.

DR. RIVERS

Well done your grandmother! She didn't know what she wasn't missing.

Silence. This time very uncomfortable.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

Just tell me what you want me to do and I will comply with your wishes.

DR. RIVERS

It isn't a question of what I want.
It is a question of what you think
you need.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

Am I to start? Or will you?

DR. RIVERS

Is there anything you feel you wish
to say?

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

What I feel cannot be talked away
or soothed into silence.

DR. RIVERS

Why?

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

Too many have died, too much has
been destroyed. The soul of the
world has died.

DR. RIVERS

There can be an easement of pain, a
move towards acceptance.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

Pain is not the only terror...there
are many more...

DR. RIVERS

Can you name them?

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

If I could name them they would
cease to be terrors.

DR. RIVERS

That is a very elegant way of
avoiding an answer.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

All evasions are elegant - think of
politics.

DR. RIVERS

I've always thought that
politicians were too stupid to be
subtle.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
Or perhaps they are just too subtle
to be inelegant.

Silence.

DR. RIVERS
Are you a good soldier?

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
Passable. But I was a poor marksman
- I never knew which eye to shut.

DR. RIVERS
I understand that you were awarded
the M.C..

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
Yes. It's supposed to signify
gallantry - but bravery is only
cowardice in extremis. At the root
of bravery lies terror and the fear
of fear.

DR. RIVERS
But you were conspicuous by your
courage. Why did you discard the
Military Cross.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
Disgust at my own dwindling
standards and the men I felt I had
betrayed. It was nothing short of
duplicity.

DR. RIVERS
And yet the men under your command
held you in the highest esteem, I
am told.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
And I them. They seemed to me to be
all that was good and true in the
world.

DR. RIVERS
Are you searching for truth?

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
Isn't everyone?

DR. RIVERS
And if you find it - what then?

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

Peace of mind. Contentment. No
longer yearning for what has been
lost.

Silence.

They sit there not saying anything. SIEGFRIED SASSOON very close to tears.

PAN UP TO WINDOWS R TO L. THE SUN FLOODING IN.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON V/O

(As we PAN to the windows)

"How beautifully blue the sky
The glass is rising very high
Continue fine I hope it may
And yet it rained but yesterday
Tomorrow it may pour again
I hear the country needs some
rain..."

DISSOLVE TO:

39 EXT. DAY. CHERRY TREE IN FULL BLOSSOM FILLING THE SCREEN. 39
(1917)

SOUNDTRACK:

"Loveliest of trees" being sung.

"Loveliest of trees, the cherry now
Is hung with bloom along the bough,
And stands about the woodland ride
Wearing white for Eastertide...
Now, of my threescore years and
ten,
Twenty will not come again,
And take from seventy springs a
score,
It only leaves me fifty more...
And since to look at things in
bloom
Fifty springs are little room,
About the woodlands I will go
To see the cherry hung with snow.

DISSOLVE TO:

WW1 FOOTAGE:

- 1) A shot of men coming towards the camera in a "V" shape.
- 2) A series of shots of soldiers in the sun waiting or marching but just before a battle commences digging trenches.
- 3) Coffins in grave.
- 4) Crowds in rain with umbrellas.
- 5) Soldiers in trenches smoking and playing cards.
- 6) No mans land. Soldiers coming through it.

DISSOLVE TO:

40 INT. DAY. SIEGFRIED SASSOON'S ROOM AT CRAIGLOCKHART. (1917) 40

He is seated at an open window - on a chair with his legs up on a window sill - the window is wide open. Lovely weather.

SOUNDTRACK:

"Loveliest of trees" ends.

He stops reading, then laying the book on his lap he closes his eyes and leans back savouring the sun.

HOLD

There's a knock on the door and SASSOON comes out of his reverie.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
Come in.

WILFRED OWEN V/O
Lieutenant Sassoon?

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
(Turning round)
Yes.

CUT TO SASSOON'S POV.

WILFRED OWEN standing at the half open door.

WILFRED OWEN
(A slight stammer)
I'm W-ilfred Owen.

DISSOLVE TO:

41 INT. NIGHT. SIEGFRIED SASSOON'S ROOM AT CRAIGLOCKHART. (1917) 41

SIEGFRIED SASSOON in bed.

HOLD ON HIM.

SOUNDTRACK:

Terrible screaming, voices then the noise of footsteps.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON lying in the dark, awake but very disturbed.

SOUNDTRACK:

The sound of the screaming intensifies, then stops.

SASSOON lies in the dark afraid.

CUT TO:

42 INT. DAY. DOCTOR RIVER'S OFFICE. (1917)

42

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
There was howling last night, like
a wolf...DR. RIVERS
Strictly speaking, wolves
"ululate", but howling will do.SIEGFRIED SASSOON
Don't make light of it like that
doctor.DR. RIVERS
That is not what I am doing. I'm
merely keeping it in perspective,
but I'm sorry if I sounded
uncaring.SIEGFRIED SASSOON
His screams were terrible! Worse
than an animal. There was such
anguish in his screaming.

Silence.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON (CONT'D)
Why do all the worst terrors come
at night?

DR. RIVERS

The dark is, I think, like the unconscious...waiting all day so that it can steal over you in the dark.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

You make it sound almost benign.

DR. RIVERS

Perhaps it is.

DISSOLVE TO:

WW1 FOOTAGE:

- 1) Moving troops.
- 2) Trees on ridge.
- 3) Sky.
- 4) Troops moving L to R (dark sky ahead, explosions)
- 5) Field guns firing into the night.
- 6) Troops going over the top.
- 7) Empty ridge.

All this footage is in silhouette.

DISSOLVE TO:

43 INT. DAY. DOCTOR RIVER'S OFFICE. (1917)

43

DR. RIVERS

I believe Wilfred Owen introduced himself to you the other day.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

Yes. He seems so gentle...I feel rather protective of him...

DR. RIVERS

Does that protectiveness hide something deeper?

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

Yes. All my friendships do, but I
have never allowed
my...emotions...to mar or spoil
them...I remain passive. It's how I
cope.

DR. RIVERS

You never act on impulse?

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

Never. I'm unable to take risks.
It's the "hero" in me.

DR. RIVERS

Why not?

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

Too afraid. Too inhibited. Shamed
by an inner corruption. Or perhaps
it's simply because of...what's the
phrase..."the love that dare not
speak its name".

DR. RIVERS

You are not alone in that respect.

They both look at each other for a while.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

Frankly doctor - I'm surprised.

DR. RIVERS

Why? The world is full of
anomalies.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

Well speaking as one anomaly to
another - how do you cope with the
law?

DR. RIVERS

I adopt a less than honest respect
for it.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

So evasion is not confined solely
to second lieutenants?

DR. RIVERS

No - it affects all ranks. I trust
that after this disclosure you will
be discreet.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
Discretion is my middle name.

DR. RIVERS
Well, it's better than Ethel
anyway.

They both smile.

CUT TO:

44 EXT. DAY. TENNIS COURT, CRAIGLOCKHART. (1917) 44

WIDE SHOT FROM THE NET CHORD JUDGE POSITION.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON AND WILFRED OWEN playing tennis.

TRACK FORWARD along the net.

They continue playing.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON V/O
15, love.

DISSOLVE TO:

45 EXT. DAY. SWIMMING POOL, CRAIGLOCKHART. (1917) 45

SHOT UNDERWATER.

The bodies of SIEGFRIED SASSOON and WILFRED OWEN plunge down into the water then, whilst still below the water, they circle each other.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON V/O
30, love.

DISSOLVE TO:

46 INT. DAY. THEATRE, CRAIGLOCKHART. (1917) 46

TWO SHOT WILFRED OWEN & SIEGFRIED SASSOON doing the Tango and coming towards the camera.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON V/O
40, love.

They are rehearsing for a little show. Building scenery, etc..

At a piano a soldier is playing a tango and SIEGFRIED SASOON and WILFRED OWEN are dancing it - and rather well too.

SIEGFRIED SASOON V/O (CONT'D)
Game... Set... and match.

TRACK BACK with them as they dance towards the camera and then stop abruptly. They come to attention and salute.

CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER
(He carries a wooden
swagger stick & tan
leather gloves)
One assumes that these
"theatricals" have some deeper
purpose.

SIEGFRIED SASOON
I think, sir, they help to give
some sort of ease away from the
front line.

CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER
I doubt that. Should the enemy
perceive that the British Army is
always preparing for a Tango - the
war is lost. Besides, the spectacle
of men dancing with men is never
palatable. I have always thought
that such creatures went into the
library with their service
revolvers and did the decent thing.

Pause.

CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER (CONT'D)
And how is your "treatment"
progressing Lieutenant?

SIEGFRIED SASOON
Oh, it has its unique moments, sir.

CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER
(He puts the swagger stick
under his arm & puts his
leather gloves on)
Then let us hope that those unique
moments coalesce enough to get you
back to active service - fighting
fit, as it were.

SIEGFRIED SASOON
Doesn't that rather depend on what
is fit to fight for?
(MORE)

SIEGFRIED SASSOON (CONT'D)
 But perhaps I'm just being
 syndromatic - or is that a lapsus
 linguae?

CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER
 (Who's not paid any real
 attention)
 I beg your pardon?

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
 Lapsus linguae - a slip of the
 tongue.

CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER
 I know what it means Lieutenant!
 The rest of us may be unable to
 read "Beowulf" in the original but
 we're not all complete Philistines!

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
 Of course not sir.

CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER
 Carry on!

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
 (Towards Wilfred Owen)
 Ready?

WILFRED OWEN
 Yes.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
 One, two, three and...

The piano starts and they resume their Tango.

CUT TO:

47 INT. DAY. SIEGFRIED SASSOON'S ROOM AT CRAIGLOCKHART. (1917) 47
 A shot of the hospital magazine, "Hydra", held aloft by
 WILFRED OWEN.

TILT DOWN WITH IT AS HE LOWERS IT AS HE GETS INTO THE ROOM.

WILFRED OWEN
 Halitosis! Halitosis! Your first
 poem in "Hydra"!

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
 Long live the editor!

WILFRED OWEN
I am the editor!

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
Hooray for nepotism!

The following exchanges are good humoured.

WILFRED OWEN
And what do you think of my verse
Siegfried?

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
It seems to be a little too
dependant on 19th century models.

WILFRED OWEN
You make it sound like, "The
courtship of Miles Standish".

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
No. Nothing's as bad as that.

WILFRED OWEN
But you do find my work derivative?

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
While I was at Clare I wasted far
too much time reading Swinburne -
very bad for my adjectives. Speak
directly. Not with another's voice.

Pause.

WILFRED OWEN clearly hurt.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON (CONT'D)
(Trying to make amends)
At first, everyone's work is
derivative. We all have to start
somewhere. At Cambridge - apart
from Swinburne - I did nothing
except read William Morris - in a
punt! - and staggered through
"Maud".

WILFRED OWEN looks a little downcast.

Short silence.

WILFRED OWEN
(He hands a poem to
Siegfried Sassoon)
(MORE)

WILFRED OWEN (CONT'D)
 Perhaps my latest effort will
 please you. It's called "Disabled".

STAY ON SIEGFRIED SASSOON AS HE SILENTLY READS THE POEM.

A long pause.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
 (With great emotion)
 It's magnificent. It pierces the
 heart.

WILFRED OWEN smiles.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON (CONT'D)
 Oh what a gift you have!

A long pause, a difficult silence.

WILFRED OWEN
 I have been passed by the Medical
 Board as fit for active service.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON clearly shaken.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
 When do you rejoin your regiment?

WILFRED OWEN
 December. Just before Christmas.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
 Oh.

CUT TO:

48

INT. DAY. THEATRE, CRAIGLOCKHART. (1917)

48

TRACK and PAN R to L on singer as she moves across the stage.

FEMALE SINGER & AUDIENCE
 ("Waiting at the church")
 "There was I waiting at the church
 Waiting at the church
 Waiting at the church.
 All day long he left me in the
 lurch
 Lord, how it did upset me
 All at once he sent around a note
 Here's the very note
 This is what he wrote
 'Can't get away to marry you today,
 My wife won't let me.'"

TRACK and PAN in on the AUDIENCE DURING THE SINGING, UNTIL WE GET TO A TWO SHOT OF SIEGFRIED SASOON AND WILFRED OWEN SITTING BY EACH OTHER.

THEN WE TRACK AROUND TO SIEGFRIED SASOON. He stops singing and just looks at WILFRED OWEN.

CUT TO SIDE VIEW OF WILFRED OWEN. He is singing his heart out.

The song stops and everyone applauds.

WILFRED OWEN
(Looking at Siegfried
Sasoon and smiling)
What is it Siegfried?

CUT TO SIEGFRIED SASOON.

SIEGFRIED SASOON
(Snapping out of his
reverie)
Nothing.

CUT TO:

49 INT. DAY. DOCTOR RIVER'S OFFICE. (1917)

49

SIEGFRIED SASOON & DR. RIVERS sitting in silence.

They don't look at one another.

More silence.

SIEGFRIED SASOON
(Without looking at Dr.
Rivers)
Wilfred is about to return to
duty...

DR. RIVERS
(Not looking at Siegfried)
I know.

A long silence.

What will you do?

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

Nothing.

Another long silence.

I will not do anything that will
make the parting even more painful.

Another long silence.

I would give all that I possess
just to have him stay one more
hour, one more minute.

(Smiles ruefully)

Quick to tears - slow to love.
When I first met him he had a
slight stammer and spoke, I
thought, with a grammar school
accent...how could I have been such
a snob? He's a lovely man and I
think, the greater poet.

Silence.

DR. RIVERS

And what about your poetry?

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

Egotism really.

DR. RIVERS

That seems a little harsh.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

The truth often is.

Silence.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON (CONT'D)

I have no idea why I come here - it
has done no good at all.

Pause.

DR. RIVERS

Think of it as a cleansing of the
soul.

SIEGFRIED SASOON
 (Nearly crying)
 Why did you have to put it so
 beautifully?

CUT TO:

50 EXT. DAY. MAIN ENTRANCE/STAIRS CRAIGLOCKHART. (1917) 50

TOP OF THE STAIRS. WILFRED OWEN comes down one side of the stairs, helped with his luggage by the TAXI DRIVER. SIEGFRIED SASOON down the other.

They both look wretched.

They stand for a moment in silence by the taxi.

A long pause.

SIEGFRIED SASOON
 (Barely controlling
 himself)
 Will you stay? Please...for just a
 few more moments...

WILFRED OWEN nods - as deeply moved as SIEGFRIED SASOON.

Throughout scene suppressed tears.

The driver stands with the doors open.

TAXI DRIVER
 Whenever you're ready sir.

Silence.

TWO SHOT WILFRED OWEN & SIEGFRIED SASOON. Very reluctantly they shake hands.

PAN L TO R.

Without looking back WILFRED OWEN gets into the taxi.

Taxi drives off and dissolves into a military vehicle at Fricourt driving away surrounded by troops.

WW1 FOOTAGE: Over this footage "Anthem for Doomed Youth" read by SIEGFRIED SASOON.

SIEGFRIED SASOON V/O
 "What passing-bells for these who
 die as cattle?
 (MORE)

SIEGFRIED SASSOON V/O (CONT'D)
 Only the monstrous anger of the
 guns.
 Only the stuttering rifles' rapid
 rattle
 Can patter out their hasty orisons.
 No mockeries for them from prayers
 or bells,
 Nor any voice of mourning save the
 choirs,-
 The shrill, demented choirs of
 wailing shells;
 And bugles calling for them from
 sad shires.

What candles may be held to speed
 them all?
 Not in the hand of boys, but in
 their eyes
 Shall shine the holy glimmers of
 good-byes.
 The pallor of girls' brows shall be
 their pall;
 Their flowers the tenderness of
 silent minds,
 And each slow dusk a drawing-down
 of blinds."

- 1) A still photograph of a young soldier looking straight into camera.
- 2) Explosions.
- 3) Montage of British soldiers.
- 4) Footage of the dead.
- 5) Persian head carving.
- 6) Dhows on the River Nile moving L to R.

SOUNDTRACK:

SIEGFRIED SASSOON V/O (CONT'D)
 People die here too...in the land
 of the Pharaohs...

DISSOLVE TO:

51 EXT. LATE AFTERNOON. EGYPTIAN BASECAMP. (1918) 51

SIEGFRIED SASSOON sitting at the front of his tent reading.
 He stops reading and looks up.

*

SOUNDTRACK:

SIEGFRIED SASSOON V/O
 (Reading "Concert Party")
 "They are gathering round...
 Out of the twilight; over the grey-
 blue sand,
 Shoals of low jargoning men drift
 inward to the sound -
 The jangle and throb of a
 piano...tum-ti-tum...
 Drawn by a lamp, they come
 Out of the glimmering lines of
 their tents, over the shuffling
 sand.

O sing us the songs, the songs of
 our own land,
 You warbling ladies in white
 Dimness conceals the hunger in our
 faces,
 This wall of faces risen out of the
 night,
 These eyes that keep their memories
 of the places
 So long beyond their sight.

Jaded and gay, the ladies sing; and
 the chap in brown
 Tilts his grey hat; jaunty and lean
 and pale,
 He rattles the keys...some actor-
 bloke from town...
 "God send you home"; and then "A
 long, long trail";
 "I hear you calling me"; and
 "Dixieland"....
 Sung slowly...now the chorus...one
 by one
 We hear them, drink then; 'til the
 concerts done
 Silent, I watch the shadowy mass of
 soldiers stand.
 Silent, they drift away, over the
 glimmering sand."

A young soldier carrying a football pauses by the tent as he notices SASSOON.

*
*

*

YOUNG SOLDIER
What are you reading sir?

SIEGFRIED SASOON
"War and Peace".

YOUNG SOLDIER
Any jokes?

SIEGFRIED SASOON
(Smiling)
Nothing but!

The soldier smiles and moves away.

HOLD on soldier.

He turns for a moment then smiles again them ambles away over the sands.

HOLD ON HIM.

DISSOLVE TO:

52 EXT. DAY. A SPA. (EARLY 1920'S) 52

A young elegant man sporting a tennis outfit moves towards camera.

The sun blazing down.

HOLD

DISSOLVE TO:

53 EXT. DAY. A SPA. (EARLY 1920'S) 53

SIEGFRIED SASOON & IVOR NOVELLO sunbathing.

IVOR NOVELLO looking towards young man. Then IVOR NOVELLO closes his eyes.

Silence.

IVOR NOVELLO V/O
How still it is today.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON V/O
How beautiful you are.

DISSOLVE TO:

54 INT. EVENING. SPA BALLROOM. (EARLY 1920'S) 54

Everyone in evening dress. A slow dance is being played.

IVOR NOVELLO & SIEGFRIED SASSOON come in with their drinks and sit down.

IVOR NOVELLO eyeing all the men.

IVOR NOVELLO
All the fine young cannibals.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
You make it sound like a raiding party.

IVOR NOVELLO
Isn't it?

He waves to someone.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON looks at him.

IVOR NOVELLO (CONT'D)
Stephen Tennant.

CUT TO IVOR NOVELLO'S POV.

STEPHEN TENNANT waves and comes over with a young woman.

STEPHEN TENNANT
(To Siegfried Sassoan)
I am...

IVOR NOVELLO
We already know who you are
Stephen...but who is this absolute
dream in oyster grey silk?

HESTER GATTY
Hester Gatty.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
Lady Gatty's daughter?

HESTER GATTY

Yes. She once invited you to
Carlton House Terrace but you
hardly noticed me.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

Then I apologise for my lack of
taste.

STEPHEN TENNANT

We're great admirers of your poetry
Siegfried.

(To Ivor Novello)

Before you take offence Ivor - we
like your work too.

IVOR NOVELLO

Careful Stephen - that was almost
enthusiasm.

HESTER GATTY

Perhaps they could play one of your
charming songs Mr. Novello. Then we
could dance to it. I can't tempt
Stephen though.

IVOR NOVELLO

Why not?

STEPHEN TENNANT

Because I only do the Valeta and
only when pressed.

CUT TO:

C/U HESTER GATTY.

She is in focus but the background is out of focus. She sways
to the slow soft rhythm.

CUT TO:

C/U SIEGFRIED SASSOON.

He is in focus but the background is out of focus. He looks
at HESTER.

CUT TO:

HESTER GATTY

I do love dancing.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
So do I.

HESTER GATTY
Come on then!

They go - hand in hand - to the dance floor.

They're playing "The Charleston" and they both start dancing and they are very good at it.

Dance finishes, both smiling and a little out of breath.

HESTER GATTY (CONT'D)
I didn't know great poets did "The Charleston".

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
I didn't know "The Charleston" did that to gay young things.

HESTER GATTY
I think everyone should be gay, don't you?

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
Only in the wider sense.

They walk towards IVOR NOVELLO & STEPHEN TENNANT.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON's POV OF IVOR NOVELLO.

IVOR NOVELLO is still with STEPHEN TENNANT. The young elegant man from before has joined them and IVOR NOVELLO is clearly interested in him.

IVOR NOVELLO
This young man is...?

ALEXANDER FENTON
Alexander Fenton.

IVOR NOVELLO
Doesn't it sound as if it should have a title in front of it?

STEPHEN TENNANT
Sir Alexander Fenton...for his services to the theatre...

IVOR NOVELLO
(riled)
That hasn't happened yet.

STEPHEN TENNANT
It will Ivor...it will...

CUT TO:

55 INT. EARLY EVENING. LONDON RESTAURANT. (1922) 55
SHOT OF SIEGFRIED SASSOON & IVOR NOVELLO reading their menus.
SHOT OF GLEN BYAM SHAW walking past their table and stopping.

GLEN BYAM SHAW
I hardly see you these days Ivor.
How are you? Horizontally speaking.

IVOR NOVELLO
Busy, old thing, very, very busy.

GLEN BYAM SHAW
Still gathering lilacs?

IVOR NOVELLO
You could say that.

GLEN BYAM SHAW
Well when you've exhausted botany,
you might consider moving into the
field of blood sports...I'm told
that the men who indulge in them
are very, very rugged...isn't that
so Mr. Sassoon?

SIEGFRIED SASSOON is too embarrassed to speak.

IVOR NOVELLO
I think that's what I'll miss most
about you Glen - your quaint sense
of humour.

Pause.

And how have you been passing your
time?

GLEN BYAM SHAW
Seeing lots of musical theatre.

IVOR NOVELLO
Such as?

GLEN BYAM SHAW
"Rose Marie" - very enjoyable.

IVOR NOVELLO
But so Rudolph Frimilly.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
(Quite innocently)
But it is by Rudolph Friml.

IVOR NOVELLO
That was a joke Siegfried.
(to Glen Byam Shore)
And tonight?

GLEN BYAM SHAW
"Lady be good". Gershwin - an
unsurpassed genius.

IVOR NOVELLO
(Riled)
We really mustn't keep you Glen.

GLEN BYAM SHAW exits.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
You have to admit it...Gershwin is
an exceptional talent.

IVOR NOVELLO
I don't have to admit anything!

He bangs his glass down on the table.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
What's wrong?

IVOR NOVELLO
We're going!

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
I thought you wanted supper?

IVOR NOVELLO
I'm no longer hungry!

CUT TO:

56 INT. NIGHT. THEATRE. (1925) 56

SIEGFRIED SASSOON comes in through the stage door.

SOUNDTRACK:

Audience applause is heard.

STAGE DOORMAN
Name sir?

SIEGFRIED SASOON
Mr. Sassoon.

STAGE DOORMAN
Sassoon you say?

SIEGFRIED SASOON
Yes!

STAGE DOORMAN
(Checking list)
Would you mind spelling it for me
sir?

SIEGFRIED SASOON
S...A...S...S...O...O...N.

STAGE DOORMAN
I'm afraid you're not on the list
sir.

SIEGFRIED SASOON
(Angry)
I'm going up anyway!

CUT TO:

57 INT. NIGHT. THEATRE. (1925)

57

SIEGFRIED SASOON goes into the dressing room. As he comes in he sees IVOR NOVELLO and ALEXANDER FENTON break from a loose embrace.

IVOR NOVELLO
(To Alexander Fenton)
Telephone me in a couple of days.

As ALEXANDER FENTON leaves he and SIEGFRIED SASSOON exchange hostile looks.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON at the door.

Silence.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
I had to practically force my way
in - past the stage doorman.

IVOR NOVELLO
You were fortunate - he's been told
to shoot anyone not on my list.

Silence.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
But why wasn't I on the list?

IVOR NOVELLO
Oh for Christ's sake!

Silence.

IVOR NOVELLO (CONT'D)
(trying to stay calm)
I'm tired Siegfried. It's been a
long run - and I'm exhausted.

He looks into his dressing room mirror. His stage make-up
still on.

A tense silence.

IVOR NOVELLO starts to take off his stage make-up.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
Do you still want supper?

IVOR NOVELLO
(Angry)
Yes!

An angry silence.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
I was surprised to see Fenton here.

IVOR NOVELLO
Why? I know lots of people. Fenton
is just another...

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
Admirer?

IVOR NOVELLO
...Fan.

Silence.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
You both seemed to me to be very
friendly after so short an
acquaintance.

IVOR NOVELLO
I get the distinct impression that
I am being grilled. And that a
storm in an egg cup is brewing.

Silence.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
I'm sorry, I didn't mean to be
petty but I am very jealous of you.

IVOR NOVELLO
Affairs are always messy - who can
know the secrets of the human
heart?

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
Usually the people who don't have
one.

IVOR NOVELLO
My, my hasn't it gone chilly in
here.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
But I love you.

IVOR NOVELLO
Yes. You've said.

CUT TO:

58 INT. DAY. FLAT, HALF MOON STREET. (1925) 58

SIEGFRIED SASSOON picks up the receiver and dials.

HOLD

Then the receiver is picked up at the other end but no one
speaks.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
Ivor?...Ivor!

The receiver is put down and we hear just the dialling tone.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON replaces his receiver.

CUT TO

59 INT. DAY. STAGE DOOR, THEATRE. (1925) 59

SIEGFRIED SASSOON comes in and attempts to go to IVOR NOVELLO's dressing room.

But the Stage Doorman literally bars his way.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
(Angry)
Let me pass!

STAGE DOORMAN
I'm sorry sir, but I can't let you go up.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
(Angry)
Why!?

STAGE DOORMAN
Mr. Novello never sees anyone after a matinee.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON tries to push past the STAGE DOORMAN but is prevented.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
(Angry)
Will you inform Mr. Novello that I've booked a table for 8pm. I'll be expecting him for dinner.

STAGE DOORMAN
Yes sir.

CUT TO:

60 INT. NIGHT. LONDON RESTAURANT. (1925) 60

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
Is there someone else?

IVOR NOVELLO

There's always someone else.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

How do you justify your behaviour?

IVOR NOVELLO

By asking myself questions to which I already know the answers. And when all is said and done, my career comes before anything and anyone. And my work is as popular as I am.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

There is a school of thought that regards musical theatre as a second rate means of expression.

IVOR NOVELLO

Before you judge other people's work Siegfried, make sure your own is above criticism.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

What do you mean?!

IVOR NOVELLO

Just this - that since 1918 your poetry has gone from the sublime to the meticulous.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

(Angry)

And tell me Mr. Novello, what did you do during the war?

IVOR NOVELLO

(Angry)

I gave my talent to my country. I boosted morale by playing every theatre in the land!

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

(Very angry)

Weren't you the lucky one! We had the Somme - you had Rhyl!

A tense silence.

IVOR NOVELLO

I see no point in prolonging this unpleasant conversation.

He hails the waiter, who comes with the bill and puts it on the table.

IVOR NOVELLO goes to get it but SIEGFRIED SASSOON stops him.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
After what's been said I don't
expect you to foot the bill as
well.

IVOR NOVELLO
Always the gentleman eh, Siegfried?

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
It's better than being a cad.

IVOR NOVELLO
I suspect that this is goodbye
then?

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
Au revoir might have been kinder.

IVOR NOVELLO
Don't undermine yourself Siegfried,
that's what friends are for.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
If you wish to see me again I'll be
at my flat at Half Moon Street.

IVOR NOVELLO
At least that's more original than
going home to mother.

IVOR NOVELLO leaves.

GLEN BYAM SHAW emerges from the back of the restaurant and stops at the table.

GLEN BYAM SHAW
Snap!

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
(He shrugs, then laughs)

GLEN BYAM SHAW
May I sit down?

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
Of course.
Do you still dine here?

GLEN BYAM SHAW
Of course.

SIEGFRIED SASOON
Why?

GLEN BYAM SHAW
Let's just say I like the trips
down memory lane.
(Pause)
What now?

SIEGFRIED SASOON
I suppose in bad melodrama I'd kill
myself.

GLEN BYAM SHAW
And in really bad melodrama you
kill Ivor.
(Pause)
Seriously, are you alright?

SIEGFRIED SASOON
The moment passes but the hurt
remains.

Silence.

SIEGFRIED SASOON (CONT'D)
(Looking at his watch)
And I was supposed to go and visit
my mother and now I've missed the
train.

GLEN BYAM SHAW
Drive down, why don't you?

SIEGFRIED SASOON
No car. Can't drive.

GLEN BYAM SHAW
I was going to motor down to the
coast - why don't I give you a
lift?

SIEGFRIED SASOON
Oh, that is kind of you.

GLEN BYAM SHAW
Where does she live?

SIEGFRIED SASOON
Kent.

GLEN BYAM SHAW
Then let's get going.

CUT TO:

61 OMITTED

61 *

62 EXT. NIGHT. COUNTRY ROAD. (1925)

62

Fog.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON V/O
Why do the cars look so sad in the
early evening rain?

*
*
*

Then the car driven by GLEN BYAM SHAW comes through the dense fog.

The car stops.

They are in dense fog.

GLEN BYAM SHAW
I have absolutely no idea where we
are.

Silence.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON looking at GLEN BYAM SHAW. GLEN BYAM SHAW goes to speak, but doesn't. He returns SIEGFRIED SASSOON's gaze.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
Although I don't possess the wit to
woo - may I see you again?

GLEN BYAM SHAW
I live in Margate.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
Pity Margate is so far away.

GLEN BYAM SHAW
It's not at the moment.

They smile at one another.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
What about Ivor?

GLEN BYAM SHAW
Oh, he's already been to Margate.

They both laugh.

THEN TRACK AND PAN AWAY INTO THE FOG.

SOUNDTRACK:

The rumble of field guns.

Tanks and soldiers coming out of the fog.

WW1 FOOTAGE:

- 1) A tank - huge and black comes over a hill and descends.
- 2) A tank and a field gun move L to R with a small group of soldiers.
- 3) Servicing of the tanks.

SOUNDTRACK:

SIEGFRIED SASSOON V/O
(Reading "Attack")
"At dawn the ridge emerges massed
and dun
In wild purple of the glow'ring
sun,
Smouldering through spouts of
drifting smoke that shroud
The menacing scarred slope; and,
one by one,
Tanks creep and topple forward to
the wire.
The barrage roars and lifts. Then,
clumsily bowed
With bombs and guns and shovels and
battle-gear,
Men jostle and climb to meet the
bristling fire.
Lines of grey, muttering faces,
masked with fear,
They leave their trenches, going
over the top,
(MORE)

SIEGFRIED SASSOON V/O (CONT'D)
 While time ticks blank and busy on
 their wrists,
 And hope, with furtive eyes and
 grappling fists,
 Flounders in mud. O Jesus, make it
 stop!"

WW1 FOOTAGE:

- 1) Burial of British soldiers and numbering the dead.
- 2) Dead in trenches.
- 3) Cavalry/soldiers in mud.
- 4) Cavalry on ridge - waterlogged trench in foreground.

DISSOLVE TO:

63 INT. NIGHT. IVOR NOVELLO'S FLAT. (1925) 63

SIEGFRIED SASSOON comes into the living room and he is shocked by what he sees.

CUT TO HIS POV.

IVOR NOVELLO & BOBBY ANDREWS in an embrace and exchanging light kisses.

BOBBY ANDREWS
 We have a guest.

IVOR NOVELLO
 He isn't a guest. He's an afterthought.
 This is my life partner Bobby Andrews.
 Siegfried - Bobby, Bobby - Siegfried.
 Don't look so shocked Siegfried,
 love has nothing to do with monogamy. Or are you the faithful type?

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
 I suppose I must be.

IVOR NOVELLO
 If you want fidelity, Siegfried,
 buy a pet.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
 You kept very quiet about this.

IVOR NOVELLO

That's because I didn't want anyone
else to shake him down from the
tree.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

You really are a bastard, aren't
you?

IVOR NOVELLO

I do my best. Now you'll have to
excuse us - we have a casserole
waiting.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON is deeply hurt. He stands looking at them
for a moment then turns to go.

He puts his hand in his pocket and takes out the keys to IVOR
NOVELLO's flat.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

Where shall I put these?

IVOR NOVELLO

Back on floor.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON drops the keys but in slow motion.

PAN/CRANE DOWN WITH THEM.

THEN

MORPH INTO MILITARY CROSS being dropped into the Mersey at
Litherland (1917).

CRANE DOWN WITH IT

The medal and the ribbon float for a moment then sink.

CRANE DOWN WITH IT

The waters of the Mersey swirl then MORPH INTO a cloudy
turbulent sky.

THE ABOVE THREE MORPHING SHOTS MUST GIVE THE IMPRESSION THAT
IT IS A SINGLE CONTINUOUS SHOT.

Boiling clouds - huge and bubbling, grey and dark like the
sea. They fume and snake.

SOUNDTRACK: SONG "GHOST RIDERS IN THE SKY" (1949).

GHOST RIDERS IN THE SKY

"An old cowboy went ridin' one dark
 and windy day
 Upon a ridge he rested as he went
 along his way
 When all at once a mighty herd of
 red-eyed cows he saw
 Flowin' through the ragged skies,
 and up a cloudy draw
 Yipee-i-oh, yipee-i-ay
 Ghost riders in the sky."

"Their brands were still on fire
 and their hooves were made of steel
 Their horns were black and shiny
 and their hot breath he could feel
 A bolt of fear went through him as
 they thundered through the sky
 For he saw the riders comin' hard,
 and he heard their mournful cry
 Yipee-i-oh, yipee-i-ay
 Ghost riders in the sky."

DISSOLVE TO:

CATTLE STAMPEDING THROUGH DUST R TO L.

DISSOLVE TO:

Soldiers moving through a mist of cordite R to L.

SOUNDTRACK: Song continues

"Their faces gaunt, their eyes were
 blurred, their shirts all soaked
 with sweat
 They're ridin' hard to catch that
 herd, but they 'ain't caught 'em
 yet
 'cause they've got to ride for ever
 on that range up in the sky
 On horses snorting fire, as they
 ride on, hear their cry
 Yipee-i-oh, yipee-i-ay
 Ghost riders in the sky."

HOLD ON SKY

More soldiers moving through the grey bubbling sky. The
 clouds fume and snake, then the procession of soldiers fills
 the sky.

SOUNDTRACK: song continues

"As the riders loped on by him, he
 heard one call his name
 "If you want to save your soul from
 Hell a riding on our range
 Then cowboy change your ways today,
 or with us you will ride
 Tryin' to catch the devils herd,
 across these endless skies"
 Yipee-i-oh, yipee-i-ay
 Ghost riders in the sky.
 Yipee-i-oh, yipee-i-ay
 Ghost riders in the sky.
 Yipee-i-oh, yipee-i-ay
 Ghost riders in the sky."

DISSOLVE TO:

64 INT. DAY. DOWNSIDE ABBEY, THE NAVE. (1918/19) 64

SIEGFRIED SASSOON sitting in a pew with his back to camera.

Instead of seeing the altar we stay on the turbulent sky and
 just before we begin to TRACK the sky becomes the high altar.

C/U OF SIEGFRIED SASSOON SITTING IN A PEW SEEN FROM BEHIND
 (1918/19)

TRACK L TO R AROUND HIM TO A FRONT VIEW OF HIS OLDER SELF.
 DURING THIS TRACK AROUND SIEGFRIED SASSOON MORPHS FROM HIS
 YOUNGER TO HIS OLDER SELF (1957/60).

BEHIND HIM SITS HIS SON GEORGE.

Silence.

GEORGE SASSOON

I'm intrinsically against any kind
 of conversion. It's too much like
 wishful thinking. Besides, in a
 poet, it seems to imply that he has
 nothing interesting left to say.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

I said I was only thinking about
 it.

GEORGE SASSOON

Surely you're not looking for God?

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
That's one way of putting it.

GEORGE SASSOON
Well, speaking as one of the
spiritually undernourished, if you
find him make sure he's still an
Englishman and doesn't live on the
wrong side of the park.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
I assume that was supposed to be
amusing.

Silence.

GEORGE SASSOON
But why Catholicism, father?

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
Something permanent, unchanging.

GEORGE SASSOON
You can get that from dressage but
without the guilt.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
There's no need to be snide. And if
all you can do is ridicule it would
be better if you remained silent or
better still go outside and wait in
the car.

Silence.

GEORGE SASSOON
It's a long drive to London, so the
sooner we get started the better.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON doesn't answer.

GEORGE SASSOON leaves.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON just sits there.

HOLD ON HIM

DISSOLVE TO:

SOUNDTRACK OVER THE DISSOLVE:

PRIEST'S V/O
 Siegfried quid petis ab Ecclesia
 Dei?

SIEGFRIED SASSOON V/O
 Fidem.

PRIEST'S V/O
 Fides, quid tibi praestal?

SIEGFRIED SASSOON V/O
 Vitam aeternam.

PRIEST'S V/O
 Si igitur vis ad vitam ingredi
 serva mandata.
 Diligis dominum deum tuum ex toto
 corde tuo, et ex tota anima tua, et
 ex tota mente tua, et proximum tuum
 sicut teipsum.

CROSS FADE TO ENGLISH

PRIEST'S V/O (CONT'D)
 Siegfried, what do you ask of the
 Church of God?

SIEGFRIED SASSOON V/O
 Faith.

PRIEST'S V/O
 What does Faith offer you?

SIEGFRIED SASSOON V/O
 Life everlasting.

PRIEST'S V/O
 If you then desire to enter into
 life, keep the commandments. "Thou
 shalt love the Lord thy God with
 thy whole heart and with thy whole
 soul and with thy whole mind and
 thy neighbour as thyself".

DISSOLVE TO:

PRIEST'S V/O
(Making the Sign of the
Cross)

Receive the Sign of the Cross upon
your forehead and also upon your
heart. Take to you the Faith of the
heavenly precepts and so order your
life as to be, from henceforth, the
temple of God.

DISSOLVE TO:

66 INT. DAY. NAVE, DOWNSIDE ABBEY. (1957/60)

66

TRACK IN ON THE PRIEST

The priest places his outstretched hand on the candidate's
head but we do not see SIEGFRIED SASSOON.

THE PRIEST

Let us pray: Almighty, everlasting
God, Father of our Lord Jesus
Christ, look graciously down upon
this thy servant, Siegfried, whom
thou hast graciously called unto
the beginnings of the Faith; drive
out from him all blindness of
heart; break all the toils of Satan
where with he was held; open unto
him, O Lord, the gate of thy loving
kindness, that, being impressed
with the sign of thy wisdom, he may
be free from the foulness of all
wicked desires, and in the sweet
odour of thy precepts may joyfully
serve thee in thy church, and grow
in grace from day to day. Through
the same Christ Our Lord, Amen.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON V/O

Amen.

DISSOLVE TO:

67 INT. DAY. NAVE, DOWNSIDE ABBEY. (1957/60)

67

TRACK IN ON PRIEST

He carries a small receptacle of salt. He wears a violet
coloured stole.

He takes a pinch of salt and offers it to SIEGFRIED SASSOON whom we still do not see.

THE PRIEST

Siegfried, receive the salt of wisdom; let it be to thee a token of mercy unto everlasting life. May it make your way easy to eternal life.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON V/O

Amen.

THE PRIEST

Peace be with you.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON V/O

And with your spirit.

THE PRIEST

Let us pray: O God of our fathers, O God the author of all truth, vouch safe, we humbly beseech thee, to look graciously down upon thy servant Siegfried, and as he tastes this first nutriment of salt, suffer him no longer to hunger for want of heavenly food, to the end that he may always be fervent in spirit, rejoicing in hope, always serving thy name.

DISSOLVE TO:

68

INT. DAY. NAVE, DOWNSIDE ABBEY. (1957/60)

68

HIGH SHOT OF SIEGFRIED SASSOON PROSTRATE IN FRONT OF THE HIGH ALTAR.

PRIEST'S V/O

I exorcise thee, unclean spirit, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, that thou goest out and depart from this servant of God, Siegfried, for he commands thee, accursed one, who walked upon the sea, and stretched out his right hand to Peter about to sink.

(MORE)

PRIEST'S V/O (CONT'D)

Therefore, accursed devil,
 acknowledge thy sentence, and give
 honour to the living and true God:
 give honour to Jesus Christ, His
 son, and to the Holy Spirit, and
 depart from this servant of God,
 Siegfried, because God and our Lord
 Jesus Christ hath vouchsafed to
 call him to his holy grace and
 benediction unto the font of
 baptism.
 And this sign of the Holy Cross,
 upon his forehead, do thou,
 accursed devil, never dare to
 violate. Through the same Christ
 Our Lord.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON V/O

Amen.

DISSOLVE TO:

69 INT. DAY. NAVE, DOWNSIDE ABBEY. (1957/60) 69

TRACK IN ON PRIEST.

PRIEST (now wearing a white stole) his hands spread ready to
 make the Sign of the Cross.

THE PRIEST
 Siegfried, do you renounce Satan?

SIEGFRIED SASSOON V/O
 I do renounce him.

THE PRIEST
 And all his works?

SIEGFRIED SASSOON V/O
 I do renounce him.

THE PRIEST
 And all his pomps?

SIEGFRIED SASSOON V/O
 I do renounce him.

PRIEST makes the Sign of the Cross.

DISSOLVE TO:

70

INT. DAY. NAVE, DOWNSIDE ABBEY. (1957/60)

70

TRACK IN ON PRIEST

His hands and arms splayed.

THE PRIEST

I anoint you with the oil of
 salvation in Christ Jesus our Lord,
 that you may have everlasting life.

SIEGFRIED SASOON V/O

Amen.

THE PRIEST

Siegfried, do you believe in God,
 the Father Almighty, creator of
 heaven and earth?

SIEGFRIED SASOON V/O

I do believe.

THE PRIEST

Do you believe in Jesus Christ, His
 only son Our Lord, who was born and
 who suffered?

SIEGFRIED SASOON V/O

I do believe.

THE PRIEST

Do you believe in the Holy Ghost,
 the Holy Catholic Church, the
 communion of Saints, the
 forgiveness of sins, the
 resurrection of the body and life
 everlasting?

SIEGFRIED SASOON V/O

I do believe.

DISSOLVE TO:

71

INT. DAY. NAVE, DOWNSIDE ABBEY. (1957/60)

71

TRACK IN ON PRIEST

He holds a white linen cloth.

THE PRIEST

Receive this white garment, which
mayest thou carry without stain
before the judgement seat of Our
Lord Jesus Christ, that thou mayest
have life everlasting.

DISSOLVE TO:

72 INT. DAY. NAVE, DOWNSIDE ABBEY. (1957/60)

72

TRACK IN ON PRIEST. He carries a candle.

THE PRIEST

Receive this burning light, and
keep thy baptism so as to be
without blame; keep the
commandments of God, that when the
Lord shall come to the nuptials,
thou mayest meet Him together with
all the Saints in the heavenly
court, and mayest thou have eternal
life for ever and ever.
Siegfried, go in peace and the Lord
be with you.

CROSS FADE TO LATIN

THE PRIEST (CONT'D)

Accipe lampadem ardentem et
irreprehensibilis costodi baptismum
tuum: serva Dei mandata ut cum
dominus venerit ad nuptias, possis
occurrere ei una cum omnibus
sanctis in aula caelesti, habeasque
vitam aeternam, et vivas in saecula
saeculorum.
Siegfried, vade in pace et dominus
sit tecum. Amen.

DISSOLVE TO:

73 INT. DAY. NAVE, DOWNSIDE ABBEY. (1960)

73

The priest (back to camera and wearing a cope) turns around
to face camera holding the monstrance in front of his face
which it completely hides. He is in clouds of incense.

SOUNDTRACK:

SIEGFRIED SASSOON V/O
Give me peace, O give me peace.

DISSOLVE TO:

74 INT. DUSK. DOWNSIDE ABBEY, LADY CHAPEL. (1957/60) 74

TRACK FORWARD to iron gates looking towards the Nave.

SOUNDTRACK: PRIEST'S V/O.

PRIEST'S V/O
"You will be drawn up in your
feelings above understanding to the
radiance of divine darkness that
transcends all being."

DISSOLVE TO:

75 INT. DUSK. DOWNSIDE ABBEY, LADY CHAPEL. (1957/60) 75

TRACK FORWARD TO GATES.

DISSOLVE TO:

76 INT. DUSK. DOWNSIDE ABBEY. (1957/60) 76

A flight of stairs.

TRACK FORWARD TO THEM.

A door at the end of them is closed.

SOUNDTRACK:

PRIEST'S V/O
"The fool hath said in his
heart...there is no God."

SIEGFRIED SASSOON V/O
Christ receive my soul and release
me from the imprisonment of doubt.
And grant me peace.

HOLD

DISSOLVE TO:

77

INT. EARLY EVENING. HALF MOON STREET FLAT. (1932/33)

77

STEPHEN TENNANT comes into the bedroom. He is just wearing underpants. He carries a cup of tea. He comes in and sits on the side of the bed next to SIEGFRIED SASOON who is still in bed.

SIEGFRIED SASOON
I can't face tea until at least
11am.

STEPHEN TENNANT
Drink it you misery. I don't do
this for everyone you know. I'm the
invalid remember - like Chekhov...
(gives a theatrically weak
cough)

Pause

(running his hand through
his hair)
Oh what should I do about my hair?

SIEGFRIED SASOON
Have you considered topiary?

STEPHEN TENNANT makes a face.

STEPHEN TENNANT
I think I might dye it...or I could
leave it in its natural colour -
when I'm sunburnt it looks like
spun gold...

Then a car horn is heard from outside loud and insistent.

SIEGFRIED SASOON gets out of bed and exits bedroom.

CUT TO:

78

EXT. EARLY EVENING. HALF MOON STREET FLAT. (1932/33)

78

SIEGFRIED SASOON comes to the window and looks out.

SIEGFRIED SASOON
(Seeing someone he shouts
down)
I'll be with you in a moment.
(to STEPHEN TENNANT
inside)
It's Glen Byam Shaw.

He exits the window and is replaced by STEPHEN TENNANT.

STEPHEN TENNANT
 Isn't that good news?
 (to the person honking on
 the horn)
 Siggy will be down in a trice -
 he's just finishing getting
 dressed.
 We've just been talking about you -
 so I hope your ears were burning -
 all three of them.

CUT TO:

79 EXT. EARLY EVENING. HALF MOON STREET FLAT. (1932/33) 79

SIEGFRIED SASSOON comes to the car outside.

GLEN BYAM SHAW is standing by it. SIEGFRIED SASSOON very embarrassed.

GLEN BYAM SHAW
 (to SIEGFRIED SASSOON)
 Is Stephen naturally unpleasant or
 does he take private tuition?

STEPHEN TENNANT
 I heard that!

GLEN BYAM SHAW
 You were supposed to.

STEPHEN TENNANT goes back inside the flat.

An awkward pause.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
 I'm sorry...what can I say?

GLEN BYAM SHAW
 There's nothing to say. It's one of
 the "inconveniences" of the shadow
 life we lead. Friends may come,
 friends may go but enemies are
always faithful. How is Ivor?

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
 I've no idea. I don't see him
 anymore.

Pause

Did you know about Bobby?

GLEN BYAM SHAW

Yes.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

You might have warned me.

GLEN BYAM SHAW

I didn't want to seem vindictive.
Sour grapes and all that.

Silence

I wanted to tell you personally
that I'm planning to marry...she's
an actress and a good sort I think
and we're very fond of each other.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

When did you decide?

GLEN BYAM SHAW

Some months ago.

(pause)

You should give some thought to it
too.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

If the intention wasn't pure I
don't think I could go through with
it.

GLEN BYAM SHAW

Purity is like virginity. As soon
as you touch it, it becomes
corrupt.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

I hope that both of you will be
very happy.

GLEN BYAM SHAW

Thank you Siegfried. I shall do my
best.

STEPHEN TENNANT

Siggy! Siggy!

GLEN BYAM SHAW & SIEGFRIED SASSOON shake hands and GLEN BYAM SHAW drives off.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON looks up at the window.

STEPHEN TENNANT (CONT'D)

"Hey ho - sing hey ho unto the
green holly.

(MORE)

STEPHEN TENNANT (CONT'D)
Most friendship is feigning,
Most loving mere folly."

He starts to cough.

CUT TO:

80 INT. EARLY EVENING. HALF MOON STREET FLAT. (1932/33) 80

STEPHEN TENNANT coughing uncontrollably and spitting blood.

STEPHEN TENNANT lying on the bed. SIEGFRIED SASOON sitting beside him. STEPHEN TENNANT has stopped coughing.

Pause

SIEGFRIED SASOON
What's the matter?

STEPHEN TENNANT
T.B..

SIEGFRIED SASOON
You should have told me.

STEPHEN TENNANT
Why? There's nothing you can do
about it.

SIEGFRIED SASOON
I could've taken you to a dryer,
warmer climate.

STEPHEN TENNANT
That rules out Frinton then.

SIEGFRIED SASOON
Is there somewhere we can go to
help you?

STEPHEN TENNANT
Yes. I've gone there before. In
Germany - Haus Hirth in Bavaria -
all cow bells, lederhosen and very,
very thick thighs - it's so idyllic
you'll want to scream! But the
German men are gorgeous! I wonder
what the collective noun for them
is?

SIEGFRIED SASOON clearly hurt.

STEPHEN TENNANT (CONT'D)
 Don't look so glum Siggy - I'm not
 about to join the Hitler Youth.

The phone rings and SIEGFRIED SASSOON picks it up.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
 Yes? Who is it?
 (to STEPHEN TENNANT very
 angry)
 Don't ring here again!
 (he puts the phone down)
 It was Fenton! I don't like this at
 all!

STEPHEN TENNANT
 We bumped into each other on
 Piccadilly the other day. We had a
 harmless drink and I gave him your
 number.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
 Don't do it again!

STEPHEN TENNANT
 (Now equally angry)
 If that were a request I might
 consider it. If it's an order I'll
 make a point of disobeying it.

Tense silence
 What did Glen want?

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
 He's getting married.

STEPHEN TENNANT
 Ah, the ultimate capitulation. I'm
 sure they'll be very happy. She's
 probably as mediocre as he is.
 You'll be doing it next.

CUT TO:

81

EXT. DAY. CHURCHYARD NEAR FITZ HOUSE. (1932/33)

81

SIEGFRIED SASSOON comes out of the house and stops as he sees
 HESTER GATTY painting/drawing in her sketch book. He crosses *
 the road and goes to her. He looks at her working.

HESTER GATTY

I thought I'd try my hand at some
water colours...landscapes and
things...it's the Magritte in me...
(she shows him the
painting)

This is not a pipe.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

Rene will be pleased. How would you
describe your style?

HESTER GATTY

Erratic. But I'm giving this to a
friend whom I really detest.

Pause

HESTER GATTY (CONT'D)

You don't remember me at all, do
you?

SIEGFRIED SASSOON very embarrassed.

The spa...Ivor Novello...Stephen
Tennant...

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

(Dawning)

Oh of course! The oyster grey silk!

HESTER GATTY

(Good humoured)

Your supposed to remember me not
the dress.

They both laugh.

Before I met you for the first time
I'd always thought you'd be either
mercurial or dark.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

And what am I - dark or mercurial?

HESTER GATTY

Neither...you're more "opaque" I
think.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON looks down and away from her - the remark
having inadvertently hit home.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
What brings you down here?

HESTER GATTY
I should like to say "the
picturesque" but it wouldn't be
true.

(pause)
I came down in the hope of seeing
you again - I used the painting as
a ploy.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
Oh I'm touched, really touched! No
one has ever used subterfuge before
in order to see me.

HESTER GATTY
It's the modern thing...liberated
woman and all that.

They both laugh.

HESTER GATTY (CONT'D)
It would be very pleasant if you
invited me to lunch.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
It would be very pleasant if you
accepted.

82

INT. DUSK. FITZ HOUSE. (1932/33)

82

Both SIEGFRIED SASSOON & HESTER GATTY are dancing alone to
"Our Love is Here to Stay" on a wind-up gramophone.

They sit together. Hester silently mouths the lyric to the
song.

PAUSE

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
You are very lovely. May I kiss
you?

HESTER GATTY
You don't have to ask.

They kiss and it is delicate in its passion.

SILENCE

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
 I have never had an affair with a
 woman...only men...

HESTER GATTY
 Stephen told me all I need to know.

LONG PAUSE

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
 All my life I feel as though I've
 been waiting for a catastrophe to
 happen.

HESTER GATTY
 Well - that's optimism for you.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
 My whole future could depend on
 you. Oh Hester, you must redeem my
 life for me!

HESTER GATTY
 That sounds like some sort of
 proposal.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
 If I were selfish enough I'd ask
 you to marry me.

HESTER GATTY
 If I were foolish enough I'd
 accept.

CUT TO:

83 INT. DAY. FLAT, HALF MOON STREET. (1932/33) 83

BEDROOM.

C/U STEPHEN TENNANT sitting at a dressing table.

STEPHEN TENNANT
 Oh, I look five hundred years old.

STEPHEN TENNANT looking at himself in the mirror. He is
 practising various looks and is holding various pieces of
 clothing against his skin.

STEPHEN TENNANT (CONT'D)
 Some say I am beautiful and, as an
 aesthete, I feel beauty is eternal.
 (MORE)

STEPHEN TENNANT (CONT'D)
 We see it in the eyes of those who
 love us...although my mother thinks
 that my eyes are like cold sea
 water...my buttocks and my
 shoulders are very well shaped...
 (then running his hand
 down the length of his
 throat)

TRACK IN ON STEPHEN TENNANT.

DISSOLVE TO 4 photographs of very facially disfigured WW1
 soldiers. These photographs are linked by dissolves.

After the final photograph.

DISSOLVE TO:

84 INT. DAY. FLAT, HALF MOON STREET. (1932/33)

84

C/U STEPHEN TENNANT

STEPHEN TENNANT
 My neck is very long and
 graceful...but my best feature is
 the beauty of my hands...almond
 milk and lemon creams are perfect
 for them...and one should never
 laugh too much, it coarsens ones
 face, especially if the laughter is
 gleeful...

TRACK IN ON SIEGFRIED SASSOON.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
 (almost speechless)
 Stephen, how can you be so
 narcissistic?

STEPHEN TENNANT
 It is my defence against nihilism
 and the vulgar.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
 You cannot conduct a life in that
 way.

STEPHEN TENNANT
 Of course one can. My life is my
 art.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

Yours isn't a life - it's barely a hobby.

STEPHEN TENNANT

That was an ugly thing to say.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

I know that sometimes it's better to be kind than honest - but you're frittering your life away...in pomades and powder. If you don't believe me ask someone with more sense and less love.

STEPHEN TENNANT

You've made your antipathy to me very obvious. I don't need a second opinion.

Pause.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

I'm going down to Salisbury for the weekend...Edith Oliver has found me a cottage to rent in Teffont Magna...I thought we could spend weekends there...will you come?

STEPHEN TENNANT

I too have had an invitation.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

From whom?

STEPHEN TENNANT

A German Prince whom I think you more than know...

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

Phillipp of Hesse...Yes...

STEPHEN TENNANT

And one of Edith Sitwell's protege's ... a concert pianist called Tchelitchew ... very cyrillic, very Russian and very divine!

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

And where are you going to?

STEPHEN TENNANT

Paris first. Then we'll motor down to Bavaria...so I can recuperate - from life...after Bavaria they're going to go on to Venice...Phillipp told me that he once tried to make love in a gondola but there wasn't enough privacy...

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

(correcting him)

Stability.

STEPHEN TENNANT

Oh, so it was with you, was it? You sly old thing.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

This all seems very sudden.

STEPHEN TENNANT

Yes. It does, doesn't it? But then that's my life - all go...

STEPHEN TENNANT looks into the mirror and begins to pluck his eyebrows.

He stops.

STEPHEN TENNANT (CONT'D)

(Over the morphing shot)

Older than God but without any of the influence.

HOLD on his image in the mirror.

He morphs into his older self - he's not aged well.

TRACK AWAY from him (R to L) and PAN into living room.

DISSOLVE TO:

85

INT. DAY. FLAT, HALF MOON STREET. (1932/33)

85

Continue TRACKING and PANNING R to L.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON & HESTER GATTY seated at window.

TRACK to them.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON & HESTER GATTY are sitting by one another by the window which is open. Pleasant weather.

A long intimate silence.

HESTER GATTY
Will you come to dinner tonight at
mother's?

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
At Carlton House Terrace?

HESTER GATTY
Yes.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
Oh must I?

HESTER GATTY
Yes! You must! She's invited a
whole galaxy of stars to impress
you... Hardy, Wells, Lady Colefax,
Graves, Virginia Woolf... she'd
have invited God if she thought
He'd come.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
I'm uncomfortable with all that
distinction... I'm not at all
intellectual, I have a very
cumbersome mind.

HESTER GATTY
Oh please come! Max Beerbohm said
he might drop in for a drink.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
Then I shall come! Just to hear
Max's delectable gossip... he once
described T.S. Elliot as "Poor old
Tom who sits there ironically
analysing an empty sardine tin".

SIEGFRIED SASSOON kissing HESTER on the top of her head.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON (CONT'D)
Come on! You'll have to get your
skates on and I'll have to get my
glad rags out of mothballs.

She exits.

Stay on SIEGFRIED SASSOON at the window.

He waves to HESTER GATTY.

CUT TO:

86

EXT. DAY. FLAT, HALF MOON STREET. (1932/33)

86

SIEGFRIED SASSOON'S POV of HESTER GATTY coming out of the building. She waves to SIEGFRIED SASSOON and then goes out of the courtyard.

STAY on the courtyard.

As HESTER GATTY disappears a car pulls into the courtyard.

It holds four young men - including STEPHEN TENNANT - they all make a great deal of noise.

STEPHEN TENNANT gets out of the car.

STEPHEN TENNANT
Goodbye darlings!

The car drives off and STEPHEN TENNANT comes into the building.

CUT TO:

87

INT. DAY. FLAT, HALF MOON STREET. (1932/33)

87

STEPHEN TENNANT comes in with two suitcases, drops them on the floor then sinks into a chair.

Silence.

STEPHEN TENNANT
No welcome? No bunting? Not even
"You're looking frightfully well
Stephen?"

SIEGFRIED doesn't respond.

STEPHEN TENNANT (CONT'D)
Am I going to get the silent
treatment or are we going to
conduct the rest of this
conversation entirely in braille?

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
Beware the wrath of a patient man.

STEPHEN TENNANT
Who said that?

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
Confucius, I think - on one of his
better days.

STEPHEN TENNANT

Well, if you're going to go all profound on me perhaps you could throw in "Old Man River" as a bonus.

Silence.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

How was Bavaria?

STEPHEN TENNANT

Bavarian.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

Did your companions stay long?

STEPHEN TENNANT

Long enough.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

What did you do - apart from cough?

STEPHEN TENNANT

I... oh, what's the phrase... "I lived life to the full".

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

All three of you?

STEPHEN TENNANT

Yes... it's called triolism I believe.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

Or an orgy.

STEPHEN TENNANT

Yes that's probably more accurate. But I won't go into details... you know how discreet I am in these matters.

Silence.

STEPHEN TENNANT (CONT'D)

My spies tell me that you've been seeing a lot of Hester Gatty.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

And Hester Gatty has been seeing a lot of me.

STEPHEN TENNANT
I'm beginning to see the light - a
new secretive you.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
Surely you're not jealous?

STEPHEN TENNANT
Of course not. Now we can be all
girls together - like Roedean.

Silence.

STEPHEN TENNANT (CONT'D)
Have you slept with her?

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
No. Our relationship is as deep as
it is decorous. I've even bought
myself some passion-killing
pyjamas.

STEPHEN TENNANT
Are you going to marry her?

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
Yes. I think I probably shall.

STEPHEN TENNANT
You'll make a vile partner, Siggy.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
Perhaps - but then I have been
taught by a master.

Silence.

STEPHEN TENNANT
You'll be taking a great risk.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
I'm taking the same risk I took
with you... it can't be much worse,
it may even be better.

STEPHEN TENNANT
I can see years ahead for both of
you filled with passionless
silences and compulsory cocoa at
bedtime.

Silence.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

Oh, by the way - as we intend to be living in the country I'm giving up the lease on this flat. I didn't want to keep you in the dark unnecessarily - so once we've found a house you'll have to move out.

STEPHEN TENNANT

That sounds almost like a threat.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

It almost is.

STEPHEN TENNANT

So you're going to throw baby's little body out into the cold, cold snow.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

Not immediately. We'll wait for warmer weather.

DISSOLVE TO:

88

INT. DAY. CHRISTCHURCH PRIORY. (1933)

88

A small subdued wedding party consisting of SIEGFRIED SASSOON, GLEN BYAM SHAW, ROBERT GRAVES, GEOFFREY KEYNES, REX WHISTLER, EDITH OLIVER and T.E. LAWRENCE.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

(Very happy)

I have given you all a surprise haven't I?

ROBERT GRAVES

Remember - marry in haste, repent at leisure.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

I was shocked when you got married and for exactly the same reason.

ROBERT GRAVES

Now it's my turn to be shocked.

REX WHISTLER

Who's officiating?

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

Canon Gay.

REX WHISTLER
Ask a silly question.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
Lawrence, this is Glen Byam Shaw...
Glen this is T.E. Lawrence.

GLEN BYAM SHAW
Of Arabia?

T.E. LAWRENCE
Not recently.

EDITH OLIVER
(Quietly to Siegfried
Sassoon)
Don't betray her Siegfried, she
doesn't deserve that.

GEOFFREY KEYNES
(To Siegfried Sassoon)
Are you sure you know what you're
doing?

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
I think so.

ROBERT GRAVES
In the end, "We few, we happy few"
are always exogamus.

T.E. LAWRENCE
Christ, what does that mean?

ROBERT GRAVES
To marry outside of one's tribe or
group...

T.E. LAWRENCE
Do you specialise in using words
that no one understands?

ROBERT GRAVES
Yes. It's my revenge on people who
don't know what exogamus means.

An uneasy silence.

ROBERT GRAVES (CONT'D)
Have you chosen any music?

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
No.

ROBERT GRAVES

Oh, I'm disappointed. I thought
we'd get something English and
dismal.

At the last minute STEPHEN TENNANT joins them.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

What are you doing here?

STEPHEN TENNANT

Hester invited me. I'm her Maid-of-Honour.

CUT TO:

89 INT. DAY. CHRISTCHURCH PRIORY. (1933) 89

TWO SHOT HESTER GATTY & SIEGFRIED SASSOON exchanging vows in front of the VICAR at the altar.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

I will.

HESTER GATTY

I will.

*

CUT TO EXT. CHURCH where they pose for the wedding photograph.

*

*

They are looking straight at us.

HOLD

THEN

FREEZE FRAME

THEN MORPH from wedding photograph to INT. DAY/EVENING. HOUSE (1936)

TRACK BACK from the wedding photograph on a side cupboard.

WE CONTINUE TO TRACK AND PAN R TO L TO A TWO SHOT.

HESTER in bed.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON sitting on the end of the bed.

HESTER lying in bed after the birth of their child.

She looks exhausted and very weak.

Silence

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
How are you?

HESTER SASSOON
Just very tired.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
Is there anything I can get you?

HESTER just shakes her head.

Silence

HESTER SASSOON
Have you thought of a name?

SIEGFRIED SASSOON just shakes his head.

I thought we might call him
"George".

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
(A rueful smile)
Yes.
(pause)
My whole future depends on him.

HESTER SASSOON
You once said that about me.

Silence

Would you like to hold him?

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
No.

DISSOLVE TO:

A christening party. A small gathering - same guests as in the wedding.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
(Holding his baby son)
I'm very happy!
(MORE)

SIEGFRIED SASSOON (CONT'D)
 (Showing his son to
 everyone)
 And this is the reason!

Smiles and applause. A nurse takes the baby.

Soundtrack:

Someone has put a record on. It is "Tea for two" (1925).

Couples come into the middle of the floor and dance. *

The rhythm is slow.

SIEGFRIED & HESTER come together and dance. *

TRACK IN on SIEGFRIED & HESTER dancing. *

TRACK STOPS when we are immediately behind them. As they
 dance their reflection stays in the mirror on the wall but
 becomes large enough to fill the entire screen. *

Their reflection is sharp but all the other dancers are
 blurred. *

HOLD. *

Then as SIEGFRIED looks directly into the mirror TRACK IN on
 HESTER & SIEGFRIED (and so they do not have to part) ZOOM
 past them. *

Then we see: *

1. SIEGFRIED dancing with ROBBIE ROSS. *

TRACK into & ZOOM past them. *

Then. *

DISSOLVE TO *

2. SIEGFRIED dancing with WILFRED OWEN. *

TRACK into & ZOOM past them. *

Then. *

DISSOLVE TO *

3. SIEGFRIED dancing with IVOR NOVELLO. *

TRACK into & ZOOM past them. *

Then. *

DISSOLVE TO *
4. SIEGFRIED dancing with STEPHEN TENNANT. *

TRACK into & ZOOM past them. *

Then. *

DISSOLVE TO *

5. OLDER SIEGFRIED dancing with OLDER HESTER. *

TRACK STOPS on them. *

They stop dancing. *

SIEGFRIED looks away from her and HESTER looks directly at *
us. *

DISSOLVE TO: *

91 INT. DAY. SIEGFRIED SASSOON'S HOUSE. (1951/52) 91 *

C/U of the door. *

HESTER SASSOON opens the front door.

STEPHEN TENNANT
(now older and looking
very seedy)
Am I welcome?

HESTER SASSOON
Come in and see.

STEPHEN TENNANT comes in.

CUT TO:

92 INT. DAY. SIEGFRIED SASSOON'S HOUSE. (1951/52) 92

LIVING ROOM, HESTER SASSOON & STEPHEN TENNANT sit down.
SIEGFRIED SASSOON already sitting.

A hostile atmosphere.

Silence.

STEPHEN TENNANT
Siegfried.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
Stephen.

Silence.

STEPHEN TENNANT
How dreadful we all look.

Silence.

But I still have beautiful hands I
think.

Silence.

HESTER SASSOON
I'll make some tea.

She goes out.

Silence.

STEPHEN TENNANT
I suppose you've heard of Ivor's
death.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
Yes. They say that the funeral
attracted a thousand people.

STEPHEN TENNANT

Probably made up mostly by all the people he slept with.

Silence.

I still have a soft spot for Ivor's work though - all those tortured princesses and lovers who have no money but plenty of sex appeal.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

His work was always sentimental nonsense. He cheapened everything he touched.

STEPHEN TENNANT

I've always thought that his particular brand of mawkishness was a kind of catharsis for the dimmer members among us.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

That's because you've never known the difference between the two.

STEPHEN TENNANT

We can't all possess your purity of thought.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

It isn't a question of purity but of discernment - and you were never very good at discernment.

STEPHEN TENNANT

(A little taken aback)

That was rather too acerbic.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

Mordant would be the more accurate word.

Silence.

STEPHEN TENNANT

Are you still very angry?

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

What do you expect? You ended our relationship with a letter from your doctor! How was I supposed to feel?

STEPHEN TENNANT

And still clearly very hurt. I had hoped that you might have been a little more forgiving.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

If I had treated you the way in which you treated me - how forgiving would you be? Besides, when the parade's gone by you have to have enough sense to realise that you are no longer part of it.

STEPHEN TENNANT

I'm trying to apologise.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

You're thirty years too late.

Silence.

STEPHEN TENNANT

Can't we still be friends?

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

No. You once meant so much and now you mean so little...

STEPHEN TENNANT goes to speak.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON (CONT'D)

... and don't trivialise it by saying something glib.

STEPHEN TENNANT

May I see you again? In London perhaps?

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

No. I rarely go to London now.

Silence.

HESTER comes in with the tea, sits down and pours. She hands them their tea.

They all sit in silence and drink.

A very awkward silence.

STEPHEN TENNANT

And how is George?

HESTER SASSOON
Young... thriving...

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
He's like all children. He has the
worst aspects of both his parents.

STEPHEN TENNANT
How about his parents' virtues?

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
He's cursed with those as well.

Silence.

STEPHEN TENNANT
(for the first time a
genuine emotion)
I'm very lonely Siggy.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
Is it agony? One does hope so.

HESTER SASSOON
George has an independent mind
which sometimes shocks Siegfried.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
It isn't independence - it's
wilfulness.

George comes in smoking a pipe and sensing the atmosphere
sits down.

GEORGE SASSOON
Who's died?

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
All of us. And George, the pipe was
not a good idea - it looks as if
it's smoking you.

GEORGE SASSOON
(Smiling)
Old silver tongue!

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
And we can do without the smirk.

HESTER SASSOON
(To George)
Tea?

GEORGE just shakes his head.

Silence.

STEPHEN TENNANT
Thank you for the tea.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
George will see you out.

GEORGE & STEPHEN TENNANT leave.

STEPHEN TENNANT
Goodbye.

HESTER SASSOON
Goodbye.

Silence.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
As charming as ever but there was
still malice at the edge of his
voice... as there always was.

HESTER SASSOON
Sometimes Siegfried it's more
humane to be kind than to be
honest.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
He constantly goaded my jealousy.
It was like being killed by
degrees.

Silence.

HESTER SASSOON
He once told me he thought you were
matchless.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
We are unique only to the people
who really loathe us.

DISSOLVE TO:

93

INT. DAY. HOUSE. (1950/60)

93

C/U of older HESTER.

C/U of SIEGFRIED. He turns on the radio.

SOUNDTRACK:

"The Third Programme" on the radio.

HESTER SASSOON
 (to SIEGFRIED)
 Is there anything I can get you
 before I leave?

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
 No.

Just the sound of the radio.

HESTER SASSOON
 I'll write once I've got to
 Scotland.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON doesn't answer.

I said...

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
 I heard you! I am trying to listen
 to the radio.

HESTER just stands there.

Silence

HESTER SASSOON
 Shall I phone?

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
NO!

SOUNDTRACK:

A car hooting from outside then GEORGE comes in.

GEORGE SASSOON
 What time is your train mother?

HESTER SASSOON
 Not for another hour - we've plenty
 of time to get to the station.

GEORGE SASSOON
 (to SIEGFRIED)
 I'll come back for you later.

They leave.

DISSOLVE TO:

94

INT. DAY. SIEGFRIED SASSOON'S HOUSE. (1960)

94

WINDOWS. Outside pouring with rain.

HOLD.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON reflected in one of the window panes.

SOUNDTRACK:

SIEGFRIED SASSOON YOUNGER V/O
I stood with the dead...

The poem "INVOCATION" runs over the next five shots.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON YOUNGER V/O (CONT'D)

"Come down from Heaven to meet me
when my breath
Chokes, and through drumming shafts
of stifling death
I stumble towards escape, to find
the door
Opening on morn where I may breath
once more
Clear cock-crow airs across some
valley dim
With whispering trees. While dawn
along the rim
Of night's horizon flows in lakes
of fire,
Come down from Heaven's bright
hill, my songs desire

Belov'd and faithful, teach my
soul to wake
In glades deep-ranked with flowers
that gleam and shake
And flock your paths with wonder. In
your gaze
Show me the vanquished vigil of my
days.
Mute in that golden silence hung
with green,
Come down from Heaven and bring me
in your eyes
Remembrance of all beauty that has
been,
And stillness from the pools of
Paradise."

A series of shots with DISSOLVES between them.

SHOT 1: Mother smiling at Victoria Station.

SHOT 2: ROBBIE ROSS sitting in a chair and smiling.

SHOT 3: IVOR NOVELLO smoking and then smiling.

SHOT 4: Dr. Rivers at his desk smiling.

SHOT 5: WILFRED OWEN at the door of SIEGFRIED SASSOON'S room at Craiglockhart. He smiles.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON YOUNGER V/O (CONT'D)
Rising, rising the voices of the
muffled dead.

HOLD on the window, heavy rain.

DISSOLVE TO:

95 INT. DAY. GEORGE'S HOUSE. (1960)

95

Windows. Glorious sunshine.

TRACK BACK from windows to a TWO SHOT of GEORGE (frame left) and older SIEGFRIED SASSOON (frame right) sitting at the lunch table opposite one another. The remains of a lunch.

An angry silence.

GEORGE SASSOON
Are you going to keep this silence
up for the rest of the day?

Silence

GEORGE SASSOON (CONT'D)
(becoming angrier)
I brought you down to London
because I was worried about you.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
(angry)
I'm fine!

GEORGE SASSOON
(angry)
No you're not! There was no food in
the house, no heating and you were
sitting in the dark like a
protestant bishop!

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
I can manage!

GEORGE SASSOON
No you can't!

An even more intense silence.

GEORGE SASSOON (CONT'D)
If you're going to sulk I'm going
upstairs.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON gives no response.

GEORGE gets up and goes upstairs.

HOLD ON SIEGFRIED SASSOON.

Silence. Then he hears GEORGE playing pop music very loudly (Helen Shapiro singing, "Walking back to happiness" (1961)).

SIEGFRIED SASSOON in a fury goes to the bottom of the stairs.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
(shouting)
Turn that rubbish off!

GEORGE SASSOON V/O
(shouting)
I'll do as I like! It's my house,
it's my music!

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
It isn't music! It's commercially
grotesque noise made by stupid
people for stupid people!

GEORGE SASSOON V/O
Oh don't be so bigoted!

SIEGFRIED SASSOON storms from the house.

CUT TO:

96 EXT. DAY. GEORGE'S HOUSE. (1960)

96

SIEGFRIED SASSOON sitting in the garden.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON in chair left of screen.

THEN

To camera right we see (whilst holding onto SIEGFRIED SASSOON all the time).

WW1 FOOTAGE:

- 1) Shot of cavalry on a ridge, and tattered netting.
- 2) Soldiers against the light.
- 3) Troops by a river.
- 4) Inside Westminster Abbey, the burial of the Unknown Soldier

SOUNDTRACK: (The statistics of the numbers of soldiers killed)

SIEGFRIED SASSOON v/o
 These are the statistics of
 catastrophe... yet from Prime to
 Compline life goes slowly on.

The visions fade and SIEGFRIED SASSOON just sits there.

GEORGE comes out and goes to SIEGFRIED SASSOON.

GEORGE SASSOON
 Are you thinking great thoughts?

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
 No. I'm just sitting here being
 petty and trying to understand the
 enigma of other people.

Long silence.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON (CONT'D)
 So many have died...too many...

GEORGE SASSOON
 Most people live for the moment -
 you live for eternity.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
 Oh don't say that!

GEORGE SASSOON
 Why not?

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
 Because I'm afraid I might believe
 it.

Silence

I would have liked to have been
 recognised though - in some
 significant way - for my work.

Silence

Eliot got the Order of Merit and
the Nobel Prize - I've had to make
do with the Queen's Award for
Poetry.

Silence

But Sir Siegfried Sassoon would
have been nice - despite all the
sibilants.

GEORGE SASSOON

Oh father, how can you be seduced
by all that Ruritanian nonsense?
The greatest argument against
Damehoods and Knighthoods is - just
look at the people who've got them.

Pause

(With tact)
Why do you hate the modern world
father?

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

(Without rancour)
Because it's younger than I am.

GEORGE SASSOON

Well you've got to bathe and
change...we're going to the theatre
remember.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

Do I have too?

GEORGE SASSOON

Yes. You promised. Besides it's a
witty and elegant score...even you
might enjoy it.

Silence

GEORGE SASSOON (CONT'D)
I'm sorry I shouted.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

So am I.

GEORGE SASSOON

Peace?

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

Peace.

They shake hands.

CUT TO:

97

EXT. EARLY EVENING. THEATRE. (1960)

97

WIDE SHOT OF THE FRONT OF THE THEATRE. "STOP THE WORLD - I WANT TO GET OFF" on the marquee.

SOUNDTRACK Applause and laughter then the musical introduction to "Typically English" sung by a woman.

TRACK IN ON THEATRE.

SOUNDTRACK: Song starts.

"My mother said I never should
Play with the young men in the
wood"

DISSOLVE TO:

98

INT. NIGHT. THEATRE. (1960)

98

TWO SHOT OF SIEGFRIED SASSOON AND GEORGE WATCHING THE SHOW.

Song continues:

"If I did she would say
Naughty little girl to disobey"

SIEGFRIED SASSOON AND GEORGE SMILE ENJOYING IT.

CUT TO:

THE STAGE.

SHOT OF GIRL SINGING. She moves across the stage bathed in the softest pastel coloured spots.

SOUNDTRACK: "Typically English" continues:

"I'm a typically English rosebud
Born of typically English stock
With a typically Anglo-Saxon family
tree."

I received my education in a
typically English way
At a typically English girls
academy.

I play typically English tennis
At a typically English club.
With my typically English feelings
for fair play.

I eat typically English crumpets
With my typically English tea
At the end of every typically
English day."

CUT TO:

SIEGFRIED SASSOON AND GEORGE.

SOUNDTRACK: song continues:

"Father is a typically English
Colonel
Living in a typical county town.
Mum and I play typically English
Patience
While the typically English rain is
pouring down."

CUT TO:

Singer on stage.

SOUNDTRACK: song continues:

"We've a typically English spaniel
Who likes typically English walks
Past those typically English trees
upon the heath.

And if anyone should ask me how I
like this typically English life.
I am fed up to my typically English
teeth.

I've a typically English suitor
 In a typically English suit
 Calls to take me out to typically
 English tea.
 There's a typically English table
 Set for typically English two
 But my typically English mother
 makes it three."

CUT TO:

SIEGFRIED SASSOON AND GEORGE.

SOUNDTRACK: song continues:

"When I go to typically English
 dances
 Mother gives me typically sound
 advice
 How to cope with typically coarse
 advances
 But I'm bound to confess I find
 them rather nice.
 Stay there."

CUT TO:

SHOT OF THE STAGE

SOUNDTRACK: song continues:

"In a typically English summer
 We take typically English hols.
 At a typically English place with
 Auntie Maude."

DISSOLVE TO:

99

EXT. NIGHT. THEATRE. (1960)

99

Audience streams out.

SOUNDTRACK: song continues:

"And if anyone should ask me
 How I like this typically English
 life
 I have never been so typically
 English bored."

Song ends.

Lots of applause.

The crowd thins out until only SIEGFRIED SASSOON AND GEORGE are alone in the front of the theatre.

The lights from the theatre are switched off.

GEORGE SASSOON
Shall we take a cab?

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
No. I'll walk home - it's such a
lovely evening.

GEORGE SASSOON
Will you be alright?

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
Of course.

They part. GEORGE EXITS FRAME LEFT. SIEGFRIED SASSOON FRAME RIGHT.

DISSOLVE TO:

100 EXT. NIGHT. PARK. (1960)

100 *

It is night in the park and the lamps are lit.

*

PAN AND TRACK R TO L TO SIDE VIEW OF SIEGFRIED SASSOON. TRACK CONTINUES FOR A MOMENT THEN TRACK L TO R TO A FRONT VIEW OF HIM. TRACK CONTINUES FOR A TIME THEN AS WE TRACK BACK WITH HIM HE MORPHS INTO HIS YOUNGER SELF. HE IS WEARING HIS ARMY UNIFORM AND GREATCOAT.

THE YEAR IS 1918 AS ARE ALL THE SUBSEQUENT SCENES TO THE END OF THE FILM.

HE SITS DOWN ON A BENCH AND TRACK STOPS.

HOLD

Light reverts to twilight.

*

CUT TO:

SIEGFRIED SASSOON'S POV. (1918) TWILIGHT

*

Young lads playing football in the early dark.

Watching them is a young disabled man in a wheelchair.

He has had both legs amputated.

SOUNDTRACK:

SIEGFRIED SASSOON V/O
 (reading Wilfred Owen's
 poem "Disabled")

"He sat in a wheeled chair, waiting
 for dark,
 And shivered in his ghastly suit of
 grey,
 Legless, sewn short at elbow.
 Through the park
 Voices of boys rang saddening like
 a hymn,
 Voices of play and pleasure after
 day,
 Till gathering sleep had mothered
 them from him.

CUT TO:

Some young girls walking through the park laughing and
 talking.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON V/O
 "About this time Town used to swing
 so gay
 When glow-lamps budded in the light-
 blue trees,
 And girls glanced lovelier as the
 air grew dim, -
 In the old times, before he threw
 away his knees.
 Now he will never feel again how
 slim
 Girls waists are, or how warm their
 subtle hands,
 All of them touch him like some
 queer disease.

CUT TO:

SHOT OF SIEGFRIED SASSOON.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON V/O
 "There was an artist silly for his
 face,
 For it was younger than his youth,
 last year.
 Now, he is old; his back will never
 brace;
 He's lost his colour very far from
 here,
 (MORE)

SIEGFRIED SASSOON V/O (CONT'D)
 Poured it down shell-holes 'til the
 veins ran dry,
 And half his lifetime lapsed in the
 hot race
 And leap of purple spurted from his
 thigh.

CUT TO:

Young men wearing tight white shorts playing football.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON V/O
 "One time he liked a blood-smear
 down his leg,
 After the matches carried shoulder-
 high.
 It was after football, when he'd
 drunk a peg,
 He thought he'd better join. He
 wonders why.
 Someone had said he'd look a god in
 kilts.
 That's why; and maybe, too, to
 please his Meg,
 Aye, that was it, to please the
 giddy jilts,
 He'd asked to join. He didn't have
 to beg;
 Smiling they wrote his lie: aged 19
 years.
 Germans he scarcely thought of, all
 their guilt,
 And Austria's, did not move him.
 And no fears
 Of Fear came yet. He thought of
 jeweled hilts
 For daggers in plaid socks; of
 smart salutes;
 And care of arms; and leave; and
 pay arrears;
 Esprit de corps; and hints for
 young recruits.
 And soon, he was drafted out with
 drums and cheers.

CUT TO:

SHOT of amputee still watching the football.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON V/O
 "Some cheered him home, but not as
 crowds cheer Goal.
 Only a solemn man who brought him
 fruits

(MORE)

SIEGFRIED SASOON V/O (CONT'D)
*Thanked him; and then inquired
 about his soul.*

Now, he will spend a few sick years
 in Institutes,
 And do what things the rules
 consider wise,
 And take whatever pity they may
 dole.
 Tonight he noticed how the women's
 eyes
 Passed from him to the strong men
 who are whole.

CUT TO:

SHOT OF SIEGFRIED SASOON SITTING ON THE BENCH. (1918)

SIEGFRIED SASOON V/O
 How cold and late it is! Why don't
 they come
 And put him into bed? Why don't
 they come?

SIEGFRIED SASOON on the bench. Now he starts to cry, sobs
 for all the suffering and pain. He sobs and sobs and cannot
 stop sobbing.

SOUNDTRACK:

We hear the beginning of "The Fantasia on a theme by Thomas
 Tallis" by Ralph Vaughan Williams. This runs under everything
 that follows including the closing credits.

DISSOLVE TO:

TRACK IN AND OVER the machine gun memorial opposite Apsley
 House.

DISSOLVE TO:

TRACK IN AND UP on the names on the Menin Gate.

DISSOLVE TO:

TRACK IN AND OVER a sea of endless crosses in the war graves.

END CREDITS.