

BENEDICTION

Written by

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SHOOTING SCRIPT

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BLUE REVISIONS

EMU Films  
77 Fortess 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 SASSOON 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 SASSOON 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 SASSOON 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 SASOON 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 SASOON AND ROBBIE ROSS.

TRACK BACK WITH THEM.

ROBBIE ROSS & SIEGFRIED SASOON 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 SASOON

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 SASOON

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 &amp; 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 SASOON (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 SASOON 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 too 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 SASSOON 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 SASSOON.

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 SASSOON 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 SASSOON 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 SASSOON

Like a virus.

ROBBIE ROSS

Don't be contrary.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

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 SASSOON

The Pope.

ROBBIE ROSS

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

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

Imperial.

ROBBIE ROSS

And Mr. Coward?

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

Gushing.

ROBBIE ROSS

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

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

I'd have tried to curtsy 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 "Facade" 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 that 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 SASSOON.

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

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

MAJOR MCCARTNEY-FILGATE  
That was impertinent Lieutenant.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON 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 Sassoon. 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 SASSOON and WILFRED OWEN are dancing it - and rather well too.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON 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 SASSOON  
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 SASSOON  
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 SASSOON  
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  
pant! - 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  
Sassoon 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 SASSOON  
(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 SASSOON down the other.

They both look wretched.

They stand for a moment in silence by the taxi.

A long pause.

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

WILFRED OWEN nods - as deeply moved as SIEGFRIED SASSOON.

Throughout scene suppressed tears.

The driver stands with the doors open.

TAXI DRIVER  
Whenever you're ready sir.

Silence.

TWO SHOT WILFRED OWEN & SIEGFRIED SASSOON. 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 SASSOON.

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

SIEGFRIED SASOON 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 SASOON V/O (CONT'D)

People die here too...in the land  
of the Pharaohs...

DISSOLVE TO:

SIEGFRIED SASOON 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 SASSOON  
"War and Peace".

YOUNG SOLDIER  
Any jokes?

SIEGFRIED SASSOON  
(Smiling)  
Nothing but!

The soldier smiles and moves away.

HOLD on soldier.

He turns for a moment then smiles again then 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 SASSOON & 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 Sassoon)  
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 SASSOON

Mr. Sassoon.

STAGE DOORMAN

Sassoon you say?

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

Yes!

STAGE DOORMAN

(Checking list)

Would you mind spelling it for me  
sir?

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

S..A..S..S..O..O..N.

STAGE DOORMAN

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

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

(Angry)

I'm going up anyway!

CUT TO:

57

INT. NIGHT. THEATRE. (1925)

57

SIEGFRIED SASSOON 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 SASSOON  
Why?

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

SIEGFRIED SASSOON  
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 SASSOON  
The moment passes but the hurt  
remains.

Silence.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON (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 SASSOON  
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 SASSOON  
Oh, that is kind of you.

GLEN BYAM SHAW  
Where does she live?

SIEGFRIED SASSOON  
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 praestat?

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:

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

65

TRACK IN ON THE PRIEST.

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

SIEGFRIED SASSOON V/O

Amen.

THE PRIEST

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

SIEGFRIED SASSOON 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 SASSOON 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 SASSOON 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 SASSOON who is still in bed.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON  
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 SASSOON  
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 SASSOON gets out of bed and exits bedroom.

CUT TO:

78

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

78

SIEGFRIED SASSOON comes to the window and looks out.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON  
(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 SASSOON sitting beside him. STEPHEN TENNANT has stopped coughing.

Pause

SIEGFRIED SASSOON  
 What's the matter?

STEPHEN TENNANT  
 T.B..

SIEGFRIED SASSOON  
 You should have told me.

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

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

STEPHEN TENNANT  
 That rules out Frinton then.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON  
 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 SASSOON 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.

STEPHAN 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 STEPHAN 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:

90

INT. DAY. HOTEL RECEPTION ROOM. (1936)

90

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 SASOON'S HOUSE. (1960)

94

WINDOWS. Outside pouring with rain.

HOLD.

SIEGFRIED SASOON reflected in one of the window panes.

SOUNDTRACK:

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

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

SIEGFRIED SASOON 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 SASOON AND GEORGE are alone in the front of the theatre.

The lights from the theatre are switched off.

GEORGE SASOON  
Shall we take a cab?

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

GEORGE SASOON  
Will you be alright?

SIEGFRIED SASOON  
Of course.

They part. GEORGE EXITS FRAME LEFT. SIEGFRIED SASOON 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 SASOON. 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 SASOON'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 Vaughen 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.