

Tommies

14th October 1914

Series 1 Episode 2

By Nick Warburton

Commentator

Mickey Bliss, Sergeant, Signals Section, Lahore Division, Indian Army.

Celestine de Tullio, 35, Doctor, born in Edinburgh, family moved to Kent while she was at school.

Marjorie Blaikley, 40, Nurse, veteran of the Boer War.

Kenneth George, Captain, Chief Medical Officer, Number Fifteen Stationary Hospital, Boulogne

Cyril Walton, 22, Corporal, Royal Army Medical Corps. From South Wales.

Orderly

*(Groans from: **Walter Oddy** - Sergeant, Signals Section, 2nd Div, BEF.)*

SCENE 1:**BOULOGNE STATION.**

FX: MUSIC. WE ARE IN THE MIDDLE OF CHAOS. AT THE
MOMENT IT'S MOSTLY STEAM AND METAL. THERE ARE NO
DISTINCT VOICES BUT SOME ENGINEERS ARE SHOUTING AS
THEY HAMMER AWAY AT A FAILED ENGINE. A TRAIN COMES
CLANKING AND STEAMING TOWARDS US, SLOWING
LABORIOUSLY. FADE UNDER ...

1. **COMMENTATOR:** The station at Boulogne. The 14th of October 1914, a little after seven in the morning.

FX: THE TRAIN HALTS AND A FEW MEN JUMP FROM THE
WAGONS. MARJORIE AND OTHERS ARE THERE TO RECEIVE
THEM. INSTRUCTIONS AND COUNTER-INSTRUCTIONS BEGIN TO
FLY AROUND. ONE OR TWO OF THE WOUNDED CALL OUT IN
PAIN.

(MARJORIE BLAIKLEY IS 40. SHE'S A NURSE AND A VETERAN OF THE BOER WAR. SHE'S TOUGH AND SEEMS TO BE QUITE SINGLE-MINDED, BUT SHE'S JUST ABOUT HOLDING HERSELF TOGETHER.

CYRIL WALTON IS TWENTY-TWO, A CORPORAL IN THE RAMC, FROM SOUTH WALES. HE'S BEEN A STRETCHER-BEARER IN FRANCE AND WAS DETAILED TO ACCOMPANY THE WOUNDED TO BOULOGNE. HE'S A QUIET, OBEDIENT YOUNG MAN WITH A HIGHLY DEVELOPED SENSE OF DUTY AND AN UNQUESTIONING RESPECT FOR HIERARCHIES.)

2. **MARJORIE:** (SHOUTING ABOVE THE NOISE)
Don't let those men off yet! ... Wait! Did you

hear me? I said wait!

1. **COMMENTATOR:** **A train's just pulled in. A long, slow journey across France. Four hundred sick or wounded.**
2. **MARJORIE:** Stretcher-bearer! You!
3. **CYRIL:** (A LITTLE WAY OFF) Just a moment, miss.
4. **MARJORIE:** No, now. Come over here. Please.
5. **COMMENTATOR:** **Sister Marjorie Blaikely is from Number Fifteen Stationary Hospital. She's already spent two and a half hours on the medical wards this morning, before being sent to the railway station.**
6. **CYRIL:** (ARRIVING) Yes, miss?
7. **MARJORIE:** Sister.
8. **CYRIL:** Sorry, Sister –
9. **MARJORIE:** The men have to be seen in order. They can't just bundle off –

10. CYRIL: I was about to check the other wagon, miss –

1. MARJORIE: Never mind that now –

2. CYRIL: You can't get from wagon to wagon, see, while it's moving –

3. MARJORIE: I need you to help me –

4. CYRIL: And they had no water in that one and there's a chap in a bit of need so I had to –

5 MARJORIE: We will get him water, Corporal, but in due course.

6. CYRIL: Yes, miss.

FX: A LORRY PULLS UP NEARBY AND SOUNDS ITS HORN.

7. MARJORIE: Unless we get them from the train in decent order no one will get anything. I need you to help me. Some of these men are for Number Fifteen Stationary, some for the Red Cross –

8. CYRIL: Right, miss, yes, miss.

1. MARJORIE: Some for other hospitals.
(CALLING BEYOND HIM)
Hold them there! ... Just hold them!
2. CYRIL: Bainsey! Stan!
3. MARJORIE: Your men are coming to me.
4. CYRIL: Right, miss.
5. MARJORIE: (TO CYRIL, URGENTLY)
Now, you have walking wounded, you have sitting down cases –
6. CYRIL: Yes, miss –
7. MARJORIE: You have lying down ones.
8. **COMMENTATOR:** **Some of the men removed from the train will have died on the journey.**
9. MARJORIE: And we have to get them to Number Fifteen Stationary. And to the correct part.
10. CYRIL: Right-oh, miss.

1. MARJORIE: We can't have chaos. Those lorries here – look – they're for the lying down ones. Severe cases only, Corporal.
2. CYRIL: Yes, miss.
3. MARJORIE: You must judge. Sitting down ones to be helped or stretchered. The rest will be told where to go and they'll go there themselves or be escorted. You understand?
4. CYRIL: Yes, miss. It's just you, is it?
5. MARJORIE: For our hospital, at the moment, yes. Others are on their way. So I'm told. So get the men to come through here so I can look at them. They must come by this fence.
6. CYRIL: Right-oh, miss. We'll do that. Leave it to me.
7. MARJORIE: Good lad. Thank you.
8. CYRIL: (MOVING OFF) Stan! Stan! Bring 'em this way! Over to me! Lying downers first!
9. MARJORIE: (TO HERSELF, QUIET) Thank you.

FX: MUSIC TAKES US TO ...

SCENE 2: A ROUGH ROAD OUTSIDE BOULOGNE.

FX: MICKEY IS DRIVING A LORRY CARRYING WOUNDED TO HOSPITAL. MICKEY STOPS THE LORRY.

1. **COMMENTATOR:** Ten minutes past seven.

2. **MICKEY:** Show me the map.

FX: A MAP IS HANDED TO HIM. HE UNFOLDS IT.

3. **COMMENTATOR:** Sergeant Mickey Bliss is taking a wireless lorry to Boulogne. A week ago he was driving it at Beaulne, in France, with the Hussars. They are now are in Paris.

4. **MICKEY:** (TO THE MEN IN THE LORRY)
We're all right, gentlemen. Still heading for Boulogne.

5. **COMMENTATOR:** Wireless lorries are being withdrawn from service – they are too unreliable. But this one now carries a dozen wounded men picked up along the way. Mickey is driving them to the coast and a chance to be sent home.

FX: MICKEY PUTS THE MAP ASIDE AND RESTARTS THE LORRY.

1. MICKEY: Right, lads. Won't be long now.
2. COMMENTATOR: **Mickey volunteered to take the lorry back. Because Boulogne is where he wants to be at the moment. Not Paris.**

FX: GEARS SLIP AND GRIND.

3. MICKEY: (MUTTERING) Come on, you bugger ...

FX: MUSIC TAKES US TO ...

SCENE 3:**BOULOGNE STATION.**

FX: IT'S STILL BUSY BUT WE'RE CLOSER TO THEM NOW AND THE NOISE IS MORE IN THE BACKGROUND. CYRIL BRINGS WALTER ON A STRETCHER.

(WALTER IS BARELY CONSCIOUS BUT FROM TIME TO TIME WE HEAR HIM GROAN.)

1. CYRIL: Set him down, Stan ... Whoah, careful, careful.

FX: CYRIL AND HIS MATE SET THE STRETCHER DOWN.

2. COMMENTATOR: The station. Seven-thirty.

3. CYRIL: (TO MARJORIE)

This is the one I was saying about, miss. Don't know his name.

4. MARJORIE: We don't need their names, not yet.

5. COMMENTATOR: It's Oddy. Walter Oddy. Signals Sergeant, 2nd Division, British Expeditionary Force.

6. CYRIL: He's in a bad way. Shrapnel in the gut and thigh. He was doing all right an hour or so back.

1. MARJORIE: Not so all right now.
2. CYRIL: No, it come on sudden, but he was in the next wagon, see, and I couldn't get to him.
3. MARJORIE: I don't think you'd have made much difference.
4. COMMENTATOR: **She can tell at a glance. One of the lying down ones. The flesh around the grubby bandage has tightened, like a drum. It crackles to the touch.**

(MARJORIE EXAMINES THE WOUND.)

5. MARJORIE: Oof. God.
6. COMMENTATOR: **A sharp smell comes from the wound.**
7. CYRIL: The one in his belly's a bit cleaner, like. I think that's doing better.
8. COMMENTATOR: **The man opens his eyes and looks directly into the face of Sister Blaikely. Briefly, it seems, he knows where he is and what's happening to him. His eyes are watery and his face is set, to keep the pain to himself. She can see this.**

1. MARJORIE: Lift him up, Corporal.

CYRIL AND HIS MATE BEGIN TO LIFT THE STRETCHER.

2. COMMENTATOR: **She says nothing to Walter. His head lolls awkwardly against the pole of the stretcher and he closes his eyes again.**

3. CYRIL: He'll lose the leg, you think?

4. COMMENTATOR: **The line of wounded men is building and she has to get them all through.**

5. MARJORIE: He's not that lucky. We should get him to D section –

(CELESTINE ARRIVES.)

6. CELESTINE: (APPROACHING) Sister Blaikely?

7. MARJORIE: (TO CYRIL) Someone there will try to contact his family.
(TO CELESTINE) You've been sent to help?

8. CELESTINE: Well, I heard there was another train in so –

1. MARJORIE: So you thought you'd amble along?
2. CELESTINE: No, Sister, I heard the train was –
3. MARJORIE: (TO CELESTINE) Where've you been?
4. CYRIL: How do we get him to D section?
(BUT HE'S IGNORED.)
5. CELESTINE: I'm not a nurse.
6. MARJORIE: That's all too obvious –
7. CELESTINE: Nor one of the Voluntary Aid Detachment –
8. MARJORIE: Wet behind the ears and more willing than use–
9. CYRIL: Sister? Where shall we take him?
10. MARJORIE: (TOGETHER) That lorry there.
11. CELESTINE: (TOGETHER) No, wait. Let me –
12. MARJORIE: All those men are for D section –

1. CELESTINE: Wait, Corporal. Let me see. I'll look at him.
2. MARJORIE: Just a minute –
3. CELESTINE: (FIRMLY) I'm a doctor. Working with Captain George at the moment.
4. MARJORIE: A doctor?
5. CELESTINE: I'm carrying out research into bacteriology. Dr de Tullio. People have been informed about this. Were you not made aware?
6. MARJORIE: Yes, but I didn't realise –
7. CELESTINE: Where are you sending this man?
8. MARJORIE: He has gangrene –
9. CELESTINE: Gas gangrene. I know what he has.
10. MARJORIE: To D section. He's unlikely to survive.
(BEAT) Doctor.

1. CELESTINE: Well, let me take a look at him, Sister, and we'll see, shall we? (TO CYRIL) Set the stretcher down again.
2. CYRIL: Yes, miss.

(AS THEY SET THE STRETCHER DOWN ...)

3. COMMENTATOR: **The men from the train will be taken to a number of hospitals in Boulogne, some in hotels or schools, others, like Number Fifteen Stationary Hospital, encampments of wood and canvas by the sea. Marjorie has spent part of the morning preparing beds.**

The beds are there now. Flat and white and waiting.

Number Fifteen Stationary is a place of waiting. Waiting for treatment. Waiting to be sent back to the Front, to be moved to a hospital ship for home.

Waiting to die.

SCENE 4:**NUMBER FIFTEEN STATIONARY HOSPITAL**

FX: IT'S BUSY BUT NOT AS CHAOTIC AS THE STATION.

MICKEY'S LORRY ARRIVES AND PULLS UP. HE GETS OUT AND IS SPOTTED BY CAPTAIN KENNETH GEORGE.

(GEORGE'S ARROGANCE IS A RESULT OF INSECURITY. HE HAS FOUND HIMSELF IN CHARGE OF MEN AND HE'S NO LEADER. BUT HE'S A GOOD DOCTOR.)

1. **COMMENTATOR:** Eight forty-five. Sergeant Mickey Bliss has found his way to Boulogne.

2. **GEORGE:** (DISTANCE) You! What do you think you're doing?

3. **MICKEY:** Sir!

4. **COMMENTATOR:** Finding the right hospital has not been so easy.

5. **GEORGE:** (APPROACHING) You can't leave that there, you bloody fool.

6. **MICKEY:** Sorry, sir. I was told this is Number Fifteen Stationary ... ?

7. **GEORGE:** Are you bringing in wounded?

1. MICKEY: I was, sir. But I took them to Number Eleven General.
2. GEORGE: Then what're you doing here?
3. MICKEY: I didn't know Boulogne had so many hospitals.
4. GEORGE: What're you doing here, Sergeant?
5. MICKEY: (BUSKING) I'm Looking for someone, sir. On behalf of Major Cockburn, sir. He said –
6. GEORGE: You're looking for one of my team?
7. MICKEY: No, sir. One of the wounded.
8. GEORGE: A patient?
9. MICKEY: Sergeant, Signal Service, 2nd Division, a Walter Oddy. I was told he was sent here –
10. GEORGE: You're looking for one man?
11. MICKEY: Yes, sir. I was talking to someone at the station and he said that I -

1. GEORGE: You think we've got time to ... ? You have absolutely no idea, Sergeant. Tell Major Cockburn he can whistle for it, whatever it is. (MOVING OFF) Now get that bloody lorry off my grounds.

OUT.

SCENE 5:**A TEMPORARY HUT AT THE HOSPITAL.**

IT'S DEDICATED TO SURGICAL CASES AND IS A CLOSED, QUIET SPACE, THOUGH THERE'S BUSTLE OUTSIDE AND OCCASIONAL DISTANT SHOUTING.

(WE'RE CLOSE AS CELESTINE IS EXAMINING WALTER. WE HEAR HIS DIFFICULT BREATHING AND SOMETIMES HE SEEMS TO BE IN PAIN.)

1. **COMMENTATOR:** **A shed in the hospital grounds. It's been put together at speed by the Engineers and is now in use for surgical cases. This is Hut 12.**

FX: CELESTINE IS CUTTING THE BANDAGE AWAY FROM WALTER'S LEG.

It's now almost ten in the morning. Walter Oddy's been brought to Hut 12, on the insistence of Dr Celestine de Tullio. She cuts away the grimy remnants of bandage still fixed to the wound on his thigh.

(CELESTINE REACTS TO THE SMELL AND SIGHT OF THE WOUND.)

2. **CELESTINE:** Well ... she's right. The signs aren't good.

1. **COMMENTATOR:** **Here is acute medical necessity. The need for action and authority. It's what Celestine has longed for – and this war is providing it. Only as a researcher at the moment, and only that because of letters of introduction from her husband's influential friends. But it's a start. And she'll make the most of it.**

FX: THERE'S A BRIEF KNOCK AND MARJORIE COMES IN.

2. MARJORIE: Dr de Tullio? I was on my way ... and I wanted to –

3. CELESTINE: The men've all been moved now, have they?

4. MARJORIE: Yes.

(SHE HAS MORE TO SAY BUT SHE'S A LITTLE STIFF AND AWKWARD.)

I have to report to the medical wards in a little while ... but I thought I'd ...

5. CELESTINE: You'd what, Sister Blaikely?

6. MARJORIE: Apologise. I should've realised. That you were a doctor.

7. CELESTINE: It doesn't matter.

1. MARJORIE: Yes. I should've known ...
2. CELESTINE: We all have enough to do here, don't you think?
- 3 MARJORIE: But you ought to've said.
(CELESTINE BRISTLES.)
4. CELESTINE: Oh?
5. MARJORIE: Instead of letting me go on. In front of the men. I think you ought to've said.
6. CELESTINE: Do you?
(A MOMENT. SHE DECIDES NOT TO PURSUE IT.)
Yes. Yes...well ... perhaps.
7. MARJORIE: (MOVING IN) This is him?
8. CELESTINE: You can see: the infection's quite advanced.
9. MARJORIE: How long has he had this bandage on, I wonder?

1. **COMMENTATOR:** **A field dressing was applied when Walter was still in Beaulne and hasn't been changed since. Mickey helped a young orderly fix the bandage. They made it as tight as they could, to stem the flow of blood.**
2. **CELESTINE:** And tight, see. Which only makes it easier for the infection to take hold.
3. **COMMENTATOR:** **The orderly had been in France just over a week when he was called on to help Walter.**
4. **CELESTINE:** Have you seen gas gangrene before?
5. **MARJORIE:** Plenty in the last few weeks. None when I was in South Africa.
6. **CELESTINE:** You wouldn't. A different sort of dirt.
7. **MARJORIE:** Dirt in the wound?
8. **CELESTINE:** It's hot and dry there, yes? Whereas here ...
9. **MARJORIE:** (UNDERSTANDING) Yes, of course. With the rain and mud ...

1. CELESTINE: And it's farmland; the soil's manured. So the wounds become infected. And many of them are shrapnel wounds. Much more ragged, more vulnerable.
2. MARJORIE: And this is your research?
3. CELESTINE: Infection, yes. But we've got a lot to learn. In the case of gas gangrene, we don't know what, if anything, might inhibit it.
4. MARJORIE: (LOOKING AT WALTER) Well ... a clean dressing would've helped.
5. CELESTINE: This was probably applied in some dressing station at the Front, under God knows what conditions.
6. MARJORIE: (REACTS TO THE SMELL)
7. CELESTINE: Could've been a week ago – which is too long, really.
8. MARJORIE: But we patch them up and send them back. And they tell us everything's going so well.

1. CELESTINE: The men believe it, Sister. This isn't a retreat, they say. It's part of a plan, some grand plan to lead the enemy into a trap.

2. MARJORIE: If it is, they're the bait.

OUT.

SCENE 6:**THE HOSPITAL GROUNDS.**

AGAIN IT'S BUSY, NOISY. MEN BEING STRETCHERED BY AT PACE. MICKEY HAS PARKED THE LORRY SOMEWHERE AND IS ON FOOT.

1. MICKEY: (TO HIMSELF) This is hopeless. No one knows a bloody thing.
2. COMMENTATOR: **Sergeant Mickey Bliss continues his search. He walks between lines of tents, looking for someone who might help. It's five past ten. Half the men don't know where they are or why. Some hardly know their own names.**
3. ORDERLY: (DISTANT) Mind out the way there!
4. MICKEY: Sorry –
5. ORDERLY: Right in the bleeding path –

FX: THEY HURRY THROUGH WITH A STRETCHER.

1. **COMMENTATOR:** **Hopeless, trying to find anyone here. The man he's looking for was put on a train – Mickey knows this – but he could be anywhere by now. Someone said they might've seen such a man. Possibly. Try Number Fifteen Stationary Hospital.**
2. **MICKEY:** (TO HIMSELF) And this is it. But no one knows anything.
(CALLING OUT) Corporal!
3. **CYRIL:** (DISTANT) Sergeant?
4. **MICKEY:** Come over here.
5. **CYRIL:** (APPROACHING) Can't stop, Sarge, I got to get back to the station –
6. **MICKEY:** You're an orderly here?
7. **CYRIL:** No, I come in on the last train. But there's another lot, a fresh lot, see, just shipped in from England. I have to go forward with them –
8. **MICKEY:** Listen, I'm looking for someone –

1. CYRIL: Somewhere in Belgium. God knows where, I've never heard of it –
2. MICKEY: Corporal!
3. CYRIL: Sorry, Sarge, but it's no good asking me –
4. MICKEY: He probably came in on one of the trains –
5. CYRIL: They're sending me off –
6. MICKEY: Maybe yours. His name's Oddy. A Signals sergeant ...
7. CYRIL: Sorry, Sarge.
8. MICKEY: From Hull. Had a wife called Gladys.
9. CYRIL: Hull? A Yorkie, was he?
10. MICKEY: Yeah.
11. CYRIL: We did have one from Hull. Never mentioned Gladys, though.

1. MICKEY: (TURNING AWAY) All right, Corporal. Thanks.
2. CYRIL: This one kept going on about Ingrid.
3. MICKEY: (ALERT) Ingrid?
4. **COMMENTATOR: German girl. The butcher's daughter.**

MUSIC TAKES US TO ...

SCENE 7:**SURGICAL HUT 12, AS BEFORE.**

WALTER IS STILL BARELY CONSCIOUS. CAPTAIN GEORGE HAS COME TO CHECK ON CELESTINE. HE RESENTS HER BEING HERE.

1. GEORGE: The difficulty is that Every available medical man is fully engaged at the moment.

2. COMMENTATOR: **Seven minutes past ten, and Captain Kenneth George of the Territorial Royal Army Medical Corps, arrives to inspect Hut 12.**

3. GEORGE: I will myself be working on one of the surgical wards this morning. So ... you can perhaps see, Mrs de Tullio ...

4. CELESTINE: Sir?

5. GEORGE: If you could help relieve some of this pressure ...

6. CELESTINE: (DELIGHTED TO BE ASKED) Of course, sir. I was in practice, in Scotland, so I'm perfectly able to –

7. GEORGE: (CUTTING IN) I'll come in from time to time, when I can –

1. CELESTINE: You won't have to. I will manage.
2. GEORGE: Nevertheless, I will come in. For my own satisfaction.
3. CELESTINE: Yes, sir.
4. GEORGE: Since I'll be held responsible. Sister Blaikely?
5. MARJORIE: Sir?
6. GEORGE: I'm assuming Matron has detailed you to assist here?
7. MARJORIE: No, sir. I'm to report to the medical wards at eleven hundred hours.
8. GEORGE: I see.
9. MARJORIE: We have some new V.A.D.s. I'm supervising them.
10. GEORGE: You have considerable nursing experience, I believe?
11. MARJORIE: Yes, sir. I was in South Africa.

1. GEORGE: Well, good, that's good. I think it would be better if you stayed.
2. MARJORIE: Stayed? But Matron says –
3. GEORGE: I'll see Matron, don't worry.
4. CELESTINE: Sir, if this is for my sake –
5. GEORGE: It's for mine, Mrs de Tullio. You understand?

(WALTER GROANS.)

You have a patient waiting?

6. CELESTINE: Yes, sir.

(THEY MOVE A LITTLE TOWARDS WALTER.)

7. GEORGE: He came in on the train?

(GEORGE EXAMINES WALTER.)

8. CELESTINE: Yes, he has gas gangrene, which I thought –

1. GEORGE: I can see what he's got. He also has an abdominal wound. Had you noticed that?
2. CELESTINE: Yes, but that's not (as bad) –
3. GEORGE: Then he shouldn't be here. Who sent him?
4. CELESTINE: Well, I was at the station when he came in and I thought –
5. GEORGE: You examined him?
6. CELESTINE: Of course.
7. MARJORIE: I had him sent here, sir.
8. GEORGE: You did?
9. MARJORIE: It was doubtful, sir, a doubtful case, so I thought –
10. GEORGE: (PEERING CLOSE) Doubtful? Where's the doubt? This man will die.
11. MARJORIE: I thought we might be able to do something –

1. GEORGE: What we can do for him, Sister, is make him comfortable and get someone to send a message home.
2. MARJORIE: Yes, sir.
3. GEORGE: Someone from his family may come out to see him.
4. MARJORIE: I shouldn't think so, sir. He doesn't look that wealthy.
5. GEORGE: Nevertheless, we will do it. There may be time.
6. CELESTINE: Yes, sir.
7. GEORGE: Though, I doubt it.
8. CELESTINE: I did, however, wonder if...
9. GEORGE: What? You did wonder what, Mrs de Tullio?
10. CELESTINE: As it's gas gangrene, perhaps I could take a closer look –

1. GEORGE: You can look post mortem, if there's time.
(TO MARJORIE) We can do nothing more for
this patient. It's unfortunate but there it is.
(MOVING OFF) Get the orderlies to move this
man to section D.

2. MARJORIE: Yes, sir.

(THEY'RE BOTH MOVING, BRISKLY NOW, BUT ...)

3. CELESTINE: No, wait.

(GEORGE STOPS AND TURNS. HE'S ASTONISHED BY HER
AUDACITY.)

4. GEORGE: Wait?

5. CELESTINE: Leave him here. Let me at least look at him.

6. GEORGE: I beg your pardon. Let you do what?

OUT.

SCENE 8:**THE HOSPITAL GROUNDS. AS BEFORE.**

1. CYRIL: This is what I'm saying. They said to take him to section D and then –
2. MICKEY: So you keep telling me. But where is D?
3. CYRIL: Down there, between that row of tents –
4. MICKEY: That's all I wanted to know. (MOVING OFF)
Thank you, Corporal –
5. CYRIL: He's not there, though.
6. MICKEY: (RETURNING) He's not?
7. CYRIL: That's what I'm trying to explain. We didn't take him.
8. MICKEY: Then where is he? Do you know?
9. CYRIL: This nurse said to take him to one of the surgical huts. Number 12.
10. MICKEY: (WITH EXAGGERATED PATIENCE) And do you know where that is?

1. CYRIL: I took him so I can show you, yes.

2. MICKEY: Then why didn't you say?

3. CYRIL: Because ... well ...

(HE PAUSES, AWKWARDLY.)

4. MICKEY: What?

5. CYRIL: If he's a pal of yours, Sarge ... Well, best you prepare yourself.

OUT.

SCENE 9:**THE HUT, AS BEFORE.**

(WALTER CAN STILL BE HEARD FROM TIME TO TIME.)

1. CELESTINE: We're seeing more and more cases of gas gangrene but we hardly know how to counter it–
2. GEORGE: We? You feel you can –
3. CELESTINE: Because our experience is limited to –
4. GEORGE: You're speaking for the entire Royal Army Medical Corps?
5. CELESTINE: No, of course not, but GHQ has issued a warning about gas gangrene –
6. GEORGE: I'm well aware of that –
7. CELESTINE: And clearly, here in France –
8. GEORGE: Good God, woman –
9. CELESTINE: It flourishes, so, we have to understand it better–

1. GEORGE: I believe I understand it well enough –
2. CELESTINE: If I can look at this patient –
3. GEORGE: And I rather resent your suggestion –
4. CELESTINE: And maybe help him at the same time –
5. GEORGE: No! Mrs de Tullio, it is our duty ... we have a duty to the men who're fighting out here –
6. CELESTINE: Of course, and we can help them –
7. GEORGE: Don't interrupt. My primary concern is their welfare. It's not research. And we will succeed in what we're trying to do, and any other challenge that may come our way, by acting as a single, co-ordinated machine, centrally worked and understood –
8. CELESTINE: Yes, I'm not denying that but –
9. GEORGE: You don't deny it? You're in no position to deny or otherwise. You are not part of that machine.

1. CELESTINE: Captain George, anything we can learn about the infection of wounds –
2. GEORGE: And still you go on.
3. CELESTINE: They're studying this in Paris now –
4. GEORGE: Do you not hear me?
5. CELESTINE: Anaerobic organisms and gas gangrene, Professor Weinberg is working on sera that might help. If we can co-operate –
6. GEORGE: No! This is nothing to do with research. Research doesn't belong where men fight, and I must say I rather resent having to
(HE STOPS HIMSELF.)
Let me explain this to you, Mrs de Tullio. What applies here is not research but simple arithmetic. This man has no chance of survival. No reasonable chance. Gas gangrene is present in an advanced state and there's the uncertainty of his abdominal wound –
7. CELESTINE: Yes but that wound is clean, it's not infected –

1. GEORGE: It is uncertain, it always is with abdominal wounds. So, as far as that's concerned, we must delay, and then we must observe, and then, even if we were to operate on the gangrene, we would have to operate yet again—

(MICKEY COMES IN.)

2. MICKEY: Excuse me, sir –

3. GEORGE: Wait! (TO CELESTINE) We would put him through the shock of a second operation if, against all the odds, he happens to survive the first.

4. CELESTINE: Yes, sir, but what we might learn will help us in the future.

5. GEORGE: If we spend an hour on this man, with no hope of success, none whatsoever, all we're doing is depriving three other men of time and attention, men for whom there *is* some hope. This is the arithmetic. It is the case. And it dictates how we can proceed.

(HE TURNS TO MICKEY.)

What do you want, Sergeant?

1. MICKEY: I was told ... Excuse me, miss ...

(HE SEES CELESTINE. THERE IS A STUNNED AND AWKWARD PAUSE.)

2. GEORGE: Sergeant?

3. MICKEY: Yes, sir, sorry.

4. GEORGE: What do you want?

5. MICKEY: Yes, sir, I was told I might find Sergeant Oddy here, sir.

6. GEORGE: Oh, it's you. I thought I'd already told you –

7. MICKEY: You did, sir, yes. But I have to find him and –

8. GEORGE: He's not here.

9. MARJORIE: I believe it's the patient, sir.

10. GEORGE: What?

11. MARJORIE: This is Sergeant Oddy.

1. GEORGE: This is? The whole of Number Fifteen
Stationary appears to be revolving round this
man.
(TO MICKEY) What do you want with him?

(MICKEY IS UNCERTAIN. HE MUST INVENT SOMETHING.)

2. MICKEY: I have to talk to him ...

3. GEORGE: Talk to him?

4. MICKEY: Yes, sir. He was with the Hussars, on the River
Aisne.

5. GEORGE: Well?

6. MICKEY: Penetrated enemy lines, sir ... And they want
me to find out what he knows.

7. GEORGE: You?

8. MICKEY: Sir.

9. GEORGE: A sergeant, sent all this way to question
another sergeant? You have orders for this
interrogation, have you?

1. MICKEY: Not exactly, sir –
2. GEORGE: Written orders? Something for me to see?
3. MICKEY: There was no time, sir. But if you get a message to Major Lewis, sir ...
4. GEORGE: Major Lewis?
5. MICKEY: (HE'S MAKING IT UP) Yes, sir, in Paris –
6. GEORGE: No, this has wasted time enough.
7. MICKEY: I only require a few minutes with Oddy, sir –
8. GEORGE: You have no orders, Sergeant. Request denied. Sister, see that this man is removed to D section.
9. MARJORIE: Yes, sir.
10. GEORGE: Mrs de Tullio, I'd be grateful if you were report to Captain Harris in B block. He'll find you something useful to do.

(HE GOES, SHUTTING THE DOOR FIRMLY. CELESTINE IS STUNG BY THE HUMILIATION.)

1. CELESTINE: I'm sorry ...

2. MICKEY: The man's a fool.

3. CELESTINE: But I pushed too far –

4. MICKEY: Pompous bastard.

5. CELESTINE: And he has the authority so ...

(SHE TURNS TO MARJORIE.)

Thank you, Sister.

6. MARJORIE: What for?

7. CELESTINE: Telling him it was you who sent the patient here.

8. MARJORIE: Oh ... well, he wasn't listening to you.

9. CELESTINE: It was kind of you.

1. MARJORIE: Captain George is a clever man. But out of his depth, if you ask me.
2. MICKEY: So now you do nothing?
3. MARJORIE: He doesn't listen to us either.
4. MICKEY: About Walter Oddy, you do nothing?
5. CELESTINE: The officer says there's nothing to do.
6. MICKEY: But there's still a chance.
(CELESTINE DOESN'T RESPOND.)
He can be helped. That's what you were saying.
7. CELESTINE: Not exactly. Anyway, it doesn't matter what I was saying.
8. MICKEY: But you could try?
9. CELESTINE: Someone could, I suppose –
10. MICKEY: In that case ...

1. CELESTINE: But not me. And not now. I've been ordered not to.
2. MICKEY: So this man's life doesn't count – ?
3. CELESTINE: In front of witnesses. I'm sorry.
4. MICKEY: Witnesses, yes. Me.
5. CELESTINE: And Sister Blaikely.
6. MICKEY: Who won't say anything.
7. CELESTINE: No, that's unfair. You can't ask her to risk her position –
8. MICKEY: (TO MARJORIE) You won't, will you?
9. MARJORIE: If Captain George asks me, directly, I'd have to say. But I won't seek him out, no.
10. MICKEY: (TO CELESTINE) There you are. What would you do?

1. CELESTINE: I'd want to take smears, so we can examine the organisms, get soil samples, from his boots perhaps –
2. MICKEY: I don't mean that, I mean to help him. What would you do?
3. CELESTINE: Open the wound, cut away the infected tissue –
4. MICKEY: Would you operate?
5. CELESTINE: Yes, but I can't. It's impossible –
6. MICKEY: Because he says so?
7. CELESTINE: Yes because he says so. You heard him. Because he's a captain and I'm ... merely tolerated here.
8. MICKEY: A captain? He's a doctor in a hat.
9. CELESTINE: Commissioned an officer. Who issues orders. You of all people must know what that means.
(BEAT.)
And anyway I can't do it on my own.

1. MICKEY: Why not?
2. CELESTINE: You need a team.
3. MICKEY: She'd help.
4. MARJORIE: Yes.
5. CELESTINE: No, you don't understand what you're asking of her.
6. MARJORIE: I'm back on duty at eleven. I'm here till then.
7. MICKEY: So there's your help.
8. CELESTINE: I'd need more than one.
9. MICKEY: What about the Welsh lad who brought him here?
10. CELESTINE: No, I don't know him.
11. MICKEY: He seems capable.

1. CELESTINE: I don't know I can trust him. No, it'll have to be you.
2. MICKEY: Me?
3. MARJORIE: You don't know you can trust him either.
4. CELESTINE: You'll have to help.
5. MICKEY: I won't know what to do –
6. CELESTINE: We'll tell you. This is your idea, Sergeant. You've come all this way to talk to this man.
7. MICKEY: Yeah, I know but –
8. CELESTINE: Well, this is the only chance you're going to get.

(HE CONSIDERS, BRIEFLY.)

9. MICKEY: Right. All right, I will.

1. CELESTINE: Then let's get ready. And quick, we must be quick.

FX: CELESTINE AND MARJORIE BEGIN TO MOVE PURPOSEFULLY ABOUT THE HUT, HURRIEDLY PREPARING, COLLECTING THE INSTRUMENTS. AS THEY DO ...

Sister Blaikely, you know how to etherise patients?

2. MARJORIE: I have done it, a few times.
3. CELESTINE: Then do it for me. And keep careful check of his blood pressure.
4. MARJORIE: Yes, Doctor.
5. CELESTINE: Temperature, heart, but particularly blood pressure. He's barely conscious as it is. You'll have to watch very closely, and keep talking to me.
6. MARJORIE: Yes.
7. CELESTINE: The Sergeant can hand me the instruments as I need them –

1. MICKEY: Just that?
2. CELESTINE: When I ask. They'll all be in this tray. You might sometimes have to hold them in place.
3. MICKEY: In place?
4. CELESTINE: While I work. Or the edges of the wound, to keep it open.
5. MICKEY: (APPALLED) What – ?
6. CELESTINE: You must. Just do exactly as I tell you. And do it immediately.
7. MARJORIE: I'll have to get some more ether.
8. CELESTINE: We haven't got time –
9. MARJORIE: There isn't enough.
10. CELESTINE: We have to start work now.
11. MARJORIE: It won't take long. And I was thinking, I could ask someone ...

1. CELESTINE: What?
2. MARJORIE: I can ask Betty to take over my shift for a while.
3. CELESTINE: You can't tell anyone what we're doing.
4. MARJORIE: I won't, and she won't ask. I'll just say –
5. CELESTINE: All right, Sister, do it. But we won't wait for you. I'm going to apply a strong solution of iodine ...

FX: SHE GIVES MICKEY A BOTTLE.

Pour some of this in a bowl. And get the gauze ... over there.

6. MARJORIE: (GOING) I'll be less than five minutes, Doctor.

FX: MICKEY BEGINS TO DO AS SHE SAYS.

7. CELESTINE: (TO MARJORIE) I'm going to apply this to the wound and when I've done that I shall make the first incision, whether you're back or not.

1. **COMMENTATOR:** Walter's stretched out on a raised table.

The bandage has been cut away to expose the wound. It doesn't look like flesh. It's wet and open and the wrong colour. It's rotting leaf-mould.

2. **CELESTINE:** Give me the iodine ... No, more than that ...

Thank you.

(CELESTINE WORKS AT THE WOUND. WALTER GROANS A LITTLE.)

3. **MICKEY:** Walter? Walter, can you hear me – ?

4. **CELESTINE:** Look at what you're doing.

5. **MICKEY:** Sorry –

6. **CELESTINE:** Forget him. Concentrate on the wound. You see how I'm doing this, with the iodine? Take some of that gauze and you do the same.

7. **MICKEY:** Yes ... yes ...

(THEY WORK, CONCENTRATING HARD.)

8. **CELESTINE:** You can see how advanced the gas gangrene is ... Look, the yellowing here ...

1. MICKEY: (Unhappily) Yes ...
2. CELESTINE: And how hard it is ...
(HE CAN'T LOOK ANYMORE.)
Don't turn away.
3. MICKEY: Sorry.
4. CELESTINE: You have to see what you're doing. You have to look, Michael.

(BEAT.)
5. MICKEY: So you do know me...
6. CELESTINE: Of course I know you.
7. MICKEY: Well you didn't say.
8. CELESTINE: Neither did you.
9. MICKEY: I thought that you ...
10. CELESTINE: What? You thought what, Michael?

1. **COMMENTATOR:** **He sees her look down at Walter's ruined leg. It doesn't disgust her, it fascinates. To her this is a piece of nature. It's a fungus, it's a flower. That's Celestine. How she always was.**
She puts her fingers to the skin. It's so tight it shines under the lamplight.

2. **CELESTINE:** Did you know I was in Boulogne?

3. **MICKEY:** No.

4. **CELESTINE:** You're not here because of me?

5. **MICKEY:** I didn't know where you were. I haven't for years. I came for Walter.

6. **CELESTINE:** Oh yes, of course. To interrogate him. Wasn't that it?

(HE SAYS NOTHING.)

(SMILING) You're no better at lying than you ever were, Michael.

7. **MICKEY:** No one's called me Michael for fourteen years.

8. **CELESTINE:** Keep working.

1. MICKEY: I ... I don't know what to say.

2. CELESTINE: There's nothing to say.

3. MICKEY: No, there is, there must be ...

FX: THE DOOR OPENS. MARJORIE COMES IN AND IMMEDIATELY MAKES HERSELF BUSY WITH BOWLS AND SCISSORS.

4. MARJORIE: Betty will cover. I've got forty minutes before they miss me.

5. CELESTINE: It might not be enough.

6. MARJORIE: Well, I can't do more.

7. CELESTINE: Then we'll have to manage.

8. MARJORIE: You've not made an incision yet?

9. CELESTINE: I'm doing it now. You were just in time.

(FROM HERE WALTER IS QUIET. THE SOUND OF THE INSTRUMENTS IS CLEAR AND HIGHTENED.)

1. **COMMENTATOR:** Sister Blaikely applies ether to a mask and the mask to Walter's face. The three of them work on ...

FX: BRIEF MUSIC. DURING THIS TIME MOVES ON ...

**If they were in the field they'd charge by
and leave him there. They'd hardly take it in.**

2. **CELESTINE:** You can feel the gas ... the bubbles under the skin ...
3. **COMMENTATOR:** In the field a soldier's attention is wide. To take in where danger might come from.
4. **MARJORIE:** Doctor de Tullio ...
5. **COMMENTATOR:** But here it's quiet ...
6. **MARJORIE:** His blood pressure's falling ...
7. **COMMENTATOR:** And in the quiet, Mickey's looking at a hole in a man's leg.

1. CELESTINE: Sergeant.
(NO ANSWER.)

Sergeant, are you with us? This is the thread
... I'll need this ... Look, here on the tray.

2. MARJORIE: The abdominal wound's seeping ...

3. CELESTINE: I need it to close cuts ... or to stitch flaps to
keep the wound open. Make sure you know
where this is.

4. MICKEY: Yes, yes, yes ...

5. MARJORIE: Doctor? The abdominal wound –

6. CELESTINE: Yes, I heard you. Can you do anything?

7. MARJORIE: I can pack it.

8. CELESTINE: Then do it. As long as you hold up the bleeding
... just long enough ...

9. COMMENTATOR: **There's no rifle-fire here, no bombardment,
no glorifying touch of danger. This is a
quiet table with lamps.**
It terrifies him.

1. MARJORIE: Sergeant, take over the mask ...
2. MICKEY: This?
3. MARJORIE: Hold it over his face while I ...
4. CELESTINE: Right. I'll need forceps ... Forceps, forceps!
5. MICKEY: I can't now. She's just asked me to –
6. CELESTINE: Do both, Michael. You have to do both.
7. COMMENTATOR: **Sister Blaikely hands the mask to Mickey.**
He looks at Walter's face. A man asleep.
Mouth open ... the black edges of his teeth
...
8. CELESTINE: The abdominal bleeding ... how is it?
9. MARJORIE: Eased a little ... I don't know for how long ...
10. MICKEY: (TO HIMSELF) This isn't him.
11. CELESTINE: What?

1. MICKEY: No ... nothing ...
2. COMMENTATOR: **And the smell. Walter never smelled sweet on the best of days but this isn't him either. This is a common smell. A stench. This is what we all come to.**
3. CELESTINE: Knife ... We'll have to cut the entire infected areas away ... all of it ... and beyond ...
4. COMMENTATOR: **Celestine doesn't notice the stench. All her concentration is on the blade. The blade in the wound.**
5. MARJORIE: (TO MICKEY) All right ... I'll take the mask again.
6. CELESTINE: I can't get the angle right ... Move the lamp for me ... More ... And hold the wound back ... there, so I can see ...

COMMENTATOR: **He leans in close. And puts a finger to Walter's wound.**
The top of his head touches her hair.
She works on. No one speaks.

FX: BREATHING. INSTRUMENTS ...

1. MARJORIE: I'll have to go soon.
2. CELESTINE: All right.
3. MARJORIE: Or I'll be missed. I'm sorry, Doctor.
4. CELESTINE: We'll manage from here. Won't we, Sergeant?
5. COMMENTATOR: **So the Sister goes. Now it's just Celestine and Mickey. Almost as they were, fourteen years ago at the Regent Street Polytechnic.**

CUT TO ...

SCENE 10:**THE STATION.**

**FX: AN ENGINE STEAMING UP AND A TRAIN PULLING OUT.
THERE'S SHOUTING.**

1. COMMENTATOR: Almost two in the afternoon. The train that brought Walter to Boulogne is preparing to return. Before it leaves it'll be shunted into a siding to allow another to pass.

FX: A TRAIN STEAMS SLOWLY BY. A SOLDIER CALLS FROM THE TRAIN TO A DOUR SERGEANT ON THE PLATFORM

2. SOLDIER: (CALLING) Hey, sergeant! Sarge!!

3. SARGE: Get your head back in, you silly sod!

4. SOLDIER: Some of the lads want to know –

5. SARGE: Get back!

FX: THE TRAIN IS TAKING THEM AWAY.

6. SOLDIER: Where are we going, sarge?

7. SARGE: You're going to war!

1. SOLDIER: The name of the place –
2. SARGE: Get your bloody head in.
3. **COMMENTATOR: More troops, fresh from home, steaming up to Ypres.**
4. SOLDIER: (FADING) We can't remember the name!

SCENE 11: THE HOSPITAL GROUNDS.

FX: THE SUDDEN NOISE OF TWO LORRIES GRINDING TO A STOP IN THE BACKGROUND. MEN SHOUT FOR HELP AS THEY PREPARE TO UNLOAD MORE WOUNDED.

1. **COMMENTATOR:** Two farm lorries, having limped erratically across country from the Marne, converge on Number Fifteen Stationary Hospital with more wounded.
2. **GEORGE:** (SHOUTING) Orderlies! Orderlies! You!
3. **ORDERLY:** (APPROACHING) Yes, sir.
4. **GEORGE:** Get over to the medical wards on the other side.
5. **ORDERLY:** Other side, sir?
6. **GEORGE:** Down there! Between that row of tents! Tell Sergeant-Major Hughes to send all available orderlies to the main entrance. Now!
7. **ORDERLY:** Sir!

1. GEORGE: (CALLING AFTER HIM) And come back here yourself!
2. COMMENTATOR: **Along the way they've picked up stragglers from Mons and the Marne. Three of the wounded are rumoured to be French but it's hard to tell. They don't speak and their uniforms appear to be old blankets or scraps of other men's clothes, picked up as they marched. So no one is certain.**

(CAPTAIN GEORGE SEES MARJORIE HURRY BY.)

3. GEORGE: Sister Blaikely!
4. MARJORIE: Yes, sir.
5. GEORGE: Has that man been moved?
6. MARJORIE: Sir?
7. GEORGE: Is Hut 12 now available?
8. MARJORIE: I'm ... not sure, sir. I had to leave –

1. GEORGE: Well, go and make sure. We need the space.
No, wait. I'll go.

2. MARJORIE: But sir...I...

3. GEORGE: (GOING) Stay here and help get these men
properly stowed.

OUT.

SCENE 12:**HUT 12.**

(CELESTINE AND MICKEY STILL WORKING AWAY.)

1. CELESTINE: Look at this ... the muscle's almost rotted to extinction ... and yet this is quite clear ... You see?
2. MICKEY: It all looks rotten to me.
3. CELESTINE: No, it's not. Here, by the side of the original wound, look, there's very little infection.
4. MICKEY: You mean he has a chance?
5. CELESTINE: No, it's still not good, Michael, but it means the infection's travelling up and down the body, with the blood flow ... not across. Do you see?
6. MICKEY: Yeah, yeah, I see.
7. CELESTINE: What's the matter?
8. MICKEY: You're not interested, are you?
9. CELESTINE: What?

1. MICKEY: In him. In what happens to him.
I remember now.
2. COMMENTATOR: **She looks up – for a moment – before turning back to the wound.**
She looks away from him.
3. CELESTINE: Check the dressing on his stomach. See if he's still bleeding.
4. COMMENTATOR: **That's how it was the last time he saw her.**
They stood in the hall and she took her gloves off the dresser.
5. CELESTINE: Michael! Do it!
6. COMMENTATOR: **She looked at them, picking at the stitching.**
Because she wouldn't look him in the eye.
The day she said she wouldn't marry him.

FX: THE HUT DOOR OPENS AND CAPTAIN GEORGE COMES IN.

(HE'S AT FIRST BEWILDERED BY WHAT HE SEES.)

7. GEORGE: What is this? What are you doing?
(THERE IS NO ANSWER.)

Mrs de Tullio?

1. CELESTINE: I decided to operate. As you see.
2. GEORGE: I asked you to report to Captain Harris.
3. CELESTINE: Yes, sir.
4. GEORGE: Did I not make that perfectly clear?
5. MICKEY: Sir, it was me. I made her –
6. GEORGE: Be quiet.
7. MICKEY: I said, if she could do anything –
8. CELESTINE: It's all right, Sergeant Bliss, I can speak for myself.
9. GEORGE: I don't think there's any more to say, is there?
10. CELESTINE: I thought I'd be better employed here –
11. GEORGE: In spite of my request to the contrary?
12. CELESTINE: Than administering first aid under Captain Harris.

1. GEORGE: Mrs de Tullio, you are not fit to serve out here –
2. CELESTINE: I am perfectly qualified –
3. GEORGE: You have no understanding –
4. CELESTINE: With experience of bacteriology, which you won't make use of –
5. GEORGE: And you disrupt what the rest of us are trying to do –
6. CELESTINE: No, this is not so. You ignore me, you ignore what I'm trying to do here.
7. GEORGE: By God, woman! You come here, waving your letters of introduction, and you think everyone will stop and bow down. Well, I won't. I intend to submit a full report about this. You are not wanted here. Do you understand?
8. CELESTINE: You're perfectly entitled –
9. GEORGE: And by the time I've finished you'll never be employed anywhere else. I'll make sure you're not!

(CELESTINE IS CALM IN THE FACE OF THIS STORM.)

1. CELESTINE: Yes, sir. I'm sure. Meanwhile ...
2. GEORGE: Meanwhile, what?
3. CELESTINE: I must complete this operation.
4. GEORGE: Oh, must you?
5. CELESTINE: I can't abandon the patient. Can I? I must finish here. Even if it's the last thing I do as a doctor.
6. COMMENTATOR: **She stands there facing him. Her hands outspread, open and bloodied from her work. Looking directly at him.**
7. GEORGE: Were you ever a doctor?
Very well, carry on. And then clear out of this hut.
- (HE GOES. CELESTINE TAKES A BREATH.)
8. COMMENTATOR: **Mickey's seen that before, too. Celestine standing, perfectly still, waiting for things to come round to her way of thinking.**

1. MICKEY: He can't do that, can he? Ruin your career?

2. CELESTINE: Quite possibly.

3. MICKEY: You're trying to save a man's life –

4. CELESTINE: Precisely. We've lost enough time as it is.

5. COMMENTATOR: They return to their work.

6. MICKEY: He's still bleeding ...

7. CELESTINE: The fool ... Foolish, foolish man ...

8. MICKEY: He's bleeding! What shall I do?

9. COMMENTATOR: Walter Oddy's blood pressure is weakening.

10. MICKEY: I don't know what to do.

11. COMMENTATOR: There's infection fizzing in the open wound.

12. CELESTINE: His entire system is shocked.

13. COMMENTATOR: The heart is diminishing.

1. CELESTINE: He's fading, Michael ... I can't keep him ...
2. MICKEY: You hang on, Walter, you hang on!
(TO CELESTINE) Come on, you must be able to do something.
3. CELESTINE: He needs blood, we have to replace the lost blood and fluids and we can't do that –
4. MICKEY: They fetched him half way across France, for God's sake –
5. CELESTINE: It's too late –
6. MICKEY: He has to live!
7. **COMMENTATOR: The wounded man's face becomes still.**
8. MICKEY: Dear God, no, no, no, no, no, no, not like this.
9. **COMMENTATOR: It becomes empty.**
10. MICKEY: Listen to me, Walter ... Listen! Take hold, man.

1. COMMENTATOR: A little family back home will recall this day.
14th October, 1914. Sergeant Walter Oddy,
2nd Division. Wounded during a chaotic
scramble on the banks of the Aisne.

The final settlement here. A table in Hut 12,
Number Fifteen Stationary Hospital,
Boulogne.

(MICKEY AND CELESTINE ARE QUIET FOR A MOMENT.)

2. MICKEY: He should've died back there. To come all this way ... this is ... this isn't right.

3. CELESTINE: I'm sorry, Michael. You must've been very close.

4. MICKEY: We were... under fire together.

5. CELESTINE: Did he have a family?

6. MICKEY: Well, he had wife back in Hull, I think.

But there was a girl, he said, when he was a youngster. Her father was German, didn't take to Walter. Which I can understand. So she was packed off, back to Hamburg ...

7. CELESTINE: And he lost her?

1. MICKEY: (POINTEDLY) Well, that happens. Doesn't it?
Something comes along and gets in the way.
He married someone else. But Ingrid was the name he said after he was hit.
No, we weren't close. That's not why I came. I didn't like him.
2. CELESTINE: Then why did you come?
3. MICKEY: I don't know.
Because ...
Because what happened to him, back there when he was hit ...
What happened ...
(PAUSE.)
It was my fault. And he comes all this way ... and ... I am responsible.
4. CELESTINE: Because he died?
(HIS SILENCE IS AFFIRMATION.)
You can't think that.
5. MICKEY: It's what happened.

1. CELESTINE: Every day you send men into danger. That's duty, isn't it? You're supposed to do that.
2. MICKEY: No, listen! I went charging into the heat of battle, not thinking, and I dragged him with me. If I hadn't done that ... if I hadn't felt so...
3. CELESTINE: So what?
4. MICKEY: It's what my mother said, the day I left for the Army. Heading for glory over the horizon, she said, not stopping to think.
5. CELESTINE: Oh, Michael.
6. MICKEY: What?
7. CELESTINE: You always did that. You take it all on yourself. You pluck guilt out of the air.
8. MICKEY: Do I?
9. CELESTINE: Yes.
The last time I saw you ...
10. MICKEY: Yeah.

1. CELESTINE: The next thing I knew you'd joined the Army.
No word ... no warning, you just –
2. MICKEY: You sent me away! That's what you ...
I was, I thought we were gonna...What did you think I'd do?
(THEY'RE CLOSE. THEY BREATHE.)
3. CELESTINE: I don't know, Michael.
I should get someone to remove this man.
4. MICKEY: Yes.
5. CELESTINE: And then clear the hut.
6. MICKEY: What he said, about you losing work that's ...
7. CELESTINE: What about it?
8. MICKEY: What will you do?
9. CELESTINE: I don't know. Leave Boulogne, I suppose. And then ... well, work somewhere else.

1. MICKEY: But how? If he says you won't?
2. CELESTINE: Robert won't let that happen.
3. MICKEY: Yes. Of course. Robert.
4. CELESTINE: People will listen to him.
5. MICKEY: Where is he?
6. CELESTINE: At home.
7. MICKEY: At home?
8. CELESTINE: Not happy about me being here, but ... well, you know ...
9. MICKEY: He does what you want.
10. CELESTINE: (Smiling) Usually, yes. He has friends, influential friends. I wouldn't be out here at all but for Robert.
11. MICKEY: No, I'm sure.

1. CELESTINE: And you can't be a doctor without a proper financial support.
2. MICKEY: Well ... he always did have that didn't he. And ... I mean, you and him ... ?
3. CELESTINE: We have a son. Harry.
4. MICKEY: Well ... That's good. That's good.
5. CELESTINE: It is, yes. And you?
6. MICKEY: Indian Army.
7. CELESTINE: India?
8. MICKEY: I was home on a signalling course when this lot started.
9. CELESTINE: Did you marry?
10. MICKEY: Yes.
11. CELESTINE: And? Nothing to add?

1. MICKEY: It seems a long way off at the moment.
(CHANGING THE SUBJECT) I didn't know what it was like here ... I mean, all these hospitals and...
2. CELESTINE: Things seem to be going rather badly.
(PAUSE.)
Michael, I have to go.
3. MICKEY: Yes. I must, too.
4. CELESTINE: Where?
5. MICKEY: Paris. I'm with the 2nd Division. I have to rejoin them.
6. CELESTINE: But not just yet. I'll find some orderlies and then ... Well, I'll see you before you leave.
7. MICKEY: Yes?
8. CELESTINE: Yes, Michael. I'd like to.
9. COMMENTATOR: **She goes to find orderlies, and Mickey Bliss is left alone with Walter Oddy.**

FX: CELESTINE LEAVES, SHUTTING THE DOOR.

1. MICKEY: Walter? Sorry. I'll do what I can for you.
2. COMMENTATOR: **The dead man has a toe tag. It contains the essence of his military life. Name, rank and number. Mickey adds to it ...**
3. MICKEY: (WRITING) From Hull. A wife there. Gladys.
4. COMMENTATOR: **He does this to expedite the finding of Walter's family.**
5. MICKEY: (HEAD) The last I'll write for any man. I led you into this, lad, but I want no further part in it. From now on I'll follow, I won't lead.
6. COMMENTATOR: **He makes no mention of his one time German girl.**
7. MICKEY: Ingrid. That wouldn't tell them anything they need to know.
8. COMMENTATOR: **A girl from the past. A long way off.**
9. MICKEY: Best forgotten.

SCENE 14: THE HOSPITAL GROUNDS.

(CYRIL IS SORTING OUT PATIENTS.)

1. **COMMENTATOR:** **Corporal Cyril Walton, RAMC, has proved himself so useful he's still at Stationary Hospital Number Fifteen.**
2. **CYRIL:** (CALLING) C Block! Take this man to C Block!
3. **COMMENTATOR:** **He missed the train he should've caught. They'll keep him busy here until the next one's ready to leave.**
4. **CYRIL:** (TO AN ORDERLY) Just up there, mate. That way, keep going.
5. **COMMENTATOR:** **Then three more weeks' service as a stretcher bearer, before he too becomes a casualty.**

CROSSFADE TO ...

SCENE 15:**ONE OF THE MEDICAL WARDS.**

(MARJORIE IS DRESSING WOUNDS. HER MANNER IS COOL AND DETATCHED.)

1. COMMENTATOR: **Sister Marjorie Blaikely is on ward B dressing wounds.**

2. MARJORIE: (TO A PATIENT) Try to keep still ...

3. WOUNDED MAN: Sorry, sister –

4. MARJORIE: Don't be sorry –

5. WOUNDED MAN: I can't stop shaking –

6. MARJORIE: Hold on to my arm there, that's it –

7. WOUNDED MAN: Thank you. Thank you –

8. COMMENTATOR: **Most of these are shrapnel wounds, which she treats by applying tincture of iodine and swabbing with Lysol.**

9. MARJORIE: It's better now than it was.

10. WOUNDED MAN: I don't know -

1. MARJORIE: Yes. Better than half an hour ago.
(SHE'S LYING) In another half hour it'll be better still. Won't it?
2. COMMENTATOR: **They are, many of them, worse than anything she saw in South Africa.**
3. MARJORIE: There ... you'll sleep better now.
4. WOUNDED MAN: Thank you, sister.
5. COMMENTATOR: **This evening, alone in her tent, she'll see Walter's face again. His head lolled against the stretcher. His watery eyes. Willing himself not to call out. And she'll regret that she found nothing to say to him in that moment. No word of comfort.**

CROSSFADE TO ...

SCENE 16:**CAPTAIN GEORGE'S PRIVATE QUARTERS.**

FX: A SMALL TENT. HE'S WRITING WITH A FOUNTAIN PEN.

1. **COMMENTATOR:** In his private quarters, Captain Kenneth George writes a terse report ...
2. **GEORGE:** (CLOSE, WRITING) Concerning the unsatisfactory conduct of Mrs Celestine de Tullio.
3. **COMMENTATOR:** His request, that she be sent back to England, will annoy some powerful people.
4. **GEORGE:** (TO HIMSELF) Can't be helped. I must make a stand.

CROSSFADE TO ...

SCENE 17: **HUT 12.**

FX: THE DOOR OPENS AND CELESTINE STEPS IN.

1. COMMENTATOR: It's past three before Celestine manages to get back to Hut 12.

2. CELESTINE: Michael?

THE PLACE IS EMPTY.

3. COMMENTATOR: She finds it deserted.

MUSIC TAKES US TO ...

SCENE 17A: ROADSIDE, NEAR BOULOGNE.

FX: A LORRY PULLS UP.

1. MICKEY: (CALLING) I've got to get to Paris!
2. CHEERY DRIVER: Jump in, sarge. We'll get you there.

FX: MICKEY JUMPS ON AND THE LORRY DRIVES AWAY.

MUSIC TAKES US TO ...

SCENE 18:**A ROAD OUTSIDE BOULOGNE.****FX: MICKEY IS SITTING IN A LORRY AS IT BUMPS ALONG.**

1. **COMMENTATOR:** Mickey has managed to get a lift. It's brought him as far as Etaples. Mostly in silence. Thinking of Walter. Of Celestine. And of war.
2. **MICKEY:** (HEAD) I wash my hands of it. Let it take me if it wants. I no longer care.
3. **COMMENTATOR:** More than a hundred and fifty miles to Paris, he calculates. It'll be dark long before he gets there.

FX: THE LORRY DRIVES INTO THE DISTANCE.**MUSIC. END.**